

TALKS ON THE PATH OF OCCULTISM
VOLUME TWO
A COMMENTARY ON THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE
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AND
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FOREWORD

This book is merely a record of talks by Mr. C. W. Leadbeater – now Bishop Leadbeater – and myself on three famous books – books small in size but great in content. We both hope that they will prove useful for aspirants, and even to those above that state, since the talks were older than the listeners, and had more experience in the life of discipleship.

The talks were not given at one place only. A vast quantity of notes were taken by the listeners. All that were available of these were collected and arranged. They were then condensed, and repetitions were eliminated.

Unhappily there were found to be very few notes on *The Voice of the Silence*, Fragment I, so we have utilized notes made at a class by our colleague, Mr. Ernest Wood, in Sydney, and incorporated these into Bishop Leadbeater's talks in that section. No notes of my own talks on this book were available; though I have spoken much upon it, those talks are not recoverable.

None of these talks have been published before, except some of Bishop Leadbeater's addresses to selected students on *At the Feet of the Master*. A book entitled Talks on "At the Feet of the Master" was published a few years ago, containing imperfect reports of some of these talks of his. That book will not be reprinted; the essential material in it finds its place here, carefully condensed and edited.

May this book help some of our younger brothers to understand more of these priceless teachings. The more they are studied *and lived*, the more will be found in them.

Annie Besant

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FRAGMENT I

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE

CHAPTER 1

THE PREFACE

C.W.L. – Even from the superficial and wholly physical point of view, *The Voice of the Silence* is one of the most remarkable books in our Theosophical literature, whether we consider its contents, its style, or the manner of its production; and when we look a little deeper and call to our aid the power of clairvoyant investigation, our admiration is by no means diminished. Not that we should make the mistake of regarding it as a sacred scripture, every word of which must be accepted without question. It is by no means that, for, as we shall presently see, various minor errors and misunderstandings have crept into it; but anyone who on that account regards it as unreliable or carelessly put together will be making an even less excusable mistake in the opposite direction.

Madame Blavatsky was always very ready to admit, and even to emphasize, the fact that inaccuracies were to be found in all her works; and in the early days, when we came across some especially improbable statement of hers we not unnaturally laid it reverently aside as perhaps one of those inaccuracies. It was surprising in what a number of such cases further study showed us that Madame Blavatsky was after all correct, so that presently, taught by experience, we grew much more wary in this matter, and learnt to trust her extraordinarily wide and minute knowledge upon all sorts of out-of-the-way subjects. Still there is no reason to suspect a hidden meaning in an obvious misprint, as some too credulous students have done; and we need not hesitate to admit that our great Founder's profound knowledge in occult matters did not prevent her from sometimes misspelling a Tibetan word, or even misusing an English one.

She gives us in her preface some information as to the origin of the book – information which at first seemed to involve some serious difficulties, but in the light of recent investigations becomes much more comprehensible. Much of what she wrote has been commonly understood in a wider sense than she intended it, and in that way it has been made to appear that she put forward extravagant claims; but when the facts of the case

She says: “The following pages are derived from *The Book of the Golden Precepts*, one of the works put into the hands of mystic students in the East. The knowledge of them is obligatory in that school the teachings of which are accepted by many Theosophists. Therefore, as I know many of these Precepts by heart, the work of translating has been relatively an easy task for me.” And, further on: “The work from which I here translate forms part of the same series as that from which the stanzas of *The Book of Dzyan* were taken, on which *The Secret Doctrine* is based.” She also says: “*The Book of the Golden Precepts* ... contains about ninety distinct little treatises.”

In early days we read into this more than she meant, and we supposed that this work was put into the hands of *all* mystic students in the East, and that “the school in which the knowledge of them is obligatory” meant the school of the Great White Brotherhood itself. Hence when we met with advanced occultists who had never heard of *The Book of the Golden Precepts* we were much surprised and a little inclined to look askance at them and doubt gravely whether they could have come altogether along the right lines, but since then we have learnt many things, and among them somewhat more of perspective than we had at first.

In due course, too, we acquired further information about the Stanzas of Dzyan, and the more we learnt about them and their unique position the clearer it became to us that

neither *The Voice of the Silence* nor any other book could possibly have in any real sense the same origin as they.

The original of *The Book of Dzyan* is in the hands of the august Head of the Occult Hierarchy, and has been seen by none. None knows how old it is, but it is rumoured that the earlier part of it (consisting of the first six stanzas), has an origin altogether anterior to this world, and even that it is not a history, but a series of directions – rather a formula for creation than an account of it. A copy of it is kept in the museum of the Brotherhood, and it is that copy (itself probably the oldest book produced on this planet) which Madame Blavatsky and several of her pupils have seen – which she describes so graphically in *The Secret Doctrine*. The book has, however, several peculiarities which she does not there mention. It appears to be very highly magnetized, for as soon as a man takes a page into his hand he sees passing before his eyes a vision of the events which it is intended to portray, while at the same time he seems to hear a sort of rhythmic description of them in his own language, so far as that language will convey the ideas involved. Its pages contain no words whatever – nothing but symbols.

When we came to know this fully, it was somewhat startling to find another book claiming the same origin as the sacred Stanzas, and our first impulse was to suppose that some strange mistake must have arisen. Indeed, it was this extraordinary discrepancy that first led to our investigating the question of the real authorship of *The Book of the Golden Precepts*; and when this was done, the explanation proved to be exceedingly simple.

We read in the various biographies of Madame Blavatsky that she once spent a period of some three years in Tibet, and also that on another occasion she made an unsuccessful attempt to penetrate into that forbidden land. On one or other of these visits she seems to have stayed for some considerable time at a certain monastery in the Himālayas, the head of which at that time was a pupil of the Master Morya. The place seems to me to be in Nepal rather than in Tibet, but it is difficult to be sure of this. There she studied with great assiduity and also gained considerable psychic development; and it is at this period of her history that she learnt by heart the various treatises of which she makes mention in the Preface. The learning of them is obligatory upon the students of that particular monastery, and the book from which they are taken is regarded there as of exceeding value and holiness.

This monastery is of great age. It was founded in the early centuries of the Christian era by the great preacher and reformer of Buddhism who is commonly known as Āryasanga. I think a claim is made that the building had already existed for two or three centuries before His time; but, however that may be, its history as far as we are concerned begins with His temporary occupancy of it. He was a man of great power and learning, already far advanced along the Path of Holiness; He had in a previous birth as Dharmajyoti been one of the immediate followers of the Lord Buddha, and after that, under the name of Kleinias, one of the leading disciples of our Master Kūthūmi in His birth as Pythagoras. After the death of Pythagoras, Kleinias founded a school for the study of His philosophy at Athens – an opportunity of which several of our present Theosophical members took advantage. Centuries later He took birth at Peshawar, which was then called Purushapura, under the name of Vasubandhu Kanushika. When He was admitted to the order of Monks He took the name of Asanga – “the man without hindrance” – and later in His life his admiring followers lengthened this to Āryasanga, by which He is chiefly known as author and preacher. He is said to have lived to a very great age – nearly a hundred and fifty years, if tradition speaks truly – and to have died at Rājagriha.

He was a voluminous writer: the principal work of His of which we hear is the *Yogāchāra Bhūmishāstra*. He was the founder of the Yogāchāra school of Buddhism, which seems to have begun with an attempt to fuse with Buddhism the great Yoga system of philosophy, or perhaps rather to adopt from the latter what could be used and interpreted Buddhistically. He

travelled much and was a mighty force in the reform of Buddhism; in fact, His fame reached so high a level that His name is joined with those of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, and These men have been called the three suns of Buddhism, because of Their activity in pouring forth its light and glory upon the world. The date of Āryasanga is given vaguely as a thousand years after the Lord Buddha; European scholars seem uncertain as to when He lived, but none assign Him a later date than the seventh century after Christ. To us in the Theosophical Society He is known in this life as a specially kind, patient and helpful teacher, the Master Djwal Kul – one who has for us an unique position, in that when some of us had the honour of knowing Him about forty years ago, He had not yet taken the step which is the goal of human evolution – the Asekha Initiation. So that among our Masters He is the only one whom we knew in this present incarnation before He became an Adept, when He was still the head pupil of the Master Kūthūmi. The fact that as Āryasanga He carried Buddhism into Tibet may be the reason why in this life He has chosen to take a Tibetan body; there may have been karmic associations or links of which He wished to dispose before taking the final Initiation as Adept.

In the course of one of His great missionary journeys in His life as Āryasanga He came to this Himālayan monastery and took up His abode there. He stayed there for nearly a year, teaching the monks, organizing the religion generally over a very large section of the country, and making this monastery a kind of headquarters for the reformed faith, and He left upon the place an impression and a tradition which last until the present time. Among other relics of His is preserved a book, which is regarded with the greatest reverence; and this is the scripture to which Madame Blavatsky refers as *The Book of the Golden Precepts*. Āryasanga seems to have commenced it as a sort of commonplace book, or a book of extracts, in which He wrote down anything that He thought would be useful to His pupils, and he began with the *Stanzas of Dzyan* – not in symbol, as in the original, but in written words. Many other extracts He made – some from the works of Nāgārjuna, as Madame Blavatsky mentions. After His departure His pupils added to the book a number of reports (or perhaps rather abstracts) of His lectures or sermons to them, and these are the “little treatises” to which Madame Blavatsky refers.

It was Alcyone, in His last life, who prepared and added to *The Book of the Golden Precepts* the reports of the discourses of Āryasanga, three of which form our present subject of study. So we owe this priceless little volume to His care in reporting, just as in this life we owe to Him our possession of the exquisite companion volume *At the Feet of the Master*. That life of Alcyone began in A.D. 624, and was spent in Northern India. In it Alcyone entered the order of Buddhist monks at an early age and became deeply attached to Āryasanga, who took Him with Him to the monastery in Nepal, and left Him there to help and direct the studies of the community which He had re-organized – a service that Alcyone performed with distinguished success for about two years. (See *The Lives of Alcyone*.) It is in this sense, and in this sense only, that *The Voice of the Silence* claims the same origin as the *Stanzas of Dzyan* – that the two are copied in the same book. We must not forget also that though we have undoubtedly much of Āryasanga’s teaching in these treatises, it cannot but be coloured considerably by the prepossessions of those who reported it; and it is probable that at least in some passages they misunderstood Him and failed to convey His real meaning. As we examine the work in detail we shall find verses here and there which express sentiments that Āryasanga could hardly have held, and show ignorance which for him would have been impossible.

It will be noticed that Madame Blavatsky speaks of translating the precepts – a remark which raises some interesting questions, since we know that she was unacquainted with any Oriental tongue except Arabic. The book is written in a script with which I am unfamiliar, nor do I know what language is used. The latter may be Sanskrit, Pali, or some Prakrit dialect, or possibly Nepalese or Tibetan; but the script is not any of those now commonly employed to

write those languages. It is at any rate reasonably certain, that on the physical plane neither script nor language can have been known to Madame Blavatsky.

For one who can function freely in the mental body there are methods of getting at the meaning of a book, quite apart from the ordinary process of reading it. The simplest is to read from the mind of one who has studied it; but this is open to the objection that one gets not the real meaning of the work, but that student's conception of the meaning, which may be by no means the same thing. A second plan is to examine the aura of the book – a phrase which needs a little explanation for those not practically acquainted with the hidden side of things. An ancient manuscript stands in this respect in a somewhat different position from a modern book. If it is not the original work of the author himself, it has at any rate been copied word by word by some person of a certain education and understanding, who knew the subject of the book, and had his own opinions about it. It must be remembered that copying, done usually with a stylus, is almost as slow and emphatic as engraving; so that the writer inevitably impresses his thought strongly on his handiwork.

Any manuscript, therefore, even a new one, has always some sort of thought-aura about it which conveys its general meaning, or rather, one man's idea of its meaning and his estimate of its value. Every time the book is read by any one an addition is made to that thought-aura, and if it be carefully studied the addition is naturally large and valuable. A book which has passed through many hands has an aura which is usually better balanced, rounded off and completed by the divergent views brought to it by its many readers; consequently the psychometrization of such a book generally yields a fairly full comprehension of its contents, though with a considerable fringe of opinions *not* expressed in the book, but held by its various readers.

With a printed book the case is much the same, except that there is no original copyist, so that at the beginning of its career it usually carries nothing but disjointed fragments of the thoughts of the binder and the bookseller. Also few readers at the present day seem to study so thoughtfully and thoroughly as did the men of old, and for that reason the thought-forms connected with a modern book are rarely so precise and clear-cut as those which surround the manuscripts of the past.

A third plan, requiring somewhat higher powers, is to go behind the book or manuscript altogether and get at the mind of the author. If the book is in some foreign language, its subject entirely unknown, and there is no aura round it to give any helpful suggestion, the only way is to follow back its history, to see from what it was copied (or set up in type, as the case may be) and so to trace out the line of its descent until one reaches its author. If the subject of the work is known, a less tedious method is to psychometrize that subject, get into the general current of thought about it, and so find the particular writer required, and see what he thinks. There is a sense in which all the ideas connected with a given subject may be said to be local – to be concentrated round a certain point in space, so that by mentally visiting that point one can come into touch with all the converging streams of thought about that subject, though of course these are linked by millions of lines with all sorts of other subjects.

Supposing her clairvoyant powers to have been at that time sufficient, Madame Blavatsky may have adopted any of these methods of getting at the meaning of the treatises from *The Book of the Golden Precepts*, though it would be a little misleading to describe any of them as translations without qualifying the statement. The only other possibilities are somewhat remote. There is at present no one in that Himālayan monastery who speaks any European language, but since it is probably at least forty years since Madame Blavatsky was there, there must have been many changes. It is recorded that Indian students have occasionally, though very rarely, come to drink from that fount of archaic learning, and if we may assume that the visit of some such student coincided with hers, it might also be that he happened to know both English and the language of the manuscript, or at least the language of other inmates of the

monastery who could read the manuscript for themselves, and so could translate for her.

Strangely enough, there is also just a possibility that she may have been taught in her own native tongue. In European Russia, on the banks of the Volga, there is a fairly large settlement of Buddhist tribes, probably Tartar in their origin; and it appears that these people, though so far removed on the physical plane from Tibet, still regard it as their holy land and occasionally undertake pilgrimages to it. Such pilgrims sometimes remain for years as pupils in Tibetan or Nepalese monasteries, and as one of them might very well know Russian as well as his own Mongolian dialect, it is obvious that we have here another possible method by which Madame Blavatsky may have communicated with her hosts.

In any case it is obvious that we must not expect an exact verbal reproduction of what Āryasanga originally said to His disciples. Even in the archaic book itself we have not His words, but His pupils' recollection of them, and of that recollection we have now before us either a translation of a translation, or the recording of a general mental impression of the meaning. It would of course be quite easy for one of our Masters or for the author himself to make a direct and accurate translation into English; but as Madame Blavatsky distinctly claims the work of translation as her own, this evidently was not the plan adopted.

At the same time, the account which we have from an eye-witness of the speed with which it was written down, does certainly seem to suggest the idea that some assistance was given to her, even though it may have been unconsciously to herself. Dr. Besant writes on this subject:

She wrote it at Fontainebleau, and the greater part was done when I was with her, and I sat in the room while she was writing it. I know that she did not write it referring to any books, but she wrote it down steadily, hour after hour, exactly as though she were writing either from memory or from reading it where no book was. She produced in the evening that manuscript that I saw her write as I sat with her, and asked me and others to correct it for English, for she said that she had written it so quickly that it was sure to be bad. We did not alter in that more than a few words, and it remains as a specimen of marvellously beautiful literary work.

Another possibility is that she may have done the translation into English beforehand while at the monastery, and that at Fontainebleau she may really have been reading it at a distance, just as our President says she appeared to be. I have often seen her do that very thing on other occasions.

The six schools of Hindu philosophy to which she refers on the first page of the preface are the Nyāya, Vaisheshika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta. She states that every Indian teacher has his own system of training, which he usually keeps very secret. It is natural that he should keep it secret, for he does not desire the responsibility of the results that would follow if it were tried (as, if known, it certainly would be), by all sorts of unsuitable, ill-regulated people. No real teacher in India will take charge of a pupil unless he can have him under his eye, so that when he prescribes for him a certain exercise, he can watch its effect and check the man instantly if he sees that anything is going wrong. That has been the immemorial custom in these occult matters, and unquestionably it is the only way in which real progress can be made with rapidity and safety. The first and most difficult task of the pupil is to reduce to order the chaos in himself – to eliminate the host of minor interests, and control the wandering thoughts, and this must be achieved by a steady pressure of the will exercised upon all his vehicles through a long period of years.

Our author tells us that if the systems of instruction differ on this side of the Himālayas in the esoteric schools, on the other side they are all the same. We must emphasize here the word esoteric, for we know that in the exoteric religion the corruptions and evil magical practices are worse on the northern side of the mountains than on the southern. We may perhaps even understand the expression “beyond the Himālayas” rather in a symbolical than in a strictly geographical sense, and many suppose that it is in the schools owing allegiance to our Masters that the teaching does not differ. This is very true in a certain sense – the most important of all

senses; but capable of misleading the reader if not carefully explained. The sense in which all are the same is that all recognize the virtuous life as the only path leading to occult development, and the conquest of desire as the only way of getting rid of it. There are schools of occult knowledge which hold that the virtuous life imposes unnecessary limitations. They teach certain forms of psychic development, but they care nothing for the use which their pupils may afterwards make of the information given to them. There are others who hold that desire of all sorts should be indulged to the utmost, in order that through satiety indifference may be attained. But no school holding either of these doctrines is under the direction of the Great White Brotherhood; in every establishment even remotely connected with it, purity of life and nobleness of aim are indispensable prerequisites.

The next paragraph in the Preface happens to contain two of the trifling inaccuracies to which I have referred. Our author mentions “the great mystic work called *Paramārtha*, supposed to have been delivered to Nāgārjuna by the Nāgas”. Nāgārjuna’s great book was not called *Paramārtha*, but *Prajñā Pāramitā* – the wisdom which brings to the further shore; but it is very true that the subject treated in that book is the paramartha satya, that consciousness of the sage which vanquishes illusion. Nāgārjuna, as already mentioned, was one of the three great Buddhist teachers of the earlier centuries of the Christian era; he is supposed to have died A.D. 180. He is now known to Theosophists under the name of the Master Kūthūmi. Exoteric writers sometimes describe Āryasanga as his rival, but, knowing as we do their intimate relation in an earlier birth in Greece, and now again in this present life, we see at once that this cannot have been so. It is quite possible that, after their death, their pupils may have tried to set up the teaching of one against that of the other, as pupils in their indiscriminating zeal so often do: but that they themselves were in perfect accord is shown by the fact that Āryasanga treasured much of Nāgārjuna’s work and copied it into his book of extracts for the use of his disciples.

It is not, however, certain that the *Prajñā Pāramitā* was the work of Nāgārjuna, for the legend seems to be to the effect that the book was delivered to him by the Nagas or serpents. Madame Blavatsky interprets this as a name given to the ancient Initiates, and that may well be so, though there is another very interesting possibility. I have found that the name of Nāgas or serpents was given by the Aryans to one of the great tribes or clans of the Toltec sub-race of the Atlanteans, because they carried before them as a standard when going into battle a golden snake coiled round a staff. This may well have been some totem or tribal symbol, or perhaps merely the crest of a great family. This tribe or family must have taken a prominent part in the original Atlantean colonization of India and the lands which then existed to the south-east of it. We find the Nāgas mentioned as among the original inhabitants of Ceylon, found when Vijaya and his companions landed there. So a possible interpretation of this legend might be that Nāgārjuna received this book from an earlier race – in other words, that it is an Atlantean scripture. And if, as has been suspected, certain of the Upanishads came from the same source, there would be little reason to wonder at the identity of teaching to which Madame Blavatsky refers on the same page.

The *Gnyaneshwari* (transliterated *Dhyaneshwart* in the first edition) is not a Sanskrit work, but was written in Mahrathi in the thirteenth century of our era.

