

*by the same author*

CONCENTRATION AND MEDITATION

KARMA AND REBIRTH

WALK ON!

ZEN BUDDHISM

BUDDHISM  
*(Pelican)*

ZEN, A WAY OF LIFE

THE WISDOM OF BUDDHISM (Ed.)

THE WAY OF ACTION

ZEN COMES WEST

SIXTY YEARS OF BUDDHISM IN ENGLAND

THE BUDDHIST WAY OF LIFE

EXPLORING BUDDHISM

BUDDHIST POEMS

A POPULAR DICTIONARY OF BUDDHISM

CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS

*Studies in  
the Middle Way*

BEING THOUGHTS ON BUDDHISM APPLIED

*Fourth Edition*

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TO H. P. BLAVATSKY

*Who once more held the Light aloft  
that all with open eyes might see*

## THE ANSWER

Now sound the foolish drums of war,  
And muted death's autumnal song  
Wails in a darkened sky.  
Now fall the severed reins of law,  
And mercy, forfeit to the strong,  
Echoes the heart's unuttered cry,  
Lest many millioned right should die  
To prove a madman's wrong;  
While reason in the eagle's claw  
And truth before a closed door  
Demand, unanswered, why.

Only the All-Compassionate,  
Hater alone of human hate,  
Enlightened makes reply.

## PREFACE

THESE essays, written at different times and in different moods, are the outcome of experience in a field of thought which, curiously enough in a world which is overfull of -isms and -ologies, bears as yet no name. Including, as it does, religion, philosophy, mysticism, metaphysics, psychology and ethics, it may be described in the vague though useful phrase, the Inner Life. This, however, has two distinct though complementary meanings: the introverted life of contemplation and the extravert life of action in the world of men. These essays, being written for the West rather than for the East, deliberately stress the latter point of view, emphasizing the inner life as a constant moving on and the mover as a pilgrim travelling an ancient Way.

This Way, described in every religion and alluded to in every system of thought which deals with man, is a movement between those 'pairs of opposites' which seem to divide in two a Reality which is in essence One. This road to union was, therefore, called by Gautama the Buddha the Middle Way, which leads, as the Lama said in *Kim*, 'from desire to peace'. Yet Buddhism has no monopoly of Truth, for it is but a branch, though a mighty branch, of a Tree of Wisdom which antedates all known religions and will outlive them all. Its principles are to be found in Brahmanism and in the *Tao Tê Ching*, in the wisdom of Persia, and in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, while in living memory Mme Blavatsky, in *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of the Silence*, has offered the most complete compendium of the Wisdom which has yet been placed before the public eye.

It follows that these essays are not described by calling them Buddhism, or Theosophy, or any other name, for they spring from the author's experience and not from the textbooks of any one philosophy, nor, indeed, from a selective reading of them all. They therefore have no validity, much less authority, for anyone who does not for himself apply their principles, and find

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them to be true. No man can offer another more than a record of his own experience, and he who has not learnt to read these records with his 'inner eye' will read in vain. There is therefore no apology for lack of 'authority' for statements made, nor for illogical *non sequitur*, nor even for what to the reason appear as obvious discrepancies. These may be stumbling blocks to the marching boots of the intellect, but to the dancing feet of the intuition no more hindrance than a rainbow to the sun.

Much has been written in recent years on the inner life, and emphasis has therefore here been laid on principles and doctrines less well known than those, such as Karma and Rebirth, with which the Theosophical and Buddhist movements in the West have made most thinking men familiar.

I am grateful to the editors of *Buddhism in England*, the *Canadian Theosophist*, the *Maha Bodhi Journal*, the *Theosophical Forum*, and the *Review of Religions* for permission to reprint some of these essays, and to Miss Clare Cameron, the editor of *Buddhism in England*, for her able assistance in preparing this work for the press.

*April, 1940.*

## PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

SINCE this work was first published, Buddhism in Europe has expanded considerably; in the number of its schools represented, in the volume of works on the subject published, in the range of Buddhist organizations founded in various countries, and in the arrival of the Sangha, the Buddhist Order.

The history of this development may be found in my *Sixty Years of Buddhism in England* (1968). Suffice it here to say that it was the Theravada, the oldest surviving school of Buddhism, to be found in Ceylon, Burma and Thailand, which dominated the scene until 1927, when Dr. D. T. Suzuki's *Essays in Zen Buddhism* opened our eyes to the glories of the Mahayana schools of China, and above all the Rinzai Zen school of Japan. The vast range of metaphysics, mysticism, philosophy, psychology, morality and art to be found in these has hardly begun to be realised.

The Sinhalese, pioneer missionaries of their school for the last hundred years, opened a Vihara, or monastic centre, in London in 1925, led by that famous figure, the Anagarika Dharmapala, but this was closed down at the outbreak of the war. After the war, Thailand followed suit with the present large Vihara in East Sheen, opened in 1966, while that of the Sinhalese was moved from Knightsbridge to Chiswick. Soon after the tragedy of Tibet in 1959, Tibetan monasteries were opened in various parts of Europe, and a Soto Zen centre in the North of England. In London, Dr. Irmgard Schloegl is preparing the way for a Zen centre with her class at the Buddhist Society in Rinzai Zen training in which, after twelve years' study in Japan, she is a qualified Teacher. To these must be added the interesting experiment founded by the Ven. Sangharakshita of the Western Buddhist Order, an attempt to apply Eastern monastic ideals to Western life.

For all these monastic bases, and the increasing number of independent Buddhist societies, large and small, springing up in the British Isles, the Buddhist Society, founded in 1924, is



## *Preface to the Fourth Edition*

the Centre, open to all schools and all branches of the Sangha, and providing lectures, classes and books on every aspect of the field of Buddhism required.

Much of this new material found its way into the third edition of this work published in 1959, but this fourth edition still stands, it is claimed, as a sound description of the principles of what may be fairly claimed as 'Basic Buddhism', which is bound to be the doctrine of no one school. The Western mood of the day is to replace an outward God or Saviour with inward awareness, and dogma of any kind with actual experience. This experience comes, it seems, in the course of study, meditation and the application of the principles so digested to the littlest detail of the daily round.

I therefore offer this volume again as the fruits of my own experience, at the service of those who find these ideas of value on the same well-tested Middle Way.

*London, 1976*

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## *The Branches of the Tree*

It has been said that no man understands any one religion until he has studied two. It might be further said that no man understands any one religion until he has reasonably studied all, and compiled from them a 'common denominator' of essential principles. Finding that these essential principles underlie the teaching of every great religion and philosophy, though with different terminology and symbols and with different relative stress, the student will be in a position to perceive them in the religion under review, and so be enabled to winnow original teaching from historical accretion, the essential from the accidental, the Message from its interpretation. From this point of view religions are the different coloured sets of clothing with which men have endowed the naked Truth.

The impartial student, as distinguished from the partisan, will soon perceive that no religion is final, none unique, but that each is man's attempt to mould into a definite form the truths which some new Teacher taught his followers. Yet the stream of life will not be stayed in its course for man's convenience, and water dammed and stilled in its flow becomes increasingly impure. Hence the undying tradition of a 'Sudden Path' to Enlightenment which, ignoring form, whether of written Scripture, man-made ceremonial, or mental code, leaps straight to the life within. Brushing aside each barrier, from the visible hymnal to the subtlest habit of thought in which the mind can be ensnared, the trained indomitable will can swiftly achieve the freedom of its own re-found integrity. This is the Way of Zen, and to Zen practitioners even the noblest philosophy is but a snare and a delusion; yet the Way of Zen, like the higher flights of mysticism and the mysteries of Occultism is, and ever will be, for the few.

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Meanwhile, *sabbe sankhara anicca*, all compounded things are subject to the law of Change, and just as some religions died with the civilisation which gave them birth, so others are born to supply the needs of the ever-evolving human mind. Just as men outgrow the clothing of their bodies, and renew it as they feel the need, so religions are patched, or enlarged, or completely renewed, while the personal colour and cut remain. Then, it may be elsewhere or near at hand, a new style comes into fashion, with new ways of worshipping Reality, and yet new names for the Unnameable. Between them at any one time these various religions, from the crudest to the most refined, cover the globe, and every human being is born as heir to one of these religious uniforms. The individual is always at liberty, at least in his own mind, to change his uniform, but modern psychology, which is increasingly influenced by the doctrines of Karma and Rebirth, throws doubt upon the ease with which in fact a man may change his faith. It is easy enough to remodel the outward form and ceremony, and to adopt new names for the concepts which are common to all religions and philosophies; it is far more difficult, if possible at all, to change one's fundamental attitude to such basic facts as God and death and destiny. In the great crises of one's life, when text-book theories cease to avail, and the content of the mind, for what it is, stands nakedly revealed, it is the beliefs and desires of the unconscious rather than the conscious mind which dominate the hour. It is only in such times of crisis that a man may know the depth of his conversion, and discover why his new religion was assumed. Sometimes it is a garment for his moral nakedness, as a 'defence mechanism' against circumstances which he lacks the courage to control; sometimes it is but the passing intellectual interest of a dilettante mind. But, and here is the rare alternative, at times his 'new' religion is a returning home, the re-assumption of a garment laid aside when last he quitted earth, which, old though it be, still fits him better than that of his new parents, even though this be a later revelation of the same Reality.

Such cases are exceptions, and the vast majority of mankind are born and bred, grow old and die in the religion of their

## *The Branches of the Tree*

fathers. But just as the nations which between them own the earth are constantly at war in an effort to increase their respective spheres of influence, so, at least in the intolerant, pugnacious West, successive religions have ever been at war, with slogans, threats, and arguments, and, in the not so distant past, with curses, tortures, and the sword to win to their own ranks the souls of 'unbelievers'. It is to the credit of the East, on the other hand, that religious differences have ever been kept on the plane to which they belong, the mind. It is true that the warlike followers of Muhammad have backed persuasion with the sword, but in the world of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, with all the ramifications and amalgamations they contain, the body is regarded as the necessary instrument of self-expression, no more, and it would never occur to the most rabid exponent of a particular doctrine that physical violence would remove the stains of illusion perceived in another's mind. Polished argument, on the other hand, has always been accepted as a reasonable way of searching for, and learning how to tread the road to Truth. Even then, the purpose of argument is to remove the illusion from one's own mind, rather than to save one's neighbour from an ignorance-begotten hell; for the East refrains from interference in another's spiritual affairs, above all in the task of self-enlightenment.

It would be pleasant to think that in the West the cruder forms of religious and racial intolerance are on the wane, but the facts are otherwise. Even the Church of Rome, which claims to speak in the name of Jesus, still employs the 'sanctions' of solemn anathema upon its erring, or as others would say, independent-minded children, and the treatment of Jews in Europe springs from a pathological condition of the national mind. As against this, there is a tendency of late in the gentler countries for the pendulum of tolerance to swing too far the other way. Ever since the First World War there have been numerous meetings of 'representatives' of the great religions, convened to prove the identity of all religions, the theory being that a realization of a common Fatherhood will tend to allay all fratricidal enmity. But instead of taking the trouble to prove

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this alleged identity, most speakers content themselves with general observations which are as superficially attractive as they are blatantly untrue. All religions are *not* the same, as these well-meaning persons aver so complacently. It is true that when delegates from half a dozen religions have each spoken for ten minutes on a subject which would need a series of lectures to explain, the impression left on the audience is that of a flat similitude, but not thus will the roots of the tree which bears so many branches be made visible to men. It is true that all religions exhort their followers to right living, but true religion begins at a point where ethics have been largely satisfied. None may begin to tread the narrow way to self-enlightenment whose feet have not been 'washed in the blood of the heart', the blood which flows so freely and so painfully while self is being slain.

Ethics are not the common denominator of religions, nor is a nebulous belief in 'God'. The source of all religions is Religion, a body of wisdom which antedates all its extant and prehistoric forms. This Wisdom-Religion has itself borne many names. In the third century A.D. Ammonius Saccas, in proclaiming the principles of his 'Eclectic Philosophy', called them Theosophia, the Wisdom of the Gods. This was the name adopted by H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott when they founded the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875, and the principles to be found in the former's *Secret Doctrine* are probably the finest presentation of the Wisdom now in print. As Madame Blavatsky wrote in the Preface: 'This book is not the Secret Doctrine in its entirety, but a select number of fragments of its fundamental tenets,' which 'belong to neither the Hindu, the Zoroastrian, the Chaldean, nor the Egyptian religion, neither to Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, nor Christianity exclusively. The Secret Doctrine is the essence of all these . . . ' The Wisdom has its Guardians, known in many countries by many names, but whether revered as Rishis, Masters, Mahatmas, Arhats, Elder Brothers, or the Ancient Ones, they form a hierarchy of perfection, and of this hierarchy the esoteric tradition proclaims that the holder of the office of Buddha, the Enlightened One, is head. While lesser members of this oldest of all Orders come forth

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from time to time as men have need of them, 'rare indeed is a Buddha, rare as the flower of the Vogay tree'. Yet the present Buddha of humanity, the 'Patron of the Adepts', attained his final human Enlightenment on earth but a few years ago, as the Wisdom reckons time, and was known to men as Gautama Siddhartha, who was born a prince of the Sakya clan in Northern India in the sixth century B.C. Not since then has any man taught the Wisdom with a voice so worthy to be heard, and it is interesting to note that of all extant religious Scriptures, those of Mahayana Buddhism most nearly approximate to the principles of the Secret Doctrine last offered to the world by the same undying Order through the pen of 'H.P.B.' It is, therefore, not surprising to learn that in the early days of the Theosophical Movement, friends and enemies alike confused Theosophy with Buddhism, and space had to be given, both in the Introduction to *The Secret Doctrine* and in the first chapter of *The Key to Theosophy*, to proving the difference between Buddhism, the science of *Bodhi*, Wisdom, the Gupta Vidya of the ancient Brahmins, and Buddhism, the exoteric religion built up by men about their understanding of such Bodhi as was given them by the All-Enlightened One. But Theosophy, though already distorted sadly in certain of its present schools, has yet to acquire the compensating advantages produced by the mellowing hand of time. This may explain why thousands of Western men and women, who, though born and reared in the mould of Christianity, have wearied of its limitations, turn for relief, not to the Wisdom-Religion in its latest form, but rather to Buddhism, one of the largest, noblest of record and least defiled of the great religions of mankind.

Why do they choose Buddhism rather than any other of the varied coloured suits of clothing with which they could endow the mind? The answer must vary with the individual, but the experience of those who lead the Buddhist Movement in England has shown that the answer is generally one or more of the following. In the first place, many are drawn to Buddhism by the operation of the laws upon which its philosophy is founded, the doctrines of Karma and Rebirth. The unwritten tradition of



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the East records an average of twelve to fifteen hundred years as the period spent by a cultured thinking person between two lives, during which he digests in a subjective state the lessons of the life gone by. Two such periods would bridge the gap between the days when those who had heard the Buddha's Teaching were spreading it far and wide, or hearing it proclaimed in distant lands, and modern times, when more and more 'proclaimers of the Way' have brought to the West the Message of the All-Enlightened One, and an increasing number of Western minds have eagerly accepted it. This may explain why many of us, hearing a lecture or reading a book on Buddhism for the first time, joyfully accept its principles in their entirety, and recognize the aroma of the Buddhist life as a beloved memory suddenly revived. To those, and they are not a few, who meet with this experience, the following answers are superfluous.

We live in a time when consciousness has suddenly enlarged its frontiers, and in the vast new areas of thought thus made available the blinkers of our previous way of reasoning are flung aside. To those who cannot believe that life ends in the body's grave, save for an undeserved 'eternity' of Heaven, the size of the canvas on which the Buddhist view of life is painted, and the scope and grandeur of its all but limitless ideal, have an immense appeal. Our span of life, no longer bounded by the brief uncertainty of the body's clay, expands into a timeless Now, in which the incalculable past projects its light and shadow on to unnumbered days to come. Throughout this timeless, joyous pilgrimage man is the sole creator of his past and present, and the sole designer of his destiny. For the first time the Western pilgrim understands that he can and must decide not only the road he treads but the speed at which he treads it, and only when this knowledge has filled his newly expanded mind will he abandon querulous complaint that he is not other than he is, and find his place in the mighty scheme of things. If there is terror in this new-found freedom, yet there is joy in it, and a dignity and a poise unknown before.

For a thousand years or more the West has been fettered with authority. For long this bogey appeared in the robes of Rome;

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now Science has taken the mantle from the failing hand of Religion, and loudly cries, for all its parade of modesty: 'Science has spoken; there is no more to be said.' But whatever the forms in which authority has sought to fetter the mind of man, the Buddhist bows to none of them. It is obvious that the individual must obey the laws laid down for the welfare of the community, but whatever a Government may say as to our food and clothing, housing and behaviour, and generally as to the disposition of our lives, even to their ending, the mind of man, if he so wills, is thereby unaffected, and nought that any Government can say or do can affect his inward pilgrimage. Again and again the Buddha insisted that no teaching is of the slightest authority to the individual until it had been tested in the fires of personal experience, found to accord with reason and common sense, and been intuitively ratified as true. Thereafter it ceases to be 'authority', and becomes for that individual a part of his own enlightenment. The Buddha's dying words still ring down the centuries in their timeless wisdom: 'Work out your *own* salvation, with diligence.'

It is of interest to note that the Rationalist movement has from the first evinced great interest in the philosophy of Buddhism. Its members find in the Buddha's teaching welcome support for their own revolt against the pseudo-mystical theism of the nineteenth century, and consider that it bears out their own attempt to approach truth through an agnostic use of reason alone. From a slightly different point of view, the 'sweet reasonableness' of the Buddha's teaching seems to appeal to the Anglo-Saxon mind, for, as already pointed out, it knows nought of authority, nor does it countenance the actions, predictable or otherwise, of an extra-cosmic God. In the same way Buddhism accords with Science, in the sense that it argues from the known to the unknown, and looks upon such principles as must, at the beginning, be accepted upon faith merely as working hypotheses for the individual to prove or disprove in the course of his own experience.

Finally, there are many who find in the Buddha-Dhamma at once a noble religion, a moral code based on the inmost heart's

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compassion, and a practical philosophy for daily life. In the language of the vernacular, 'it works'. It begins with life as we know it, analyzes its nature, and describes in detail a path to better things. It produces a delicate balance between all extremes, and fosters the all too rare capacity for minding one's own business. On the one hand, its conception of universal compassion for *all* forms of life, based on a realization of the common source from which they spring, has never been equalled; on the other hand, it stresses the importance of a sympathetic tolerance of others' right to find their own way to the common Goal. In the twin doctrines of Karma and Rebirth the Western mind discovers an enlargement of mental horizon, an increased sense of self-respect, as of one who is master of his own destiny, and an expression in daily life of what Giordano Bruno called the Higher Justice, that is to say, a law of life which operates on every plane to bind as one a cause and its effect. Add to these various ingredients the history of a religion which has never yet shed blood in the name of its Founder, has produced the art of China and the spiritual culture of Japan, together with an unrivalled equality of the sexes and the maximum of personal freedom, and it is not surprising that Buddhism, the largest and one of the oldest of the world's religions, should capture the attention of an ever-increasing number of Western minds.

The Buddhist movement in the West deserves, and has received, a brief volume to itself.<sup>1</sup> During the latter half of last century many of the Scriptures of the Theravada or Southern School were made available to English readers, and in due course text-books, based upon these Scriptures, began to appear. For many years, however, interest in the Buddha-Dhamma was confined to scholars, who studied it objectively with other modes of thought. The same applied to the first translations from the Scriptures of the Mahayana, or Northern School, which reached the West much later, and it was not until 1908 that Ananda Metteyya, a fully ordained Bhikkhu of the Buddhist Brotherhood, brought Buddhism to his native England as one of the

<sup>1</sup>*Sixty Years of Buddhism In England (1907-1967)*. Christmas Humphreys.

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living religions of mankind. In preparation for his coming the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland was formed for the study of Pali and Buddhist principles, and the work which Ananda Metteyya founded in this country has been carried on by others ever since. But it has never been the policy of English Buddhists to convert the English, or even a large proportion of them, to the Buddhist faith. A Buddhist is concerned with the attainment of Enlightenment, and Enlightenment is a state of consciousness which is unaffected by a change of name. The fact that an individual proclaims himself 'converted' is no one's business but his own. At the same time, being naturally desirous of making known to others the truths which he has found to bring increased enlightenment, the Buddhist offers his fellow men the wherewithal for the same development. With those contented with their own religion he is not concerned, but there are thousands in the West today who feel the need of a nobler mode of living than the materialism of modern life provides, and as the easiest way to assist these hungry minds is through the printed word, an ever-increasing quantity of Buddhist literature is demanded and provided year by year. The number of those who study these ancient laws of life can only be gauged by the amount of literature upon the subject sold, but such is the quantity that it is not surprising to find that the effect of Buddhist principles on Western thought is increasing annually. Christianity, it seems, has had its day, and it may be that before this century has run its course another world religion will be founded by another Messenger. Meanwhile, the East is fast absorbing the science of the West. Is it not reasonable that the West should learn to study and apply the spiritual Wisdom of the East?

In the following pages a little of that Wisdom may be found by those who, having eyes, have learned to see.

## A ROSE IS ABSOLUTE

A rose is absolute; not evidence  
To man of life's impermanence,  
That all that grows must fade and fall.  
It is a rose, a scented absolute,  
Itself entire, and not a mute  
Appointed symbol of the All.

I too am absolute, that silent stare  
Intense of will, importunate  
Until with voided mind, heart-consummate,  
Sudden I shall be wide aware  
And know, as all creation knows—  
A rose is absolute, and I the rose.

## II

### *The River of Becoming*

It is odd,' said Max Born in *The Restless Universe*, 'to think that there is a word for something which, strictly speaking, does not exist, namely, rest.' Rest, in fact, is merely slightly less activity, for even that which is to the senses 'still' is moving at tremendous speed in space.

*Sabbe sankhara anicca*, said Gautama the Buddha. Truly all compounded things, all 'aggregates'—and science has yet found nothing 'pure'—are subject to *anicca*, change. Our senses tell us that our bodies change each moment of the day from birth to death. So do our clothes and furniture, our friends and habits, and our means of livelihood. So do our larger selves, our clubs and circles and societies; so does the nation and the race to which we belong. Even the 'everlasting hills' are subject to *anicca*, and the world we live in and the sun which gives it life had sometime a beginning and will ultimately die. No less does the law of change embrace comparatively immaterial things. Our loves and hates, our joys and fears are as changing as the weather; and thoughts, when analyzed in terms of consciousness, are found to be more fleeting still. The Indian philosophers who developed the message of the Buddha into a system of philosophy carried the process of self-analysis to extremes, but they certainly proved, two thousand years before the Western science of psychology was born, that that which alone entitles man to say of himself 'I am', his consciousness, is itself impermanent.

The process of thought is a process in all its parts. Just as the countless pictures which comprise a film are thrown on the screen by a powerful light, so consciousness makes visible the endless stream of thoughts which pass at immense speed through the mind. Yet this projecting light itself arises from

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successive flashes of life, in this case known as electricity, which alternate between the poles which in the East are called the Pairs of Opposites.

Again, just as the personality, including consciousness, is a changing aggregate of changing parts, so is the soul, or character, the elusive factor which gives meaning to the whole. As Emerson wrote, 'the soul of man may not sleep, but must live incessant. Not in his goals but in his transitions, Man is great; and the truest state of mind rested in, becomes false'. In truth, 'there is no abiding principle in man'.

The metaphysical basis of *anicca* lies in that primordial Duality which is the highest conceivable aspect of the ONENESS which, as the first expression of the Absolute, it is foolish to attempt to name. As H. P. Blavatsky points out in *The Secret Doctrine*, this 'Be-ness' can be symbolized under two aspects—absolute abstract Space, the father of all form, and absolute abstract Motion, which is unconditioned Consciousness. Hence the essence of Life is movement, and form is but the robe of life. These primal ultimates, Life and Form, are the warp and weft of the changing pattern of existence, and the complexity of their relationship informs the littlest aspect of the daily round. The movement of form is circular; the form of life is perpendicular; and these two symbols are the parents of all others yet devised by man. The cycle of form is invariable, moving from birth through growth to maturity, and thence through decay to death. Life, on the other hand, has two directions, up or down, moving either to More or Less, towards its periodic Source, or from it. These two symbols, the circle and the line, respectively female and male, are the two modes of manifestation. Inspired by the upward movement of the line, the circle strives to rise, and its efforts form a spiral, the symbol of progress. The inter-relation of these symbols reveals an infinitely complex flux of becoming, in which Life, the immortal, ceaselessly builds and uses, discards and destroys the forms essential to its self-expression. For the Life-force is the manifestation of that absolute, abstract Motion which is the creative aspect of the Absolute, even as absolute, abstract Space is reflected downwards in the matter which is

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Spirit's complement. These two, which yet are one, are thus the first and last of the 'Pairs of Opposites'. Life, the superabundant, passionless, relentless, onward flow, is meaningless, unmanifest, invisible without the resisting, and therefore moulding limitations of its other aspect, form. Yet because Life is movement and movement involves change, it is rightly said that Life is a becoming and progress a becoming more. Wherefore the wise man welcomes Life with open arms, and cries to himself and all awakened to their destiny—'Walk On,' and then, 'Walk On,' and then again, 'Walk On'!

The law of change implies that no man is the owner of anything. At the most he can possess, yet is it truer to say that by certain articles and thoughts he is possessed. All this is foolishness. As the Tibetans say: 'Seeing that when we die we must depart empty-handed, and the morrow after our death our corpse is expelled from our own house, it is useless to labour and to suffer privations in order to make for oneself a home in this world.' All of which Akbar expressed more pithily in saying: 'Life is a bridge. Pass over it, but build no house on it.'

But just as it is futile to covet or over-value personal possessions, whether wealth or titles, knowledge or ideals, so is it futile to attempt to preserve unchanged existing forms, whether of art or social structure, education or the inter-relations of mankind. He who refuses to swim with the stream will be flung on the shore, from which with helpless, angry eyes he will watch the stream of life flow by. Life moves from what it is to what it wills to be. All that exists must die, by reason of the fact that it has come to being. Hence the truism—the cause of death is birth.

Life is limitless and therefore fills all forms. It fills and uses alike an atom or a solar system, and goes on fulfilling itself within that form, and thereby filling that form, until the moment of repletion bursts it; and while the life is released to inform a new and finer vehicle, the older form, as form, forever dies. Thus Life is the cause of death, and in its killing builds anew. But the paradox remains that form is inconceivable apart from Life. The very form when dead is still alive, and expressing



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the same Life in another form; hence the truth of the tremendous principle—There is no death.

Life, the resistless, works through an infinite complexity of forms, one of the most potent being principles. A principle is as much a force as the Niagara Falls, and far more dangerous; the latter can only crush men's bodies, while the former can slay men's minds. Yet a man of principle is a man alive, attuned to the flow of life and not its forms. The principle of Truth, for example, is the Absolute made manifest subjectively; the principle of Good is the Absolute in its objective form, while Beauty is the principle of true relationship, the invisible third factor which enables the mind to perceive and understand the unity behind the many. To the man of form the relationship between the parts of 'things' is meaningless, without significance. To the man of principle the correspondence of the form's design to the pattern of the Universe produces Beauty, which is Life made manifest in the design of form.

Thus Life and Form, the ultimate antitheses, unthinkable apart are unified in Beauty, their true relationship. To the aggregation of such forms there is no end. Even a broken egg-shell is composed of forms of life of delicate perfection, and these in turn consist of countless atoms, each elaborately built about a central focus which, in the last analysis, is only a form of force. Thus form, when driven to the wall, reveals itself as Life, even as Life, in the subtlest guise we can measure it, is the subject of unvarying laws of wave-length, range and potency, which are in fact the attributes of form.

All man's material productions are the child of thought, the creative process of the mind, even as the forms of nature are the product of the Universal Mind. As the Patriarch Hui Neng proclaimed: 'The essence of Mind is intrinsically pure; all things, good or evil, are only its manifestations, and good deeds and evil deeds are only the result of good thoughts and evil thoughts respectively.' One of the oldest Buddhist Scriptures opens with the words: 'All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts', and recently Sir James Jeans wrote: 'Mind no

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longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that it is the creator and governor of matter.' Thus every act, which is of the realm of matter, was born of an idea. It is therefore a thought-form, that is to say, a life-form. All facts are equally mind-begotten, and alike have no importance. What matters is their significance, and this pertains to the realm of spirit, which is Life.

The world of life is the world of causes; facts, events and circumstances are effects. The wise man, therefore, pays immense attention to all causes, basing them on principle, and leaves with confidence the law of Karma to take care of the effects. These effects are subject to the laws of form, and one is the law of cycles, of periodicity, of flux and reflux, ebb and flow. These cycles do not move in circles, but themselves obey the law of progress, which raises the circle into a spiral, as already described. It has been noted that a given point in a wheel, after making a complete revolution of descent and ascent, moves on again from its starting point, but the next revolution takes it so much further along the road. Men and movements, empires and ideas are born and die, and are then reborn again according to the cyclic law which brings them back, not to the same point on the circle, but to a point directly above it; for though the pendulum of form swings evenly, Life has its own purpose, and steadily raises the whole towards its own essential mystery. For the purpose of Life is becoming, a re-becoming of itself, with something gathered from the process of becoming which was not manifest before. In blind obedience to this inner law man climbs the mountain step by step, content, if he is wise, with an ever-receding ideal, for an end achieved is dust and ashes in the mouth; only the climbing is worth while. Achievement is at the best a pause for breath on the upward climb, for Life allows no halting, and ever cries from higher up the hill—'Walk On!'

Thus Life is a relentless movement, blending its ever-changing forms in a vast kaleidoscope. Through all three planes of body, mind, and spiritual becoming, in three dimensions and the illusion we call time, Life moves unceasingly, and every form exists or perishes according to its sovereign will. The fool resists

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the process of becoming, but the wise man plunges into the river joyously, abandoning the foolish quest for certainty in a restless world of change. He would say with the late Mr. Edmond Holmes in one of his *Sonnets to the Universe*:

‘I find life’s treasure in this endless quest,  
And peace of mind in infinite unrest.’

The fearful man objects that life is merciless. It is, and rightly so, for mercy is a quality invented by the human mind to supply the deficiencies of human judgment and of man-made law. The laws of Life are perfect, and dispassionately just. Life recks not of the individual, who either obeys its laws and moves to the ever More, or resists the flow and is crushed accordingly. If the whole of self be opened with a willingness and yearning to be filled, Life the superabundant will reply unstintingly, but if the gates of self be closed, the pressure at the gates will rise and rise until the resister yields at last to the Beauty-Wisdom-Love that seeks to enter in. Then will Life so fill the form that it will shatter it, only to build a palace more commodious, and when its gates in turn are closed with selfishness, lay siege to them anew. Not until no self remains that can be filled does the individual cease from suffering; only when the resistant self has died for ever is the Self revealed which rides the River of Becoming onward to the Shoreless Sea.

## ALL THAT IS DONE

All that is done has died, is dead.  
Thought, that of life so lightly wrought  
The soon unloved and bartered robe of things,  
Our cold and spent imaginings,  
Dies in the hour when life and substance wed.

The river of life has no remembering.  
A truth embodied falls to the river bed.  
Life on the heart's uprising wings  
Flows onward, outward, soars and sings,  
Floods the loud orbit of the earth and sky  
With turmoil of immediacy.  
No thing shall stay that onward flow  
And every self, resistant, still shall know  
The wounds of suffering and die,  
Nor stain the lightless fields of memory.

