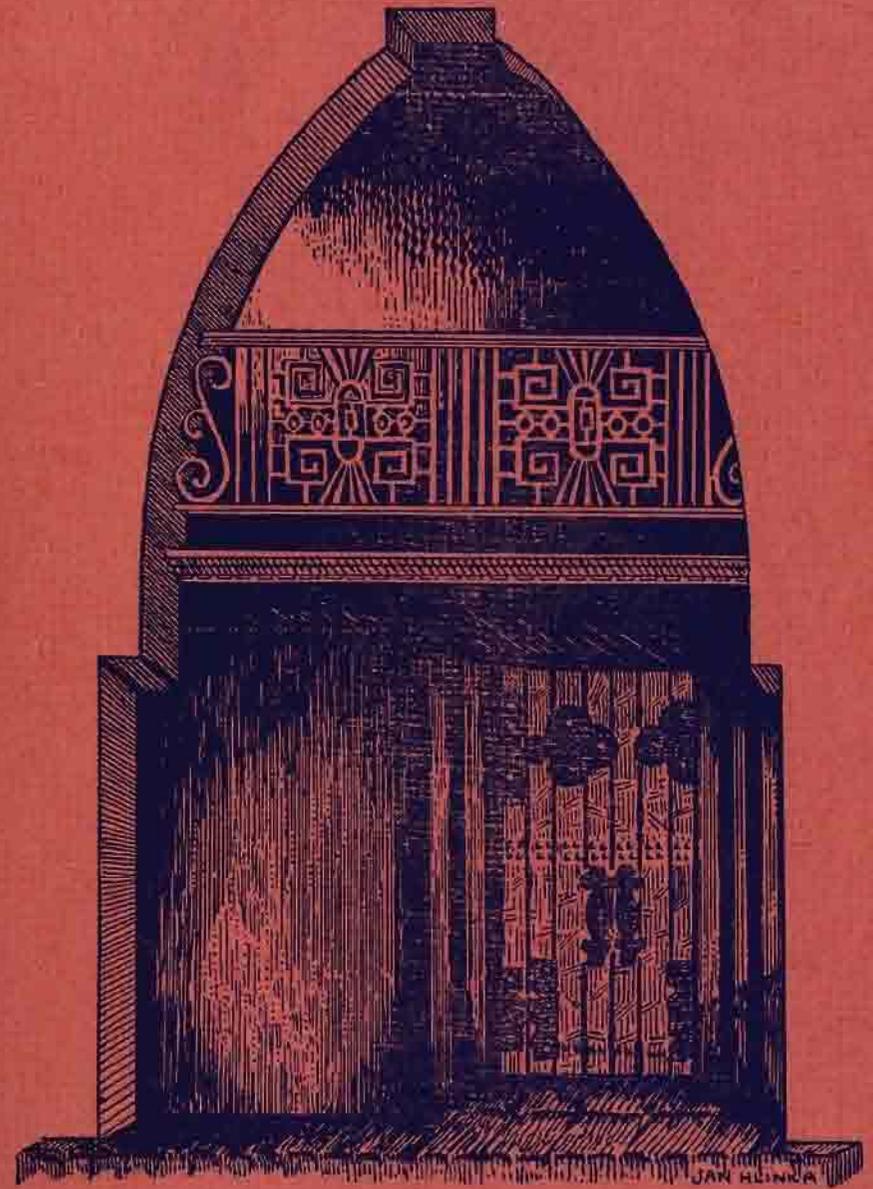


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Journal of the
Philosophical Research Society

WINTER
1949



ISSUED
QUARTERLY
VOLUME 9, No. 3

HORIZON LINES

AN EDITORIAL

BY MANLY PALMER HALL



That Spiritual Quality

THE religious-minded in general and the metaphysical-minded in particular have a tendency to use abstract terms somewhat vaguely. We are reminded of a discussion in *Alice in Wonderland* between the White Queen and Alice. In the story, Alice has difficulty believing in the impossible. The queen assures her that it only requires practice. If you draw a deep breath and shut your eyes, the incredible seems much more credible. "Why!" said the queen, "Sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast." Sufficient industry and effort always increase proficiency; and proficiency, in turn, contributes to the rapidity with which we can discover that spiritual quality in certain other persons.

The dictionary supplies some useful, if rather general, information. It defines *spiritual* thus: "of or consisting of spirit; incorporeal; of the intellectual and higher endowments of the mind; intellectual; of the moral feeling or states of the soul;

of the soul, or its affections as influenced by the divine Spirit; pure; holy." Strictly speaking, therefore, those regarded as possessing unusual spiritual qualities must be richly endowed with characteristics and attributes reminiscent of the proper definitions of the word. Immediately, however, we find ourselves on the horns of a dilemma. There is little more agreement about the meanings of the defining terms than there is about the term defined. We can eliminate the thought of *incorporeal* as unsuitable as a description of those still in the flesh. The higher endowments of the mind suggest the possibility of honest differences of opinion. Those disagreeing with our conclusions on various subjects may consider us mentally attenuated, but not superiorly endowed. The state of our moral feelings and the security of our souls may also be subject to reasonable doubts. Purity and holiness seldom appear in their natural state, so it is difficult to judge the degree of their superabundance. Whether we use

the term *spiritual* to describe the disembodied or the devout, we should recognize our responsibility to the science of semantics.

In the course of more years than we like to remember, I have been introduced to a number of men and women who have been described by enthusiastic friends and followers as outstanding examples of that spiritual "something." In some instances, there were qualities present which justified a reaction of natural and simple admiration. Usually, however, the overtones were not entirely "out of this world." Some of the worse rogues that it has been my misfortune to meet have gained considerable reputation for that elusive quality of godlikeness suggested by the term *spiritual*. Conversely, I have met folks who just did not have that "something," but whose lives in terms of practical and unselfish devotion to principles were infinitely superior to those who were very, very spiritual.

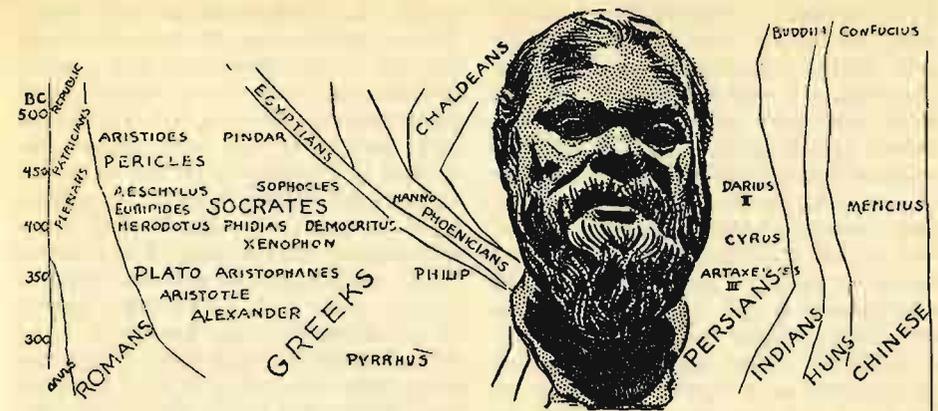
As an observer, therefore, I have catalogued and classified certain attitudes and attributes which bring with them those easily recognized divine overtones. This somewhat scientific approach has revealed some useful facts of importance to such as may have any real interest in discovering them. It would appear that in many cases that spiritual quality is the higher octave of sex appeal. It also partakes of what the ancients called glamour, which is itself a compound of mysticism and mystery. It is a fact beyond dispute that the appearance of this quality can be cultivated with practice and a slight flair for histrionics. One of the primary requisites is a soulful look. Some are born with it; some achieve it; and in others, it is the result of astigmatism. Those suffering from short-sightedness often develop that wide-eyed look of wonder which conveys an impression of extraordinary innocence and out-of-this-worldness.

Suavity also helps. There is a kind of slightly unctuous, somewhat-faunting toadying to prospective customers that is just too, too divine. In this case, the spiritual quality is bestowed by the cir-

cumstance that the smooth character has been sufficiently "illuminated" to recognize the advanced state of our own illumination. Only those really spiritual can appreciate our spirituality. This is the acid test. Once there is mutual agreement on this highly vulnerable point, we are not only willing but also anxious to contribute generously to the cause which only the most advanced souls can fully recognize.

Languor is also an asset. Those filled with that spiritual quality must be a little weary with the world and its low vibrations. Those who are weary must naturally be tired; and those who are tired are not expected to be interested in hard work. The ethereal quality of lassitude, the ability to, shall we say, float from place to place and from situation to situation suggests that we are leaving this world in one way or another. It is the cause of some surprise to ordinary mortals that so many who have renounced all earthly considerations contrive at the same time to accumulate such tidy reserves against the inconspicuous of fortunes.

When attempting to discover those associations of ideas involved in the concept of spirituality, we should turn to the broad field of religious art. The great artists of the past, when portraying sacred or sanctified persons, usually followed a well-established precedent. Of course, details of appearance and costume differ according to the time and locale in which the artist flourished. In Christian art, the Madonna is always virginal, delicate, and demure, but the *bambino*, or infant Christ, is not so successfully portrayed. Saints and scholars of the masculine persuasion are almost invariably bearded, and a martyr with sideburns is inconceivable. God the Father, if depicted, is most ancient and most venerable. Seldom is any sanctified person represented as engaged in any useful occupation. Holiness is symbolized by a penitential posture—the hands clasped in prayer, the eyes raised toward some distant source of glory, and the like. Apparently, perpetual prayerfulness suggests to both



the artist and the layman that spiritual quality.

Representations of Christ in his mature years are consistently sentimental. The effort has been made to portray the Master as beautiful rather than strong, vital, or purposeful. The Nordic Jesus, with his placid, gentle, or slightly sorrowful expression, has no foundation in history or tradition. All the implications of sanctity are more or less negative. The great teacher and spiritual leader is reduced to a completely unreal symbol of the human impulse to escape the responsibilities of conduct and character.

For thousands of years, artists have created idealistic restorations of the appearances of the great teachers of the past. As there are few authentic portraits of early religious leaders, the restorations are really the creation of ideal types to signify qualities of consciousness. Confucius is depicted by the Chinese according to their own concept of a perfect scholar. Buddha has become so closely identified with his philosophy that his images are intended to convey the very disciplines which he taught. Throughout the world, it is the same. The venerated saint or sage is not only the folk hero, but is also represented as the perfect folk type.

A few of the Greek and Roman immortals are represented in the modern world by what may be contemporary works of art. These are uncertain, but they have a stronger claim to authenticity than the Eastern depictions. The

older works consistently depict greater strength of character and less of that prettiness which we associate with the spiritual "something." Socrates, for example, appears learned, robust, and perhaps just a trifle worldly. He certainly lacks that look of injured innocence which medieval artists bestowed upon pious characters about to be martyred. Artistically speaking, it appears that the gentility of soul which we are seeking to define is appropriately personified by the dying Camille or the fading heroine of *La Boheme*. It certainly seems to help if the holy do not look healthy.

We have noticed that a gracious kind of inefficiency also receives honorable mention. If we are helpless enough, there always seems to be someone willing, ready, and eager to support us, sustain us, and adore us. All we have to do is convince the adoring one that we are "about the Master's business" in some way or other. If we can convince the other person that there is just no hope that they will ever be able to understand the deep spiritual currents that flow through us, we can live on the bounty of the unenlightened for half a century. In a case of this kind, it is also wise to be fragile. If we collapse under the slightest breath of criticism, doubt, or question, our position is strengthened immensely. No reasonable doubt remains of our spirituality.

There is a popular misunderstanding about the religious life that really needs clarification. Monastic orders have long

been regarded as institutions of escape from the burdens and responsibilities of daily living. Actually, nearly all monastic groups are engaged in various enterprises, but these projects are not well-known to the general public. Even in religious retreats, human beings cannot remain idle indefinitely without complete demoralization. Regular occupation is just as necessary to the spiritual health of man as prayer, fasting, and meditation. A life of uselessness can never be a life of godliness, and there is nothing more useless than wandering about in a mystic daze. The excuse that we are being prepared for great work in the future is not a sufficient justification for present idleness.

There is supposed to be a special state of virtue which makes it impossible, or at least extremely difficult, for certain sensitive persons to fit into this mortal life. They just "can't adjust themselves to the humdrum, profane, prosaic commercialism" which makes this earth so earthy. They should have been born somewhere else, some other time. They are sure of this themselves, and after awhile most of their friends agree. We will grant that present conditions are not especially inspiring, but we shall not be rescued from this slough of despond by plaintive moans and sighs. Perhaps we are sure that five lives back we were Atlantean high priests or Lemurian vestal virgins, but in the present incarnation we are Social Security numbers, our wings somewhat clipped, and our auras considerably dimmed.

To be consistent with human expectancy patterns, the spiritual should always be poor, or at least financially restricted. It is imperative, of course, that the economic state be due to the renunciation of sordid materialism. In the interest of science, I have examined this matter with some care, and find that for every one who has renounced worldly goods from spiritual convictions, there are a hundred who had nothing to renounce in the first place. This is a delicate issue, but must be ventilated. The renunciation process follows several patterns. The most familiar is to renounce that which we have already lost by

stupid mismanagement of our funds. We can renounce an oil well which fails to come in, the inheritance that goes to someone else, or the stock scheme which goes nowhere. Having lost all by our own foolishness or extravagance, we dedicate the empty purse to the glory of God, and exhibit it to our friends as proof that we are emancipated from all addiction to the coin of the realm. While in this state of poverty, many of us also make high resolutions. Several advanced spiritual types have spent hours telling me all the beautiful and unselfish things they were going to do if the Lord ever replenished their bank accounts. Occasionally, the Lord favored these folks, but not one of them has ever kept his pious promises.

There is also that spiritual type, poor by choice rather than by necessity, that is perfectly convinced that he could be rich if he wished to engage in some sordid enterprise. It is high principle and not ineptitude that keeps him among the poor whom God loves so dearly. I am inclined to think that in most instances the members of this class are inept. It is easy to discuss at length various ways of accumulating filthy lucre, but quite another thing to go out into this cold, cold world and earn a living. Psychologically speaking, we must all be able to justify our own conduct to ourselves, and the talk about how successful we could be if only we would compromise our convictions is not very convincing to the profane. There are also folks who are good simply because they are afraid to be bad.

Nearly all the more flourishing modern metaphysical movements emphasize prosperity as part of the divine plan for mankind. The spiritual-minded sit about meditating upon their share of the universal abundance, and do not seem to feel that they will be contaminated if their prayers are answered. It is hard to visualize wealth and spirituality together, for the reason that they have so seldom been associated in the experience of the human race. Poverty has always been the badge of the wise. The enlightened achieve poverty, and the stupid have it thrust upon them.

Thales, the Grecian lawmaker, was once ridiculed because wisdom did not make him rich. By his knowledge of astronomy, Thales calculated the future of the grape harvest, cornered the orchards, and in less than a year was a very wealthy man. He then called his critics together, returned to the farmers their orchards, and reminded them all that if the wise really used their wisdom for material ends, they could own the world in a century.

We are worried about a young generation of overprivileged, undisciplined boys and girls, who do not seem much inclined to take upon themselves the economic responsibilities of the future. These juvenile intellectuals have many excuses, such as dissatisfaction with the system, disillusionment over the economic theory, and disinclination to submerge their individual interests in the humdrum practice of some trade or profession. Actually, many of these young people are mentally alert, but physically lazy. We are agreed that these young people must learn to accept their part of the world's work. At the same time, there is a large group of adults with the same shiftless instincts, concealing their true motives behind an appearance of spiritual integrity.

Another proof of something or other is the enthusiasm with which we renounce what we do not want. It sounds much better to walk out on five small children because we have been called to glory than because we are tired of supporting them. In the same way, we can achieve remarkable victories over uncongenial employment, unpleasant home conditions, etc. With the same spiritual skill, we can fall out of one dilemma and into another. A prosaic case of alienation of affections becomes a cosmic issue of soul mates, affinities, and high vibrations. An old scholar once defined a man's personal religion as a self-invented creed, which makes it a spiritual obligation to do as he pleases.

Those from distant places or of other races gain a certain spiritual quality. The unfamiliar has special charm, and we are venerated to the degree that our personal habits are unknown. Only

once in awhile does spirituality wear well, and probably these more comfortable characters have made no claim to soul growth. Those who are forever being disillusioned should remember that the word itself implies disappointment over something unreal. You must have illusions or you cannot be disillusioned. Therefore, *you* are at fault in believing something that is not true or reasonable. It is not wise to blame another if he does not live up to our expectations, unless he has made unreasonable claims himself. If he has, *you* are at least partly to blame for believing them.

The religious world is strewn with fallen idols. In fact, it is a religious duty to demolish the monuments of predecessors and conflicting contemporaries. The most grievous of all offenses is to relapse into an unspiritual state. To do so is to be ostracized by the elect, and referred to in tones of pity and pious condemnation. "Poor Joe, he just wasn't big enough." As a matter of fact, Joe did not fall from grace; he just discovered where he had always been. We can walk around in a roseate glow until some direct challenge comes. At that precise moment we "backslide." In other words, we are good until there is any special satisfaction in being otherwise; then we are otherwise. Whether we realize it or not, there is a great deal of hypocrisy mixed up in our competitive codes of what constitutes spirituality.

As soon as we are threatened with that spiritual state, we start to wrestle with the mystery of divine love. We float around in a very rarified sphere of cosmic bliss basking in the cosmic light, and filled to overflowing with adoration for everything and everyone except our relatives. Of course, infinite love does not include politics, religious institutions, business associates, or those who at any time or under any condition have injured, offended, or annoyed us, or had the audacity to tell us an unpleasant truth about ourselves. One group I know concentrated on cosmic love for thirty years, with the result that no two

of this select little clique are on speaking terms.

May we inquire discretely: What is divine love? One dear soul told me that she enveloped herself in it for a half hour every afternoon. It never showed particularly, but it was too, too divine. What was she thinking about? How did she feel? In what way was she actually better off as the result of this daily ritual? She did not have the reputation for being especially thoughtful or considerate of others. In fact, she was recognized as one of the worse gossips in the neighborhood. Her alibi for broadcasting other peoples' private lives was the pious and smug conviction that what she repeated was for their own good. The same lady was a hypochondriac, slightly dispeptic, and especially irritable when she had one of her "spells." She explained to me that without her meditation she just could not endure the unfeeling and ungrateful environment in which she was forced by circumstances to abide. No one could discover any tangible evidence that divine love had overcome a single unpleasant trait of her character.

The Scriptures remind us that it is extremely difficult to love God, whom we have not seen, if we are unable to love our neighbors, whom we have seen. The difference lies in the problem of generals versus particulars. It is easy enough to serve humanity, but considerably more troublesome to serve any one human being. I have known a number of folks who have devoted their lives to the general improvement of their world, but I cannot find anything in particular which they have done successfully.

One trouble everywhere noted is the unhappy interval between platitudes and practical solutions. Those whose minds are not trained in the sciences dealing with human behavior and social problems simply do not understand either the real needs or the efficient remedies. In fact, there are no grand formulas which can be applied successfully to the complex situations of the hour. Even utter sincerity is not enough to justify impractical social experiments. The un-

informed, however, are ever-ready to go in where angels fear to tread, convinced that by some miraculous means the impossible can be accomplished.

If these well-intentioned enthusiasts confused only themselves, it would be bad enough, but usually they succeed in confusing many others equally earnest and equally uninformed. We may point out an example of the wide interval between formulas and facts. The incident occurred in an entirely different sphere of life, but the principle remains the same. Recently an enterprising citizen evolved a mathematical system for beating the roulette wheel at Las Vegas. The system was checked and rechecked by mathematicians and no flaw could be found in the calculations. There was considerable publicity, and the inventor, equipped with his perfect plan, went to Las Vegas and lost his money like the merest tyro. The system should have worked. It was infallible. It could be proved by a variety of calculations. But the roulette wheel itself broke the pattern of expectancies, and luck remained mistress of the wheel.

It is easy to gain a reputation for remarkable ingenuity, and in the field of religion an unusual recipe for salvation brings considerable distinction. Some creeds have flourished for centuries, but to date, all have failed to bring to pass the universal redemption of mankind. Sad to say, most of those who have attained the level of that spiritual "something" have lost vital contact with the daily uncertainties and difficulties of their neighbors. The progress of human society depends upon a combination of vision, thoughtfulness, and skill. If any one of the elements in this compound is lacking, things go awry.

There is a strange mental blindness which causes well-meaning people to ignore their own shortcomings. The less they know, the more it seems they wish to share their insecurity with others. We had someone in not long ago who was qualified, in his own estimation, to lead the peoples of the earth to the Promised Land. His diction was extraordinary. With him, *th* was always pronounced *de*. He told me he had seen "de light,"

"de time had come," and "dis was de big moment." He was qualified by a year and a half of reading popular metaphysical literature about God wanting everyone to be rich. He had all "de" answers, except that he did not know where to begin, what to teach, or how to find anyone who would listen. Thus well-qualified to found a successful 'cult, he wanted me to give him a few practical pointers. I recommended the Pythagorean discipline of five-years silence, but doubt if we can hope for such a fortunate outcome. He was one of those who had felt "dat" spiritual "something" creeping over him.

On the more serious side, it is true beyond question that the average person who reads a book on metaphysics or mysticism has the experience of suddenly contacting something important to himself. He often feels as though at last there were answers to questions and explanations for problems hitherto completely baffling. Many people have told me that the first time they had read or heard about reincarnation and karma, they knew by some internal reaction that they had found the truth. It is only natural that when we learn something that answers our questions we should want to share it with others. Within certain boundaries of moderation, we may do considerable good, but we must not overlook the deeper implication. It requires more than a psychic experience, some reading, and a few compliments to equip us to become instruments of destiny.

If folks would take stock of themselves and hold a mental mirror before their own eyes, they would be inspired to advance their opinions with caution. It is hardly likely that anyone with a limited background is going to accomplish, with neatness and dispatch, that which baffled Pythagoras, Plato, Buddha, and Jesus. The vacant argument that times have changed cannot be proved to be solutional. Perhaps time has changed, but the trouble is that people have remained the same, and it is people, not time, that we aspire to reform. We always overlook our own limitations, unless our economic survival is involved, and

then we are painfully aware of them. Many a young business man has taken special courses in his spare time so that he can justify promotions as they come along. If a man is willing to devote several years to equipping his mind in television engineering so as to increase his earning capacity, metaphysicians should ponder the implications. Before attempting to redeem humanity, it might be well to take an intensive course in sociology, economics, political administration, or international affairs. Certainly it could do no harm, and with equal certainty it would prevent a great deal of trouble.

The Bible devotes considerable time to the Pharisees who are forever comforting themselves with the thought that they are holier than others. The implications of the Good Book seem to have fallen on sterile ground along with some of the mustard seeds. Today, practically every religious group, large and small, is holier than all the rest put together. It would seem that with all this holiness we should be living in the millennium and not in the prevailing pandemonium. All we have to do is sit back, get our minds off our own soul growth for the moment, and survey the situation to see what is wrong. To summarize: Everyone is right, and everything is wrong. How so many people could know so much about so many things without anything being solved is one of the minor miracles. There is only one answer and that is: We do not have the answer.

It has long been noted that religious motion is usually accomplished through a violent process of reformation. Individuals rise within the structure of theology, revolt against practices or policies which they regard as wrong, and are promptly thrown out of the faith, bag and baggage. As they depart, they are anathematized, excommunicated, and variously insulted, and their immortal souls are assigned to limbo or worse. These heretics then found new religions, gather all the discontented souls from the dominant creeds, and are duly persecuted until they get strong enough to persecute someone else. By that time,

they have nonconformists in their own midsts, and these repeat the formula *ad nauseum*.

The moral seems to point at the menace of new ideas. There is seldom room in any well-established organization for an independent thinker. As a result, the religious world today has mostly followers and very few leaders. Any follower who exhibits qualities of leadership is promptly tossed out of the assembly of the elect. This is done regretfully but firmly, and in the end leads to countless small movements so broken and disconnected as to have slight influence upon the larger body of society.

Luther and Huss and Wycliff and Tyndale and Calvin are all examples of religious reformers who had to break with prevailing orthodoxies in order to accomplish what they regarded to be essential reforms. The organizations from which they departed remained adamant and refused to recognize the inevitable elements of growth or change moving in the world at that time. The various Protestant leaders created sects, several of which attained to a large following, but in the process they grievously wounded each other, and built creedal barriers which have never been completely removed. The resulting confusion, discord, and open antagonism weakened the Christian religion even more than it strengthened the dissenting denominations.

It is much the same with modern mystical and metaphysical movements. There is very little forthright co-operation among them. Each views with suspicion both the tenets and methods of the others. Doctrinal differences are emphasized to the confusion of the laity, which must weigh abstract policies without the necessary aptitudes. The end of all this bickering is revealed through a disconcerting mass of tight little -isms, each of which is convinced that its own peculiar cult is the true axis of the spiritual universe. In many of these groups, nonconformity remains the most deadly of the sins. Virtue is measured in terms of unquestioning allegiance, and the heretic still feels the

full weight of the displeasure of the orthodox.

The notion still lingers that a complete dedication to the jots and tittles of some creed or other is the final proof of spirituality. Those who have never questioned, never doubted, and never dissented take comfort in the belief that great will be their reward in heaven. The quality of their allegiance and the actual substance and merit of their doctrine receive slight consideration. It naturally follows that some very nice people have devoted their lives to some very stupid ideas. It is doubtful if such a procedure hastens the advent of the millennium.

While this condition prevails, and it seems to me the problem is essentially doctrinal, there is no possibility of a united front on practical issues. There are enough people dedicated to noble concepts to accomplish many needed reforms and changes in the religious, scientific, political, and economic spheres if the enlightened could ever present a united front. As a simple example, we may point out that there are no national publications representing the interests of students of metaphysics, mysticism, or the esoteric doctrines. Such a journal could exist if each group were not afraid that articles by rival organizations might lead their own members astray. We might also add that if a truly representative interreligious congress could be formed it would have considerable weight in such problems as medical monopolies, educational policies, and the field of entertainment, including radio, the theater, motion pictures, and now last, and possibly least, television.

I would hazard a guess, with some experience in the field, that the number of persons avowedly interested in the broad level of metaphysics in the United States would be between five and ten million. This is a potential force which could demand and command respect and consideration. Today these truth seekers are scattered in isolated and, for the most part, un-co-operative groups, cliques, etc., some flourishing like the proverbial green bay tree, but many struggling along in cellars and garrets

with mere existence their dominant concern. Certainly this metaphysical isolationism is responsible for the unfortunate fact that while the harvesters are many, the harvest is small. Larger reactionary religious organizations have little trouble submerging or even completely eliminating the scattered groups of idealists. This is especially tragic at a time like this when ideals are the only hope of our civilization. We must recover from the illusion that allegiance to one's favorite sect is a greater spiritual virtue than co-operating for the general good of humanity.



These little groups are also in an almost constant state of internal doubt and depression. Their survival is a sequence of small tragedies and a struggle against unfortunate conditions which they have created for themselves. The saddest story that one hears is the untimely departure of the most promising members. The very ones who could be of the greatest help make a few suggestions or recommend a new policy or two and immediately they are traitors to the status quo. When they are warned to conform or leave, they promptly leave. Then everyone is unhappy. Frequently, these departing ones promptly found a cult of their own, differing in name only from the one they have left. This causes more hard feelings, accusations of plagiarism, etc., etc., and a small religious war is in the making. Assuming, for the moment, that no ulterior motives are involved and that everyone is acting in good faith, little of practical value is accomplished.