On the next page we find a reference to the Yogacharya (or more accurately Yogachara) school of the Mahāyāna. I have already mentioned the attempt made by Āryasanga, but a few words should perhaps be said as to the vexed question of the Yānas. The Buddhist Church presents itself to us to-day in two great divisions, the Northern and the Southern. The former includes China, Japan, and Tibet; the latter reigns in Ceylon, Siam, Burma and Cambodia. It is usually stated that the Northern Church adopts the Mahāyāna and the Southern Church the Hinayāna, but whether even this much may be safely said depends upon the shade of meaning which we attach to a much-disputed word. Yāna means vehicle, and it is agreed that it is to be

applied to the Dhamma or Law as the vessel which conveys us across the sea of life to Nirvāṇa, but there are at least five theories as to the exact sense in which it is to be taken:

That it refers simply to the language in which the Law is written, the Greater Vehicle being by this hypothesis Sanskrit, and the Lesser Vehicle Pali – a theory which seems to me untenable.

Hīna may apparently be taken as signifying mean or easy, as well as small. One interpretation therefore considers the Hīnayāna as the meaner or easier road to liberation – the irreducible minimum of knowledge and conduct required to attain it – while the Mahāyāna is the fuller and more philosophical doctrine which includes much additional knowledge about higher realms of nature. Needless to say, this interpretation comes from a Mahāyāna source.

That Buddhism, in its unfailing courtesy towards other religions, accepts them all as ways of liberation, though it regards the method taught by its Founder as offering the shortest and surest route. According to this view, Buddhism is the Mahāyāna, and the Hīnayāna includes Brahmanism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism and any other religions which were existing at the time when the definition was formulated.

That the two doctrines are simply two stages of one doctrine – the Hīnayāna for the Shrāvakas or hearers, and the Mahāyāna for more advanced students.

That the word Yāna is to be understood not exactly in its primary sense of “vehicle”, but rather in a secondary sense nearly equivalent to the English word “career”. According to this interpretation the Mahāyāna puts before a man the “grand career” of becoming a Bodhisattva and devoting himself to the welfare of the world, while the Hīnayāna shows him only the “smaller career” of so living as to attain Nirvāṇa for himself.

The Northern and Southern Buddhist Churches are related somewhat as are the Catholics and Protestants among the Christians. The Northern resembles the Catholic Church. It has added to the teachings of the Lord Buddha. For instance, it adopted much of the aboriginal worship which it found in the country – such ceremonies as those in honour of nature-spirits or deified forces of nature. When Christian missionaries went among the Northern Buddhists, they found ceremonies so similar to their own that they said it was plagiarism due to the Work of the devil, and when it was conclusively proved that these ceremonies antedated the Christian era, they said it was “plagiarism by anticipation”!

In the Buddhist, as in all other scriptures, there are contradictory statements; so the Southern Church has founded itself on certain texts; anxious to avoid excrescences, it ignores the others, or calls them interpolations. This has made it narrower in its scope than the Northern Church. To take one example. The Lord Buddha preached constantly against the idea that was evidently prevalent in His time, of the continuation of the personality. That notion is common also among Christians – that our personalities survive to all eternity. But while He taught that nothing of all that with which men generally identify themselves lasts for ever, he made most unequivocal statements about the successive lives of men. He gave examples of preceding lives; and when some King asked him what it was like to recover the memory of former lives, He said it was like remembering what one had done yesterday and on preceding days when visiting this village or that. Yet the Southern Church now teaches that only karma persists, not an ego; as though man in one life made a certain amount of karma, and then died, and nothing was left of him, but another person was born, and had to bear the karma which he did not make.

Still, while the Southern Buddhists teach that only the karma survives, they speak at the same time of the attainment of Nirvāṇa; so that if you ask a monk why he wears the yellow robe, he will answer you: “To attain Nirvāṇa,” and if you say: “In this life?” he will reply at once: “Oh, no, it will need many lives.” So also, after every sermon that a monk preaches he blesses his congregation with the words: “May you attain Nirvāṇa”; and again, if you asked him whether they could attain it in this life, he would say, “No, they will need many lives.” So

a practical belief in the continued existence of an individual persists, in spite of the formal teaching to the contrary.

Madame Blavatsky devotes a couple of pages to the question of the various forms of writing adopted in the Himālayan monasteries. In Europe and America the Roman alphabet is so widely spread, so almost universally employed, that it is perhaps well, for the sake of our Western readers, to explain that in the East a very different condition of affairs prevails. Each of the numerous Oriental languages – Tamil, Telugu, Sinhalese, Malayalam, Hindi, Gujarati, Canarese, Bengali, Burmese, Nepalese, Tibetan, Siamese, and many others – has its own alphabet and method of writing, and a writer in one of them, when quoting a foreign language, expresses that language in his own characters, just as an English writer, if he had to quote a German or Russian sentence would probably write it not in German or Russian type, but in Roman. So that in dealing with an oriental manuscript we have always two points to consider – the language and the script, and these two are by no means always the same.

If I take up a palm-leaf book in Ceylon, it is almost certain to be written in the beautiful Sinhalese script, but it does not at all follow that it is in the Sinhalese *language*. It is quite as likely to be in Pali, Sanskrit or Elu. The same is true of any of the other scripts. So that when Madame Blavatsky says that the precepts are sometimes written in Tibetan, she may very likely mean only in Tibetan characters, and not necessarily in the Tibetan language. I have not seen any instances of the curious cryptographs which she describes, in which colours and animals are made to represent letters. She speaks in the same paragraph of the thirty simple letters of the Tibetan alphabet. These are universally recognized, but it is not clear what is meant by the reference a little later on to thirty-three simple letters, since if she takes them without the four vowels there are but thirty, while if the vowels are included we should of course have not thirty-three but thirty-four. As to the compound letters, their number may be variously stated; a grammar which is before me gives over a hundred, but probably Madame Blavatsky refers only to those in general use.

I remember an interesting illustration of her statement as to one of the Chinese modes of writing. When I was in Ceylon there came one day to visit us two Buddhist monks from the interior of China – men who could speak no language with which any of us were acquainted. But fortunately we had some young Japanese students staying with us, in pursuance of Colonel Olcott's splendid scheme that each Church, the Northern and the Southern, should send some of its neophytes to learn the ways and the teaching of the other. These young men could not understand a word of what these Chinese monks said, but they were able to exchange ideas with them by means of writing. The written symbols meant the same to them, though they called them by quite different names, just as a Frenchman and an Englishman would each perfectly understand a line of figures, although one would call them "un, deux, trois," and the other "one, two, three". The same is true of notes of music. So I had a very curious and interesting interview with these monks, at which every question which I put was first translated into Sinhalese by one of our members, so that the Japanese student might understand it; then the latter wrote it down with a paint-brush in the form of writing common to Chinese and Japanese; the Chinese monk read it and wrote his reply in the same characters, which the Japanese student then translated into Sinhalese, and our member into English. Under these circumstances conversation was slow and a little uncertain, but still it was an interesting experience.

CHAPTER 2

THE HIGHER AND THE LOWER POWERS

These instructions are for those ignorant of the dangers of the lower Iddhi.

C.W.L. – To this opening sentence of the First Fragment there is a note by Madame Blavatsky as follows:

The Pali word Iddhi is the equivalent of the Sanskrit Siddhis, or psychic faculties, the abnormal powers in man. There are two kinds of Siddhis – one group which embraces the lower, coarse, psychic and mental energies, while the other exacts the highest training of spiritual powers. Says Krishna in Shrīmad Bhagavat:

“He who is engaged in the performance of Yoga, who has subdued his senses and who has concentrated his mind in me [Krishna], such Yogīs all the Siddhis stand ready to serve.”

There is a vast amount of misunderstanding on this subject of psychic powers, and it will save the student a great deal of trouble if he will try to get a reasonable conception of it to begin with. First, let him not attach a wrong interpretation to the word “abnormal”. These powers are abnormal only in the sense that they are at present uncommon – not in the least in the sense that they are in any way unnatural. They are perfectly natural to every man – indeed they are latent in every man here and now; a few people have developed them from latency into activity, but the majority have as yet made no effort in that direction, and so the powers still remain dormant.

The simplest way to grasp the general idea is to remember that man is a soul, and that he manifests himself on various planes through bodies appropriate to those planes. If he wishes to act, to see or to hear in this physical world, he can do so only through a body made of physical matter. Similarly if he wishes to manifest in the astral world, he must have an astral vehicle, for the physical body is useless there and even invisible, just as the astral body is invisible to our physical sight. In the same way a man who wishes to live upon the mental plane must use his mental body.

To develop psychic faculty means to learn to use the senses of these different bodies. If a man can use only his physical senses, he can see and hear only things of this physical world; if he learns to use the senses of his astral body, he can see and hear the things of the astral world as well. It is merely a matter of learning to respond to additional vibrations. If you will look at the table of vibrations in any book of physics, you will see that a large number of them evoke no response from us. A certain number appeal to our ears, and we hear them as waves of sound; another set impress themselves upon our eyes, and we call them rays of light. But in between these two sets, and above and below them both, are thousands of other sets of oscillations that make no impression at all upon our physical senses. It is possible for a man so to develop himself as to become sensitive to all these undulations of the ether, and of matter even finer than the ether; we call a man who has done that clairvoyant or clairaudient, because he can see and hear more than the undeveloped man can.

The advantages of such an unfolding of the inner sight are considerable. The man who possesses it finds himself free of another and far wider world; or to speak more accurately, he finds that the world in which he has always lived has extensions and possibilities of all kinds of which he has previously known nothing. His studies may already have informed him of the presence all round him of a vast and complicated non-physical life – of kingdoms of devas and nature-spirits, of the enormous army of his fellow-men who have laid aside their dense bodies in sleep or ‘in death, of forces and influences of many sorts which can be evoked and used by those who understand them; but to see all these things for himself instead of merely believing in them, to be able to contact them at firsthand and experiment with them – all this

makes life far fuller and more interesting. He who can thus follow on higher planes the results of his thought and action, becomes thereby a more efficient and more useful person. The gain of such an unfoldment of consciousness is obvious; but what of the other side of the story? Madame Blavatsky writes of the dangers of this development, and of two kinds of it, a lower and a higher. Let us take this latter point first.

All information which reaches man from without comes to him by means of vibrations. Vibrations of the air convey sounds to the ears, while those of light bring sights to his eyes. If he sees things and creatures of the astral and mental worlds, it can only be through the impingement of vibrations of astral and mental matter upon the bodies respectively capable of responding to them. For man can see the astral world only through the senses of his astral body, and the mental world through those of his mental body.

In each of these worlds, as in this, there are coarser and finer types of matter, and, roughly speaking, the radiations of the finer types are desirable, while those of the coarser kinds are distinctly undesirable. A man has both kinds of matter in his astral body, and he is therefore capable of responding to both the higher and the lower vibrations; and it is for him to choose to which of them he will turn his attention. If he resolutely shuts out all the lower influences, and accepts only the higher, he may be greatly helped by them even at astral and mental levels. But Madame Blavatsky will have none of these – not even as temporary aids; she groups them all together as “lower, coarse, psychic and mental energies “ and urges us to sweep onward to far higher planes which are beyond the illusions of the personality. She evidently regards the dangers of ordinary psychic development as outweighing its advantages; but as a certain amount of this development is sure to come, in the course of the evolution of the disciple, she warns us of some points as to which extreme care is necessary.

In our own experience during the forty years that have elapsed since Madame Blavatsky wrote this, we have seen something of these dangers in cases of various students. Pride is the first of them, and it bulks very largely. The possession of a faculty which, though it is the heritage of the whole human race, is as yet manifested only very occasionally, often causes the ignorant clairvoyant to feel himself (or still more frequently herself) exalted above his fellows, chosen by the Almighty for some mission of world-wide importance, dowered with a discernment that can never err, selected under angelic guidance to be the founder of a new dispensation, and so on. It should be remembered that there are always plenty of sportive and mischievous entities on the other side of the veil who are ready and even anxious to foster all such delusions, to reflect and embody all such thoughts, and to fill whatever *role* of archangel or spirit-guide may happen to be suggested to them. Unfortunately it is so fatally easy to persuade the average man that he really is a very fine fellow at bottom, and quite worthy to be the recipient of a special revelation, even though his friends have through blindness or prejudice somehow failed hitherto to appreciate him.

Another danger, perhaps the greatest of all, because it is the mother of all others, is ignorance. If the clairvoyant knows anything of the history of his subject, if he at all understands the conditions of those other planes into which his vision is penetrating, he cannot of course suppose himself the only person who was ever so highly favoured, nor can he feel with self-complacent certainty that it is impossible for him to mistake. But when he is, as so many are, in the densest ignorance as to history, conditions and everything else, he is liable in the first place to make all kinds of mistakes as to what he sees, and secondly to be the easy prey of all sorts of designing and deceptive entities from the astral plane. He has no criterion by which to judge what he sees, or thinks he sees, no test to apply to his visions or communications, and so he has no sense of relative proportion or the fitness of things, and he magnifies a copy-book maxim into a fragment of divine wisdom, a platitude of the most ordinary type into an angelic message. Then again, for want of common knowledge on scientific subjects he will often utterly misunderstand what his faculties enable him to

perceive, and he will in consequence gravely promulgate the grossest absurdities.

The third danger is that of impurity. The man who is pure in thought and life, pure in intention and free from the taint of selfishness, is by that very fact guarded from the influence of undesirable entities from other planes. There is in him nothing upon which they can play; he is no fit medium for them. On the other hand all good influences naturally surround such a man, and hasten to use him as a channel through which they may act, and thus a still further barrier is erected about him against all which is mean and low and evil. The man of impure life or motive, on the contrary, inevitably attracts to himself all that is worst in the invisible world which so closely surrounds us; he responds readily to it, while it will be hardly possible for the forces of good to make any impression upon him.

But a clairvoyant who will bear in mind all these dangers, and strive to avoid them, who will take the trouble to study the history and the rationale of clairvoyance, who will see to it that his heart is humble and his motives are pure – such a man may assuredly learn very much from these powers of which he finds himself in possession, and may make them of the greatest use to him in the work which he has to do.

The siddhis are enumerated at considerable length in the third chapter of the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali. He speaks of them as being attained in five ways – by birth, by drugs, by mantras, by tapas, and by samādhi.

We have come to birth in a particular kind of body as the result of our actions in previous incarnations, and if we find ourselves by nature in the possession of psychic powers we may take it for granted that we have worked for them in some way in previous lives. Many clairvoyants of the present day, in whom the faculty has been easily awakened, but perhaps reaches no great heights of spirituality, have been in such positions as those of the vestal virgins of Greece and Rome, the minor yogīs of India, or even the medicine-men of various half-savage tribes or the “wise women” of the middle ages; there has always been a very wide range in these matters.

What will happen to such people, how their spiritual lives will be shaped, depends largely upon those with whom it is their karma to come into contact. If that karma is good enough to lead them to Theosophy, they will have the opportunity of learning something about these dawning faculties, and of being trained in its Esoteric School in the preliminary qualities of character and purity of physical and magnetic life that are prescribed by all true occultists, so that a little later on they may develop their psychic powers in safety, and become of great service to mankind.

If on the other hand they come into touch with the spiritualistic school of thought, they are quite likely to find themselves following a line which frequently results in passive mediumship, the very opposite of what we are trying to attain.

There are those who turn to pseudo-occultism for the attainment of magical powers in order to gratify personal ambition. That path is full of the most serious dangers. Sometimes such people sit in a passive condition and invite unknown entities of the astral world to work upon their auras and organisms and to adapt them to their purposes; sometimes they practise various forms of Haṭha-Yoga, consisting mainly of peculiar kinds of breathing, which have unfortunately been widely taught in the Western world during the last thirty years or so. As a result of such proceedings mental and bodily disorders of a serious character often arise, while at best the contact which is gained with the inner worlds seldom extends beyond the lower astral levels, from which nothing can come that is uplifting to mankind.

As to the second method – the use of drugs – there is a note by Vyāsa, in his commentary upon the *Yoga Sūtras*, to the effect that these are used “in the houses of the asuras” for the purpose of awakening the siddhis. The asuras are the opposite of the suras, and the word may roughly be translated as “the ungodly”; the suras are the beings on God’s side, those who work for His plan of upward-evolving life.

Patañjali does not recommend this method; he is merely enumerating the ways in which the siddhis can be acquired. A study of the *Sūtras* shows very clearly that he favours only the last of his list of five methods – that by means of samādhi or contemplation.

We can understand to some extent the action of drugs on the body, when they are used as a means of awakening psychic powers, if we remember that in the fourth root race clairvoyance through the sympathetic nervous system was quite common. Then the astral sheath, not yet properly organized into a body or vehicle of consciousness, responded in a general way to the impressions made upon it by the objects of the astral plane. Those impressions were then reflected in the sympathetic centres in the physical body, so that consciousness in that body received astral and physical impressions together, and often scarcely distinguished between them. Indeed, in the earlier days of that race, and in the Lemurian race, the activity of the sympathetic system was far greater than that of the cerebro-spinal system, so that the astral experiences were more prominent than the physical. But since then the cerebro-spinal system has become the dominant mechanism of consciousness in the physical body, and man in consequence has paid more and more attention to the physical-plane experiences, as they have grown stronger and more insistent. Therefore the sympathetic system as a purveyor of impressions has gradually lapsed, its business now being to carry on in an involuntary manner many bodily functions to which the man need not attend, because his life is mental, emotional and spiritual rather than physical.

The objection to the use of drugs, therefore, is not only that they upset the healthy working of the body and bring the sympathetic system once more into a prominence which it ought not to have, but even from the point of view of the psychic powers attained they merely re-awaken that system and bring again into the physical consciousness indiscriminate impressions from the astral world. These come generally from the lower part of the plane, in which are aggregated all the astral matter and all the elemental essence concerned with exciting the lower passions and impulses. Sometimes they come from slightly higher regions of sensuous delight, such as are described in the visions of the Count of Monte Cristo in Dumas' famous novel, or in De Quincy's *Confessions of an Opium Eater*; but these are scarcely better than the others.

All that is entirely contrary to the plan of evolution laid down for humanity. We are all intended to unfold clairvoyance and other cognate powers, but not in that way. First there should be a development of the astral and mental bodies, so that they may be definite vehicles of consciousness on their own planes; then may come the awakening of the chakras in the etheric double by means of which the valuable knowledge gained through those higher bodies may be brought down to the physical plane consciousness. But all this should be done only when and as the Master advises; remember, in *At the Feet of the Master* the Teacher said: "Have no desire for psychic powers."

The third method mentioned is by the use of mantras. The term mantra is applied to certain words of power which are used in meditation or in ceremonial rites, and are often repeated over and over again. These are to be found in Christian rituals as well as in the East, as has been explained in *The Science of the Sacraments*. In many religions sounds are thus used, and are associated with pictures, symbols, signs and gestures, and sometimes dances.

The term *tapas*, used to describe the fourth method, is often associated with ideas of extreme austerity and even self-torture, such as the method of holding the arm extended until it withers, or lying on a bed of spikes. These practices certainly develop the will, but there are other and better ways of doing that. These Haṭha Yoga schemes have the great demerit of making the physical body useless for that service of humanity which is above all other things important for the Master's work. The will may be just as effectively developed in dealing with the difficulties of life that come to us by nature and through karma; there is no necessity to *make* trouble.

In the *Gītā* Shri Krishna speaks strongly against this superstition. He says, “The men who perform severe austerities, which are not prescribed by the Scriptures, wedded to vanity and egoism, impelled by the force of their desires and passions, unintelligent, tormenting the aggregated elements forming the body, and Me also, seated in the inner body – know these as *asuric* in their resolves.” (*Op. cit.*, xvii, 5-6.) Such antics cannot be the real *tapas*. The word means literally “heat”, and perhaps the nearest English equivalent to that when it is applied to human conduct is “effort”. The real meaning of the teaching with regard to it seems to be: “Do for the body what you know to be good for it, disregarding mere comfort. Do not let laziness, selfishness, or indifference stand in the way of your doing what you can to make your personality healthy and efficient in the work that it ought to be doing in the world.” (See *Raja Yoga*, by Ernest Wood, p. 18.) Shri Krishna says in the *Gītā*: “Reverence to the Gods, the elders, the teachers and the wise, purity, straightforwardness, continence and harmlessness are the *tapas* of the body; speech truthful, pleasant and beneficial, and study of the sacred words are the *tapas* of speech; cheerfulness, balance, silence, self-control, and being true to oneself are the *tapas* of mind.” (*Op. cit.*, xvii, 14-16.) These descriptions, given by one whom most of the Hindus regard as the greatest incarnation of Deity, certainly do not indicate any of the dreadful developments of which we sometimes see such sad examples.