The past, by mind from matter bred  
Is but a cold museum of the dead.

### III

## *Deny Nothing—Affirm All*

to deny anything is to state: 'I am not that.' This affirmation expresses a duality in the thinker's consciousness between himself and that, whatever that may be, yet this assumption is the gravest error known to Eastern thought, the heresy of separateness.

The wise man learns to deny nothing and to affirm, by unconditional acceptance, all. To say, in terms or inferentially, 'This is not that,' though relatively reasonable, is basically untrue. At the heart of things is a Reality beyond description, for it is beyond the reach of the intellect. We know that it is Unity, an all-embracing wholeness from which nothing is left outside. It follows that 'all duality is falsely imagined', yet so long as the mind confines itself to intellectual reasoning it is bound by the limitations of dualistic thought. All that we know of anything is that it is not this and it is not that. We gain experience in terms of pairs of opposites, and because we know of the qualities of largeness, hardness, heaviness and heat we can describe a thing by saying that it is small and soft and light and cold. Of the countless pairs of opposites used by the mind to acquire experience, one is the self and the not-self, and modern psychology concerns itself, beyond all else, with this duality. This mental process is a convenient, and for the first stage on the Path the only way in which man can acquire experience, but the time comes when the growing mind must realize that it is but a convention of consciousness, and therefore without ultimate validity. *Sabbe sankhara anatta*; there is no Self in man or in any compounded thing which is not part of a greater Unity. The sense of separateness is the Great Illusion, and the father of all self-ishness. To deny anything is to attempt to expel it from the circle of consciousness, but that which is not admitted does

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not thereby die. The aspects of that Unity which self denies live on, and later prowl, like hungry wolves, on the edge of consciousness. Nothing denied can be understood, and these unformulated facts breed fear. A patient of Professor Jung has ably voiced a great discovery: 'I always thought that when we accept things they overpower us in one way or another. Now this is not true at all, and it is only by accepting things that one can define an attitude towards them.' It is the refusal to accept things, and the delusion that because they are unaccepted they are no longer there, that wraps the thinker closer in the lesser self of his own building and leads, when carried to excess, to schizophrenia, a splitting of the mind which is rightly called insanity. The causes may be various, but their basis is a thrusting or keeping out of consciousness of parts of the self ashamed of, or for other reasons undesired. Unwilling, to the point of frenzy, to admit that things are what they are, whether of thought or circumstance, the deluded patient builds a barrier between the self admitted and the self denied, and retires into a world of phantasy. The motive for this partitioning is the will to escape from the unacceptable aspects of the mind, and there is an amazing range of this escape technique. In the same way, when circumstances, the 'larger self', are more than the mind has strength to face, the individual either creates for himself a world of day-dreams, where he need but accept the creatures and conditions of his own imagining, or else finds in material phantasies the alternatives to hard 'reality'. Some for this purpose use the stories of the screen or those in novels, and for countless minds these mass-produced alternatives to life's 'realities' become as necessary as the drink or drugs with which a different temperament tries to create oblivion.

In the same way, many a man who accepted life as he found it until middle-age, retires as soon as funds permit to indulge the phantasies which seemed to him, while still at work, so infinitely preferable. Yet when he does retire, he often finds his leisure strangely sterile, and cannot believe, as his health and vigour leave him, that whereas his work, however material, was at least carried out 'with all the whole soul's will', the life of retirement

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is a life of illusion in which, unless other interests demanding his whole vigour are adopted speedily, the strain between fact and phantasy will tear the self in two. Of the same type, but more violent because unexpected, are the mental splittings created by those who run from a threatened danger to their lives. The European crisis of September, 1938, produced a remarkable crop of temporary schizophrenia. Some people shut themselves up in their daily occupations and refused to face the proximity of war, even refusing to read the news of its approach; others, who could not face the horrors of a war they thought was imminent, fled to the depths of the country, not, as they claimed, to protect their bodies, but to save intact their minds. Many of both these types, when the crisis was safely over, were physically ill; such was the visible working out of the mental strain created by the mind's denial.

Some men escape from the world of men for life. Of those who retire to monasteries, therein to exclude themselves from the world, many are no doubt genuinely seeking the self-realization which they do not think can be found in the distractions of daily life, but others desire to escape from worldly problems which they found insoluble. Yet no man can run away from life and find it. Only in possession of all his principles, and with the experience gained in each, can a man achieve self-realization in its perfect form. Just as the mind must face each aspect of its existence and know it as its own, so must the body face its own temptations and problems among those of its fellow men. True, from time to time we all need rest and recreation, and for the mind to retire within itself in silent self-communion is as necessary as sleep to the physical vehicle, but not in the mountain fastness of this spiritual calm will the battle be won. As soon as the warrior is rested he must return to the battlefield, renewed in his sense of wholeness with his highest principles, to fight anew. More than this is refusal to accept reality, and the cause of the flight is fear. We run from that which we fear, and not from that we despise. If we have no fear of life, why should we strive to leave it? We deny, then, that which we fear to accept as true, in ignorance of the splendid affirmation, 'I am THAT'.

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From this deluded habit of the mind has sprung the wealth of poetry wherein the fearful, trembling soul flees from the call of the Beloved. It was denial, born of fear and ignorance, which caused the timorous soul in Thompson's *Hound of Heaven* to fly from its own immensity.

'I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;  
I fled Him down the arches of the years;  
I fled Him down the labyrinthine ways  
Of my own mind . . . .  
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.'

And the voice of the Whole spoke to the trembling part:

'All which I took from thee I did but take,  
Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.'

He who denies the littlest part of Life denies the all and thereby denies his spiritual parentage. It is a popular belief that ostriches, on seeing an enemy, hide their heads in the sand, and imagine that, being themselves unable to see, they therefore cannot be seen. We do the same with our sins and blunders, and the problems we have set ourselves, but cannot solve. And yet when Karma, the dispassionate principle of cause-effect, presents the reckoning of our deeds of ignorance, some part of our foolish mind perceives the enemy, and knows it for what it is, and when the rest of consciousness deliberately thrusts this knowledge in the sand and pretends to itself that, having seen no enemy, there is no enemy to be faced, the conflict arising in the mind from this self-deceit leaves little energy for fighting the common foe. The refusal to admit that the enemy exists is caused by fear, and fear is the child of selfishness or ignorance. As selfishness itself is caused by ignorance of the fact that life is indivisible, it may be said that ignorance is the basis of all fear. We deny, therefore, because we fear to admit, and we fear to admit because we know not the nature of that which seeks admittance, that it is but part of ourselves.

To accept is the first step on the way to affirm. Acceptance may be reluctant, and is apt to be negative, whereas to affirm is a cheerful admission that the accepted fact is an integral part



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of the self affirming. Yet to affirm is not the same as to approve. We may affirm an action and yet be ashamed of it, but so long as we readily admit responsibility for the act affirmed, however despicable, the self retains its integrity, and can still move forward as a whole to better things. A sense of discrimination is a vital factor in applying the moral sense to experience, for the value of a fact, as distinct from its nature, is something added by the mind. Thus, to admit the nature of one's past life is to face a fact; to decide that it has been 'good' or 'ill' is valuation added to experience. One may either approve or deplore the facts admitted, and the function of valuation, which approves or deplores, pertains to the life side of the mind. As such, it is beyond the reach of ancient or modern psychology, for facts are forms, but value, or meaning, is life. Matter and spirit are ultimately one, but in manifestation they are antitheses, and life, like the winds of heaven, dies in a lecture room. It follows that optimism and pessimism are alike unhealthy forms of phantasy, for the one undervalues and the other overrates experience. The wise man, therefore, values honestly, and accepts experience at the value found.

Those who have studied Evans-Wentz' *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines* will find in the 'Precepts of the Gurus' much of the material now being rediscovered by the Western science of psychology. Among these Precepts there is a section on the Ten Things not to be Avoided. These include: 'Ideas, being the radiance of the mind,' 'Obscuring Passions, being the means of reminding one of Divine Wisdom,' and 'Affluence, being the manure and water for spiritual growth', this, no doubt, being added to curb the desire for ascetism as a way of enlightenment. Then comes 'Illness and Tribulations, being teachers of piety', 'Enemies and Misfortunes, being the means of inclining one to a religious career', and finally, 'The Thought of helping others', however limited one's abilities to help may be. A strange companionship, yet representative of the vast variety of human experience, all of which must finally be accepted and affirmed. Debts of every kind, for example, must be at once admitted and faithfully discharged. Cause and effect are equal and opposite,

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not merely in the laboratory, but in the mind, and every effect returns to the point of its causation for the adjustment of the balance which the act or thought disturbed. Cause and effect are as the two sides of a coin, save that, owing to the illusion of time, our consciousness is only able to cognize them separately. The wise man knows that by using the law of Karma he may deliberately 'acquire merit' for himself in lives to come by performing deeds of which the effect is happiness. Yet is it far more important in the great quest for enlightenment to pay off at once and willingly the debts of error, for nature demands exorbitant interest on all bills overdue. As Dr Jung points out: 'The veil of Maya cannot be lifted by a mere decision of reason, but demands the most thorough-going and wearisome preparation consisting in the right payment of all debts to life.' Even the payment of money-debts is important in the growth of character, for money is the blood of the body corporate, and to deprive the bloodstream of its due is to injure the larger self in which, and by the grace of which, the body lives. Still more important are the debts of mind—all undertakings, vows and promises, however rashly made. Even if the making of the debt be later regretted, yet it was made, and must be honoured utterly, accompanied, maybe, with a resolve to be more careful about debt-creation in the days to come. All possessions are apt to create fetters in the mind. Wherefore the wise man pays his debts, and more, unstintingly. There was a Man of Nazareth who said: 'If any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also, and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow turn not away.' When all is said and done, life is a process of the soul's deliverance, and 'What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' Debts are fetters. Wherefore break them. For love give love, and love for hate, for in the words of the All-Compassionate One, 'Hatred ceaseth not by hatred, hatred ceaseth but by love'. Refuse no application lightly, and never refuse a claim. That which claims is a part of yourself in greater need, and the need that waits your filling is your own.

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An appointment is a debt of honour. He who incurred the debt should pay it punctually; else should it not have been made. He who in life keeps faith with life will not fear to keep faith with death. 'I have a rendezvous with death,' wrote Alan Seeger in the trenches, a few weeks before he died.

'And I to my pledged word am true,  
I shall not fail that rendezvous.'

To affirm is to liberate; to refuse is to be bound. Wherefore avoid all fetters and be free. Above all, learn to accept responsibility when offered. What right have you to refuse? An offer is made. Affirm it promptly, and the powers of the mind will grow to the newborn need. To refuse to accept responsibility is to ignore the hand outstretched from the rock above you. Grasp the hand and climb. The grounds for refusal are fear, or else false modesty, a compound, usually, of laziness and self-deceit. An offer of responsibility is an opportunity earned by past endeavour. The opportunity is Nature's payment of a debt incurred. Refuse it, and the payment has none the less been made by the debtor, while the creditor has let the opportunity go by.

Duties are the debts we owe, and rights the payments due to us. Yet the wise man is so occupied with the performance of all duty that he has no time to claim his rights. A man inherits at the threshold of each life the debts of all his past, but this, his Karma, is more than can be handled in one life. Such portion of the debt as can be liquidated in the life to come is the Dharma of that life, his duty, which, if faithfully performed, will leave him stronger to perform the duty of such further lives as must be lived ere the last of his fetters falls at the threshold of Enlightenment. Much follows from an understanding of this doctrine, and a great content. No man is given a burden heavier than his strength will bear; conversely, all experience offered and all debts presented, on whatever plane, are due for payment when presented, and the debtor always has, if he only knows it, the wherewithal to pay. It may be that his mental and physical make-up and his field of circumstance seem to offer a painfully limited scope for such repayment, but the digestion of all Karma

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is effected by the right attitude of mind, and the will to affirm will itself dissolve the problems of the daily round.

Deny nothing; affirm all. Life is, and we are part of it. Wherefore run to meet it with open hands and heart. The Christian mystic calls this attitude a surrender of the will to God. Geraldine Coster calls it 'sitting loose to life', and Jung translates the Taoist doctrine of *wu-wei* as learning 'to let things happen', which he describes as 'a real art of which few people know anything. Consciousness is forever interfering, helping, correcting, and negating, and never leaving the simple growth of the psychic processes in peace'. Nor is the average mind content to leave other people's growth in peace, yet tolerance in its noblest sense is far more than conceding an opinion or a course of conduct with which one does not agree. In the infinite complexity of inner growth almost anything is right for someone at some time and in some circumstances. Where is the man who claims to judge what is right and wrong for another according to *his* needs?

Whatever is, is right, for someone. True tolerance is a form of charity, not in the Christian sense, which, as Keyserling points out, 'means wishing to do good; in the Buddhist sense it means wanting to let everyone come into his own at his own level', which implies in turn a 'sympathetic understanding for the positive qualities of every condition', affirming them as right for that individual. He is a brave man who can realize that all that is, is right, yet so it is in the eyes of THAT, the eternal Namelessness.

The doctrine of acceptance is beyond the reach of justice as conceived by man. The wise man learns to accept all blame, though he be blameless, and suffering he knows he has not earned. Yet it is harder still for some to accept an offer of assistance, for pride is the last of the fetters to fall. It may be more blessed to give than to receive; it is certainly much easier. There is a difficult technique to learn in charity, both in finding a way of giving without condescension and in learning to ask and to receive in such a way that love is thereby strengthened, and not made forfeit to the gift.

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Life is the greatest of all givers; meet life with open hands. All that it has is yours of right for the taking, and none shall take it from you unless you strive to keep it for yourself alone. Life denies nothing, and offers all. There's beauty in the world, and silence, and love that laughs at hate. There's wisdom, too, that calls to folly and makes folly wise. They wait alike the mind's acceptance, and the open heart that, taking all life in its keeping, makes its owner say, as Thoreau said: 'I know that the enterprise is worthy. I know that things work well. I have heard no bad news.'

## IV

### *Self as the Lord of Self*

THE nature of Self is a problem which cannot be solved in words. As Mrs. Suzuki says in her *Mahayana Buddhism*, 'What the True Self is can only be found out through the experience of enlightenment. Anything predicated of it is only theory and a maze of words, and while many books have been engaged in discussing it, the wise Mahayanist leaves it to intuition to disclose.'

Science can never do more than accumulate knowledge *about* the self; only the intuition, the faculty of direct cognition, can enable the voice of the Delphic Oracle—*Know Thyself*—to be obeyed. The scientific approach to Truth will serve to examine the garments of God, but the ultimate Light, the face of God, will ever be veiled from the eyes of the intellect. Yet intellect, though it can never attain Reality, may build the scaffolding of reasoned thought from which the essential man leaps up to his own enlightenment. By the right use of the machinery of thought we can analyze and examine the divers parts of the Self and learn their interrelation. This interrelation, however, can only be truly seen from the standpoint of that SELF in which alone all other selves have meaning, and to which they will in time return. Only he who sees the SELF in all things, and all things as SELF, can hope to understand the nature of its complex vehicles; the study of the part is futile unless viewed through the eyes of the whole.

Material science studies the visible form of things; psychics study the realm which lies between matter and mind. Psychologists study the mind as a piece of invisible machinery, and aim at restoring the healthy functioning of its different parts. But man, however efficient his mental instruments, will never widen his point of view, and therefore range of usefulness, while he

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wears the blinkers of his own adjusting, and in the realm of matter nought but matter can be seen. Shut off from a wider life in the sad little boxes of their own creation, men grow frightened at their loneliness. When the lid of the box is closed the world is darkened for them and, in the darkness of their own imagining, fear is born. Not knowing, for they will not see, that the light and love they are seeking wait but the opening of a door, whose fastening is within, these countless prisoners, groping in darkness, grasp what they can of the things they value — goods and money, opinions, knowledge, fame — and fiercely resent a neighbour filling his own box with a better array than theirs. The violence of their possessiveness is proportionate to their foolish fear, and like animals caught in a trap they abuse and attack all those who attempt to release them from their misery. No mere religious ceremony can free these prisoners, nor faith, nor prayer, nor bitter blasphemy. Only by showing to each ultimate form in which all things are alike enfolded, and proving to them that the love which kills out fear stands waiting for the door to be opened, can these prisoners of Self be finally set free. Let us speak, then, of the form called SELF, the first-born of the Namelessness.

Beyond all forms, all pairs of opposites, there dwells 'an Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception, and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude'. (*Secret Doctrine*, H. P. Blavatsky, 1. 14.) The first radiation of this nameless PRINCIPLE, the first and lightest veil about the formless Life, and therefore the first and ultimate Form, is SELF. It has no nature, for it is beyond all predicates, and being the essence of Life it is the exclusive property of none. Its alone-begotten children are the Pairs of Opposites, the eldest, Life and Form, producing the Self and Not-Self respectively. But no man can conceive duality without conceiving three, for all things, being products of the mind, must have relationship, and this relationship reflects the SELF, the Higher Third which gave birth to the opposites.

With the division of man into three there appears the familiar

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'Body, Soul and Spirit' of St Paul. Taking Body to include those factors which compose the 'personality', Soul to mean the nobler qualities of man which form his essential character, and Spirit as the Life which fills all forms alike and is the monopoly of none, we have 'a working analysis of man's constituents which may be reasonably called the self, the Self and the SELF respectively.

Indian philosophy, like Chinese Taoism, acknowledges five principles. These are the seven described in *The Secret Doctrine*, less, on the one hand, Atman, the Supreme SELF, which is discarded as a human principle, and on the other hand the body, which is regarded as a lump of clay. This scorn of our outermost garment may be an over-emphasis on its unimportance, but it should be noted, as food for thought, that the physical body, which a few years ago was regarded by Western scientists as being the whole of man, is looked upon by some of the oldest schools of wisdom as a thing of no consequence at all.

Theravada Buddhism, that which is found in Burma, Siam and Ceylon, speaks of man as composed of five *skandhas*, these being *rupa*, the body, *vedana*, the feelings, *sanna*, perception, whether mental or sensuous, the *sankharas*, including not only mental and physical tendencies but also the power of discrimination and comparison between the ideas thus produced, and finally, *vinnana*, consciousness, which includes all mental activities and processes, from concrete ideation to the most abstract ideal. *Vinanna* is the 'Soul' of St Paul, and is at once the resultant of all past actions, on whatever plane, and the womb of countless effects as yet unborn. The existing Pali Canon has nothing to add concerning the Spirit of man, or SELF, for the Buddha, when questioned about its nature, preferred a 'noble silence' to the further illusion which words about the Namelessness must ever provide. For before this 'unspeakable, Infinite Wonder words fall away, and even the mind, the line and plummet of the universe, sinks and is dumb before that viewless wonder, the Void which is the Full, the Full which is the Void. . . . Let us bow down in awe before the Sacred Mystery and keep our words for realms where words can live'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Yoga of the Bhagavat Gita*. Sri Krishna Prem.



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Theosophy, the latest exposition of the Wisdom-Religion, boldly proclaims the sevenfold nature of the Cosmic Man, and hence of his human miniature. The seven comprise three spiritual and four material principles, being the Trinity or threefold Spirit, and the Quaternary or square of matter found in the Scriptures of many lands. At the head stands *Atma*, which, like sunlight, shines on all. In one sense it is the supreme principle in man; on the other, being the life within all forms, it is super-human. Illusion about its nature produces *Sakkaya-ditthi*, the illusion of Separateness, the belief that there abides in man an immortal soul which is his and his alone.

*Buddhi* is the vehicle of *Atma*, and therefore the highest principle in man. It is the faculty of intuition, the power of certain knowledge as distinct from the intellect's discoveries 'about it and about'. The third principle is *Manas*, the seat of *Ahamkara*, self-consciousness. These three between them form the spiritual man or Individuality, as distinct from the perishable Personality. Not that the former is changeless, for *Manas*, the Mind, is subject, as everything else in manifestation, to the law of *anicca*, change, but whereas the whole personality is new each life, *Manas* is the seat of that stored-up memory of all past error and experience which re-incarnates from life to life on its pilgrimage towards perfection. Further, it is the reflection in man of that Essence of Mind which, as the Patriarch Hui Neng proclaims, is intrinsically pure, and beyond the defilement of man.

The personality consists of the lower aspect of *Manas*, the intellect or seat of thought, of *Kamarupa*, literally the desire-body, the seat of our instincts, passions and desires, and of the life and form side of the physical body, respectively known as *Prana*, the life blood of the visible universe, and *Rupa*, the body of flesh and blood which is our clumsiest and least expressive vehicle.

Such is man, a sevenfold unity, though the principles are differently named in various Schools, with correspondences between these principles and those of the world around. Health, as the word reveals in its origin, consists in wholeness, and he

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alone is utterly well whose parts are healthy in themselves, and alike obedient to the SELF whose modes of manifestation they are on the various planes of matter. The true relation of *Atma* to its principles is shown in statues of King Poseidon of Atlantis, who was always portrayed as driving a team of six white horses, and all in perfect control. Doctors treat the body; a number of 'unorthodox' healers preserve a knowledge of the astral 'double', the seat of the senses, and of the 'golden web' in the body whereby it is fed with life; psychologists are learning something of the lower mind and its complex habits and desires, but the interrelation of all our parts is far too subtle for health to be achieved by curing one of them. The secret of health, or wholeness, lies in alignment, a smooth subservience of the divers parts to the will of the whole. Only thus is the light of the SELF enabled to shine from its own place down to the farthest atom of its densest vehicle.

This sense of oneself as a unity should never desert the mind. Whether consciousness is focused in the hands, or feelings, the thoughts or the *buddhi*-illuminated world of ideal forms, this awareness of oneness should never fail, for none of the bodies is more than a garment of the SELF assumed for its own high purpose. A lighthouse, though a crude analogy, may be of service to some. The keeper, who is lord of the whole, may function at the first-floor level or watch at the sleepless light above. But whether he looks through the windows of the third floor or the fifth, the base of the building stands on rock and its head illumines the sky, and every blow delivered by the storm outside is borne by the smallest stone in the building, for the tower was built as one. The lighthouse exists for the light above, and the keeper's task is to attend and polish the lamp that its Light, which is never *his* light only, may light his fellow men to harbour, safe from the troubled sea.

To change the analogy, the alignment of the bodies in harmony allows the voice of the universal to be heard in the particular mind, and by killing all sense of separateness leads to the heart's enlightenment. The nest of selves is the complex instrument by which the SELF perceives Itself on the divers planes of

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matter. The personality acquires experience through the five senses and the mind, and therefore provides a workshop for the growth of character. The material thus acquired is passed through the *laya* centre between the lower and higher mind, and is then digested and stored in memory. There the SELF, unmoved, examines it, for whereas facts are the province of the lower self, it is the mind, as mirror of the SELF, which decides their value and meaning.

‘There is no abiding self in man.’ The Buddhist doctrine of *Anatta* is neither abstruse nor difficult. It states categorically that there is in man no permanent ‘Immortal Soul’ which eternally distinguishes one unit of life from another. In other words, the *Atta* (Sanskrit, *Atma*) in the sense of the soul in man, is a process of becoming, while the nearest approach to an Immortal Soul, the Spirit or SELF, is to human eyes a changeless Principle and the property of no man. So far from distinguishing man from man, the SELF is the element common to all forms of life, from the noblest God to the ‘proto-plasmic slime’ so dear to nineteenth-century philosophers. As was written in *What Is Buddhism?*<sup>1</sup>

‘In a universe in which all forms of life are fragments of an Indivisible Unity, if such a paradox be understood, the fact that each is clothed in the temporary garments of matter does not make those garments or any of them separate the true man from the Whole of which he is a part. Hence is the doctrine of *Anatta* described as that of ‘non-independence’, and is therefore inferentially the Buddhist recognition of the brotherhood of Man as a fact in Nature, and not merely as a beautiful ideal . . .’ Unfortunately, the Buddhists of the Southern School have taken the word *Anatta* to mean that there is no self other than the five *skandhas* described by the Buddha. There is no scriptural justification for such a view. Granted that none of the *skandhas*, nor their totality, is the Self, still less the SELF, for to identify oneself with the personality is to confuse the driver with the chariot, yet nowhere does the Blessed One deny that this

<sup>1</sup> The Buddhist Lodge, London. 1928. Now largely incorporated in the author’s *Buddhism* (Pelican Series).

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personality is the instrument of a Self which, ever growing towards perfection, will only cease to need these instruments at the threshold of Nirvana. It is true that the Buddha refuses to describe or discuss the ultimate aspects of our complex being, but as Professor Radhakrishnan points out, 'hesitation and diffidence in defining the nature of the supreme seemed proper and natural to the Indian mind.' But where, if I may quote from an article I wrote for the *Maha Bodhi Journal* in 1936, 'where in the Pali Canon does the Buddha deny the existence of this reasonable, nay, essential doctrine of an ever-becoming, ever-progressing Self, the child of its past *karma* and creator of *karma* to be, the receiver of merit and demerit, the charioteer who controls the stallions of desire, the Self which by learning to be "mindful and self-possessed" attains in time the liberation of Nibbana? . . . The Buddha's attitude towards the Self, as deduced from his recorded conversations with Vacchagotta and Potthapada, seems to be a stressing of the unreality of the personality, or not-Self, as a corrective to the current delusion that the Self, or individuality, was permanent and immortal, instead of being an indivisible part of life.'

So far from producing authority for denying a higher self than the personality, the Scriptures have plenty of passages describing the attitude of the Self to the self. For example, verse 30 of the *Dhammapada* reads: 'Self is the lord of self, Self is the goal of self; therefore control thyself as a merchant controls a horse of noble breed.' If even the fifth of the *skandhas*, *vinna*, consciousness, is denied by these Theravada pundits even a semi-permanent existence, at least as a bundle of attributes which collectively enshrine some fragment of a deathless SELF, who and what is it that reaches the goal described in the *Udana*, the state which is 'Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, and Unformed?'

The Self which moves from life to life is complex, changing and without permanence. It is called *santana*, which means 'a continuous flow'. It is above all else a becoming, a ceaseless growth, an endless process of becoming what it really is, for has it not been written—'Look within, thou *art* Buddha!'

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As we have seen, the mind is in structure a duality. The lower mind, confused with *kama*, the passions and desires of the personality, struggles, by means of the cumbrous mechanism of reasoning, to arrange and classify the incoming knowledge of experience. But only the higher mind, illumined by the Buddhist principle, can clearly decide the reaction to this experience by giving it meaning and value. When the lower mind, obsessed with the judgments of the personality, tries to value experience, it clouds the vision of the Self within and creates illusion. Hence the warning in *The Voice of the Silence*, 'The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real. Let the Disciple slay the Slayer.' The technique of the slaying is to lift the consciousness over the bridge between lower and higher, and to view life through the eyes of eternity.

Karma, a doctrine which pervades most countries east of Cyprus, is a threefold unity, for it is cause, effect and the relation between them, the latter being that action and reaction are equal and opposite. All action is borne in the mind. The first verse of the *Dhammapada* reads: 'All that we are is the result of our thoughts; it is born of our thoughts, made up of our thoughts.' Yet the SELF neither acts nor receives the results of action, but is seen by the eyes of Wisdom, and perceives. The Mind, its reflection, acts and suffers the fruits of action accordingly. As is said in the *Sutra of Wei Lang*: 'Our Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure; all things, good or evil, are only its manifestations, and good deeds and evil deeds are only the result of good thoughts and evil thoughts respectively.' Not only is action mind-begotten, but, strictly speaking, it never leaves the mind. There is a story in the same *Sutra* of two Bhikkhus who watched a pennant blown in the wind. One said the pennant moved, and the other said the wind. The Patriarch was passing and heard the dispute. 'I submitted to them that it was neither, and that what actually moved was their own mind.'

The size of the mind is the size of the man. All selfishness is born of illusion in the mind, and selflessness arises when the obscuring clouds of passion are cleared away. Looked at from above, the Self is the mirror of *Atma*, but it cannot reach to the

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radiance which gives it life till the most unruly of its lower members is brought under control. The bridge between lower and higher is the soul's unceasing battle ground. But the opposing forces are not the clear-cut opposites where right is obviously right and wrong as clearly wrong. As Sri Krishna Prem points out in his *Yoga of the Bhagavat Gita*, the forces arrayed on the field of battle in that symbolic war were cousins. 'There is none of the ultimate dualism that has marred so much of Christian thought, no God and Devil standing as ultimate irreconcilables. The *Daivi* and *Asurik* forces both spring from the same Supreme Source and in the end both return to it.' Nor can the humblest of our principles be scorned or despised. The Buddha went out of his way to point out that 'it is in this six feet of body, with its sense-impressions and thoughts and ideas, that are to be found the world, and the origin of the world and the ceasing of the world and likewise the Way that leadeth to the ceasing thereof'. (*Anguttara Nikaya*.) It is not surprising that the late Anagarika Dharmapala described *The Voice of the Silence* as 'a pure Buddhist work', for we read therein: 'Mistrust thy senses; they are false. But within thy body—the shrine of thy sensations—seek in the Impersonal for the Eternal Man; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha,' a fully Enlightened One.

The problem of self-control is one for the individual to solve. It can never be easy, for it consists in maintaining a ceaseless balance between too much repression and too much expression of the qualities undesired. At all times it is vital that the SELF and its needs be the guiding principle, for the interrelation of the parts is nothing save as it serves the whole.

Modern psychology is still in its infancy, but it is old enough to have learnt that the conscious and unconscious are another of the pairs of opposites, and that the true Self lies between. Consciousness must learn to regard the whole of its other half objectively before it is free to move forward as a whole. As Jung points out, 'By understanding the unconscious we free ourselves from its domination,' and not until the unconscious, or not-Self, has been disentangled from the regarding consciousness can the

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progressing individual understand the meaning of self-control. 'In the first place there must be the attempt to isolate by analytic meditation on experience the watching Self from the participating self. In the second place there must be the effort of the will to identify one's being with the former and from there to rule the latter.' Only this twofold practice will 'culminate in the ability to centre oneself permanently in the Eternal Mind'.<sup>1</sup>

Yet this process of 'detachment of consciousness', as Jung describes it, is not to be confused with a denial of the outward life, for the withdrawal of consciousness to higher levels, which enables the light of *Buddhi* to irradiate the mind, produces in the lower vehicles a sense of harmony and joy which leads in turn to a greater efficiency. The actual process of self-domination is a matter of ethics rather than philosophy, but the key to it is a ceaseless regard for the Self as an aspect of the SELF, the divers principles of which are for the moment out of alignment. The lower self of a man not yet enlightened has a collective life of its own, with its own desires. As the darkness of *Avidya*, ignorance of SELF, is dissipated by experience, the wants of this lower self fall more and more into line with those of the Self, and this in turn, as the higher centres of consciousness are wakened and developed, is slowly brought into line with the will of the SELF as voiced through *Buddhi*, the 'still small voice' within. From time to time it is reasonable to take the Self to pieces, in order the better to adjust its parts, but even in the midst of such analysis it must be remembered, not only that all these parts are equally needed, but that the instrument as a whole exists to serve its owner's will.

The process of mind-development has three principal stages—the cleansing of the mind, the development of mind-control, which is the preparation of the instrument and, finally, the right use of the instrument to slay the self which blinds us to our own essential Buddhahood. This moving of the mind towards its own enlightenment is achieved by meditation which, as Hui-neng says, is 'to realize inwardly the imperturbability of the Essence of Mind'. But, as the Chinese also say, 'Man walks on two legs';

<sup>1</sup> *Yoga of the Bhagavat Gita*. Sri Krishna Prem.