I was present years ago at the funeral of a metaphysical leader with a considerable following. The virtues of the deceased were being extolled at some length, with special emphasis upon his unwavering devotion to "the cause." His transition to a blessed state was assured by the fact that in nearly fifty

years he had never had a new idea or had even given up an old one. If we are here to grow as Nature's processes intimate or are here to help others grow, it would seem that the deceased had contributed very little to any type of progress.

Organizations, like individuals, must either grow or perish. To date, the tendency has been to perish. The process of disintegration may be lengthy if the structure is deep-rooted, but only that which achieves a contemporary perspective can survive the pressure of time. It has always seemed strange that a world in which so many religions flourish or have flourished could be so lacking in morality and ethics. Perhaps the answer lies in the tendency of religious movements to retire to their ivory towers content to preach whether anyone listens or not. These organizations also seem completely oblivious to the consequences of their preaching, if there be any consequences. Certain that they are right in everything, these creeds sit back and wait for humanity to come to them. If a problem-plagued layman does not choose to seek refuge in one of these camps of consolation, it serves him right and the devil can have him.

It is difficult to understand how the religious of the world can read the histories of their own sects and not profit from such a pursuit. Theologians today are making exactly the same mistakes they have made for the last eighteen centuries, and, sad to say, most of the metaphysical movements are making precisely the same mistakes as the theologians. Groups, which five hundred years ago were persecuted for nonconformity, are now persecuting with equal fervor any nonconformists who arise within their ranks. Organizations just seem to wait for that blessed day when they, in turn, can do as they were done by. Worst of all, this sorry condition is perpetuated beneath a thin veneer of an all-prevailing Christian charity, brotherly love, and the like. While this continues, it may be questioned as to whether the religions of the world are entitled to the measure of respect which they demand with words but do not justify by action.

All human beings like to be regarded as honorable and wish to be respected for their intelligence and integrity. To merit this esteem, the individual must practice principles which justify public approval. In the religious world particularly, the tendency is to regard the ministry as the most important branch of spiritual science. Although the word *ministry* implies to *minister to* (that is, to *serve, help, protect, and assist*) the word has come, through usage, to mean simply to *preach*. Obviously, preaching is the easiest way to spread the Gospel to the unbelievers. The inefficacy of preaching is more or less revealed by the amount that has been done and the poverty of results. Practice is far more important than preaching, but is not nearly so convenient. While words take precedence over deeds, religion will contribute very little to the present human emergency.

Even practice requires thoughtfulness. We have a tendency to correct first those faults and failings for which we have the least attachment. Small-mindedness in metaphysical thinking causes us to strain at gnats and swallow camels. We suddenly discover that cats are our younger brothers, so we proceed to gather in all the strays in the neighborhood. While we are exercising this deep spiritual appreciation for the universality of consciousness, we are not on speaking terms with the members of our own human family, and are entirely unmindful of civic responsibility. I once knew a character of this kind who used to have heart-to-heart talks with buttercups and dandelions. This dear soul had two children, one of whom ran away and married too soon to escape an impossible domestic situation, and the other child developed criminal tendencies and is now being treated in an institution devoted to the rehabilitation of psychoneurotics. Nearly always it is the same. Spiritual graces are cultivated at the expense of down-to-earth physical virtues.

The fault is not alone with the joiner. Most religious organizations are so anxious to attract sustaining members that they compete with each other in offering

salvation with a minimum of effort. The prospective member hears little about self-discipline and a great deal about advancing rapidly in mystical powers and economic estate. Nirvana is just around the corner. If you join the right group, you are practically there, and the final push will be given by a few private lessons from the "grand hierophant." Year after year the student hears about things he never questions, abstract rules he must follow faithfully, and certain little private restrictions which differ with each sect. The special virtues in these groups have to do primarily with the rules imposed by the cult. Usually these simply interfere with normal living without improving anything perceptibly.

In trying to obey a mass of recommendations and conflicting suggestions, the new disciple loses all sense of proportion. He forgets that the universe belongs to the Lord, and that God and Nature have their own rules which mortals cannot disobey with impunity. It is far more important to keep faith with the universe than with some man-made theological statute. After the perspective has been distorted by causing slight matters to appear overwhelmingly important, the truth seeker is confused by bad conditioning of the mind. His normal sense of values has been disturbed, and when he loses certain simple, practical anchorages he is well on the way toward becoming a psychotic. He develops curious symptoms which would be alarming to a layman, but which to the conditioned would-be mystic are symptoms of his increasing spirituality. We must remember that five hundred years ago idiots were regarded as particularly under the divine favor, because their curious actions could not be explained by any reasonable system of philosophy. It might be mentioned that some of our modern mystics are also acting a little strangely, and they also are convinced that this indicates the proximity of Deity.

The lack of basic religious education is responsible, at least in part, for the gullibility of the American public in matters theological. While it is certain-

ly true that it would be unfair for the public schools to teach sectarian doctrines, there is no reason why young people should not have some acquaintance with the spiritual ideals of their race. We are quite willing to instruct them in our economic ideals, our political policies, our social theories, and, to a degree, our historical psychology. As religion has been, and remains, one of the most powerful forces in human life, it would seem practical to include at least a general outline of its dominant concepts and precepts.

After all, the purpose of education is to acquaint us with the tradition and experiences of our kind in order that we may become constructive and cooperative units in our social structure. If the basic teachings of the great religious and philosophical systems of the world were presented impartially, we would be better equipped to discriminate between honorable spiritual convictions and cults which are obviously fantastic or fraudulent. The average person approaches important religious decisions completely uninformed, if not actually misinformed. He must make decisions involving inner convictions without an adequate reference frame or the information necessary to sound judgment. It is not surprising, then, that the decisions are faulty and frequently lead to unfortunate alliances.

The popular belief that religion is not essential in an educational program is incorrect. Each mature citizen must live with himself and direct his conduct by internal conviction. If the inner life of the people fails, the physical structure of society will collapse. We have abundant proof of this in the records of past civilizations, but apparently we are not inclined to benefit from the experiences of our predecessors. Only non-sectarian interreligious education can protect average mortals from the intolerances of some sects and the absurdities of others. We cannot be sure that we have that spiritual "something" unless we have at least a remote concept of what constitutes real spirituality. Trial and error is a long and painful method for acquiring experience, but it is the

only way available in the modern world where intelligent direction is entirely lacking.

Another deficiency of our educational theory is revealed by the state of abject mental helplessness which distinguishes the graduates of our colleges and universities. Outside the formal boundaries of the academic structure, the average B. A. is as helpless and gullible as a small child. It has been proved on numerous occasions that the easiest person to fool, deceive, or exploit with religious fraud is the highly trained scientist or the prominent intellectual. Until advanced schooling stimulates mental activity instead of cultivating memory alone, we will have but little real advancement in learning. The enlightened religious person must have a certain amount of initiative. He must be able to think for himself, weigh and consider evidence with some skill, and have the courage to resist doctrines which cater only to qualities in himself which he knows are not commendable.

Maturity of religious belief cannot be attained apart from maturity in other branches of society. We cannot be spiritually redeemed and at the same time be culturally benighted and economically adolescent. The world cannot produce persons who are high-thinkers and low-livers at the same time. The spiritual experience is probably the highest of human attainments, and it consummates accomplishments in many departments of human character. It is foolish to believe that we can fail in small things and at the same time succeed in vast projects. The reason why we have so many conflicting notions about religion is that only a small minority has ever experienced the facts of faith.

If that spiritual quality is difficult of attainment, it is almost equally hard to define. When those who do not know what spirituality is think they have it or believe they have discovered it in someone else, there are bound to be complications. The truth is that we cannot identify with certainty a quality in others which is not equally mature in ourselves. Sometimes the reasoning goes thus: "Spirituality is rare and different.

The chap I have just met is certainly different; perhaps he is spiritual." If, then, he tells us he is spiritual, the evidence is conclusive.

As we have no sure measure of what is spiritual, we have no way of contesting the claims of another. Algernon, for example, is definitely eccentric. He is hypersensitive, hyperthyroid, and suffers from hypertension. He is very outspoken and has opinions about everything. If contradicted, he becomes violent and retires into Sanskrit. He seems quite detached from this world, and it is well-established that he is unpopular with his creditors. He has very new ideas about art, and makes occasional allusions to existentialism. He wears the baggy tweeds which are the hallmark of higher intellectualism. No one seems to know just where he came from, exactly how he lives, or where he expects to be tomorrow. There is *talk* that he was in Tibet; it is *rumored* that he is a yogi; and he has several books ready to change the course of history when he can find an enlightened publisher. Who can tell? Perhaps he is spiritual. He is hard to get along with, but, then again, probably God would be hard to get along with if he didn't see things our way.

If any of Algernon's friends knew much of anything about subjects spiritual, they could classify him immediately. But in the shadow of the prevailing ignorance, his spiritual proportions, if any, are difficult to define. There will always be someone who thinks that Algernon is just too, too divine. The evidence which led to this conclusion, however, is too attenuated to be understandable by the profane. Thousands of such characters as Algernon have been living off the American public for years because the yardstick necessary to measure them correctly is unavailable. These Algernons are not all rascals and deceivers. Sometimes they have deceived themselves into believing that divinity is peculiarly mindful of them. A good psychiatrist could clarify the whole situation in a short time if anyone were interested. He would get no thanks in such a case, for the believers would in-

sist that he was too materialistic to recognize the mystic overtones.

In the course of years, I have been consulted by any number of sincere folks who did not know the difference between the ascending of the kundalini and a gastrointestinal disturbance. One individual who heard spirit bells ringing in his ears recovered when an ulcerated wisdom tooth was removed. High blood pressure has been mistaken for initiation, and spinal lesions have passed as elemental possessions. Whenever the mystically-inclined feel peculiar or have dizzy spells, a higher entity is entering their auras, etc. It is very hard to convince such folks that the symptoms are due to some physical problem that requires immediate attention. As a simple and sincere word of warning, I would recommend that anyone studying metaphysics who develops any unusual symptoms or notes any change in his physical health should consult a reliable physician, as it is perfectly possible for mystics to have the same ailments that affect everyone else.

It is also not unusual for devout persons to become psychotic as a result of following occult exercises and practices advocated by groups themselves deluded. In fact, even extensive reading, if the literature be fantastic and unreasonable, can result in the building of injurious psychoses. Unsound religious doctrines and practices can undermine the physical health and unbalance the body chemistry. The problem takes on psychosomatic proportions, and, unless the condition is corrected, can lead to both mental and physical diseases. Advanced studies require a solid foundation of normalcy and common sense. Without these censoring powers, delusion is almost inevitable.

Genuine spiritual growth is a simple and natural unfoldment. It cannot be hastened beyond the natural aptitude of the student. Progress is measured in the unfoldment of character and the increase of internal poise. Philosophy teaches the human being the rules and laws governing human growth and behavior. Religion is an internal experience, and spiritual insight cannot be bestowed; it

must be attained. It is not any easier to become wise than it is to become a great musician or a great artist. Growth means work, long and patient endeavor, motivated by a sincere desire to become enlightened. The great pianist Paderewski, once told a friend: "If I do not practice for one day, I know it. If I do not practice for two days, my friends know it; and if I do not practice for three days, the world knows it."

Euclid once told the king of Egypt that there was no royal road to knowledge. This applies equally to spiritual enlightenment. No sect or creed can promise salvation or illumination and fulfill that promise. If a man like Paderewski was so devoted to great music that he practiced many hours every day for over sixty years, our devotion to truth suggests even greater consecration. The perfection of man himself is infinitely more difficult than the perfection of any art or science. In the presence of the facts, most pretensions are revealed in their true light. Only those deeply, gently, and devoutly dedicated to the service of truth have any

right to claim that they are spiritual, and, needless to say, they have learned too much to claim any merit for themselves.

It is sad, indeed, to find folk counting the jewels in their crown before they have anything that remotely resembles a crown. It is all a terrible misunderstanding originating in the exploitation of man's natural instinct to seek for truth. The exploitation of this honorable and commendable desire has led to the elevation of pseudoreligious principles to a high place among human convictions. Until we realize that man's spiritual growth is impossible without discipline and consecration, our theologies will remain comparatively ineffective. Too many creeds have interfered with growth, thus retarding rather than advancing the human cause. It is as natural for man to grow up spiritually as it is for him to mature physically, but in both cases the enlargement is from within, and is governed by the unchangeable laws of Nature and not by the notions and opinions of men.



Heraclitus, remaining silent in the midst of a most talkative group, was asked why he remained silent. He replied that it was just his unselfish nature; he was giving the others more opportunity.

Being reproached because he would not be elected to public office, Chrysippus the philosopher, explained: "If I govern badly, I will displease the gods; if I govern well, I will displease the people."

To one who sought to become his disciple, but who had no knowledge of music, geometry, or astronomy, Zenocrates said: "Begone! You have not even the handles of philosophy."

"The Athenians," said Aristotle, "invented two things, corn and law, but made use only of corn."

A man, boasting of the greatness of his country to Aristotle, received the following recommendation: "Consider, a moment, whether you be worthy of so noble a nation."

Greek Mythology



THE mythology of the Greeks and Romans has survived to the modern world largely through the industry of Thomas Bulfinch, whose book *The Age of Fable* has been a household classic for nearly a century. The myths and legends as collected and digested by Bulfinch have been regarded with the same uncritical affection bestowed upon the fairy stories of Hans Christian Anderson and the brothers Grimm. It is rather amazing that a Christian world which has objected strenuously to everything pagan since the days of the first patristics should have taken the adventures of Hellenic gods and godlings so lovingly to its bosom. Of course, the public mind is unpredictable and has a warm place in its heart for the equally unorthodox musings of that sophisticated old Islamite, Omar the tentmaker. No one seems to have noticed any inconsistency between the doctrines set forth in the *Rubaiyat* and the more recent pronouncements of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Of course, modern readers do not take classic fables seriously. They are delightful and, in the original, somewhat easy reading and are an enduring monument to the foibles of the Grecians. We

even like to contemplate the improvement in our concept of theology, and the general reformation of the cosmos which has been accomplished with benefit of the Protestant Reformation. I remember one old college professor who insisted upon pronouncing Socrates as So-crá-tes, who for fifty years had been at a loss to understand how Plato and Aristotle could have accepted, as a point theological, that Zeus took on the form of a bull and swam out to sea with Europa. I may add in justice to the good man that he also had trouble with Jonah and the whale. However, he reasoned that the Jonah story gained favor at a time considerably less enlightened than the golden age of Greek intellectualism.

One year I helped two young college men who had chosen to prepare special papers on Greek culture. We decided to suggest the possibility that Greek mythology might have a meaning deeper and more significant than was generally supposed. We developed the basic idea in several thousand well-chosen words, and the papers in due time were turned in for grading. The young men got most satisfactory marks, but the professor of philosophy, who, incidentally, had ma-

jored in athletics, blue-penciled the fatal paragraphs with curious marks signifying consternation. I will say for him that he recommended an enlargement of the theme with appropriate documentation, as the concept was revolutionary.

The modern scholar must be naive, indeed, if he is willing to assume that the Brahman priests of India believed that the Supreme God of the universe was three-headed, or that Hanuman, king of the apes, burned the city of Lanka by running through the buildings with his tail on fire. While it is possible that the unlettered and unlearned accepted some of the old legends literally, it is quite inconceivable that men like Solon, Democritus, Plato, and Aristotle accepted the concept that heaven was in a state of constant uproar, due to the philandering of the Olympian divinities. The average modern reader of *The Age of Fable* has no knowledge or even a fair notion of the religion of the classical Grecians. The culture of Greece survives to us largely through the names of about three hundred illustrious men and women, whose researches in science, philosophy, the arts, politics, sociology, and economics made possible the rise of modern civilization. Outside of venerable persons in white togas and Homer's description of the Trojan War, our opinions of the ancient Hellenes lack definition.

It would seem that we should have wit enough to realize that the Athenian State, though burdened with the inevitable corruptions which accompany human ambitions, was in the main a rather enlightened community. At least, there was light enough there to illumine the whole world for more than two thousand years thereafter, so we may suspect that they enjoyed a faint glow of it themselves.

What little we can learn of Greek manners, customs, occupations, and pre-occupations seems to indicate a mature and even a somewhat-sophisticated people who enjoyed living and were not ashamed to acknowledge their profound regard for comfort, pleasure, and a ready wit. They were never burdened with religious inhibitions, and viewed life

and death with a serenity past our comprehension. In music, architecture, painting, sculpturing, poetry, and the dance, they revealed an aesthetic maturity only possible to those highly civilized in the essential meaning of the term.

We have come to admire certain phases of Greek culture and at the same time have completely ignored other equally significant aspects. The political theories of Plato have been revived periodically, and have shared distinction with the logic of Aristotle and the atomism of Democritus. We are indebted to the Greeks for much of the machinery of statescraft, the architecture of our public buildings, and some of the noblest canons of art. It is only reasonable that we should recognize great men to be in some measure the products of time and place. If the Greek philosophers possessed extraordinary mental clarity and integrity, it was because they were nourished by lofty ideals and high principles.

The source of the Greek philosophy was the Greek theology. On this important subject, very little has been written by modern scholars, and such articles as have appeared are, for the most part, superficial. It is known that Plato cultivated the doctrines of the Pythagoric sect, and in the closing years of his life composed several works on mystical theology. These writings have not been recovered, and it is probable that they have not survived. It is remarkable that Plato's philosophical *Dialogues* should have descended comparatively intact, and his religious books have completely vanished. It seems possible that the early Church, which had appropriated so many of the Platonic ideas, found it expedient to destroy the source of these teachings.

The Neoplatonist, Proclus, writing in the 5th century A. D., attempted a restoration of the Platonic theology. So noble and learned were his commentaries that he has been called the Platonic successor, in that he preserved the genius and entire succession of Plato. Unfortunately, the works of Proclus are generally neglected because of their mystical implications. An English edition

was published in London, in 1816, through the industry of Thomas Taylor, under the title *Six Books of Proclus on the Theology of Plato*. Due to financial limitations, only a few copies of this exceedingly valuable work were printed, and these are almost unobtainable today. There appears to be a conspiracy among the modern scholastics to prevent the metaphysical writings of Plato from reaching public attention.

Even a superficial study of the *Commentaries of Proclus* will correct the prevailing misunderstanding about the mythology of the Grecians. It immediately becomes evident that the classic fables are fragments out of context of a sublime doctrine about God and Nature, and the origin and destiny of the human soul. The concepts and opinions which we cherish today are insignificant when compared with the majesty of the classic tradition. This great theology is the only reasonable explanation for the apparently spontaneous genius of the Greek artists and intellectuals. Men nourished by such spiritual food would have the courage and vision necessary to become leaders in several branches of essential learning.

Modern students of classical culture are fully aware that the initiates of the State Mysteries were the guardians and custodians of the esoteric tradition among the Grecian provinces. That these Mysteries were important to the Greeks, were honored and venerated by them, and regarded as divinely instituted is also generally known. Most outstanding scholars who flourished during the classical period were initiates of these Mysteries and testified to their excellence. Usually such references were veiled or worded obscurely, as the initiates themselves were vowed to secrecy. The thoughtful reader, however, has no difficulty in finding allusions to the sacred dramas and the marvelous happenings which accompanied them. Why have such references been ignored or ridiculed, and the entire subject dismissed with a depreciatory gesture? Perhaps the answer lies in the temper of the times. Our higher intellectuals are so completely dedicated to an oppressive

and depressing materialism that they reject empirically as absurd any mystical or metaphysical ingredients in the compound of intellectualism. The Mysteries emphasized the reality of divine matters and were, therefore, in terms of modern criticism, monuments to superstition. It is passing strange that the graduates from these universities of delusion should still be honored as the wisest of mortals.

Most of the elegant fables arranged and edited by Bulfinch were derived from the rituals of the Greek Mysteries. They were never intended to be taken literally, anymore than was Aesop's fable of the fox and the grapes. We have all enjoyed the fairy tale of Snow White and the seven dwarfs, but it would be ridiculous to settle down to an interminable argument over the historicity of the story. On the other hand, perhaps it has been dismissed too lightly. The present version probably came from Russia, and the Russians got it from the Mongols. Parallel legends exist in China and India, but it is beneath the dignity of scholars to examine the possible religious, philosophical, or even scientific content of folklore.

A peculiar and, to us, rather unhappy kind of caste system existed among all ancient nations. This applied especially to public worship. The common people celebrated their gods with festivals, processions, and various public exhibitions. Their religious life was simple, literal, and obvious. They performed the rites and rituals prescribed by the priests, paid their taxes, and stood ready to be drafted when neighboring States made war. Slavery was extensively practiced, and in early times those who could not pay their debts became the servants of their creditors. Only a free man or woman of good character could be initiated into the State Mysteries, and only a highly trained person with exceptional aptitude could be advanced to the higher grades. Thus religion was sharply divided, much as stated by St. Paul, who separated the mysteries of faith into milk for babes and meat for men. Unfortunately, modern theologians

inherited only the milk, and promptly skimmed that.

Today we give thanks that we may all share equally in the benefits of our religions, but the situation is not so attractive as first appears. Nothing is concealed today, because we do not know anything worth concealing. The divine science of human regeneration, which was the true arcanum of the Mysteries, is not available to all; in fact, if we may judge by the general complaint, it is not available to any. We cannot legislate spiritual democracy, for the reason that growth depends upon the integrity of the individual. This integrity cannot be bestowed by an act of Congress; it must be earned by dedication to high principles. It is foolish, therefore, to assume that we have unveiled the ancient sanctuaries and pillaged the old temples of their priceless secrets. No man can storm the gates of heaven, and the audacious mortal who tried to steal the thunderbolts of Zeus merely destroyed himself with the lightning.

Speaking of the fox and the sour grapes suggests a direct analogy. Lacking the key to unlock the ancient fables, we now solemnly pronounce them meaningless and unworthy of our interest. But we are the losers. Thoughtlessness has its own reward, and we are suffering today from the consequences of our disinclination to improve ourselves while we are hard at work trying to perfect our physical civilization.

If the classic myths were taken from secret rituals, it becomes evident that these rituals themselves were pageants or theatrical productions performed at stated intervals as an integral part of worship. Some of the Mysteries were hereditary institutions which originated within certain families, and were perpetuated by priests and priestesses selected from these families. Possibly in the beginning this was the usual procedure, but as time passed and intermarriage affected the blood stream, the election of the hierarchy took other forms. Occasionally, the servants of the temple were selected by oracles, omens, or by the utterances of entranced priests. In

any event, the ritual of a particular Mystery was based upon myths and legends which had accumulated about a certain god, demigod, or hero. The mysterious birth, growth, and the maturity of the deity, his exploits, miracles, and adventures, and, finally, his martyrdom or translation became the framework of a theatrical production. Usually, the deity himself was believed to be mindful of his Mysteries, and would intercede for his worshipers in various ways.

As there were many Mysteries celebrating either the gods of localities, or the various local aspects of the greater deities, the sacred fables increased in number and developed countless variations. The more celebrated of the Mysteries were those of Samothrace, Eleusis, and Thrace. Thus, we have rites sacred to Ceres, Persephone, Sabazios, Dionysus, Attis, Adonis, Melitta, Orpheus, and even ancient Kronos. The Olympian pantheon supplied the basic cast of characters. Each of the deities had its own temperamental peculiarities, and by its attributes came to be associated with various arts and crafts. Cities and States had patron divinities, and every function of life was under the protection of some immortal being. It was proper to propitiate the deity of any enterprise about to be undertaken. Thus, Socrates, before one of his discourses, solicited the assistance of the Muses. When the lecture proved especially fine, Socrates gave credit to the immortals who had bestowed their favor.

The rudiments of the guilds and trade unions were already evident in the Grecian period. Families were identified with professions and crafts, as, for example, the descendants of Aesculapius, who were physicians by divine right. The gods of old clans and brood families became the tutelaries presiding over the privileges of these families. Often, it was believed that the family was founded by a divine being, which took upon itself a mortal appearance. The Greeks filled their world with invisible spirits, but it is important to note that most of these invisibles were benign, perhaps a little roguish, but in no way hypercritical. Evidently, when the gods

mingle with mortals almost constantly, they become more tolerant of the frailties and foibles of their human associates, and change from grim-visaged judges to venerable family counselors who are pleasant to have around. At no period in man's religious history have gods and mortals fraternized so successfully. There were no inhibitions, frustrations, or neuroses as the result of competitive orthodoxy or interdenominational bigotry.

The gods were represented everywhere by appropriate statues and symbols. Even the stone figures gained virtue by a mysterious participation in the deities they symbolized. Many of the lesser divinities had favorite abodes in and about Athens and, for that matter, other cities. When these spirits moved in, no one objected; in fact, it was a cause of general rejoicing. The groves had their dryads; the streams and fountains, their nymphs; and even crossroads had certain sprites who assisted travelers. On almost any occasion, a deity of the first rank might decide to make a brief excursion into the mortal sphere. Usually, a god on such an enterprise, or even escapade, traveled incognito, and might visit at any house which pleased his fancy. Mysterious strangers were invariably treated well—just in case. Sometimes the hosts were unexpectedly rewarded by an inexhaustible pitcher or some other evidence of heavenly bounty. It is difficult for us, who have exiled our gods to the furthest corners of the empyrean, to appreciate a way of life in which sacred matters were part of daily experience. A great philosopher said that there is no one so superstitious as the individual who is forever denying that he has superstitions.

Naturally, the escapades of the gods and heroes were as close to the Grecian soul as good gossip about our neighbors enriches the psyches of present-day folk. There is evidence that the Greeks engaged in some gossip about their immortals, but the innumerable stories have bestowed upon future ages a charming and colorful literature.

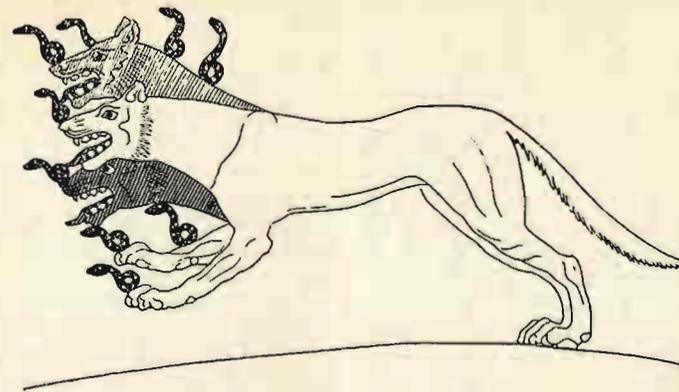
Egypt contributed largely to the back-

ground of Greek religion. In fact, the whole Mesopotamian region, as also the civilized area of North Africa, evolved their religious doctrine out of their agricultural pursuits. The supreme mystery was the multiplication of life from the seed. All the great gods were connected with seed worship. The grain-seed dies, is born again, and attains the increase. The tithing system is a survival of the ancient agrarian cult. When each harvest came, those who gathered the grain milled the greater part for their own use, but they set aside a certain portion as seed for the next planting.

In the primitive nature-worship, Tammuz, Osiris, or Bacchus, were seed gods. They are all associated with the mystery of the Great Mother, the earth, Gaea, into which the seed must be planted, and from which it will rise again. In ancient times, human beings were buried in the embryo posture, because death was a second birth into the world beyond the grave. In this way, the tomb came to symbolize the womb of the Great Mother.

Out of these primitive beliefs came the most ancient Greek symbol, the Mother Goddess. The ancient worship was associated with the cult of Miletta, the black Diana, the earth mother. Into her the seed was planted. She forever gave birth to the savior of the harvest. Yet, at the same time, she was the Eternal Virgin. Thus, in one way or another, our first agriculturists evolved the concept of certain mystical rites and rituals associated with the birth, death, and resurrection of men. This symbolism was rendered more elegant as civilization developed.