It is the fifth means, that of *samādhi*, that the *Book of the Golden Precepts* advocates, and, as in the *Yoga Sūtras* and other standard works of the kind, this is preceded by *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna*, which are commonly translated as concentration and meditation, while *samādhi* is interpreted as contemplation. These one-word translations from the Sanskrit are, however, often rather unsatisfactory; the Sanskrit words, coming down to us through the ages, have acquired a marvellous complexity, have added to themselves many fine shades of meaning which are not to be found in any modern English expression. The only way really to understand them is to study the terms in their context in the ancient books.

The *siddhis* may be divided into two classes, not only as higher and lower, but also as faculties and powers. The world acts upon us through the senses, through our faculties of sight, hearing and the rest; but we also act upon the world. This duality applies also with regard to super-physical accomplishments. We receive impressions through the newly unfolded powers of our astral and mental vehicles; but we can also act through them. It is usual in Hindu books to speak of eight *siddhis*: (1) *aṇima*, the power to put oneself in the position of an atom, to become so small as to be able to deal with that tiny thing; (2) *mahima*, the power to be as if of monstrous size, so as to deal with huge things at no disadvantage; (3) *laghima*, the power to become as light as cotton borne on the wind; (4) *garima*, the power to become as dense and heavy as anything can be; (5) *prāpti*, the power of reaching out, even as far as the moon; (6) *prakāmya*, the will power with which to realize all wishes and desires; (7) *īśatvā*, the power to control and create; and (8) *vashitvā*, the power of command over all objects. These are called “the great powers”, but others are mentioned, such as steadiness and effulgence in the body, control of the senses and appetites, beauty and gracefulness, and so on.

We students of these later days approach all these problems from a point of view so totally different from that of the Hindu writers of thousands of years ago, that it is sometimes difficult for us to understand them. We are the product of our age, and the quasi-scientific training through which we all pass makes it a mental necessity for us to try to classify our knowledge. Each man endeavours to build for himself some kind of scheme of things, however crude it may be, and when any new fact is presented to him he tries to find a niche in his scheme for it. If it fits in comfortably he accepts the fact; if he cannot make it fit in, he is quite likely to reject it, even though it may come to him with the weightiest evidence. Though some people seem capable of holding, quite happily, beliefs which are mutually contradictory, there are others who cannot do this, and it is often a painful process for them to reconstruct

their thought-edifice to admit a new fact – so painful that they not infrequently avoid it by conveniently forgetting or denying the fact. Our ancient Indian brethren seem to me to have catalogued their observations and left them there – to have made no special attempt to relate them to one another or to classify them by the planes on which they occurred or the kind of faculty which they required.

We have no difficulty in recognizing the first and second powers on this list of siddhis; they are instances of the alteration of the focus of the consciousness; we sometimes call them powers of magnification and reduction. They mean the adaptation of the consciousness to the objects with which it has to deal – a feat which presents no difficulty to the trained occultist, though it is not easy on the physical plane to explain exactly how it is done. The third and fourth mention the possibility of becoming light or heavy at will; this is achieved by the comprehension and use of the repulsive force which is the opposite of gravity. I am not so sure about the fifth; it *may* refer merely to the power of travelling in the astral body, since the limit of astral migration is indicated by the mention of the moon; but I rather suspect that it means the power of producing a definite result at a distance by an effort of will. The sixth and eighth are only developments of will-power, though very remarkable developments; the seventh is the same, with the addition of the special knowledge required for the dematerialization and rematerialization of objects. In this list there seems to be no direct reference to clairvoyance at all, either in space or in time.

It is to be noted that *The Voice of the Silence* does not say that the lower *iddhis*, those belonging to the astral and mental bodies, are to be neglected altogether; it merely points out that there are serious dangers connected with them. We shall have to deal with them a little further on, for he who would climb the ladder must step on every rung.

He who would hear the voice of Nāda, the “Sound-less sound,” and comprehend it, he has to learn the nature of Dhāraṇā.

To this there are two footnotes, as follows:

The “Soundless Voice,” or the “Voice of the Silence.” Literally perhaps this would read “Voice in the *Spiritual Sound*”, as Nāda is the equivalent word in Sanskrit for the Senzar term.

Dhāraṇā is the intense and perfect concentration of the mind upon some one interior object, accompanied by complete abstraction from everything pertaining to the external universe, or the world of the senses.

The word that is here translated concentration comes from the root *dhri*, to hold. The word *dhāraṇā*, with a short final vowel, means holding or supporting in general, but here we have a special feminine substantive, with the long terminal vowel, as a technical term signifying concentration or holding of the mind.

It is described in some places as a kind of pondering or dwelling upon a given thought or object, and it is said in the Hindu books that meditation and contemplation will not be successful unless this is practised first. It is obvious that while the mind is responding to the appeals of the physical, astral and lower mental planes, it is not likely to hear the message that the ego is trying to transmit to the personality from his own higher planes.

Concentration is requisite, that attention may be given to the chosen object, not to the restless activity of the lower vehicles. It is usual to begin the practice of concentration with simple things. On a certain occasion some people came to Madame Blavatsky, and asked her upon what they should meditate; she threw a matchbox down on the table, and said: “Meditate on that!” It startled them somewhat, because they had expected her to tell them to meditate upon Parabrahman or the Absolute. It is very important that this concentration should be done without strain to the body. Dr. Besant has told us that, when Madame Blavatsky first instructed her to try it, she began with great intensity; but her teacher interrupted her, saying:

“My dear, you do not meditate with your blood-vessels! “

What is required is to hold the mind quiet, so that one looks at the object of thought with perfect calmness, just as one would look at one’s watch to see the time, except that one keeps on looking for the length of time prescribed or decided upon for the period of concentration. People often complain of headaches and other pains as a result of meditation; there should never be any such result; if they will take care to keep the physical body calm and free from tension of any kind, even in the eyes, they will probably find their concentration much easier and more successful, and free from physical trouble and danger. Various books have been written on this subject, and some of them offer exceedingly dangerous suggestions. Anyone wishing further information on this should read Professor Wood’s book, *Concentration – a Practical Course*, of which Dr. Besant wrote: “There is nothing in it which, when practised, can do the striver after concentration the least physical, mental or moral harm.”

In her footnote, H.P.B. associates dhāraṇā with the higher mental plane, for she says the mind must be fixed upon an interior object and abstracted from the world of the senses; that is, from the physical, astral and lower mental worlds. That is a prescription for the candidate who is already on the Path, and is aiming at the samādhi of the nirvanic or atmic plane. But the three terms concentration, meditation and contemplation are also used in a general way. To fix one’s thought on a verse of scripture – that is concentration. To look at it in every possible light and try to penetrate its meaning, to reach a new and deep thought or receive some intuitional light upon it – that is meditation. To fix one’s attention steadily for a time on the light received – that is contemplation. Contemplation has been defined as concentration at the top end of your line of thought or meditation. It is usual for the Oriental student to begin his practice on some simple external object, and from that to carry his thought inward or upward to higher things.

CHAPTER 3

THE SLAYER OF THE REAL

Having become indifferent to objects of perception, the pupil must seek out the Rājā of the senses, the Thought-Producer, he who awakes illusion.

The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real. Let the Disciple slay the slayer.

This refers to what has to be done during the practice of concentration. In the Hindu books on the subject it is explained that prior to the actual concentration the student who sits for the practice must withdraw his attention from the objects of sensation; he must learn to take no notice of any sights or sounds that may come within his range; he must not be attracted by anyone or anything that comes within his view, or affects his sense of touch. He will then be ready to observe what thoughts and feelings rise in the mind itself, and to deal with them.

As I have already explained, in most persons the mental and astral bodies are in a constant state of activity, full of vortices, which must be removed before real progress can be made. It is these that create the mass of illusions which beset the average man, and render it exceedingly difficult for him to get a true view of anything at all. It is an axiom of Shri Shankarāchārya’s teaching that just as the physical eye can see things well when it is steady, but not when it is roaming about, so the mind can understand things clearly when it is still. But if it is full of vortices they are sure to distort the vision and so create illusion.

The mind is called the rāja or king of the senses. Sometimes it is spoken of as one of them, as in the *Gītā*:

A portion of Mine own Self transformed in the world of life into an immortal Spirit, draweth round itself the senses, of which the mind is the sixth, veiled in matter. (*Op. cit.*, v, 7.)

That the mind does act as a kind of sense is obvious, since it corrects the evidence of the

five senses and also indicates the presence of objects beyond their reach; for example, when a shadow falls across your threshold, you may infer that somebody is there.

What *is* the mind, that has to be dealt with so severely by the aspirant? Patañjali speaks of it when he defines yoga practice as *chitta-vritti-nirodha*, which means restraint (*nirodha*) of the whirlpools (*vritti*) of the mind (*chitta*). Among the Vedāntins, or in Shrī Shankarāchārya's school, the term *antaḥkaraṇa* is not used as we generally employ it, but indicates the mind in its fullest sense. It means with them literally the entire internal organ or instrument between the innermost Self and the outer world, and is always described as of four parts: the "I-maker" (*ahamkāra*); insight, intuition or pure reason (*buddhi*); thought (*manas*) and discrimination of objects (*chitta*). It is these last two that the Western man usually calls his mind, with its powers of abstract and concrete thought; when he thinks of the other processes he imagines them to be something above the mind.

The Theosophist ought to recognize in these four Vedāntic divisions his own familiar *ātma*, *buddhi*, *manas* and the lower mind. Madame Blavatsky called the last *kāma-manas*, because it is the part of *manas* that works with desire and is therefore interested in material objects. *Kāma* is to be taken not only as relating to low desires and passions, but also to any sort of desire or interest in the external world for its own sake. The whole of the triple higher self is from this point of view nothing but the *antaḥkaraṇa* (or internal agency) between the monad and the lower self. It has become a tetrad, because *manas* is dual in incarnation.

The three parts of the higher self are considered as three aspects of a great consciousness or mind; they are all modes of cognition. *Ātma* is not the Self, but is this consciousness knowing the Self; *buddhi* is this consciousness knowing the life in the forms by its own direct perception; *manas* is the same consciousness looking out upon the world of objects, and *kāma-manas* is a portion of the last immersed in that world and affected by it. The true self is the Monad, whose life is something greater than consciousness, which is the life of this complete mind, the Higher Self. Therefore Patañjali and Shankara are quite in agreement; it is the *chitta*, the *kāma-manas*, the lower mind, which is the slayer of the real, and has to be slain.

Much that is now called the astral body by Theosophists must be included in the Indian idea of *kāma-manas* or *chitta*. Madame Blavatsky also speaks of four divisions of the mind. First there is *manas-taijasi*, the resplendent or illuminated *manas*, which is really *buddhi*, or at least that state of man when his *manas* has become merged in *buddhi*, having no separate will of its own. Then there is *manas* proper, the higher *manas*, the abstract thinking mind. Then there is the *antaḥkaraṇa*, a term used by Madame Blavatsky merely to indicate the link or channel or bridge between higher *manas* and *kāma-manas* during incarnation. Finally there is *kāma-manas*, which is on this theory the personality.

Sometimes she calls *manas* the *deva-ego*, or the divine as distinguished from the personal self. Higher *manas* is divine because it has positive thought, which is *kriyā-shakti*, the power of doing things. Really all our work is done by thought-power; the sculptor's hand does not do the work, but thought-power directing that hand does it. The higher *manas* is divine because it is a positive thinker, using the quality of its own life, which shines from within it; that is what is meant by the word divine, from *dīv*, to shine. But the lower mind is only a reflector; like all other material things, it has no light of its own; it is something through which the light comes, or through which the sound comes – merely *persona*, a mask.

The *antaḥkaraṇa* is usually considered in the Theosophical works as the link between the higher self or the divine ego, and the lower self or personal ego. The *chitta* in that lower self puts it at the mercy of things, so that our life down here may be compared to the experience of a man struggling to swim in a maelstrom. But this will be followed sooner or later after death by a period in the heaven-world. The man has been whirled about; he has seen many things; he has not dwelt upon them, however, with a calm, steady mind, but with *kāma-manas*; therefore he has not understood their significance for the soul. But in the heaven-world the

ego can widen out the *antaḥkaraṇa*, because all is now calm; no new experiences are to be gathered. The old ones can be quietly turned over and dwelt upon, and their essence taken up, as it were, into the deva ego, as being of interest to him. So, very often, the *ego* really begins his personal life-cycle with the entry into the heaven-world, and pays a minimum of attention to the personality during its period of collecting materials.

In that case the aspect of mind that is *antaḥkaraṇa* (in Madame Blavatsky's classification) functions but little before the period of the heaven-life. But if a man is to become expert on the astral and mental planes during the life of the physical body, he must bring the positive powers of the higher self down through that channel, by the practice of *dhāraṇā* or concentration, and so make himself entire master of his personality. In other words he must clear out the astral and mental whirlpools. A man who is genius on some line may find it easy to apply tremendous concentration to his particular kind of work, but when he relaxes from that, his ordinary life may quite possibly be still full of these whirlpools. That is not what we want; we are aiming at nothing less than the complete destruction of the whirlpools, so as to comb out the lower mind and make it the calm and obedient servant of the higher self at all times.

These whirlpools may and do constantly crystallize into permanent prejudices, and make actual congestions of matter closely resembling warts upon the mental body. Then if the man tries to look out through that particular part of that body he cannot see clearly; everything is distorted, for at that point the mental matter is no longer living and flowing, but stagnant and rotten. The way to cure it is to acquire more knowledge, to get the matter into motion again, and then one by one the prejudices will be washed away and dissolved.

It is in this way that the mind is the great slayer of the real, for through it we do not see any object as it really is. We see only the images which we are able to make of it, and everything is necessarily coloured for us by these thought-forms of our own creation. Notice how two persons with preconceived ideas, seeing the same set of circumstances, and agreeing as to the actual happenings, will yet make two totally different stories from them. Exactly this sort of thing is going on all the time with every ordinary man, and we do not realize how absurdly we distort things. The disciple *must* conquer this; he must "slay the slayer". He must not of course destroy his mind, for he cannot get along without it, but he must dominate it; it is *his*, but it is not *he*, though it tries to make him think so. The best way to overcome its wandering is to use the will; its efforts are just like those of the astral body, which is always trying to persuade you that its desires are yours; you must deal with them both in a precisely similar manner.

Even when the whirlpools that fill the mind with prejudice and error are gone, much illusion still remains. The translation of the Sanskrit word *avidyā* as ignorance is perhaps not very fortunate, though it is universally accepted. So often in Sanskrit there are delicate shades of meaning which it is difficult to convey in English. In this case perhaps what is intended is not so much ignorance as unwisdom. A man may have vast stores of knowledge, and yet be unwise, for knowledge is concerned with objects and their relations in space and time, whereas wisdom is concerned with the soul or consciousness embodied in those things. The wise politician understands the people's minds; the wise mother understands her children's minds. However much one may know about material things, if one has only the matter-sight and not the life-sight, one has in reality only unwisdom or *avidya*. It is at the expense of wisdom that intellect generally lives," said Madame Blavatsky. Then, out of that unwisdom or ignorance spring four other great obstacles to spiritual progress, making five altogether, which are called the *kleshas*.

If *avidyā* be the first obstacle the second is *asmitā*, the notion that "I am this" or what a Master once called "self-personality". The personality is developed through life into quite a definite thing, with decided physical, astral and mental form, occupation and habits; and there

is no objection to that if it be a good specimen. But if the indwelling life can be persuaded to think that he *is* that personality, he will begin to serve its interests, instead of using it merely as a tool for his spiritual purposes.

In consequence of this second error men seek inordinate wealth and power and fame. When a man looks over his country houses and his town houses, his yachts and cars, his farms and factories, he swells with pride, thinking himself great because he is called the owner of these things; or he hears his name on everybody's lips, and feels that thousands of people are thinking of him with praise (or even with condemnation, for notoriety is often pleasing to men who cannot attain fame) and he thinks himself a very great person indeed. That is "self-personality", one of the greatest superstitions in the world, and a great source of trouble for one and all. The spiritual man, on the other hand, counts himself fortunate if he can be the master of his own hand and brain, and he wishes to hold the images of thousands of others in his own mind that he may help them, rather than to rejoice in the thought that his image is multiplied and magnified in *their* minds. Hence self-personality is the greatest obstacle to the use of the personality by the higher self, and so to spiritual progress.

The third and fourth obstacles may be taken together. They are *rāga* and *dvesha*, liking and disliking, or attraction and repulsion. These too spring from this same self-personality. That it should show its likes is inappropriate; it is as though a motor-car should have a voice of its own, and should raise it in great discontent when its master drives over a broken road, or in a purr of delight when he goes over a good road. The road may be a bad one for the car, but from the point of view of the driver it is a good thing that there is a road at all, because he wants to get somewhere, which would be a difficult matter without a road. It is nice to have our armchairs and fires and electric light and steam heat, but he who would make progress has to go over new country, sometimes materially, and always in thought and feeling. People like the things that consort with their settled conveniences and habits; anything that disturbs those is "bad"; anything that fits in with them and enhances them is "good". Such an outlook upon life does not harmonize with spiritual progress; we do not refuse comfort when it comes, but we must learn to be indifferent to it, and to take things as they come; this emphasis upon liking and disliking must go, and the calm judgment of the higher self as to what is good and what is bad must take its place.

The fifth obstacle is *abhinivesha*, the outcome of the last, the state of being fixed, settled in, attached to a form or mode of life, or to the personality. From this arises fear of old age and of death – events which can never exist for the man himself, but must come in due course to the personality. A veritable death in life may arise but this fifth trouble; people waste their youth in preparation for comfort and safety in age, and then waste their age in seeking for their lost youth, or are afraid to use their bodies, lest they should wear out. They are like a man who buys a beautiful motor-car, and sits in his garage, enjoying his new possession, but unable to bring himself to run it out on the road, lest it should be spoiled. Our business is to do what the higher self wants, and to be utterly willing to die in his service if need be.

All the whirlpools arise from these five obstacles. Concentration and meditation are the means to dispel them completely. When the kama-manas no longer gravitates downwards, the manas can turn upwards, to become *manas-taijasi*.

Another Sanskrit word connected with this self-personality is *mana*, sometimes translated pride, but perhaps better rendered by conceit. This root appears in the word *nirmāṇakāya* which means a being who is beyond this illusion – *nirmāṇa*. Madame Blavatsky said that there were three kinds or modes of incarnation; first, that of the *avatāra*s, those who descend from higher spheres, having reached them in a cycle of evolution prior to ours; secondly, those of an ordinary kind, when a person passes through the astral and mental worlds and then takes up a new body; and thirdly, that of *Nirmāṇakāyas*, who incarnate again without interlude, sometimes perhaps after only a few days. In *The Secret*

Doctrine she cites the Cardinal de Cusa as an instance of this, he having been born again quickly, as Copernicus; and she says that such rapid rebirth is not an uncommon thing. She speaks of such people as adepts, not using the word quite as we employ it now, but meaning that they are adept or expert on the astral and lower mental planes; she says that they sometimes act as spirits at seances, and that they are particularly opposed by the Brothers of the Shadow, presumably because of the progress that they are making for themselves and also for mankind in general.