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and subjective meditation is not enough in itself. As is said in the *Precepts of the Gurus*,<sup>1</sup> two things are indispensable. 'a system of meditation which will produce the power of concentrating the mind on anything whatsoever,' from the job in hand to the abstract contemplation of an ideal, and, which is just as important, 'an art of living which will enable one to utilize each activity of body, speech and mind as an aid on the Path'. Meditation and right action are not alternatives, but two halves of a balanced whole, and the Middle Way, which reconciles all opposites, has need of both.

Unfortunately, as the power of the Self develops, both as a true reflection of the SELF and as Lord of self, the serpent of pride unwinds itself and prepares to strike. If the poison gains a hold, the work of unnumbered years is forfeit, for pride is the father of illusion, and illusion breeds belief in the splendour of 'I', thus rousing from its grave the heresy of Separateness. In the *Tao Tê Ching* an ancient saying is quoted: 'Be humble, and you will remain entire.' The greatest of men are always humble, yet those with the smallest sense of self have the most powerful minds. Perhaps the same great classic can solve the paradox.

'He who pursues learning will increase every day;  
He who pursues Tao will decrease every day.  
He will decrease and continue to decrease,  
Till he comes to non-action;  
By non-action (*wu-wei*) everything can be done.'<sup>2</sup>

'Be humble and you will remain entire.' Conceit is like a balloon that flies up to the sun—its fate is sealed, for the key to spiritual growth is self-surrender. Only when the self is raised into the Self, and the Self surrendered to the SELF are the parts again made One. The knowledge required for such reunion consists in the right relation of self to all other selves, an illumined vision of the forms of Life as viewed from the Eternal. 'For this thou hast to live and breathe in all, as all that thou perceivest breathes in thee; to feel thyself abiding in all things, all things in SELF.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*. Evans-Wentz.

<sup>2</sup> *Tao Tê Ching*. Ch'u Ta-kao. Buddhist Society.

<sup>3</sup> *The Voice of the Silence*.



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No man achieves the Path of self-dominion until in his heart the flame of compassion, the 'Wisdom-heart' of the Buddha, has been kindled, and the height and the depth of a man's enlightenment is measured by that flame. A kindly man may feel for his fellow men benevolence; he who would enter the Path must feel and know that he and they are One. Benevolence is the fruit of the six Paramitas, the glorious virtues of the Buddhist Way. This is the second step. 'The first step is to live to benefit mankind.'<sup>1</sup>

It has been said that all serve self, but the measure of a man's enlightenment is the size of the self he serves. Man in his youth is a slave to the personality. As he grows, he serves the mind, his proudly built-up character, but finally he sees the SELF. Thereafter he strains to enlarge the limits of his being to make room for all mankind, and learns by bitter suffering that progress is the courage to let go. Little by little the hands of self are emptied and the empty corners of compassion filled. As the veils of the not-Self fall away, the veils of the SELF fall too until, the burden of all self-hood laid aside,

'Om Mani Padme Hum, the Sunrise comes!  
The Dewdrop slips into the Shining Sea!'

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

## SELF

Be seated, thou, unfettered, free,  
The heart's attention poised as third of three.  
Now still the mind, nor claim the unceasing flow;  
He holds the boundless heaven in fee  
Who learns the uttermost command—Let go.  
Now seal with cold resolve the doors of sense.  
Be still, my son, and seek thine Immanence.

I am not body. I am never ill,  
Nor restless, weary, fretful, nor in pain.  
I am not hot emotion, nor the will  
Which forfeits progress in the name of gain.  
I am not thought, the process of the mind  
On caging partial truth intent,  
Unknowing, for its eyes are blind,  
The wings of life beat ever unconfined.  
I am not any instrument.  
I am.

I am the light that slays the night at dawning.  
I am the love that woos its own reward.  
I am the slow resolve that wakes at morning,  
And sleeps at twilight on a sheathéd sword.

I am the fullness in the wealth of giving.  
I am the void within the orb of fame.  
I am the death that dies within the living.  
I am the namelessness that bears the Name.

I am the golden joy of beauty.  
I am the stillness underlying sound.  
I am the voice of undistinguished duty.  
I am the Self in which the self is drowned.

## *The Use and Abuse of Circumstance*

IN approaching the obvious antithesis of the Self and Not-self the East and West have taken opposing points of view. The latter aims predominantly at the conquest of matter, the former at the conquest of self, and only those who have learnt to see with the 'Third Eye' can merge the antithesis of subject and object in a higher unity. Even the realms symbolical of life and form, Nirvana and Samsara, are, in the nobler reaches of Mahayanist thought, seen as the twin poles of Reality. These poles must both be studied and understood before the higher synthesis can be achieved, and those who have studied the SELF, as the manifestation of Spirit, must sooner or later turn to the Not-SELF, or the field of matter which surrounds our consciousness.

Strictly speaking, all lesser selves are Not-SELF, and our mental make-up, the use and control of emotion, the nature, appearance and ailments of the body are as much the circumstances of the all-pervading SELF as the state of one's income or the name of the street in which one lives. All alike will vanish when the Self, the evolving aggregate of past experience, unwinds its essence from the fetters of illusion, and 'the Dewdrop slips into the Shining Sea'; yet pending that 'far-off, divine event' our circumstances form the school wherein we learn the technique of self-freedom, and the wise man learns at an early stage to examine the nature of this 'soul's gymnasium', and to decide how best it may be used.

Circumstance, which means 'those things which stand around', may be viewed as standing in concentric circles about the SELF. First comes the highest level at which our individual consciousness can function, the realm of intuitive as distinct from intellectual understanding. This is the home of *Bodhi*, Wisdom, and

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its faculty *Buddhi*. Lower than this, or further from SELF, is the intellect; then comes the emotions and the purely physical levels of matter on which the body is built. All these are specialized areas of our environment, and there is no true distinction in the eyes of SELF between the inherited sex and aptitudes of the physical body, and the family and class and race and religion into which the individual, drawn by his *karma*, is born.

But the practical antithesis lies between man, in his totality of bodies or vehicles, and his surroundings, inherited and acquired. Between these two there is an unceasing reaction of immense complexity and the birth of a great difficulty. For the individual must learn to perceive the Field of knowledge and yet remain objective to the Knower of the Field, although a large part of himself is part of that Field, and although his perceiving consciousness is itself, as shown at length in the Buddhist Scriptures, changing at enormous speed each second of time. The process of acquiring knowledge is further complicated by the alteration of normal consciousness between the introverted or subjective state, and the extraverted or objective state of mind, which collates with an alternating striving after greater depth and greater expansion of understanding respectively. Add to these difficulties the fact that the opinions, judgments and reactions of the mind to circumstance become themselves a part of its circumstance, and the complexity of the subject is complete, for as Shakespeare says:

‘Men’s judgments are  
A parcel of their fortunes; and things outward  
Do draw the inward quality after them.’

The Knower of the Field is the Manifested SELF, or, in Buddhist terminology, the ‘Buddha within’. The Field of Knowledge is the world around, which Buddhists call Samsara, the constituents of which are the *sankharas*, aggregates or compounded things, as distinct from the ‘Essence of Mind’. As the Buddha taught, all these *sankharas* are *anicca*, impermanent, *dukkha*, subject to suffering or insufficiency, and *anatta*, lacking a changeless soul. In Indian philosophy the Field is described as the playground of three forces or Gunas—that of *sattva*—radiance, that

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of *rajas*—desire-energy, and that of *tamas*—inertia. In Buddhist terms, the first is the force of enlightenment, the second, of desire, lust and anger, and the third, of the darkness of illusion. Sri Krishna Prem, in his *Yoga of the Bhagavat Gita*, describes the Gunas in terms of the light of enlightenment. 'Under the contemplative gaze of Consciousness, three tendencies manifest themselves within the Matrix. One moment of it reflects the Light and is irradiated by It, itself becoming, like a fluorescent substance, an apparent light. A second moment as it were transmits the Light, not reflecting it back towards the Source, but ever speeding it onwards and outwards. The third moment neither reflects nor transmits, but absorbs the Light that falls upon it.' In other words, the Light falls into matter, and, deluded with desire born of ignorance, rushes out to the confines of space, breaking up in the process into a myriad particles, which strive alike for their own aggrandisement. In the darkness of *tamas* each of these points of light is immersed in the cumbrous clothing of matter, and forgets its origin and destiny. These 'forms of life' are countless, yet each is the shrine of a smouldering spark of the Light which, if it is to return to the 'Essence of Mind', must throw off the smothering robes of *tamas*, curb the outgoing force of desire which strives for self- and not SELF-satisfaction, and return once more to the joy of *sattva*, which mirrors the Light of Enlightenment. Within this Field of the Gunas, 'the world of the ten thousand things', as the Chinese say, the law of Karma is absolute, and all that lives is subject to its sway.

According to H. P. Blavatsky, 'Karma is the *Ultimate Law* of the Universe, the source, origin, and fount of all other laws which exist throughout Nature. It is the unerring law which adjusts effect to cause on the physical, mental, and spiritual planes of being. As no cause remains without its due effect from greatest to least, from a cosmic disturbance down to the movement of your hand, and as like produces like, Karma is that unseen and unknown law which adjusts wisely, intelligently, and equitably each effect to its cause, tracing the latter back to its producer. Though itself unknowable its action is perceivable.

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For though we do not know what Karma is *per se*, we *do* know how it works . . . ” The word means action, but an act has three related parts—a doer, a deed, and the relation between them. All these, as we have seen, the Knower, in the sense of the individual, the Field, in the sense of Samsara, and the relation between the two are constantly changing. All three are therefore essentially alive, and must be viewed as forces to be studied and controlled, not facts to be forgotten.

Karma, of course, has a wider range than mere causation, and includes all manifestation in its realm, but viewed as the Law which the wise man uses to attain enlightenment it is enough to consider this cosmic force as the law of cause and effect. The cause of all human Karma is the human mind. The Mahayanist states this proposition, from the point of view of cause, in the *Sutra of Hui Neng*: ‘Our Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure; all things are only its manifestations, and good deeds and evil deeds are only the result of good thoughts and evil thoughts respectively.’ The Theravadin views the law from the standpoint of effect. As is written in the *Dhammapada*: ‘All we are is the result of what we have thought; it is born of our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts.’ But the mind has its own instruments, and is responsible for them to the Light within. Just as thought produces results on its own plane, and so gives birth to acts which are those thoughts made manifest, so emotions reap their own results, and physical acts, as well as reacting on the parent mind, produce their own effects on the physical plane. The person affected by any act is primarily the doer, and neither a million miles nor a million years can hold the two parts of that unity, cause and effect, from ultimate reunion.

For good or ill, and these are relative and changing terms, the acts of any entity affect the actor according to their kind. As St Paul wrote to the Galatians: ‘Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.’ Or, in the older words of the *Dhammapada*: ‘If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, suffering will follow him as

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the wheel follows the beast which draws the cart; but if he speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness will follow him as a shadow which he never leaves behind.' These are facts, though to do good and not evil because of these facts, thereby 'acquiring merit', is a low, unworthy motive for good deeds. For no man lives alone, and a nobler motive for well-doing is the realization that the smallest action has incalculable effects on every atom of the boundless Universe. A stone flung into a pond will stir each drop of its water; so will the ripples of our lightest thought flow out to the margin of the Universe. From there they will return to the centre of disturbance, looking to the thrower of the stone to restore the disturbed equilibrium. If the emotion of wonder, and its sister awe, still live in modern hearts, here is a cause for it. As 'A.E.', the Irish poet, wrote in *Song and Its Fountains*: 'There is as great a mystery about our least motion as there is about our whole being. We are affected by the whole cosmos. Emanations from most distant planets pour on us and through us. Everything is related to everything else. "Thou canst not stir a flower without troubling of a star."'

We humans band together to think and feel and do, reacting as a complex unit according to the predispositions of the unit formed. The effects of the acts of the larger unit fall on that larger unit, and form a complex *karmic* effect. Hence family, society, party, racial and national Karma, with the elaborate *inter-reaction* of the smaller units within the whole. Whatever the size of the unit, the *karmic* effects of its causes may be classified, though none too easily, as being inevitable, that is to say, results which are the effect of such powerful and cumulative causes that nothing can now avert their due effect; secondly, results which may still be modified by thoughts and actions of a different kind; and finally, those which can still be entirely dispelled. War, for example, is a mass result of mass thought and feeling, a compound, usually, of hatred and desire. In some cases it is inevitable, for years of evil forces generated in the national mind may so bank up, as rival clouds in a thunder sky, that only a spark is needed to precipitate the storm. Other results may be modified, in this sense and in this sense only, that

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whereas nothing can hold apart a cause and its effect, a new and different cause may modify the final, or in terms of mechanics, the 'resultant' effect of the mixed and differing causes. Thus, a thought of anger will harm the hated man, and react on the thinker's mind. But a subsequent readjustment of the mental attitude, in the light of reason and self-control, may produce an equally powerful thought of apology and healing friendliness, and this, while strictly speaking bearing its own effect; will modify the net result of the total incident. Finally, there are cases where a cause, though later in that illusion 'time', may overtake and neutralize a previous cause, and so destroy the original cause-effect.

The field of Karma is thus composed of a living mesh of cause-effect bewildering in its complexity, and without some key to its purpose it seems a meaningless and heartless servitude. But none who has studied Eastern philosophy, and the raw experience of daily life in the light of that ancient Wisdom, can fail to see that the Law of Karma is the technique of a cosmic Plan, wherein Life unfolds in the world of form the mighty purpose of THAT which must ever remain to human minds the final Namelessness. Of the SELF which manifests in order the better to realize itSELF, and the purpose behind these cosmic happenings, words are unable to speak; the wise man is content to observe the plan and endeavour to serve it. He who obeys the Law moves forward to his own becoming; he who is disobedient suffers accordingly. As Oscar Ljungström wrote in *Karma in Ancient and Modern Thought*: 'If we throw a selfish act in front of us on the Path, it is an energy, a living part of ourselves, that does not belong to the Universal life; and it is denounced by the gods, is repelled, and falls back forcibly on ourselves. We have to reap its consequences, and suffer; and suffering makes us wiser.'

But part of the Plan is the field of circumstance which surrounds each fragment of the SELF whose will produced it, and this introduces the third of the factors here under review. The Knower and the Field are but two sides of the triangle; the



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third is the right relation between them; in brief, the use and abuse of circumstance.

Before a man can settle the proper reaction to his circumstances he must learn to face their nature without phantasy or added attribute. Such cool analysis of the objects of perception will enable the observer to distinguish the nature of things from the value of things, and to realize that the value of things is an attribute which the observing mind decides to add to or withhold from attributeless circumstance. Good and evil, for example, are qualities imposed on facts by the mind. It may be a fact that it is raining, but to describe the weather as good or bad is an addition of the mind's opinion, for the farmer may regard as good what the host at a garden party bitterly regards as bad. It must be realized, further, that the nature and the value of things are alike changing, even as the mind of the beholder is constantly changing in its attribution of significance to the ceaseless flow of events. It is wise to learn humility in the face of this vast panorama of cause-effect. It may be that man in the measure of his spiritual grandeur 'doth bestride the world as a Colossus', yet, as Thomas of Malmesbury pointed out: 'There is no action of man in this life but is the beginning of so long a chain of consequences as that no human providence is high enough to give us a prospect to the end.' Humility is the wise man's measuring-rod for learning the difference between what is and what is yet to be, for man in his becoming has yet far to go.

The tapestry of circumstance is woven of the weft of things upon the warp of happenings. Facts are the bodies of someone's thought, and like all forms have a life of their own, with the usual cycle of birth, growth, decay, and death. Their use is to enshrine or mould the force of life, as the banks of a river mould and give direction to the river's flow. In combination, facts provide experience, which is the raw material for the spirit's growth. The wise man, therefore, plucks from the passing stream of circumstance those happenings which best subserve the mind's requirements, selecting the knowledge which, digested, may be turned into wisdom. For 'Knowledge for the mind, like food

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for the body, is intended to feed and help to growth, but it requires to be well digested, and the more thoroughly and slowly the process is carried out the better both for body and mind.' (*The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, 3rd. edn., p. 258).

Possessions, like the talents entrusted to the servants in the famous parable, provide the possessor with duties as well as rights, and the wise man buries none of them. There is always someone who can make use of the smallest article. Is anyone entitled to a thousand volumes which he does not read, or five coats if he wears but one?

Events or happenings are far from dead. They are forces which the wise man turns to his own advantage and the greater wisdom of his fellow men. He is a fool who is broken by the 'force of circumstance'. Just as the science of *judo*, or *ju-jitsu*, enables a wrestler to use the force exerted by an opponent to his own undoing, so the wise man uses the forces about him to work to his advantage, and, in the midst of the raging storm, remains unmoved. He whose consciousness is raised above the personal and anchored in the SELF has nought to fear from circumstance. 'Knowing that all that comes to him of joy or grief is but the fruit of his own actions in the past, he is content and strives for nothing finite, but, with the mind clinging through *Buddhi* to the One Eternal, stands like a rock amidst the surge of Time.' This ideal, so ably thus expressed by Sri Krishna Prem in his *Yoga of the Bhagavat Gita*, is otherwise phrased in the *Sutra of Hui Neng*: 'Our mind should stand aloof from circumstances, and on no account should we allow them to influence the function of our mind.' And again, 'Our Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure, and the reason we are perturbed is simply that we allow ourselves to be carried away by the very circumstances we are in.'

Facts are of no importance; what matters is their significance. The valuation of this significance, by the attaching of labels such as good or bad, sad or joyous, liked or disliked, is the link between a man and the circumstances which he must control, for control of reaction is the key to control of circumstance. Many philosophers have stressed the importance of this fact,

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and some have outlined its technique. The nearest Western equivalent to the Buddhist point of view is that of the Stoics, as best expressed in the words of the Greek slave, Epictetus, and the Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius. Their secret was to limit the field of their concern, and to classify all things and events as within or without 'the ambit of one's moral purpose'. This field of interest equates remarkably with the philosophical use of the Buddhist *Dharma* (Pali, *Dhamma*), and represents the field of duty which it is 'right' for the individual to perform. All that lies within the ambit of one's moral purpose is of intimate concern to all departments of the mind. That which lies without should be ignored, in the sense that no significance should be attached to it. As the Stoic Emperor pointed out, 'Death and life, good report and evil report, pain and pleasure, riches and poverty, fall to the good and bad indifferently, and neither ennoble nor demean. The inference is that they are neither good nor evil.' The wise man refuses to judge, and accordingly value, events which do not enter the range of duty waiting to be done. Such mental and emotional control is a matter of unremitting practice, as Epictetus was the first to admit. As he said again and again in his *Lectures*, 'You must know that it is no easy thing for a principle to become a man's own, unless each day he maintain it and hear it maintained, as well as work it out in life.' That even he expected few to practise what he preached is shown by his famous outburst in Book II of the *Lectures*: 'Who then is a Stoic, in the sense that we call that a statue of Pheidias which is modelled after that master's art? Show me a man in this sense modelled after the doctrines that are ever upon his lips. Show me a man that is sick—and happy; in danger—and happy; on his deathbed—and happy; an exile—and happy; in evil report—and happy. Show me him, I ask again. So help me, Heaven, I long to see one Stoic!' Yet Epictetus himself had learned to command the perfect attitude to circumstance. He knew that nothing is misfortune till we make it so. "His son is dead." What has happened? "His son is dead." Nothing more? "Nothing." "His ship is lost." What has happened? "His ship is lost." "He has been hailed to prison." What has happened?

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“He has been hailed to prison.” But that any of these things are *misfortunes* to him is an addition which everyone makes of his own.’

The Buddhist knows that all events are mind-begotten and can therefore be, in the mind’s reaction to them, mind-controlled. Problems are not problems till we make them so, and, strictly speaking, being mind-created can never be, at their own level, ‘solved’. If the problem lies without the ambit of one’s moral purpose it should never have been born; if within, it will be solved, as Jung points out in *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, by raising the level of consciousness. ‘Some wider or higher interest arose on the person’s horizon, and through this widening of his view the problem lost its urgency.’ In other words, by a deliberate change of values, or of the significance of the event so anxiously expected or feared, the mind-created problem loses its grip on the mind, and this control of reaction brings about a control of the offending circumstance. Yet once again it must be stressed that circumstance is not controlled by self-deception as to its nature, or by any method, actual or psychological, of running away. If principles are dwellers on the heights, their application to experience is in the heat and conflict of the market-place. When Epictetus was asked if he had heard the latest news he enquired politely of the anxious student whether the news he longed to relate was within or without the ambit of his moral purpose. Does not the same unspoken reproof apply to a vast proportion of the matters which we choose to honour with the passionate labels of approval, hate or fear, in the course of the daily round?

The world of forms, of daily happenings, is the soul’s gymnasium. ‘Does it seem a small thing that the past year has been spent only in your “family duties”?’ wrote the Master K.H. in a letter to A. P. Sinnett. ‘Nay, but what better cause for reward, what better discipline, than the daily and hourly performance of duty? Believe me, my “pupil”, the man or woman who is placed by Karma in the midst of small plain duties and sacrifices and loving-kindnesses, will through these faithfully fulfilled rise to the larger measure of Duty, Sacrifice, and Charity

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to all Humanity.' Yet he who is engrossed in forms sees nought but forms. The panorama of events, though valued, handled and used as though by one in the midst of circumstance, must yet be viewed dispassionately through the eyes of SELF, and the world of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* must be increasingly controlled by the growing realization of the Buddha within.

Each man is the child of his past, and by his use of the present moulds his future circumstance. All acts expressing self need self for their reaction, just as the nobler deeds of Self need the Self to restore the balance which is equally disturbed by actions, good or bad. Only utterly selfless acts, which flow on the Cosmic tide of self-becoming, cause no tremor in Nature's equilibrium and, therefore, having no effect, need no author to receive it. The perfect act has no result.

The perfect act alone binds no man firmer to the Wheel of Life and its endless suffering, and the perfect man is *anagarika*, homeless, even in his home. 'Whether he lives in crowded cities or on lonely mountain peaks he is a Homeless One, for though he may fulfil all social duties, yet neither family, nor caste, nor race holds him in bondage.'<sup>1</sup>

Henceforth he is for ever alone, in that he is freed from the tyranny of form and the fetters of circumstance, yet he is never lonely, for as he grows increasingly at one with SELF, he is one with the Life which fills its myriad forms. Samsara conquered, in that the ambit of his moral purpose is made one with the *dharma* of mankind, he turns aside from the threshold of Nirvana, and dedicates his days to moulding, 'nearer to the heart's desire', the plastic form of circumstance, which to him has become coincident with the sorrows of mankind.

<sup>1</sup> *Yoga of the Bhagavat Gita.* Sri Krishna Prem.

## VI

### *In Praise of Pain*

'FROM forty onwards only the shallow man, or the coward, or the liar can help admitting to himself that by far the greater part of this life is made up of suffering.'<sup>1</sup> The Buddha, referred to by Keyserling as 'the first fully awakened man who had the courage to be entirely truthful with himself', made suffering the keynote of his unique analysis of human experience. For him, the process of becoming perfect could be summarized in four Noble Truths, of which the first is a frank recognition of the omnipresence of suffering. The second is the nature of its cause, which is desire, born of ignorance, and the third is the oft-forgotten fact that the undesired effect may be removed by the removal of its cause. The fourth and last truth tells of a Way which leads to the end of self-ness, hence of selfishness and personal desire, and hence of suffering.

*Sabbe sankhara dukkha*, taught the Buddha; all things are *dukkha*, which is usually translated suffering. Yet the Pali word has a very much wider range, for it covers all manner of pain, whether mental, emotional or physical, and includes as well disharmony, discomfort, discontent. From the mystic's point of view it is the awareness of incompleteness, the sense of insufficiency which urges man to recover his lost integrity, that sense of wholeness which alone is Heaven. Finally, it includes the heartache which is born of another's suffering, that sympathy which makes of happiness, as usually understood, an idle dream. Buddhism, it is said, makes much of suffering, but if *dukkha* is indeed one of the Signs of Being, a factor to be found in all existing things, it is an emphasis well laid.

In the course of twenty centuries the Buddhist monk may have lost the true significance of *dukkha*, but if monks at times

<sup>1</sup> *From Suffering to Fulfilment.* Keyserling.

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are morbid about this Sign of Being it is one which only fools deny. It is true that a great deal of suffering is assumed through man's inability to mind his own business. 'He who regards anything outside the ambit of his moral purpose as being either good or bad shall be punished by becoming subject to envy, dissatisfaction, discontentedness, sorrow and unhappiness,' wrote the Stoic Epictetus, but a calm analysis of the three dimensions of experience—physical, emotional and imaginative-mental—must prove beyond all doubt, itself a mental form of suffering, that *dukkha* is one of the three fundamental factors of all Sankhara, that is to say, compounded things.

It follows that only the fool is happy. He whose circumstances let him say, 'I am a happy man,' forgets that he was unhappy an hour before, and that *anicca*, change, being another of the Signs of Being, his happiness, as all else in existence, will shortly cease to be. Even while this illusion lasts it only does so at the cost of shutting out the cry of those unable to escape from *dukkha's* grim reality. For though the final SELF is unaffected by the Signs which permeate all manifested things, yet as between these things the Signs of Being are manifestly true, and the poet has the right to lament the seeming 'heartbreak in the heart of things'. Happiness, more often than not, is a self-lie based on fear, a cocoon of illusion in which to escape from a state of affairs which the sufferer is unwilling to admit. Yet only he who is willing to suffer can find and remove its cause, and the frank admission, that life is a hell of suffering for me, the individual, is the first step on the road to understanding that the self-same suffering racks my brother, too. From compassion, fellow-suffering, is the Wisdom-Light of pure Compassion born, and with it the opening of a Path whose end is full Enlightenment.

There are those who proclaim that suffering is evil, and turn their faces away. But suffering is neither good nor evil; it just is. We in our foolishness add the labels good or bad, and thus proclaim our foolishness, for, as the same Epictetus said, 'Men are disturbed not by things, but by the notions they form concerning things. Death, for example, is not in itself terrible; the terror resides only in our opinion.' Insistence upon the truth of suffer-

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ing may seem morbid to the mind unable to face facts, but it serves to prick the balloon of happiness.

What, then, is this happiness which all men think they seek? When the conception is analyzed, it is found to contain at least four ingredients, of which the first is a sense of security with a strong likelihood of the undisturbed continuance of the *status quo*. In the second place there must be an absence of worry, which to most men means an absence of that fruitful cause of worry, responsibility. Thirdly, there must be an absence of strife or conflict; and fourthly, there is a powerful sense of comfort, involving a comfortable income, good health, a happy home. Certain bolder spirits would allow occasional 'ups and downs' to add spice to life, and would claim to find time for a little mild philanthropy, but the mean conception approximates undoubtedly to the earthly idyll of the 'happy valley'—

'Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea.'

Such a conception is a lie, utterly selfish, and impossible of achievement.

It is true that although happiness, as a goal, is a mirage in the desert of desire, yet as a rest for refreshment it has its use, for just as the body needs to sleep, so pleasure oils the wheels of progress by affording respite from the task of self-release from life's entanglements. Yet all too soon the inner call, to be about 'my Father's business', rouses the pilgrim to take once more the road which leads him and his fellow beings—home.

The true antithesis of suffering is not happiness, but joy. That which is happy is itself unreal, for the self which craves security and comfort in a changing world has no eternal value, and like the drops of morning dew, will vanish with the rising sun of the soul's enlightenment. Joy, on the other hand, is a quality of the SELF, and radiates from the nameless Wholeness of which all manifested things are part. Thus joy and sadness are two more of the 'pairs of opposites'. As Blake once sang, 'Joy and



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Woe are woven fine, a clothing for the soul divine.' Happiness pertains to self: Joy to selflessness. As the same great poet wrote:

'He who binds to himself a joy  
Does the wingéd life destroy;  
But he who kisses the joy as it flies  
Lives in eternity's sunrise.'

A Buddhist is a pilgrim on the road from separation to reunion, but 'though weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning', and as the sun of SELF draws ever nearer to the noon-day of enlightenment the shadow of pain shrinks back to nothingness. Yet the joy which fills the heart of every pilgrim as he nears the Goal is one which never forgets, still less denies, that 'mighty sea of suffering formed of the tears of men'. He who shuns the face of suffering denies thereby the need of his fellow men, whereas the wise man, fearless in pursuit of Truth, denies nothing, but rather seeks the cause of suffering in order that, by striving to remove that cause, he may assist to 'wipe the bitter tears of pain from out the sufferer's eye'.

It is, however, first imperative to face the omnipresence of suffering, for in this realization lies the seed of that compassion whose flowering is the crown of Buddahood. He who faces the fact of his own unhappiness may learn to see the same unceasing agony in the eyes of other men, and so be driven, as the Buddha was impelled, to find and finally destroy the cause of suffering, both for himself and his fellow men. There is no other way to be free. There is no escape in the pleasure of the senses, crude or delicate, in books and busy products of the mind, in man-begotten beauty, in the silent fastness of the desert air, in dreams of may-be or the might-have-been, nor yet, when death has partially disrobed the soul, in Heaven. Soon or late each human must face the cold, inexorable fact of suffering, alone.

It is threefold, corresponding to its threefold form. The first may be described as cosmic suffering, that which exists by virtue of the nature of manifestation, with the consequent separation of all manifested things. For the Universe is ultimately ONE, and separation from this Oneness is an illusion from which all things

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struggle to be free. This sense of separateness is in essence *maya*, for the Secondless can never cease to be, and those who think they wander in the wilderness have never left their Father's home. But every self, bemused with the *maya* of separate existence, fights to maintain its 'interests' at the expense, if need be, of all other selves, and dreams that it will grow thereby. It knows not that in fighting for its own aggrandisement it fights against the SELF. Thus *dukkha* is the lot of all who fail to realize the truth of *anatta*, that 'there is no abiding principle in man'. Yet even this illusory self, this fragment of a whole it cannot comprehend, is itself for ever changing, and change, *anicca*, is a cause of suffering to those unable or unwilling to flow with the river of change. Life is a process of becoming, and progress is becoming more. But growth of life means a constant change of forms, as each in turn is unable to express the evolving life within. Hence the truth of the Buddha's dictum, 'Birth is suffering, growth is suffering, decay and disease are suffering, death is suffering.' Unknowing of the law of change, man strives to resist its flow; believing in a personal, Immortal Soul, so comforting to human vanity, he fails to realize, in H. G. Wells' immortal words, that 'we are episodes in an experience greater than ourselves', and boasts of the rare occasions when he rises to self-sacrifice. He does not see, as Gerald Bullett pointed out, that 'self-sacrifice has neither spiritual beauty nor any other human value if it is not, at the same time, genuine self-expression. An act of "unselfishness" profits a man nothing, and does more harm than good, unless he is able to put his deepest self into it.'