Beginning about 1200 B. C., according to some authors as early as 1800 B. C., the Greeks had already established centers of religious Mysteries in various parts of their nations. The more important of these Mysteries were those which celebrated the agricultural deities. Beginning about 800 B. C. and unfolding down to the beginning of the Christian era, the Grecians revealed a mystical tradition which reached its highest point of development during the era of Plato and his legitimate descendants.



CERBERUS, THE SYMBOL OF TIME—PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE
—THE GUARDIAN OF THE MYSTERIES

Orpheus, Pythagoras, and Plato established the threefold foundation of Greek metaphysics. They were the most initiated and the most illumined of all the Grecians. Orpheus was the great priest; Pythagoras, the great scientist; and Plato, the great philosopher. We are told that in the earliest time remembered by the Hellenes, Orpheus, traveling from a distant place, probably Asia, brought the mysteries of religion to the Hellenic States. Orpheus was described as the son of Bacchus (Dionysus). The whole system of Grecian religious philosophy is suspended from the Orphic rhapsodies and the secret religion which produced them. Through the Orphics, a magnificent system of cosmogony and theology was revealed to the world. After the first impact of the wisdom religion upon the Grecian mind, the Greeks eagerly sought knowledge in all parts of the world. Their philosophers and sages traveled into many nations and brought back priceless records of the spiritual and cultural achievements of Asia and North Africa.

Gradually, the Orphic tradition was enriched until it became a resume of the religious convictions of the whole civilized world. The Orphic theology is concerned with an elaborate system of emanationism. This may be defined as a system which regards all created things as emanating from one universal and

eternal principle. In the Greek system, this First Principle is a universal abstraction, denominated *unaging time*. Unaging time is the complete abstraction of all dimensions, states, energies, and substances. Eternity is not only a time abstraction, but also a place abstraction. Eternity is both duration and expanse in terms of infinitude. Unaging time gives us also the Greek concept of the eternal *now*.

There is a difference between that kind of time which never passes and that kind of time which is swiftly and always passing. The eternal, immeasurable substance of unaging time carries a strange implication. There is an instant which lasts forever, and there is a forever which is but an instant. The Greek mind conceived of the expanse of place which had no beginning and no end. The Greek idea of eternal time and unbounded place was practically identical with the Egyptian "thrice deep darkness," or abstraction three times abstracted. The Gnostics later borrowed from the Greeks this concept of unaging time, calling it "that which stood, stands, and will forever stand."

Having determined the nature, or, more correctly, the idea of this boundless principle, the various philosophers of Greece sought to refine the substance of this concept. Thales believed that "boundless time" and "boundless place"

converged to a humid principle similar to water, and that this humid principle contained the potency of eternal generation. Paracletus held eternal substance or being to be an airy principle, partaking of limitless intellect; and Aximander believed it to be a fire principle, identified with the qualities of soul. But according to the greater philosophers, all of the elements, themselves in a state of eternal abstraction, mingled in the constitution of the Infinite.

Unaging time was Kronos, the great Father Principle which lay beneath and behind all existence. Time, place, creation, and individualization resulted from the fragmentation of eternity. The one was broken up, creating or causing an infinitude of phenomenal and, to a degree, illusional manifestations.

The symbol of Kronos is the hour glass, for he is the keeper of the year. He also carries the scythe, for he is the eternal harvester. Father Time corresponds to the Egyptian Seb. Kronos is the devourer of his own progeny, for time in its largest aspect absorbs into itself all the works of gods and men. Saturn, the Latin Kronos, as a time god, is said to have devoured his own children, for everything that is created in time, perishes in time, and nothing can survive time. Time has been defined as a motion which corrupts form. Things perish merely from the circumstance that they exist, and, existing, are worn away by time.

Time must also contain the potential of place. Kronos is not only time, but also place, for time and place cannot exist without each other. Time is the measure of place, because it measures the duration of form. Anything which exists either in place or time comes under the tyranny of the time-principle. We feel this today when, having put a high economic value upon time, we are destroyed by the psychological pressure of our own conceit.

Most of the ancient systems of cosmogony explain the process of creation by a sequence or concatenation of triads. Each of the creative powers manifests through three attributes. In the Greek system, the world emerges as seven

superior deities or dynamic principles, each threefold in constitution. Thus, seven triads, emanating twenty-one specialized spiritual entities, are said to constitute the true nature of the sun. Each of the solar rays contain these twenty-one energies and distributes them throughout the solar system. For this reason, the Greeks and Egyptians venerated the number twenty-one as the secret number of the sun.

The Greeks were indebted, at least to a degree, to the Chaldeans for their doctrine of triads. The details of the system are set forth in the celebrated *Chaldean Oracles*, sometimes attributed to Zoroaster. The Bembine Table of Isis unfolds these triads through an elaborate design and is regarded as a very important, if somewhat late, relic of classical philosophy. The Chaldean-Greek triad concept represented all natures, divine and human, as existing by virtue of a father-principle, a power-principle, and an intellect-principle. In each repetition of this triad, in the various planes of manifestation, the father was called the foundation, the power was called the energy, and the intellect was called the mind. Thus, all beings subsist by foundation, energy, and mind.

The deities possessed a centric substantial existence. They existed by virtue of themselves in the foundation of endurance. Each deity as an enduring principle was called a father. Thus, we have references to father-gods in nearly all mythologies. From the fathers, the enduring principle, those that stood, stand, and shall stand, emanate two attributes: energy and mind, or action and thought. These emanations may be regarded as the polarities of being itself. A *being* may be defined as *an existence capable of emanating from itself action and thought*.

Being does not of necessity manifest continuously through its polarities of action and thought. *Being* can exist in an unconditioned state apart from manifestation, and the Supreme Being, completely unpolarized, is called the Absolute. Before they are manifested, action and thought reside together in the substance of being as primary will. By the

motion of will, action and thought, or energy and intellect, are gradually brought into manifestation. The result of this emergence of polarized attributes is the process we call creation. Thus, from the father-principle, the foundation or cause of all things, as from an ever-flowing fountain, descend the streams of manifested energies, represented in India by the River Ganges flowing from the head of Siva.

Unaging time is the eternal abode of the father-principle. To represent life without direction, or time without the extension of itself, the ancients conceived a constant swirling motion, which had neither beginning, end, nor direction. It should be further realized that this swirling agitation is qualitative. It is an unmoving motion in the sense that it does not proceed in any direction or from any condition or place to another condition or place; it is motion suspended, bearing within itself action, also in suspension. Thus, unaging time contains place and motion in complete abstraction, and is the vehicle for the unmanifested potentials of the primary triad of father, power, and mind.

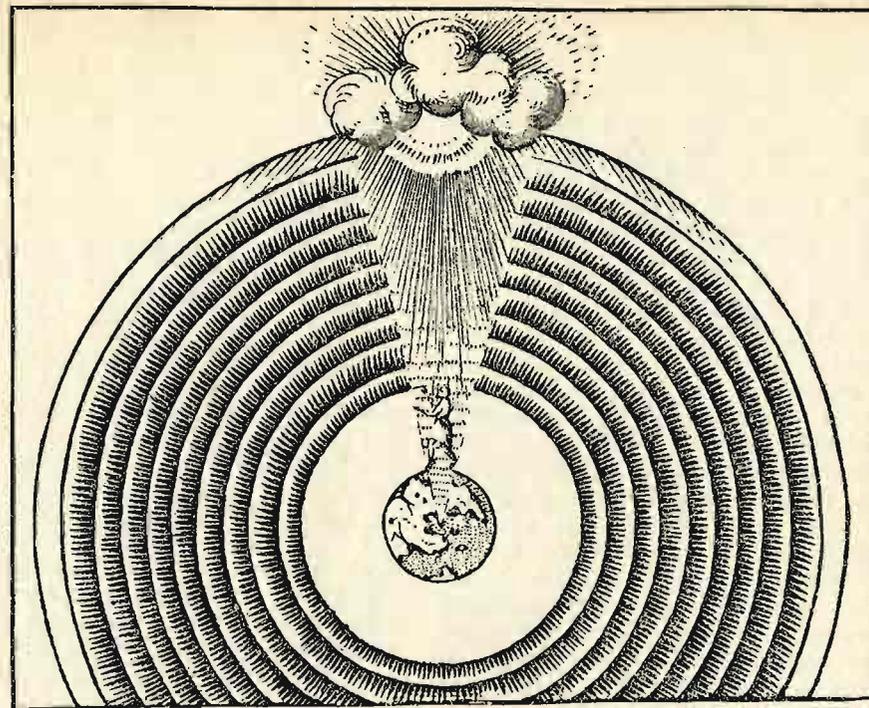
The sphere represents eternity in its most abstract state, for it is the infinite extension of a three-dimensional curved line. From this sphere of unaging time, by the motion of internal will, emerges a triad, consisting of ether, chaos, and Phanes. The father-principle of this triad is called *ether*. (This is not the ether of science, but is a spiritual energy permeating all space and making it fruitful.) At the same time is emanated a power-principle called *chaos*. In this sense, *chaos* means *power without boundary, direction or organization*. Ether and chaos separate gradually within the sphere of unaging time. Ether ascends as the more subtle, and chaos descends as the more gross. Here we have what the Chinese Taoists called *the gross and subtle air*: Yin and Yang.

Ether and chaos are therefore the first division. Ether is the life or father-principle, and chaos is the abyss, sometimes symbolized as slime or mud. In the *Kojiki*, the Shinto records of creation, we find the same sedimentation

concept in their cosmogony. According to these Japanese philosophers, the earth was created by the gods dipping their spears into the abyss and bringing up mud on the points. Here we have, also, the first slime of the Chaldeans, from which crawled the great giant, Tammir. In the process of cosmic generation, the ethereal agent carried within it the father-principle of foundation, or existence. Ether permeated all of chaos, but chaos did not penetrate the ether. Thus, we have the separation of that which is qualitatively above and qualitatively below. In Genesis, it is said that the waters which were above the firmament were divided from the waters which were below the firmament. Chaos was also the patient, or the receptive medium, upon which the agent ether operated. Ether was cosmic fire; chaos, cosmic water; and these were father-mother, the instruments of generation. From the union of father-fire and mother-water, a strange creature was born. This was the "son of striving," for it was produced from the spiral motion of ether in and upon chaos.

From the union, then, of ether (father) and chaos (mother), united by Eros, the cosmic abstraction of love, was produced the world egg. This is the egg of iron referred to in the Finnish epic, *The Kalavala*. In the Brahmanic Mysteries, this is Hiranyagarbha, the golden or luminous egg. This egg is described in the old Greek myths as consisting of two hemispheres, of which the upper was golden, and the lower, silver.

Let us recapitulate for a moment. According to the great Greek cosmologists, ether and chaos swirling together caused a centrifugal motion, by which the heavier substances of chaos were caused to move toward the circumference of the sphere of unaging time. Thus, the primitive egg is formed by a motion similar to that described in the nebular hypothesis of modern science. The gross elements, cast to the circumference to form the shell, were held within the field of the father-ether, which supplied the archetype, or mold. Thus, the boundary of the egg is ether, the substance is chaos, and



THE LADDER OF THE WORLDS AND THE LIGHT OF THE LOGOS,
FROM THE WRITINGS OF ROBERT FLUDD

within it, the two generate the new creature.

In the cosmic symbolism, the egg breaks open at the junction of its hemispheres, and from it is born splendid Phanes, who is properly designated the intellect. Thus, the triad completes itself: being, the father-ether; the power, chaos; and the intellect, Phanes. Phanes is represented as a composite creature generated within the egg and, in a sense, the first born of the manifested creation.

This world egg is also the sacred egg of the Druids, around which is twisted the serpent of ether. Also, in the Egyptian religious system of Memphis, the god Ptah makes the universe on the potter's wheel, fashioning it in the form of an egg. Later the egg breaks open to release the seven workers, the builders, the cosmocreators, who are in turn the Elohim of the early Jewish mystics. The aged god Seb is represented hieroglyphically as the parent goose which

laid the great world egg. Undoubtedly, the fairy-story-fable of the goose that laid the golden egg is a corruption of this mythological record. This golden egg of creation is also the globe held between the claws of the Egyptian scarab, which contains the eggs of this insect.

Out of this Orphic egg comes forth glorious Phanes, called the Logos. When the great world egg breaks assunder, Phanes lifts the upper hemisphere and causes it to become the heavens. He depresses the lower hemisphere, and standing upon it causes it to become the foundation of the material universe. Phanes is described as winged and with four heads: those of an eagle, a bull, a man, and a serpent. Almost certainly, Phanes is the original cherubim described in the Old Testament.

Having completed this first tremendous creative process, the gods rest; and the morning and the evening were the

first day. Then Phanes incarnates himself into the germ, or archetype, of the world form, and fructifying this pattern causes it to increase and to come forth in glory. He thus becomes the apex of a celestial order, or the beginning of the mundane gods. Following the inflexible rule, Phanes causes three energies to radiate out from himself forming another triad. This will be the great legislative foundation, upon which will be established the world of the law and the prophets. Phanes remains in a certain mysterious and obscure form as the father of this new triad, and abides in the middle place. From the golden upper half of the egg is fashioned the power of the triad, Uranus, whose name is High Heaven. From the lower half is produced the intellect of the triad, Rhea, or Demeter, the great mother of the Mysteries. These are the manifested gods.

Out of the union of Uranus and Rhea, the universal heaven and earth, descends an order of deities which terminates in the demiurgus Zeus, the ruler of the physical world and the Third Logos. This Zeus is the whole of physical Nature. His body includes the innermost atom and the furthestmost star. He is spangled within and without, and exists in himself, of himself, and as himself. As father of the material order of deities and of the material universe, he is like Ra in Egypt, the Zeus-Amon of the Seraphic Mysteries, and the Jupiter of the Latins. He is represented as horned, like the Moses of Michaelangelo, and is venerated as the constellation of Aries, the lord and opener of the year. He is also Zeus-Pan, the god of Nature; Zeus-Olympus, regent of the living and the dead; or Zeus-Hades, the god of the dark sphere. This dark sphere is the part of chaos which has survived into the material creation.

Zeus as the Third Logos, having fashioned the physical universe, causes to issue out of himself another triad. As the father, he is the lord of air, governor of the mortal mind, and the fifth, or etheric essence, of the universe. Thus, he recapitulates the principle of ether. As the power, he is Poseidon,

called the aquatic Zeus, governor of the middle region; and as Hades (Latin, Pluto), he is the infernal Zeus, which represents that form of his authority which has to do with the physical existence. In this aspect, he represents material intellect.

In India, Brahma caused to issue out of himself Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the conserver, and Siva, the disintegrator. These three form the completion of the lower material triad. In the Greek system, Poseidon is lord of generation, and Pluto confers the processes which crystallize form into manifestation. This same crystallization finally destroys the very forms which it has fashioned.

THE BACCHIC RITES

In the Mysteries established by Orpheus, mathematically substantiated by Pythagoras and fashioned into a great system of philosophy by Plato, the mythological factors are slightly rearranged, but the principles are preserved with remarkable care. Proclus, surnamed the Platonic successor, describes the direct descent from the gods thus:

1. Unaging time
2. Ether (heaven)
3. Chaos (night)
4. Chronos (Kronos)
5. Zeus
6. Bacchus (Dionysus)
7. Orpheus

This is the royal line, the kings of the earth descending from their fathers, the gods of heaven.

Zeus dethroned his father and, in turn, his kingdom was destroyed by Bacchus, who died symbolically, and his philosophy or the keys to his Mysteries were given to his beloved son, Orpheus. Bacchus is the dying god, the Osiris of Egypt. As Osiris was torn to pieces by Typhon, so the members of Bacchus were scattered by the Titans, and his body distributed to all parts of the earth. Isis gathered the remains of her husband-brother, Osiris, and Minerva (the Divine Wisdom) restored the

parts of Bacchus and lifted him to the heavens. It was from the blood of Bacchus and the ashes of the Titans (ether and chaos) that human beings were made.

Bacchus first appears as a child, the beloved offspring of Zeus and Semele, the child of the above and the below. This is the human Ego. According to the Greeks, he who does violence to himself does violence to Bacchus, the indwelling principle of the gods within him. Bacchus is the ancestral spirit in the blood, the divine man within. While he was an infant, Bacchus was left by Zeus to play in heaven with celestial toys. These toys were the principles of man's seven bodies, suspended from a divine essence.

While the Ego, Bacchus, is thus playing as a child plays with his toys, the Titans, the twelve primordial forces of chaos which later became rationalized in the zodiac, cause a mirror to be set before him. Bacchus looks and sees himself reflected in the polished surface. Mistaking his own reflection for another child, Bacchus seeks its companionship. This reflection in the mirror is the personal, or objective, self. The Ego fascinated by its own reflection pursues it out into the distant parts of space. This is the same myth as that of Narcissus, who, falling in love with his own reflection in a pool, throws himself into the water and drowns in his effort to embrace the shadow.

As Bacchus approaches the mirror, the Titans draw it back, so that the little godling follows them until he is outside of his father's kingdom. Then, deprived of the protection of the cosmic law, Bacchus is slain by the Titans, when his cries for help cannot be heard. Having killed Bacchus, the Titans place his body over a fire and cook it, and prepare to eat it. This is a veiled account of man's divine nature being consumed by his material appetites and instincts. The smoke and the effluvia of this terrible repast rise to heaven, and Zeus, discovering the truth, sends a thunderbolt which destroys the Titans. Alas, however, he cannot restore Bacchus to life, for part of his body has already

been devoured by the giants. Zeus sends his own mind, Minerva, who was born out of his head, to go down and rescue what she can of the divine child. Minerva does so, but finds the body so scattered that it cannot be restored. She rescues the head, which she elevates to heaven. This head signifies the internal spiritual awareness of consciousness, by which man finally discovers his heavenly estate. Thus, Minerva is the divine reason, the mind of the father going forth to redeem.

It being impossible to rescue the body of Bacchus, Minerva takes the ashes containing the blood of the god and the burned remains of the Titans and molds them into a human figure. Zeus ensouls this figure by his word of power and it becomes a man. So the bodies of men contain the twelve irrational energies of the giants of chaos and also the saving blood of the dying god. Thus, having fashioned mankind, Zeus had great patience with them and guided them and forgave them and sent his prophets unto them, and this he did in the memory of his own son.

This is the root of the Messianic cycle. God so loved mankind that he sent his own son to them that they might be redeemed. After the great tragedy, Zeus then dispatched the mind of himself to rescue men, to establish the Mysteries, and to reveal the secret of human regeneration. The Bacchic Mysteries derive their rites from this tradition. The rituals contain two degrees. In the first, Bacchus is torn to pieces and eaten by the Titans. In the second is the mystery of the blood and the formula by which the Bacchic soul in man is released from the material body, restored to life, and returned to its father.

THE ELEUSINIAN RITES

The Rites of Eleusis at Attica have as their pageantry a similar story, told in a different way. The first, or Lesser Rites, explains the descent of the rational soul of man into the irrational body. The Greater Rites show the release of the soul through discipline and purification. Bacchus here appears under three,



—From *Tempel Der Zang-Godinnen*

A SYMBOLICAL REPRESENTATION OF CHAOS

The figures of the zodiacal signs and star-patterns are shown bursting forth from the splendor of the universal power.



—From *Tempel Der Zang-Godinnen*

THE TITANS ATTEMPT TO SCALE HEAVEN BY PILING MOUNTAINS ONE UPON THE OTHER



—From *Tempel Der Zang-Godinnen*

ORPHEUS, LEADING EURYDICE FROM THE UNDERWORLD, LOOKS BACK UPON HER AND LOSES HER FOREVER



—From *Tempel Der Zang-Godinnen*

THE HOUSE OF SLEEP

This illustration represents the porch of the Temple of Initiation into the great Mysteries of the visible and invisible worlds.

sometimes four, guises. First, there is Bacchus as a child; then Bacchus as Dionysus, from whom we have the Mysteries of the Dionysian Artificers; then Bacchus in the form of Zagreus, or the Bullheaded, whose Mysteries were celebrated in Crete. Sometimes there is a fourth form, Hiarchus.

It will be useful to list the principal forms of Bacchus with their meanings:

- Bacchus-Hiarchus, the infant, the physical body
- Bacchus the child, the human soul
- Bacchus-Zagreus, the Bullheaded, the animal soul
- Bacchus-Dionysus, the night sun, the divine soul

According to the accounts of the Mysteries, Orpheus was the son of Bacchus. It does not necessarily follow that this was to be taken literally; it might imply only that Orpheus was heir to the mystical tradition. Orpheus was the dark or black one. Dark means *concealed or hidden*. Orpheus actually personifies the School of Mysteries, which was founded for the redemption of the dead god; that is, the human soul. The resurrection of Bacchus was entrusted to the dark-skin man, Orpheus. He established the Mysteries, and was the first hierophant of them.

The rituals of Orpheus are contained in the account of his descent into the underworld to rescue Eurydice. By means of his lute of seven strings, representing the celestial harmonies and the seven sacred sciences, he was able to charm the prince of the underworld. He failed to rescue Eurydice, however, because he glanced back before they had reached the upper world. After this tragedy, Orpheus wandered the earth disconsolate, and his music filled the air with sadness and despair. In one account, he wandered to Thrace, where he was torn to pieces by frenzied women who belonged to a cult of the Corybantes. The head of Orpheus, like that of Bacchus, was rescued and placed

in a temple together with his lute. This head represents the secret doctrine which did not die, although its sanctuaries were violated by fanatics. It is said that the head of Orpheus was made to speak by Pythagoras. This intimates that the school of Pythagoras restored the secret teaching of the Orphics.

These Mysteries were divided into three grades as follows:

1. The meeting and overcoming of the Minotaur, the bull-man; a rite of purification which took place in subterranean crypts called labyrinths, symbolizing the complexities of the physical world and the confusion of the physical body. The Minotaur is the animal soul which rules in the dark torturous underworld, a sphere divided into numerous passageways and chambers where there was no guide and no help. The neophyte must battle with the shadows and conquer by courage and wisdom. This grade reveals the struggle against ignorance, by which the individual gains freedom from the monster which forever demands the homage of the ignorant.

2. The child Bacchus is involved in the rite of the human soul. The ritual took place in a broad plain near the shores of a sea, and was given at night. In this Mystery of the Bacchic Rite, the intellect is established in various forms of essential knowledge. The apex of the rite was the achievement of philosophy. Those who accomplished this were called the Mystai, those who perceive through a veil. This veil could not be lifted until the human consciousness was elevated above the limitations of the material state.

3. This degree was the highest and most secret, and was reserved for those who had perceived the deepest mysteries of the soul. It was the rite of the midnight sun. The neophyte perceived the sun shining at midnight beneath the earth, as though under his feet. Dionysus is this night sun, the lord of the highest degree of the Mysteries. He is the divine soul which is elevated above human concern, and has mingled itself



THE GREAT CIRCLE OF THE ELEUSINIAN DEITIES, FROM A GREEK VASE

in the divine light. This light in darkness is the light within, by which all external things must be illumined.

The Dionysian Rite was called an *orgy*, which at that time meant a period of contemplation, or a sacred drama in which the audience participated. The rite was also called an *autopsy*. The word now means the dissection of the human body after death, but to the Greeks it meant a contemplative exercise. We read of the frenzies of Dionysus. These were a kind of ecstasy, by which the devotees of the cult attempted to project themselves into a state of eternal harmony by a mystical experience.

In the Eleusinian Rites, the same legend appears in slightly different form. Persephone, the daughter of Ceres, was playing with her companions and gathering flowers in the vale of Enna when Pluto appeared through the earth, riding in a chariot. In spite of the screams and pleadings of Persephone, Pluto abducted her and sped away to the bank of the River Cyane. Here he struck the earth with his trident; the ground opened and gave him passage to Tartarus.

Ceres, searching everywhere for her lost child, finally seated herself on a stone, where she remained sorrowing for nine days and nights. This stone stood

in the field of an old man named Celeus, and afterwards the city of Eleusis was built upon that place. After several adventures in the house of Celeus, the goddess wrapped a cloud about her and mounting her chariot, refreshed and encouraged, continued her search. Finally she met a nymph by the River Cyane, who told her the circumstances of the abduction. Later, through the assistance of Diana, she learned that Persephone had become queen of Erebus, and ruled with Pluto over the realms of the dead.

When Ceres learned these things, she hastened to the throne of Zeus, imploring him to restore her daughter. Zeus agreed, on the condition that Persephone had not touched food during her stay in the infernal abode. Mercury was dispatched to accomplish her release, but, sad to say, Persephone had eaten part of a pomegranate. The situation was arbitrated, and Persephone was permitted to pass half of her time with her mother in the upper world, and the other half in the dark regions of Pluto. Ceres, now happier, remembered the kindness she had received in the house of Celeus, and bestowed her favors upon this family. The descendants of this good man built a magnificent temple to

Ceres at Eleusis and established the worship of the goddess. "These Mysteries," says Bulfinch, "surpassed all other religious celebrations among the Greeks."

The Lesser Rituals of Eleusis represent dramatically the rape of Persephone and the sorrow of her mother who seeks her, bearing in each hand a tall, lighted torch. Here, also, is introduced the episode with Celeus, which led to the establishment of the sanctuary. The Greater Ritual presents the appeal of Ceres before the god Zeus, and the circumstances of the partial restoration of Persephone to the upper world. Because of the abduction of her daughter, Ceres, who was the guardian of the harvest, had caused the earth to become sterile. Pacified by the final decision which restored her daughter to her for half of each year, Ceres now brought back the fertility and prosperity of Nature. There was general rejoicing, and the drama ended with everyone living happily ever after.

It does not appear that such a legend or drama could have gained such universal admiration as to cause the greatest of philosophers to acknowledge its supreme significance. Obviously the rituals had a far-deeper meaning than might be suspected from reading modern digests of the legend. Persephone, like Eurydice, is a symbol of the human soul. By the process of incarnation or rebirth in a material state, the soul of man spends part of its time in the sphere of light and part in the sphere of darkness. The pomegranate, like the celebrated apple in the Eden story, signifies the principle of generation. Once the human soul has entered into the cycle of generation, it must remain there until liberated by the initiation ritual. Each detail of the rite has a particular meaning, and the entire drama unfolds the struggle for liberation from the darkness of ignorance.

Pluto among the Latins was somewhat different from the Greek Hades. Hades was a god of death, but Pluto was a god of riches. In either case, the deity stands for worldliness, attached to physical possessions, and the psychological acceptance of the reality of ma-

terial things. Hades rules over an empire of shadows, and so do all earthly monarchs. The underworld is a dream and an illusion, and those who become masters of its dark ways govern only phantoms and accumulate only mists and ashes.

The sphere of Hades was originally the Greek world of the dead. After the Homeric period, however, clearer concepts of immortality and metempsychosis freed the Greek mind from a belief in an afterlife continuing forever in an abode of ghosts. During the philosophical era, therefore, Hades came to be accepted as symbolical of the state of ignorance. Here all things were confused and unreal, and over this darkened realm ruled a god of wealth, tyranny, and gloom. Pluto abducted Persephone because he desired to bring light, happiness, and life to the ghost world. The analogy is obvious. Persephone is truth ravished by mortals and dragged down into the abode of error. In order to redeem the underworld, schools of the Mysteries were established in the dark realm, and the esoteric tradition, veiled in fables, myths, and legends, was given secretly to such as possessed the proper merits.