She explains that there are two kinds of *nirmāṇakāyas*: those who have renounced the heaven-world, as above explained, and those who at a later and higher stage renounce what she calls absolute Nirvāṇa, in order to remain to help the progress of the world. Modern Theosophical literature confines the term to this latter class, but here we are concerned with the lower class. The man who has slain the slayer has largely destroyed the five obstacles, and has become the servant of the higher self, with nothing in him but what is favourable to its purposes. He has his *antaḥkaraṇa* widened out so that during his bodily life he is in full touch with the higher self, and all the time that self is taking what it needs; the bee can visit the flower when he will, for there is no storm raging; and when the physical body is dead, the subtle part of the personality can be used again in the next incarnation, because it is not full of whirlpools which represent fixed desires and rigid opinions, and selfish habits of feeling and thought.

CHAPTER 4

THE REAL AND THE UNREAL

For when to himself his form appears unreal, as do on waking all the forms he sees in dreams; when he has ceased to hear the many, he may discern the One – the inner sound which kills the outer.

C.W.L. – The simile of dreaming and waking is frequently used in Oriental philosophy. It has its use, but we must take care that it does not lead us into a misapprehension. When we wake from an ordinary dream we realize that our senses have been deceived, that what we thought at the time to be a real experience was in truth nothing of the kind. But this is not exactly what happens when we wake to a perception of spiritual reality. We awaken to a higher and broader life; we perceive for the first time the crushing yet entirely unsuspected limitations under which we have hitherto been living. But that does not mean that our life before that time was nothing but a useless deception. The awakening to higher things causes our previous state of mind to appear irrational, but, after all, it was only relatively so. We were acting then according to our lights, upon such information as we had; now we have so much more that all our lines of thought and action are completely changed.

Even the Vedāntist does not deny that this physical plane dream of ours has its value for the production of enlightenment. A man may dream that a snake is threatening him, and be much alarmed thereby; at last in his dream the snake strikes him, and with that shock he wakes, and is much relieved ‘to find that the whole experience was an illusion. Yet it was the blow of the illusory snake that awoke him to a more real life. Similarly, in the *Gītā*, Shrī Krishna tells his pupil that wisdom is better than worldly goods, because, he says, “All actions in their entirety culminate in wisdom.” (*Op. cit.*, iv, 33.) That great Teacher did not deprecate a life of activity, but encouraged it to the utmost; yet he said that one should not be attached to the activities and the things with which they deal, but should seek only the wisdom that can be obtained from them. It is in the wisdom that man has his own true being, as he is a part of the Logos. If he listens to the voice of wisdom he will become increasingly the master of himself and his life; the inner sound will thus put a stop to the outer clamour which directs the feverish

activities of ordinary men.

It is very true that a man should cease to give his attention to the many things which surround and play upon him, and should turn it inwards to the one witness of all these things; but he is not entirely free to do this until he has fully performed his dharma in the outer world. Any man at any time, whatever his duties may be, may set his affection upon things above, and not upon things of the earth. But he may not be at liberty to devote his whole life to higher work until he has satisfied the demands of the karma which he has made in past lives, or in the earlier part of his present life. He may certainly *feel* vairāgya, but while any physical duties still remain to him, he must retain sufficient interest in them to do them as perfectly as they can be done.

If his desire for liberation is strong enough, and unless his karma places some insuperable obstacle in his way, he will probably find that the path to freedom will soon open before him. I myself had an experience of that kind; I received a message from my Master offering me certain opportunities which I most thankfully accepted. But if that gracious offer had been made a little earlier, I should have been unable to accept it, because I should not have been free; there lay upon me a clear duty which I could not possibly have neglected.

Vairāgya has two parts; there is the *apara* or lower vairāgya, and the *para* or higher vairāgya.

There are three stages in the abandonment of attachment to external things. First, the man becomes tired of the things which used to give him pleasure, yet he is sorry that he is tired of them; he desires still to enjoy them, but he cannot. Then, because of that satiety, he seeks elsewhere for satisfaction. Finally, when he has caught a clear glimpse of the higher things his spiritual desires awaken, and they prove so attractive to him that he thinks of the others no more. Or else, having learnt of the existence of the higher things and decided to follow them, he in the second stage either sets himself to observe the defects of the lower things, so as to create a sort of artificial disgust for them, or he fixes his will in rigid determination to reject their attractiveness and starve out desire for them. Finally, as in the former case, perhaps only after many fluctuations, the man sees the higher; he hears the inner sound which kills the outer. Then he has the higher vairāgya.

In the middle stage of struggle, it often happens that the man conceives a positive repugnance for the things of his erst-while pleasure; that is usually a sign that he has only recently escaped from bondage to them and he still fears their attractiveness; he feels that he is liable to be tainted by their proximity, so he shudders and avoids them, or he attacks and tries to destroy them with unreasoning vehemence. All these different aspects of the second stage are forms of the lower vairāgya.

Then only, not till then, shall he forsake the region of Asat, the false, to come unto the realm of Sat, the true.

Let us be careful here not to misunderstand. Many have supposed that this passage implies that the lower planes are mere illusion, but that is by no means what is intended. I have already written on the real and the unreal and have explained that each plane is real to the consciousness which functions upon it. ("The occult Path and the interests of the World" in the first Volume of *Talks on the Path of Occultism*.) What is true is that until a man is able to hear the inner voice and to look upon life from the standpoint of the higher planes he has no real grasp of the truth which lies behind all this complexity of manifestation that surrounds us.

Before the Soul can see, the harmony within must be attained, and fleshly eyes be rendered blind to all illusion.

Before the Soul can hear, the image (man) has to become as deaf to roarings as to whispers, to cries of bellowing elephants as to the silvery buzzing of the golden fire-fly.

Before the Soul can comprehend and may remember, she must unto the Silent

Speaker be united, just as the form to which the clay is modelled is first united with the potter's mind.

The harmony within is that between the ego and his vehicles, and also, of course, between those vehicles themselves. In the average man there is a perpetual strain going on between the astral body and the mental body, between the desires and the mind; and neither of these bodies is in the least in tune with the ego, or prepared to act as his vehicle. The personality must be purified, and the channel between it and the ego must be opened and widened. Until this is done the personality sees everything and everybody from its own very limited point of view. The ego cannot see what is really going on; he perceives only the distorted picture in the personality, which is like a camera with a defective lens that distorts the light rays, and a faulty plate or film which makes the result all blurred, indistinct and unequal.

That is why in most people the ego cannot derive any satisfaction from the personality until it is in the heaven-world. The ego knows the true from the false, he recognizes the true when he sees it, and rejects the false; but generally when he casts an eye downwards into the personality he finds so crazy a confusion of inconsequent thought-forms that he can distinguish nothing definite; he turns away in despair, and decides to wait for the quietude of the heaven-world before attempting to pick the fragments of truth out of this unseemly chaos. Under those more peaceful conditions, as the emotions and thoughts of the recent physical life come up one by one and envisage themselves in the vivid light of that world, they are examined with clear vision, the dross is thrown away and the treasure is kept. The disciple must try to bring about this condition while still in the physical body, by purifying the personality and harmonizing it with the soul.

The possibilities of personal error are almost infinite. Suppose that a worm, a bird, a monkey, and a traveller simultaneously look at a tree. The first will think of it as food, the second as a house, the third as a gymnasium, the fourth as a kind of umbrella; the pictures will all be different from one another, and different again from the tree's conception of himself.

While seeing has reference to looking outward, hearing refers to what comes from within. The man must become quiet if he is to hear the still small voice. Dhāraṇā or concentration will produce this quietness. If the soul is to hear the inner voice with certainty and accuracy, the outer man must be unshaken by all external things – by the clamour of the big breakers of life that dash against him, as well as by the delicate murmur of the softer ripples. He must learn to be very still, to have no desires and aversions.

Intuition can scarcely ever be invoked except when the man is utterly willing to receive its behests as the best and most acceptable guide, without intruding his personal desires. It would be of little use to ask from the intuition any solution of a problem of conduct, if at the same time the man wished that the answer should be this or that. Except on rare occasions when it is unusually strong, it is only when personal desires and aversions have ceased to exist when the voice of the outer world can no longer command him, that a man can hear the inner voice which should be his unfailing guide.

Before the soul can fully comprehend the drift of all the tuition which comes to him from without, and the intuition that comes from within, another harmonizing process must take place, in which the manas gradually becomes attuned to the will, which gives *direction* to his life.

There are three stages in the development of consciousness. On the probationary path the man's highest consciousness works upon the higher mental plane; after the First Initiation and until the Fourth, it is climbing steadily through the buddhic plane; at the end of that stage it enters on the atmic or spiritual plane. He has then become united with the will, the directing agent, controller of his destiny. While in the middle stage he might have said: "Thy Will, not mine, be done," but now he says: "Thy Will and mine are one." Just as the design of the pot that is to be made is first in the potter's mind, and just as the model for a race of men is in the

Manu's mind, He having received it from above, so is the goal of achievement for every one of us already marked out by the Monad, and then brought down into the evolving life of the conscious man by the spiritual principle within him.

There is thus a reason for the use of the word soul in these three verses. It is the soul that treads the path of progress, not the personality. On the first half of the path it unites itself more and more completely with the buddhi, forming the spiritual soul, manas-tajjasi. But all the work is done under the direction of the ātma, the voice of the silence.

CHAPTER 5

THE WARNING VOICE

For then the Soul will hear, and will remember. And then to the inner ear will speak

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE,

and say:

If thy Soul smiles while bathing in the sunlight of thy life; if thy Soul sings within her chrysalis of flesh and matter; if thy Soul weeps inside her castle of illusion; if thy Soul struggles to break the silver thread that binds her to the Master; know, O disciple, thy Soul is of the earth.

C.W.L. – In occult books we have frequent reference to the voice of the silence, and we often find that what is said in one place does not agree with what appears in others. In the early days of the Society we used to puzzle over its exact significance, trying to make it always mean the same thing. Only after much study did we discover that the term is general. The voice of the silence for anyone is that which comes from the part of him which is higher than his consciousness can reach, and naturally that changes as his evolution progresses. For those working with the personality the voice of the ego is the voice of the silence, but when one has dominated the personality entirely and has made it one with the ego so that the ego may work perfectly through it, it is the voice of the ātma – the triple spirit on the nirvanic plane. When this is reached there will still be a voice of the silence – that of the Monad on the plane above. When the man identifies the ego and the Monad and attains Adeptship, he will still find a voice of the silence coming down to him from above, but then it will be the voice, perhaps, of one of the Ministers of the Deity, one of the Planetary Logoi, as They are called. Perhaps for Him in turn it will be the voice of the Solar Logos Himself; and if even for Him there is such a thing as that, it must be the voice of a higher Logos. But who can say?

“The sunlight of thy life” refers to those periods in our personal existence when fortune smiles upon us, and everything seems bright and fair. The ego who basks in that pleasure, and mistakes it for the true happiness of the higher self, has not yet the higher vairāgya which kills the outer sounds. In *The Ancient Wisdom* our President has explained how the man who feels that nothing on earth can satisfy him, not even those things that give the greatest delight to ordinary mortals, may through a strong but calm effort of the will rise to and unite himself with the higher consciousness and find himself free of the body; but that is only for those who obey the first condition, who cannot be satisfied with anything less than that union.

The three bodies, physical, astral and mental, which with their habits constitute the personality, are in truth a chrysalis, in which a butterfly is gradually being formed. In our present caterpillar state the soul must be in the body and the world; yet it must not be *of* them; it must not accept that life as its own, but must realize that it is independent of its vehicles. Here again we must be careful not to misunderstand. It is indeed well, it is even necessary that the soul should rejoice on its upward path, that it should smile, that it should sing within its

chrysalis; there is no harm in that – there is even much good in it. What it must *not* do is to sing *because* of the chrysalis, or of anything that happens to that outer shell. It would be wrong, terribly wrong, that the soul should weep within its castle of illusion, because depression and sadness are always wrong. But that, true as it is, is not what is meant here. What Āryasanga is trying to tell us in His graceful poetical language is that the soul must neither rejoice nor sorrow because of anything whatever that is connected with the chrysalis or the castle, or any outer form; it must be indifferent to that form, unaffected by what happens to it. If it is *not* indifferent, it is still of the earth, still entangled with this lower world, and so not yet ready for perfect freedom.

All around us eternal change is taking place; but the soul must press forward on its way resistless, undeterred by change, for to be influenced by these outer things shows weakness. Remember how Shakespeare writes in his *Sonnets*:

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced
The rich proud cost of outworn buried age
When sometime lofty towers I see down-razed,
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the watery main,
Increasing store with loss and loss with store;
When I have seen such interchange of state,
Or state itself confounded to decay;
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminare,
That Time will come and take my love away,
 This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
 But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

Since brass, nor stone nor earth, nor boundless sea.
But sad mortality o'er-sways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wreckful siege of battering days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but Time decays?
 Sonnets, xlv, xlv.

But time is really the friend of the aspirant, for it is precisely the finer, the higher, the inner things which are least subject to its ravages. This truth the occultist learns as a matter of certain experience and knowledge, so the changes in outside things at last come to trouble him not at all.

Silver is the thread – as befits an emblem of purity – that binds the soul to the higher self; every traffic that the soul has with impurity of body, emotions or thought, is a struggle to break that silver thread, a temptation to ignore the still, small voice.

Madame Blavatsky adds the following footnotes:

The “great Master” is the term used by chelas to indicate the Higher Self. It is the equivalent of Avalokiteshvara, and the same as Ādi-Buddha with the Buddhist occultists, Ātma with the Brāhmaṇas, and Christos with the ancient Gnostics.

Soul is used here for the human Ego or Manas, that which is referred to in our occult septenary division as the human Soul in contradistinction to the spiritual and animal Souls.

Madame Blavatsky here employs the word Master in an unusual sense, saying that it is so

used by the chelas or pupils. In later Theosophical literature this title has been reserved for that limited number of members of the Great White Brotherhood who accept pupils from among those who are still living in the world. That number is small; it would seem that one Adept on each of the rays is appointed to attend to that work, and all those who are coming along His particular ray of evolution pass through His hands. No one below the rank of Adept is permitted to assume full responsibility for a pupil, though those who have held the position of pupil for a number of years are often employed as deputies, and receive the privilege of helping and advising promising young aspirants. These older pupils are gradually being trained for their future work when they in turn shall become Adepts, and they are learning to take more and more of the routine work off the hands of their Masters, so that the latter may be set free for higher labours which only They can undertake. The preliminary selection of candidates for chelaship is now left to a large extent in the hands of these older pupils, and the candidates are temporarily linked with such pupils rather than directly with the great Adepts. But the pupils and the Master are so wonderfully one that perhaps this is almost “a distinction without a difference”.

The terms which Madame Blavatsky uses in these footnotes will be better understood if we study a little the various trinities in the universe and in man. It is in the experience of everybody that there is a duality of the knower and the known, of the one who sees and the things that are seen, of the subject and the object. This is the old division of the world of experience into two parts, spirit and matter, using those words in a general or common sense. Spirit or consciousness and matter are a pair of opposites – the spirit is an active principle, the matter a passive one; the spirit has a centre but no circumference, the matter has a circumference but no centre; the spirit is self-moving, the matter is moved from outside. In these two we have also the division of reality into the divine and the material; the free and the bound; that which shines with its own light and that which has only reflected light.

When one looks closer still, one sees that those two are playing, as it were, on the stage in one’s presence, that they are not No. 1 and No. 2 principles, as many people think, but they are No. 2 and No. 3; for the one that now witnesses their interplay is No. 1. No. 2 is the *God who is seen*, but No. 1 is the God who is the real Self, who is the cause of all the interplay between No. 2 and No. 3.

In Christian terminology, Christ is the God who is seen. “No man hath seen God at any time.” (I John, 4, 12.) Yet said Christ: “I and my Father are One.” (St. John x, 30.)

That brings us to the term Avalokiteshvara. This word is a compound of *avalokita* (seen), and *Ishvara* (God, the Ruler). It thus means the Higher Self in the duality of spirit and matter in the universe. “There are three that bear record in heaven,” said S. John, “the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost.” (I John, 5, 7.) The Word, the Logos, Avalokiteshvara, is the Second. He is the Christos, the God that is seen. This is the universal spirit, or purusha, as distinguished from the matter, or prakriti. Man is consciousness looking at matter, and this God is glorified or universal Man, the supreme subject. Analyze yourself, and you will find the reflection of this – the inner God in yourself. Still, that God that is seen only bears witness to the real Godwin man to the Self, the “I” which embraces both the subject and the object.

This “I” is not a new subject, witnessing the old subject and object, put together and now made into one new compound object. It is “I” – that is all there is to say. Every thinking man can look at his own body, and in some cases his astral and mental bodies as well, and Call it “it”, that is, he can look upon it as an object. He can also have a conception of the consciousness or subject in his neighbour, and infer that it is of the same nature as that consciousness (containing will, feeling and thought) which he finds in himself. *But on this point he now makes a great mistake*, by giving two different names to one thing – he calls the same thing “you” when he sees it in his neighbour, but “I” when he looks at it in himself! Let him look upon the consciousness or subject within himself (all of it) as he does upon that in

others, and call it “you”, regarding it as just one of the great sea of “yous” that make up the Logos, as drops of water make up the ocean, and he will be ready to transcend consciousness and reach the real “I”, the Self or God that is not seen. (This argument is expounded in *The Seven Rays*, by Ernest Wood, Ch. xxi.) The consciousness, the “you”, is a portion of Avalokiteshvara, the God that is seen, the Christ, the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, just as much as the bodies are parts of the ocean of cosmic matter; and both equally are not the Self. No one hath *seen* the supreme God at any time – not even the Son.

This trinity has been considered in various ways: Avalokiteshvara has been described as follows by Swami T. Subba Rao: “Parabrahman by itself cannot be seen as it is; It is seen by the Logos with a veil thrown over it, and that veil is the mighty expanse of Cosmic Matter.” And again: “Parabrahman, after having appeared on the one hand as the Ego, and on the other as Mūlaprakriti, acts as the one energy through the Logos.” The danger of all such descriptions is immense; the use of the word “it” alone in this connection can undo everything. In *oneself* deliverance, the truth, must be sought – only I being I can solve this mystery, which is so easy, but that people will not see. There is also the strongest objection even to the word God as applied to Parabrahman – for to think of God is to think of the seen, that is, of Avalokiteshvara; and that God is, after all, a “you”, or rather all “yous”.

The conception of a subject or “you” involves a time limitation; that of an object or “it” involves a space limitation. But motion in both time and space is a mystery. Some ancients argued that nothing could really move, “because it cannot move in the space where it is, and it certainly cannot move in the space where it is not.” But subjects can move in time, and objects can move in space, because all move in Parabrahman. Both time and space are secondary to motion, properly conceived. See *The Seven Rays*, Ch, viii.

“And these three are one.” (I John, 4, 12.) Mūlaprakriti, the root of manifestation, basic matter, external being, is not something other than Parabrahman, but is the same, as seen through the time limitations of consciousness. Parabrahman is beyond that time limitation, and therefore seems to be still, and from that arises the appearance of space, the characteristic of Mūlaprakriti – which is in reality a space containing everything which ever existed or will exist in all of the three periods of time – past, present and future. Then universal consciousness, the great Man, also called Daiviprakriti (the divine manifestation), as against Mūlaprakriti (the material manifestation), is Avalokiteshvara, the Ishvara or Ruler or God *who is seen*, in contradistinction to Parabrahman, the first member of the Trinity, who is not seen directly even by him.

Now, in the higher triad in the consciousness of man we have a reflection of this great Trinity. Therefore Madame Blavatsky says that the Higher Self, by which she means buddhi or the intuitional love, is the *equivalent* of Avalokiteshvara. Any confusion in thought of the universal reality with ātma, buddhi and manas – the three modes of consciousness in man – would result in serious error, but there is an analogy between the two. The great Trinity is reflected in man in various ways, and appears in one form in those three aspects of his consciousness. So ātma, buddhi and manas reflect in their smaller sphere the characteristics of the universal trinity. Ātma is the consciousness of Self, and also the will, which gives self-direction. Manas, at the other pole, is consciousness of the world, and its thought-power does all our work, even that which is effected through the hands. But buddhi, between the two, is the very essence of consciousness, of subjectivity. Thus the greater Trinity is reproduced in the consciousness of the ego.