The second cause of suffering is the inevitable friction which arises from the opposition of countless human wills to each other's personal desires and purposes. So long as foolish men imagine that each can plan his own path to perfection without reference to the needs and wishes of his fellow men, so long will they resemble a close-packed herd of cattle each of which, with head well down, the horns in frequent play, is striving to reach a different point of the compass in the belief that there and there alone lies happiness. It is the illusion of separateness which causes man to fight for his own desires, not knowing, for *avidya*

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fills his eyes, that the littlest act of the smallest part of the Universe affects the whole, and so long as his own will fails to accord with the will of the Universe, so long will his efforts breed but suffering for himself and all mankind. 'It is an occult law that no man can rise superior to his individual failings without lifting, be it ever so little, the whole body of which he is an integral part. In the same way no one can sin, nor suffer the effects of sin, alone.'<sup>1</sup>

This introduces the third cause of all suffering, the imperfect acts of the individual, for the evil which men in ignorance do to one another is no greater than the suffering which the individual, driven by a false desire, imposes on himself. In the Buddha's words, the cause of suffering is *tanha*, craving, personal desire, the selfish will for a separate self-aggrandizement. This egocentric point of view impels its victims to grab at the part and ignore the needs of the whole. Yet all that tends to separateness is fundamentally untrue, and violates the will of SELF, whose purpose is reunion. All that accords with Universal Law will move to its appointed end with the vast momentum of that Law, while every desire that includes the thought of self must gain fulfilment as a breach of Law, and take the consequence. It is desire, moreover, which gives power to circumstance, for it grasps and clings to possessions with a miser's claw, and when the river of change inevitably bears them away the sense of loss is a torn-out agony.

What, then, of sin? It is but foolishness, blind error born of hatred, lust and illusion, with the added approbrium bestowed by men's uncharitable minds. None can forgive it, for there is no one to forgive. Nor would the wise man seek forgiveness, for unless we suffered for our foolish acts we should not learn the unwisdom of repeating them. It is no service to a man for another to bear the burden of his sins, for without the certainty that all Life-hindering acts will reap the consequence of pain, and all Life-furthering acts enlarge the vision of the actor's mind, we should be robbed of the sanction of all morality, the knowledge that 'Just is the wheel, unswerving is the Law.'

<sup>1</sup> *The Key to Theosophy*. H. P. Blavatsky.

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Suffering is not punishment in the sense of a sentence imposed by some law-giving authority for deliberate breach of its laws. Nor are we punished by an abstract law. It is not Karma that rewards or punishes, but we who reward or punish ourselves according as we work with Nature's laws or break them. Sin punishes itself by weakening the will, by further deluding the mind, and by fostering the growth of low desire. We are punished, therefore, *by* our sins, not *for* them, and, what is more, we have the right to be punished for our sins. Were it not so, in the darkness of illusion man would plunge still deeper in the mire, unknowing that his chosen path was the left-hand path of self-destruction. The wise man is therefore willing to suffer, for, whatever its cause, the right 'digestion' of that suffering will lead to a clearer vision of his true relation to the Universe, to his fellow men and, thirdly, to the inter-relation of the parts of his sevenfold being. He who refuses to suffer is like a man who ignores the violent pain which ensues on drinking an unknown fluid. He may not have known it as poison; now he knows. Only he who is willing to suffer can understand, in the deepest sense, the suffering of others, and this understanding is the awakening of that flower of pure compassion whose final bloom is Enlightenment. Hence the noble ideal as taught by the Wisdom-Religion, the womb of all philosophy. It is our duty, wrote H. P. Blavatsky, 'to drink without a murmur to the last drop whatever contents the cup of life may have in store for us, to pluck the roses of life only for the fragrance they may shed on *others*, and to be ourselves content with the thorns, if that fragrance cannot be enjoyed without depriving someone else of it'.

Once admit the existence of your own dis-ease and suffering, and imagination says of your fellow men, 'Thou too!' 'The man in whom the imagination of the heart has wakened to fullness of life feels the suffering of another as directly and personally as he feels his own. More indeed! For at bottom all men can bear their own suffering: that of another, on the contrary, only those can bear who are lacking in imagination. . . .'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *From Suffering to Fulfilment.* Keyserling.

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Those who perceive in their brother's mind the same temptations and frailty of will, producing the same unpleasant consequences, grow at the least more tolerant of others' failings, and, at the best, more understanding of the Path which Life itself is leading to its own fulfilment.

Let us, then, sing in praise of pain. To show that 'Sorrow is a *guru*, being the means of convincing one of the need of the religious life,' there is no need to quote from the *Precepts of the Guru*<sup>1</sup>; for resistance is essential to progress, and limitation is necessary to give direction and purpose, and therefore creative force, to the raw material of life. Our sins and errors, which we only learn to be sins and errors by the suffering they entail, are not only useful incentives to progress but necessary to growth. As Professor Jung explained, at a lecture given in London, no doctor can heal a patient against his will. The healer, representing the voice of Nature's laws, explains those laws as best he can, but 'when a man goes away, and does not pay attention. I do not call him back. You may accuse me of being un-Christian, but I do not care. I am on the side of Nature. The old Chinese *Book of Wisdom* says: 'The Master says it once.' He does not run after people, for it is no good. Those who are meant to hear will understand, and those who are not meant to understand will not hear.' Now, only by suffering do we learn that we are in error, and one of the commonest errors is to imagine that pleasure and happiness are 'worth the wear of winning', for the fruit of pleasure pursued as an end is a sense of spiritual hunger and frustration, without one foot of progress on the Way. No great man is ever satisfied, for the man who is satisfied with life as it is and himself as he is is dead. He who believes that the life of the senses is worthy of serious pursuit may be left to consume its sweetness and resulting bitterness, but he who has felt the heart-beat of the heart of Life will turn from the fading delights of the self's indulgence, and leaving the golden palaces of sense, go forth, as Gotama the Buddha once went forth, in search of an end to suffering.

Resistance develops the will and forces a change of values.

<sup>1</sup> *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines.* Evans-Wentz.

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Bodily disease is seen as a friend which points to errors of living; anxiety, fear and hate are found to be moods which drift like sullen clouds across a winter's sky; while ignorance, and doubt and pride, defilements of the mind, are seen as products of wrong thinking. Only the Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure, and the Essence of Mind is the journey's end of human consciousness. The wise man, therefore, uses *dukkha* as a signpost on the Way. As Mrs. Suzuki writes in her *Mahayana Buddhism*: 'In Hinayana, suffering is something to be escaped from, but in Mahayana there is developed the idea that in suffering there is meaning, that indeed it is the very principle of religion and makes a way to deliverance.'

For it is in adversity alone that the true man is revealed. In the fires of suffering, false desires are finally consumed, and from the ashes rises, purified, the essential man. When the storm of life through many lives is over, and the clouds of *maya* swept away, the self with eyes of wisdom, passionless, may view the sunlit heights which mark the entrance to a SELF unseen. Thereafter, between this man and his redemption lies but the enemy of pride, which claims for self the rewards of victory. When pride is slain, and the feet of the Pilgrim finally 'washed in the blood of the heart', the gates of Enlightenment swing open to receive the conqueror. Yet only a blinding flash of the inward glory is revealed, and then they close again, with the 'Man made perfect' still outside. Once more the Mystery of the Great Renunciation has achieved its purpose, and the world is richer by another Bodhisattva vowed to the service of mankind.

## AT A BUDDHIST FUNERAL

Here nothing is; only a worn-out thought,  
Whose parent Mind thinks elsewhere thoughts anew.  
Here's but the ashes of a garment wrought  
With mental fingers by the living you.

Life only is, Life the unceasing womb,  
Whose children move the cycle of their day  
And jest a while; within the closing tomb  
There's nought but dust new-settled by the Way.

The world is but a grave wherein we find  
Only the drifting shadows of Pure Mind.

## VII

### *The Middle Way*

AS is written in the Sutra of Hui Neng: 'You should know that so far as Buddha-nature is concerned, there is no difference between an enlightened man and an ignorant one. What makes the difference is that one realizes it while the other does not.' Wherefore is it true to say that: 'The aim of man is to become what he is,' and all religions are designed to assist in this becoming. Yet behind religions stands Religion, which Professor Radhakrishnan, earlier in *Gautama the Buddha* than the above quotation, describes as 'the vision of a reality which stands beyond and within the passing flux of immediate things, the intuitive loyalty to something larger than and beyond oneself'. This Reality has been given many names, but Indian philosophers, with proper reticence in limiting with names the Namelessness, refer to it as THAT, and knowing, as all mystics know of their own experience, that within each man is something which is part or aspect of the timeless Whole, they summarize their Wisdom in a single phrase—Thou art THAT.

This fundamental statement comprises three particulars—thou, THAT, and the relation between them. Whereas Hindu thought has ever stressed the fact of this identity, the Buddha was the first in human history to emphasize and analyze the means whereby the potential was made actual, the way from Thou to THAT, the technique of Becoming. There was, as Mrs. Rhys Davids has pointed out (*What was the Original Gospel in Buddhism?*), 'a danger in too lightly accepting identity of the actual human with the divine self. Between the two lay a great, a very long process of "becoming" before man could realize what it was in his essential nature to come to be. It called for a "training" requiring not one little life only but many lives,' and called, too, for a deliberate 'choosing to become, and the sus-



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tained outcome in endeavour'. But this tremendous journey, whose only pauses are those periodic nights of rest when the garments of the day are laid aside in 'death', implies a pilgrim moving onward to the ever More, a striving will whose watchword is 'becoming' (*bhavana*), and whose goal is infinite. Whether the goal of Life be viewed, as in Theravada Buddhism, as the ending of all sense of self, or whether, as in other creeds, the crown of a thousand lives of effort is the attainment of a state of consciousness where Thou and THAT are made commensurate, is a matter of terminology and point of view; yet this we know, that 'according to Buddha's teaching each man will have to find salvation, in the last resort, alone and with his own will, and he needs all the will in the world for so formidable an effort'. Truly, 'by precept and example Buddha was an exponent of the strenuous life'!<sup>1</sup>

This noble pilgrimage, from Here to There, from the fact to the realization of Enlightenment, takes place within the illusion of our consciousness called time, and the details of this aspect of the journey form the doctrine of re-birth. Just what is the Self which moves from life to life, and what is the nature of the healing sleep which lies between are matters of no practical importance; nor does it greatly matter what is the nature of the journey's end. We know this much about Nirvana, or Moksha, or Fana-al-Fana, or however else men name this vague Ideal, that only he can speak of it who knows its essence from his own experience, for as with Tao so with all other aspects of Reality, 'those who know do not (for they cannot) speak; those who speak do not know'. Even the noblest of ideals is only a milestone on the road of the 'ever-becoming'. There is in fact no final goal, and all our visions of the journey's end are only carrots tied to the donkey's nose. They draw us onward, but the journey is itself the goal, and every duty done is itself that journey's end. Even as a climber, victorious on a lowly pinnacle, looks upward to a nobler summit yet unclimbed, so should man's ideals be ever-receding. Yet there is value in the symbol of an ultimate ideal, for herein all the ultimates must meet, even the known

<sup>1</sup> *Gautama the Buddha*. Radhakrishnan.

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and unknown areas of the human mind, for, as Jung points out, "the symbol is on the one hand the primitive expression of the unconscious, while on the other hand it is an idea corresponding to the highest intuition produced by consciousness".<sup>1</sup>

Yet if the end of the Road can never be known until we arrive at it, the beginning is here and now. Life is a ceaseless process of becoming, and moves in a double spiral down to the deeps of matter and back to the heights of its own unstained eternity. In one sense the whole of the journey home, from mineral to God, comprises that Middle Way, 'narrow as a razor's edge,' which moves between the countless Opposites on which is built the manifested world. Yet it may be said that the final path of self-deliverance only begins in that moment of time when the lower self, the personality, first sees with the eyes of the Self within, and knows, with radiant certainty, that Thou indeed art THAT, that 'I and my Father are One'. Thereafter the vision fades, but not the memory, and the Path, once entered, knows no shadow of turning and no pause upon the Way. From hour to hour, from day to day, Life, the Initiator, tests the aspiring pilgrim soul. Each step on the way is a minor achievement, illumined with that same Enlightenment which, at cosmic levels, crowned the efforts of Siddhartha Gautama, and every sacrifice of self to Self and Self to SELF is training for the Great Renunciation, when all that is learned by the individual, of knowledge, power and spiritual grandeur, is laid on the altar of mankind.

The Road of Becoming is in this respect unique, that it starts and ends in the mind. As the Patriarch Hui Neng proclaimed: 'The Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure,' and 'we should work for Buddhahood within the Essence of Mind, and we should not look for it apart from ourselves'. Whether we travel to the East or West we only move our bodies, and for the greatest journey in history there is no going away. There are those who, in preparation for the journey, leave the world, the better, so they say, to prepare for the final march to victory. But a man needs scrip and staff for the journey, and the news of others'

<sup>1</sup> *The Secret of the Golden Flower*. Trans. R. Wilhelm.

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experience, and, if he loves his fellow man, a boon companion at his side. All these are found in the market-place of circumstance, and Life, the superabundant, looks disdainfully on those who hide away. For the Path is not to be studied in a monkish cell, but lived each moment of the day, in the midst of circumstance. Indeed, as is said in *The Voice of the Silence*: 'Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself.' But the same great manual of self-becoming also says: 'Before that path is entered, thou must destroy thy lunar body (the body of desire), cleanse thy mind-body, and make clean thy heart.'

This is the field of ethics in its widest sense. Ethics alone, the way of the saint as distinct from the ways of devotion, of beauty, and that of the student-philosopher, is the art of true relations with one's fellow men. All codes of morals consist of a series of precepts designed to prevent the evils done by one man to another, enjoining respect for his body, his goods, and his reputation. This true relationship involves the maximum of self-control; that is, control of the desires of one's self where they conflict with those of others. With the dawning consciousness of a larger Self the need for rigid rules, whether imposed from without or within, gives way to the true nobility of life which springs from an understanding of its essential unity. Ethics, therefore, is the school wherein the character learns to subdue the desires of the part to the greater needs of the whole. As such, it is of immense importance, but the Path begins at a point where the need of ethics is transcended, and at its entrance lies a bridge.

This bridge is mentioned in every treatise on the inner way. It joins the will to the deed, fantasy to fact, the ideal to the real made visible. Over it life must some time pass, but because beyond it lies the realm where Self, the inward character, and not the self is ruler, the latter uses the utmost of its energy, acquired in many lives of self-indulgence, to hold the traveller back. This explains why few of our splendid plans for spiritual growth are allowed to materialize, for all involve the subjugation

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of self, and the lower desires resent being chained to the needs of the whole of which they are such unruly members.

Man walks upon two legs. The Path is a Middle Way between the Pairs of Opposites, and the doctrine of the 'Mean' may only be grasped by an understanding of the correlation and interdependence of the two. These opposites are as the two sides of a coin; the existence of one implies the other. As the *Tao Tê Ching* points out:

‘When all in the world understand beauty to be beautiful,  
then ugliness exists.

When all understand goodness to be good, then evil exists.

Thus existence suggests non-existence . . . .’

and the existence of any attribute or quality implies its opposite.

To him who treads the Middle Way all opposites are fused into one in the crucible of a Mind unstained with differences, for ‘the Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure’. Only the eye of Buddhi, the ‘third eye’ of mythology, can see the opposites from the viewpoint of this ‘higher third’, yet he who lights this lantern will not lose the Way, for ‘if thine eye be single thy whole body will be filled with light’.

The *Sutra of Hui Neng* sets out thirty-six pairs of opposites, including, for example, heaven and earth, affirmation and negation, form and formlessness, good and evil, existent and non-existent, to which may be added the usual Western examples of in-breathing and out-breathing, night and day, and the ebb and flow of the tides. The list is endless, for in respect of all things there are at least two points of view. Of profound importance in the history of Eastern thought, however, for it is the principal distinction between the Theravada and Mahayana Schools, is the apparent distinction in the human mind between what Buddhists call the Arhat and the Bodhisattva ideals. The Arhat is a man or woman who by lives of self-elimination attains Nirvana; the Bodhisattva vows from the first to dedicate his whole endeavour to the service of mankind. The former, concentrating on his own improvement, aims at reducing the power of the selfish self, or not-Self, until there is no longer a self to impede the will of the Whole: ‘Forgoing self, the Universe

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grows I.' The latter, concentrating on the needs of all humanity, aims at so expanding the germ of the universal Life within, that self grows into Self, and Self into SELF. In brief, the former strives to slay all sense of self-ness; the latter fosters the sense of oneness with all other forms of life until the sense of self-ness coincides with SELF. Both slay duality, but by complementary and therefore 'opposite' means. The different 'devices' used to achieve the same ideal produce the complementary paths of the more rational, literal-minded, even puritanical Theravadin and the more compassionate, expansive mysticism of the Mahayana. Even here, however, the wise man treads the Middle Way, and while moving towards the ideal of the Arhat, the self-perfected man, remembers that self-development cannot proceed very far without that all-compassionate regard for living things which makes the Bodhisattva the ideal of unnumbered millions of humanity.

There is a characteristic Buddhist virtue which illustrates the doctrine of the Mean, and this is tolerance. At one extreme lie those who conceive it their duty to save their brothers' souls, even in the face of fierce resentment on the part of those to be 'saved'; at the other extreme lie those who consider that salvation is such a personal affair that they take not the slightest interest in the spiritual welfare of any of their fellow men. The Buddhist attitude allows each man to mind his own business, yet always offers help where help is needed and desired.

Man walks upon two legs, and progress is an alternating change of weight or emphasis between the two. Yet just as a fencer's weight seems ever poised between his feet, resting upon either foot only for so long as is needed to swing back the emphasis, so on the Path the traveller rests at neither extreme, but strives for balance on a line between, from which all opposites are equally in view. For all extremes beget their opposites, and both are alike 'unprofitable'. As the Buddha said, in his first expounding of the Middle Way: 'There are two extremes, O Bhikkhus, the habitual practice on the one hand of those things whose attraction depends upon the passions and senses, an

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unworthy and unprofitable way . . . and the habitual practice on the other hand of self-mortification, which is painful and equally unworthy and unprofitable.'

But if to the eye there are obvious pairs of opposites, no less definite is the inward division in the mind. Western psychology has rediscovered the 'feeling' and 'thinking' types, and the difference between the introvert and the extravert. Less obvious, but just as important, is that between the gaining of experience and digesting it, which corresponds with the active and the meditative type of mind. All these distinctions are, of course, ephemeral, for every mind—that is, each aspect of the Essence of Pure Mind—must sooner or later develop every quality, and in the course of many lives use male and female bodies to that end.

In the course of centuries, progressive thinkers of the Mahayana School have carried the doctrine of the Middle Way to its logical though staggering conclusion. If neither life nor death is an ultimate, if time and timelessness are both untrue, then equally the two ends of the Path are a pair of opposites, and the world we know, Samsara, and the end of which we dream, Nirvana, are equally untrue. Both alike are aspects of the Essence of Pure Mind, but none will reach this state of cosmic consciousness until for him the pendulum of the opposites is stilled.

Meanwhile, for him who finds the doctrine of the opposites, as such, too subtle and profound, there is ample precedent for studying the Way in terms of trinities. The Hindu pantheon includes the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer, and the West has long made use of the threefold Path of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True. These may be compared with the three divisions of Raj Yoga: Jnana Yoga, the way of spiritual knowledge, Bhakti Yoga, the way of love and devotion, and Karma Yoga, the way of right action in the due performance of all duty. These three are aspects of one Way, for the vision supplied by wisdom is useless unless translated into action, and placed at the service of all by the hands of love; devotion is useless unless guided by right knowledge, and the perfect act needs knowledge

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and love if it is to avoid reactions on its author in the days to come. It has been said that 'love is the power by which we rise, whether that love be of the True or of the Beautiful or, best of all, of the One *Atman*, Krishna, Who shines through everything men love or worship',<sup>1</sup> but even love must be constantly and usefully applied. It is said of Tao that 'when one looks at it one cannot see it; when one listens to it one cannot hear it. However, when one uses it, it is inexhaustible,' and, as the followers of Zen Buddhism know best of all, it is in the right performance of the daily round that beauty, love, and wisdom are alone made truly manifest.

Yet even these trinities may be resolved into the pairs of opposites which sever one-ness into the illusion of duality, for knowledge in action is wisdom, and love in action is compassion, or service, and the Buddha was the All-Enlightened and the All-Compassionate One.

From a different point of view the Path is a spiral on which a threefold cycle of understanding is perpetually experienced. There is a Japanese saying to the effect that in the beginning a man sees mountains as mountains, and trees as trees; later, the mountains are no longer seen as mountains nor the trees as trees; later still, he sees once more the mountains to be mountains, and the trees as trees. On this analogy, an interesting schedule might be made of the mental cycle, constantly repeated, by which the indwelling consciousness, *vinnana*, moves from an early state through an 'opposite', intermediate state to a 'final' state, which, seen as a higher third above the two, is in fact the first with so much added experience. Even so does THAT periodically manifest in the Universe as we know it, and then withdraw Itself into the *Mahapralaya* of the Great Unmanifest, with all the added experience of the intervening period of 'time'. We pass, for example, from formlessness through form to a higher formlessness; from a lack of desire, from feeble will, through fierce desire to a pure desirelessness; from absence of purpose through intensity of purpose to the state described by the Master Lu Tzu in the *Secret of the Golden Flower*: 'If one

<sup>1</sup> *Yoga of the Bhagavat Gita*. Sri Krishna Prem.

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can attain purposelessness through purpose then the thing has been grasped.' In the same way, lack of effort moves through effort to the true Right Effort, which is effortless, while no-self, in the sense of no personality yet developed achieves, via a period of selfishness, to selflessness, where only SELF remains. It may be that when psychology as a science has been more developed we shall find that from the unlimited Unconscious we reach, through a slow dissolution of the *participation mystique*, a perfect consciousness, only to lose it, as we near the Goal, in the Universal Consciousness which lies at the threshold of the unmanifest Unconsciousness. However that may be, the Path of Life would seem to be a learning that mountains are not mountains, and yet they are, a technique which Zen alone as yet has developed and applied.

The Buddha summarized life into Four Noble Truths, and according to the Scriptures said: 'It is through not understanding, through not penetrating the Four Noble Truths, O Bhikkhus, that we have wandered round this long, long journey (of re-birth), both you and I.' These Truths are, first, the omnipresence of suffering; secondly, its cause, desire or selfishness. Third is the logical and vitally important statement that the effect, suffering, may be removed by removing its cause, desire; and the Fourth Truth is described in the Scriptures as the Noble Eightfold Way. The untranslatable terms which describe the steps on the Way are usually rendered as Right Views, Right Motive, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Means of Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Concentration, and Right *Samadhi*, a state of consciousness which is the prelude to Nirvana. This Path may be studied and applied at divers stages of development, as the Confucian 'golden mean' of ethical conduct, as the moral and mental character-training usually described as 'self-development', or as the unfolding of the higher centres of one's being, of which one reads in spiritual classics such as *The Voice of the Silence* and, in its purest rendering, the *Tao Tê Ching*.

At all three levels, however, the same three facts apply—that the Path begins both Here and Now; that 'thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path thyself'; and



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that the Path is at all times a Middle Way. All that we think and say and do is short of perfection, for it is ever at least a hair's breadth to the one side or the other of the median ideal. Yet to find and then to tread this Middle Way, unswervingly, untiringly, is the oldest, hardest, and most enjoyable game in the world. Whether viewed as a religion, a science or an art, a habit, a hobby, or as the only thing in a dismal world which is 'worth the wear of winning', this ceaseless effort to bestride and ride the Bird of Life is a whole-time job for any man, and its own supreme reward.

## SEARCH

I seek the One, the final One, but who  
Am I that craves communion?  
Am I but child of all that I have done  
And yet shall do?

I seek, unknowing I am sought.  
I search about me for the eyes which see.  
My shouting will is clamorous to be free  
Yet I am nought.

I shrink, and the pale stars grow brighter  
Fade, and a shadow dies upon the sun.  
Desires die, dissolve, are gone;  
The light grows brighter.

I rise, and earth rejoices at my spending,  
Grow, and the stars are but a garment shed.  
Illusion dies, and lust is dead.  
The self has ending.

I am and am not. The Many is the One.  
All life is but a robe unrolled.  
Nay more, still is the Many manifold,  
The Real, a journey scarce begun.  
I that am I walk on.

## VIII

### *Dana : The Art of Giving*

DANA, which may be translated as the 'charity' of St Paul, is described in *The Voice of the Silence* as 'the Gate that standeth at the entrance of the Path'. Its importance in that inner growth which is known as treading the Middle Way is paramount, and not subordinate. As St Paul wrote, 'Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.' The Buddhist religion has been summed up in the triple injunction: 'Cease to do evil; learn to do good; cleanse your own heart.' And the heart of doing good is charity, loving-kindness, the utmost giving of all that we have and are, not for reward, now or hereafter, but because we cannot do otherwise.

Dana is far too wide a term to be confined within the modern usage of the word 'charity', which has fallen sadly from the Greek original of St Paul. The word today is confined to the physical plane, and has the implication of a condescending surrender of money and things which are surplus to our own requirements. The fact that we can say, 'As cold as charity', is proof of the degradation of a noble virtue, and charity so carried out is an insult to the receiver and useless, if not evil, in the giver's mind. True giving covers far more precious gifts than pass from hand to hand. Money and goods are the least of charity. Time is often far more valuable and the busy man would rather give a substantial cheque than an hour of his busy day. More common in those who have not than in those who have is the goodwill of the heart, the 'willing well' to the one who needs, and those who complain that this is all they have to give are ignorant of spiritual values. Motive is the touchstone of an action's worth, and he who wills to give all he has, and backs

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it with the giving of all that he can spare, is helping the recipient and himself far more than he who gives what he does not want and considers himself well rid of a tiresome applicant.

So much for what is given, but who gets, who gives? The personality is a mask for the individual, and the individual is, as Buddhism has demonstrated, only a 'bundle of attributes' enshrining a ray of Enlightenment, the Christ or Buddha within. It is from the illusion of individual permanence, 'the great dire heresy of Separateness that weans thee from the rest',<sup>1</sup> that the need for charity is born. As is written in the *Tao Teh Ching*, 'When all in the world understand beauty to be beautiful, then ugliness exists. When all understand goodness to be good, then evil exists', and when all believe that men are separate, then love, the binder, is needed to unify the foolishly self-separated things.

But the enquiry must go deeper. Do we in fact give away and receive in return, or is it truer to say that we own nothing save what we give away? The affairs of the heart are exempt from reason, for they spring from a higher plane, and the whole rational conception of possession must be reconsidered in the light of love, that force which, with its twin, repulsion, is the strongest in the world. If the Buddhist doctrine of *anatta* be the truth, then truly we own nothing, for we are but bubbles on the stream of time. The Chinese say that life is a bridge; wherefore build no house upon it. If we are travellers, perpetual travellers, treading the journey home, how can we who are mortal burden ourselves with mortal goods? Yet even as in a wayside inn we use its furniture for a night, so for a single life we use what we need of material things, then freely let them go. In a way we are all alike trustees for our possessions, whether we have twenty or thirty talents, or only one. And as we use what we have, so shall we find our future possessions. 'For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.' The more we acquire, the greater our responsibility. Let a man have two coats, but if he have six will there be no dis-ease in his mind

<sup>1</sup> *The Voice of the Silence*

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that others shiver for want of one? Let a man have books, but he cannot read the whole of a thousand at one time, and others have need of them. If this seems communistic, so it is, of the spirit, but it is the greatest possible mistake to imagine that the virtue of right possession can be instilled by politics. Not one per cent of the population would willingly forego the right to acquire as much as wealth can buy, and to force the remaining ninety-nine per cent to be starved in their desire is the way to revolution and not the Middle Way.

Money, the most fluid of all property, must circulate unceasingly or, like blood, it will stagnate and lead to serious disease in the body corporate. Water finds its own level, and from him who has too much there is a natural flow to him who has too little, but this should be a natural flow, not a transfer forced against the donor's will.

For the opposite of Dana is Tanha (Sanskrit, Trishna)—

‘Trishna, that thirst which makes the living drink  
Deeper and deeper of the false salt waves  
Whereon they float . . . .’<sup>1</sup>

This thirst, or personal desire binds the possessor to the thing possessed with an elastic cord, and to tear out our possessions against our will is to cause intensive suffering or *dukkha* to the person robbed. The reaction of the deprived possessor is anger and the will to regain his goods or, if he has never been allowed to possess them, to gain what he desires. The only way to procure true Dana is to educate the mind to want to give, and this by teaching the fleeting nature of possession and the folly of all personal desire.

It has been said that there is no poverty save in desire. Desire, in the sense of personal desire is a craving to add to the stature of the not-Self, and in the same point of space there is no room for God and Mammon, the Self and the not-Self, Tao and Illusion. Desire unsatisfied is discontent, a hunger in the lower mind which is itself a form of suffering; desire satisfied is a contradiction in terms, for desire of this kind is never satisfied, but feeds on itself without end. Where there is desire there is

<sup>1</sup> *The Light of Asia.*

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no peace, for peace within is the reward of self-lessness. The reason is that every gain is to another's loss, and that which harms the whole can never serve the nobler ends of the individual. In English law there is a clear distinction between possession and ownership. I possess the watch which is lent me, but I do not own it; I own the house which I have rented to another, but I do not for the time possess it. In these terms it might be said that in the inner life we possess what we have; we own but that which we give away. And this conception may be linked with the idea of trusteeship of all our goods and talents, for we have given away, in the spiritual realm, that which we no longer hold with bonds of self-regarding, but in trust for all.

Why do we give? The answer is all-important, for the difference between good and evil is in the mind, and Karma, the law of cause-effect, takes cognisance of an act on every plane. Thus, a gift of money for the purpose of publicity will help the donor to 'acquire merit' on the physical plane, but will further darken the mind with selfishness. This equally applies to invisible things, with the added doctrine that in Nature's commerce there is no cheating; we get what we give, no more and no less. He, for example, who goes to a meeting to see what he can get will get little, even though he will surely blame the speakers for his poverty. For Dana resides in the heart, and he who would have must pay, if not with money at least with the will to receive, with spiritual energy, with goodwill. And these are easy things to give abundantly, and their giving involves no loss. Has he who loves less love for all his loving? For the quantity which the lower self can give of its possessions is limited; the amount of Nature's wealth of life and love and beauty is unlimited, and he who draws on 'the power-house of the Universe' can draw, so long as the drawing be for the commonweal, unceasingly. The measure of what he will have to give is the width of the conduit pipe he offers the higher life, the life of which he is one brief infinitesimal form.

In every counting house there is a direct reflection of these laws of spiritual book-keeping. As every accountant knows, all that you borrow is a liability, though it makes you rich in the

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eyes of men; all that you lend, though it seems you have lost it, is an asset, and in some concerns the principal asset of the firm. Nature goes further, and rules that the only abiding assets are what you have given away.

It has been said, 'The price of a debt is its payment.' Nature's accountants are inexorable: all that is owed must be paid. A debt is a bond that binds you to the debtor; sever it, and be free. Money debts are the easiest, for if the debt cannot be paid it should not have been contracted. Let the payment be swift, willing and with measure running over. Promises are debts of honour, whether of money, to keep an appointment, or to keep a secret. Let them be paid at once, even though with regret that the promise was ever made. But however deep the regret, once the promise is given it must be kept. Next time, be more careful about making such a promise! Gratitude is a form of debt-paying, and the student soon discovers that it is more difficult to receive than to give. The Eastern attitude to thanks is the opposite to the West. In the East, the Buddhist Bhikkhu does not thank the donor for his bowl of food, but regards the giver as fortunate that he will acquire such merit for his generosity. Yet in his mind he pays for the food with gratitude, and the debt is paid.