Like the wanderings of Ulysses, the Mysteries unfolded the pagentry of the human quest for the divine reality. Special disciplines were used to stimulate the internal faculties of the human mind. It is believed that hypnotic drugs were employed in some cases, and in others, advantage was taken of the fumes issuing from volcanic vents. Always the purpose was the same, to cause visions or internal experiences. With the decline of the Mysteries, the religion of mystical apperception generally failed to be practiced.

It may be pointed out that in ancient times there were no religious services as we now know them. Worship was a private matter, and the priests merely assisted in the various rites and sacraments. There were no sermons or discussions about the gods or laws of Nature. The temple was a house of prayer and meditation. Those seeking enlightenment intellectually attended the schools

of celebrated philosophers or attached themselves to the priesthoods of the various sects. The religious experience for the common people came through the festivals and public ceremonies in honor of patron divinities, the seasons, great heroes, and the deities presiding over the cities and nations. These festivals were rich in symbolism, but the meanings of the emblems were known only to the initiated. Most mythologies are based upon the spectacles and the myths and legends accompanying these occasions.

In all the mythologies, there are references to heroes who performed heroic exploits and whose adventures take up much space in the old accounts. In the Greek mythology, we have Jason and his Argonauts, Hercules and his labors, and Achilles and his exploits, especially during the Trojan War. All such characters are folk heroes. They represent the perfect type of humanity passing through the initiations which ultimately bestow immortality and the heroic state. We may be sure that these accounts have a definite and unchanging meaning, for they are transferred from one nation to another, and are to be found wherever the esoteric tradition has survived. Each system of mythology becomes in this way a key to all the others.

The psychology of the myth has been examined in some detail by Freud and Jung. These men are convinced that the myth-patterns originate below the threshold of human consciousness. Because the myth arises in the individual and not from circumstances external to him, the same or similar sequences may appear spontaneously in different parts of the world. The patterns are released by pressures upon the person and his instinctive psychic defense. Man is forever seeking for some explanation which will account for the circumstances of his own existence. A satisfactory solution must both explain and justify; that is, explain the environmental condition, and justify the course of human action under the prevailing pattern.

For example, consider the origin of the world. Meditation upon this abstraction is a symbolical way of ap-

proaching the mystery of the origin of the self. The human being feels himself to have come "out of the everywhere into the here." As he thinks back toward the physical origin of his personality, he is defeated in his efforts to define or identify the source of his consciousness, his intelligence, or his impulses. He has the conviction, however, that he departed from a condition of blissful oblivion and entered into a state of confusion, uncertainty, pain, and ultimate death. His descent into personal responsibility was gradual and included comparatively pleasant childhood years, in which he received much love and attention and was not expected to carry even the burden of self-subsistence.

Unconsciousness, which is the complete absence of pain, is the golden age of man's beginning. Childhood is the age of silver, a kind of lunar fairyland. Maturity is the age of bronze, where ambitions compound living into a strange alloy of precious and common metals. Old age is the age of iron, that period of life which is ruled over by a tyranny of infirmities and inevitables. In these later ages, man dreams of the return of the golden age with its freedom from the pressure of the conscious self which impels action and oppresses the human being with the weight of mature responsibility. Most ancient cosmogonies are cyclic and correspond with the principal divisions of human life and occupation.

Many old cycles of myths are dominated by a melancholy fatalism. The world hero always perishes, destroyed by evil beings and their conspiracies. Of course, the world hero is the Ego, the infallible self of man. The will, the purpose, and the desire of this self are always frustrated by the circumstances of life. That which prevents us from accomplishing our own intentions, whether these be good or bad, is always a villain—an evil, heartless creature conspiring against us. The great enemy of the hero (Ego) is death, and as this is the inevitable fate of mortals, the hero-legend is shadowed with the sadness of a hopeless struggle against the darkness of the grave. In the Nordic myths,

Siegfried, the Hero of the World, is slain by the spear of black Hagen. This Hagen, with his sable cloak, the broad, black wings spreading from his helmet, and his dark hair and beard, personifies the ultimate decay which plots the death of the hero-soul.

The human being analyses and estimates the entire expanse of existence only in terms of his own birth, growth, maturity, and decline. For him, the world begins with the first dawn of his own awareness, and ends when the awareness ceases. Even the grandeur of the cosmic myths is captured in this little frame of human hope and mortal expectancy. Immortality, in some strange way, emerges from the somber pattern of the human tragedy. After the gods have perished, after the Hero of the World has been consumed upon the funeral pyre, there is the dawn of another day. This is the day of those who come after us, our children and our children's children. This is the better day for which we labor, but is not for us. Perhaps these instincts lack the grandeur of a broader philosophic vision, but they are human, and, to a degree, they lurk in the unconscious of those who consciously cling to a better hope. Today we teach immortality, the resurrection of the spirit, and the life to come. Those more philosophically inclined contemplate with inner certainty the doctrine of reincarnation. But if the spiritual man, enlivened with a great hope, faces a universe of infinite life and infinite opportunity, the mortal man has no such expectations.

Tyana, a city in Cappadocia, having rebelled, the Emperor Aurelian decided to demolish the place. In his tent on the eve of battle, the spirit of Apollonius of Tyana appeared to him saying: "O Aurelian! If you desire to overcome, be merciful and clement." The emperor was so impressed that he spared the city.

St. Basil was an earnest defender of the advantage and lawfulness of the study of pagan literature.

Maculey began writing a history of the world when he was seven years old.



Елена Петровна Блаватская.
(Радда-Бай).

—From the *Russkii Vestnik*

H. P. BLAVATSKY

FROM THE CAVES AND JUNGLES OF HINDUSTAN *

A NOTE FROM THE TRANSLATOR

H. P. Blavatsky wrote for the Russian journals of her time about her travels in India under the pen name of Radda-Bai. These articles appeared under the general title of "Iz Pescher I Debrei Hindustana" ("From the Caves and Jungles of Hindustan") in the Russian journal, *Russkii Vestnik* (*Russian Messenger*), during the years of 1883, 1885-1886.

The narrative about Mr. Peters, the English Collector stationed at Madura, which follows was translated from the original Russian as it appeared in *Russkii Vestnik*, Vol. CLXXXI, February 1886, pp. 772-792. It consists of the third chapter in Part II of the series without any deletion and presents a complete story in itself. To the knowledge of the translator, this text is now translated into English for the first time.

Since it is customary for stories or articles to have titles and since this particular story has none except the general title of the series in which it appears, it is presented under a subtitle of its own—"Mr. Peters and the Goddess."

Mary G. Langford

LETTERS HOME

MR. PETERS AND THE GODDESS

By H. P. BLAVATSKY

I pass on what Mulji related to us "about the Anglo-Indian who loved the Hindus."

Mr. Peters was the Collector for the *holy* city of Madura, the Mecca of Southern India. An ardent archaeologist and venerator of ancient manuscripts, he needed Brahmanas for the search and translation of such manuscripts; consequently, though possibly at first he did not quite love them, nevertheless, as the saying goes, he kept company with the Hindus and he did not, in imitation of his own colleagues, oppress them. A materialist of the worst tinge, he only laughed at their superstitions and prejudices; but his attitude was exactly the same towards his own Christian religion and so the Brah-

* See *Russkii Vestnik*, No. 11, 1885.

manas did not pay much attention to this. "Nastika" (atheist), they used to say and wave their hand. But soon all this changed and Mr. Peters surprised both the peoples of India and his own compatriots.

Here is how it happened.

Once a *yogi*, unknown to any one, came to him and asked for a personal appointment. Having obtained permission to appear before the bright eyes of Mr. Collector, he handed him an ancient manuscript and explained that he had received it from the goddess Minakshi herself (one of the comeliest forms of Kali), who, he said, had ordered it to be given to Mr. Peters. The manuscript was written on an *olla** and its appearance was so archaic that it inspired involuntary respect from the antiquary. The Collector, who was proud of his knowledge in the field of ancient letters, was delighted and immediately wished to reward the hermit properly. To his greatest surprise, the *yogi* refused with dignity any payment. But he surprised the superior still more. Like almost all Anglo-Indian officials, Mr. Peters belonged to the Masonic Lodge. Unexpectedly, the hermit gave him the most secret Masonic sign and, having uttered the well-known formula of the Scottish Rite, "I have not so received *it*, nor shall I so impart it"† (that is, the manuscript was not given for money), disappeared quickly.

Peters became thoughtful. He sent a *sepoy* in pursuit of the guest who had vanished, but himself he engaged at once in the deciphering of the manuscript and in its translation with the aid of a Brahmana pundit. The *yogi*, of course, was not found because, in the opinion of Mulji, the echo in this instance of the whole city of Madura, that had been a werewolf of the goddess Minakshi herself. From diligent study of the *olla*, the Collector found out much that was interesting about some things.

According to the assertions of the pundit, the manuscript was the *autobiography of the goddess Minakshi in her own handwriting*, in which there was discourse about manifestations, power, qualities, and about her character in general. According to her own statement, the goddess possessed power (*sakti*)‡ of the most agreeable variety and there were few wonders that she would not promise to her favorites. Too blind a faith in her personal power was not even demanded: it was sufficient to love *devatri* (goddess) sincerely and ardently, as a mother is loved, and she would extend her patronage to the worshipper, take care of, love, and help him.

"O you, *fish-eyed one!*" whistled the incorrigible materialist Peters upon having heard the above from the lips of the pundit.

* *Olla*—palm leaves which have been dried and prepared for writing.

† (This footnote gives the formula as rendered in English and is used above in the text — Translator.)

‡ *Sakti*, literally, "force," the feminine principle in male gods. But *sakti* in the ordinary sense is *power*.

This epithet, however, was not insolence on his part. Literally translated, "fish-eyed one" is the name of the goddess, from the words: *mina*—"fish" and *akshi*—"eyes."

"But what or who is the goddess Minakshi?" the European laity will ask us.

Minakshi is the selfsame Kali, namely, *sakti*, the creative power of Siva, his feminine principle and *aspect*, impregnated with his spirit, and is one of the numerous manifestations of his spouse Kali.

Every god of the vast pantheon of India, be it female or male, in its first-begotten aspect—that is, at its first separation from "the One Impersonal One," the purely abstract principle which they denominate *Parabrahman*—is always neuter. But in its earthly manifestation it appears twofold like the first-begotten Adam and Eve, and the feminine half, separating from the masculine, becomes a goddess while the other half remains a god. The universal divinity, *Parabrahman*, is *It*, but its twofold energy, which afterwards begets a countless number of gods and goddesses, is *he* and *she*, that is, bisexual. From the principal gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, and their *saktis*, other gods are begotten in their turn. These latter are not direct descendants, as one might think, of the divine spouses, descendants which have in the pantheon of the Brahmanas a completely separate and distinct place from others; but they are simply the same first-begotten gods and goddesses which masquerade and present innumerable "aspects" or countenances out of themselves.

Therefore even the sanguinary goddess Kali, the mightiest of all *saktis*, appearing under one of her own aspects, such as Minakshi for example, changes her personal attributes completely and becomes unrecognizable. It would be untimely and too boring to explain here the idea of such a transformation. It will be sufficient to say that Kali, in transforming into Minakshi of Madura, becomes the most peace-loving of goddesses, who possesses all the best qualities: meekness, long-suffering, generosity, etc.

Minakshi is the patroness-goddess of the City of Madura, which is built to resemble the plan of the temple Srirangam—a square divided into a great number of inner squares, or enclosures, and in the center of which appears the famous Temple of Minakshi. The goddess, in spite of her inner qualities and, possibly, as proof that she has no vanity nor pride, is far from beautiful in her outer image. Her eyes resemble two fishes, from whence the appellation "fish-eyed one." But then, in the understanding of her worshippers, she possesses extraordinary power, of course. The unfortunate ones who are possessed by *pisachas*, "demons," are brought to her in throngs for cure. There are many such possessed ones in India because the pious Brahmanas include in the category of "those who are possessed" also those whom we, in Europe, designate as "mediums." In India, the right of citizenship is

permitted to phenomenal manifestations only in the presence of the yogis, *sadhus*, and other miracle workers initiated into the "secret sciences." Everything which occurs *without the will of the person* and which we call *demoniacal* is attributed by the Brahmanas to the indecent behaviour of the *pisachas*.

But what is a *pisacha*?

Pisachas are the very same "spirits," *esprits frappeurs*, of the spiritualists, only not in the complete structure of their divested personality. Only that part of a human soul becomes a *bhuta* (earthly spirit), or a *pisacha*, which, upon separating from the immortal spirit after death, usually remains in an *invisible* form, but which frequently *is sensed* by the living, in the atmosphere where it moved and had existence during the life of the body. After the death of a human being, everything that is *divine* in him departs into a higher, cleaner and better world. *Only the dregs of the soul* which are held back by this atmosphere remain—the soul's *earthly passions* which find temporary welcome for themselves in the semi-material "double" of the deceased, which has been expelled from its habitat by the decomposition and complete destruction of the physical envelope; and the final disappearance of "the double" is delayed because of this, causing it torment. A case such as this after death is sad for the family of the deceased and is looked upon by the Brahmanas as a great misfortune. The Hindus take all-possible measures to avert such an unwelcome event. It happens most frequently, so they think, as the result of a *sinful thirst for life*, or of a particular passion of the deceased for somebody or something with *whom* or with *which* he did not, and even after death does not, wish to part. Therefore, the Hindus try to remain indifferent to everything, not to allow any passion in themselves at all, fearing more than anything in the world to die with an *unsatisfied* desire and, consequently, of becoming a *pisacha*. Natives of all castes and sects detest "spirits" and, seeing in them *pisachas*, the very demons, they try to exorcise such as quickly as possible.

And so, nevertheless, the respect for Minakshi! Daily, in the courtyard of her pagoda, it is possible to see throngs of Hindus who are possessed. There are such among them that crow like cocks and bark like dogs, as they do in our Russia. But there are yet more mediums among them: these are, quite candidly, ghost-seers and *foretellers*, in the presence of which various phenomena and all sorts of devilry take place. Just as soon as the ailing one who is possessed by the *pisachas* is brought before the fish-eyes of the goddess, the demon begins to shout (through the mouth of the possessed, of course) that he will immediately vacate the lodging occupied by him, if only the goddess gives him time. The sick person is led away and the *pisacha*, true to his word and as a token of his having kept it, throws

a tuft of hair, always plucked by him from the head of his victim, in front of Minakshi as a farewell. According to the stories, such bunches of hair constantly fly around in the temple before the eyes of the amazed people, from morning till night, unknown from whence. It would be possible to make superb mattresses from them if the Brahmanas did not burn them with great ceremony. *

Flocking by thousands and hundreds of thousands, the pilgrims bring huge revenues to the temple, and its officiating Brahman-oracles are considered the richest in India. Besides the Temple of Minakshi, there are only five such lucrative *pagodas* in the entire Madras Presidency, namely: the renowned temples Tirupati, Aligarh, Vaidesvaran, Kovil, and Swamimalai. The first two are consecrated to the god Vishnu, and the last three to Siva. On ordinary week days, from 3,000 to 10,000 rupees are collected in the pagodas *daily*, but during holidays, the daily sums of revenue surpass all belief. They frequently reach from 25,000 to 50,000, and even to 75,000 rupees *a day!* These figures are not exaggerated, but are a well-known fact to the Anglo-Indian government. Not in vain have the Madras authorities been gnashing their little teeth for a long time at the colossal *pagoda fund* of Southern India.

Malicious tongues assure us that this celebrated "fund" escaped for a time the bitter fate which threatened to land it under the complete management of the administrators of Madras only through compromise. It occurred to the richest of all the demon-curing *pagodas*, Tirupati, to present in the nick of time 40 lakhs of rupees (4 million rubles) to the above-mentioned administrators after having apportioned the amount according to rank among the members of the legislative council, through which it spared the other pagodas for several years. But it is somehow awkward even to relate such a rumor. Spare us, Englishmen — and suddenly a bribe! Who in Europe now does not know, chiefly from the London papers, that only in barbarous, semi-Asiatic Russia there are still such monstrous anomalies in our century like *bribe-taking officials* (*Pioneer* and *Bombay Gazette*). But is it possible to believe that any of the Anglo-Indians—those sober, temperate warriors and officials, the foremost of which must be reputed from now to the end of centuries to be the "Spartans of the Afghan Thermopolae"—could have decided to take *a bribe!* And could Englishmen *pur sang*, the Englishmen of London, the worthy sons of a nation, the representatives of which punish so severely in Parliament "greediness for usurpation" in their neighbor and the smallest departure from truth and honesty in other nations, have even permitted this in their own Anglo-Indians! Unthinkable,

* If we are to believe the stories, it is very dangerous to touch this hair. Mulji, during the time of his chaste youth, stole such a tuft of hair from the Temple of Minakshi, and the *pisacha* immediately took possession of the boy. "Thanks to *devatri*, at long last I got rid of the devil," related the general.

simply absurd. We must not believe this because such a sensible nation would not express so much ardent indignation in the press and Parliament at "Russian extortioners" if it had kept company with like transgressions. As a result of this reflection, we have decided to consider the accusation from the Brahmanas an abominable slander coming from ungrateful heathens and to return to the story about Mr. Peters.

Alas, this "story" cannot be attributed to slander as was the "bribe of the forty lakhs of rupees offered by the Temple of Tirupati" to the instigators of the celebrated bill. The heathen grave of the honorable Collector, with its heathen symbols, is seen to this day at the gates of Madura, and at the sight of it the cultured officials, successors to the deceased, blush.

They blush because Mr. Peters, also, belonged to the very same cultured class of officials (only not in relation to bribes), and also because he not only never looked askance at the pagoda funds but even added to them from his own pocket. This was the result of the fact that, after having read the manuscript about Minakshi, for some reason he was moved in his soul in the presence of such great virtue, and he decided to get a little better acquainted with the goddess. Up to that time, though he had studied the philosophy of the Hindus a great deal, he did not share their views on "obsession," and the feminine healer of it he did not include in the province of philosophy; on the contrary, he amused himself and made fun of such beliefs of the natives. But from the day he received the manuscripts, he began visiting the Temple and made an effort to collect all the existing legends about the goddess.

One among such legends gathered by the scholarly Collector proved to be unusually interesting and, though the British geologic ethnographers do not render it due attention, Mr. Peters classified it among fully historical events. Moreover, it was set forth by the goddess herself in her "autobiography," which afterwards, upon Peters' own wish, was buried in the tomb where his ashes repose.

The river Vaigai, on the southern shore of which the City of Madura is situated, belongs to the number of so-called *antarvahini nadi*, that is, to the rivers which flow *underground* from their source to their outlet into the sea; in short, to the subterranean streams. Even during the season of the monsoons, when the environs are flooded with torrential rains and the river overflows its banks, the river bed dries up in three or four days and only its rocky bottom remains. But it is well worth digging at any time of the year an arshine * or two underground in order to obtain superb water, which is not only indispensable for the city but also sufficient for the irrigation of the fields of the entire district.

* (Arshine—a former Russian unit of measurement equal to .77 yards — Translator.)

Such recluse rivers are very few in India and, consequently, they are considered very sacred. As is known to all, and possibly to only a few, every temple and hill, every mountain and wood in India, in short, every locality and every building which is considered sacred for some reason or other has its own *Purana* (history or chronicles). * Written on ancient palm leaves, it is always carefully preserved by the officiating Brahmana of one or the other of the pagodas. Sometimes, the Sanscrit original is translated into the vernaculars and both texts are preserved with equal reverence. On the anniversary of holy days, in honor of such "river-goddesses" and "hill-gods" (to them a river is always a *goddess*, and a hill, a *god*), the manuscripts are brought out, and these local *Puranas* are read to the people by the Brahmana at night with great ritual and the necessary commentaries pertaining to them. In many temples, on the Hindu New Year's Eve, † the almanac for the following year is also read to the people by the Brahman-astrologer.

These almanacs indicate accurately the position of the planets and stars; distinguish the *fortunate* from the *unfortunate* hours of each of the 365 days of the forthcoming year; predict the day, date, and even *the hour of that day* when there will be rains, winds, hurricanes, eclipses of the planets or the sun, and various other manifestations of nature. ‡ All this is read in front of the patron-god or patron-goddess of the temple. The crowd listens reverently to the prophecies of the idol, who speaks through the lips of his Brahmana about famine, wars, and other national calamities; after which the astrologer and the Brahmana bless the crowd and, upon dividing the rice, fruit, and other edible offerings brought to the idols, give it leave to go home.

Collector Peters found a similar *Purana* about *antarvahini nadi* in the "autobiography" of Minakshi. With the aid of his pundit, he

* *Purana*—literally, "ancient," but this word is also a synonym for *history*.

† In March and April, depending on the sect.

‡ Our astronomers also predict the hour and minute of eclipses no worse, we take it, than the Brahman-astrologers. But it is strange that the latter seldom make mistakes in frequently foretelling for a whole year ahead the dates and even the hours of chance hurricanes and rains, which (particularly the latter) very rarely occur out of the rainy season period. Here is what the Maha-rajah of Travancore writes about these Brahman-astrologers in his article, "The Borderland Between Matter and Spirit": "Astrology, so much scouted by moderns, has still its hold upon mankind, and belief in it may often be seen in the most unexpected quarters. A European friend told us the other day that some years ago he was going to a timber depot in the heart of forests and situated on an islet formed by two branches of a large river. It was perfectly dry weather and the streams were quite dry. Happening to meet an astrologer on the way, he was warned that three days hence there would be heavy rain and a terrible flood in the river. There was not a speck of rain-cloud in the sky; and pool-pooling the prediction he went on to the timber depot. The result was, rain came in torrents on the predicted day, the river was inundated, shutting out all passage and washing away much valuable timber, and compelled him to live most miserably in an improvised log-hut on the most elevated part of the islet for several days. He, for one, professes belief in *astrology*, however much *astrologers* may be impostors in many cases. We have known instances in which the date of child-birth and the sex of the child have been foretold with perfect correctness." (See the journal, *The Theosophist*, Vol. VI, No. 2, November 1884, p. 41, 2nd column.)



— From Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*

THE GOD SIVA AND HIS CONSORT

translated it from the Sanskrit into *Telugu*, and it is read to this day in the temple of the kindhearted goddess. Here is a brief summary of it in several sentences. This *sthula-Purana* explains the cause of the subterranean streams of the river Vaigai and, in addition, gives proof of the deep trust of the goddess Minakshi in Mr. Peters, to whom she chose to confide the episode of her early youth and love for her spouse Siva.

Kulasekhara, * the valiant King of Madura during the adolescent days of the chief gods, and his spouse (whose name has not come down

* Literal translation of this name: "the head of the family jewels."

in history) found themselves rewarded for long years of continual *tapas** and of pious works by the birth of a charming daughter.

That was the fruit of hundreds of their past *janmans* (reincarnations) in the forms of other outer personalities, for this daughter was the celebrated and fish-eyed Minakshi. The goddess did not become a goddess at once, but also as the result of piety in many of her former existences, during the course of which she supplicated Siva and Kali—the first, to honor her by selecting her into the rank of his spouses, and the other, to make the supplicant one of her *aspects*. Finally, *Sundaresvarat* fulfilled her ardent prayer and announced to Minakshi that he would marry her.

The king, Kulasekhara, started magnificent preparations for the wedding feast. Overflowing with pride at the thought that he was being honored with such a divine son-in-law, he beseeched Siva to bring a large retinue with him from the most eminent lords of Kailasa.‡ *Bhumi-devi* (the earth goddess), he said, though her fecundity and innate patience were proverbial, would not have time to give birth to enough *devas* for the wedding over and above the mass of sinners (not to mention the animal and other kingdoms) which she has to bring forth daily into the world; therefore if Siva did not take pity, the wedding feast would be lacking in splendor and there would be no one to eat the prepared provisions.

The bridegroom promised to satisfy the ambition of his father-in-law, but when he descended from *Kailasa* to "sweet earth,"§ instead of the expected resplendent retinue, he brought with him only one misshapen dwarf, by name Kundadara.¶ The chosen father-in-law took this action as mockery and became very vexed. But what can the anger of a mortal mean in the eyes of a god? Siva, upon reading the thoughts of Kulasekhara, smiled and only said: "King, feed my little courtier." The Raja, very grieved by the fact that there would be no one to eat his provisions, ordered his *pradhana mantri* (prime minister) to see that the dwarf was well fed. But, when the latter began to eat, he devoured not only the *delicacies* which had been prepared at the palace, but also the supplies, and even the entire year's reserve of the town of Madura; and thereupon, also swallowed all of the reserve water in the wells and fountains. The dwarf, still crying for more water, was then led to the shore of the river Vaigai. All of its water proved to be insufficient for quenching Kundadara's thirst. In one gulp he drained the river to the bottom, following which the river-goddess had to save herself by flight into the bowels of the earth.

* *Tapas*—ceremonial prayers in various postures.

† *Sundaresvara*—"the Magnificent Lord," a name of Siva and one of the *ekadasa Rudras*, that

‡ *Kailasa* is that part of heaven which is the favorite abode of Siva and his domicile.

§ *Madura* denotes "sweet earth."

¶ *Kundadara*—"large belly."

That was a lesson given by Siva to his father-in-law, who had not thought of the many poor whom he could have fed with the food prepared for the wedding, but who had preferred that the nobles of the court should eat it. Since that time, the dwarf, under the guise of his *barrel-bellied* stone idol, has been sitting on the bank of the dry river and awaiting its annual appearance during the rainy season. But kind Minakshi, having taken pity on the fate of the Madurans, prevailed upon the goddess Vaigai to return from the bowels of the earth and to flow toward the sea one yard underground, and she permitted the dwarf to drink up all the water of the river just once a year. Since then she has been the patroness of the city.

In a short time, upon visiting the temple frequently, Peters, who had become immersed in the study of the glorious deeds of the mighty *deva* and astounded by her virtues, began finding something engaging in the expression of the fish-eyes of Minakshi. It seemed that her Ethiopian mouth would spread into a benign smile upon the approach of the Collector. He began getting used to her ugliness. A bachelor and with simple tastes like all scholars, Peters, who at first had begun to study the religion of the Hindus for the sake of science and, possibly, from boredom as well, started being drawn in, little by little, into the complicated, head-splitting philosophy and soon became an actual *Sastri*.* He ceased making fun of the pious Brahmanas and started fraternizing and surrounding himself with them.

Among the latter there was one *mantrika*, a Brahmana of the Temple of Minakshi, whose duty consisted of uttering *mantras* and other conjuring prayers before the goddess. In a short time, he became the *alter ego* of the Collector. Finally, one fine day he brought the Collector an idol of Minakshi, and the bronze image was placed in the bedroom of the host. Knowing him as an archeologist, the few Anglo-Indians who lived in Madura paid no particular attention to this.

But now, Mr. Peters, who always slept very soundly, saw his goddess in a dream one night. The fish-eyed apparition tried to waken him hastily, bidding him "to get up and get dressed." But even such summons could not have an effect on the sound sleep of the Collector. Then *in his dream* it appeared as if the goddess herself began dressing him in haste; the holy hands of Minakshi were not even squeamish about pulling his boots over his legs, boots which were made from *sacred* cow hide. (This is the reason that in the eyes of the Brahmanas boots are the most defiled article of European apparel.) Having dressed her admirer, she touched his forehead, saying, "Save yourself through the window. Jump down, else you will perish!" She vanished and Mr. Peters awakened.

* A theologian who has learned by heart all the "sastras," theological treatises.