Beyond this middle member, triple in character, is the Monad in man, representative in him of Parabrahman, the state of his true and absolute nirvana, beyond consciousness. The ātma is the state of his false and relative Nirvāṇa of the nirvanic plane, his last illusion, that persists between the Fourth and Fifth Initiations. As the Monad lies above the trinity of consciousness, so the personal bodies lie outside or beneath it – they are known only in reflection in manas.

On the first half of the Path (from the First to the Fourth Initiation) the man is busy shaking himself free from those personal limitations, from the illusion of “it”. On the second half he is engaged in releasing himself from the illusion of “you”.

There are still a few more points to consider in Madame Blavatsky’s notes. Her reference to Ādi-Buddha and Ātma requires some comment, though that to the Christos of the Gnostics will be abundantly clear from what has been said above. The “Ātma of the Brāhmaṇas” is rather what the Buddhists thought that the Brāhmaṇas meant by the term (and what perhaps many of the Brāhmaṇas who missed the true point of their philosophy really did think); it is that spiritual soul in man which the Buddha declared to be not utterly permanent. Yes, even the Christ (the higher self) in man is at last mortal. Beautiful and wonderful, and far beyond the vision of ordinary men as it lies, it must at last give up its life, to be one with the Father. It is the “you” masquerading as the “I” in spiritual men – just as, far earlier in evolution, the absurd personality, the “it” pretended to be “I”. But when he says that their belief in ātma is wrong, the orthodox Buddhist has not understood the height of true Brāhmaṇa thought, and especially the teaching on this point of Shrī Shankarāchārya, who was really one with the Buddha in His anātma doctrine, because by ātma He meant the Monad, the indescribable Parabrahmic aspect of man. The Buddha saw that people called “you” the ātma, the Self, and tried to dislodge them from that error by saying that what they called “I” was perishable.

In the foot-note Madame Blavatsky says that Avalokiteshvara is the same as Ādi-Buddha. She amplifies her statement on the subject in *The Secret Doctrine*, as follows:

In the esoteric, and even exoteric Buddhism of the North, Ādi-Buddha, ... the One Unknown, without beginning or end, identical with Parabrahman, emits a bright Ray from its Darkness. This is the Logos, the First, or Vajradhāra, the Supreme Buddha, also called Dorjechang. As the Lord of all Mysteries he cannot manifest, but sends into the world of manifestation his Heart – the “Diamond Heart,” Vajrasattva or Dorjesempa. This is the Second Logos of Creation. *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 624.

In this extract she clearly shows that the First and Second Logos are respectively Ādi-Buddha and Avalokiteshvara, for the latter is the same as Vajrasattva. Therefore when she speaks of them as one it can only be as the Christians speak of the Christ as one with the Father. I wrote as follows on this subject in *The Inner Life*, Section II:

There has been much discussion as to the exact meaning of the terms Ādi-Buddha and Avalokiteshvara. I have made no special study of these things from the philosophical standpoint, but so far as I have been able to gather ideas from discussion of the matter with the living exponents of the religion, Ādi-Buddha seems to be the culmination of one of the great lines of superhuman development – what might be called the abstract principle of all the Buddhas. Avalokiteshvara is a term belonging to the Northern Church and seems to be the Buddhists’ name for their conception of the Logos. European scholars have translated it: “The Lord who looks down from on high,” but this seems to have in it a somewhat inaccurate implication, for it is clearly always the manifested Logos; sometimes the Logos of a solar system and sometimes higher than that, but always manifest. We must not forget that while the founders of the great religions see and know the things which They name, Their followers usually do not see; they have only the names, and they juggle with them as intellectual counters, and build up much which is incorrect and inconsistent. *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 169.

We have already seen that by the term Higher Self Madame Blavatsky means the buddhi in man, the central member of the trinity of his immortal consciousness. That is the wisdom in man. But it is a reflection of the universal wisdom, without which there could be no human wisdom. Similarly, without the Dhyāni-Buddha Avalokiteshvara, “the centre of energy” of the ultimate wisdom, Ādi-Buddha, no human Buddha could become. The Illumination of the sage Gautama was therefore not essentially the flowering of a man into a god, but the union of a perfected human consciousness with the wisdom of the Logos.

The second of the foot-notes under consideration speaks not only of the manas as the human Soul, but refers also to the animal soul in man. This is the lower manas, the kama-manas. On its plane reside the group-souls of animals, while those of the vegetable kingdom are on the plane beneath it, and those of the mineral lower still. To these meanings of the terms Soul, Higher Self, etc., Madame Blavatsky keeps with perfect consistency right through the book.

CHAPTER 6

SELF AND ALL-SELF

When to the world's turmoil thy budding Soul lends ear; when to the roaring voice of the great illusion thy soul responds; when frightened at the sight of the hot tears of pain, when deafened by the cries of distress, thy Soul withdraws like the shy turtle within the carapace of selfhood, learn, O disciple, of her silent God thy Soul is an unworthy shrine.

When waxing stronger, thy Soul glides forth from her secure retreat; and breaking loose from the protecting shrine, extends her silver thread and rushes onward; when beholding her image on the waves of space she whispers. "This is I" – declare, O disciple, that thy Soul is caught in the webs of delusion.

C.W.L. – At the beginning of this passage, in the expression "budding Soul" we have a suggestion of the idea of evolution. For many centuries in Europe people did not think of evolution; they had the idea that the world and all the various creatures in it had been created quite suddenly, and they did not suppose that the more complex forms had evolved out of inferior ones, and would evolve further into something more perfect. Then came the idea, within about the last century and a half, that the material forms of living creatures were undergoing evolution, an unfoldment which has been believed by some to be due to an impulse of the indwelling life, and by others merely to the selective agency of natural environment.

But long ago there existed a theory of evolution of the Soul, which has all along been a central doctrine of the Hindu and Buddhist traditions, and has been spread extensively in the Western world by Theosophists during the last fifty years, along with the doctrine of reincarnation. This is put forward as the most logical and ethical theory of human destiny, once it has been established, on scientific or religious grounds, that the Soul of a man survives the death of his body. The soul incarnates many times for the sake of experience, and each one will thereby become at last not merely a genius in some field of human thought or work, but a perfect man, ready for full conscious divinity.

There are two great stages on the path of the soul's evolution – the first is called the pravritti mārga, the way of forth-going, and the second the nivritti mārga, the way of return. In the former the development of personality takes place, accompanied by the accumulation of much karma as the soul pursues its restless career of seeking the satisfaction of its multitudinous desires in the external world. In the latter the soul little by little turns its back upon the world, and with its face towards the divine, its source and goal, proceeds with the task of perfecting itself so as to finish up the human stage of its evolution.

It is this second stage, the nivritti mārga, that is divided up into the probationary path and the Path of Initiation, which have been fully described in *The Path of Discipleship, Initiation, the Perfecting of Man*; and *The Masters and the Path*. This mārga implies a course of voluntary evolution, in which the candidate is deliberately training himself in the higher qualities of character; the evolution of the lower creatures and of men on the pravritti mārga is involuntary, they seek and respond to experience, and learn without clear realization of what

is happening to them.

In a foot-note to the word illusion, Madame Blavatsky calls it Mahā-Māyā, the great illusion, the objective universe. The meaning of the term illusion, as applied to the external world, has already been discussed. It is not the same idea as that referred to in the text as “webs of delusion,” which has reference, as another foot-note says, to “Sakkāyadiṭṭhi, the delusion of personality”.

When the Lord Buddha revealed to men the Noble Eightfold Path, the way to liberty, the practical means to bring sorrow to an end, He told them about the ten fetters which the candidate must cast off – one after another. The first of these was called Sakkāyadiṭṭhi, the delusion of personality. Let us see how this arises. A child is born subject to karma – the result of its deeds in previous lives. It has a certain kind of body, and various things happen to it. In course of time it hears what people say of it, and it finds out what it can and what it cannot do. It sees itself in these things as in a mirror – one of those distorting mirrors which are sometimes set up in exhibitions to amuse people with their grotesquely flattened or elongated images. It thus obtains ideas about itself – that it is clever, or stupid, beautiful or ugly, weak or strong. As its education proceeds it acquires social standing or position or character, assumes the habits of body and mind of doctor, lawyer, house-wife – whatever it may be – and thus acquires a settled *personality*. When it thinks itself to be that personality, it has what has been called “self-personality” – exactly the same delusion that obsesses the unfortunate people in the lunatic asylums, who imagine themselves to be tea-pots, ear-drums, north poles, Queen Elizabeths and Napoleons.

A definite well-trained set of bodies and personality, with useful habits, is, of course, a good thing, just as is a good set of tools, or a good motor-car. We do not want to have weak or nondescript personalities. But however good our personality may be we should not think it to be ourself, and we should be able to enjoy all our native will-power, love-power and thought-power while using it for our purposes, for our spiritual life in the material world. These personalities should not set themselves up as candidates for immortality, and try to intrench themselves against the ravages of use and time that beset all material things. A middle-aged gentleman once said to his son, who volunteered to relieve him of some work: “No, no, my boy. Always use up the old ones first!” The personalities must be willing to be used, to be adapted to the spiritual purposes of the moment, to be worn out – and must be content with the sole reward of a long and glorious devachan, that will follow the death of the outer body in the case of all those who have thus served the divine indwelling self, except, of course, the servants of the Masters who renounce this reward and take speedy rebirth in order to work for the world.

This earth, disciple, is the hall of sorrow, wherein are set along the path of dire probations, traps to ensnare thy Ego by the delusion called “great heresy”.

That the physical plane is a place of sorrow is a widespread Buddhist and Hindu thought. Uncongenial and often disfiguring or debilitating labour, oppression, disease, indignity and dread fall to the lot of the majority of mankind. Those whose fortune has set them in places of ease may say that they find much pleasure in it; but Patañjali says: “To the enlightened *all* is misery.” There are many things that give no trouble to the relatively unevolved – such as the smell of alcohol, meat or onions, the noise of factory sirens or coarse music, gross manners, hideous clothes and buildings, and a thousand other things that afflict those who are more sensitive. In addition to these there is hunger to gain what we want, and fear to lose it when it is in hand, and suffering for others all round us, if not for ourselves. Surely men must be mad to hug such chains as these. Surely this world is indeed a hall of sorrow. Think how poor is its best in the sight of those who know the higher planes.

But it is so chiefly because man has made it so. Think of the vast sea of life that fills the mineral, the vegetable and the animal kingdoms of nature, and how all that is throbbing with

pleasure. Even the dreadful picture of the poet, of “nature, red in tooth and claw with ravin” loses most of its lurid colour when we realize that the animals do not “think before and after” as men do, with painful longing and fear, and that while their battles are on, and the blood and wounds distress the human beholder, the excitement of the animal consciousness is at its greatest height and is often experiencing its greatest pleasure. Earth is a hall of sorrow only for man, who with his greed and anger, born of a strong imagination that feeds the flames of hot desire, has poisoned with innumerable horrors both his personal and his social life.

Yet it only needs the conquest of *selfishness* to remove every one of these horrors, and open to all mankind the joys of this world – the thrill and deep strong peace of beauty, of discovery, of creative work, of social and bodily well-being.

Madame Blavatsky’s foot-note then speaks of:

Attāvāda, the heresy of the belief in Soul, or rather in the separateness of Soul or Self from the one universal, infinite Self.

Attā is the Pali equivalent of the Sanskrit *ātma*, and *vāda* means doctrine. The doctrine of *ātma*, which we have already considered, is the great source of cleavage between the Hindus and Buddhists, but as a matter of fact the distinction is merely one of words, because when the Hindu says that the Self or *ātma* in man is one with the universal Self, he does not mean by the word what people usually mean when they think or speak of themselves, but something altogether deeper, which only the advanced *yogī* can even imagine. There is a passage in the *Shrī Vākya Sudhā* which warns the aspirant that when he repeats the great religious formula “I am That,” he must take care what he means by “I”; it explains that the separate individual should be understood as threefold, and that it is the union with Brahman only of the highest of these three that is proclaimed by “Thou art That” and such sayings. As already explained, the personality is not “I”, and even the “you” in me is not “I”, but the “I” is something indistinguishable from the universal Self in which the many and the One are one. The Lord Buddha’s teaching denies the permanency of the “you” that men call “I”.

It is an unfortunate thing that two such great religions as Hinduism and Buddhism should be separated mainly by so small a misunderstanding, and also that because of it the modern Theosophical movement has spread very slowly among the Buddhists. We have developed a large Theosophical literature, in which the words *ātma* and Self figure extensively, and this has alienated a good many Buddhists who have not taken the trouble to clear away this obstacle of words which we have inadvertently put in their path.

This earth, O ignorant disciple, is but the dismal entrance leading to the twilight that precedes the valley of true light – that light which no wind can extinguish, that light which burns without a wick or fuel.

In this and some later verses we have poetical names for the planes of nature. As previously stated, it was common among oriental occultists to bunch together the astral and lower mental planes, and Madame Blavatsky often followed that plan in her teaching. This combining of the two is indicated in this picture of a “twilight that precedes the valley of true light”. That description of the valley of true light shows it to be the region of the Soul and the Higher Self, the planes where buddhi and higher manas have their habitat.

If we divide the planes by a line separating the lower from the higher mental, we find that there is a radical difference between those which lie below the line and those which are above. In the former, matter is dominant; it is the first thing that strikes the eye; and consciousness shines with difficulty through the forms. But in the higher planes life is the prominent thing, and forms are there only for its purposes. The difficulty in the lower planes is to give the life expression in the forms, but in the higher it is quite the reverse – to hold and give form to the flood of life. It is only above the dividing line that the light of consciousness is subject to no wind, and shines with its own power. The symbol of a spiritual fire is very fitting for

consciousness at those levels, as distinguished from the lower planes, where the symbol of fire burning fuel is more appropriate.

Saith the great Law: “In order to become the knower of All-Self, thou hast first of Self to be the knower.” To reach the knowledge of that Self, thou hast to give up self to non-self, being to non-being.

In a foot-note Madame Blavatsky distinguishes between the Ātmajñānī who is mentioned here, and the Tattvajñānī . In Hindu literature generally the distinction is slight and is usually ignored, but she says: “The Tattvajñānī is the knower or discriminator of the principles in nature and in man; and Ātmajñānī is the knower of Ātma, or the universal One Self.” Jñānī means a knower and tattva means the truth or the real nature of things.

It has always been a teaching of Theosophy that to make progress we must apply the old Greek formula “Know thyself”. In consequence, a very large part of our modern Theosophical literature deals with the constitution, history and destiny of man. It is by the study of the various principles and bodies of man that we are able gradually to distinguish what he is, and to separate him in thought from the vehicles that he uses, until at last we arrive at the real Self. Then, through that real Self in us, we shall realize the universal Self; in fact, the two are one.

But to know the real Self in oneself, the lower self must be set aside, must become as naught. As we have already seen, the utter destruction of “ self-personality “ is the very first task of the Initiate on the Path proper, since sakkayaditthi, the delusion of the personal self, is the first fetter which must be cast off.

And then thou canst repose between the wings of the Great Bird. Aye, sweet is rest between the wings of that which is not born, nor dies, but is the Aum throughout eternal ages.

On the Great Bird, which occupies a prominent place in Oriental religious symbolism, Madame Blavatsky has the following foot-note:

Kāla Haṃsa, the bird or swan. Says the Nāda-bindupanishat (Rig Veda) translated by the Kumbakonam Theosophical Society – “The syllable A is considered to be the bird Haṃsa’s right wing, U its left, M its tail, and the Ardhamātra [half metre] is said to be its head.”

The word Aum, generally pronounced Om, is used at the commencement of every good work or thought, because it is a word of power, symbolizing divine creation. Innumerable Sanskrit books repeat the statement that hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell are correlated respectively with the orders of matter named *ākāsha* (ether or sky), *vāyu* (air), *tejas* or *agni* (fire), *apas* or *jala* (water), and *prithivī* (earth), which are our familiar five planes of human manifestation, the atmic, buddhic, mental, astral and physical. These planes were created in this order, beginning with the atmic, where sound was applied as the creative power. Of course, that could not be the same thing as our physical sound, which is a pulsation in the air or some other physical substance; it was of the nature of the voice of the silence, the will of ātma. Yet even on our physical plane sound is a great builder of forms, as every student of elementary science knows, who has made Chladni’s figures or performed similar experiments. There is a great deal of symbolism in the Hindu Scriptures connected with this idea that the world was created by sound.

The word Aum is said to have special value as a mantra because it is the most complete human word. It begins with the vowel A in the back of the mouth, continues with the vowel U sounded in the centre of the mouth, and closes with the consonant M, with which the lips are sealed. It thus runs through the whole gamut of human speech and so represents in man the entire creative word. Its three parts are also taken as symbolical of the manifestation of the Trinity, in a variety of ways, to explain which one might fill a book. Thus we have

Parabrahman, Daiviprakriti and Mūla-prakriti; Shiva, Vishnu and Brahmā; will, wisdom and activity; ananda, chit and sat, or happiness, consciousness and being; ātma, buddhi and manas; tamas, rajas and sattva; and many another. Aum is thus a constant reminder of this triplicity running through all things; it is a key therefore to the solution of many mysteries, as well as a word of power. The head of the bird is then taken as the unmanifested origin of the triple word.

Kāla, a word which means “time” is one of the names of Vishnu or Avalokiteshvara. Kāla-haṃsa therefore means the swan of time or in time, haṃsa being a swan. This symbol of a bird contains the implication of time, since it is proceeding through space. It is a characteristic of consciousness that it progresses or evolves, and so exists in time. The consciousness of the Logos *is* time, it does not begin nor end in time, and is therefore without birth or death.

This bird is thus a symbol of the Second Logos, which is also the great Wisdom. There is a well-known Hindu fable which connects the haṃsa or swan with this idea of wisdom also, for it relates of that bird that when a mixture of water and milk is placed before it, it can separate the milk from the water. So does wisdom operate even in human life, selecting from our mixed experience the essential nutriment of the soul. Wisdom remains in the spiritual soul of man when experiences have died away, since, as the *Bhagavad-Gītā* says: “All actions in their entirety culminate in wisdom.” *Op. cit.*, iv. 53.

A man on the Path who has passed the Third Initiation is also called a Hamsa, or swan. He is busy getting rid of raga and dwesha, the fourth and fifth fetters, which are liking and disliking, and is therefore especially practising wisdom. People in the world are full of likes and dislikes, and they therefore suffer greatly from their own opinions about things. Throwing these two fetters off, the Hamsa becomes like the sage described in the *Gītā* as one satisfied with wisdom and knowledge, to whom a lump of earth, a stone and gold are the same, who regards impartially friends and foes, the righteous and the unrighteous. It is not that this man does not value gold and friends; he does, but he values also clay and foes. The wise man can profit from every kind of experience; all are useful for the soul. Epictetus asserted this when he declared: “There is only one thing for which God has sent me into the world – to perfect my own character in virtue; and there is nothing in all the world that I cannot use for that purpose.”

Again, Haṃsa is also a form of the saying “Ahaṃ Saḥ” or “I am That,” or, as it is frequently used, “So’ham,” which consists of the same words reversed. So when the aspirant repeats this sentence he also remembers that the way to bestride the Hamsa or bird of life is to realize that he is the Self. It is said that the devout yogī utters this formula with every breath, of which there are said to be 21,600 in a day and night, for the air is considered to come in with the sound of “sah” and go out with that of “ha”.

As long as the bird is flying, the creative word is sounding, time exists. Although this time has neither beginning nor ending it is nevertheless a measurable period – which is a great mystery. On this point Madame Blavatsky has the following note:

Eternity with the Orientals has quite another signification than it has with us. It stands generally for the 100 years or age of Brahma, the duration of a Mahā-Kalpa or a period of 311,040,000,000,000 years.

This part of the subject is concluded with the words:

Bestride the Bird of Life, if thou would’st know. Give up thy Life, if thou would’st live.