Dana, in the modern sense of charity, is a complex and profoundly difficult problem. If it is to do more good than harm it needs right motive, ample understanding of the human mind, and wisdom in the choice of ways and means of giving. As H. P. Blavatsky wrote, 'More mischief has been done by emotional charity than sentimentalists care to face.' There is only one right motive, the desire of the heart to help another's need. Organized societies may serve the needs of the body, but it is the personal touch, the warmth of heart in the giver that feeds the real hunger of the one in need. Organized charity is almost a contradiction in terms, for the heart element is negligible, and one cannot thank an anonymous committee, nor give of the heart to a Benevolent Institution. It is the smile which goes with the gift that makes it easy to accept, and the fact that a fellow being has taken the trouble and time to help is the healing

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element which money and goods can never supply. In the ideal community there would be no charitable associations, for the needs of the individual would be met by individuals, and there are communities in the world today that have no 'charities', for the individuals do not allow the need for such to arise.

It is because individual charity needs such care and wisdom that organizations arise, though there are other reasons less creditable. For on the one hand no call must be refused—'Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin'; and on the other hand there is the 'sponger' who will always ask for what he is too lazy to earn, whether of money or wisdom. It is wrong to help too long, lest self-reliance be weakened, yet it is harmful to withdraw before the sufferer is weaned from such assistance. It is said that advice is cheap to give, yet sound advice, when asked for, is the most valuable gift that age and experience can give. Yet even advice is dangerous, for if another acts upon your advice the karma of his acts is also yours. Wherefore be careful of interference, lest with a will to help you do but bind yourself more firmly on the Wheel. Give principles, in the Buddhist manner, prefacing, though silently, the wisdom offered with the old, traditional words, 'Thus have I heard.' As is said in the Buddhist Scriptures, 'The gift of the Law excels all other gifts', for the Wisdom which is the heart of all religions will alone enable a man to tread the Middle Way unaided, and to find for himself the changeless, common Goal. And there is value in the word gift. As Shakespeare makes Polonius say, 'Neither a borrower nor a lender be, for loan oft loses both itself and friend, and borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.' It is wiser to give impersonally, asking for no reward, than to create a tie which may, with much unpleasantness, 'lose both itself and friend'.

And so to the word 'afford'. One can always afford to be generous, for if the request for help is 'right', not only is it right to answer it but the means to help will be forthcoming. Experience shows that when the motive is right the law of the vacuum obtains. 'Give, and it shall be given unto you'; when the self is emptied Tao flows in, and bread cast upon the waters



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returns in strange and devious ways. For the root of it all is in the heart's sure knowledge of its own eternal unity. The man that loves his fellow men is above all argument. He knows that the Buddha-Christ is shrined in Everyman, that all that stands between the Light and the heart's enlightenment is man-erected, and though the Way be long, it bears its own infallible reward.

The technique used must vary with the individual. Buddhists largely use the four Brahma-Viharas, pouring out on all that lives the tremendous power of Love, Compassion, Joy and Equanimity. Other religions have their own methods, with or without the symbol of God, but the power is the same and its power is infinite. 'Give up thy life if thou would'st live,' says *The Voice of the Silence*. 'Greater love than this hath no man,' say the Christian Scriptures, 'that a man lay down his life for a friend.' And the life that is given is more than the life of the body. It is the life of self, the dearest of our dear possessions, the last and final barrier between a man and his own divinity.

Most religions speak of the Great Renunciation yet, as is written in the *Dhammapada*, 'Drop by drop is the water-pot filled,' and only by lives of small renouncement will the self at last be shed. 'To live to benefit mankind is the first step,' says *The Voice of the Silence*, and it would seem the last, for we must needs 'remain unselfish to the endless end.' Perhaps in this same immortal manual of true Dana is to be found a passage which, when laid beside the inspired exordium of St Paul, makes further words seem futile. As is said in the Scriptures of Zen Buddhism, 'the rest is silence, and a finger pointing the Way'.

'Let thy soul lend its ear to every cry of pain like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun.

'Let not the fierce Sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye.

'But let each burning human tear drop on thy heart and there remain; nor ever brush it off until the pain that caused it is removed.'

## IX

### *Buddhist Morality*

SILA is a Sanskrit word which covers the field of morality, or ethics. When practised in relation to Dana, the art of giving, it forms the necessary self-preparation for Bhavana, the road to self-enlightenment by concentration, meditation and contemplation. Its relation to enlightenment is therefore intimate. As Professor Radhakrishnan puts it, 'Truth can never be perceived except by those who are in love with goodness.' For goodness, leading through the realm of good and evil, reaches the plane beyond all these illusion-born distinctions. The only barrier which holds us from 'becoming what we are' is self, and when the self, the temporary aggregate of passions, fears and prejudices, of hopes and personal desire, has died, even as a fire for want of fuelling, then right and wrong, and all other 'pairs of opposites' belonging to the realm of self, will also die.

Morality, then, is the way of the Good, until such time as good and evil are transcended, and it may be described as the common denominator of all religions, for though the systems of philosophy have generally diverged in the long road from the several Founders' teachings, ethics, in the sense of moral principles, are found to be much the same. It may be said that the really good man will achieve the Goal as soon as those who tread the way of the true or the way of the beautiful, yet these are but aspects of a Middle Way, and ultimately all must develop every capacity of body, heart and mind before perfection is attained. A moral life alone will not lead to enlightenment, for only the purification of the mind will awaken Buddhi, the dormant faculty which must be wakened that the inward eye may see. The development of beauty, goodness and knowledge are so many preparations to that end, and each, in this life or some other, must be severally fulfilled.

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The field of morality may be considered in its inner and outer aspects, the former, the development of moral grandeur or nobility of character, manifesting sooner or later as right action, the Karma Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita, or, as Professor Radhakrishnan calls it, the sanctification of daily life. The third to the fifth steps on the Buddhist Eightfold Path, right speech, right action and right livelihood, comprise the field of Sila, first with the negative 'cease to do evil', then with the positive 'learn to do good'; and these, as already set out, enable the pilgrim of the Way to begin to 'purify his own heart', and so attain release from the fetters of his unreality.

As between the inner and the outer aspects of morality Buddhism insists on the former's dominance. As is written in the *Dhammapada*, the Buddhist manual of morality, 'All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts.' In other words, character is thought and feeling which precipitates in action, which action in turn affects our future thought and feeling, and hence a character which is the ever changing 'resultant' of this ceaseless interplay. Right thinking is therefore of the essence of Buddhist teaching. 'Our Essence of Mind,' said the Zen Patriarch, Hui Neng, 'is intrinsically pure; all things are only its manifestation, and good deeds and evil deeds are only the result of good thoughts and evil thoughts respectively.'

This emphasis on 'rightness' of mind as the sole cause of right action leads to the need of Bhavana, the culture of the mind for its enlightenment. The logic of the step is obvious. 'If you remove (from conduct) the purpose of the mind, the bodily act is but as rotten wood. Wherefore regulate the mind, and the body of itself will go right.'<sup>1</sup>

Yet this, as already pointed out, is the process which should follow the 'ceasing to do evil' and 'learning to do good' of morality. The truth is that in the inner life the whole vast process of development, of 'self-becoming', is inseparable. There is neither first nor last in the steps to be taken. Each link in the

<sup>1</sup> From the *Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king*.

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mighty chain must be separately forged and tested, and all must be at least begun before any is perfected to its last degree.

Yet without trespassing on the province of Bhavana, morality insists on the control of the mind's reaction to outside events. As Epictetus, the Greek slave, proclaimed, 'If any man be unhappy, let him remember that it is by reason of himself alone.' Again, as the Stoic Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, wrote, 'Pain is either an evil for the body, and if so let body state its case; or for the soul. But the soul can maintain its own unclouded calm, and refuse to view it as evil. For every judgment or impulse or inclination or avoidance is within, and nothing evil can force entrance there.' More than a thousand years later Shakespeare summed it up more briefly when he wrote, 'There is neither good nor ill but thinking makes it so.'

The mind must have its roots in the infinite if this sense of 'rightness', of an inner judgment based on universal values, is at all times to prevail. But if life, as our senses tell us, is an ever-changing complex of circumstance, subject to the cycle of birth, growth, decay and death in all its parts, there must be, as the Buddha said, 'an unborn, unoriginated, un-become', a state 'wherein there is neither earth nor water, nor fire, nor air, nor the sphere of infinite space, nor the sphere of the Void . . .', nor any attributes or aggregates which the mind can possibly conceive. For the universe in the spiritual sense is one and indivisible, yet utterly alive in all its parts. It breeds humility to see it, as Aurelius saw it, as a living organism, 'controlling a single substance and a single soul'. And, he goes on, 'Note how all things react upon a single world sense, all act by a single impulse, and all co-operate towards all that comes to pass; and mark the texture and concatenation of the web.'

This is the sanction of right action. At the lowest, it pays to be good. For in accordance with the Karmic law of natural retribution, 'If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, suffering will follow him as the wheel follows the beast which draws the cart';<sup>1</sup> in the realm of philosophy, a growing realization of the unity of the life-impulse, of the 'concatenation of the web',

<sup>1</sup> *Dhammapada*.

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destroys the desire to injure others for the sake of self-aggrandizement; while on the plane of spiritual understanding he whose heart has wakened to the flame of Bodhi-citta, the Wisdom-Heart of compassion, will find it increasingly impossible to think or to do anything which injures what has become to him his Self.

The path of morality, whose starting point is in the heart of Everyman and its Goal an infinite Reality, is a movement of the whole man to the More, leaving no part behind. In a world which is but a manifestation of Reality no part is unimportant, and though none is of more than comparative reality, all must be redeemed by the sacrifice of that which stands between the unenlightened part and the all-enlightened Whole. We live in the field of the Opposites, where good is better than evil, and that which is good in us is more to be desired than that which is 'unredeemed'. Yet all alike must be reintegrated, and he who dissociates himself from that part of his self of which he is ashamed is but creating a further division in a world of over-division, and thereby delays his own enlightenment. If the way seems weary, bearing the burden of not-Self on the road to Self, yet he who looks within will find the One, however dim its light is shining. Once that light is seen, the way by which the Self becomes 'the lord of self' is a matter of reasonable faith and the indomitable will to reach the heart's enlightenment. For, as Dean Inge has pointed out, faith begins as an experiment and ends as an experience, and what any man has done, any other man, with infinite time before him, can sooner or later do.

The Way is a Middle Way between, and ultimately above, extremes. At its lowest, it moves between the too indulgent and the too ascetic life. On a higher plane, it is the constant choosing of the 'more right', in all the changing circumstances, remembering that evil is but the shadow of good, the progeny of *avidya*, ignorance. For *avidya*, which Professor Radhakrishnan describes as 'more a functional disorder of the human mind than an organic defect of the universe', is the only root of evil, leading men to the foolish belief in a separate self, and hence to the desire for its self-aggrandizement. But, as Epictetus says, 'To

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a good man there is no evil, either in life or death,' and the time comes when the mind achieves a position above the Opposites. As the Patriarch Hui Neng taught, 'There are good ways and evil ways, but since Buddha-nature is neither, Buddhism is known as having no two ways. . . . For within our mind is Buddha, and that Buddha is the real Buddha. If Buddha is not to be sought within our mind, then where shall we find the real Buddha? Doubt not that Buddha is within your mind, apart from which nothing can exist.' For 'Buddha' let the Christian read 'Christ', or the Taoist 'Tao'; the truth is the same, that ultimately all distinctions, man-conceived, will blend in the unity from which his ignorance divided them, and all the Opposites be seen as the necessary means whereby the finite consciousness must make its slow way 'home'.

Meanwhile the battle rages. Wrong thinking, wrong desiring and wrong deeds are the enemy, and the battlefield is the endless here and now. Self must be lord of self, and the self take refuge in Self. 'Just as a dealer trains a thoroughbred, and breaks him to the rein, so do thou self restrain.' So sings the *Dhammapada*, and adds, and all who have fought have found it to be true, 'Though one should conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men, yet he who conquers himself is the greatest warrior.'

From this battle there is no escape, either in time or space. For the mind in which the battle rages is itself the warrior, and neither travel for the body nor distraction for the mind will bring so much as a pause in a struggle which must end in a victory for one side or the other. In the spiritual realm there is neither armistice nor compromise.

The enemy is desire, for delusion of the mind, the foolish thought that 'self' is permanent, has bred desire to serve its insubstantial ends, and wrong desiring breeds wrong deeds. The aim of morality, then, is to 'kill out desire', and to beware lest, being dead, 'it should again from the dead arise'. None can do this in a day, few in a lifetime, for there are grades of desire from those which are purely self-ish to those which are purely self-less, and only the formation of habit, and the persistence of

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those habits with the power of an indomitable will can change the purpose and direction of desire from ignoble to more noble ends. 'Drop by drop is the water-pot filled,' whether with good or evil. And though it is true that 'by oneself evil is done, by oneself one suffers; by oneself evil is left undone, by oneself one is purified',<sup>1</sup> the task is made far easier by choosing an environment of good thoughts, good books and good people than by deliberately increasing one's difficulties by choosing the reverse. Habit is all-powerful in the average mind, and just as a stream will cut its own bed in the mountainside, so thought will cut the grooves of future thought for good or ill. Moreover, as Epictetus said, 'You must know that it is no easy thing for a principle to become a man's own, unless each day he maintain it and hear it maintained, as well as work it out in life.'

Our principal weapon in the armoury of right is the law of Karma, that harmony of nature and the universe whereby disturbance of the universal law must be adjusted by the disturbing mind. This law, vast in sweep as utterly compassionate in its results, is at the command of every man. To quote again from the *Dhammapada*, 'Not in the sky, not in the midst of the sea, not in a hollow in the mountains is there a place where a man can escape from an evil deed' or, for that matter, from a good one. The compassionate pressure of this mighty law has been noted and sung by most philosophers. It is the manifestation of that 'Power divine which moves to good' of *The Light of Asia*, and it is the power which Marcus Aurelius noted. '“All that happens happens right.” Watch closely, you will find it so. Not merely in the order of events, but by scale of right, as though some power apportions all according to worth.'

Using this law, as a mechanic uses the harnessed power behind the tool in his hand, the wise man slowly builds, changes, improves and refines his character, knowing that happiness, enlightenment and finally Buddhahood are the inevitable reward. But he knows too that he alone must make the effort, for 'Buddhas do but point the Way'.

<sup>1</sup> *Dhammapada*.

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If wars may only be won with 'blood and sweat and toil and tears', how much more is the effort needed for this war of Self-becoming, of the utter and final realization that the self we serve so lovingly is non-existent, and that the only God is the latent Buddha within? Yet what nobler enterprise can any man desire? He who has even begun to master himself becomes for others a rock in a storm-swept sea, a guide in the mind's bewildered darkness, an example of precept and philosophy applied. Such a man, no longer fearing death, is beyond all harm from others, for he knows that none can injure him save himself by his own thought and deed, and as for the body, none can do more than advance the day on which it dies.

The outward signs that the war goes well in the struggle for self-mastery are increased humility, serenity and power. Many a Master has taught that he who would be spiritually great must be ready to be nought in the eyes of men. Personal conceit is an absolute barrier to progress for, as Epictetus said, 'It is impossible for a man to begin to learn what he has a conceit that he already knows.' As for serenity of mind, the process of self-reducing involves a constant change of values, and most of the things which caused us worry worry us no more. The vast and complex cycle of becoming is seen increasingly as the pattern of unending law, and where there is no room for caprice or variance there is found an inviolable calm. Attributes attached to circumstance are barriers to enlightened vision. Things are neither good nor bad, desirable nor undesirable; they are. The rest is a matter of labelling by the mind. To the wise man the immense machinery of cosmic motion is beyond the predicates of 'right' and 'wrong', and he can say, in the immortal words of Thoreau, 'I know that the enterprise is worthy. I know that things work well. I have heard no bad news.'

Finally, self-mastery produces an increasing sense of power, power to help, power to heal, power to handle circumstance. When conscience, which is a memory of lessons learnt in days and lives gone by, approves the plans for some projected action, the power of the will that uses thought and action to achieve its ends is always equal to the task assumed. For as the illusion of



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an ego ebbs away, the mind grows in stature, even as the field of service grows from self to family, from family to state, and so to all mankind. And as it grows its power grows in volume and efficiency, in volume in that it more and more controls and uses the infinite power of the universe, and in efficiency when the force, in smooth, direct transmission, flows from the highest to the lowest plane with the minimum of friction from wrong thinking, wrong desiring and wrong action on the way.

So much for the subjective field of morality, but the man who is learning to be a 'good man' must adjust himself to the community in which he serves. On the one hand, he must not be dubbed a prig; on the other he must never bow the knee to 'propriety' or 'respectability'. For all of these are lies, are whited sepulchres of conduct, whereas the Buddha's teaching and his life were one. 'As he speaks so he acts; as he acts so he speaks. And because he speaks as he acts and acts as he speaks, therefore is he called the Enlightened One.'

The first step on the Path of self-perfection is, as we know, 'to live to benefit mankind', and the last is the slaying of the last of our enemies, pride. Between these two is a long road and a hard one, yet the treading is its own reward. 'Mindful and self-possessed' each moment of the day, the pilgrim finds increasingly that right habits of thought, desire and action have their slow but final effect. For within the limits self-imposed in the past the will is free, and none can prevent another from planning and carrying through the task of character-building to its glorious end. Whether his goal be the Arhat or the Bodhisattva ideal is immaterial; these are another pair of the Opposites and the wise man walks between. The former stresses self-perfection, on the ground that he who perfects himself is perfecting the only thing over which he has complete right of improvement. As for others, he sets an example and minds his own business. The Bodhisattva, on the other hand, aims at the salvation of all life in every form, and by incessant sacrifice of self attempts to achieve that end. The difference lies in emphasis; the result is the same. For none can save mankind until he is

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self-perfected, and none can be rid of the unreal self until it is offered on the altar of mankind.

In either case the Buddha's dying command is imperative, 'Work out your own salvation—with diligence.' Always the order, from every Teacher and from life itself is the same, 'Walk on!' 'Always within, some sword-point of my consciousness pierced through the fog and found first principles. Always within, something stirred and saved me from the level of content. I was to climb, we were all to climb, and doing the job at hand seemed to be the mountain offered for the scaling. Ascending hillsides; that was our function. Our means and our end.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Splendour in the Night.*

## THE PURPOSE OF AFFRAY

Who lives, and living does not find  
High purpose in the surge of life's affray?  
The unreturning wheel of night and day  
Rolls ever on  
Demanding larger union  
And moves upon a goal-directed way.

Yet we are wrapped in circumstance.  
These gilded bars that margin our parade  
Were mind-imagined and desire made,  
And only thought  
By which all things were wrought  
Shall free the heart by Judas-thought betrayed.

What then of dreams, of splendid dreams  
Of visions of a newborn commonweal?  
Shall substance never know the far ideal?  
These present things  
Or far imaginings,  
Which is the fond illusion, which is real?

I gaze at facts, at present facts  
Grey rocks upon the field of circumstance.  
And yet the very hills shall dance  
In joyous flow  
And sing as down they go  
To dissolution in the sea's expanse.

There's only change, a flow of change  
The rise and fall of thinking and things thought.  
Desire and will  
These are the builders still.  
The temple grows in splendour, then is nought.

The grandeur of the far ideal  
Is here and now, and changes as it grows.  
And every deed,  
The child of love and greed  
Is ultimate of purpose as it flows.

The goal, the pilgrim and the road  
Alike are mutable as earth and sky.  
And all are part  
Of one essential heart  
That beats in life and death, and does not die.

## X

### *Why are We Afraid?*

WE are all affected in our daily lives, and to a grave extent, by fear. Hourly I see it manifest in the thoughts and actions of my friends, and in my own mind I am still discovering subtle forms of it that I had not recognized as such before. It may be therefore helpful to consider briefly the nature, cause and cure of fear, with a view to ending it.

Before proceeding let me say that I regard all fear as evil, for it is negative, inhibiting, and incompatible with progress on the Way. It is said that it has its uses; physical, for self-preservation, mental, to stimulate foresight, and even as anxiety when this is a low form of that noblest of human virtues, compassion. Yet even here it is a force that might be replaced with a better, for a Buddhist is not concerned with the interests of self save as they are needful for its final elimination. For the rest, all fear is evil, and should be sought out and destroyed.

The human mind is immensely complex, and its manifold parts are related and interrelated in a way that makes analysis difficult and complete analysis impossible, for the analyzing consciousness is itself a part of the mind and therefore involved in its complexity. A mechanic can take down the parts of an engine and tabulate them; he can also speak with certainty as to their relationship. The same is impossible with the mind, for the process is always to some extent subjective and can never, *pace* the psychologists, achieve the objectivity beloved of science. It is only for convenience, therefore, that we may here speak of the body, emotions and thinking mind, hoping that in seeking the cause and cure of fear upon these planes we may be standing at the vantage point of an intellect illumined by the intuition

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which is, for our present purposes, a level of consciousness beyond the reach of fear.

First, let us face, perhaps for the first time, the omnipresence of fear, that we may realize that in all our days and functioning we are foolishly and miserably afraid.

On the physical plane we are full of fears, as distinct from dislikes, or the instinct of the body for self-preservation. We are frightened of hunger, lest we miss a meal; of heat and cold—else why do we fret so much at the least change of temperature beyond the narrow range of our approval?—and we are frightened of missing our sleep. We fear the very thought of illness or accident, especially if such might deprive us of pleasure, profit or sexual enjoyment, and we deeply fear the onset of old age which will certainly have that effect. We are more frightened still of insanity and quite terrified of death. Now let us look at the emotions.

There are those who are frightened of almost anything, and certainly any new thing, person or situation. For shyness is a form of fear, and the inability to cope with a new situation is derived from our fear of it. We are fearful of all pain. We fear lest we are or may become unpopular, or may lose—almost anything we possess, home, health, mate, job, and all security. We are fearful of grief, not noticing that we do not grieve for our friends but for ourselves, for the feeling of loss of our friend. We are afraid of being abnormal in any way, in clothes or speech or social habits; we are frightened of the censure, however unjust, of the least of our acquaintances. We are frightened, above all, of fear.

In the mind, we are afraid most of all, for we fear, and therefore hate, the smallest new idea. We cling to a custom or convention, not because it is good but because we fear all change. We are frightened of the future because it is unknown. We are frightened of responsibility, and run to any job which enables us to avoid it. We fear to be different; fear the very thought of death; we are frightened, and this is the first and last of all our fears—of life itself.

The crippling effect of fear on all activity needs no emphasis.

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On the physical plane its action is profound. On the emotional plane it is no less baleful. To the psychic it shows as a grey cloud in the aura, inhibiting the light of reasoning, and gravely disturbing the physical functions in their activity. Working through the solar chakra or plexus, the only one of the seven known to popular science, it helps to cause the duodenal ulcer, a product of the modern age of anxiety, which is another name for fear. On the plane of thought it is equally inhibiting, for we cling to security of thought, to security of our home and job and habits, and the rigid orthodoxy of the petty-minded man is a symptom of his fear to face the unknown even in a change of concept. The fearful man is generally a selfish man, unco-operative, ineffective, feeble in all his parts and functioning.

Moreover fear has a most unpleasant twin. We fear what we hate and we hate what we fear. In our fearfulness we strike at what we fear, and hate whatever produced the cause of it. In fear a man becomes aggressive, as a dog at bay. We are all of us apt to attack when frightened and with a violence which is quite unpredictable. It is unpredictable because it is unreasonable, that is, without rational basis.

Here is a clue to the nature of fear, that it is irrational. It surges up from our unconscious; hence the very nature of panic, for the great god Pan is a nature symbol of the unconscious. When we are frightened we are unreasonable, and a mob that is frightened is literally a terrible thing.

The part of the self into which the force of fear erupts would seem to be the emotions, whence it works 'down' into the physical body, and 'up' into the reasoning mind. If this is right it is easier to understand the psycho-somatic effect of fright, that is, its effect on the functioning of the body. It is also easier to see how it rises as a cloud into the plane of thought and confuses the process of clear thinking. The anxiety neurosis, of which today we know so much more than we did, is irrational, and beyond the reach of thought. Yet it strangles thought as it inhibits effective action, save that of escape. In fear we lose our manhood, and cease to move on the way that leads to the mind's and heart's enlightenment.

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What, then, is fear? It is born of Ignorance, a child of *sakkayaditthi*, the false belief in self. Wrapt in the illusion of an ego which is separate from other selves, which has its interests to follow in the pursuit and preservation of an 'immortal soul' that is eternally as such distinct and absolute, we fear each single thing or power that on any plane can touch our false integrity. Fearing for self, we fear for its dissolution. Or do we? This won't do. It is the self which fears for its own diminution, or worse, obliteration, and we, whoever and whatever 'we' are, let ourselves be dragged down into the abyss of fear. With the wrong 'I' on the throne, I fear the effect on myself of the actions of others, the thoughts of others, the lack of appreciation by others, of all and everything which impedes my desperate striving to assure myself of my own importance and immortality.

What then, is it that knows all this, that watches the false self fighting for self-preservation? It cannot be the self in which the fear is born. There must be a Self to watch the process which, when the self allows it, climbs the heights to Enlightenment, a Self which is Lord of self, which knows that there is no hate, no death, no fear. This Self has one desire, a noble one, to unite again with that—Indian philosophers call it THAT—of which the universe is the visible expression. The self, on the other hand, would seem to be a compound of the unregenerate forces which collectively assume the status of an entity and fight to preserve their existence as such. This it is that cries 'I am' so loudly, and 'I want this and that', for if it does not cry successfully the vast force of the Whole will smooth it out of existence and move on without pause to its own high purposes. How fearful is the self to die, falsely believing that when it ceases to be there will be nothing left to achieve Enlightenment.

Between the self and Self there is eternal warfare, for the one is a barrier upon the other's journey—home. This inner tension means that happiness is an idle dream until it is resolved, in the unit of life which dreams it and in all mankind. We shall know suffering, and in particular the agony of fear so long as this duality remains, and there is no escape from this battlefield. Nowhere can the Self escape from the low desires and dull

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resistance of the self, the 'shadow' of Jung's psychology, or pursue in peace its selfish and unhappy life so long as Self, having seen the light of the One, is resolved to slay its enemy. True, the slaying is in fact a process of absorption and regeneration rather than destruction; but to the self it is equally the end. Fighting for its survival, it is fearful for its body, for it needs it to satisfy its physical desires, for its feelings, for all injury to them lowers its prestige, and for its thought-machine in which all dangerous truths are cased in concept and sterilized with dogma and tradition from the rude assaults of change. Above all, the vague awareness that it cannot long exist is kept as far as possible from consciousness, and the meditation hour, when the light of truth shines brightly, is therefore its greatest enemy.

What are the battle tactics of the Self in this affray? Not to fight fear on its own plane, for reason can never slay the irrational; only a function higher than both can dissolve that hard duality. But fear can be dragged into the open and faced for what it is, and many a man who breaks from fear of fear can be healed by facing it. The man who knows that he is afraid, of a physical danger or moral decision, is at least half way to mastering his fear. And it is so much easier to face it when its source is known to be self, which reason and experience agree to be a dreary and uncomfortable delusion. For just what is afraid in me? My body? It is as perishable as the lamp in which the electric current runs and shines. It is an instrument to be used as such, then left behind for others to burn. My feelings? They certainly fear for themselves, and rather enjoy being hurt. Yet *I* am not hurt when my feelings suffer from the absence of my friend's appreciation of my self-appointed worth. The same applies to the hate which arises hand in hand with fear. *I* do not hate. I cannot, for I know that life is one. But the little self hates bitterly, and shows it by every device of jealousy and spiteful gossip. Hate will die when the sense of separation dies, when it is replaced by love, the awareness of oneness, and the two are merged in a force which is greater than both—compassion.

Is it, then, our thoughts that are afraid? They claim to be



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rational, which at best they are. Yet they do not decide our actions. What man can say that in all his decisions, large and small, he is unaffected by emotion, or by laziness, or by the desires of the flesh? Yet as the mind is the seat of reason it is easier, in spite of its habit of rationalizing its desires, to reason about the fears which at times possess it. By meditation on the Self and self it is possible to rise to a higher level than thought and to see, as direct experience, the tension between the two on every plane, including that of the mind. It is possible to consider the Buddha's teaching of the Signs of Being, and to understand that all things are indeed in a process of change, both self and Self, and that wrong action, born of illusion, produces suffering in all our lives. Reason tells us that it is foolish to seek security in a world that knows it not; to seek happiness where it can never be; to fear life when only upon the tide of life shall we be borne beyond its present forms and limitations.

Fear, then, dwells in all our 'vehicles' of expression, yet there is something in us which can look objectively at all of them and watch it functioning. Because it inhibits progress it must be transcended. But before we can transcend it we must face it bravely, and cease to run away. For we fear life most of all, life which is utterly indifferent to the claims of its myriad forms, as electricity to the woes of the lamps which, when it wears them out, are cast away. Of the means of escape there is no end, yet all, in proportionate success, lead to the worst known hell of suffering, the feeling of separation, the cold and loveless desert which awaits the mind that is severed from the whole. Whether we run away into pleasure, drugs, slogans, illness or suicide, we are pursued by fear, the fear that is born of the knowledge, growing steadily, that in the long run that which runs away *must* die in order that that which knows itself as one may be reunited with THAT from which it came.

If self is the house of fear, and fear can only be slain by destroying its abode, at least its cure is amenable to reason. The Buddha, who diagnosed the cause of all suffering patiently described the cure. Ignorance must be attacked at its source with reasoning from accepted premises—we must begin with right

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views. We must study the Signs of Being for ourselves, and begin to act as if they were true. We must study life and the forms of life, and watch the cycle of birth, growth, decay and death. We must cease to struggle with the stream of life, and happily fall in and learn to swim.

This process, the willing acceptance of life as it is, will make it easier to face all fears as they arise and to analyze their functioning. The power of emotion to cloud the mind will diminish and it will become more easy to watch the braggart, lying and unhappy self, absurd in its efforts to maintain its unreal semblance of existence, as a scientist dispassionately observes the movements of a microbe under his high-powered lens. Hate will die at the same rate of progress. One cannot hate when the mind is clear. With less and less to fear there is that much less to hate, and as the Oneness becomes an habitual experience, love, not hate, will become the normal reaction to environment and those who people it. As consciousness is raised, the importance of daily life will diminish. To the master of life does it matter whether it rains or whether the body is hungry or sleepy for a while; or is growing old and about to die? When pride and self-importance die with self, are there any feelings left to be hurt, and is not the relief at their departure worth all the effort involved in letting them die? If thoughts are found to be boxes in which we have shut some cupful of the river of life as it once flowed by, are we fearful still of changing our opinions; are we quite so fond of forming them?

There will come a time of convalescence, when the Self withdraws from the rim of the wheel of becoming, and becomes the 'captain of his soul' and master of his destiny. The patient assumes responsibility with far less fuss, makes decisions as they must be made on merits, and produces courage as it is needed on the physical or moral or mental plane.