The Collector's house was all afire. The blaze was already licking the walls of his bedchamber with its greedy tongues and the sole door leading out of the room was blazing. Without deliberating, he jumped out of the window and thus saved his life. The house was built on the bank of the river, but at the time of the fire, as usual, the Vaigai was absolutely dry. Suddenly and to the amazement of all, before the eyes of the gathered crowd, the water began to ooze through the river bed and to rise rapidly to the very veranda of the burning house. Thanks to this unexpected help, the fire was soon put out and many objects of Mr. Peters' priceless collection were saved. Only papers and documents of great importance to the government were burned.

This fact is stated in the Collector's own handwriting and signed by him, and confirmed by the testimony of his assistant, of his clerks, and many of those present at the scene of the huge fire; furthermore, it is entered in the corded book of the city archives, where the curious document is found even to this day.

Strangest of all was the fact that Mr. Peters, according to the testimony of both his valet and his own recollections, went to bed on the eve of the conflagration undressed and unshod and then, upon jumping out of the window, he found himself dressed and with his boots on. In addition to all this, he did not jump from the first story alone, *but with the heavy bronze idol of Minakshi under his arm*. This inexplicable fact, which he related himself hundreds of times, caused everybody to smile and shake his head. "The honorable Peters," they said, "was simply drunk that eve and probably fell asleep as he was and with his boots on." But the Brahmanas and the native population triumphed and were firmly convinced that *he had been dressed and saved by the Maha-devatri*, "great goddess," herself.

It is evident that Mr. Peters, also, was fully of this opinion, judging by the unforeseen results of this event: he suddenly became extremely devout, if it is at all possible to use this word in connection with a subject of such piety, and from a complete materialist he actually "was transformed into a *pujist*," in the words of Mulji. Peters began honoring the goddess Minakshi no worse than any Brahmana. He gave up his service and, upon resignation, clothed himself in the attire of the *Bairagas* and daily performed the religious rites prescribed by the *sastras*, and finally gained the reputation of "the holy white one" among the populace. He grew fond of the Hindus and became such an ardent defender of theirs that his memory still lives in the hearts of the grateful natives, and his name is uttered with greatest respect by all pilgrims who come to worship.

In consequence of such an unusual "occurrence," the government proclaimed him insane and appointed a commission of psychiatrists to despatch him to England for cure. But even here "the goddess" did not betray her admirer. The doctors and experts, evidently, fell

under the influence of *tharana* (magnetic influence) of Minakshi, for instead of a testimonial of his mental derangement, they gave him a clean slate which stated that the ex-Collector's reason was found completely sane. Thereupon, having returned to Madras, they again affirmed their testimony. Peters had influential friends in England, also independent means: he was left in peace. When he died many years later, it was his wish that his ashes be buried in a place from which it would be possible to see the temple of his goddess. And so it was done. He was buried, after cremation, on a hillock from which the golden *stupa* (cupola) of the eastern tower of the temple was seen as clearly as if it lay in the palm of one's hand. The granite mausoleum still towers to this day and pilgrims come to visit the grave of "the holy white one." *Peters Tomb* is one of the curiosities of Madura, and the tourist who wishes to gaze upon a view of the city and temple sets out for the very well-known hillock. The latter is located on land belonging to the Temple of Minakshi, otherwise the grave and monument would have been taken down and leveled to the ground long ago.

But Anglo-Indians "who were *not* fond" of the Hindus would have found their own work too much for them had they been forced to proclaim as insane all the Anglo-Indians who, though they did not love the natives, still believed in the power of their gods and goddesses, no matter how strange this might have appeared. All these eccentric people—upon inquiry—appear to have left the ranks of the materialists. All of them are *ex-atheists* and positivists! For example, here is what the Maha-rajah of Travancore, the most educated of all the Indian princes, wrote about another Collector whose name he did not wish to reveal:

"A certain Collector of a certain district in the Madras Presidency had a family of several daughters but not a single son. Having had, in the course of his official life, to associate with Native gentlemen of all shades of faith, he was advised by several natives to take sea-baths at Ramesvaram to get a son! Of course, he derided the proposal, but thinking that a sea-bath could do no harm he did bathe at Dhavamkoti.* *And he had a son shortly after!*" †

Some Anglo-Indians turned to Mohammedanism; others, who were not accepted into Hinduism by the Brahmanas, became either *Vallabhacharyas*‡ or devil-worshippers from grief.

Madura is no distance from Madras. When we went there about two years later and thereupon settled on the river of Adyar, one of the

old Brahmanas who had known Peters personally told us much about him.

"The goddess revealed herself to him," he said among other things, "in her *actual primordial essence*; otherwise he would never have worshipped her so."

In answer to our comment that even though they, the Vedantins, speak a great deal about the Oneness of Parabrahman, their worship of idols disproves and contradicts this Oneness in their comprehension, he replied:

"*Devatri* (goddess) is an idol only in the eyes of the ignorant *sudra* (lower caste); for the initiated *sastris*, Minakshi, as well as other divinities, is simply *one of the bricks of the common edifice*, the name of which is *Sat, Be-ness*."

This explanation and the expression, "brick," seemed at the time very unsatisfactory to us and, to me, exceedingly ludicrous. Later, however, I better understood its significance.

Prior to my serious study of the *Vedas* and, in general, of the symbolism of the Brahman beliefs, I frequently asked myself the question: by virtue of *what* could such intelligent people and such thinkers as the authors of these, in the highest degree remarkable and original, systems appear to be (to him who has studied the *six* main philosophies of India), themselves have fallen for *polytheism* and its outer expression of idols, or even allowed it in the masses no matter how ignorant the latter might be? For a long time I could not account for this strange predilection. I could not explain to myself, even superficially, why, for example, Keshub Chunder-Sen, the well-known, highly educated Bengal reformer, a man who at one time had charmed Queen Victoria* by his conversation and his views, and all London high society by his unusual, enchanting eloquence—why also this mystic, the head and leader of Brahmo-Samaj, could not reject while he lived his goddess *Durga*. At times it seemed simply disgusting to listen to him and to read in the press how, in his mystical semi-delirium, he jumbled together Mohamet, Buddha, Chaitanya, and *Durga*! But I have understood now and sincerely regret my vociferous censure of this reformer who is now deceased. He was an ardent monotheist, but he was born a Hindu and remained one unto death. Possibly the following explanation of the riddle will prove to be not without benefit.

In the strange mythology of the Brahmanas—which at first glance is still more legendary than Greek mythology—and, generally, in their still stranger conception of the world, a profound philosophy is concealed, nonetheless. The outer form of idolatry is but a curtain which hides the truth like the veil of Isis. But this truth is not given to all. For some the curtain hides not the countenance of Isis, but only empty

* The Temple of Ramesvaram at Dhavamkoti is a place of pilgrimage visited by the natives under vow in order to have sons.

† See journal, *The Theosophist*, Vol. VI, No. 2, Nov. 1884, p. 41.

‡ The Vallabhacharya sect is the most immoral. It recognizes as its sole head, the pontiff, who enjoys absolute connubial rights with the wives and daughters of all Vallabhacharyas without exception.

* Keshub Chunder-Sen always called the Queen his "mother." The members of the Brahmo-Samaj sect are considered to be and are called the Indian "Unitarians," semi-Christians.

space disappearing into the impenetrable, for them, darkness; for others light pours forth from there. For those not endowed by nature with that innate, inner sense possessed by some, which the Hindus so rightly call "the third eye" or "the eye of Siva," it is by far better to be content with the fantastic patterns on the curtain: for such there is no penetrating into the depth of the impenetrable darkness, no filling of empty space. But he who has the "third eye" or, speaking more clearly, who is capable of transferring his vision from the grossly objective on to the purely inner ground, that one shall see light within the darkness, and in the seeming emptiness discern *the Universe* Inner self-awareness will show him infallibly that the presence of God is *perceived* here, but cannot be communicated, and that wishing to express this in concrete form finds its excuse in the very ardency of the desire to convey this experience to the masses. And thus, though still censuring in his soul the form of worship, he will no longer laugh openly at idols and at the belief in them of that one who, unable to penetrate beyond the curtain, is satisfied with the exterior only because it is difficult for him, if not completely impossible, to receive any kind of suitable presentation about the "Unknown God."

In order to demonstrate descriptively that all the 330 million gods of India taken together indicate *One Unknown God*, I shall try to speak more plainly. For this it will be sufficient to present one of the allegorical stories of the ancient Brahmanas from the *Puranas*, a story which has not yet, apparently, reached our Orientalists. It is quickly told.

Toward the very end of the last *pralaya* (that is, the intervening period between two creations of our world), the Great Raja who abides in the eternity of endless space, wishing to give to the coming people some means of knowing him, built a palace upon Mt. *Meru* out of *qualities inherent to him* and established residence therein. But when people again inhabited the world, this palace, one end of which leaned upon the right and the other upon the left boundlessness, proved to be so vast that the little folks did not even surmise its existence: for them the palace was a celestial firmament, for which they had no comprehension. Then the Great Raja, having perceived the inconvenience and taking pity on the little folks, desired to reveal himself to them, *not in entirety, but in parts*. He demolished the palace created out of his qualities and started throwing one brick after another down to earth. Each of the bricks turned into an idol: a red brick, into a god and a gray, into a goddess, and each of the *devatas* and *devatris* who had embodied into an idol *received one of the innumerable qualities of the Maha-Raja*. At first the entire pantheon consisted of only superior qualities. But the people, taking advantage of impunity, proceeded to become more depraved and more evil. Then the Great Raja sent *karma* (the law of retribution) down to earth. *Karma*, which spares

not even the gods, changed many of the *qualities* into instruments of punishment: thus destroyer-gods and avenger-gods appeared among the all-forgiving benevolent divinities.

This story, which was related to us by a Brahmana from Madura, explains why he called the goddess Minakshi "a brick" and, in addition to this, indicates the unity at the bottom of all of this polytheism. Between *dii majores* of the holy Mountain Meru—the Olympus of India—and *dii minores*, the difference in their essence is not great. The first are direct rays and the second are dismembered pieces, which are the broken rays of the same luminary. What in reality is Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva? The threefold ray issuing directly from "the light of the universe," *Swayambhu*, that is, from the *power* or the *spirit* that gives life to and fecundates matter, which has been personified in Sarasvati, Lakshmi, and Kali, which are the three representations of *prakriti* (matter), the three goddesses of the three gods. These three pairs, which have been synthesized in *Swayambhu*, "The Unmanifested Deity," are the symbols that personify his unseen presence in all the manifestations of nature. In short, Brahma and Sarasvati, Vishnu and Lakshmi, Siva and Kali represent in their totality *spirit* and *matter* in their threefold quality—*creation, preservation, and destruction*.

Vishnu is one, but he has 1,008 names. Each one of these names is the name of *one of the qualities of the One*. The personal qualities of Vishnu are embodied in their turn in secondary gods of the Hindu pantheon. Having thus become a separate personality from Vishnu (while Vishnu himself is only a personification of one of the *seven* main qualities or attributes of *Swayambhu*), each personification is called one of the *aspects* or "appearances" of Vishnu, Brahma, or Siva—in short, of one or the other of the *main* gods and goddesses. All of them have so many names which the officiating Brahmana of this or that sect repeats *in our time* like a parrot, but each of which had deep significance in the days of antiquity. *Swayambhu* is the first emanation or ray of Parabrahman, *Attribute-less Divinity*, the first breath of its spirit: it is *Trimurti*, the synthesis of the three spiritual powers in union with the three material powers. From the qualities of these three pairs are born lesser gods, *dii minores*, who in their turn represent qualities of the greater gods.

Thus the seven primary colors of the prism into which the *colorless* ray is decomposed, upon further blending, form secondary composite colors and are diversified *ad infinitum*. The Brahmanas say that the god *Surya* (the sun) has *seven sons*, whose offspring comprise a good third of the pantheon of *devas*; and the god of air, *Vayu*, is the father of the seven primordial syllables and of the seven musical tones in which are generated and from which issue all-possible combinations of sounds in the harmony of nature.

In ancient India, religion was closely tied with the contemplation of nature. Universal truths and the very essence of *Truth* were personified in Deity. Every manifest truth, no matter what it consisted of, had a direct relationship to divinity or *self-existent* truth. In the pantheism of the Hindu religion, only the outer method of expression is really crude and, usually, has a repellent and caricatured form.

The natural inference from all this, is that the pantheism of India, which obviously has deified all the crude forces of nature as if personifying only the outer forms, is tied in with the realm of physical knowledge, of chemistry, particularly of astronomy, and presents in itself something in the nature of poetized materialism—a continuation of Chaldean Sabatism. But if after casting away its outer form, which has led the ignorant masses to the most repugnant worship of idols, we penetrate to the primordial source of the myths of the pantheism, we shall then find in them neither gods nor even outer worship of various objects from the kingdoms of nature in their ordinary forms, but a worship of the *Omnipresent* Spirit, therefore, equally present in the smallest blade of grass as in the power that begot and grew it.

Such appears to be the simple and natural explanation of the 33 *kroros** (330 million) gods of India. These gods were begotten and endowed with being as a result of the blind endeavor to personify that which cannot be personified, creating by that very means an "idol." In the course of time, the cornerstone of the philosophic and religious world conception of their wise men found itself in the hands of the ambitious, coldly calculating Brahmanas, who broke the stone into chips and ground it into dust for the convenient assimilation by the masses. But for the thinker, as well as for every *unprejudiced* Orientalist, these distorted chips, as also their finely crushed gravel, are, nonetheless, from that very stone—the attributes of the manifested energy of Parabrahman, the One that Is without beginning and without end.

The Brahman-Vedantists postulate three kinds of existence: *paramartha*—the real, the true; *vyavaharika*—the conditioned practical; and *pratibhasika*—the illusory. Parabrahman is the only manifestation of the first and, therefore, is called *Sat*, "the One that truly Is" or the *One-Existent*; to the second class belong the gods which have been embodied in diverse forms, the *personal* souls† of mortals and everything that is manifested and phenomenal in the world of subjective feeling. This class, having received existence in the imagination of the ignorant masses, has a foundation no firmer than all that which we see in dreams; but in view of the realness of the practical relations of the people to these gods, their existence is allowed *conditionally*. The third class includes in itself such objects like mirage—the mother-of-

* *Krore*—100 lakhs or 10 million.

† *Personal* soul or *earth* consciousness, in the teachings of the Brahmanas, is distinguished from our "immortal spirit."

pearl which is taken for silver, the coiled serpent which is taken for rope—and in its subdivision, also man. People *think*, imagine that they see one or the other: consequently, for him who sees this and imagines it as such, it *actually exists*. But since this actuality is only temporary and the very substance of the objects is ephemeral, therefore conditional, then in the last analysis it appears that all this actuality is only *illusion*.

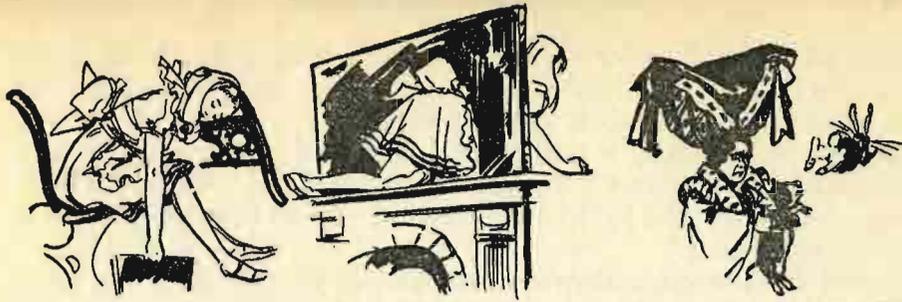
All of these conceptions not only do not interfere with the belief in the personality and oneness of deity, but also serve as an impassable barrier to atheism. In India there are no atheists in the sense in which we Europeans use this term. *Nastika* is an atheist in the sense of *non-belief in gods and idols*. This is known to everyone in India, and we have become completely convinced of that. The atheists of the West, and even the *agnostics* of the West, have a long way to go to the philosophy of the *Nastikas* of the East. The former grossly deny everything except matter; the latter, that is, the Hindu materialists, the *Nastikas*, do not at all deny the possibility of the existence of that which they do not understand. The true philosopher will understand the *spirit* and not the letter of their denial. He will be easily convinced of the fact that if they, in referring to the abstraction called *Parabrahman*, teach that the principle is "without will and without activity, without sensation as without consciousness," then they do this, namely, because according to their understanding, *The One* under this name is *unconditioned* will, activity *without beginning* and *without end*, *self-existent* self-consciousness, self-contemplation, and self-awareness.

It appears that the pantheists of India, in retaining their gods, sin simply through the profusion of religious, even badly applied, feeling. And in addition, after the all-shattering and equally non-creative *animal* materialism of Europe, such pantheism appears as a moral and spiritual refreshment, a blossoming oasis in the midst of a barren, sandy desert. Better to believe *even in one of the qualities of divinity* after having personified it and worshipped it under that guise which represents to each, according to the power of his understanding, the most convenient representation and symbol of *The All*, than, while denying this *All* under the pretext that It is not provable by scientific paths, not to believe in anything, as our learned materialists, and even fashionable agnostics, do.

From the point of view of the aforesaid, and even though we may be surprised and even sincerely laugh at the originality of his selection for the object of divine worship, we shall understand why Mr. Peters was converted, so unexpectedly and unforeseenly for all, from an ardent materialist of the school of Mill and Clifford to a pantheist and even a *pujist*.*

And now we shall return again to Dig.

* From the word *puja* — worship of gods by established precepts; not prayer, but ritual.



Curiouser & Curiouser

A DEPARTMENT DEDICATED TO ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Homunculi

According to the teachings of the Paracelsian physicians and certain other alchemists, a homunculus is an artificial human being generated by chemistry. The idea of creating living creatures is not new for it is to be found in the magical speculations of many ancient nations. The homunculus is usually represented as a small creature about a span (9 inches) in height, and sometimes semitransparent, resembling tinted glass. We have several alchemical manuscripts in our collection which refer to the forming of living creatures by art. There are also reports of Mongolian magicians who fashioned homunculi from roots of the ginseng plant.

We present, merely as an extraordinary curiosity, certain reports derived from the diary of Joseph Kammerer. This Joseph was the butler, famulus, and kind of esoteric secretary to John Ferdinand, Count of Kueffstein. This fantastic *valet de chambre* of the eccentric Count was present at, and party to, the experiments carried on by the Count of Kueffstein in the Tyrol in the year 1775. Incidentally, Count John Ferdinand was not only a celebrated thaumaturgist, occultist, student of secret mysteries, and master of cursed sciences, but was also in proper person a rich Austrian lord and chamberlain of Maria Theresa.

Of course, the Lord of Kueffstein was supposed to have gained knowledge and power as the result of a pact with the devil, which was duly signed with blood. The Count traveled extensively about Europe, searching everywhere for the secret of creating life, and the faithful Kammerer kept a complete diary of his master's activities.

In Calabria, his lordship met the Abbe Geloni, whom Franz Hartmann called an Italian mystic and Rosicrucian. The abbe is described as a great initiate and a high French Mason, and these two most eccentric persons, Kueffstein and Geloni, retired to a laboratory in a Carmelite convent. Here they remained for five weeks carrying on their dangerous and incredible experiment. They took turns guarding the furnace in which bubbled and brewed the strange mixture which was to produce life. Kammerer, though frightened out of his wits, helped in minor ways and kept his diaries, which became less and less orderly as his terror grew.

The alchemical-magical formulas seem to have been successful, and the count and abbe generated ten mysterious little beings. Each of the creatures, as soon as it came into life, was placed in a bottle filled with sanctified water and tightly sealed. The ten homunculi consisted of a king, a queen, an architect,

a monk, a miner, a nun, a seraphim, a knight, a blue spirit, and a red spirit. Kammerer is not entirely precise in his description, but it seems that the homunculi resembled perfect little human beings, about ten inches high. One of the descriptions suggests that they were visible at all times, floating like undines in the large bottles. In another place, however, it appears that these creatures would fade from sight in the liquid, and only took form when commanded to do so. Count John was not satisfied with these tiny forms, and a further ritual was undertaken which caused them to grow to a state of maturity in about four weeks. When full-grown, the homunculi attained the height of eighteen inches.

The Abbe Geloni not only blessed each of the little elementaries, but seems to have made clothes for them so that each was attired according to his station. The king had a small scepter and crown, the queen a diadem, the knight a sword, and the architect a compass. The tiny people were most handsome, but their dispositions were not of the best. One day while the kindly abbe was barbering the hair and beards of the gentlemen homunculi, the monk bit his hand. When no one was around, the homunculi argued, screamed, and bickered among themselves. Their one desire was to escape from the bottles. One day the king did so, and it required much time and patience to capture him.

These strange spirits had the power to divine the future and to discover hidden things, but only the red and blue spirits would answer general questions. The others would prophesy only in matters pertaining to their own stations or characteristics.

The Count of Kueffstein was so proud of his alchemical children that he took them to Vienna and exhibited them to the initiates of the Grand Lodge of Masonry. Here they were seen by a number of distinguished persons, including Count Franz Josef von Thun, a celebrated mesmerist, and Count Max Lamberg, a diplomatic writer of the



AN ALCHEMICAL HOMUNCULUS

time. Max was extremely critical and called the homunculi fearful monsters. This so distressed their creator that he refused Count Max admittance to the exhibition.

It seems that the homunculi aged rapidly, and as they grew older their dispositions became worse, so that Kammerer was afraid to be alone in the same room with them. The first to die was the little monk, whose end was hastened by an accident. His lordship dropped the bottle, and the tiny creature was mortally injured. Encouraged by Count von Thun, the Lord of Kueffstein attempted to replace his monsters by a new experiment, but it failed utterly. As time passed, the Count of Kueffstein seems to have developed qualms of conscience. He feared that some terrible penalty would descend upon him as the result of his audacity in attempting to create life. The diary tells us that he finally decided to rid himself of all the spirits, but there is no detail as to how he accomplished his purpose. Certainly no further mention is made of them. A full account of the entire proceedings appeared in a book called the *Sphinx*, edited by Dr. Emil Besetzny, and published in Vienna in 1873. It is believed that Goethe was aware of the experiments of the Count of Kueffstein and the Abbe Geloni, and perpetuated the account in his description of the homunculus created by Wagner, the pupil of Faust.

Ganēsa.

गणेशः



GANESA

THE name of the Hindu divinity, Ganesa, is composed of two words meaning *governor* or *leader of a company of deities*. He is the East Indian god of prudence and policies. He has only one tusk, and is therefore called Ekadanta, and his vahan, or vehicle, is the rat. The following extract from the *Ganapati Upanishad*, which is an address to Ganesa, summarizes the appearance and attributes of this strange deity: "I speak what is right and true; preserve me therefore when speaking, listening, giving, possessing, teaching, learning; continually protect me everywhere. By thee was this universe manifested; for thou art earth, water, fire,

air and ether. Thou art Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. We acknowledge thy divinity, O Ekadanta! and meditate on thy countenance; enlighten therefore, our understanding. He who continually meditates upon thy divine form, conceiving it to be with one tooth, four hands, bearing a rat on thy banner, of a red hue, with a large belly, anointed with red perfume, arrayed in red garments, worshipped with offerings of red flowers, abounding in compassion, the cause of this universe, imperishable, unproduced and unaffected by creation, becomes the most excellent of Yogis."

The elephant deity, Ganesa, or Ganapati, seems to have originated in what

has been called the "old diffusive mercantile culture" of the Bharatas. He was not the type of deity that would have been conjured into existence by the subconscious impulses of a neurotic or frustrated people. Ganesa was huge and optimistic, genial and generous, friendly and benign; and yet, like the elephant whose head he bore, this ro-tund immortal was wise and shrewd and even a trifle crafty in a humorous sort of way. Anyone who has watched the eyes of an elephant bent on mischief will appreciate Ganapati's wiles.

We seldom think of India as a land of merchants, yet there are no people in the world who enjoy sharp trading more than the Hindus. Naturally, a class devoted to barter and exchange and the endless conversation that distinguishes Oriental merchandising would regard business as a pleasure. Shopkeepers and traders meeting others of their own kind exchange notes and news, and the endless stream of customers, seeking bargains, bring with them scandal and gossip from far and near. The born merchant, regardless of his religious persuasions, is a practical man—not a dreamer. His mental horizon is limited by the natural boundaries of his craft, trade, and counter. Life is an endless challenge to the wits, for numerous devices must be employed to entice and then ensnare the prospective purchaser. The god of the money-changer, the vender, and the proprietor of a small business must be ever-attentive to the prayers and anguished cries that ascend to the higher strata of the atmosphere during the transactions of the day.

To the popular mind, Ganesa was not only a god of wealth, distribution, and free enterprise, but he was also a sharp trader and willing to overlook slight exaggerations and moderate misrepresentations among the dealings of his votaries. After all, it is the buyer who must beware, and those who purchase in the market place must have gods of their own to protect them from shoddy goods. Ganesa was also a robust spirit and, like the nature deities of the Greeks, was addicted to a moderate overindulgence in

the popular vices. Ganesa was not plagued by his own conscience, nor were his genial activities seriously restricted by the higher members of the heavenly hierarchy. He had much his own way, and reflected with very little distortion the dominant convictions and policies of his numerous followers.

Ganesa was a deity of good fortune, success, and wisdom in the more worldly sense of these terms. To be sagacious without dedicating at least a part of the intellectual capacity to the improvement of one's earthly fortune was outside the concept and experience of the bartering Bharatas. Wisdom implied comfort, convenience, and that temporal success which was necessary to social standing. It also implied the capacity to enjoy accumulations without becoming a victim of one's material possessions. In all, therefore, those of superior mentality should be successful, contented, and comfortable. If wisdom did not confer such blessings, its cultivation was unprofitable.

There was nothing theological in the basic conception of shrewd old Ganesa. Some are of the opinion that he was a cloud god, and that in early times he was the tutelary divinity presiding over small villages and the social system which produced them. He was provided with an ample ear with which to become mindful of the small concerns and intimate problems that dominate living in scattered rural communities. Perhaps originally he had cosmic proportions and represented the huge frame of the world itself, within which all things live and move and have their being. Ancient Hindu schemes of the universe show creation supported on the back of a huge elephant. But merchants are not so much concerned with metaphysical abstractions and it makes little difference to them what kind of creature upholds the world. As long as the cosmos hangs together, there is time for sharp bargaining and shrewd trading.

His association with success, worldly comfort, and security has resulted in Ganesa being appealed to at the beginning of most religious observances. He seems incapable of denying his followers

anything that they may desire, but he is also given to pranks; for having bestowed his favors, he often involves the recipients in the consequences of their own unreasonable requests. He is the kind of true sophisticate and a man of the world who, bestowing luxury upon all others, would himself live frugally.

Ganesa requires no priesthood to administer his worship. He is perfectly qualified to arrange his life and affairs and bestow his blessings without benefit of clergy. Like the elephant, he is a rugged individualist, who bestows his favors as he pleases and withdraws them without apology or explanation. An image of Ganesa is to be found wherever men buy or sell or lend or borrow. He assists the borrower to make a loan at so low a rate of interest as to threaten the stability of the financial world, and at the same instant he contributes his inspiration to the lender so that this worthy can devise a dozen new schemes of usuary. It remains for the parties themselves to decide by skill and argument and with proper display of tears and pathos which of them will benefit most from Ganesa's intercession.

Probably Ganesa is not among the oldest of the Hindu gods, but certainly he is one of the most appealing. There are countless legends about the origin of this Aryan deity in that mass of Indic literature known as the *Puranas*. One of these books describes Ganesa as being the eldest son of the mother of the universe. At the time of his birth, all the gods, demigods, and miscellaneous godlings visited his cradle with greetings and felicitations—that is, all but one. Shani did not come. Now this Shani is the deity of the planet Saturn, and he feared to approach the newborn lest a single glance from his blazing eyes consume the infant's head.