To these are appended the following notes:

Says the same Nāda-bindu, “A Yogī who bestrides the Haṃsa [thus contemplates on Aum] is not affected by karmic influences or crores of sins.”

Give up the life of the physical personality if you would live in Spirit.

A crore is ten millions. It must not, however, be assumed that the yogī is permitted to perform these sins; if he did he would not be a yogī. This expression is only an Oriental way of indicating that he is utterly free from taint by the material world. The man who thinks and works without personal desire, with utter unselfishness, suffers no karmic consequences. The fruit of all his efforts goes into the great reservoir of spiritual force for the helping of the world, as has already been explained.

CHAPTER 7

THE THREE HALLS

Three halls, O weary pilgrim, lead to the end of toils. Three halls, O conqueror of Māra, will bring thee through three states into the fourth, and thence into the seven worlds, the worlds of rest eternal.

If thou would'st learn their names, then hearken, and remember.

The name of the first hall is Ignorance – Avidyā. It is the hall in which thou saw'st the light, in which thou livest and shalt die.

The name of hall the second is the Hall of Learning. In it thy Soul will find the blossoms of life, but under every flower a serpent coiled.

The name of the third hall is Wisdom, beyond which stretch the shoreless waters of Akshara, the indestructible fount of omniscience.

C.W.L. – The three halls may be interpreted in two ways: as objective planes, or as the subjective condition of man.

In the former case the hall of ignorance is the physical plane, and the hall of learning, described in a foot-note as the hall of probationary learning “is what may perhaps be called the astro-mental plane (the astral and lower mental planes taken together). When I wrote *The Inner Life* sixteen years ago it seemed to me probable that by the term hall of learning Madame Blavatsky meant the astral plane, and by the hall of wisdom the lower mental plane, but having thought the matter over and discussed it many times since then, I now lean to the opinion that we shall more accurately represent her thought if we take the hall of learning to include not only the astral but also the lower mental, and if we raise the hall of wisdom so as to include within it the planes of higher manas and buddhi.

That Āryasanga was not thinking of the astral plane as the hall of learning and the lower mental world as the hall of wisdom is shown a little further on, when He speaks of the latter hall as one “wherein all shadows are unknown, and where the light of truth shines with unfading glory”. The lower mental world does not answer to this description; far more glorious and delicate than the astral plane as it is, it is still a material world and the habitat of the personalities of men. Further, the Teacher also says that that which is uncreate abides in the hall of wisdom, and it is the ego, not the personality, which is uncreate. And in the lower mental plane, as well as in the astral, there is a serpent coiled under every flower; for if passion and foolish desires infest the one, pride and prejudices inhabit the other. In the higher mental plane, though there may be much that the ego does not know, what it does know it knows correctly; but the lower mental is a region of personality and error.

The extent to which the lower planes are worlds of illusion is also seen in the way in which our senses and powers work in them. To take sight as an instance – we see because our sight is obstructed. If one could see perfectly through the wall one could not see the wall. It is the same with walking; we have some freedom to move about, because the earth resists the free motion of our feet. In the higher planes one lives in the light.

The combination of the astral and mental planes is not uncommon in the Oriental schools of occult training. The Vedāntins speak of one body (called the manomayakosha, the body made

of mind), (See *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 181.) where our Theosophical literature usually distinguishes the two (the astral and the mental), and to that body when awakened and functioning they ascribe the experiences proper to both planes. The candidate for the path of yoga in the Rāja Yoga schools was always trained to work from the mental down to the astral. This very cautious procedure is also shown in the teaching of Patañjali, who makes his first two steps moral, and requires definite progress in these before the practices leading to the siddhis or yoga powers are taken. In *Raja Yoga: The Occult Training of the Hindus*, Prof. Wood had called these first steps “The ten commandments”, and has translated them as the five restraints: “Thou shalt not injure, lie, steal, be incontinent, be greedy”, and the five observances: “Thou shalt be clean, content, self-controlled, studious and devoted.” These methods were in full force long before the time of Āryasanga; Pandit N. Bhāshyāchārya and some other Sanskrit scholars maintain that Patañjali, who in turn was not the originator of the system, gave his famous *Sūtras* to the world as far back as in the ninth century B.C.

In *The Masters and the Path* I have explained that in the old Initiations it often happened that much time was taken in instructing the candidate in astral work, as the awakening of the pupil to work at that level was left to a relatively later stage than is customary among the modern Theosophists, who often have already done much astral work and have thus learnt the detail of the astral world long before Initiation.

If we think of the three halls subjectively, as stages of progress in human development, we have the following familiar divisions: (1) The man who lives ignorantly in the world, attracted and repelled by the things around him, impelled to action by his own uncontrolled passions and desires – this is the ignorant stage. (2) The man who is learning that nature has definite laws, and is realizing that by working with them he can gain much more power than he had in the days of his ignorance – this is the hall of learning. (3) The man who has realized that there are spiritual laws, and is learning to obey them. He knows about reincarnation and karma, and the ethical and moral laws that govern the progress of his own soul and those of others. He is aware that outer things exist only for the purposes of the evolving soul, and lives according to this knowledge. He is in the hall of wisdom.

Madame Blavatsky describes the four stages of consciousness:

The three states of consciousness, which are Jāgrat, the waking; Svapna, the dreaming; and Sushupti, the deep sleeping state. These three Yogī conditions lead to the fourth – the Turīya, that beyond the dreamless state, the one above all, a state of high spiritual consciousness.

These states of consciousness are not fixed, but may be correlated to the sets of planes or objective halls above mentioned, in the case of the candidate who is being prepared for the Arhat Initiation. In this case the waking state may be the physical, the dreaming state the astro-mental, the sleeping state the higher mental and buddhic, and the turiya state the atmic.

The rather curious terms waking, dreaming and sleeping seem to have been selected from a physical plane point of view to name the heights of consciousness reached by the candidate at different times. When the man was going about his business in the physical plane, with all his faculties awake to this world, he was in the first state. To understand the second state we have to remember that there are two kinds of dreams – the often nonsensical productions of the brain (physical and etheric), and the true experiences of the man away from his physical body, working and learning in the astro-mental regions. It is to these latter that this term dreaming applies. The candidate sleeping, or almost going to sleep in a day-dream, would afterwards remember some such experiences, and then ascribe them to the “consciousness of the dream state”. Suppose, however, that the aspirant out of the body should at any time go into what may be called a second sleep, and rise into the next set of planes, to be conscious for a time at that higher level. Probably on waking physically he would remember nothing of what had been happening out of the body – his brain not being attuned to record the experiences

coming from planes higher than his “dreaming state”. So it would seem to him that he had had deep dreamless sleep, and usually his only feeling would be one of great satisfaction and well-being. The “sleeping state” is therefore consciousness in that still higher region. Now, the fourth state is sometimes called *trance*, for the following reason. It has often been explained that an aspirant when out of the body can rise a stage higher than when in it. It is possible also in deep meditation for the disciple to rise in trance to the higher state and afterwards bring that experience down into the waking memory. Thus the Arhat can touch the buddhic level while in the physical body, and the ātmic or nirvāṇic plane when out of it, or in deep meditation or trance. The term akshara, which is here applied to this fourth region, means simply that which does not melt away; it is the undecaying.

The same set of terms may be used as a relative series for less advanced occult students. One may have his waking consciousness on the physical plane, his dreaming state on the astral plane, his deep sleep on the mental; another, who is able to use his astral faculties in his physical waking consciousness, will have his dream consciousness on the lower mental, and his sleep state on the higher mental, and so on. The *turīya* is a higher state reached in every case by a special effort of will and meditation, which is a means to ultimately raising the whole set of three states to a higher level than before. While the transition is in progress, before the new level is established, there will always be this fourth stage.

This is seen in meditation. The candidate will sit and fix his waking consciousness on some object – suppose it is a cat. Then he will rise to the “dream state”, and try to realize the astral aspect of the animal. Next he will ascend to the “sleep stage”, and give his attention to the mental being of the creature. The fourth step would be *samādhi* – or contemplation – an attempt to realize its significance and reality for the ego, to go beyond the three forms of the cat into its subjective meaning. The fixing of the mind on the cat in the first case is concentration; the process of elevation of the consciousness is meditation; the final concentration in a higher field of vision, beyond what was reached before, is contemplation (or *samādhi*). The last effort may be like piercing a cloud or fog, out of which the new vision will gradually form itself, or from which it may come like a flash of lightning. In either case the practitioner must hold himself very still in order to retain the impression as long as possible – one thought of self, of the old personal relativity, can dismiss the whole thing, so that there remains not even a memory of what it was like.

The three halls, it is said, lead to the end of *toils* – not to the end of *work*, it must be observed. In these lower worlds we have a sense of work which is certainly quite different from that of higher levels. To us down here the word is almost synonymous with toil, and often with drudgery, but from a higher point of view work is really play. Drudgery is merely action; it does not create the man who does it. But the least bit of work done occultly, done heartily “as to God and not unto men”, done better than ever before, is good for the evolution of him who does it. If, in writing a letter, for example, one is at pains to do it neatly, even beautifully, and to express oneself briefly, clearly and gracefully, one has developed hand, eye and brain, thought-power, love-power and will-power. True work, such as that of an artist, is full of creative influence and of joy. We find some toil even in these things, however, because of the obstructions of the lower planes. Yet even down here there is no clear dividing line between toil and play. If one goes out, for example on a long ride, the earlier part of the journey will be full of delight for both man and horse, but insensibly that passes away as fatigue increases, until suddenly the man realizes that the ride which was play in the beginning has now become work, or rather drudgery. In other cases, there may be a task, not prolonged, but a little beyond our strength; then there is a sense of toil. But all work in reality is play when there is willingness and no fatigue or overstrain.

We have much to learn from the animals, and even from the plants, in this respect. “Grow as the flower grows,” says *Light on the Path*, “opening your heart to the sun.” Said the Christ:

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” (S. Matthew, vi, 7. 7) It is deadly fear of the morrow that makes men’s work a toil, that makes them sweat in bitterness. But the Law says: “Do the wise and right thing to-day, and leave the result to take care of itself.” This is not a doctrine of idleness, but of work that is play instead of toil.

An illustration of this is also to be seen in the way in which different people take a long journey. One man will get into the train at Chicago, and remain in a fever of impatience for the three or four days’ time which the train takes to go to San Francisco, his destination. He has fixed his mind on something that he wants to do there; in the meantime his journey is a toil and a misery. Another finds a thousand things of interest on the way – the scenery, the people, the train itself; for him the journey is a happy holiday. And in the end he has accomplished much more than the other man. The Hindu villager lives very near to nature, and certainly grows as the flower grows. A man will set out from his village to get the mail from the Post Office or to post some letters there, perhaps sixteen or twenty miles away. He does not tramp along stolidly and painfully, jarring his nerves with the graceless movements that spring from a discontented or impatient mind. The vision of his mail is not a mania that shuts out all other interests, and makes him curse the length of the track. No; there are insects, birds, flowers, trees, streams, clouds in the sky, fields, houses, people and animals, and lastly the blessed earth itself, to lie on which for awhile is to be on velvet in the divine arms. How little the white man knows of life, how much of toil!

The Hindus have long held that God plays. The Līlā or play of Shrī Krishna, as it is called, is the great work of evolution, which looks so toilsome to us that we shudder at the long ages of work that lie in front, and cry out for rest. Think of the 311,040,000 million years of our mahākālpa. What an illusion! When we come to the end of toils life will be all play, all happiness.

The end of toils, though not of work, comes with the entry of the candidate, on the fourth Path, into the nirvāṇic plane. He has finished the toil of casting off the first five fetters – self-personality, doubt, superstition, liking and disliking – all of which marked his bondage to material things, with which his life was one long struggle on an up-hill road. But now his remaining five fetters are internal; he has to conquer them, truly, but his weapon will be serenity, quietness, calmness – the use of the will, which is the quietest thing in the world. These fetters are: desire for life in form and formless life, pride, agitation and ignorance. Little profit is to be derived from examining these in detail in this place; it is enough to notice their internal character, and to say that to destroy them the man must quieten himself and his vehicles above the line that divides the personality from the ego.

At earlier stages, before the end of toils, the student will do well to organize his life wisely, so that his work for the Master may be as far as possible play. It should be pure delight, unmixed happiness – such a condition would make for the swiftest progress. Toil is not meritorious, nor especially profitable, though sometimes it may be necessary. How often a student does meditation, feeling it an irksome thing, but regarding it as a duty to be done, though with travail and suffering. Do it happily and rejoicing, as play, or at least look forward to the time when you can do so. Some men sink luxuriously into the arms of the present, and say, “We will enjoy ourselves now, and let the future take care of itself.” Others stand aloof in proud strength and say, “We refuse to respond to that which can distress us.” But the disciple must bare his back to the strokes of time, rejoicing in the long future, in the game in which every move can be a dancing poem of delight. On the subject of the seven worlds, Madame Blavatsky says:

Some Oriental mystics locate seven planes of being, the seven spiritual Lokas or worlds within the body of Kāla Haṃsa, the swan out of time and space, convertible into the swan in time, when it becomes Brahmā instead of Brahman.

All the manifestations of seven in nature, such as the seven principles in man, or the seven planes in the world, come from a sevenfold division arising from Parabrahman. Three of the seven principles are manifest in the universal consciousness, and three more in mūlaprakṛiti. One remains at its source and includes all the others, for the presence of many does not mar the unity of That which is truly One. So, at his lower level, the man who transcends his middle set of principles (ātma-buddhi-manas), and rises into the first (the Monad), though he escapes from the worlds or planes, finds them all present in that new state of real nirvana, which is beyond the consciousness-state as much as that is beyond the mere matter-state. We speak thus of it, in the third person, only as a concession to ignorance, and must point out that what has been said should be translated into terms of “you” for consciousness and “I” for the true life of super-conscious nirvāṇa, if it is to be understood. These “worlds,” however, are not entered by the Arhat, but by the full Adept.

There are several other ways in which the Arhat may be thought of as entering the seven worlds of rest eternal:

In one way those worlds are the sub-planes of the atmic plane, through which the Arhat begins to climb. The characteristic of the man who dwells in them is a changeless serenity, for everything is seen as in the One Self, and where that is realized, fear and anxiety can have no place. As the *Gītā* says: “For the sage enthroned in yoga, serenity is called the means.” (*Op. cit.*, vi, 3.) It is not that there is any lack of activity in those regions – it is one vast wave of ever-moving life – but there are no obstructions to the will of the One. On the buddhic plane we have still duality in a sense, since there one sees others, though the same Self is seen dwelling in them as in ourselves. But buddhi has to be transcended, for love implies a duality.

The serenity that the Arhat increasingly acquires puts a new face on the common planes of our existence. He enjoys in them a liberty that others do not know; he has found that work is play. Having touched the vale of bliss, he has discovered that life not only there but on all planes is pure delight. He not only sees and loves the advancing life behind the perishing forms, but feels and rejoices in the Divine Will behind the changing life. The rest eternal that he enjoys is not idleness, but the utter internal peace of one who knows that all is well, that the Divine Will is present even in what may to others seem the obstructions to progress, as well as in the apparent progress itself. A philosopher once caught a glimpse of this idea when he said: “Be serene; for if you fail through no fault of your Own, the failure is a success better than you knew, since the Divine Will is being done.” The Arhat knows something of the peace that passes understanding, because he is beginning to dwell in the Eternal. This is, Madame Blavatsky says, “The region of the full spiritual consciousness, beyond which there is no longer danger for him who has reached it.”

If thou would'st cross the first hall safely, let not thy mind mistake the fires of lust that burn therein for the sunlight of life.

If thou would'st cross the second safely, stop not the fragrance of its stupefying blossoms to inhale. If freed thou would'st be from the karmic chains, seek not for thy Guru in those māyāvic regions.

The wise ones tarry not in pleasure-grounds of senses.

The wise ones heed not the sweet-tongued voices of illusion.

Seek for him who is to give thee birth in the Hall of Wisdom, the hall which lies beyond, wherein all shadows are unknown, and where the light of truth shines with unfading glory.

The guru here spoken of is the Master, the Teacher. Madame Blavatsky puts it:

The Initiate who leads the disciple, through the knowledge he imparts, to his spiritual, or second birth, is called the father, Guru or Master.

A statement of the lives and work of the Gurus or Masters has been given in *The Masters*

and the Path. A glimpse of the marvel of Their exalted powers is seen in the account there given of a meditation of the Master Kūthūmi. As He sits in His garden or His room, He seems to be meditating, but is, in fact, giving attention to some millions of people, dealing with each one as individually as an ordinary man could if he were to give his full attention to that one.

Every ego is being helped by one of the Masters, so the man who can vivify the link in himself between the lower self and the higher may receive that help in his personal life. The gurus who are to be met with on the physical plane are generally Initiates, advanced pupils of the full Adepts, as stated before.

That which is uncreate abides in thee, disciple, as it abides in that hall. If thou would'st reach it and blend the two, thou must divest thyself of thy dark garments of illusion. Stifle the voice of flesh, allow no image of the senses to get between its light and thine, that thus the twain may blend in one. And having learnt thine own Ajñāna flee from the Hall of Learning. This hall is dangerous in its perfidious beauty, is needed but for thy probation. Beware Lanoo, lest dazzled by illusive radiance thy Soul should linger and be caught in its deceptive light.

This light shines from the jewel of the great ensnarer (Māra). The senses it bewitches, blinds the mind, and leaves the unwary an abandoned wreck.

That which is uncreate refers to the higher triad, ātma-buddhi-manas, as distinguished from the personality and its bodies. The statement that the hall of learning is needed but for probation applies to the hall of ignorance as well. The set of material planes, physical, astral and lower mental, are but the buildings and equipment of a school for man, in which he is taught by means of toys. There is no experience that does not modify the soul and give it some wisdom; but he who is alive to the educative purpose of it all, and is eager to learn and to extract from the experience of embodied life lessons of eternal value, will not find the toys attractive in themselves. He will be like the bee that takes the honey from the flower and goes away, not intoxicated, by its scent and colour.

Mara is a personification of the attractiveness of external things. Madame Blavatsky describes him as follows:

Māra is in exoteric religions a demon, an Asura, but in esoteric philosophy it is personified temptation through men's vices, and translated literally means "that which kills" the soul. It is represented as a king (of the Māras) with a crown in which shines a jewel of such lustre that it blinds those who look at it, this lustre referring of course to the fascination exercised by vice upon certain natures.

In *The Light of Asia* (Book vi.) Sir Edwin Arnold has given us a vivid picture of this prince of darkness, as he came forth leading the ten chief sins, his angels of evil, against the Lord Buddha, as He sat under the Bodhi Tree, when nearing His Illumination.

The moth attracted to the dazzling flame of thy night-lamp is doomed to perish in the viscid oil. The unwary Soul that fails to grapple with the mocking demon of illusion, will return to earth the slave of Māra.

Behold the hosts of Souls. Watch how they hover o'er the stormy sea of human life, and how, exhausted, bleeding, broken-winged, they drop one after another on the swelling waves. Tossed by the fierce winds, chased by the gale, they drift into the eddies and disappear within the first great vortex.

The subject of "lost souls" is very complex. Some are like the children in a class at school who are not ready to pass on with the bulk of their fellow-students into the next grade at the end of the year, either because they are too young or because they have been lazy. Then, too, there are cases where the personality has become so immeshed in matter during bodily life that it has nothing to give to the ego, and it may then be cut off. Thirdly, there are the terrible fruits of the practice of black magic. It would take too long to discuss the subject here; I have

dealt with it at some length in the article on *Lost Souls* in Volume I of *The Inner Life*.

Some of the expressions in these passages have all the strength of Oriental imagination. We must not think too literally of abandoned wrecks and broken wings. He who falls from the Path on account of material desire certainly does wreck his spiritual prospects for the time being, but even in that case he has learnt something which will be useful to the soul later on. In all cases it is best for a man to learn with wise thought; only when that is neglected will bitter experience be necessary to take its place.