Fear, then, may be described as the reaction of the self throughout the various *skandhas* or components of the personality to all events and forces which tend to destroy it. But the Buddhist, like the western psychologist, knows that the self is illusion, the cause of most of our suffering and a barrier to

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Enlightenment. Only as the power of the self is reduced will fear diminish, and the pilgrim move more swiftly to his goal. But as the pilgrim, conquering fear, 'walks on', life is more and more seen as a whole, in which wisdom, courage, truth, beauty—all the virtues—have their place, and their opposites have but the shadow life beside them. The new-born man, for thus he feels himself, looks boldly on life as a whole and finds it no more frightening. For soon compassion is born, the unquenchable flame of love which lights the Oneness but is all but extinguished in the world of the manifold. Now is the moment of conversion, when this, the perfect love, is felt to cast out fear. For compassion is 'no mere attribute. It is the law of laws, eternal harmony'. The very universe is one harmonious entity; the man who has risen to that level knows no fear. If it is a long climb from our present abyss of ignorance and self-enlightenment to that fearless and unceasing joy, is it not worth taking the first step, at the only time it can be taken—now?

*Buddhism and God*

WE in the West are steeped in the concept of God. We are most of us brought up in a Christian atmosphere, and taught at an impressionable age the story of Jesus and the teachings of Christianity. The latter are based on the concept of a God who is at the same time Absolute yet personal, the omnipotent Creator of the Universe who yet answers without fail the most personal needs of the least of his creatures. As children we may have been puzzled at the muddled emotions which bind mankind to this supreme Being, how he loves while he punishes, should be feared while he is loved, is all good while permitting evil and, while standing as the Creator of all things, is only concerned with a small proportion of the inhabitants of this tiny planet. This ambivalence of emotion, as some of us later discovered, is the result of projecting into the sky a God whose parts and principles reflect some of the worst as well as the best ingredients of the near-Eastern mind. As a wit remarked, 'In the beginning God made man in his own image, and man has been returning the compliment ever since.'

But it is far easier to analyze this view of God and then to reject it from the conscious mind than to extract it without leaving roots from what Jung calls the personal unconscious. As a metaphysical concept, such as a theory of cosmic causation, or the ultimate relation of the parts and the whole, it can do no damage, and may not even affect the mind. 'If I accept the fact that a god is absolute and beyond all human experience, he leaves me cold. But if I know, on the other hand, that God is a mighty activity in my soul, at once I must concern myself with him; he can then become even unpleasantly important . . .'<sup>1</sup> The distinction is profound, for we cannot, as Dr Jung points

<sup>1</sup> C. G. Jung in *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, p. 129.

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out, as many before him, 'understand' these first beginnings or final ends. We may learn more and more *about* them; we never know them. These are indeed the matters which it profits not a man to argue or discuss, and about them the Buddha ever maintained a 'noble silence'. God as a product of thinking is therefore a harmless inhabitant of our spiritual sky, for he is at best a creation of our mind, and bears no relation to the Reality which thought can neither contact nor describe. But God as a psychological fact, as a 'mighty activity' in the mind is as real as anything else in a world of relative reality. And God in this sense is not a 'thing' which we may drop from the mind at will. Before it can be removed the process of projection which gave it life must be slowly reversed until the courageous thinker is faced with his own 'shadow' and has, as it were, consumed it.

This needs great courage, for we all love to blame others for our own shortcomings. If I may quote again from Jung, who in this field is the greatest mind in Europe, 'Such a man lives in the "house of self-collection". Such a man knows that whatever is wrong in the world is in himself, and if he only learns to deal with his own shadow he has done something real for the world. He has succeeded in removing an infinitesimal part at least of the unsolved, gigantic social problems of our day . . . ' From the Buddhist point of view he has done more. In learning to become 'mindful and self-possessed' he is learning to 'work out his own salvation, with diligence'. But if the wise man should cease to project his own 'shadow', the dark side of his soul, onto his surroundings and his fellow men, he must also learn to withdraw the existing projection of his spiritual needs from the muddled concept of a painfully human God. The later stages of this process are the harder, for it is a paradoxical truth that the closer the projection the harder it is to see it as such and so to analyze and remove it. We see the folly of worshipping a tribal God on religious and national occasions; it is much more difficult to see as projected gods our loved ideals or dreaded phobias. If our God has shrunk to that soulless entity, 'the State', it is no less a projection of our personal insufficiency; when smaller still, as 'the Department', beloved of the official mind, or some new

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'ism' or vaguely as the Needs of the People, or even Science, it is no less flung on to our mental sky with a mysterious power to rule us and to prevent us working out our own salvation with diligence.

When our last projection is withdrawn and digested what do we see remaining in the spiritual firmament? A multitude of gods and godlings, of all ages, forms and standing in the divine hierarchy. Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu, each with a hundred variations; God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; Ahura-Mazda, Jehovah, Allah and the vast assortment of gods of the classical near-East, all are now seen as the products of the human mind, as signs and at the same time healing symbols of his undevelopment. From the savage's sacred tree with which he is still in a *participation mystique*, as Lévy-Bruhl called it, through the gods of Olympus to the tribal and national Gods of the Theist religions, all, says the Buddhist, exist, but all alike are 'bound upon the Wheel' and have not yet attained deliverance. And devils are as many as the gods, for the Devil is only God reversed, the shadow of the light. The worship of the one and the propitiation of the other is alike a sign of weakness, and all these entities can screen the eyes of man from the Truth which he claims to seek. The same applies to religions, which are man-made forms of apparatus for the worship of some God. These may be rafts, to be used to cross the stream of life and to be left behind on reaching the other shore, or they may be shields from the truth which the seeking mind is unable to face when found. In the same way the god may be a substitute for the effort to stand alone. To use a crutch knowing it to be a crutch is one thing; to use it while claiming to walk unaided is a lie to oneself, which is the worst form of lie.

Perhaps the attitude of every man in regard to God is one of the two following: to project the highest concept one can form of the Absolute, and to expand it as understanding is advanced with use, or to effect a double process, on the one hand leaving the Absolute, as such, unknown and unknowable; on the other, finding it as a force, a cosmic and unlimited force, within.

The latter method, surely preferable, is that of the Buddhist, whereas the former is more usual with the Bhakti yogin. For

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the Absolute is absolute and there can be no bridge between it and the relative. Being absolute it cannot be expressed or described, and all words concerning it are futile. As Eckhardt said, 'Whatever thou sayest of God is untrue', and in older Chinese words, 'the Tao that can be expressed is not the eternal Tao'. If it be argued that the Absolute itself is a concept, to our relative minds it is necessary. In Buddhist terms, 'There is an Unborn, Unbecome, Unmade, Incomposite, for were it not for this there would be no escape from birth, becoming, making, composition.' At least this thought of the Absolute is the highest thinking possible on God. The greatest minds of the earth have from the earliest days attempted to express their vision of this Absolute, and in anthologies like Aldous Huxley's *Perennial Philosophy* their views, enormously diverse in form but one in substance, are collated for the thinking world to see. But about this One which is beyond the one and the many the Buddha observed a 'thundering silence'.

Only when the mind falls back, exhausted, utterly frustrated in attempts to know what may not by the processes of thought be known, does it look for substitutes, for symbols to express the inexpressible. Realizing that thought can never take the pilgrim to the goal of ultimate awareness, the Buddhist pilgrim points to the Way which the All-Awakened One proclaimed 2,500 years ago. This leaves unprofitable thoughts aside, and strives to develop in mind the faculty, which alone can know the Absolute, the intuition, or *Buddhi*, the 'third eye' of direct awareness by which the part and the whole are known as one, and the Absolute is seen in each of its infinite and ever-changing forms.

For one who treads this Path no lesser God than the Absolute is needed. The Buddha and those of lesser mind who teach the same transcendent journey, are for him guides, not gods, human beings who in the many have found THAT. But man is lazy, frightened and psychologically immature. He cries out for a crutch in his walking, for a Saviour to bear, or share with him in bearing, the burdens which are none the less heavy for being self-imposed. He prefers to project his insufficiencies and to wor-

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ship, plead with, bribe a self-created God to bear the effects of his causes. Hence Theist religions of every kind, from the tribal God of a 'savage' to the infinite complexity of the Hindu pantheon which is yet, in the mind of the cultured Indian, a pattern of manifestation of the one primordial Parabrahman. Even in Buddhism there has been a fall from the supreme position, and in corners of the Buddhist field may be found the 'services' with prayers and pleading which the Buddha would have condemned as forming no part of the Way.

Yet there is truth in Theism, and the Buddhist who has learnt to work out his own salvation can see its uses for others not so strong. Having himself achieved a vision of the God Transcendent he is aware of the Immanence by which the Absolute abides in every blade of grass, and is throned eternally within his own most human mind. With all the universe within him, and all its strength, compassion, wisdom and beauty at his command, he looks to no God between himself and his own Absolute, but can look with understanding on the man that needs a crutch upon the Way and will even carve it for him. The less developed soul—in the Buddhist sense, that compound of conflicting attributes which moves from life to life towards Enlightenment—has need of a rope with which to pull itself up the mountain, of a God who, placed ahead on the Path, will call to him and draw him on. So God is invented, endowed with attributes which, splendid or painfully human, are yet the reflection of the creating mind, and given the power (which could not be given were it not in the mind which gave it) to save the climber from his sins, and to lead him to that Enlightenment which, did he know it, dwells untarnished, only waiting to be found within.

But this God should be flexible in form, and should be allowed to grow. To the baby the mother is God; then the father. Then projection is flung further, on to a teacher or leader; then the godhead is dissolved into an abstraction and 'God', very vague and rather frightening, is born. As the camera may be fixed at three feet, six feet, twenty-four feet and so on into infinity, and the eyes are focused from the point of the nose out to the sky,



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so the Power within is projected outward, and for the greater part of our unthinking lives we are content with *tarikī* as the Japanese call it, looking for salvation to some Other Power, until with growing awareness we turn to *jirikī*, salvation by Self-power, and find from self-experience that Nirvana and Samsara are indeed one.

The ideal, to change the analogy, should always move ahead of us, and God be a condensation of thought and feeling of the best of our ambitions not yet realized. For God, once seen as concept, is subject to *anicca*, change, as all else in the universe; only an unchanging God is a stumbling block, for nothing is save the Absolute, and not until the pilgrim, his God and the Absolute are one may the trinity dissolve in actual awareness. The rest is silence.

The Buddhist, then, ignores the Absolute as beyond conception, and walks on toward an actual awareness of THAT which is beyond thought. He is content to wait until he reaches the mountain top before demanding knowledge of its nature or of the view which is then revealed. Meanwhile he looks into the deeps of his own mind for all that he needs upon this Way and finds it. As is said in *The Voice of the Silence*, 'Look within; thou art Buddha,' and as the Zen Patriarch Hui Neng pointed out, 'So far as the Buddha nature is concerned, there is no difference between an enlightened man and an ignorant one. What makes the difference is that one realizes it and the other does not.'

The alternative attitude to the Absolute has, to the Buddhist, no appeal—to project to some point between the human mind and Reality, the part and the Whole, a concept which is built of man-made attributes, and then to worship it. In the Buddhist pantheon such a god is less than man, deserving at his hands no more respect than the other ranks of gods and godlings, such as nature-forces, personified aspects of the cosmic law and the like. Certainly none is worthy of worship for none possesses an influence on the lives of men which man has not in the first place given it.

The steady withdrawal of these and other projections is therefore essential to the Western Buddhist before he can make any

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progress on the Way. As the process continues he will be amused and perhaps annoyed to discover how many and various are those not yet withdrawn. Moreover, he will, in time, discover that the God which he thought had been utterly destroyed is not only a product of the conscious mind but also of the dark unconscious, not merely a creation of thought but a projection of mental material which is still below its horizon. What then? Our mental evolution would seem to necessitate the slow consumption by the tiny conscious mind of the as yet vast unconscious. Yet we must consciously consume that 'thing' within the mind which we knew as God without developing the *folie de grandeur* of imagining that hereby we become that God. For while it is true that each part, as it grows, increasingly becomes the Whole, and the 'soul' does become 'God', this mystical process is one of humility and never of pride. The fool claims to be a God. The Buddhist knows that this path is a cul-de-sac and leads to spiritual insanity. Only as the self dies and makes room for Sunyata, the Void which alone is full, does the part re-become the whole.

What happens when this God-idea, part thought-produced and part the child of the unconscious, is at last withdrawn and consumed? First, there is a vast sense of relief, an inrush of light as when one cuts down a large dark tree which grew right up to the window. Then comes balance, as the weight of responsibility swings back over one's own two feet and is no longer leant against an outside object. The tension of emotion is released when there is no more an outside thing which calls for love, fear, adoration, expectation or an uncomfortable compound of all these and other emotions. In its place is a universe which, though clearly an illusion is, in a relative world, the child of law. In his 'walking on' the pilgrim now knows where he is, and where he is going, and although he will have to battle on the way with a vast assortment of powers, of fate and fortune, blind terror and cold doubt, he will know these to be forces of his own unconscious, and learn to cope with them as they come.

If the destruction of the God complex is complete, and no Buddhist substitute, of Dharma-kaya, or Amida, is allowed to

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fill the gap, the pilgrim will be a little frightened and then delighted to observe that he has left himself no Saviour of any kind. He will not need one. Increasingly aware of the identity of every living thing, and none is dead, in the world of *maya* around him, his Bodhisattva compassion for every form of life will become increasingly genuine and therefore powerful. Bereft of God he will find Sunyata, the Void which underlies phenomena, the restful nothingness which is the essence of each 'thing'. His focus will shorten; he will learn to find everything in each to make the colossal concept of *jijimuge* come true, to see that all means are ends in themselves of equal importance, and that the part, in its essential partness, is indeed the whole. He will find that all is *anicca*, changing, and *anatta*, without any faculty which for ever makes it distinct from anything else.

On the Way he will create, use and let go a number of teachers, points of wider view, half-gods and great ideals; but he will never stop. Yet the Absolute will more and more invade him, not at his will but with its own. Here only is the meaning of the Japanese *tariki*, salvation by Other Power, but when that power is found it is found within and it is one with the All-Power which is, though manifest before our eyes, unconquerably Absolute.

Beyond diversity lies unity, first as a concept and then as experience. Beyond unity lies THAT which is beyond unity and diversity. Beyond THAT is silence. It is somewhere in this superb experience that the moment of Truth will come. When this consumes us utterly and no whimper of self is left we shall know God as he is, Unborn, Uncompounded, beyond any name. Thereafter we must learn to live accordingly.

Said a Sufi sage to another, 'I have never seen anything without seeing God therein.' Said the other, 'I have never seen anything but God.'

## ONE

I sing of the individual, of man,  
Of woman-man, seed-unit of the Whole  
Who, impious, with illimitable span  
Twin-footed at the gates of heaven and hell  
Uprises, arbiter of ill and well  
And in his hands, the soul.

None fetters him; none binds or bids him stay.  
Only the Law is master, and the Law  
Bearing the fruits of action, must obey.  
Now the impelling raised eyes indraw  
The substance of his God, and eager find  
New alchemy, and now the clouded mind  
In passion plunges to a mould of clay.  
Thus rent, with his own passion copulate  
While yearning heaven, still unconsummated  
Man-woman treads the darkness of the Way.

I sing of the Indivisible, of One  
The infinitely more, the utmost less  
The thought-abysmal Void, the Namelessness  
The Uncompanionate, the last Alone.  
For death has no abiding, life must move  
And find in Three its flawless unity.  
Mind the divider reasons back to love  
And love, its healing done, dies happily.  
As child to mother, drop to the endless sea  
Man-woman moves on errant feet that roam  
The lone ways of the dark unceasingly  
Content if soon or late they journey home.

I sing of the Indivisible, of Man,  
Man-Woman-God, though born, immaculate;  
Of men that in the round of love and hate  
With closed eyes await the unclouded Plan  
And murmur in the night importunate.

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I sing of the Many, yet of heart the same;  
Of common men that serve the common weal  
Through dark of doubting, blindly to reveal  
The unmoving sun that shines in every flame.  
For we are pilgrims of an olden road  
That leads the many to Man-Woman-God  
To THAT which has no name.

I sing, though folly sings and louder far;  
I sing, and care not if the Way be long.  
Though few shall rise and follow, still my song  
Shall echo endless on the field of war.  
For this I know, though fools shall say I lie,  
That we, the Manifold who seek the sun  
Shall slay and slay ourselves till death is done,  
And all shall know that none that lives shall die  
For all is Life, and all that lives is One.

## *Bhavana—Self-Enlightenment*

BHAVANA, usually translated as 'becoming', in the sense of developing, or becoming more, is the third of the Buddhist trinity of Dana (charity), Sila (morality), and Bhavana, the road to self-enlightenment. It covers the last three stages of the Noble Eightfold Path, Right Effort, Right Concentration and Right *Samadhi*, which is untranslatable. It is the technique of the cleansing of the heart described in the well-known summary of Buddhism, 'Cease to do evil; learn to do good; cleanse your own heart; this is the religion of the Buddhas.' It forms the entrance to that inner Path to self-enlightenment where for the first time the heroic task of self-development is taken in hand.

Its purpose is the mastery of the mind, first as an instrument, the higher aspect controlling the lower as a rider learns to control a restive steed, then as a process of self-development, whereby the mind develops its own potentialities, and learns 'to become what you are'. Note that the task is that of self-enlightenment in the sense of unveiling a light already present within. As is written in the *Bodhisattva Sila Sutra*, 'Our Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure, and if we know our own mind and realize what our nature is, all of us would attain Buddhahood.'

The task is complicated at the outset by the fact that the entity developing and the thing developed are the same, the mind, and there is no evading the paradox. For, as *The Dhammapada*, one of the most famous Buddhist Scriptures, states, 'All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts,' and the same great truth was uttered in one of his speeches to Parliament by that pungent observer of mankind, Oliver Cromwell. 'The Mind,' he said, 'is the man. If that be kept pure, a man signifies somewhat; if not, I would very fain see what

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difference there is betwixt him and a beast. He hath only some activity to do some more mischief.' From the Buddhist point of view, however, before the mind can be kept pure it must be made pure, in the sense that the accumulated impurities must be purged away until the Essence of Mind is seen for what it is, 'intrinsically pure'.

According to Buddhist teaching, all phenomena are relative. Relatively speaking, objects exist as much as the mind that perceives them, for that mind itself is only relatively real. But the emphasis in all development is on the subjective attitude to things and circumstance. What matters to the Buddhist is not what happens, but its significance, its meaning, that is, for him at that time. For the world without is only a manifestation of the world within, and this applies to the individual and his environment as much as to 'the unrolling and rolling up of the universe'. The only events of importance to the Buddhist are those which occur in the mind, as illustrated by a passage in the *Sutra of Hui Neng*. 'It happened that one day, when a pennant was blown about by the wind, two Bhikkus entered into a dispute as to what was in motion, the wind or the pennant. As they could not settle their difference I submitted to them that it was neither, and that what actually moved was their own mind.'

This mind, the home of 'the three fires' of hatred, lust and illusion, is twofold in its make-up, a lower and a higher mind, being the two aspects of our central principle. The higher leans to the light, yearns for re-absorption in that Essence of Mind which is intrinsically pure; the lower is bound in the darkness of self and therefore of selfishness. It breeds that craving for the limited self which brings about the appearance of separation from all-Life, and hence produces hatred of its other forms; it produces the illusion wherein the relative is viewed as absolutely real, and the heresy engendered that our temporary personality, all that we know as 'I', is permanent and worth tremendous effort to maintain. The lower mind sees all things separate; the higher knows that they are forms of the same Reality. Desire, in the sense of a craving for the interests of the petty self is born of illusion, the illusion that the things desired are other than

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itself. Hatred, the father of all war and of most human suffering, follows in its train.

To integrate these warring factors is the aim of mind control. Only a higher faculty than 'higher' or 'lower' thought can bring about this synthesis, and this is *Buddhi*, the 'intuition' of Western psychology, the instrument of direct as distinct from indirect cognition, whereby the mind is enabled to rise above the state of knowing about the object of its thought, and to know it by a process of fusion which amounts to identity. As the path of self-development proceeds, the higher mind is more and more illumined by the light of *Buddhi* which, when the process is complete, so fills the individual that, as his fellow pilgrims on the Way would say, he 'attains enlightenment'.

For most of us the Way to such a state of bliss is almost immeasurable. The sixth step on the Buddhist Eightfold Path is known as 'Right Effort', effort directed to the proper goal, and effort is the operative word. Only he who for the first time seriously tries to control the errant steeds of thought will admit how pitiable is our present 'self-control', whether of thought or feeling. In the ideal, the intellect should be as a searchlight in the darkness, cold, far-reaching, brilliant in intensity and perfectly focused on the chosen object, to be held on it unwaveringly at will. How feeble are the wobbling rays of our poor torches compared with this ideal, and it is not for nothing that Patanjali describes the act of concentration as 'a hindering of the modifications of the thinking principle'!

It is for this reason, that before an instrument can be used it must be forged, and the user taught how to handle it, that the task of mind-development is generally divided into at least two stages. The available words in English have as yet no agreed equivalent meaning to the Eastern terms, but concentration and meditation seem the best available. Thereafter the stage of contemplation is reached, about which words in any tongue are almost valueless. The process of learning to concentrate is in no sense 'spiritual' and can begin and often does begin with a door knob. The process of meditation begins in the lower mind and slowly rises to the higher; and perhaps the most difficult part of



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the whole journey is the passage from one to the other, the building of the bridge between. Contemplation is entirely spiritual, that is, on a plane above the conception of the intellect.

The discipline of concentration, a process long or short according to previous experience in this and other lives, is the mental equivalent to the physical training for any sport or physical exercise. The fencer must lunge at a point for weary hours and days before the eye and hand are trained to perfect harmony; the ballet dancer trains at the 'barre' for years before she earns her first appearance on the stage; in the same way, 'As a fletcher makes straight his arrow, so the wise man straightens his fickle and unsteady thoughts, which are difficult to guard and difficult to guide.' (*The Dhammapada*.) In concentration of mind there is the added difficulty that the 'character' that passes from life to life has to make the instrument as well as use it, yet user and instrument are the same evolving, ever-changing entity. There are many Eastern methods of this training available in English, and many written in Western lands. Not all the former are suitable to the Western temperament, and few of the latter distinguish between the necessary training for the right use of the instrument and its later use. Nor is the overriding question of right motive sufficiently emphasized. It is true that concentration can be learnt for purely business purposes, and sooner or later, whatever the motive, it must be learnt, but the moment the student passes from concentration to meditation he is entering a world of changed and changing values. As the distinction between white and black magic is the purity and selflessness of the motive for which the magic, the use of forces beyond the current knowledge of the day, is put, the sooner right motive is built into the mind the better for the practitioner.

Assuming that the preliminary stages of right concentration have been achieved, the student enters for the first time a path of self-development whose goal is nothing less than Buddhahood, and the decision, irrevocable, is a solemn one indeed. Until this moment he or she has from a spiritual point of view been one

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of the drifting mass of humanity. Now, the aspirant might say:

The future lies unmoulded in my hands,  
A Path winds out before.  
There is no backward way. Behind me stands  
A closed door.

Thereafter values change fundamentally, and in particular the relative importance of the inner and the outer life. Before, the daily round was paramount, and 'Buddhism', or whatever the chosen aspect of the Way was labelled, was something half way between a hobby and occasional higher thought. Now, the balance changes, and the Buddha-Dhamma, the ceaseless treading of the Way as the only worth-while mode of living, occupies the forefront of the mind. Emphasis in the previous way of life was on the individual and his needs, on analysis and differences; now it shifts to synthesis, to the needs and interests of the whole. Henceforth it becomes increasingly true that 'If any man would follow me, let him deny himself,' for all that was known and loved as self begins to realize that it is doomed to deliberate destruction. The self resents this treatment, and the battle rages, for the energy released by occasional glimpses of the heights now coming into view is fighting with the forces of reaction and the dead weight of inertia. Casualties in the forces of light at first seem severe, for it is an occult law that he who deliberately takes his own development in hand must pay the price of more rapidly precipitated karma, of the variety usually labelled 'bad'. Yet until the results, or the worst of them, of lives of past wrongdoing have been faced and, as it were, digested, there is no advance up the hillside where such burdens would make progress all but impossible. Hence the immediate suffering of all manner of misfortunes, and many a pilgrim, finding that illness, business and family troubles, and a host of all-but-forgotten mental weaknesses are massed upon his path to defeat his enterprise, gives in, and for a long time, possibly until another life, the adventure is postponed. Only the few accumulate the reserves of spiritual energy which the enterprise demands, yet these have their reward.

For life to them is at last seen as a vast, illimitable purpose

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under the rule of a felt but not yet formulated Law. Soon this Law is found to be coincident with Dhamma, or duty, that which is right to be done in all the circumstances, for it is the will and purpose of the source of life, the 'Essence of Pure Mind', that the part shall find its place in the Whole and so become that Whole, and no less motive than the needs of the Whole is 'right' upon this timeless and unending Way. Motive varies from pure selfishness to pure selflessness, but with the aspirant to self-perfection 'right' motive moves up the hillside as he goes, at any one time being the service of the Whole as he sees it by the self that he has come to be.

So far the training is common to all, to the introvert and extravert, the scientist and the mystic. Now, the difference of types begins to call for variety of method. There are, for example, negative and positive types of mind, and each may work either by following the line of least resistance or by deliberately cultivating the so far undeveloped point of view. Again, the mystic scorns the use of 'science'; the occultist, using scientific methods in the inner planes of being, masters each step on the Way before passing to the next. Raja Yoga has a dozen subdivisions, each adapted to some definite type of mind or stage of progress, but all alike are different methods for achieving the same enlightenment. There is a plane of consciousness above the intellect which may be reached by pure mathematics, mystical devotion, occult science or pure 'right action', to name but four examples of technique. For as the spokes of the wheel approach the hub, the illusory divisions of *nama-rupa*, name and form, dissolve, and even as a dozen men may reach a height by so many paths up the mountain side, nor quarrel at the summit as to how they came, so those who attain self-mastery use and honour all ways to the same goal.

All methods produce the same profound adjustment in the pilgrim's inner mind. In the East and West the same phrase is adopted for the change, a 'turning round' in Mahayana Buddhism, 'conversion' for St Paul. And this may be gradual or sudden, according as the Gradual or the Sudden School technique had been adopted. Most systems are of the gradual

## *Bhavana—Self-Enlightenment*

method of attainment; Zen Buddhism is almost unique as a school for 'taking the gates of Heaven by storm', of which the West has knowledge but little experience. There comes a time when the limitations of the intellect have been acutely realized and the mind that hitherto progressed by ever clearer reasoning admits that reasoning, while telling the thinker more and more about the object of his thought, will never fuse into identity. Hereafter the intellect must be transcended, and a higher faculty developed, one whereby the truth may be immediately experienced. Zen is the technique for demolishing the limitations of conceptual thought, so that the light of the intuition may break in.

To leave the well-known forms and processes of thought, and to leap into a void beyond imagining needs courage, and courage of a high order such as only years and lives of preparation will achieve. Yet meditation year by year affects the meditator's mind more widely than mere progress to the mind's enlightenment. As flashes of *Buddhi* flood the mind the consciousness of unity is strengthened, and a joyous love for all mankind becomes part of normal consciousness. Motive is purified accordingly, and the thought of self diminished day by day. 'Mindful and self-possessed,' the student lives his daily life, patiently accepting the consequences of his own past error, and striving to avoid the sowing of ill-deeds whose seed will ripen in the days and lives to come. And as he treads the Path, and self, the swollen unreal self is steadily reduced in size, there awakens in his heart a faith which is certainty, a knowledge beyond all argument, a vision of the inner eyes, that all is well, and it is the remembrance of this oneness of all things which produces courage, strength to surmount the obstacles that make all progress infinitely tedious, and with it a joyous will to victory which the triple fires of hatred, lust and illusion are unable to destroy.

And it is all needed. In the early stages of meditation the student is often troubled and alarmed by psychic visions which, while they have no power to hinder, have great power to mislead, if only into the belief that they are spiritual visions and rewards, whereas they are but happenings on the 'astral' or

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psychic plane but a little 'above' our physical daily world. More serious because more subtle are the mental habits formed by the efforts for a new and nobler living, for these, though useful habits, are still habits, and as such potential prison bars for the rapidly growing mind. More serious still is the reaction, comparable to the enemy's counter-attack, which follows every gaining of fresh ground. Here the faint-hearted leave the fray, and they are numerous!

Only the few continue, yet victory has ever been for 'the few'. It has been said that there are only two rules for successful meditation, 'Begin, and go on', but the casualties before the second bastion are severe. Yet only he who continues will arrive, and though 'the race is won by one and one, and never by two and two', yet help when sorely needed is forthcoming, and whether it be achieved by meditation, from a source known to be within, or by prayer, from a source erroneously believed to be without, the assistance is the same, and only limited by the warrior's use of that aid.

So far, meditation has been 'with seed', that is, upon some chosen subject, theme or phrase. Thereafter comes the further stage of dropping the subject, and meditating 'without seed'. This condition, a poised and steady focus of the mind upon itself, is the prelude to contemplation, and this, of which little can usefully be said until the first two stages have been mastered, leads to the threshold of the final stage, *Nirvana*, which, though unattainable in this life or for many lives to come, may be dimly perceived in the process of Contemplation. Yet of *Nirvana*, as already said, no words suffice for its describing.

Here dwells the virgin Be-ness unalloyed  
Which only those can see whose eyes are blind;  
Here only dwells the Essence of Pure Mind,  
The all-pervading Perfume of the Void.

## *The Doctrine of Immediacy*

ALL that is said about Zen is necessarily untrue. Asked 'What is Zen?', Ummon, the great Zen master, replied: 'That's it!' Strictly speaking, all else that is written or said about Zen is so many stains on paper or noises made in the air, for all means of communicating experience involve the use of the intellect, and Zen begins where the intellect, exhausted, falls to the ground. All information about Zen is, therefore, at the best a series of signposts, or, as the Chinese say, a finger pointing to the moon.

Yet signposts have their uses, and by the right use of the intellect one's consciousness may be directed to that state of mind which the Chinese call Ch'an (a corruption of the Sanskrit Dhyana) and the Japanese, Zen. Zen, being direct experience of Reality, is beyond the intellect, and therefore beyond description, but comparison with this and that quotation from the sayings of Zen masters, and a description of the school which developed and still uses its remarkable technique, all these, and a resolute attempt to rouse the faculty by which Reality is immediately experienced, may stimulate that will to final knowledge which alone achieves the Wakening. If Zen can be classified at all, it is a mysticism of the will. All lesser faculties are developed and used to awaken *Buddhi*, the power in all men of immediate, direct perception of Reality, which is itself the first-born of the Namelessness. Zen as a method is therefore the technique of direct experience, and all its processes are directed to that end. This end or goal, being itself beyond the intellect, is impossible to describe, but it is often called Enlightenment. Perhaps a better term is Awakening, for the latter word more forcibly reminds the student that no man can acquire what he has not already got, whereas if he will open his inner eyes he will see the Light already within. 'The Light is within thee; let

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the Light shine' taught the Egyptian Hierophants, who only echoed the Buddhist teaching, 'Look within; thou *art* Buddha!'

There are no short cuts to this Awakening. The intellect must be developed and trained before it can be surmounted, and reasoning made so rapid and immediate that as a process it almost disappears. But thought-control implies an understanding and control of the emotions in order that these, too, so far from hindering, may serve the indomitable purpose of the central will. As thought becomes clearer, faster and freed from the limitations of its past misuse, it becomes as a rapier in the hand of a trained enthusiast, and only a thrust like a flash of light can pierce the heart of truth.