The mother of the universe was so certain that Ganesa could withstand Shani's gaze that she insisted that the god approach the cradle. But alas! Immediately Ganesa's head vanished in a blaze of light. In the Hindu system of astrology, Shani has rulership over all evildoers and those who disobey the laws of the gods. So he sent forth a mes-

senger to find some creature performing a wrong action from whom he could secure a new head for the infant Ganesa. Apparently vice was on the decline in the world at that time and the only creature that could be found committing a fault was an elephant who had made the mistake of going to sleep with his head to the north. By this minor infraction of the code, the elephant's head was available, and Shani caused it to be placed on the shoulders of Ganesa.

With his new head, the god did exceedingly well, apparently inheriting the elephant's sagacity along with his trunk, tusks, and ears. Legends are not in agreement, but certainly Ganesa was regarded as the son of Siva and Parvati. As these deities represent spirit and matter in the primordial form and the Oriental mystics assumed the mind to originate from the mingling of these two universal essences, Ganesa personified the intellectual energy of Nature.

In the *Varaha Purana*, Ganesa is said to have been produced by Siva alone. Mahadeva addressed his new son thus: "Thy name shall be Ganesa, and the son of Siva; thou shalt be chief of the Vinayakas and Ganas; success and disappointment shall spring from thee; and great shall be thine influence among the gods, and in sacrifice and in all affairs. Therefore shalt thou be worshipped and invoked the first on all occasions, otherwise the object and prayers of him who omits to do so shall fail."

Pure intellect, unconditioned by addiction to any prejudice or conceit, was symbolized by the native shrewdness or perspicacity of the elephant. The natural inclination of the human being is to apply his intellectual powers to his own survival, security, and pleasure. It is only after he has been indoctrinated with theological opinions, ethical notions, moral speculations, or philosophical concepts that he begins to think contrary to his immediate personal advantage. Ganesa, the animal mind combined with the human body, suggests that the old Bharatas regarded pleasure, contentment, and success as natural instincts which should be gratified through

the ingenuity of the mind.

Apparently the peoples of Asia regarded the elephant with profound respect. This animal not only possessed extraordinary strength, but its intellectual powers were by no means feeble. Its memory was proverbial throughout Asia, and there are numerous occasions reported of an elephant remembering with extraordinary vigor a person it had seen but once, fifty years before. This massive pachyderm also had the delightful quality of humor and a lightness of mind not to be suspected from so bulky an organism. Elephants enjoy life, and exhibit a wide range of temperament, including hysteria, temper fits, and illusions of grandeur. They sulk and pout, but having contracted friendship are most faithful and indulgent. They can be held prisoner by a thread, and yet can break through the strongest barriers. They pine and sorrow and whimper, are very easily insulted, and can be as emotional as a prima donna. In substance, they are so, so human.

The worship of Ganesa originated long before the rise of Buddhism, but, in part, the symbolism of the elephant-god was transferred to this great Indian school of philosophical speculation. The *Jataka* tales include in their list of the previous incarnations of Buddha one in which he was born as the son of the elephant chief of a herd of eight thousand royal elephants.

In the Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist nativity stories, representations of the birth of Buddha show him descending from the spiritual world into the womb of his mother in the form of a white elephant. Obviously, this symbolism has resulted from thousands of years of familiarity with the characteristics of the elephant. The Hindus have long recognized this animal as one of immense strength, but one patient under burden and ever-available to serve the needs of man. These characteristics have caused it to be associated intimately with the practical wisdom which these East Indians so greatly admire. Ganesa is said to have written the *Mahabharata* at Vyasa's dictation. A supposed incarnation of Ganesa occurred about 1640.

The god appeared in a vision to a Brahman of Poona, who practiced abstinence, mortification, and prayer. The overshadowing of the god, according to this revelation, was to continue through the seventh generation of the seed of this sacred man.

The association of Ganesa with the rat is extremely curious. Of course, this rodent was generally disliked by merchants, especially those who dealt in foodstuffs. Because its depredations usually occurred at night, the rat became associated with darkness and, by extension, with benightedness. Ganesa was the god of light; therefore, he subdued darkness and made it his servant.

Ganesa had many of the attributes of the Egyptian deity Thoth, or Hermes. He played the part of a scribe in the divine court, and is said to have been able to write with extraordinary dexterity and rapidity. Although an outstanding intellectual, Ganesa seems to have been excluded from many of the old initiatory rites. Those about to perform special rituals invoked the deity to bless their project and then dismissed him before actually undertaking the ritual. It was believed to be a misfortune if Ganesa heard certain sacred formulas, etc.

Possibly of Dravidian origin, Ganesa's original place in the ancient pantheon is now uncertain. Often in the descent of religious tradition, old gods, once exercising large powers, are reduced to the estate of tutelaries. The deities of conquerors take first place, and the gods of conquered nations become their vassals. This occurred in India and Egypt, and there are vestiges of this process in Greece and among the Nordic peoples.

In modern usage, Ganesa is deeply involved in the problem of solvency. Occasionally one sees a picture of this deity hung upside down in some place of business. This means that the merchant is bankrupt. Only if the business gets back on its feet does Ganesa do the same. Evidently this divinity was especially dear to the hearts of Eastern peoples. His worship and his image have been distributed through nearly every country of Asia, and he is just as

popular in areas where merchandising is extremely backwards. This probably indicates that the instinct for barter is attractive even where materials are scarce and industry languishes in tropic indolence.

In the classic writings of the Hindus, the elephant is often referred to as a symbol of worldly wealth. These animals were part of the treasures of princes, and the rajahs kept large herds of them for hunting and ceremonial purposes. The elephant was always an impressive part of the pageantry of Asia. The animals were painted bright colors, their tusks tipped with gold or silver, their blankets woven with threads of precious metal and adorned with jewels. One native prince had an elephant howdah carved entirely from ivory, and another wealthy potentate strung the neck of his pet elephant with ropes of matched pearls. The mausoleum of a favorite elephant could be more impressive than the memorial to a reigning prince.

The elephant himself delighted in the attention which was showered upon him. He carried his dignities in the grand manner. He was seldom difficult unless it profited him, but ambled along under his load of finery with his trunk sedately curled around the tail of the preceding pachyderm. But his little eyes missed nothing, and in the presence of the slightest humiliation, he collapsed and became inconsolable.

In some way, the old Hindu mind came to regard the elephant as a lordly creature, endowed with attributes which invited profound respect. It is not known why the elephant should be associated with money-changing and high finance, unless in ancient times the animal was used as collateral or security in large transactions. Perhaps those who were worldly-wise and sharp in their transactions could in the end be rich enough to own elephants. These animals bestowed prestige much in the same way that today the expensive motorcar is presumed to symbolize an adequate bank account.

As a remover of obstacles, the deity Ganesa occurs in Japanese Buddhism, especially in the sects originated by

Kobo Daishi. Here it gains some metaphysical implications, but still remains essentially the personification of worldly wisdom. Perhaps, therefore, we should inquire further into the problem of what constitutes practical thinking. To the Asiatic, who is, contrary to popular belief, a very practical kind of person, worldly wisdom may be associated with the responsibilities of a householder. East Indian religious philosophy is not merely an escape to godliness through the rejection of personal responsibility. Important cosmic laws, especially karma, are constantly operating in the life of the individual. It is the duty of all men to pay their debts to Nature, and to avoid this is to incur ill karma.

Those who come into the world are nursed through infancy, protected through childhood, and established in their privileges of young maturity. They are educated and trained and fitted to make their own way in life. It, therefore, becomes the responsibility of each mature man and woman to bestow similar advantages and opportunities upon their own children. This may be wiser than the Western approach to this very controversial issue. Occidental parents are very apt to impress upon their children a sense of indebtedness. The child should never cease being grateful that he has been brought into the world, clothed, fed, and educated. The least he can do is to honor his parents and provide them with numerous tokens of appreciation for the rest of their lives. In the East, the parent does not feel that his children owe him; rather he takes the attitude that he is paying his debt to his own parents. Thus, the children are not born and reared to feel that they are hopelessly in debt before they have any earning capacity.

To the Bharata merchants, religion, no doubt, was a luxury which the wealthy could afford to cultivate. There was no virtue in the poverty of those lacking the ability to be rich. Anyone can be poor; in fact, the less we think and the more impractical we are, the more rapidly we attain poverty. It is not fitting that men should be regarded as venerable simply because they have

wasted their goods or are too lazy to accumulate material possessions. We are reminded of the definition of a certain kind of political radical. It was said of him that he had nothing and was determined to divide it with everyone.

If a man has a family, a home, and a trade, he must be industrious to maintain the obligations that he has voluntarily assumed. He must have the skill to buy low and to sell high. He must be eloquent, persuasive, and, if necessary, belligerent. He must have the capacity to dramatize his goods and fictionalize a little if his customer requires such embellishment. He must work long hours, make a superior product, carry it to market, or find ways to bring the market to him. His mind must stay close to his shop, and he must sacrifice many pleasures, opportunities, and even convictions in order to keep faith with the duties of the day. After he has kept the law, paid his debt to Nature, and proved to himself that he could succeed in the competitive world of buying and selling, he might, if the time were right, retire. Then he could renounce the world because he had something to renounce. Other men would then say: "He has given up wealth; therefore, he is sincere." He could divide his goods among his children and go on pilgrimage, visiting sacred shrines or associating himself with some venerable teacher.

In youth, he learned the ways of this world. In older years, he studied the ways of the world to come. When a young man, he apprenticed himself to a brass-worker. In age, he apprenticed himself to a saint. It was all very practical and very reasonable, and, no doubt, Ganesa would bless the project. We may think of worldly wisdom as something that makes men honorable even if it does not make them wise. Later, however, wisdom is more fitting to an honorable man than to one who lacks such homely virtues. God must have been very fond of merchants, shopkeepers, tradesmen, and craftsmen, for in his wisdom he made more of them than any other class of mortals.

In Indian art, Ganesa is usually figured alone, but in such matters there

are always exceptions to the rule. Occasionally, he appears with other deities in ritualistic scenes. He is rarely represented with a Shakti, or female counterpart, but he is associated with two figures, Buddhi and Siddhi; that is, wisdom and success. On rare occasions, he may be surrounded with gopis, shepherds or shepherd maidens, female figures representing planets or the signs of the zodiac. In Northern India, conventional images show the deity with four arms, but he occurs with various numbers of hands and symbolic attributes, from two to ten. Sometimes he appears with as many as five heads, and seated figures of him may show traces of a second pair of legs. The objects which he carries differ in the several regions where the god is honored. They include an elephant goad, a conch shell, a loop of rope, a large ripe fruit, a ball-like ornament which is a religious cake, a water lota, and his broken tusk. More rarely, he carries an axe highly conventionalized, or the trident of his father, Siva.

The god is frequently depicted with his trunk turned to the left in the act of taking a religious cake from the globelike bowl. He wears a serpent twisted around his body, and sometimes a second snake about his neck instead of the Brahman cord. His principal garment consists of a dhoti, or a short pleated shirt. Sometimes he wears a caste mark of the Sivaite sect or a lunar crescent on his forehead. Often this is accompanied by a third eye placed vertically. In some areas, Ganesa is not shown as a rotund figure, and the elephant attributes are less obvious. In Nepal, he more frequently carries the axe and the trident, and his headdress is plumed or feathered. Some areas are not aware of the legend of the broken tusk. There is some dispute as to the symbolism of the deity in Japan. He appears there holding a radish instead of the tusk. It may be that the Japanese, contacting a crude image of Ganesa, mistook the tusk for one of their favorite vegetables.

The bowl of batasa, the small sugar cakes of which Ganesa is particularly

fond, is nearly always close to the deity. He is a constant nibbler, which accounts, no doubt, for his portly proportions. His ears, head, and trunk are usually represented as bright red, while the rest of his body is fair and pink, like a small child. His robe is traditionally yellow, but in art may be any rich shade or material. Figures of Ganesa are included among the carvings on the walls of the ancient cave-temples at Elephanta and Ellora.

There have been many reasonable doubts raised as to Ganesa's morality. Like the old gods of Greece and Rome, he regarded his divinity as bestowing certain privileges. It is rumored that he secured his two wives, Buddhi and Siddhi, without benefit of proper ceremony. Edward Moor, with British conventionality in describing the god in his *Hindu Pantheon*, says: "Ganesha is not so correct a character as one might hope and expect from the deity of policy and sagacity."

At one time, according to the mythology, the wicked Ravana, King of Lanka, remembered as the villain of the great epic, the *Ramayana*, subjected all the gods and demigods and forced them to perform menial services for himself and his household. In all probability, this account refers to the kings of Atlantis, who became black magicians and attempted to pervert the universal energies to satisfy their own ambitions. The legend goes on to tell that Ravana forced the god Siva to become his barber and trim the giant's ten beards. Vishnu was appointed as impressario to drill and instruct the dancing and singing girls. Ganesa had charge of the cows, the goats, and the herds. Vayu swept the house, and Yama washed the linen. It was quite an establishment while it lasted, but the gods soon found a way to discomfort the tyrant Ravana, and to escape from servitude. Because of this legend, Ganesa had considerable reputation among those who raised and marketed domestic animals.

Ganesa and Kartika are sometimes referred to as the first and second sons of Siva and Parvati. In this arrangement, these brothers partake of the attributes

of Mercury and Mars. It is reported that Kartika, the brother of Ganesa, was born with six faces. He was nursed by the six Pleiades, and became commander of the celestial army. He is shown riding a peacock.

Some of the earlier writers attempted to correlate the Hindu deity Ganesa with the Latin god Janus. Certainly images of him were set up at crossroads. Sometimes these were little more than rude stones, daubed with red paint. Moor suggests that changing the hard *g* of Ganesa to the soft *g*, or *j*, brings the names Ganesa and Janus to a close degree of similarity. Ganesa is reported to have been the father of thirty-six female offspring. On one occasion, he took the form of an astronomer and used his thirty-six children to form a magical horoscope. Ganesa occasionally assumes solar propensities, and the thirty-six decans of the zodiac are represented by his daughters.

Although Ganesa is reputedly the child of Siva and Parvati, there are reports to the contrary. He is sometimes represented as produced by the thought of Siva alone; and in other legends, he was generated by Parvati by an immaculate conception. Here, again, there are intimations of his identification with the great esoteric solar myth.

In the Asiatic researches for 1801 appears a royal grant of land in Carnata which indicates that Ganesa was invoked in the transference of property. The grant opens with the words: "Prosperity attend you! Adoration to Ganesha." The third stanza of the grant reads: "May the luminous body of that god, who, though formed like an elephant, was born of Parvati, and is revered even by Vishnu, propitiously dispel the gloom of misfortune." In a note on this verse, the translator adds: "The bodies of the Hindu gods are supposed to be an imperial substance resembling light."

Edgar Thurston, in his *Omens and Superstitions of Southern India*, notes that the scorpion is supposed to have great reverence for the name of Ganesa, and will stop instantly if the name is spoken. He also mentions a curious de-



—From an Indian chromo

GANESA AMONG THE PRINCIPAL DEITIES OF THE HINDU PANTHEON



FINE BRONZE FIGURINE OF GANESA

This example from Southern India is late 18th century, and the pedestal is ornamented with a votive inscription.



—From a Hindu brass carving

GANESA AS LORD OF THE GANAS

The deity is presented in his attribute of patron of prosperity, happiness, and material success.



—From Moor's *Hindu Pantheon*

THE SO-CALLED "ESOTERIC" FORM OF GANESA WITH HIS ATTRIBUTES

The deity is represented throned on his rat, while above is the sacred syllable "Om" surrounded by the serpent of eternity, both irradiated.

tail of the practice of astrology in Southern India. The astrologer places three cowry shells in a row beside the nativity. Occasionally he uses five shells. These represent Ganesa, the planet Jupiter, Sarasvati, the goddess of wisdom, and the astrologer's own guru, or teacher.

Ganesa is supposed to have lost his tusk guarding the door of the apartment of his father, Siva, while the great deity was sleeping. This may refer to the material mind protecting the life of the individual before his spiritual faculties have been awakened. The elephant has always been associated with faithfulness, for, like the human intellect, he protects man from the excesses of his emotions and appetites. In the Tantric philosophy, Ganesa is associated with one of the chakras, or centers of energy along the spinal cord.

In his *Tibetan Yoga and the Secret Doctrine*, Mr. Evans-Wentz writes: "According to Hindu tradition, the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet were first revealed by Brahma, the Creator, to Ganesha, the God of Learning, and by Ganesha imparted to mankind. Owing to this divine origin, the sounds of these letters when properly intoned in *mantras*, or words of power, are said to convey celestial psychic influences, in the form of 'gift-waves' of grace. All these phonetic visualizations taken together number fifty; and they are symbolized by the fifty blood-dripping human heads which form the mystic necklace of the great Shakti, the Divine Mother, Vajra-Yogini."

Fragments like the above may cause the Western reader to wonder at the extravagant fantasy of Eastern religious symbolism. Such improbable stories, such impossible tales suggest the delirium of minds steeped in superstition and dedicated to strange heathen practices. We give thanks that our religion is free from such absurdities. But let us think a minute. After all, Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt; Jonah dwelt for a time in the belly of a great fish; Balaam's ass reprimanded his master, and Noah gathered quite an eccentric group of creatures into a very small boat with only one window. It

would be hard to find, even in India, a symbolism more complicated than Ezekiel's vision or a fragment of inspired literature more amorous than the Song of Solomon.

The modern Christian will assure us that these old legends should not be taken too literally, but undoubtedly refer to mysteries in the spirit. We may say the same for the Eastern myths, which are improbable and grotesque only when we fail to understand the true meanings. It is just as unreasonable to assume that the Hindus actually worshiped a rotund deity with the head of an elephant as it is to assume that Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle paid homage to philandering Zeus or inebriated Dionysus. The esoteric cult of Ganesa used the symbolical form of the deity as a kind of mandala, or meditation image. The symbolism is purely idiomatic and relates to experiences of consciousness, and not to the worship of an image.

While the profane were satisfied to regard Ganesa as merely the bestower of blessings, he was to those of deeper insight conceived to be the cosmos itself—vast, mysterious, filled with life and wisdom, and at the same time shrewd and humorous. One moment the world overwhelms us with its majesty and magnitude, and then suddenly the appearance of things changes, and we feel existence as strangely intimate, extremely personal, and even slightly ridiculous. One moment the world seems to have the uncontrollable power of some huge animal, and the next moment we sense an infinite tenderness guarding and guiding all creatures. In a way, everything outside of ourselves becomes a matter of interpretation. We see what we fear, what we expect, and, to a measure, what we demand. The world soul takes on the dimensions and proportions of our own expectancies. If we seek for justice, wisdom will reveal it. If we search for injustice, ignorance causes it to be apparent.

Once there was an elephant, and he belonged to a king who was blind. Because the king was blind, he chose four ministers likewise blind to rule his na-

tion. One day the blind monarch sent his four blind ministers to discover for him the appearance of an elephant. They went into the jungle and found, with the aid of men who could see, the lordly beast who was quietly eating the juicy green tops of small trees. The first blind minister groping toward the elephant put his arms around one of the creature's legs. He immediately reported that an elephant had the shape of a tall palm tree with a huge stem. The second blind minister approached from the rear and got hold of the animal's tail. He contradicted the first account, insisting that an elephant was a long thin creature resembling a piece of rope. The third blind minister advanced at the front end of the peaceful pachyderm. Carefully feeling the trunk, he stated with dogmatic finality that an elephant was a huge serpent. The fourth minister had himself hoisted onto the elephant's back. After creeping all around the curved surface, he finally slipped off one side, and sitting on the ground somewhat shaken, pronounced gravely that an elephant was an animal built like an island with high cliffs on all sides.

The four ministers then returned to the king and each told his story, and the ruler knew no more than before about the elephant. Each of the blind men told the truth so far as he could, and while all the stories contradicted, the facts were large enough to include all the errors. Very likely, this elephant explains the symbolism of Ganesa, for those who examine the world are all, to some degree, blind, and their reports are incomplete and apparently unreasonable until the light of reason illumines the mysteries of the material world.

In some of the old paintings and sculpturings, there are lines about the face of Ganesa that seem to indicate that the elephant head is a mask. This may mean that the deity originated in the primitive Dravidian animal-cult. Most ancient nations used animal totems and endowed various animals, with human characteristics. Later, in the religious rituals, masked priests played the parts of the animal gods. We know

that this practice explains the composite deities of the Egyptians. Today in North India, Tibet, and China, masked priests portray demons, monsters, and fantastic animals. As the elephant was the most powerful and the most intelligent of the animals, he would naturally be the totem of a dominant tribe or clan. As his tribe increased and flourished, the deity extended his dominion and sphere of influence. Later, however, more intellectual religious and philosophical systems came to dominate the Hindu mind, and Ganesa retired to become a secondary divinity without a formal priesthood. It is quite possible that his close association with the Bharatas and the Sudras is due to his origin among the lower classes of Indian society.

When Ganesa was accepted into the Brahmanic pantheon, his concept was intellectualized and he gained spiritual stature by interpretation. There are evidences among most sophisticated nations that certain primitive religious concepts and symbols have survived through the strength of tradition, and continue even after their meanings or purposes have been entirely forgotten.

East Indian religious art has become increasingly important to Western collectors and connoisseurs in the last fifty years. It has been noted that the Occidental concept of decoration has changed greatly in the present century. The modern home with its simple and somewhat severe furnishings is ideal as a setting for great Asiatic works. Even European and American painters and sculptors are now considerably influenced by Hindu, Tibetan, and Chinese art forms and technique. Naturally when we acquire a work of art, we like to understand the reason for which it was created. This exchange of art concepts has opened a considerable part of Eastern religious symbolism to the Westerner. Until recently, most Oriental art goods imported into this country were made in factories to be sold entirely to indiscriminating Americans. As a result, the products were a poor quality and totally without aesthetic merit.

It is only in large collections or ex-

tremely discriminating private accumulations that representative pieces can be found. These prove beyond doubt that the Asiatic masters were equal to any of the European artists. The work is exquisite in quality and design, and the symbolism stimulates profound thoughtfulness. As soon as we recover from the still-prevalent conceit that Eastern artists were servants of heathen gods, we shall have still more appreciation for their genius and skill.

A well-executed image of Ganesa is a delightful addition to the well-ordered home. From a niche on the wall, a corner of the mantle, or the top of a cabinet, this sagacious divinity takes over immediately the management of the menage. His small bright eyes and curling lip cause him to assume the proportions of the family conscience. As you take a sly glance in his direction, you can tell from his affable smirk that he is fully aware that you are trying to lie your way out of a complicated situation. He senses exaggeration, tolerates egotism, and condemns a bad temper. He becomes the symbol of a generous and genial host, for to be skimpy in his presence is to be obviously ridiculous. He tells you something about living and conveys the feeling that all his intimations and implications are from wide personal experience.

He is also an excellent source of conversation, for your friends may never be able to understand why you spent a considerable sum for such a curious-looking creature. The moment he is the center of attention, Ganesa beams, and his rotund body seems to shake and sway and swell to even larger proportions. He is surely a ray of sunshine, and it is very difficult to nurse a hypochondria when he is around. The more serious and personal and introverted you become, the more promptly he convicts

you of your stupidity. Probably the simplest way to understand Ganesa and why he is so widely admired throughout Asia is just to let him convey to you the impact of his abundant personality. If you do not try to understand him, he will convert you, not only with his worldly wisdom, but with something that transcends so prosaic a standard of erudition. He will tell you that the highest form of worldly wisdom is to realize that wisdom is not of this world. He will assure you that everything you regard as important is comparatively meaningless, that your certainties are mostly delusions, and that you are wasting your time, your money, your energy, and your life in the pursuit of phantoms. Yet, like the world of which he is the symbol, Ganesa is kindly even when he is breaking bad news. If we say the world is flat, the universe does not argue or insist that it is round. It lets you find out your mistakes in your own way. The gods are much more tolerant of mortals than men are of each other. Probably this is because, like Ganesa, they are so very wise that they can understand the foolishness of mortals, and find that the best way to plague humanity is to let humans plague each other.

With these thoughts, then, we will pay parting homage to Ganesa, the Lord and leader of the Ganas. We will meditate upon his countenance, and while certain of his beauty may escape us, we will acknowledge him to be a friendly and genial spirit. Incidentally, the existing condition of our economic system over which Ganesa is said to preside might suggest that an image of him be given a place of honor in the New York Stock Exchange. I wonder if such an image properly adorned and festooned would be mistaken for a symbol of the Republican Party.

A young man was asked a serious question, and remained silent. Theophrastus, the successor to Aristotle, spoke to him quietly: "If you keep quiet because you are foolish, then you are wise; but if you are wise in this matter and keep quiet, then you are foolish."



In Reply

A Department of Questions and Answers

QUESTION: In critical periods of history, such as the one we are in now, the average individual has very little to say about prevailing policies. Regardless of his personal feelings and convictions, he must abide by the will of the majority and suffer the consequences of practices of which he disapproves. How does the law of karma apply in such cases?

ANSWER: In order to understand the operations of universal laws in the sphere of human activity, we must first take a broad view of an exceedingly complex situation. Universal laws operate throughout the entire cosmic scheme. These laws are not limited to solar systems or even to the galaxies suspended in interstellar space. The philosophic concept of law may be defined as a pattern of inflexible rules operating everywhere and forever.

A universe of law and order reveals the rules governing its processes by unfolding within these rules and according to them. We cannot discover that the insular universal systems resist in any way the elaborate structure or framework of inevitable laws within which they exist and unfold. Obviously, there can be no successful rebellion against the plan which is coexistent with time and space, and which endures as long as the

creation through which it operates. When the philosopher refers to the divine law, he means the workings of the divine will, against which there can be no recourse under any condition.

We have passed that time in theological thinking when it was fashionable to assume that the universe was created for the convenience of man. Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake for suggesting that the stars and constellations were not candelabra fashioned to prevent mortals from stumbling about in the dark. This concept passed out of favor with another which insisted that the earth was a tuffet on which the Almighty could rest his feet. Even though we have formally revised our opinions, most folks nurse the secret conviction that by presenting a united front under the leadership of their favorite clergyman they can demand amendments to the cosmic constitution and the heavenly

bill of rights. These same enthusiasts are further convinced that the divine plan will remain unsatisfactory and imperfect until they are called upon to add certain finishing touches. In substance, God's way of doing things has never been generally approved by the majority of that species which modestly proclaims itself to be the noblest work of the Creator.

Many moderns are becoming acutely neurotic at the thought that they must obey the edicts of the divine will. It is frustrating, indeed, to discover that we cannot do exactly as we please, whenever we please, and as often as we please without a number of exceedingly unpleasant consequences. The supreme tragedy of all is to be inhibited by the rules governing the game of life. Having convinced ourselves that we are higher than the angels, we are ready to take over the management of the cosmos, etc., etc. With so much ability available, we become a bit disgruntled that the gods remain comparatively unmindful of us and continue to run the business of the universe without our invaluable recommendations.

It should be evident that a creation which has failed utterly to carry on its own affairs with dignity is worthy to be "called" to a larger sphere of usefulness. We can only assume that the "board of directors" is prejudiced or is favoring next of kin at our expense. To justify our demands for more active participation in management, we point out the lamentable state into which things have fallen under present ownership. We have not noticed that the only trouble seems to be in the areas which we inhabit. Could it be possible that our calamities are due to our own character deficiencies, and not to executive negligence?