It is by no means requisite that any human being shall go through every kind of experience. The more advanced and the wiser a man becomes, the more he will see in everything, and he will learn much from trifles that others might pass by as insignificant. It is said that a fool cannot learn even from a wise man, but a wise man can always learn, even from a fool. To know that fire is hot it is not necessary to put one's hand into it; a fool may do so, but the wise man has other ways of learning the fact that fire burns. Yet it is a great blessing that those who will not think and thus learn willingly, should be taught in the stern school of experience, without which they would learn nothing at all and make no progress.

The law of karma, that brings to men the experiences that they have given to others, is thus a benefactor and ultimately a liberator, not an instrument of vengeance or punishment. Suppose, for example, that a foot-pad waylaid a gentleman, knocked him down, perhaps killed him, and took his money. Under the law he would have to meet with some such painful experience himself, sooner or later. The robber was capable of such an act because he himself was a coarse being, lacking sensitiveness and imagination; otherwise he would have thought of the feelings of his victim or of the latter's wife and family, and such thought would have stayed his hand. Because he is coarse, crass, unimaginative, the foot-pad needs the violent kind of experience that he gives to others; nothing less will stir him. Later, when through karmic retribution he has had some suffering, he will remember it when he is about to strike another, and will say to himself: "That is not a very nice thing for that poor man." He will then begin to reform, thanks to the law, which is always educative, never punitive.

CHAPTER 8

THE WORLD'S MOTHER

If through the Hall of Wisdom thou would'st reach the vale of bliss, disciple, close fast thy senses against the great dire heresy of separate-ness, that weans thee from the rest.

C.W.L. – Herbert Spencer came very near to a revelation of the spiritual truth about evolution, when he described it as a progressive change from a state of incoherent homogeneity to one of coherent heterogeneity of structure and function. To him evolution meant that things which in the beginning were similar and separate, later become different but united. This specialization is seen in the human body, which has different organs which work for the whole; thus the digestive system digests food for the whole body, and the hands grasp, the feet walk, the eyes look, not for the sake of the hands, the feet and the eyes, but for the whole body. Similarly, society becomes more and more highly organized as time goes on. Men become more and more differentiated from one another, as the professions in life advance in knowledge and skill. The doctor cures all, the teacher teaches all, the bridge-builder builds bridges for all. One man works for the benefit of many, and the work of many flows back to benefit him.

When men get the organic sense and feeling for their fellows they cease to be a mob of incoherent homogeneous human beings and become heterogeneous and coherent. A man with that spirit will do his best for his community, or nation, or humanity, leaving it to the law of

unity to bring him what he needs from the other organs of the great body. The incoherent homogeneous elements of matter or of society cannot organize themselves; it is the inner principle that draws them together and makes swift progress possible for them through mutual help. The unity is love, the force behind evolution, the *energy* of life; it is buddhi, the greatest wisdom. There is a profound difference between co-operation and brotherhood – the former springs from an intelligent appreciation of the mutual relations of men, the latter from a realization in feeling that the same life is dwelling in all.

In the evolution of an individual it is usually the spirit of co-operation that develops first; the business of the world brings people together, then by contact the divine fire of buddhi is struck. Two men, for example, go prospecting together, and support each other in the work. True friendship supervenes. But if it should chance, as it sometimes does, that brotherhood comes first, it will not develop into perfect and useful co-operation unless the intelligence is also awakened and applied to the business of life. An instance in point was the beautiful love between David Copperfield and his impractical wife Dora, whom the novelist was constrained to kill in order to make room for the more practical Agnes, and so give the story a happier termination.

In the occult life candidates who have developed the higher intelligence so that they have a keen appreciation of the principle of co-operation and of spiritual laws, often still find themselves dull and apparently incapable of rapid progress. They await the awakening in themselves of true love, buddhi. That is the burning energy of the inner man. Still, in this second of the stages of true spiritual unfoldment there will often be much agitation and trouble; the divine energy gushes forth irregularly and not always in the wisest way, causing much sorrow to its possessor – until the third spiritual stage, the place of serenity, has been reached. As that serenity is the goal to which the voice of the silence is directing the candidate, he is told to pass *through* the Hall of Wisdom into the vale of bliss. Even in the buddhic plane there is a certain duality, or separateness. We cannot love ourselves; love needs an object, even though it be not a material object, but the divine life manifested in many spiritual souls. Buddhi is the first veil, the Avalokiteshvara of the Higher Self, not the Parabrahman. The “dire heresy of separateness” has to be disposed of on every plane in turn, the physical, the astral, the mental and even the buddhic.

Let not thy “heaven-born,” merged in the sea of Māyā, break from the universal Parent (Soul), but let the fiery power retire into the inmost chamber, the chamber of the heart, and the abode of the world’s Mother.

Then from the heart that power shall rise into the sixth, the middle region, the place between thine eyes, when it becomes the breath of the One-Soul, the voice which filleth all, thy Master’s voice.

The “heaven-born” is chitta, the lower mind. It is born from the soul above, when manas becomes dual in incarnation. The planes of ātma-buddhi-manas are typified by heaven, while those of the personality are spoken of as earth. We have already observed the distinction of character which divides the five planes of human manifestation into two. The monadic and divine planes, beyond these five, taken together form a third division. So the seven worlds can also be grouped as three. The lowest division is in the region of sattwa or law. Here we find everything regulated, but man has some freedom because the “heaven-born” is in him – so much of the energy of the Law-maker works through him. It is because man has this liberty and power to go his own way that his life is usually more disorderly, less regulated, than that of the lower kingdoms of external nature.

The middle set of planes contains those of spiritual energy, the indwelling life, without which the rest would be dead and motionless. They are the planes of the divine, the shining, the Avalokita, or “seen”, God – the life seen by wisdom, not the form seen by knowledge.

The highest group of planes is that of the Monad, the Self that is bliss and freedom, where

are the realities behind every human ideal and the ecstasy beyond consciousness that is the extracted quintessence of beauty, goodness, truth, harmony, comprehension, union and freedom.

What is here called the fiery power is the force named kuṇḍalinī in Sanskrit. This may be described as a latent fire, coiled up like a sleeping serpent at the base of the spine in all men except those few in whom it has been specially awakened, and is actively working in the etheric body. It should not be difficult to realize the existence of such a fire, since it is well known that the breath in our lungs constantly feeds a slow fire, and that digestion also is a kind of fire. Kuṇḍalinī is more like electrical fire – a force developing heat where there is resistance – than fire that burns fuel, but it is not of the same order of force as electricity.

I have written on this subject in the articles on the Serpent-Fire and the Force-Centres in *The Inner Life* and that on Vitality in Chapter IV of *The Hidden Side of Things*, and I hope to publish shortly a somewhat fuller study, illustrated with coloured plates. (Book on *Chakras* has been since issued by T.P.H., Adyar.) There is also an extensive, if somewhat obscure, literature on the subject in Sanskrit, including the *Shat-chakranirūpaṇa*, the *Ānanda Laharī*, and many other works. There is an excellent translation of the first of these, with a commentary, by Arthur Avalon, called *The Serpent Power*, published by Ganesh & Co., Madras.

The following is a very brief summary of the subject. Kuṇḍalinī is the lower end of a stream of a certain kind of the force of the Logos, and it commonly lies sleeping in the chakra or force-centre at the base of the spine. If it is awakened prematurely, that is, before the man has purified his character of every taint of sensual impurity and selfishness, it may rush downwards and vivify certain lower centres in the body (used only in some objectionable forms of black magic), and irresistibly carry the unfortunate man into a life of indescribable horror; at best, it will intensify all that the man has in him, including such qualities as ambition and pride. Kuṇḍalinī should be wakened only under the personal direction of a Master, who will instruct the student in the use of the will to arouse it, in the manner in which it should be moved when aroused, and in the spiral course along which it must be carried through the chakras or force-centres, from that near the base of the spine, to those which lie on the surface of the etheric double at the spleen, (Hindu works usually mention the chakra at the root of the genital organs as the second. We recognize the existence of such a centre, but we follow the ancient Egyptians in thinking it eminently undesirable that it should be stirred into activity.) the navel, the heart, the throat, between the eyebrows, and at the top of the head. This course differs with different types of people, and it is quite a definite physical thing, for the force has literally to burn a pathway for itself through the impurities of the etheric double.

There are chakras in the astral body also, which are already aroused by kuṇḍalinī working in that plane in all the cultured people of the higher races. The process of developing those centres has rendered the astral body sensitive to the plane, awakening its feeling, its power to travel about, its sympathetic response to other entities there, its vision and hearing, and astral faculties generally. But the memory of those experiences or the use of the astral faculties while in the physical body, becomes possible in a definite and well-controlled way only when kuṇḍalinī in the etheric double has been carried through the corresponding centres.

The special mention of the place between the eyes in our text has reference to the pineal gland and the pituitary body. The forces from both the sixth and seventh astral centres (which are between the eyebrows and on top of the head) usually converge on the pituitary body, when the etheric centre is aroused, and then vivify it and act through it. But there is a certain type of people (who are being addressed in our text) in whom the seventh astral chakra vivifies the pineal gland instead of the pituitary body, and it in that case forms a line of communication directly with the lower mental plane, without apparently passing through the

astral plane in the ordinary way. Through that channel come for them the communications from within, while for the other type of people they come through the pituitary body.

When kuṇḍalinī awakens of itself, which it rarely does, or is accidentally aroused, it usually tries to pass up the interior of the spine, instead of following the spiral course in which the occultist is trained to guide it. In this case it will probably rush out through the head, and the man will suffer from nothing worse than a temporary unconsciousness.

The Hindu books hint at, rather than explain, what happens. They make no references to the chakras on the surface of the etheric double, but speak of their roots, which are in the spine. In the spine, running from its base to the top is what is called Merudaṇḍa, the rod of Meru, the central axis of creation. In that rod is the channel called sushumna, and in that again is the channel called chitrinī, which is “as fine as a spider’s thread”. Upon that are threaded the chakras, like the knots on a bamboo rod. The lowest of the chakras, called mulādhāra, lies at the base of the spine, and in it kuṇḍalinī sleeps, closing the mouth of the merudaṇḍa.

The aim of the aspirant is to raise kuṇḍalinī through all the chakras till she reaches that which is between the eyebrows. Then the candidate will find that he, as it were, remains behind, while she leaps forward into the sahasrara, the great “thousand-petalled” lotus at the top of the head. If he goes with her, it will take him out of the body and put a stop for the time being to his practice of meditation in the body. She rises up chitrini little by little as the candidate uses his will in meditation. In one practice he may not get very far, but in the next he will go a little further, and so on. When she comes to one of the chakras or lotuses she pierces it and the flower, which was turned downwards, now turns upwards. The candidate meditates upon her in some form, and upon her associates, seated in that lotus. An elaborate dhyāna or meditation, full of rich symbology, is prescribed for each lotus. When the meditation is over, the candidate leads kuṇḍalinī back again by the same path into the muladhara; but in some schools she is brought back only as far as the heart chakra, and there she enters what is called her chamber.

Kuṇḍalinī can be awakened by various methods, but it should be done only under the direction of a guru or competent teacher, the Master who is responsible to the Brotherhood for the training of the candidate. He is not likely to conduct this awakening until the first three fetters on the Path have been destroyed by the candidate’s own power, so that he is no longer in serious danger of being stirred by sensuous or material things. Then his “heaven-born”, closely united or harmonized with the higher manas, can remain master of the triple house of personality, and when the energy of kuṇḍalinī is set free in the body it will be likely to run in pure channels of service to the higher self. Hence the awakening of kuṇḍalinī will take place usually somewhere near the Third Initiation, or, in the present kali yuga, or dark age, it is said, even later. Even then it is awakened in various layers, so that in the early stages it may give nothing more than a general sensitiveness to the higher planes.

Kuṇḍalinī is thought of as a goddess. She is what is called the shabdabrahman in the body. *Shabda* means sound. Sound is the creative force, as before described. Speech is considered to be the most outward form of it. It is an expression of thought, which in its true active form is kriyashakti. Certain letters of the alphabet, which are the foundation of human speech, are said to reside in each of the chakras, and the power of those letters (their portion of the creative word) is awakened when kuṇḍalinī enters them after her union with Shiva in the highest centre, causing them to shine brilliantly with her light. The creative speech of Brahma, the third Logos, has four forms or stages; hence He is called the four-faced one. When kuṇḍalinī represents him in the body she also exhibits those four forms, as she rises through the chakras.

Kuṇḍalinī is called the world’s mother because the outward action of the powers of consciousness is always regarded as feminine. Thus will, wisdom and activity are feminine, being shaktis or powers, outward turned aspects of the divine. She is’ the representative of all

these, as they were expressed in the creation of the world, in the activity of Brahmā, the Third Logos. It has also been said that she is the world's mother because it is through her that the various planes are brought into conscious existence for the occultist.

The following foot-note by Madame Blavatsky will also throw light on the foregoing explanations.

The inner chamber of the heart, called in Sanskrit, Brahmā-pura. The “fiery power” is Kuṇḍalinī .

The “power” and the “world-mother” are names given to Kuṇḍalinī – one of the mystic Yogī powers. It is Buddhi considered as an active instead of a passive principle (which it is generally, when regarded only as the vehicle, or casket, of the supreme spirit, Ātma). It is an electro-spiritual force, a creative power which when aroused into action can as easily kill as it can create.

It is by no means certain what Madame Blavatsky meant by saying that kuṇḍalinī is active buddhi, but several speculations may be offered:

In normal men buddhi is not positively active in the outer life, but when the first three fetters have been cast off, the personality is so purified that the astral body will no longer be active merely on its own account, but will faithfully respond to buddhi, now active. At or near this stage kuṇḍalinī is often aroused, as we have seen, and when the faculties of the astral body are then laid open to the candidate while in his physical body it is an astral body reflecting buddhi, which now becomes a veritable fire of love in the man's life. That clairvoyance and other psychic powers need not be awakened in the physical brain even at this advanced stage of human progress, is also indicated by Dr. Besant, in her *Initiation, the Perfecting of Man*. She there says that before a man can come to the Third Initiation he must learn to bring the spirit of intuition (buddhi) down to his physical consciousness, so that it may abide in him and guide him. Then she adds: “This process is usually called ‘the development of psychic faculties,’ and it is so, in the true meaning of the word ‘psychic’. But it does not mean the development of clairvoyance and clairaudience, which depend on a different process.” *Op, cit.,* p. 82.

The entire higher triad (ātma-buddhi-manas) is but the central member or the buddhi of the still more inclusive triad of Monad, ego and personality. That larger buddhi is triple (will, wisdom and activity), and now its third aspect (activity, kriyashakti) comes into operation in the body, to awaken its organs and liberate its latent powers.

‘Tis only then thou canst become a “walker of the sky,” who treads the winds above the waves, whose step touches not the waters.

On this, Madame Blavatsky says:

Khechara, “sky-walker” or “goer”. As explained in the 6th Adhyāya of that king of mystic works, the *Jñāneshvarī* – the body of the Yogī becomes as one formed of the wind; as “a cloud from which limbs have sprouted out,” after which – “he [the Yogī] beholds the things beyond the seas and stars; he hears the language of the Devas and comprehends it, and perceives what is passing in the mind of the ant.”

The term “walker of the sky” has various grades of meaning. In Indian story it is, for example, applied to the great Rishi Nārada, as an emissary of the Logos, who could travel through the pure akasha from globe to globe. On the lower planes the astral body or the māyāvi-rūpa may be taken as an illustration, as they can be used to travel in what is the air or sky to ordinary people.

In the astral world the ordinary man is a kind of cloud, a being full of kama, that is, desire and emotion, but not by any means a definite entity such as he is on the physical plane. But when he masters his kama, and gives it definiteness, the astral body is organized as a vehicle; it is no longer kama but kāmārūpa. Still further, about the time when the first three fetters are

dispensed with, the māyāvi-rūpa is formed, and that enables the man to operate with his mental body in the astral as well as the lower mental plane. This may be taken as one interpretation of the statement that his step “touches not the waters”, which are a symbol for the astral plane.

CHAPTER 9

THE SEVEN SOUNDS

Before thou sett'st thy foot upon the ladder's upper rung, the ladder of the mystic sounds, thou hast to hear the voice of thy inner God in seven manners.

C.W.L. – It has already been mentioned that *The Voice of the Silence* is intended to guide the candidate as far as the Fourth Initiation. At that point his consciousness is raised to the seventh principle and begins to function in the atmic or nirvanic plane. The man is then ready to commence treading what is here called the ladder's upper rung, to go through the course of training which prepares for the Fifth Initiation, that of the Asekha Adept. The Path has two equal divisions, which may be called the ladder's lower and upper rungs.

It is said that the Initiate on the ladder's lower rung must hear the voice of his inner God in seven manners. That inner God at his present stage is the higher self, the buddhi, the second principle. In his meditation the aspirant may or may not hear a series of seven sounds, marking his attainment of the seven sub-planes of the buddhic plane; that depends upon his psychic temperament. But what he *must* do, in all cases, is to bring the influence of buddhi down into his life on each of the lower planes, so that the activity of all his principles will be governed by it, and thus his inner God will be ever-present in his life.

The latter stage is called the ladder of the mystic sounds; this is perhaps because they are the sounds of the voice of the silence, hidden in the ātma or Self. One must not push too far the exact interpretation of any English word in our text, as it is only a translation; though every Sanskrit and Pali word in it is rich with technical significance. Still, the word mystic, coming from a root that means to close the eyes, indicates here certain sounds which do not mingle in the outward life at all, but give direction as from above, in the *ex cathedra* manner of pure conscience. It is implied that the sounds about to be mentioned are more accessible, are not “mystic” at all events to the candidate at the stage under consideration. True conscience does not tell you *what* to do, as is commonly supposed, but it *commands* you to follow that which you already really know to be best, when your mind is trying to invent some excuse to do otherwise. It speaks with the authority of the spiritual will, determining our path in life. It is not the ātma, but the buddhi, the second principle, that gives intuitive knowledge as to right and wrong. Manas gives inspiration, buddhi intuition as to right and wrong, ātma the directing conscience.

The first is like the nightingale's sweet voice, chanting a song of parting to its mate.

The second comes as the sound of a silver cymbal of the Dhyānis, awakening the twinkling stars.

The next is as the plaint melodious of the ocean-sprite imprisoned in its shell.

And this is followed by the chant of the vina.

The fifth like the sound of bamboo-flute shrills in thine ear.

It changes next into a trumpet-blast.

The last vibrates like the dull rumbling of a thunder-cloud.

The seventh swallows all the other sounds. They die, and then are heard no more.

The series of seven sounds mentioned here has caused much puzzlement among those who meditate upon this little book. We must notice first of all the character of the sounds; then we

shall see that there are several interpretations of them. They are increasing in materiality and losing in penetrating quality in the order here given. One may notice, for example, the difference between the vina and an Indian trumpet of the old-fashioned kind. It is nearly always a surprise to the European, when he first hears the wonderfully delicate music of the vina, perhaps in a large and crowded hall, how, without any exhibition of force, it reaches every corner, and how it gives the impression of sound half-removed from our material planes.

The highest sound in the series is likened to a certain chant of the nightingale. It is said that there are occasions when the voice of this bird rises higher and higher in pitch until it is beyond the range of human hearing, although one may still see the throat of the warbler trembling with song. That such high sounds exist is well known to students of science. The note of a siren, for example, can be raised by increased pressure of air or steam, until one after another of those who are listening declare that they can no longer hear it. There is a certain kind of whistle with which German police dogs can be called. When one blows upon this instrument, which looks like an ordinary whistle, no man can hear the slightest sound, but the dog, in another room or some distance away, will instantly prick up its ears, and come leaping and bounding to the exact spot where what is presumably to it the sound originated.