The intellect builds laboriously and then destroys; Zen destroys, but has no need to build. The student of Zen, on reaching as high as his thinking mind can take him, turns, and destroys the ladder by which he climbed. He seeks the Light, and therefore every form, without exception, which impedes his path is fiercely thrust aside. So far as human frailty permits, no single thing must be allowed to stand between the seeker and the Life which sleeps within, for every 'thing', however tenuous in form, is a cage wherein some spark of Life has died. Scriptures are viewed as a cemetery of words, and ritual but a net to snare the mind. Temples are a sign of weakness, robes but a children's game, and even the image of the Buddha, lest it hold the will in fee, is best put on the fire. But if this be true of the symbols of the religious life, still more is it true of religions, for these are at best intellectual systems built on the tomb of some great man's experience. Even Buddhism is no exception, for it is far removed from that supreme Enlightenment which made of Gautama, the greatest of the sons of men, the Buddha, the supremely Awakened One.

The question arises, then, to what extent is Zen a school of Buddhism? In the field of religious experience the law of the Pairs of Opposites reveals the profound duality of the human mind. The intellectual and emotional approaches to Reality are seeming antithesis, as are occultism and mysticism, self-reliant ethics and salvation by faith, and even in Buddhism itself the

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same division between the rational, ethical, conservative Theravada and the more mystical, metaphysical, progressive Mahayana is to be observed. But if these be antitheses, Zen belongs exclusively to neither, for it uses and unites all pairs of opposites, and is at once mystical and practical. At its highest it blazes with a spiritual glory rarely achieved elsewhere; in the world of men it is concerned with the humblest detail of the daily round. It is in one sense as cold as crystal, yet *Buddhi* is the level of human consciousness at which for the first time a direct perception of Knowledge is fused with pure Compassion for Life in its every form. It is not without cause that the Buddha is equally known as the All-Compassionate One and the All-Enlightened One, for the eye of *Buddhi*, once awakened, knows that the two are one.

As a spiritual experience, Zen will be found wherever a mind achieves direct experience of Reality, but in its methods of instruction the Japanese School of Zen is unique. There is no doctrinal teaching and nothing to be learnt. Scriptures, ritual, prayers and fasting, together with all other signs of a 'religious' life, are equally ignored. To the student of Zen these are apt to be hindrances, not helps. As Alan Watts points out in his *Spirit of Zen*: 'The whole technique of Zen was to jolt people out of their intellectual ruts and their conventional morality. The masters asked awkward and unanswerable questions; they made fun of logic and metaphysics; they turned orthodox philosophy upside down in order to make it look absurd. Thus we have the master Hsuan-chien saying: "Nirvana and Bodhi are dead stumps to tie your donkey to. The twelve divisions of the Scriptures are only lists of ghosts and sheets of paper fit to wipe the dirt from your skin. And all your four merits and ten stages are mere ghosts lingering in their decaying graves. Can these things have anything to do with your salvation?"'

Historically, Zen is the result of the Chinese attempt to assimilate the doctrine of *Sunyata*, the Plenum-Void, brought by Buddhist monks from India. The Chinese mind is essentially practical, and no philosophic principle which cannot be immediately applied in action has any appeal. In the course of cen-



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turies, however, the masters of the 'Sudden' School developed their own technique for rousing in others the spiritual awakening they had themselves achieved, and in this way a School was born. Inevitably, however, concessions were made to the frailty of the common people, and gorgeous rituals are today enacted in Zen temples for their benefit, while certain Scriptures of the Mahayana, notably the *Lankavatara Sutra*, are admitted to be of value in removing the stains of illusion from the mind. But the spirit of the masters knew no compromise, and the principles which they have handed down are simple in the extreme.

'A special transmission outside the Scriptures;  
No dependence upon words and letters;  
Direct pointing to the soul of man;  
Seeing into one's nature.'

In the course of time the spirit of Zen produced the widest and noblest range of character-training, culture and art attributable to any School in the history of mankind. From Bushido, the 'Way of the Knightly Virtue', which produced the Samurai warrior, to the delicate arts of serving tea and the arrangement of flowers, there is no part of Japanese culture and art, as distinct, be it said, from political policy, which was not formed in the crucible of Zen.

The reason is easy to find. Philosophy and science, mysticism and the arts, all reach in time by divers routes the entrance to a Way which is itself the Goal. 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' said the Christ, who embodied the Christ or Buddhist principle in everyman, and again, as is written in *The Voice of the Silence*, 'Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself.' From such a level of consciousness, which is at once the Light and a way of action illumined by that Light, great art and culture and noble character must needs be born, and, be it noted, all these things must spring from a higher level than the intellect, the limitations of which, though obvious to all who meditate, seem yet unknown to the average Western mind. Yet the intellect can only learn *about* the Truth, and even when all that is knowable *about* Reality is learnt, the knower and the known are still two and not one, and the knower

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has yet to *know* Reality. Even the knowledge that all diversity is so many forms of One is an intellectual equation between this and that, and the subtlest process of thought can say no more. The mind, as thinking machine, collects, collates, compares and values manifested things, and thereby learns as much about them as may be known—*about* them. But these distinctions and comparisons are qualities inherent in the 'lower' mind, defilements upon that Essence of Mind which is 'intrinsically pure'. It follows that he who would *know* Reality must first admit that he does not know, for no man can begin to learn what he thinks he already knows. Hence the advice of St Paul: 'If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.'

The word 'science' means knowledge, but 'scientists' decide, before seeking to know, that nothing is knowledge which cannot be proved by standards of their own determining, and these are laid down by the intellect. If they would truly *know*, they must therefore enlarge their field of search, and the first move is to abandon the habit of choosing between alternatives. Both may be equally true. In the essential duality of manifestation all forms are polarized, as it were, into 'pairs of opposites' and the first step on the way from knowledge *about* things to knowledge *of* them is to appreciate that both these opposites are true. As the Dean of St Paul's wrote recently: 'It may be that the nearest approach we can make to an intellectual apprehension of Reality is by approving propositions which we do not see the way to harmonize with one another.' But such is the strain imposed on the thought-machine, the intellect, in attempting to accept at the same time two contradictory statements, that a tension arises which can only be released by the rousing of a higher faculty, the intuition, known in the East as *Buddhi*.

The foundation of Zen is the fact that the Buddha was the Buddha because he was *Buddha*, which is a more important statement than it sounds. Siddhartha Gautama learnt from the Brahmin teachers of his day as much as any man may learn from another's mind, but only as the crown of ceaseless striving

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did he burst the bonds of *avidya*, ignorance, and attain the highest office in the hierarchy of this world, the BUDDHA, the Fully-Awakened One. This self-attained Enlightenment, the crown of direct experience, self-understanding in its highest form, is only attained by the immediate cognition of Reality, which begins with occasional flashes of true understanding, and finally becomes this glorious state of consciousness attainable at will. He who attains it speaks thereafter, as the Buddha spoke, and Jesus spoke, as one who *knows*. 'And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings [the *Sermon on the Mount*] the people were astonished at His doctrine; for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.'

The Scriptures of the world have this in common, that they all make sense. But what is sense and what is nonsense? Sense is a fragment of truth presented in a form approved by the intellect. All else is nonsense; yet throughout the ages men have found that the deeper truths of life can only be phrased in paradox, which, from the intellectual point of view, is illogical, unreasonable and absurd. But Zen can never be logical, nor rational, nor even intelligible to the intellectual mind; on the contrary, 'the method of Zen is to baffle, excite, puzzle, and exhaust the intellect until it is realized that intellection is only thinking *about*; it will provoke, irritate, and again exhaust the emotions, until it is realized that emotion is only feeling *about*, and then it contrives, when the disciple has been brought to an intellectual and emotional impasse, to bridge the gap between second-hand, conceptual contact with reality, and first-hand experience.' This, as Alan Watts (*The Spirit of Zen*) points out, needs the faculty of *Buddhi*, 'for the aim of Zen is to focus the attention on reality itself, instead of on our intellectual and emotional reactions to reality'. This reality flows as a river, the river of Life, and whereas thought can lead the student to the river-bank, only the indomitable will to continue onward, plus the confession that the intellect can do no more, will produce the tremendous courage to take the 'death-leap' from the cliff of knowledge into the fathomless unknown. Life on the cliff is safe, and known, but, to the will which knows no pause upon

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the Way, such life is a prison not to be endured. Better the chance of death for every loved belief and principle than the dull security of a life outworn, and out of the mists of the valley below, that 'valley of the world' which, being lowly, holds the world, the voices of the fearless ones who leapt and lived bring reassurance to the doubter's will.

If this be so, how seriously misleading is the half-truth that Awakening may be achieved, not, it is true, by ritual or prayer or fierce devotion or much learning, but by the due performance of all duty as it comes to hand. It is true that a great teacher said that 'usual life is very Tao', and that, as Dr. Suzuki wrote, 'Salvation must be sought in the finite itself, for there is nothing infinite apart from finite things,' but to reach the true Awakening life must be lived in its littlest detail freed from the tyranny of thought, which bows to the 'Opposites', freed from desire, which binds the aspiring will to things of sense, and in the brilliant light of a consciousness that all things, good or evil, manifest the Essence of Pure Mind. When this and more than this is a fair description of 'usual life', then usual life is the way of Zen, but not one moment before!

To the master of Zen the average pupil seems as a man in chains, as a man who builds a tower of scaffolding in order to reach the sky, as a man in a cage who is proud of its sound construction yet cries aloud to be free. Hence the variety and startling nature of the means employed to release the prisoners, ranging from stony silence or irrelevant answers to rudeness and even violence to the person of the questing mind. Nothing, however extravagant, is beyond the range of the master in his efforts to shatter the cage which men erect about their minds with slow, conceptual thought, for until these outworn habits are removed, the light of *Buddhi* shining within will never irradiate the mind. Yet the whole technique is used, not to give the seeker something he has not got, but to bring him to the point of being able to 'let go', and it needs great courage, and a fierce intensity of effort, to 'let go'!

The philosophy of Zen may be called the doctrine of Immediacy. As early as the seventh century A.D. the Patriarch

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Hui Neng referred to his teachings as those of the Sudden School, for its aim is to stimulate the mind into leaping the gap between subject and object *immediately*, that is, without the intervening processes of thought. The 'devices' used to attain this end are various. One is the *mondo*, in which by a rapid exchange of question and answer the pupil is forced to an ever-increasing speed of thought till, finally, leaping the well-worn steps of reasoning in a single flight, he rouses the dormant flame of *Buddhi*, and achieves in a flash of vision that union of subject-object which is pure experience.

The *mondo* is used in the presence of the master; the *koan* is used alone. This apparently meaningless word or phrase is held in the mind unceasingly, as the object of meditation in the hours so set apart, and at the rim of consciousness in all other waking hours. For weeks and months, and maybe years, the whole power of the mind is bent on 'solving' the *koan*, but finally, baffled, exhausted, and all but beaten, the mind attains the Ring-pass-not of reasoning, there to be faced with a door to which it has no key. Yet the moment of despair is the moment of victory, for here is the 'centre in the midst of conditions', where the swing of the Opposites is stilled, and here, in the darkness of exhausted thought, *satori* comes, and the *koan*, as the shell of a broken nut, is thrown away. Yet this is not the end. *Satori* is but a flash in the darkness; ultimately the light must burn unceasingly, as 'a flame in a windless place'. Yet 'even among Zen followers there are some who are no believers in the *koan*, regarding it as something artificially contrived; indeed, they go farther and declare *satori* itself to be a sort of excrescence which does not properly belong to the original system of Zen'.<sup>1</sup>

Zen is a method of approach to Truth which cannot be limited, even by a 'Zen' technique, and its lower stages need no Japanese master to assist in the mind's unravelling. The purpose of Zen is to shatter the trammels of form, and too much reliance on a single method, even though used as a mere 'device', will only prolong the bondage rather than bring it to an end. Even

<sup>1</sup> *Essays in Zen Buddhism*. Series Two. D. T. Suzuki.

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a 'pure' abstraction is a cage, and consciousness is none the less enslaved by an object by reason of the fact that it wears but a tenuous form. Hence one finds, as Alan Watts points out, that while the philosophers of the Mahayana were considering problems intellectually, Zen passed beyond discursive thinking to the direct experience of Reality: 'When asked about the ultimate mysteries of Buddhism, it replied, "The cypress tree in the courtyard"—"the bamboo grove at the foot of the hill"—"the dried-up dirt-scraper". *Anything* to bring the mind back from abstractions to life!'<sup>1</sup> For a conception, as the word implies, however abstract, is a fragment of life that is captured and confined, while the purpose of Zen is to stand in the flow of the river of Life, and then—let go.

It follows that Zen is a discipline, not of the mind and emotions merely, but of the will. Sooner or later the mind rebels at paradox, and describes as nonsense the mountain peaks of wisdom where its feet have not yet trod. Yet the mental man walks stumbling forward, using the rope of established reasoning to haul himself in mind from here to there, from now to then. The Zen practitioner walks upright in the Eternal Now, and, knowing that all directions are in equal error, flows with life unceasingly, faster and ever faster, only to remain unmoved in the Almighty Here! The extravert acts ceaselessly, in constant need by useful action to retain his sense of an all-embracing Unity; the introvert would say, with the Patriarch Hui Neng: 'We should work for Buddhahood within the Essence of Mind, and we should not look for it apart from ourselves.' The wise man, knowing there is neither out nor in, prefers the Middle Way and treads it, Here and Now.

What, then, is the secret of Zen?

'It is so near that none can see it,  
Yet so far that here it is!'

The Western teaching of a Heaven to be earned in life but only experienced after death has made the average Christian so long-sighted that, forgetting the Christ's own teaching that the

<sup>1</sup> *The Spirit of Zen.*

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Kingdom of Heaven lies within, he fails to perceive what lies so close at hand. Zen describes nothing, explains nothing, teaches nothing; but it points a way, and the way is within the mind. Asked: 'We have to dress and eat every day; how do we escape from all that?' the master Bokuju replied: 'We dress, we eat.' 'I don't understand,' said the questioner. 'If you don't understand, put on your dress and eat.' There is a famous saying in the New Testament beginning: 'To him that hath . . . ' In the same vein Hui-ch'ing said to a pupil: 'When you have a staff I will give you one; when you have none I will take it away.' To the thinking mind this is nonsense; to the intuition, true.

Dr. Suzuki<sup>1</sup> gives a perfect example of the difference between the intellectual and the intuitive technique. There is an Indian story, often recited as the origin of Zen, which runs: A Brahmin came to the Buddha and offered him two flowering trees, which he carried in either hand. As he approached, the Buddha called out 'Drop it!' The Brahmin dropped the tree in his right hand. Again the Buddha called out, 'Drop it!' The Brahmin dropped the tree in his left hand. Once more the Buddha called out, 'Drop it!' Puzzled, the Brahmin asked, 'What else have I to drop?' 'I never told you to drop the trees,' the Buddha answered, 'but to abandon your desires, your hatred, your illusions, and that which you call your self, for only when all these are abandoned will you be free from the Wheel of Birth and Death'. Far different is the Zen equivalent. 'A monk once asked the master Joshu, "How is it when a man brings nothing with him?"—"Throw it away," said Joshu.—"What shall he throw away when he is not burdened at all?"—"If so, carry it along!"'

There is a lovely passage in *The Man Without a Sword*,<sup>2</sup> which is of the very essence of Zen: 'I have no parents. I make the heavens and the earth my parents. . . . I have no strength. I make submission my strength. I have neither life nor death. I make the Self-Existent my life and death. I have no friends. I make my mind my friend. . . . I have no sword. I make the sleep of the mind my sword.' Here is the clue, if not the key, to

<sup>1</sup> *Essays in Zen Buddhism*. Series One. D. T. Suzuki.

<sup>2</sup> *Dreams and Delights*. Mrs Adams Beck.

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Zen. With the mind that is friend asleep, the sword that is wisdom is wakened. So sharp that it severs the Gordian knots of every problem before they are even tied; so swift that it pierces the heart of Truth before the shield of the Opposites can intervene, it is a flame of joy in the darkness of illusion, and once unsheathed will never rest until the hour of victory.

Asked: 'What is Zen?' a master replied, 'Walk On!'



## ZEN

There's pleasure in the body, strange delight  
In all the functions of the day and night.  
The lust of warmth, the belly's deep content,  
The feel of fur, and sleep's abandonment.  
The smell of wine, of woman's hair;  
A bonfire heavy on the autumn air;  
But lust of heart is better.

The feel of fear, resolved in swift relief;  
Blind anger, brutal, past belief  
To reason kneeling, and heart's kindness  
That fills the throat and runs to bless  
The littlest form of life; and jealousy,  
Conceived of love, and beauty's ecstasy;  
Yet lust of thought is better.

Mind, the unswerving searchlight of the soul,  
Womb and destroyer of each partial whole.  
To build with cold, conceptual glee  
The shrine of an ideal, then set it free,  
And nobler build, moving on godlike feet  
Toward the vision of the thing complete;

But give me Zen.

*Theravada and Zen*

A DISPASSIONATE survey of Buddhism in the West reveals a clear-cut division between those who study and attempt to practise the Theravada, the Way of the Elders, of Ceylon, Burma, Thailand and Cambodia, and those who in pursuit of Zen, study Zen Buddhism, the home of which is Japan. It is a solemn thought, that I may be one of the very few in Europe, or for that matter in the whole field of Buddhism, who regard the two as of equal value, and as no more genuine rivals than the two halves of a whole. Followers of the two Schools in Europe have drifted apart with the years, and without deliberate and sustained attempts to build up a body of Western Buddhists who will see them as each with a rightful and necessary part in the total field, the split may be disastrous. It is therefore with this sense of responsibility to the future that I invite the readers of *The Middle Way* to face the present problem, and to take action to end it.

The Theravada is the older school, and probably contains the oldest extant teaching of the Buddha. The Teaching was handed down, to the extent that the Theras understood it and were faithful in their handling, for at least 400 years by word of mouth. Not till at least the first century B.C. was it written down, and in the last 2,000 years there has been plenty of time for omission of parts not understood or not approved by an editor, for changes intentional and unintentional, and for additions, often by copying marginal comments into later editions of the text. Yet for all this criticism, though it may be absurd to regard the Pali Canon as the *ipsissima verba* of the All-Enlightened One, it does enshrine as much of the Buddha's actual words as any existing record, and may well contain the basic principles of his exoteric teaching to the world. That much of the present

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Canon was not written down, or even created until the early centuries of the Christian era does not invalidate this assumption, but it does mean that scholars will never agree what passages are original and which were later in creation. Certainly, much of the Abhidhamma has no historical basis in the Buddha's Teaching, and is as much a development of later minds as most of the Mahayana, against which the purists of the Theravada so vehemently inveigh. In brief, the Pali Canon of the Theravada is the best source for the Buddha's basic teaching, but it is not the whole of 'Buddhism'. When I showed a famous Buddhist in Ceylon the Society's *Twelve Principles of Buddhism* he remarked, 'What is all this about schools of Buddhism? There is Dhamma or not Dhamma, and that is all there is to it.' For begging the question and for most un-Buddhist intolerance this is, one trusts, exceptional, but it is an attitude very easy to adopt. Without dogmatism or the claim of non-existent 'authority' the Theravada teaching is clearly the Buddha's Way to Nirvana, the expression of his Enlightenment, and clearly the product of tremendous thinking illumined by an intuitive awareness unique in the annals of mankind. If it has little of the value of Buddhi, the intuition, little of compassion or the noblest flights of thought, these may be the limitations necessary to produce the desired effect, to keep the Buddhist's eyes on the task in hand, the treading of the Path which, trodden to the end, will produce in every man the Enlightenment achieved by one. As such, the mind of the student is turned inward, introverted to self-destruction and Self-enlightenment. The salvation of the world can wait until the individual can show that his own life is an example of what may be achieved by any man who obeys the Buddha's injunctions and treads the Path which he trod to the end.

The Mahayana is a development from the Theravada. True, some of it is equally old, and it contains much of an esoteric tradition which was probably taught as such by the Buddha. But it contains the Theravada, and there is no main teaching in it which cannot be found in seed-form in the older Canon. This is no place for yet further consideration of the rise of the later

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from the earlier school, but some of the differences are important. The student is encouraged to lift his eyes from the Path at his feet; to use reason to its limit but to refuse to be bound by those limitations; to regard the Bodhisattva ideal as at least comparable with that of the Arhat. The expansion of doctrine went far, and so far that the two schools became very largely complementary. A magnificent range of metaphysic and philosophy was developed from the germs in the earlier teaching, and the higher ranges of thought were pressed to a limit not yet surpassed by any system produced by the mind of man.

Then came Zen, a revulsion by the Chinese mind from the prolixity and complexity of Indian thought. We read of a claim by Zen supporters to name the Patriarchs from Buddha to Bodhidharma, a learned Buddhist from South India, who in the sixth century A.D. founded the new school in China after his memorable interview with the reigning Emperor. But it was the sixth Chinese Patriarch, Hui Neng, who is the true founder of the Zen school of Buddhism, and his Platform Sutra is the basic scripture which no pursuer of Zen can ignore. The object of the school and each of its members is the highest possible for human beings, to attain that grasp of the Absolute which made of Gautama Siddhartha an Indian princeling, *Buddha*, the Awakened One. For Buddhism, let it never be forgotten, is the teaching collected around *Buddhi*, the Enlightenment which made the Buddha *buddha*. Without *Buddhi* there would be no awareness of *Bodhi*, the Wisdom attained in Enlightenment, and as Zen, a corruption of the Sanskrit *Dhyana* is used as a synonym for that Enlightenment, there can be no truer goal for the Buddhist than to seek for Zen. Nor can there be any nobler school than that which, ignoring anything less, whether scripture, ritual or any form whatever, teaches its members to drive into the deeps of their own mind, relentlessly, unceasingly, to find that Light. But if Zen must be the highest form of Buddhism, in that it aims the highest, its roots are in Theravada Buddhism. For if the Theravada be the roots of Buddhism, and the Mahayana developments the body of the plant, then Zen

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is the flower, but a flower does not grow in the air, but on a branch which springs from roots.

If this be true, and forty years of study convince me of it, I strongly advise all newcomers to Buddhism to begin their study, in humility of mind, at the bottom, on the rock-base of the lighthouse rather than with the Light at the top. It is easy to quote the Zen saying, that the way to climb a mountain is to begin at the top; to the intuition this is true, but when the Buddha said, 'Of all things springing from a cause the Tathagata hath shown the cause, and also its ceasing', was this the bottom of Buddhism or the top? With a deep and thorough study of the Theravada the mind is given a body of working principles for application; it is based on a magnificent morality which in turn relies on reason and not on dogma; it is trained to concentrate and to meditate; it is then ready to consider the wider field of the Mahayana if it so desires.

If this preliminary training be omitted; if the student, impatient to achieve the excitement of satori, tries to by-pass what is the greater part of 'Buddhism', he is in danger of that antinomianism against which Dr. Suzuki expressly warns us. Antinomians, a sixteenth-century German sect, taught that the moral law was not binding on Christians, and it is easy for Zen enthusiasts to fall into the same error. If all phenomena are illusion; if there is no self to do bad deeds or suffer their results; if all is changing and thus in the long run of no consequence, what does it matter if we help ourselves from the till or do anything else we fancy? It is far too easy to become imbued with principles which belong to the world of spirit and have no immediate application in the world of men. If good and evil are but a pair of opposites, like night and day, why worry which we choose? These are the 'wrong views' which a new boy in the school of Buddhism may develop and apply unless he is well grounded in those basic truths which the Buddha taught us in the Theravada school.

For Zen training is very strenuous, and the fact that it attempts to break through the bounds of reason puts a strain on the mind. If there is a crack already, the instrument may

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break under the strain, and the outcome may be immorality, insanity or crime. But if the new devotee of Zen is well based on his Buddhist principles, his mind will be so free within that he will be well content to obey the laws and rules of society while 'walking on' on his spiritual journey.

I therefore strongly advise beginners in Zen to begin with basic Buddhism. By this I mean the ambit of subjects which to my knowledge has been used in the West for lectures to the public for forty or more years—the Three Signs of Being, the Four Noble Truths, Karma and Rebirth, tolerance and no authority, and Nirvana as the Goal. These may include the twelve Nidanas, whether or not the Buddha taught them in that form, but they are not the whole of Theravada Buddhism, and many an earnest student has found no need for them.

But just as the student of Mahayana, or its pinnacle, Zen, should first have a working knowledge of the older school, so should members of the latter raise their eyes from the Path to look awhile at the stars. If the Theravada is introvert, rational and deliberately confined, the Mahayana is extrovert, rational/irrational, intuitive and wide as the mind of man. Zen goes further . . . The truth is that the 'greater vehicle' is complementary to the older school, developing facets of the total man untouched by the curriculum of the Pali Canon. Here is another of the Pairs of Opposites, and these, as all other extremes, meet. Meet where? Surely in Zen, the 'higher third' of the lower antithesis, which alone transcends all teaching and resorts to pure experience. This is of course incommunicable—'The Tao that can be expressed is not the eternal Tao'. That which lies beyond thought cannot be expressed in the only terms in which the thought can be expressed, in concepts, and those concept-symbols we call words. All that lies beyond thought must abide in silence, which is no doubt why the Buddha maintained a 'noble silence' to every question asked him about ultimates.

But to go beyond thought implies a mind that can think. This means that the student of Zen must first have a thinking machine to transcend, for only when thought has reached its

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limits can No-thought appear. True, the processes of thinking will be increasingly illumined as the intuition is developed, but actual experience of Reality must come to a mind which is devoid of thought, and made so by a long course of mind-development. Hence the necessity of concentration and meditation as deliberate accomplishments. When knowledge applied has become wisdom, functioning in a character of solid worth, the effort may be safely made to abandon thinking, and, with the aid of Buddhi, to *know*. Here Zen technique comes in, for Zen is unique in this alone, that no other school of mysticism, if that is a right description of it, has ever produced an actual course of mind-development trained to produce the 'experience'. This is the secret of Zen, not to earn enlightenment, nor to wait for it, still less to be good and hope for it, but to unsheathe the sword of Truth and, fighting all opposition, even to the thought of Enlightenment should that stand in the way, to win it. 'We are warriors,' said the Buddha. We fight for enlightenment, for none will give it us. We fight to destroy the barriers in the mind which hide what we possess, to destroy the self which prefers scriptures, ritual and even prayer to the desperate battle which alone achieves Enlightenment.

Is this an unfair picture of the total Buddhist in the total Buddhist field? Knowledge of principles, the development of character, the training of the mind—is not this the right and the only right approach to Zen? For the final stages we have as yet no teacher. But 'When the pupil is ready the Master appears', such is an ancient maxim, and when we have earned a Zen Master to help us one will undoubtedly appear. Meanwhile let the Theravadins raise their eyes to the light and laughter of Zen, and let the Zen enthusiasts 'be humble, and remain entire' as advised in the Tao Tê Ching. More vision, compassion and a sense of the divine fun will help the former to go further on the Way they have chosen; let the men of Zen *reculer pour mieux sauter*, go back to the bottom before they leap for the top. They will leap the better.

*The Head and the Heart*

I READ in the papers of a new technique devised by scientists for releasing such power as will make an A-bomb sound like a pop-gun; I read of philosophers who have evolved an entirely new concept of Reality, and remember another such called Marx whose views have had remarkable results. These inventions are products of the intellect. Do they lead us one foot farther on the Way? Or do they pertain to the realm of concept only, of knowledge 'about it and about', yet knowledge which, used without reference to compassion, may utterly destroy mankind? As Dr Suzuki has pointed out, the twin bases of Buddhism are Maha-Prajna, supreme Wisdom, and Maha-Karuna, supreme Compassion. The one is useless without the other, for man walks upon two legs. The intellect alone is dangerous, for it generates lust for power, hate of the least shadow of a rival view, and the illusion that it can sometime know Reality. Hence the long history of war between rival schools, and between those who belonged to them, between nations whose leaders fought that a rival concept might obtain; hence the distrust in the heart of the average man of the brilliant, cold and humourless mind that is not warmed by the human, because universal, attribute of compassion for all mankind.

The Lord Buddha himself was no intellectual. Though he penetrated further in pure thought than any man before in history; though he pressed into a single phrase the ultimate analysis of all phenomena; though he was the world's first scientist in the objective approach to all that is, he was, in the application of his wisdom, the incarnation of compassion, and his life was dedicated to explaining in simple terms the Way along which others might, by suffering rightly, end it. Thus he spoke to the suffering Kisagotami; thus he cared for the sick



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disciple; thus he comforted the unhappy Ananda at the end. His touch was for the common people, and he met them with a loving heart as man to man.

What, then, is the alternative to the intellect? Emotion? Certainly not, in spite of Jung's analysis of the divers springs of conduct in the average man. Yet the triple division of Raja Yoga into Jnana, Bhakti and Karma Yoga applies to all men. We are not all Jnana yogins, those who seek for knowledge, nor ever shall be. Without its millions of Bhakti yogins, those who develop through devotion to a Teacher, to an Ideal, to a personified Way, Buddhism would have died as a world-teaching in a hundred years, and survived, if at all, as a minor school of dialectic and pure reasoning. In fact, the Buddha-Way, enshrined in a complex Buddh-ism of man's devising, rapidly spread about the world and has satisfied for 2,500 years unnumbered millions of men and women whose intellects could never grasp the niceties, for example, of the Twelve Nidanas, or if they could, never achieve their application to our daily progress on the Way.

There remains Karma Yoga, the way of right action. This of the three is undoubtedly the Western way, and explains why Karma and Rebirth are always the most popular themes in a talk on Buddhism. The average Westerner is not an intellectual and not, at any rate in England, a Bhakti devotee. He asks of any doctrine, how does it work; and how does it apply to daily life? Buddhism answers him.

Yet deep in the vast body of Buddhism and certainly near its heart, lies an objective, unemotional analysis of things as they are. All things, without exception, said the Buddha, are *anicca*, changing; live accordingly. All things, seen and unseen, are *anatta*, without a separate self. I have, since I first read of this doctrine at the age of seventeen, entirely rejected the modern concept of its meaning as an unqualified no-self, partly because the Buddha, according to the Pali Canon, taught nothing of the kind; partly because, as I read it, he taught by his silence and in other ways precisely the opposite, and mostly because I reject a statement of fact which every faculty of knowledge I possess,

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including the intuition, informs me to be quite untrue. On the other hand, I entirely accept the doctrine that there is not in me, nor in any man, a single faculty or part which is unchangingly mine or his, or eternal, or separate from that All which men call variously the Dharma-kaya or Buddha-nature or Reality or God. This is a doctrine of enormous value to all men and I believe that the Buddha taught it. As for *dukkha*, man causes it, said the Buddha; let him remove the cause. But I deny that Buddhism is an escape from suffering. The way of the heart, as distinct from the head, deliberately leads into it and through it, until the last drop of that mighty sea of suffering caused by the tears of men is drawn up by the sun of Enlightenment, and the sense of separateness, which causes desire for self and therefore suffering, is no more.

When self is analyzed, pitilessly, utterly, what is left to say 'I' and to boast of I's achievements? Nothing. But what is left when the intellect, to its own satisfaction, has also proved the non-existence of a higher, nobler, ever-glorious Self which is in turn unsevered from the SELF which is the light of all Enlightenment. The answer comes from *hsin*, the heart, the impulse in each individual which tells him that greater than man or any faculty in man is humanity; greater than any part, the all. But *hsin* is very much more. The interrelation of human faculties is subtle in the extreme, but just as *Buddhi*, the intuition, irradiates the higher levels of thought, so does it give point and purpose to the promptings of the heart which, where they argue against pure reason, are so often and so interestingly right. For *Buddhi* knows instead of knowing about; it knows, and without any medium, the oneness of all things, and the cycles of becoming, large and small, by which that Unity, in a vast field of diversity, in some way achieves its own high purposes.