In all seriousness, we secretly nourish an audacity which we would not openly acknowledge even to ourselves. There is a saying that it is the criminal who finds fault with the law, and, perchance, it is the disobedient child who thinks of his father as a possible source of chastisement. The human mind is not sufficiently developed to enable mortals

to comprehend the vastness of the universal plan. Even the great telescope cannot convey to our limited capacities the experience of the sidereal immensity. What do we know of distances measured in terms of the speed of light, or of clouds of stars, in which each tiny point of light is larger than our solar system? We memorize formulas and are duly amazed, but these formulas do not confer the capacity to understand. If we extend this thought about the frailties of thinking to the higher dimensions of these immeasurable vistas, we approach the mystery of universal law. Do we honestly and sincerely believe that with prayers and penances we are going to alter, modify, or temper the plan and purpose of the Infinite? According to available information, it appears likely that the present sidereal government will remain in office for some time.

In an extremely minute suburb of a very tiny star, likely enough on the wrong side of the planetary tracks, there is a comparatively recent subdivision of would-be property owners, who have only made small down-payments on their modest homesites and are generally in arrears. The members of this remote community do not know where they came from, where they are going, or why they are there. They have been extremely troublesome from the beginning, and have the reputation of letting their properties run to wrack and ruin. They are belligerent, quarrelsome, fault-finding, and practically impossible to please. They are forever stealing from each other and, although they have elected approximately one out of every five of their number to protect the rest from each other, they live in constant fear and anxiety. They have suffered from numerous delusions, the latest and most exaggerated being the notion that they are ready to become the self-appointed dictators of the cosmos. Perhaps we are overoptimistic when we assume that the gods are patient with this troublesome breed; more likely, the gods have not yet noticed either these creatures or their commotion.

Humanity itself would have a better comprehension of the facts of life were

it not so completely absorbed in its own affairs. The genus Homo spends far too much time in blissful admiration of itself. Long ago when towns were small, shepherds, guarding their flocks, gazed with silent wonder at the splendor of the night skies. Today, the average city dweller is fortunate if he can glimpse an occasional star through the smog-laden industrial atmosphere. Instead of the constellations twinkling above him, his eyes feast upon a huge, grotesque neon sign advertising "O'Toole's Gin Emporium." As industry and economics lock the human being into the narrow confines of a man-made world, the universe ceases to be an equation of consciousness. Heavenly matters lose significance, and we dedicate our minds and hearts to the pressing difficulties which we have created for ourselves. The laws of men gain dignity by proximity, and it appears more practical to nurse the friendship of our assemblymen than to keep faith with gods, dim and remote.

In the course of time, man's fear of man came to be the obsessing emotion. The more we feared, the more we conducted ourselves in a way which added substance to our fears. As the universe receded from our attention, we deprived ourselves of the strength and courage which comes from an understanding of the larger purpose for which we were created. Finally, we became exiles, breaking, one by one, the bonds that bound us to the gods. We grew progressively more confused and uncertain, stumbling about in a darkness that was not in the world, but in ourselves.

In the course of ages, we built religious and educational institutions, with which to light the gloom of our underworld. Unfortunately, our religions, to at least a degree, were infected by our own shortcomings. We prayed to the gods, not that we should have strength to keep the law, but for the privilege of being disobedient with a good hope. We worked on the policy that it was not *what* we knew, but *who* we knew that assured salvation. Our educational institutions settled down to train us for that noble destiny of exploiting the re-

sources of the universe. We were instructed that Nature waited patiently to be ravished by M. A.'s, Ph. D.'s, and D. Sc.'s. Of course, in spite of our constant pillaging of our planet, we continued to appear and disappear as regularly as before. We brought nothing when we came, and took nothing when we left, but we did an immense amount of bartering and accumulating in the interval between appearance and disappearance. The more learned we became, the more quickly we overlooked the immensity of what we did not know. We became distinguished and loquacious interpreters and commentators, analysts and estimators. So profound were our observations and so elegantly were they expressed, that everybody, including ourselves, believed that we knew something. Of course, we make mistakes, but after all we are still human, even though we are outgrowing it rapidly.

There was an insidious undertone beneath all this book-learning. We gradually developed a pronounced superiority complex. We sat around discussing cures for crime, remedies for war, solutions for poverty, and even hazarded the speculation that we would speedily distribute the pill of immortality at a price within the reach of the average consumer. If, however, we continue to function according to our present policies, no one will want the elixir of life by the time we get it into production. With each passing day, we make this well-meaning old world a better place to leave behind. We have talked solution since the days of the cave man, but we have solved very little, and the remedies, like sulfanilamide, are worse than the disease.

We have now confused ourselves and each other so completely that we are unable to put together any patterns of ideals, ethics, or morality that will hold together until the next assembly. We have not only ignored the laws of God and Nature, but also have developed considerable immunity to the laws of man. Altogether, our pattern of laws has collapsed into an all-pervading lawlessness. In this emergency, there is some talk—not very enthusiastic—of re-

turning the splendid human experiment to the gods. We have not heard, however, whether or not the gift will be accepted.

If we appear to be facetious, it is because the point must be driven home that man himself is responsible for the sense of injustice about universals which he has so consistently cultivated. Folks are forever complaining that the universe permits grievous faults to go uncorrected. These same folks point out the sorrows and misfortunes which afflict mortals, and then demand to know why God permits such things. Within the limited scope of his own small sphere, man has a measure of free will. He may choose to keep faith with the universal plan or he may temporarily ignore this plan and try to follow his own imperfect instincts. He has the choice, but, having chosen, he must abide by the consequences. Universal law is not the whim of a fretful old ancestral spirit; it is the way of life. To the measure or degree that man wilfully or through ignorance departs from universal law, he suffers. When trouble comes, excuses are of no avail, nor is there the slightest chance for a new trial or a reversal of the verdict. Neither bribery nor influence will help. Once a debt has been incurred, it must be paid.

The Hindus were among the first to teach the law of cause and effect. The realization that such a law actually operates in Nature brought great peace and joy to their hearts. The virtuous man is not offended because he must pay his bills, nor does he resent reasonable punishment for unreasonable conduct. Just as the unpunished child is seldom a source of joy or comfort, so the human race, if permitted to grow up without discipline, would come to a sorry end. No one really likes to be reprimanded, but if it is necessary, the wise accept the punishment with good grace. In fact, the very discipline itself brings with it a larger understanding and the skill to live better in the future. As we are here to learn, that which increases knowledge is more valuable than that which merely brings passing pleasure.

The word *karma* has now been accepted into the English language. In the process, certain license has been taken with the Sanskrit form. Regardless as to whether popular usage is in complete conformity with the requirements of language, the meaning and import of the term remain unchanged. In present usage, karma means *the law of cause and effect applied to the moral life of the human being*. Cause and effect properly may apply to tides, cosmic rhythms, and universal processes, but karma specifically refers to causes and effects as they are set in motion in the temperament, personality, disposition, and actions of creatures possessing individualized intelligence.

Only orders of life capable, by virtue of their constitution, of decision resulting in good or ill and having within themselves the power to estimate the consequences of action come under the law of karma. Thus, the element of free will, or, more correctly, the power of choice, can cause an action for which there is personal responsibility. If a creature lacks the power to disobey, there can be no virtue in obedience. Virtue itself means *conscious decision in conformity with right*. Animals, not having individualized the faculties of self-determinism, cannot be held responsible for the natural operations of their instincts. In man, instincts are under the government of intelligence. The karma of animals belongs to group intelligences and not to the animals themselves. It is therefore the group intelligence which has self-determinism that is punished if the animal destiny is not guided with proper propriety.

The type of consciousness which comes under the direct power of karmic law is that in which the rudiments of conscience are already operating. When someone says, "I know I shouldn't, but I am going to, just the same," we are in the presence of a minor rebellion against the inevitable. There is much more to the law of karma than merely an obvious and rather mechanistic process of retribution. We do not wish to imply that conscience and karma are the same. Conscience may punish us

for breaking the code—the taboos of our clan; but karma punishes us for breaking the law ordained to our kind by universal wisdom.

It may be well to emphasize again that the law of karma is in no way affected by any attitudes, emotions, or convictions of the individual or of the human collective. Humanity may build creeds which are at variance with truth. These creeds may be followed honestly and devotedly by millions of human beings, but if these creeds teach anything which causes man to depart from the laws governing his kind, he will come to grief. Even if all human beings together were in perfect agreement about a certain subject, their weight would have no effect whatever if the conclusions were incorrect. We seem to feel that there is a certain security in common agreement, and that we may safely follow where the majority leads, but these are illusions. No matter how learned the error or how skillfully it is defended with argument, the fact remains the fact and the rest is foolishness.

To get down to particulars, we have today a world in which nearly a hundred nations with various convictions, countless beliefs, innumerable policies, and strangely assorted allegiances are in the midst of what sometimes appears to be a hopeless muddle. How many of these conflicting ideologists have the slightest interest in the truth or in the rules by which the universe about them operates so efficiently? Each of the groups is dedicated to an opinion. Most of the opinions have not succeeded sufficiently well to justify their imposition upon the rest of society. In fact, many of the more adamant and stubborn policies are surrounded by the direful evidence of their own utter worthlessness. This in no way, however, reduces the enthusiasm of fanatical advocates, who are willing to tear down the cosmos if necessary rather than to alter their own notions.

Solution lies in discovering the will of the universal plan. Every pattern that exists in human society is governed by universal laws. When we find out what the law requires and obey

without compromise, the difficulties will end. As we consider the alarming increase in crime, the dangers of business recession, the long shadow of possible war, and the innumerable evidences of humanity's inhumanity, we may ask ourselves just what is being done by leading experts to discover the universal laws involved and how these laws can be promptly obeyed. How does it happen that man can live in the presence of the divine geometry and fail to see that rules govern everything? We have perfect faith in the laws manifested through astronomy, biology, and physics. How does it happen, then, that we have fashioned the conceit that there are laws governing everything except us? We alone of all living things have the glorious privilege of self-destruction. It would seem that we wish to be unique, but if we do not correct that conceit we shall merely become extinct. Of course, in fact, we shall not even have the privilege of extinction; we may destroy our world, but we must continue to live with ourselves until we can honestly enjoy the association.

Those long fed on the belief that God is in a state of perpetual rage and can only be pacified by one kind of sacrifice or another will have difficulty in accepting the old wisdom teachings. The ancient philosophers were convinced that man was not the victim of divine displeasure, rather the sorry product of his own foolishness. No deity ever could plague a creation as effectively as human beings have plagued themselves and each other. This led the Platonists to the sagacious observation that this world and not the next is the real Inferno. There is not a single misfortune that afflicts the life of the average man which cannot be explained without recourse to celestial whimsy.

Karma is not a law enforced by a cosmic equivalent of the sheriff's office. All consequences are inherent in their causes, and once a pattern has been set in motion or activated by an impulse of the human will, it must fulfill itself. Sometimes it requires years for patterns to complete themselves, and by that time the factors have been obscured or

forgotten. Usually, the motivations which determine the quality of karma are known only to the person who has nourished these motives within his consciousness. Therefore, it is almost impossible to estimate correctly the karmic factors operating in the lives of others. We must depend for our understanding of the workings of the law of compensation upon thoughtful analysis of our own policies and actions.

Many human projects are launched without due consideration for ethical principles. Where ulterior motives are present at the beginning of an enterprise, the end result must be unsatisfactory. In all human relationships, ulterior motives abound. Sometimes these take the form of a planned program for exploiting the faith, trust or good nature of others, and sometimes only native selfishness is responsible for an unjust policy of conduct. In any event, the offender sets in motion a series of chain-reactions which ultimately return to him, bringing with them unpleasant happenings. The first instinct, when we find ourselves in a predicament, is to assume that the immediate or apparent cause is the real cause. We spend much of our time trying to convince ourselves that others are responsible for our troubles, but only on rare occasions do we succeed in deceiving even our own minds.

Every human personality has its limitations, its peculiarities, and its mental and emotional blind spots. It is not intended that mortals be perfect at this time, and, as long as imperfections continue to exist, there will be a degree of insecurity in human relations. We destroy, however, the value of experience when we attempt to explain away the causes of our problems. In the universe, ignorance is not accepted as an excuse for benighted conduct. It is true that the human being is not expected or required to solve problems beyond his capacity. That is why the responsibility for the maintenance of the cosmos is not upon his shoulders. He is, however, required by Nature to solve those mysteries which pertain to himself and to those with whom he has immediate re-

lationship. Only enlightened honesty can break the sequences of crime and punishment. Each time we compromise principles which we know are true and right, we must prepare ourselves to pay for this indiscretion. We cannot escape in any way, for even death does not break the sequences of cause and effect.

All terminal virtues or states and conditions realized to be desirable result from the fulfillment of rules peculiar to these desirable ends. For example, peace is the consequence of peace and is not the result of war. There are two ways in which nations and individuals can attain to the state or condition of peace. The first is through war, by which the individual or the social collective ultimately discovers that war can end only in war. This is the negative approach. It requires the complete exhaustion of internal and external resources until, at long last, the universal law is recognized and acknowledged. This recognition ends in the establishment of convictions, but it is a long, painful, and terrible way of enlightenment. We must discover in our hearts that it is an immutable law of the universe that he who sows the whirlwind shall reap the whirlwind.

The second and direct way is to set in motion, by conscious will and action, the pattern of peace. The word itself implies a compound of which the principal ingredient is integrity. It may require a great effort within the character to choose righteousness in the presence of temptations to personal advantage. If this choice is wisely made, the results are inevitably and invariably good. Perhaps it would be better to suffer a little in the beginning than to suffer a great deal, year after year and life after life, until the vitality of the involved forces is exhausted by repentance. Why, then, do so few of us make the right choice at the start of enterprise? When we ask this question, the usual answer is that the sufferers did not know or did not realize the difficulties they were creating for themselves. Actually, they did not believe that universal law and order applied to them. They more or less honestly assumed that it was pos-

sible to plant weeds and reap a good harvest. Furthermore, to them religion actually justified this attitude by its doctrines of miracles, repentance, and vicarious atonement. While such teachings prevail, operating honesty is not considered an essential ingredient of character.

When a person acts in a selfish, critical, or unkind way, is miserable as a result, and then tries to excuse himself by a statement that he did not know any better, he is casting a terrible reflection upon the educational, religious, cultural, and ethical institutions which he has established and maintained at considerable expense and inconvenience. To graduate from a prominent university with a high scholastic rating, a Phi Beta Kappa key, and a scholarship or two without being aware that his own conduct will determine his success or failure in life is a ridiculous state of affairs. The moral implication of the law of cause and effect should be taught to every child from the time it is old enough to understand the simplest moral lessons. The child should be taught that while it can learn to deceive other human beings it can never deceive the universal laws which govern man, Nature, and the world. Later, the ethical implications of karma should be the enduring foundations of higher learning. In the process of building a better world, integrity is more important than skill, although each complements the other. Skill without integrity equals disaster.

I realize fully the difficulties attendant upon a reformation of human policy. We are so established in a concept of greed and grab that the prospect of an honest world gives cause for the gravest apprehension. It seems that our entire economy would be shaken to its foundation and that the broad and generous practice of integrity would have an effect more cataclysmic than a deluge of atomic bombs. Many of our oldest and most cherished institutions would collapse about our ears and we would stand in the presence of a vast ruin. This has caused a number of prominent "practical" thinkers to gravely warn the world against policies of idealism in high places. Not long ago, there was

discussion of impeaching a high public official because he insisted that integrity was more important to the survival of human society than high-pressure economics.

The question advanced at the beginning of this article was based upon the conflict between the individual instinct to integrity and the collective pressure of a nonethical, if not unethical, standard of living. Is it possible, without an unreasonable amount of immediate suffering, to practice a code more lofty than that advocated by the contemporary social order? I say *unreasonable*, not because integrity can ever be essentially unreasonable, but because the average person has not the courage or will to expose himself to pressures which he feels he cannot sustain. If a man is asked to be honest at the total expense of everything that is near and dear to him and must practice his integrity by destroying the hopes of his children and reducing himself to a state of abject economic helplessness, this demands more than most people can or will endure.

Frankly, however, the facts are not so terrifying as the preceding paragraph might suggest. There is still a considerable qualitative interval in which human behavior-patterns can be modified and adjusted. The average person can practice considerably more than his present degree of integrity without seriously hazarding his reasonable requirements. The doleful picture of martyrdom is, to a degree at least, merely an excuse or a justification for a continuance of unethical practices. There are still many honest citizens in all walks of life and in every profession. Perhaps their honesty is not dynamic, but still it represents a degree of character-strength which is not making life unendurable.

Inordinate ambitions impel those people dominated by them to compromise the natural code of ethics. We cheat the most, not for what we need, but for what we want beyond our needs. A man once came to me with a problem. He was youngish, eagerish, and ethically immature. He explained his situation thus: "I have resolved to make a million dollars by the time I am forty. This is my

goal in life. I cannot make a million dollars from my present position without engaging in unethical practices. The world will not permit me to accumulate such a sum honestly, so what shall I do?" While his statement was a bit blunt and lacked the finesse usually associated with such ambitions, this man summed up the prevailing temper. In a generation in which too many folk must be rich or be miserable, the majority of them will in time, if they have the abilities and the resources, become rich and miserable.

Such universal laws as rebirth and karma have no concern with the wealth or poverty of human beings. Nature does not decree, require, or even desire that anybody be wealthy or poor, and those whose minds become too deeply absorbed in their dreams of material success usually become a little careless in matters of ethics. The only part of the proceedings which interests the universe is this carelessness, for which it has appropriate remedies. Within a sphere of moderation, the average person can make certain adjustments of character which will increase his contentment and security without endangering the success of any reasonable project. After all, most of us suffer largely from dispositional violation of ethics, about which society in general is completely indifferent.

Integrity is a combination of honesty and intelligence. Many folks have wrongly diagnosed their own troubles. They believe that they are being punished for honesty, when in fact they are being punished for lack of intelligence. Honesty is not a substitute for ability or skill or farsightedness or devotion to the work at hand. Those who pride themselves that they have not committed an evil should also inquire as to whether they have performed a virtue. There is a class of so-called "good" people which is the despair of heaven and earth, and a horrible object lesson to its fellow man. These dull, "good" people suffer just as much as the smart, bad people, because both groups are breaking the law. One is dull and the other is bad, and Nature has a particular remedy for

each class, and the medicine is bitter.

The good can suffer because they are not wisely good, and the very word *good* has become so weak in meaning that it is applied to almost anything that has an atmosphere of sanctity. Nature does not punish human beings because they try to live principles which they believe. It only punishes when those principles are wrong or have been misinterpreted so that the results of addiction to them are bad. Certain it is that we may consecrate our hearts and minds to lofty ideals without fear of losing caste. In the first place, no one can actually intrude upon our inner lives without our consent. As I have said before, I have known of no case in which an individual got into trouble because he controlled his temper, overcame instincts of jealousy, or refrained from idle gossip. He usually attained the state of being obnoxious by making a large issue out of his pretension to virtues and then failing to practice any of them when they threatened to inhibit the eccentricities and excesses of his disposition. If we move into a situation with an extensive baggage of concepts and precepts which we impose upon others but fails to exemplify to any degree, we are of those "good" people who constitute one of the heaviest burdens that flesh must bear.

I have had several families discuss with me their desires to build an honorable career in this lackadaisical sphere. The breadwinners in these families did not wish to engage in business in which it was necessary for them to be dishonest or dishonorable in order to continue employed. As the people were perfectly ready and willing to work and had good principles, they were all able in a reasonable length of time to associate themselves with firms and organizations which they could honestly admire. One, a nurse, changed employment several times before she found a doctor who was truly practicing the spirit of medicine. Another, who wished to be a salesman, tried several products and finally associated with a firm whose merchandise he regarded as meritorious. None of these young people had any

serious trouble advancing in their employment, and the qualities of their characters were recognized and appreciated. They were wise enough to be skillful and industrious as well as honorable. In one instance, several less honorable but equally industrious employees have been dropped from the rolls. Honesty is not a serious disadvantage to those of moderate ambitions if it is combined with positive assets of character.

If there is trouble in the job, it is much more likely that disagreeable traits of character and not our high ethics are the cause, but if we are a compound of a very literal, unimaginative kind of honesty and a bad disposition, we are inclined to blame our lofty standards and not our temperaments for our troubles. If the truth were known, there is still considerable applause for demonstrated integrity, and most people are so traditionally involved in the concept of the golden rule that they will applaud it even though they do not practice it. I once knew an eminently dishonest business man, who said that the most important person in his institution was a certain secretary who was incorruptible. After cheating and chiseling for half a century, the man told me that if this secretary ever failed him he would lose all faith in the nobility of human nature.

The next and larger consideration involves the collective social and political pressures which outrage the honorable person's sense of values. It is difficult sometimes to accept leadership from persons we do not regard as honorable, and we like to think that the corruptions obvious in our system are responsible for our intimate, personal misfortunes. We resent governmental mismanagement, political dishonesty, professional corruption, and industrial exploitation. All these environmental factors work a hardship upon us and make us feel that we must play the game, even against our wills, in order to meet the false standards which dominate our society. Here again, however, I wonder if we do not swallow the cow and choke on the tail.

Most of us are well-satisfied with the luxuries, conveniences, and extravagances which surround us. We resent the fact that we cannot buy everything we see and compete in terms of possession with our wealthiest neighbors. If we are really going to be idealists and sincerely desire to enrich internal consciousness, we must be willing to get along without a number of things we never needed. As our desires are stimulated by everything that we see, we are very, very human, but not very, very wise. Not long ago, I talked to a man who was especially proud of his son. "He had a bad start," the gentleman explained, "as all boys must have when they have a father worth a million dollars. But the lad was lucky. In 1929, I lost every nickel, and that saved him. He was in college. He belonged to a number of fraternities, and was showing early signs of dissipation. When the crash came, he had to go to work, and that was the first moment he ever wanted to go to school. He worked his way through the last two years of college in a small school without much high society. Today, he is one of the finest men you would ever want to know, happily married, and a leader in his profession. Every time I see him, I say to myself, "Thank God I had to cut out your allowance."

Many men in this country have built fortunes by questionable means in order to give their children every advantage that the world affords. As a result, these children are among society's most distinguished failures. In this life, too much is just as bad as not enough. Moderation is the secret of essential progress and security. Men can be honest, if they are willing to be moderate; and this very moderation sets up sequences of cause and effect which end in essential progress.

One tragedy that must be given serious consideration is the division which exists in many families. Some members naturally desire to be moderate, and others demand for themselves advantages, privileges, and opportunities which are not necessary or essentially desirable. In families where the members earnestly

desire each other's happiness, they are inclined to cater to the demands of unreasonable husbands, wives, or children. Persons, not of themselves inclined to immoderation, are moved by their sympathies to satisfy the emotions and appetites of those whom they love. Thus, they act against their own best judgment, and there is trouble.

The only remedy for these domestic conflicts is sound advice and home planning. Clinics are available today which can assist and guide those seriously desirous of living well in a domestic pattern. Such as are not willing to be reasonable must face the consequences of selfishness and unkindness. It does no good to humor them, and it may ruin other lives in the future. When we feel that we owe our children an education and a good start in life, that should mean that we must use every means in our power to inspire them and instruct them in policies of intelligent honesty. To fail in this is far more serious than to be unable to finance for them a college education.

The operations of karma are the basic facts of ethics. Cause and effect in the sphere of moral life should be as commonly known and acknowledged as the law of gravity and the principles of the Bill of Rights. If the peoples of the world, especially those in high estate, could come to know and love the doctrines of rebirth and karma, these laws would furnish the foundations of a practical religion which could achieve peace on earth and good will among men. Unless they were complete materialists within themselves, most of the world's leaders could not advocate the practices and policies which they are striving so desperately to defend and maintain. Materialism must fail because it does not defend the inevitability of enlightened ethics. Unless man believes in powers superior to himself, he cannot rescue his own life from the selfishness which dominates his codes of action.

The majority of human beings are not, as individuals or even as minority groups, capable of forcing a reformation of their world. Fortunately, the law of karma does not require that any person

achieve the impossible in order to be virtuous. Buddha taught that the law of karma bound all creatures dominated by the illusion of matter. As long as material things are important, to the degree that we invest in them all our hopes and aspirations, we are the victims of the policies and institutions which man himself has created.

This brings us to the final phase of the question that has been asked. The law of karma cannot operate against any individual who has not himself broken the rules of the universal plan. We are not destroyed or injured or punished along with the guilty simply because we happen to be there at the time. We are reprimanded only when we ourselves, by our own actions, are involved in the guilt and only to the degree that we are so involved. If our hopes, dreams, and aspirations are centered upon objectives themselves wrong, we suffer when these objectives are changed or removed.

Punishment for the fault of worldliness can affect only the worldly. The difficulty seems to be that we are all a bit worldly. As internal enlightenment reveals the universal truths, we gain an understanding of values which causes us to depart from the false and cling to the true. When this decision has been made, we are free from the tyranny of physical things. We can only escape from the world by outgrowing the world. Death may take man out of the world, but only wisdom can take the world out of the man. As long as the human being is obsessed by worldliness, he will suffer from the karmic consequences of false allegiances. When, however, worldliness is transmuted into a spiritual integrity within the consciousness of the individual, he is free, even though he still dwells physically among worldly things.

We observe repeatedly how what appears to be a miraculous intercession occurs, and in the midst of some vast disaster a few escape. Law cannot punish the lawkeeper, for he is one with the current of life, and there is no inconsistency between his own nature and the plan. Man cannot suffer unless he acts

contrary to the code set up by Nature for the administration of mortal affairs. It follows, then, that man cannot escape collective disasters by taking refuge in some unfrequented place. The worldliness in him accompanies him wherever he goes; even in heaven he will be miserable. If he desires to escape some collective ill which he feels to be impending, he must change the quality of his own convictions. He is part of everything that he is like, and only separates from the rest when the quality of likeness ceases. As understanding of the law increases, the student of truth is also freed from numerous uncertainties and anxieties about the working of the law. Faith, courage, and friendliness increase within us as our understanding of life grows through thoughtfulness and integrity. After a time, we are no longer concerned as to whether we shall survive some karmic distress. Even more than this, the physical circumstances lose so much of their significance that we are not concerned unduly over the mutations of States and Empires. The wise man stands ever-ready to teach and to serve, to guide and to direct, but he has already learned that he cannot transfer his internal security to any other person, even though he loves them devotedly. Security must be earned. It must come from an experience of universal justice, and it can only mature when man is no longer seeking to escape the just consequences of any action, thought, or emotion.

We do not need to abide by the will of the majority except by such natural conformities of appearances as are necessary to maintain the essential structure of human society. Sometimes it may be that we must say, "Suffer it to be so now; this, too, shall pass away." It is never necessary for us to accept the illusion of the world, even though we must live here and obey certain simple forms and rituals. In a democracy, the individual must always adjust himself to the decisions of the majority. This does not mean, however, that he must

accept inwardly that which is false. He can grow, unfold, and mature his consciousness in this environment. Had not such been possible, the environment itself could not have existed. In all ages, a world dominated by selfishness and ambition has given birth to heroes. Good men do not wait upon good times, or they would never come. Strength of character, if it really exists, survives all shocks, and grows more rapidly because it must hasten toward the light.