Its voice and law and instrument is compassion. 'Compassion is no attribute. It is the Law of Laws, eternal harmony; a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting right, the fitness of all things . . .'

It follows that the Arhat ideal is limited, though its limits are for most of us still out of sight. For the time being, whose mind

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can we purify and ennoble save our own? It is easy to choose the Bodhisattva path and, in the excuse of saving all mankind, to project our own diseases upon others, thereby saving ourselves the unpleasant task of rooting out each 'fond offence', and of slaying the self which cries aloud for the glory of saving others when itself it cannot save. At some far point on the road ahead of us the two paths surely join. Meanwhile let us regard the head and the heart as brother ways upon one Way, but see to it that the way of the intellect is used for the Bodhisattva way, and does not produce that super-selfishness which leads in turn to the state of the Pratyeka Buddha who achieves Nirvana for himself alone.

For these are two paths, though the Path is One. Head-learning, 'the doctrine of the Eye', is for the many; 'the doctrine of the Heart' for the few. The Dharma of the 'Eye' concerns the external, ever-changing world; the Dharma of the Heart achieves by Bodhi, the ultimate wisdom, the Unchanging. The distinction lies in the purpose for which the Path is trodden. Whether for self, however meticulously analyzed, or for the whole, however vague as yet that feeling and poor as yet the power of thought, which between them serve the ideal of wholeness. Between the two we choose in the end irrevocably; meanwhile, in a small way, we choose every moment of the day, as the needs of the part or the claims of the whole pull harder. The self wants sensual, emotional and intellectual gratification. The greater Self—and who would dare deny the duality and the tension between them?—serves the one life or light, that indivisible Be-ness which is beyond the range and reach of thought, before which the intellect, in all its pride and majesty, falls impotent.

The one path leads to the accumulated wisdom of the ages, tested and verified by generations of men made perfect, those whose patron and Master is that greatest of the sons of men, Gautama the Buddha. The other path is lonely indeed, and its pilgrims tread it for the reward alone. These are the 'rogue elephants' that, divorced from the herd, must face destruction, though on the way they may achieve considerable bliss. On the

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way of the heart the rule is absolute, that even the final goal is sacrificed for the benefit of all. The first step on this path is 'to live to benefit mankind'. This is the path of perpetual sacrifice yet, as is well said, 'there is no such thing as sacrifice; there is only opportunity to serve'. If the Arhat path must first be trodden, in that we must begin, as in a way we end, with self-salvation, yet never for one second do we lose our contact with the Life or Light or inseparable Oneness of the Dharma-kaya of which the Buddha in a human vesture was the form we knew. 'Thou shalt not separate thy being from BEING, and the rest, but merge the Ocean in the drop, the drop within the Ocean.' So speaks *The Voice of the Silence*.

Yet the selfish path is much the easier, for on that way lies an escape from sorrow. The Bodhisattva path eschews all happiness, from now until the end. On this Way of the heart all woe, the whole of the world's suffering, is faced and consumed. Nothing of self in the end remains for him who obeys the command to 'remain unselfish to the endless end'. Only the choice remains, and the privilege of choosing; the cold, dispassionate calm of pure untroubled thought, or the ceaseless labour, directed alike by the heart and head, to proclaim the Dharma to all mankind, and to lead all forms of life, to the last blade of grass, into Enlightenment.

Wherever the intellect has spoken alone, men have slain one another since the dawn of time, and striven to bind each others' minds in the toils of dogma. Where the heart controls the head the exclusive claims of the intellect are silenced, and in the silence 'compassion speaks and saith: Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?'"

## *Buddhism and Psychology*

*Being a condensed version of a Lecture at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on October 31st, 1950, with Dr. E. Graham Howe in the Chair.*

BUDDHISM today is potentially the greatest spiritual force in the East. It is also the only force in the East, and probably in the world, which is capable of stemming the tide of naked evil which threatens to overwhelm mankind. Psychology, on the other hand, is potentially the greatest science of the West, for whereas all other activities of the mind and emotions, such as science, religion, philosophy and political economy, are the results of thought and feeling applied to the world around us, the subject of psychology is the mind itself. The former are, as it were, the pictures flung upon the screen of circumstance; psychology concerns itself with the projector, the film, the light, and even the operator. It is not surprising, therefore, that psychology is now being used in industry, in the labour market, in the Forces, in prisons and in the prevention and cure of delinquency. It is being used in the mass in national and international affairs; it is invading the individual realm of medicine, where more and more doctors appreciate the high percentage of diseases which have a discoverable mental cause. A comparison between these two great forces is therefore of interest, and although I have no qualifications as a psychologist, few psychologists have much knowledge of Buddhism. For want of anyone more competent to blaze the trail in this new field of comparison I must therefore do what I can. If it be asked why the comparison is not between Western psychology and Buddhist psychology, which was a well-developed study 2,000 years ago, it may be answered that the East avoids the Western attempt to analyze the flow of the river of life, and to divide what is indivisible into non-existent 'parts'. Philosophy, psychology,

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religion, mysticism, these in the East are aspects of Mind, and cannot be understood apart from each other.

The scope of Buddhism is enormous. The Theravada or Southern School possesses the finest moral-philosophy in the world; the Mahayana or Northern School has added to it a wealth of abstract philosophy, metaphysics, mysticism and art; while Zen Buddhism, a unique contribution to spiritual development, is the crown of this vast edifice of the mind's achievement. The scope of Western psychology is equally many-faceted, the Schools of Freud and Jung and their respective followers occupying most of the field. But whereas Freud reduced the value of the individual mind, Jung expands it to universal proportions, and in *The Secret of the Golden Flower* laid the foundations of a new bridge between East and West which men like Graham Howe, Kenneth Walker and Aldous Huxley are widening and using to unite the two.

In comparing any two concepts one should define one's terms, but no two students in either of these fields would agree on a definition. The would-be synthesist, therefore, can but note the factors common to both and compare them; later scholars must deepen the study of the concepts chosen, and widen their range. Taking the two fields of thought at their widest there does seem such a concensus of agreement, both in content and technique, as will probably surprise the Buddhist and psychologist alike. Let us consider some of them.

Both are empirical and scientific in approach; that is. they advance from the facts of experience to theories based upon those facts, which in turn are tested in the light of fresh experience. There are none of the assumptions, still less the dogmas of religion, such as the Christian concept of a personal God, an immortal soul, or the power of priests to influence the one in the salvation of the other.

Both are essentially practical, the Buddhist seeking a Way off the Wheel of Becoming and the psychologist, or his more active colleague, the psychiatrist, helping his patient to acquire relief from self-assertion in terms which at times make echo of the Buddha's words. Both are direct, for though *upaya*, means or

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devices, may be used to achieve the chosen end, the finger pointing to the moon is never mistaken for the moon, and the raft which is used to cross the river should not be borne on the shoulders up the mountain side.

Both may be described as dynamic ways to the restoration of a lost sense of wholeness; both face and use and finally transcend the conflict of the 'opposites'. In both the patient/pupil is made to face facts and to eschew all forms of 'escapism', this being one of the most difficult tasks which either strives to perform. All of us run away from what we do not like, forgetting that it is in fact the result of our own past error. We escape into 'pleasures', or into illness so that we need not do what we do not want to do. We escape into phantasy or day-dreaming, preferring an admittedly untrue world to a truer world we do not like. We escape into concepts, slogans, formulae, and then expect these creatures of our minds to save us from the consequences of our own habitual error. Some of us run further still from the unpleasantness of life as we have made it, and when the internal conflict between the 'lower' and 'higher' parts of the Self gets too acute we develop mental illness. Sometimes this becomes bad enough to be labelled madness, the mind's last refuge from the truth, and some there are who try to escape from their problems by suicide. But the Buddhist, knowing the law of karma/rebirth, knows that 'Not in the sky, nor in the sea, nor in a cave in the mountains can a man escape from his evil deeds', and that debts unpaid in this life must be paid in a life to come.

Buddhism and psychology agree that the whole man must be 'saved' and not merely the best of him, and that in the end he must save himself. 'Work out your salvation—with diligence,' said the Buddha, and the psychiatrist can but guide his patient to his own healing. And the cure or the Enlightenment takes place in this world, and not in a hypothetical heaven. Both agree that we can but achieve a relative knowledge with our present faculties, and make the best of present conditions until they can be changed. Both use all 'means' to the common end and are tolerant of others' choice of means. Both agree that the part must serve the whole and that the whole or commonweal

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must be at the service of the part until the false antithesis between them is resolved, and the Whole, or Universal Unconscious has been absorbed into the least, self-conscious part.

I have chosen five principles in common for a closer view. Here are the first fruits of my survey. If my observations seem disjointed and insufficiently worked out, I can but repeat that these are first steps in a vast new field of study.

### I. THE UNCONSCIOUS BEHIND CONSCIOUSNESS

The unconscious part of the mind contains, it would seem, the worst that has been and the best that is yet to be, both the used and unused material of the working consciousness. We may view our states of consciousness as a series of concentric rings, with human self-consciousness at the centre. About it lies the pre-conscious, and beyond it what Jung calls the personal unconscious. Outside this again lies the collective unconscious which merges into the Universal Consciousness which is at the same time the Universal Unconsciousness. The East describes an ascending range of grades of consciousness, from that of the mineral, vegetable and animal to that of man, and from the bare self-consciousness of primitive man to heights of spiritual splendour described by Dr. Bucke as 'Cosmic Consciousness'. Science, it seems, would now grant consciousness, if not self-consciousness, to every atom of matter, thus moving a further step towards the Eastern view that mind and matter are equally born of Mind, are equally alive in all their parts and that indeed there is nothing 'dead'.

Eastern teaching is based on the primordial unity of manifestation. This Unity can be first perceived as a basic duality, the 'Absolute, abstract Space' and 'Absolute, abstract Motion' of *The Secret Doctrine*, the latter representing 'unconditioned Consciousness'. This fathomless unconscious is basic to the Mahayana School of Buddhism and, though a philosophic doctrine, may well equate, though Dr. Suzuki seems to think otherwise, with the Unconscious of Western psychology. For behind mind is Mind, which is 'no-mind' (*mu-shin*), and the whole concept of the Void behind phenomena is surely the



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philosophic counterpart of the psychological Unconscious behind individual self-consciousness.

'Mind-Only' is a doctrine basic to Mahayana Buddhism and, it would seem, to psychology. In terms of philosophy it is, I suppose, subjective idealism, in that the phenomenal world is but a temporary illusion. To the Buddhist all manifestation is *anicca*, impermanent, *dukkha*, known to suffering, and *anatta*, lacking a permanent core or 'soul' which eternally separates it from other forms of life. Behind Manifestation lies THAT of which all this is but the 'appearance'. 'There is, O Bhikkhus, an Unborn, Unoriginated, Unformed. Were there not such an Unborn, Unoriginated, Unformed, there could not be the born, the originated and the formed . . . ' So does the psychologist, while seeking to avoid contamination with philosophy, impliedly realize that nothing has validity for the individual save that which emanates from his own mind. A thing may seem to exist, but it is the mind alone which gives it value and meaning. Hence the mental sickness which arises from a confusion of appearance and reality, of form and meaning, of the part and the whole. For if the Signs of Being spell unhappiness, and not enlightenment, we must strive to return to the Unborn Unconsciousness or 'No-Mind', which H. P. Blavatsky described as 'Be-ness'. If the psychiatrist seeks, for his patient, a return to wholeness, the Buddhist seeks an Enlightenment wherein the opposites are finally transcended. And these are ways to the same One.

Then what is consciousness, in the only sense here relevant; self-consciousness? The East would say that the West too lightly assumes its possession. So far from being the one thing which we know that we possess, self-consciousness is in fact extremely rare. We have most painfully acquired this faculty, and the vast majority of mankind have only partially acquired it. Most are still fettered to the thoughts, beliefs, emotions and values of the mass about them, be it family, class or nation. How many of those who use the words 'I think' have ever done any such thing? Have they thought, or are they echoing the current views of the Press, or the club or the party, or some neighbour? Who

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can say that he stands in full self-consciousness? He is a bold man, for on this psychologists are agreed, that a vast proportion of our motive lies in the unconscious, and we have little idea of our actual motives for any act. Nor do we hold this self-consciousness for long at a time. Whenever we lapse into idle dreaming, or leave a sub-conscious part of the mind to drive the car, we have lost our full self-consciousness. Moreover the Buddhist, who claims to have analyzed consciousness more thoroughly than anyone else has pointed out the enormous speed of the change in consciousness. So far from being a stable faculty, it is changing with inconceivable rapidity. It is but a momentary awareness which arises from the reaction to stimuli, and then passes away. Yet, like all else in manifestation it is dual in nature, as we shall presently see.

### 2. THE SELF AND ITS CONSTITUENTS

The nature of self, or Self or SELF, and these are but labels for a mystery, is of the essence of Buddhism and psychology. Both agree that man has a visible body and an invisible something, a personality or individuality, which uses it. Buddhism speaks of five attributes of the illusion called self. There is a body (*rupa*); then *vedana* which, with *kama*, sensual desire, includes sensation-feeling-emotion; then *sanna*, which is the mind's perception-reaction to these stimuli; and then the *samskaras* (Pali: *sankharas*) which must be taken to include all mental attributes and qualities, both good and bad, with all propensities, inhibitions, complexes and tendencies of all degree. The *samskaras* must also be taken to include the mind as a thought-machine, with its double function of concrete and abstract thought. In Mahayana parlance, however, these would be included under *manas*, as the fifth 'principle' in man, the word being perhaps the root from which 'man' is derived, for man is only such by virtue of the faculty of thought.

Then comes *Vijnana* (Pali: *Vinnana*) or 'consciousness'. But it is interesting to note that this highly complex term means literally 'without *jnana*', a corruption of the Sanskrit term *dhyana*, a later corruption of which, through the Chinese *ch'an*,

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is Zen. *Dhyana*, to the extent that it is translatable, means Wisdom or Enlightenment. Our much prized human consciousness, then, is 'not-enlightened'. But this is corroborated by Western psychology. For most people, and for all people most of the time, consciousness is confined to consciousness of self, the lower, personal, selfish, craving self, which cries 'I want', 'I will' and 'I will have', indifferent to the self-same cry from a million equally selfish selves about it. The word, however, has two meanings, and if at its lowest it is the false self which, in the fires of spiritual experience, will be slowly burned away it is also the 'higher Self' which, progressively illumined by the light of the intuition, controls and then eliminates its undesirable attributes and in time, or when the illusion of time is ended, attains Enlightenment.

But no step in the evolutionary ladder can be left out. Just as there is no by-passing the full development of every faculty, so, as the psychiatrist knows, there can be no leaving in the dustbin of the unconscious those parts of the self of which we are frightened or ashamed. The whole man must rise as one, and just as we cannot cut off a diseased limb and remain whole, so we must purge the whole Self of the fires of hatred, lust and illusion in order to attain that whole perfection which is Enlightenment.

Surely it follows that the *anatta* doctrine can be rigidly applied too soon. Until a man has reached self-consciousness he cannot throw away the false self he has not yet gained. There has never been a man who attained Self-consciousness without first acquiring self-consciousness, for that would be jumping a step on the ladder, and Buddhists and psychologists agree that this cannot be done. In the same way a man can be psycho-analyzed too far. If there is insufficient self-consciousness to function when its complexes and knots have been removed, there is nothing left at the end of analysis, and the man, such as he was, has been destroyed.

To proceed with the faculties of the self, the Mahayanist adds to those already covered by the five *skandhas* several more. The 'will' has no precisely equivalent term in Buddhism, but the

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Western concern with the will to self-expression, whether through sex or the will to power, or some other primal urge, is well represented in Buddhist psychology, which has much to say of the suffering which the uncontrolled expression of these desires inevitably brings. *Buddhi*, the faculty of *Bodhi*, another term for wisdom, is that which the West calls intuition, a power of the mind which western psychology has not yet understood. In the East it is as much a faculty of the mind as thought, and as different from thought as thought is from emotion. It is the power of immediate awareness, and is the only faculty other than the senses by which man acquires direct experience.

The comparative view on what may be called the Higher Self is extremely interesting. Jung speaks of a Self being born at the junction of the conscious and unconscious parts of the mind. This would equate with the 'higher third' of Mahayana Buddhism, or the integrating factor in the higher reaches of the mind which compares, co-ordinates and transcends the functions of the opposing lower principles. Its ultimate purpose is to absorb and thereby unify the conscious and unconscious, destroying in the process both the limitations of self-consciousness and the unknown and therefore uncontrolled forces of the unconscious. In Mahayana terminology this is *Buddhi-manas*, mind illumined by *Buddhi*, the intuition. It is also the higher aspect of *Vinanna*, the fifth of the five *skandhas*. That which is reborn from life to life is *Vinnana* in all its complexity, with the best and worst of the man, for 'all that we are is the result of what we have thought', and that which passes over is the net resultant of all past causes, to produce in time their proper effect.

An important principle in man, say the Buddhists, is *Karuna*, compassion. Where is this to be found in Western analyses of man? It is linked, of course, to the awareness of the oneness of all life, and may therefore be regarded as a function of *Buddhi*, the faculty of direct awareness of such unity. For compassion means to 'feel with', and he who feels himself one with all forms of life will exercise 'compassion' in their suffering. Buddhism at any rate ranks it high. 'Compassion is no attribute. It is the

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Law of LAWS—eternal Harmony, Alaya's SELF . . . the law of Love eternal.'<sup>1</sup>

Then what of the SELF, the personal aspect, if there be one, of that 'Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression of similitude'?<sup>2</sup> Psychology rightly ignores it, as being utterly beyond its sphere. So did the Buddha, who classed all such conceptions as the 'Indeterminates', speculation on which was to be deplored as in no way leading to the heart's release from suffering. But Buddhism has always strenuously denied that the SELF is a faculty possessed by the individual man, and speaks of *Attavada*, the heresy of belief in *Atta*, an immortal 'soul'. For in Buddhism the Self has no existence apart from the Whole, and belief in a personal, immortal Soul, with the spiritual pride and sense of independent being which the thought implies, is to Buddhism unknown.

### 3. KARMA AND REBIRTH

The principal difference between the two subjects under review is in the fact that psychology has not yet adopted the twin doctrines of Karma and Rebirth. It speaks of the relative emphasis on the doctrines of causality and teleology as the correct viewpoint for all life processes, but it will not adopt a hypothesis which unites the two. For in Buddhism the doctrine of causality applies to all planes and not merely to the physical. Man is morally responsible for his thoughts and acts and must suffer their effects. He therefore has the power to plan and move towards a definite goal, and to produce the causes which will have the desired effect. Surely, therefore, life being one and indivisible, and all forms but its passing modes of expression, the causal and teleological viewpoints in relation to human psychology may be viewed as the polarized aspects of one thing? All this, however, needs and should receive considerable study,

<sup>1</sup> *The Voice of the Silence*.

<sup>2</sup> *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. 1, p. 14.

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for it may be one of the most important bridges between the two subjects under review.

The value of Karma/Rebirth to the psychologist would be immense. It provides a synthesis for the dreary contest of heredity versus environment, for the Buddhist would say that both are factors in the growth of the child-mind, and both alike are effects of that entity's past thought and action. For the incoming 'character' or karmic entity enters a family which is 'right' for its immediate development, and all environment is only an extension of family life into surrounding circumstance. Both affect the incoming child in some proportion, but both effects are, *qua* the child, effects of its own past causes.

Again, the psychiatrist often speaks of a sticking-point in analysis, when he can go no further back into the patient's past. The Buddhist would advise him to look into the last birth for the missing cause of present illness. And what are 'character deficiencies' but qualities not yet developed, and which therefore no amount of analysis will reveal? Moreover, in terms of escape, if the patient could be made to see that not even madness or suicide will absolve him from the effects he will not face, but merely postpone the reckoning, he might have the courage to turn at bay and face the result of his own past causes, and by acceptance put an end to them.

### 4. MENTAL ILLNESS

Psychiatry is the science of mental healing, or psychology applied to the readjustment of abnormal conditions of mind. The Buddha was the Great Healer in that he diagnosed the cause of suffering, and diagnosis may be in itself at times a cure. But the Buddha prescribed a form of treatment for all forms of illness, and the treatment is in the patient's hands. The cure is to remove the cause of suffering, as distinct from seeking escape from it or being content to palliate its effects; the cause of suffering is desire, the desire for the gratification of self. As the tension between the Self and the self increases in the unconscious mind our sense of suffering increases, and few of us climb the hillside to Enlightenment or wholeness without the

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assistance of a psychiatrist or his religious equivalent. For although the equivalence of evil deeds and suffering, and of good deeds and increasing happiness is fairly obvious, the actual causes of wrongdoing are rooted in the unconscious part of the mind, and only a trained practitioner in mental processes, whether he practise in a temple or in Harley Street, can find and unravel the knots of hate or lust or illusion which produce the suffering.

It is tempting to make a list of the better known neuroses and to equate them with Buddhist terminology. This, however, is beyond the scope of the present lecture, and I can but mention here the anxiety neurosis and the correlated types which are actuated by fear. A neurosis is the manifestation in our conscious life of a tension in the unconscious which has reached a point when it can no longer be endured. Such is the anxiety neurosis, which the Buddhist might say is born from the illusion of permanence. All of us strive for permanence, of income, job and 'happiness' in a world which is essentially *anicca*, impermanent. We strive to insure ourselves against everything. We cling to the banks of the river and will not flow. We have no faith in life as life, but strive to escape from it. We are consciously frightened of many things, of poverty, disease and death, all of which only affect the body, but our hidden fear is of life. And why? Because life is the death of self, and sooner or later the force of life, which created and will destroy all forms, will slay the self which most of us in our illusion label 'I'. And when the Self is born, and the tension grows between Self and self, we crave for adjustment, alignment, for integration of the two, for an end to the intolerable war in the mind and heart within.

### 5. SELF-COMPLETION

Says Kenneth Walker, 'To know more a man must become more.' Psychology and Buddhism bid their pupil/patients to 'Walk on' and to walk on unceasingly, and the Buddhist story of the man and the poisoned arrow is excellent psychiatry. 'The ways to the One are as many as the lives of man,' says the Buddhist, and is utterly tolerant of all of them. The psychiatrist

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would agree that any means is acceptable if it achieves the end in view, and no two patients need the same form of meditation or of treatment to achieve a cure. 'Look within—thou art Buddha,' says *The Voice of the Silence*. Decide what you want of wholeness—you will find it in your own mind, says the psychiatrist. Both would add, 'Meanwhile you must face the fact that you are not as yet enlightened; nor am I, your Guru/doctor.' But at least I think I can help you, says the psychiatrist; the Buddhist goes much further in his joyous certainty. 'One day even the littlest blade of grass will enter into Buddhahood!'



## *Theosophy and Buddhism*

IN any comparison it is well to define or at least to describe one's terms. By Theosophy I do not mean what is currently taught in most Lodges of the Theosophical Society, whose Headquarters is at Adyar, Madras. With the writings of Annie Besant, C. W. Leadbeater and others I am not concerned save as they extend and comment upon the teachings of the Masters M. and K. H. as given to H. P. Blavatsky and by her given out to the world. When a doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism has roots in the Pali Canon it is clearly a part of the field of Buddhism; when a Theosophical doctrine taught today is an extension of the outline of that 'accumulated Wisdom of the ages, tested and verified by generations of Seers' which 'H.P.B.' wrote down in *The Secret Doctrine* and other works, it is reasonable to call it Theosophy. But when a doctrine found in Buddhism is by all reasonable tests diametrically opposed to the original teaching it should not be known by that teaching's name. In the same way, if much that is taught in the Theosophical movement today is incompatible with the Masters' teaching as given by H.P.B., A. P. Sinnett, W. Q. Judge and some others, it should not be taught as Theosophy.

Theosophy, so called from the Theosophia or 'Wisdom of the Gods' of Ammonius Saccas of the fourth century A.D., is not a pastiche of doctrines culled from various religions and represented as a whole. It is the accumulated fruits of man's spiritual experience, as preserved by those who are self-perfected, whether called Arhats, Bodhisattvas, Rishis, Mahatmas or the Brothers. Much of this Prajna Wisdom is necessarily 'esoteric', in the sense that the Integral Calculus must remain esoteric to a class of small children. But there is no 'closed fist' for those

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who have earned the right to know, even though that which may be publicly disclosed must ever remain in quantity as a single leaf to the forest of trees around.

Masters have pupils, for those who have attained to Prajna knowledge are ever willing to help to enlightenment all who have ears to hear. These pupils have pupils in their turn, down a descending hierarchy to the beginner-student who humbly attempts to assist a friend who knows still less than he. But the pupil must teach as he was taught and not otherwise, and woe to him who takes the name of his master in vain. Whether the 'transmission' be the handing on from student to student of intellectual understanding, or the direct passing in silence from Master to chosen successor of the unwritten wisdom as taught by the All-Enlightened One, the principle is the same. 'Thus have I heard,' says the Bhikkhu of his Master's teaching, 'and thus have I found to be true'. In the end the teaching has no words, for words are the coinage of the dual world of thought. The essence of such teaching may be indicated, but the rest is silence, and a finger pointing the Way.

The Theosophical movement is enormous. No one Theosophical Society is commensurate with the movement any more than one school of Buddhism is Buddhism. There are many Theosophical Societies in the world, some faithful to the outline of the Wisdom given in the last century, some 'extending' the Teaching out of all recognition. There are also scores of groups, bearing a chosen name or none. Finally, there are numberless individuals, many of whom know nothing of the name as such but yet carry out, consciously or subconsciously, the will of those who have found Enlightenment and work in the world, or out of it, unceasingly for the benefit of all mankind.

Our knowledge of Theosophy, then, comes from the two Masters who trained H. P. Blavatsky for her mission in the world, and taught her by divers means the wisdom outlined in her writings, from *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* to *The Key to Theosophy* and that exquisite gem, *The Voice of the Silence*. Later they corresponded at length with A. P. Sinnett, and their correspondence was made available to the

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world in 1923 in the *Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. Other students, who imbibed the teaching direct or from the first pupils, included the famous Buddhist, H. S. Olcott, founding President of the first Theosophical Society, Subba Rao, a learned Brahmin, W. Q. Judge, who was largely responsible for the movement in America, and somewhat later, Mrs. A. L. Cleather, author of *Buddhism, the Science of Life*.

After the death of H. P. Blavatsky in 1891 the movement split up, as all such movements will, into several societies. Among them there are, as in Buddhism, always the Blavatsky or 'original' groups and the 'progressive' (Mahayana or modern Theosophy) groups. Always from time to time there is a sudden movement of 'back to the source' of which the Zen and the present 'back to Blavatsky' movements are examples.

And so to Buddhism, which is a Western term for the structure of thought built up over a thousand years about the Buddha's Enlightenment. Like Theosophy, it has no dogmas or authority; hence no intolerance of differing points of view. According to the ancient Wisdom the Buddha is the fourth of the present line of Buddhas, and as such the 'patron of the adepts', the holder of the supreme 'office' in the hierarchy of self-perfected ones. The Buddha gave his deeper teaching to the Arhats; to the people he gave a limited yet magnificent way of life, which, at first transmitted orally, was written down as remembered in the first century B.C., and is now available to all as the Pali Canon of the Theravada school. When the Mahayana school arose it was a blend of the esoteric tradition and of doctrines developed from the earlier teaching by minds which, if not of the Buddha's calibre, were some of the greatest yet to appear in the history of mankind. Within a thousand years the various forms of the teaching had spread over a large part of the earth, and today at least a third of mankind accepts in one form or another the noble message of the All Enlightened One. As such it is as a whole the finest extant exposition of Theosophy, in the sense of the Wisdom which, appearing in fragments in all religions, is slowly receiving the endorsement of science, psychology and other aspects of

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Western thought. If this Theosophical attitude to the Buddha Dharma disturbs the sleep of Buddhist orthodoxy, its truth may be checked, as mine was gained, by thirty years of study of the entire joint field involved.

Comparisons may be odious but none the less useful to those who, without emotion or pre-conception, wish to know what Theosophy and Buddhism have in common. First, the Buddha. 'We too have temples,' wrote the Master K.H. to Sinnett, 'but in them there is neither God nor gods worshipped, only the thrice sacred memory of the greatest, as the holiest man that ever lived'. Secondly, the Masters. Whether in Brahmin or in Buddhist bodies at the moment, they are in perpetual Prajna-consciousness, above all base distinctions, and serve the Buddha as their Master in the service of mankind. Coming to mere mortals, both H. P. Blavatsky and Col. Olcott took Pansil in Ceylon in 1880, and the Buddha-rupa of gold which marked the event for H.P.B. is the most treasured possession of the Buddhist Society today. In the way of publications, they share *The Light of Asia*, by Sir Edwin Arnold (those who like 'relics' may visit our Headquarters and sit in the chair in which he wrote most of it); *The Voice of the Silence*, described by the late Anagarika Dharmapala as 'a pure Buddhist work' (and he took up Buddhist work at the behest of H.P.B.); and Olcott's *Buddhist Catechism*, still selling steadily and approved as 'pure' Buddhism by many of the Sangha of Ceylon.

The basic teaching is the same, at least as I understand the Buddha's teaching. The unity of life throughout all manifestation, which in time, or at the end of that illusion, returns to the Unmanifest; the unreality of any self less than the SELF which is a reflection of the Absolute and the property of no man; Karma and Rebirth, and a graded path to self-Enlightenment and finally Nirvana. Such was the teaching taught to Europe for thirty years before Buddhism appeared as a way of life, and it is thanks to the efforts of those pioneers that the way was prepared for the Dhamma as such when it finally appeared.

The difference between the two is a difference of emphasis. Theosophy is a modern exposition of the doctrine of the

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immemorial Wisdom on cosmo- and anthropo-genesis; Buddhism, at least in its early life, emphasized the Way. In neither are there Gods to dogmatize; only Guides, whether greater or less in their own advancement, to assist the pilgrim on his journey home. They agree on self-effort, self-preparation and ultimately self-Enlightenment. 'When the pupil is ready the Master appears.' Until then, and after, the individual works out his own salvation with diligence. Whether he follows the Arhat or the Bodhisattva ideal, or realizes that the two are modes of the same experience, matters not. In the end he can but enlighten himself; in the end he cannot save himself by working for himself alone. Compassion speaks and saith, 'Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?'<sup>1</sup>

Theosophy, then, is the accumulated wisdom of mankind. Of those who have attained the enlightenment from which it flows the Buddha was and is the Master of Masters. His own message to mankind was of the Way which leads to the Enlightenment which is the birthright of each living thing. Let us study that Wisdom and add to it by treading that Way.

<sup>1</sup> *The Voice of the Silence.*

## ONWARD

The falling tide of darkness flows away.  
The voice of self is stilled.  
I am a child with opened eyes of day,  
A vessel yet unfilled.

I am alone, yet seek not any friend.  
I feel the heart of woe.  
The face is veiled of my appointed end,  
Yet this I know :

The future lies unmoulded in my hands.  
A Path winds out before.  
There is no backward way. Behind me stands  
A closed door.