As Socrates explained, it is not good for wise men to set an example of lawlessness because they regard the law as unjust. I am referring, of course, to man-made legislations and codes. No one can be held to a pattern less than that of his own conscience. Bad laws may enslave the ignorant, but the wise man cannot be captured in this way. If all the world is wrong, one man who is right cannot be moved. When there appears to be an exception to this rule, it is because the one who thought he was right was not so right as he thought. Although the doctrines of reincarnation and karma were, to a degree, taught by the classic Greek philosophers, the greatest statements of these laws and the most complete literature concerning them are to be found in the sacred writings of Asiatic peoples, especially the Buddhists. These laws are Asia's contribution to the ethical survival of the whole world. We may be able to help the East to a better standard of physical living, but the East can help us to a better standard of ethical and moral living. We can never have an honest human society until men realize that the universe is honest and requires honesty from all its creatures. We cannot know this without a certain degree of internal enlightenment, and it is enlightenment about honesty which leads naturally and directly to enlightened honesty. To know the law, to love the law, and to keep the law: this is the threefold path of righteousness. Who walks this path, dwells in the light, and for him there is no fear.

Theophrastus said: "The soul pays a high rent for her habitation in the body."

Nostradamus

The Seer



ANOTHER magical device mentioned by Nostradamus was the consecrated basin. Examples of these bowls may still be seen in old museums side by side with unicorn's horns and dragon's teeth. Bowls made of crudely baked clay, their inner surfaces ornamented with complicated formulas and strange symbols, and intended for purposes of divination, have been discovered in the ruins of Sumerian cities. These bowls were filled with water and, when properly consecrated according to the rituals of transcendental magic, the surface of the water was strangely agitated by the presence of familiar spirits.

Hydromancy was practiced by the ancient Greek philosopher Pythagoras, and on the testimony of his disciples he had the power to cause rivers and streams to speak. Comte Cagliostro, the last of the magicians, foretold future events by causing a mesmerized child to gaze into the surface of a basin of water. The consecrated bowl with its shining contents, the magic mirror with its burnished surface, the crystal ball with its luminous depths, and the glittering particles of sand used by the Oriental fakir are all part and parcel of the same magical procedure.

Also, there was the wand, that indispensable symbol of metaphysical authority. The conjurer's stick is as old as human history. It could be of the purest gold or ivory set with jewels, or only a twig plucked at a crossroad on All Soul's Eve. The wand was the scepter of the Mysteries, carried by the hierophant of pagan rites when he descended into the abyss of enchantments. With this rod of authority, the magician, like Prospero in *The Tempest*, controls sidereal spirits and submundane sprites.

The wand of Nostradamus was a laurel branch, and possessed the properties of a divining rod. When a spirit appeared, the end of the wand inclined itself in a manner similar to the Water Witch of New England farm lore. The leafy head of the wand was used to sprinkle the consecrated waters upon the paraphernalia of the magic arts.

Following the rules set forth in his secret manuscripts, Nostradamus applied his mystic machinery to the problem of foreknowledge. Robed in sanctified raiment, he touched his laurel wand to the

waters in the basin and anointed his robe and his foot. As enchantments must be wrought at night, the flickering light of his solitary candle was reflected from the brazen legs of the tripod. The Delphic table moved and the agitation was conveyed to the basin of water that stood on its polished top. Eddies and ripples swirled in the bowl; then from the midst of the water came forth the shrill cry of the captured spirit.

Nostradamus describes the manner in which the strange agitation which moved the waters in the brazen bowl was communicated to his own body. His arms shook, he declared, and could scarcely hold the pen; the room was filled with an eerie mist; phantom shapes moved to and fro in the heavy air; vapors floated upon the surface of the magical sea; a light shone from the waters. In the midst of an airy turmoil, the spirit appeared, girdled about with a magical circle of pentagrams.

As Nostradamus leaned forward to listen, a small faint voice spoke from across the void, and, shaking in his sleeves, the prophet wrote down the words that were given to him. The Greeks taught that prose was the speech of men, and verse the language of gods and spirits. The Delphic oracles were revealed in obscure hexameter, and when Nostradamus published his *Prophecies* in quatrains and sextains, he but followed the precedent established by the priests of Apollo.

As the revelations continued night after night, terror accompanied them, for the spirit told Nostradamus of the grievous afflictions that should burden the ages as yet unborn. Hour after hour the voice from the waters foretold plagues, famines, wars, and crimes. The great would conspire against the weak; despots would afflict their peoples; corruption would shake the foundations of both Church and State, and the world would be full of crimes and seditions. Year after year would bring pain; generation after generation would see misery.

Ingenious men, the voice predicted, would devise new means for their common destruction. There would be wars

in the air, birds of death screaming in the night; there would be battles under the sea for dominion of the land; forts would move upon wheels; death would come like lightning, and poisons in the air would suffocate the living; cities would be destroyed by fire falling from the clouds, and the helpless would take refuge under the earth; whole nations would be utterly wiped out, and art and science would languish as men devoted themselves wholly to courses of destruction.

Throughout many nights the shrill voice of the spirit proclaimed the doom of an afflicted world. The fullness of the revelation will never be known, for Nostradamus declared that so terrifying was the import of the words spoken to him that he dared not reveal them lest all the hopes of humanity be crushed. He pleaded with the spirit to bring him kindlier tidings. The form, floating in the luminous mist, complied. Despite wars and rumors of wars, sorrow and desolation, it affirmed that in the end truth should yet prevail; for, through its own "self-inflicted pains," mankind would eventually learn the lessons of its survival.

At last the period of revelation came to an end. For the final time, the spectral shape slowly faded away; the sparkling vapors grew dim; the waters in the basin subsided; the strange agitation ceased. Nostradamus stood alone in his study, and silently contemplated that strange future which he would not live to see. How great was the problem of this kindly man! He yearned to give some warning which would incline human beings to a wiser course of action.

Like all great idealists, Doctor Michael longed to change the shape of the inevitable. He had the power to write the history of tomorrow, yet it was no part of his intention—as he observed in his letter to King Henry II—merely to depress men with the terrors of the unborn future.

Out of Nostradamus' meditations was evolved the obscure style which has been the torment of his interpreters these four hundred years. It was his purpose to reveal—and yet conceal—by

a cipher of words. The result has been what his enemies have characterized as a jargon, a meaningless mass of words. Needless to state, their verdict would have greatly pleased the object of their detractions, whose firm belief it was that those who lacked the wisdom to understand should also lack the power to discover.

Yet another problem remained to be disposed of by Nostradamus. Suppose another person should follow in his footsteps and perform the same conjurations he had used. The spirit might be evoked to speak again. If it did, would that other prophet also have the wisdom and the patience to hide, with the veil of obscurity, the meaning of its fate-laden words? Would he reveal too much and thus add to the sorrows of an already burdened mortal kind? If another Prometheus of prevision should bring to a future generation the sacred fire of prophecy, would he likewise take the precaution to hide it in some hollow reed?

Out of these meditations the wise doctor came to a high resolution. One night, in the quietude of his cabinet he lit the flame of his alchemical furnace and with the bellows blew it to white heat. Then, to this purifying flame he consigned his secret books of magic. He burned them all—the scrolls, the parchments, and the papyri. Gone forever were the priestly books of Issachar and the magical pentacles of King Solomon. According to his own account, the rolls and parchments blazed up with an unearthly splendor. The room was alive with invisible powers as the flaming fingers of the salamanders clutched at the ancient books.

In a little while only ashes were left behind, and Nostradamus remained the last man who would ever know their contents. It was his responsibility to perpetuate, according to his own judgment, the unknown lore. The prophetic *Centuries and Presages* are the product of his decision. He compiled more than a thousand verses covering two thousand years of the world's history, dedicated them to his king, and left them to far places and distant times.

One day a young man presented himself at the door of Doctor Michael's house. His name was Jean-Aymes de Chavigny, and he had come from the village of Beaune. Chavigny had been attracted to Nostradamus through the influence of Jean Dorat, with whom he had studied Greek. The fame of the prophet had induced Chavigny to present himself as a disciple, so strong was his desire to devote his life to the understanding of the mystical arts of foreknowledge.

Convinced of the youth's sincerity and in need of an amanuensis, Nostradamus accepted him into his confidence. Though the seer could not communicate to his new pupil that strange enthusiasm with which he himself was filled, he could and did supply Chavigny with important keys for interpretation of the prophetic writings. As far as is known, this one sincere follower is the only living person whom Nostradamus made party to his secret methods. The intimacy between these two continued throughout the life of Nostradamus and was broken only by his death.

If the prophet was veiled and obscure in his writings, he was frank and open with his student. Chavigny became his spiritual son, the heir to his mystic writings. It is quite possible that he dictated part of his prophetic verses to his young secretary.

After the death of his master, Chavigny published some interpretations of the *Prophecies*. In 1562, Nostradamus dedicated an almanac to Pope Pius IV. This dedication was accepted by His Holiness, and Nostradamus was shown much respect and consideration by the Church. In 1566, Brother Jean Vallier, a Franciscan attached to the monastery at Salon, which was named Des Mineurs Conventuels de Saint Francois, reprinted the *Prophecies* with ecclesiastical permission.

In August 1554, an ominous event took place in Provence. Two monsters had been born, and the countryside was in an uproar over the event. It is noteworthy that early scientific books are remarkable for the detail with which such prodigious events are recorded.

While to ordinary matters only scanty attention might be given, the birth of a monster was so portentous as to be rivaled in importance only by comets and fiery apparitions.

In this case an infant with two heads, each with a complete set of organs, had arrived unexpectedly at the village of Senas, to the consternation of its parents and the distress of the community. Furthermore, in confirmation of the saying that disasters never come singly, there was born in the town of Aurens near Salon a lamb also with an extra head. These prodigies undoubtedly portended some dire calamity, and both the Church and State were troubled.

There was but one thing to do: Nostradamus must be consulted. So the monsters were brought to him, and in the presence of the Governor of Provence, the astrologer interpreted the omens. These two-headed creatures, he declared, portended a division in the power of France. There would be domestic wounds that only centuries could heal; the long struggle between Catholicism and Protestantism was about to begin, and this religious strife would divide the nation into two warring camps. The assembled elders were duly impressed, and the incident found permanent record in the *Histoire Chronologique de Provence* by Honore Bouche.

Chavigny records another interesting episode of the curious power exhibited by Nostradamus on numerous occasions. While deep in his reveries one night, the prophet was suddenly disturbed by a persistent knocking at the front door. A page of the illustrious family of de Beauveau had been given a beautiful and valuable dog to guard. In some manner the animal had broken loose and had run away, and the lackey in his desperation had turned to the astrologer as a last resort.

Before his visitor could offer any explanation for his errand at that unseemly hour of the night—in fact, without asking the stranger his business—the doctor responded by crying in a voice loud enough to be heard outside: "What is it, page of the King? You make a deal of noise for a lost dog. Go out on the

road to Orleans. You will find it led on a leash."

Too astonished to speak, the page hastened to a fork where the roads met and in a little while found the dog held by a vallet just as he had been told. This story was widely circulated, and was followed by a deluge of requests for Nostradamus to discover missing persons as well as lost articles.

Trone de Condoulet, a rich burgher of Salon, was witness to an important prediction made by Nostradamus on the occasion of his meeting the young Prince de Bearn. The astrologer turned to those accompanying the youth with the pronouncement: "This young prince will sit on the throne of France and the title of 'Great' will be added to his name." The attendants dismissed the remark with a smile, since such a contingency appeared to them unlikely in the extreme. It took the Prince de Bearn ten years of strife to win his kingdom, but he was eventually crowned Henry IV, and, due to his immense popularity, he has always been known as "Henry the Great."

In 1560, the strife between Catholic and Protestant factions became general and, reaching Salon, put the city in an uproar. There were riots in the streets and many suffered violence for their religious differences.

Although Nostradamus' only desire was to be left alone and continue his scholarly pursuits in peace, his neutrality was not sufficient to protect him from attack. He was a man of wealth and importance and well-known for his strong Catholic leanings. All this was a source of considerable annoyance to the Protestant faction, in whose persecutions of the doctor both religious fanaticism and personal jealousy were often joined.

On the other hand, the doctors and apothecaries had stirred up the Catholic faction by accusing Nostradamus of the practice of sorcery, and insisted that his pious mien was but a cloak to conceal his heretical and devilish inclinations. So bitter did the persecution become that Nostradamus dared not appear on the public streets for fear of bodily harm.

To make matters worse, the Ordinance of Orleans, published on January 31, 1560, included the following: "And because those who prognosticate things that are to come, publishing their Almanacs and Prognostications, using the terms of astrology, against the express commandment of God, a thing which ought not to be tolerated by any Christian Prince, we prohibit all publishers and libraries of publishing, from exposing for sale any Almanacs or Prognostications that first have not been seen by the Archbishop, the Bishop, or such as they may appoint. And against him who will have composed such Almanacs will be prosecution by our extraordinary judges and corporeal punishment."

Especially dangerous to Nostradamus was the edict because of the false editions of the *Prophecies* attributed to him, which were being circulated under his name and for which he could be held personally responsible under this ordinance.

Just when it seemed that disaster was inevitable for Nostradamus, the course of fate suddenly changed and the prophet emerged triumphant from a period of grave anxiety. His *Prophecies* began to be fulfilled with such startling rapidity that the Spanish Ambassador wrote to his King, recommending that Nostradamus should be duly punished for the misfortunes being suffered by France, as though he (Nostradamus) had been the actual cause of them!

This is reminiscent of the experience of William Lilly, the English astrologer,

who a hundred years later foretold the date of the Great Fire of London. When his prediction came true, Lilly was summoned to appear before Parliament to prove that he himself had not personally burned the city. Lilly states that he was treated quite decently and dismissed with honors of his peers that he was no incendiary.

In France, the quatrains of Nostradamus were on everyone's lips. Henry II had died exactly according to verse 35, "Century I." The conspiracy of Amboise was clearly indicated in verse 13, "Century I;" also the conspiracy of Lyon, verse 59, "Century X." On November 17, 1560, while at Orleans, Francois II swooned in the midst of a religious ceremony. On December 5, of the same year, he died unexpectedly from an abscess in the ear. On this occasion the Venetian Ambassador, Michiele, wrote to the Doge that everyone recalled the 39th verse of the "Xth Century," and commented on it in a low voice.

A man's success, however, only makes his personal enemies more embittered. Each time one of his predictions met with fulfillment was a fresh excuse for charging Nostradamus with sorcery. Never had such a prophet appeared in the modern world. It was obvious that no man who had not sold his immortal soul to the Prince of Hell could possibly know so much about the future. A God-fearing man might occasionally utter a prophetic line, but Nostradamus' uncanny accuracy outraged religious decency!

(To be continued)



Philedonus blamed Plato for continuing to study after he had become a teacher. "How long do you intend to remain a disciple?" asked Philedonus. "Until I am ashamed of growing better," replied the Master.

Euclid, of Negara, when asked to describe the gods, replied: "I know but one thing of them—they seem to dislike curious persons."

When Plato left his school each day after teaching, he always turned back, saying: "See to it, young men, that you make good use of your idle time."



Library Notes

By A. J. HOWIE

Plotinus - *His Essay On The Beautiful*

*A digest of Thomas Taylor's translation
from the Greek*

Beauty is to be found in every species of harmony. It is received for the most part through the eyes and ears. If we rise from the regions of sense into those of soul, there we shall perceive studies and offices, actions and habits, sciences and virtues invested with a much larger portion of beauty. Whether there is above these a still higher beauty will appear as we advance in its investigation.

What is it which causes bodies to appear fair to the eye, sounds to the ear, and science and virtue lovely to the mind? After what manner do they partake of beauty? Is beauty one and the same in all? Is the beauty of bodies of one kind and the beauty of souls of another kind? What are they if they are two? Or what is beauty if it is perfectly simple and one?

Some bodies are beautiful by a kind of participation; others appear to be essentially beautiful in themselves—such is the nature of virtue. Some bodies appear beautiful to one person, but the reverse of beautiful to another.

What, then, by its presence causes the beauty of bodies? Perhaps a certain proportion of parts to each other and to the whole, with the addition of color, generates that beauty which is the object

of sight. If so, the compound only can be beautiful while the single parts will have no peculiar beauty. Yet it is necessary that a lovely whole should consist of beautiful parts, for the fair never can rise out of the deformed. From such a definition also it follows that beautiful colors and the light of the sun, since they are simple and do not receive their beauty from proportion, must be excluded from the regions of beauty.

Virtue is the beauty of the soul. But it has symmetry neither in magnitude nor in numbers. Since the parts of the soul are many, in what proportion and synthesis, in what temperament of parts, or in what concord of speculations does beauty consist?

Lastly, of what kind is the beauty of intellect itself, abstracted from every corporeal concern and intimately conversing with itself alone?

The beauty of bodies presents itself to sense. The soul familiarly apprehends it and eagerly embraces it as if it were allied to itself. When it perceives any object related to itself, even the mere vestige of a relation, it congratulates itself on the pleasing event. Astonished with the striking resemblance, the soul enters deep into its essence, and by rous-

ing its dormant powers, at length recollects its kindred and allies.

Body becomes beautiful through communion supernally proceeding from divinity. The soul by her innate power acknowledges this beauty of forms. Perhaps its knowledge arises from accommodating an internal ray of beauty to form, and trusting to this in its judgment. To the good man, virtue shining forth in youth is lovely because consonant to the true virtue which lies deep in the soul. The simple beauty of color arises when light, which is something incorporeal, entering the obscure involutions of matter, irradiates and forms its dark and formless nature.

But leaving every object of sense far behind, by a certain ascent we contemplate beauty of a much higher order—beauty not visible to the corporeal eye, but manifest alone to the brighter eye of the soul. Without some previous perception of beauty, it is impossible to express the beauties of sense in words. Neither can we speak of the beauties of offices and sciences if deprived of their intimate possession. Thus we never shall be able to tell of virtue's brightness unless by looking inward we perceive the fair countenance of justice and temperance.

It is requisite to perceive objects of this kind with that eye by which the soul beholds real beauties. Besides, it is necessary that whoever perceives this species of beauty should be seized with much greater delight and more vehement admiration than any corporeal beauty can excite—as now embracing real and substantial beauty. Such affections as admiration and sweet astonishment ought to be excited about true beauty; also desire, love, and pleasant trepidation. All souls are affected in this manner about invisible objects, but those the most who have the strongest propensity to their love; likewise all equally perceive beautiful corporeal forms, yet all are not equally excited, but lovers in the greatest degree.

It may be allowable to interrogate those who rise above sense concerning the effects of love. What does such an one suffer respecting fair studies, beauti-

ful manners, virtuous works, affections, habits, the beauty of souls? What does he experience on perceiving himself lovely within? After what manner is he roused to converse with himself and collect himself separate from the impediments of body?

Thus are true lovers enraptured. The cause is neither figure, nor color, nor magnitude, but soul herself, fair through temperance, with no false gloss of color, but bright with the splendors of virtue. This you experience as often as you turn your eye inwards or contemplate the amplitude of another soul. Just manners; pure temperance; fortitude venerable by her noble countenance, modesty, and honesty, walking with an intrepid step, and tranquil, steady aspect; and what crowns the beauty of them all, the constant irradiations of a divine intellect.

In what respect shall we call these beautiful? They are such as they appear; nor did ever any one behold them and not pronounce them realities. But reason desires to know how they cause the loveliness of the soul, and what that grace is in every virtue which beams forth to view like light.

Let us consider a soul deformed, intemperate, unjust, filled with a multitude of desires, a prey to foolish hopes, and vexed with idle fears. A soul engrossed in what is mortal and low possesses neither true life nor true sense, but is endued with a slender life through its mixture of evil, and this is worn out by the continual depredations of death. No longer perceiving the objects of mental vision, nor permitted any more to dwell with itself because ever hurried away to things obscure, external, low, it becomes impure as it is caught in the unceasing whirl of sensible forms. Covered with corporeal stains, it loses all its original splendor, and almost changes its own species into that of another.

The pristine beauty of the most lovely form would be destroyed by its total immersion in mire and clay. But the deformity of the soul arises from inward filth of its own contracting. If such an one desires to recover his former beauty, it is necessary to cleanse the infected

parts, and thus by a thorough purgation to resume his original form. The soul by her mixture, confusion and commerce with body and matter becomes base. The baseness of the soul consists in not being pure and sincere. Gold is deformed by the adherence of earthly clods; when these are removed the gold shines forth with its native purity—beautiful when separated from natures foreign to its own.

The soul, when separated from the sordid desires engendered by its too great immersion in body, and liberated from the dominion of every perturbation, blots out the base stains imbibed from its union with body. Becoming alone, it will expel all the turpitude contracted from a nature so opposite to its own.

The ancient oracle declared that temperance, fortitude, prudence, and every virtue are purgatives of the soul. True temperance does not indulge in corporeal delights, but flies from their connections as things which are neither pure nor the offspring of purity. True fortitude is not to fear death, for death is nothing more than a certain separation of soul from body—and he who desires to be alone will not fear this. Magnanimity is the contempt for every mortal concern; it is the wing by which we fly into the regions of intellect. Prudence is no other than intelligence declining subordinate objects and directing the eye of the soul to that which is immortal and divine.

The soul thus refined becomes altogether incorporeal and intellectual, and wholly participates of that divine nature which is the fountain of loveliness and of whatever is allied to the beautiful and fair. The soul reduced to intellect becomes astonishingly beautiful. As the lambent flame which appears detached from the burning wood enlightens its dark and smoky parts, so intellect irradiates and adorns the inferior powers of the soul which without its aid would be buried in the gloom of formless matter.

However, intellect, and whatever emanates from intellect, is not the sovereign but the proper ornament of the soul.

The beauty and good of the soul consist her similitude to deity from whence flow all her beauty and her allotment of better being.

But the beautiful itself is that which is called being. Perhaps the good and the beautiful are the same, and must be investigated by the same process. In the first rank we place the beautiful, good. From this immediately emanates intellect as beautiful. The soul receives its beauty from intellect. Every inferior beauty derives its origin from the forming power of the soul. Lastly, bodies themselves participate of beauty from the soul, which, as something divine and a portion of the beautiful itself, renders beautiful whatever it supervenes and subdues as far as its natural capacity will admit.

Let us therefore reascend to the good itself which every soul desires and wherein alone it can find perfect repose. If one shall become acquainted with this source of beauty, he will know after what manner he is beautiful. They alone pursue true good who rise to intelligible beauty, tending toward good itself so far as they lay aside the deformed vestments of matter with which they become connected in their descent. Those who penetrate into the holy retreats of sacred mysteries are first purified, and then divest themselves of their garments. One who by such a process has dismissed everything foreign from the God, by himself alone beholds the solitary principle of the universe, sincere, simple, pure, from which all things depend, and to whose transcendent perfection the eyes of all intelligent natures are directed as the proper cause of being, life, and intelligence.

With what ardent love, with what strong desire will he who enjoys this transporting vision be inflamed while becoming one with this supreme beauty! He who does not yet perceive it still desires it as good; but he who enjoys the vision is enraptured with its beauty, filled with admiration and delight, agitated with a salutary astonishment, affected with the highest and truest love. He derides vehement affections, inferior loves; and despises the beauty which he

once approved. Such, too, is the condition of those who, on perceiving the forms of gods or daemons, no longer esteem the fairest of corporeal forms.

What then must be the condition of that being who beholds the beautiful itself?—in itself perfectly pure, not confined by any corporeal bond, neither existing in the heavens nor in the earth, nor to be imaged by the most lovely forms imagination can conceive, for these are all mixed, mere secondary beauties proceeding from the beautiful itself. If one beholds that which is the source of munificence to others—remaining in itself while it communicates to all and receives nothing—and so abides in intuition as to become similar to its nature, what more of beauty can such an one desire? Such beauty, supreme in dignity and excellence, cannot fail of rendering its votaries lovely and fair.

To souls the object of contest is the highest beauty. We should strive for its acquisition with unabated ardor lest we be deprived of that blissful contemplation of the happy vision with which whoever pursues in the right way becomes blessed. He who does not obtain the vision is unavoidably unhappy. The miserable man is not he who neglects to pursue fair colors and beautiful corporeal forms; who is deprived of power, and falls from dominion and empire. The miserable man is he who is destitute of this divine possession for which the ample dominion of the earth and sea, and the still more extended empire of the heavens, must be relinquished and forgot. If we ever intend to arrive at substantial felicity by beholding the beautiful itself, we must despise and leave these far behind.

What measures, then shall we adopt? What machine employ? What reason consult by means of which we may contemplate this ineffable beauty that abides in the most divine sanctuary without ever proceeding from its sacred retreats lest it should be beheld by the profane and vulgar eyes?

We must enter deep into ourselves, leaving behind the objects of corporeal sight, the accustomed spectacles of sense.

It is necessary that whoever would

behold this beauty should withdraw his view from the fairest corporeal forms, convinced that these are nothing more than images, vestiges, and shadows derived from the fair original to which he would eagerly soar. He who rushes to these lower beauties as if to grasp realities instead of beautiful images appearing in water, by stretching after the shadow, will sink into the phantom lake and disappear. Embracing and adhering to corporeal forms, he is precipitated, not so much in his body as in his soul, into profound and horrid darkness. Then blind like those in the infernal regions, he may converse only with phantoms, deprived of the perception of what is real and true.

Closing the corporeal eye, we must stir up and assume a purer eye within—which all men possess, but which is used alone by a few.

What does this inward eye behold? Suddenly raised to intellectual vision, it cannot perceive an object exceeding bright. Therefore, the soul first must become accustomed to contemplate fair studies, and then beautiful works—not such as arise from the operations of art, but such as are the offspring of worthy men. After this is it necessary to view the soul which is the parent of this lovely race.

You may ask after what manner is this beauty of a worthy soul to be perceived?

It is thus. Recall your thoughts inward. If while contemplating yourself, you do not perceive yourself beautiful, imitate the sculptor who, when he desires a beautiful statue, cuts away what is superfluous, smooths and polishes what is rough, and never desists until he has given it all the beauty his art is able to effect. In this manner you must proceed by lopping what is luxuriant, directing what is oblique, and illustrating by purgation what is obscure. Thus continue to polish and beautify your statue until the divine splendor of virtue shines upon you, and temperance, seated in pure and holy majesty, rises to your view.

If you become thus purified: Residing in yourself—having nothing any longer

to impede unity of mind, no farther mixture to be found within—perceiving your whole self to be a true light, and light alone; a light which, though immense, is not measured by any magnitude, nor limited by any circumscribing figure, but is everywhere immeasurable as being greater than every measure and more excellent than every quantity.

If you perceive yourself thus improved, and trust solely to yourself as no longer requiring a guide, fix steadfastly your mental view. With the intellectual eye alone can such immense beauty be perceived.

But if your eye is yet infected with any sordid concern and not thoroughly refined, while it is on the stretch to behold this most shining spectacle, it will be immediately darkened and incapable of intuition — even though some one should declare the spectacle present which you might otherwise be able to discern.

It is necessary that the perceiver and the thing perceived be similar to each other before true vision can exist. The sensitive eye never can survey the orb

of the sun unless strongly endued with solar fire and participating largely of the vivid ray. Everyone must become divine and of godlike beauty before he can gaze upon a god and the beautiful itself.

Proceeding in the right way of beauty, he will first ascend into the region of intellect. Contemplating every fair species, he will perceive their beauty to be no other than ideas themselves. All things are made beautiful by the supervening irradiations of ideas because they are the offspring and essence of intellect. But that which is superior to these is the fountain of good everywhere widely diffusing around the streams of beauty. In discourse it is called the beautiful itself because beauty is its immediate offspring. But if you accurately distinguish the intelligible objects, you will call the beautiful the receptacle of ideas. The good itself, which is superior, you may call the fountain and principle of the beautiful. Or, you may place first the beautiful and the good in the same principle, independent of the beauty which there subsists.

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