The interpretations of the sounds fall into two groups. The first mentioned in the list may represent the last heard by the candidate. The sounds are enumerated downwards in the order of their creation, after the Oriental manner, so that the first sound in creation is the seventh when the aspirant is approaching the Lord of that creation. So, first comes the dull rumbling of a thunder-cloud, a sound representing or correlated to the physical principle in man, in the middle is the vina, representing the antaḥkaraṇa (according to Madame Blavatsky's classification), and lastly there is the nightingale's melody, associated with ātma, the silence. That well typifies the seventh, the soundless sound, into which all the others have to be raised, until they die away and are heard no more. The candidate must learn to hear God in the dull rumbling sound of the physical plane, then in the trumpet-blast of the astral, then in the sound of the lower mental that is likened to the music of a bamboo-flute, and so on right up to the world of his highest principle.

The same sounds may be taken in another way as typical of the *intensity* with which the aspirant hears the voice of the higher self. It is one voice, but is heard in seven *manners*. At first it is delicate and sweet, like the nightingale's song, and it often disappears into silence; next it becomes stronger, like "the silver cymbal of the Dhyānis". Louder and louder it becomes, until at last it is constantly heard, as filling all the air, like the dull rumbling of a thunder-cloud. In the early stages of our progress the voice of the higher Self may seem thin and faint, but later it will have for us all the reality of thunder.

Again, in the text the description of these sounds follows upon the mention of kuṇḍalinī, which is carried through the chakras. That force awakens in seven layers, or degrees, and so gives the psychic results already mentioned in increasing power. The voice that is heard when kuṇḍalinī rises to the place between the eyes will therefore be heard with seven degrees of intensity, typified by the seven sounds here mentioned.

Once more, it is natural that in the densest plane the candidate should hear the inner voice but faintly, like the nightingale's voice. When he rises to the next plane, where the covering of the inner Self is not so dense, its voice will be more easily heard; until finally, when he reaches the highest principle it will be like the rumbling of a thunder-cloud. It is only the illusion of the lower planes that causes us to ascribe delicacy to the higher things. Ultimately we shall find that they have the full body and reality of thunder.

These interpretations are not mutually exclusive. All the experiences which they suggest are possible for the candidate at the same time.

I remember that on one occasion a question about these sounds was asked in one of our

talks on the roof at Adyar. The President and I respectively answered as follows:

A.B. – In meditation, one of the sounds that you begin to hear (for instance, one thing that I heard quite distinctly) was a sound which was like the beating of a tom-tom in an Indian village. I described that to H.P.B., who said: “That is very good, go on.” Next I heard some strains of beautiful music, and then something like silver chimes. Another sound was like the ringing of a temple bell, such as you hear in Benares. I never found out that these sounds meant anything more than that I was becoming able to hear in the astral world.

In India there is a school formed by a man of whom the Master M. spoke highly. The people who belong to that, after a certain amount of practice, hear sounds quite clearly in the brain, but I have never found that any of them got further on that account. Many people come to me in the North, asking what the sounds mean. I reply: “I think it is nothing more than that you are becoming clairaudient.”

These seven sounds mentioned by H.P.B. I have never been able to sort out. They may mean that you have to wake your consciousness in plane after plane, and that each is meant to symbolize the note of a particular plane, just as down here *Fa* is the combination of the countless sounds in the physical plane blended together. But that does not really explain matters.

C.W.L. – I cannot make them exactly correspond with the planes; they may possibly be sub-planes. They may also be intended to symbolize the sounds which accompany the awakening of the seven centres by the Kuṇḍalinī, for sound is one of the expressions that take place in that particular case. I have never felt at all certain of what she meant. One would be inclined to say that the silver cymbal in different tones would do for all. The thunder certainly does not seem to fit in very well.

A.B. – Of course there are a certain number of sounds in the head which belong entirely to the vascular system. If a person hears such sounds very strongly it means that he is getting into a dangerous state of anaemia.

The sounds are not progressive. H.P.B. put things very often in a circle; she sometimes begins with number four and then works round on the two sides. It may also be that she gives these sounds in no sort of order. You might possibly begin with the thunder, then the trumpet blast, and next the ocean sprite; then you might come to the cymbal for the fourth, the flute for the fifth and the vina, which is a more delicate sound, for the sixth, and then the nightingale for the seventh, the top.

C.W.L. – If we are allowed to turn them round like that, they will begin to mean something definite.

A.B. – H.P.B., when consulted astrally said: “What fools you all were to take them in that way: you might have arranged them before: thunder, trumpet, ocean-shell, cymbal, flute, vina, nightingale.” She said that we were abominably literal.

C.W.L. – Similar lists of sounds are to be found in various Sanskrit works. We have taken the following example from the *Shiva Saṃhitā*:

The first sound is like the hum of the honey-intoxicated bee, next that of a flute, then of a harp; after this, by the gradual practice of Yoga, the destroyer of the darkness of the world, he hears the sounds of ringing bells; then sounds like the roar of thunder. When one fixes his full attention on this sound, being free from fear, he gets absorption, O my beloved! When the mind of the Yogī is exceedingly engaged in this sound, he forgets all external things, and is absorbed in this sound.” *Op. cit.*, v, 27-8.

When the six are slain and at the Master’s feet are laid, then is the pupil merged into the One, becomes that One and lives therein.

Madame Blavatsky speaks of the six as:

The six principles; meaning when the lower personality is destroyed and the inner individuality is merged into and lost in the seventh or Spirit.

And of the One here spoken of she says:

The disciple is one with Brahman or Ātma.

When the six principles are “slain”, in other words, when they no longer assert their independence, but have become entirely obedient to the will of the Self, the aspirant lives in that One. The seventh voice of buddhi will carry him up into Ātma. Madame Blavatsky applies the term Brahman to the human ātma by analogy. Brahman (neuter) is the One containing the Three; so does ātma contain buddhi and manas within itself, when the man has become an Arhat, and learned to live in the triple spirit.

Before that path is entered, thou must destroy thy lunar body, cleanse thy mind-body, and make clean thy heart.

To the term “lunar body” Madame Blavatsky adds the note:

The astral form produced by the kamic principle, the Kama Rupa, or body of desire.

On the term “mind-body” she comments:

Mānasa Rūpa. The first refers to the astral or personal self; the second to the individuality, or the reincarnating Ego, whose consciousness on our plane, or the lower Manas, has to be paralysed.

Madame Blavatsky did not think in *planes* so completely as do most of the Theosophists of to-day. She had her eye more on the principles, and saw the matter of different levels taking form under their influence.

Here she speaks of “our plane”, meaning the region of personal existence – physical, astral and lower mental. The “astral form” is by no means necessarily the astral body, but rather the personal form built up in the subjective regions of our personal life (the astral and lower mental planes) on account of our bodily form and the personal feelings and thoughts connected with it. In my little book *The Devachanic Plane* and in Dr. Besant’s *Ancient Wisdom* an account is given of the four types of life in the heaven-world: (1) personal friendship, (2) personal devotion, (3) the true missionary spirit, and (4) human achievement. They are all emotive – though unselfish, they are not impersonal, but kamic. They take their form from the character of the physical plane experience. But the pure lower manas would be the antaḥkaraṇa – it would be the soul’s mind, not the body’s mind. It would have its activity stimulated *only* from above. It must now be cleansed from all the kama, to become a pure channel for the soul.

Think of the condition of the astral body of an advanced person. It gives practically no direct response to impacts from outside. It is, by itself, dead to the world. It has no independent life of its own; it has been “slain”. If some one went up to the average man and struck him, probably his astral body would burst instantly into flames of anger; that is its immediate response. Not so that of the advanced man. The impact in his case would go inwards through the astral to the buddhic vehicle. That would respond in its own way. Then *its* impact upon the astral would call forth the beautiful colours of the love emotions which are *its* correspondences in the astral body. Dr. Besant has often explained that the astral aura of an advanced man is colourless, or rather, slightly milky-white, when in repose, but that all the most lovely colours which the plane can exhibit flood through it in response to the great man’s buddhic response to the world.

Eternal life’s pure waters, clear and crystal, with the monsoon tempest’s muddy torrents cannot mingle.

Heaven’s dew-drop glittering in the morn’s first sunbeam within the bosom of the lotus, when dropped on earth becomes a piece of clay; behold, the pearl is now a speck of mire.

Strive with thy thoughts unclean before they overpower thee. Use them as they will thee, for if thou sparest them and they take root and grow, know well, these thoughts will overpower and kill thee. Beware, disciple, suffer not e'en though it be their shadow to approach. For it will grow, increase in size and power, and then this thing of darkness will absorb thy being before thou hast well realized the black foul monster's presence.

There are some people in the world who imagine that it is possible to carry on the lower things and still make progress on the Path. Sometimes they actually think that by various forms of vicious excitement they can generate a great deal of energy which will help to carry them onward and upward. They are afraid of becoming colourless, should they repress the lower activities entirely. It has been said, of course, that the colourless person, the feeble good man, cannot make progress. "I would thou wert cold or hot," says the Spirit in *Revelation*, and "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." *Revelation* 3, 15-16.

This very well represents the facts. The most promising persons, in order of preference, are (1) the vigorous good man, (2) the vigorous bad man, (3) the ordinary good man. No man can be an effective criminal unless he has a strong development of some divine quality. His badness is the result of unbalance – such as great will-power and courage, or great intelligence, without love for his fellow-beings. Or great love and will-power, without intelligence, can make an equally dangerous and harmful man, for he may become a fanatical leader of forces of discontent and disruption. The mere good man, weak in all qualities – in will, intelligence and love – makes little progress, though it may be steady. Great men have great faults, but they may get rid of them quickly; little men have little faults, which often seem to last for ever.

There is in all this no recommendation to evil living. It indicates that mere repression of lower tendencies will not make for rapid progress, but that there must be positive and vigorous exertion in the expression of what is high and good. While making that effort a person may possibly fall. The very will-power or knowledge or love that he has gained by his exertions will make the man's Jail deep and terrible, should he become unbalanced. Thus the magnitude of a man's sin may be a sign of possible rapid future progress for him; but that progress will begin only when the man through karmic suffering has realized his error and purged away the impurities incidental to his fall. Nothing much can be done, however, until that purification has taken place. Madame Blavatsky deals vigorously with this point in her *First Steps in Occultism*, as follows:

There are those whose reasoning powers have been so distorted by foreign influences that they imagine that animal passions can be so sublimated and elevated that their fury, force and fire can, so to speak, be turned inwards; that they can be stored and shut up in one's breast, until their energy is, not expanded, but turned towards higher and more holy purposes: namely, until their collective and unexpanded strength enables their possessor to enter the true Sanctuary of the Soul and stand therein in the presence of the Master – the Higher Self. For this purpose they will not struggle with their passions nor slay them, They will simply, by a strong effort of will, put down the fierce flames and keep them at bay within their natures allowing the fire to smoulder under a thin layer of ashes. They submit joyfully to the torture of the Spartan boy who allowed the fox to devour his entrails rather than part with it. Oh, poor, blind visionaries!

As well hope that a band of drunken chimney-sweeps, hot and greasy from their work, may be shut up in a Sanctuary hung with pure white linen, and that instead of soiling and turning it by their presence into a heap of dirty shreds, they will become masters in and of the sacred recess, and finally emerge from it as immaculate as that recess. Why not imagine that a dozen skunks imprisoned in the pure atmosphere of a Dgon-pa (a monastery), can issue out of it

impregnated with all the perfumes of the incenses used? Strange aberration of the human mind.

This portion of our text concludes with the following uncompromising passages:

Before the mystic power can make of thee a God, Lanoo, thou must have gained the faculty to slay thy lunar form at will.

The Self of matter and the Self of Spirit can never meet. One of the twain must disappear; there is no place for both.

Ere thy Soul's mind can understand, the bud of personality must be crushed out, the worm of sense destroyed past resurrection.

The mystic power is once more kuṇḍalinī, the representative in the body of “the great pristine force which underlies all organic and inorganic matter”. Madame Blavatsky's note on the subject is as follows:

Kuṇḍalinī, the serpent power or mystic fire; it is called the serpentine or the annular power on account of its spiral-like working or progress in the body of the ascetic developing the power in himself. It is an electric fiery occult or fohatic power, the great pristine force which underlies all organic and inorganic matter.

CHAPTER 10

BECOME THE PATH

Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself.

C.W.L. – To this the following foot-note is appended:

This Path is mentioned in all the mystic works. As Krishna says in the Jñāneshvari: “When this path is beheld ... whether one sets out to the bloom of the east, or to the chambers of the west, without moving, O holder of the bow, is the travelling in this road. In this path, to whatever place one would go, that place one's own self becomes.” “Thou art the path,” is said to the Adept Guru, and by the latter to the disciple, after Initiation. “I am the way and the path,” says another Master.

It has already been explained (in the commentary on *At the Feet of the Master*) that the thoughts and feelings which are at first difficult to grasp and maintain become quite easy in the course of time. When the aspirant has so trained and developed himself that the buddhic outlook and response to life become perfectly natural and spontaneous to him, we may say he has become the Path itself- Sometimes such a consequence of continued effort and practice is called “second nature”. That expression, however, gives one something of a feeling that the new qualities have been put on, and afterwards become habitual. That is unfortunate. It is our original and best nature, our higher nature, that shows itself in the higher life; it seems to be something new to us only because it has heretofore been obscured by our material integuments and the pressure of circumstances in the worlds of our personal being.

An interesting metaphysical truth is indicated in the foot-note. Our evolution is not a transit, nor even a growth. It is not a process of going somewhere, nor an increase of size. It is an unfoldment of the powers potential in our lives. As already stated, in the planes of the ego materiality takes second place, the powers of consciousness – will, wisdom and activity, (or will, love and thought) – dominate almost completely the matter of the planes. Therefore space is not the jailor which it is down here, and consciousness need not travel through it in order to appear in another place. The following conversation between a Guru and his pupil has been related to illustrate this point. The Guru told the pupil to walk across the room, and then asked:

“What were you doing? Were you moving?”

After meditating upon the matter, the disciple gave the following answer, which was declared to be correct:

“No, *I* was not moving. I was watching the body move. I was thinking, feeling and willing; the body alone was moving.” See *The Seven Rays*, p. 13.

This fact is true for all of us; we know of the body’s motion merely on account of observing it by means of the senses, just as we do that of any other object. The sensation of rushing along in an open motor-car, for example, resolves itself, when one shuts one’s eyes, into an actual feeling of air rushing by, and a sense of power which, acting through the imagination, exhilarates the body. The same experience could be reproduced by suitable apparatus, composed of wind and motion machines, without any transportation of the body. Again, most people who have travelled at night in Pullman berths have had the experience of waking and wondering whether they were going head first or feet first, or even whether the train was moving or not, and they have usually settled the question by slipping up the blind and inferring their direction from an observation of passing lights and shadows.

The fact that, in order to go from one place to another, travelling is not necessary for the ego, is shown also in the way in which it can simultaneously appear in the devachanic images of a number of people in the lower mental plane in different parts of the world.

Though, at the stage of development presupposed in this teaching, the candidate is working at the perfection of his personality, at the same time his inner work is particularly concerned with the development of buddhi, the spiritual soul. To put it in other words, he is climbing through the buddhic plane. Hence his becoming the Path is shown in a great development of sympathy and love for others, as indicated in the following verses:

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.

These tears, O thou of heart most merciful, these are the streams that irrigate the fields of charity immortal. ‘Tis on such soil that grows the midnight blossom of Buddha, more difficult to find, more rare to view, than is the flower of the Vogay tree. It is the seed of freedom from rebirth. It isolates the Arhat both from strife and lust, it leads him through the fields of being unto the peace and bliss known only in the land of silence and non-being.

When Christ said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (*S. John*, 14, 6.) He declared a mystic truth, for the Christ is one with the buddhic aspect of the world-consciousness. There is only one consciousness; on full recognition of this fact the Initiate can become an Arhat – but unless he goes through that Christ-principle he cannot reach the Father, the atmS, above. That truth, explained with wonderful inspiration and clarity in Dr. Annie Besant’s *Esoteric Christianity*, is, however, only one aspect of the matter, for the Christ incarnate embodied the same principle in His outward life in Palestine, which has moved millions of men – because He did not shrink from pain. Most men try to escape pain as much as possible, but Christ accepted His own and added to it that of all other people as well. Men who follow the buddhic path instinctively say, when trouble comes to them: “Many are suffering; why should I desire to be exempt?” More than that, in the fullness of their sympathy, they feel that other suffering to the breaking point, before they reach the serenity of Arhatship, the illumination that puts death under them, that makes them glow with the joy of liberty, whatever pain may betide. Such liberty would lead to careless rest, could men have it before experiencing the suffering of the Christ, in which the pain of the cross is as nothing beside that of His compassionate response to the cry of a world

in pain. Then comes the point at which the man says: “What does it matter whether I suffer or not?” His mind is so busy with service that he can scarcely attend to himself.

Such an expression as “the peace and bliss known only in the land of silence and non-being” can be understood only by those who are willing to think of metaphysical realities. Most of such Oriental expressions as this are based on the fundamental idea that the universal God expresses himself as sat, chit and ananda, that is, as being, consciousness and bliss.

Being is well understood; people see it all around them; consciousness they also know by experience; but happiness they *seek*. All seek themselves. Happiness is not something that we shall gain, obtain and possess; it is our true state of Self. But beyond both matter and consciousness is the real inner life, which is silence and non-being from the standpoint of the external, and yet is the bliss of true being.

Kill out desire; but if thou killest it, take heed lest from the dead it should again arise.

Kill love of life; but if thou slayest Taṇhā, let this not be for thirst of life eternal, but to replace the fleeting by the everlasting.

Desire nothing. Chafe not at Karma, nor at nature’s changeless laws. But struggle only with the personal, the transitory, the evanescent and the perishable.

Common desire is the love of external things for the sake of astral or sensuous enjoyment. We have already seen that the disciple must not seek the satisfaction of such desires, but must give up all the energy of his personality – physical, emotional, and mental – to the work of spiritual evolution and the service of the inner life in himself and other men.

Taṇhā is the root of these desires, because it is the thirst for sentient life. The ego on its own plane is far from being fully conscious, but what consciousness it has gives it a feeling of great pleasure, and arouses a kind of hunger for a fuller realization of life. It is that which is behind the world’s great clamour for a fuller life. As before explained, the forces of the higher mental plane pass through the causal body for the most part without affecting it in the case of ordinary persons, as the ego is not yet developed and trained so as to respond to more than a few of the vibrations of its own level. There are no coarse vibrations on that plane, such as it can respond to in its younger days, so it descends to the lower planes for the sake of feeling more fully alive. For a long time therefore its consciousness is most vivid when things of the physical plane are presented to it, but later, when the astral nature is awakened, the pleasures of that plane prove to be still more intense.

It is not possible in the physical body to realize how keen are the delights of the astral life. So much is that the case that they often turn aside and delay persons who have overcome the same sort of pleasure of the physical plane. Yet that danger is not great for those who in physical life are definitely seeking the things of the Path, if they are persons of advanced type, as they are in a position to realize still higher delights, which have a far greater attraction. The same thing is true of each plane in turn.

Still, the disciple must be on guard not to give up the lower pleasures merely for the sake of relatively higher ones, but always to keep his eye upon his ideal goal, beyond *all* transitory pleasures. He must not thirst to enjoy the age-long pleasures of the heaven-world, but must give up *all* that is transitory and personal. While, on the one hand, he will not seek to obtain the objects of desire, on the other he will not shrink from the lessons that karma places before him; he will not wish that his field of experience should be other than it is. He knows that it is because nature’s laws are unchanging that he can use experience for growth. Were it not for the orderly nature of the world, it would be impossible for the intellect to grow or for man to use his powers at all. So he has no resentment against karma, which is the embodiment of the Law.

Help nature and work on with her; and nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.

And she will open wide before thee the portals of her secret chambers, lay bare before thy gaze the treasures hidden in the very depths of her pure virgin bosom. Unsullied by the hand of matter, she shows her treasures only to the eye of Spirit – the eye which never closes, the eye for which there is no veil in all her kingdoms.

Then will she show thee the means and way, the first gate and the second, the third, up to the very seventh. And then, the goal; beyond which lie, bathed in the sunlight of the Spirit, glories untold, unseen by any save the eye of the Soul.

All students of the material sciences are familiar with the fact that “nature is conquered by obedience”. All the forces that we employ in modern life, such as the pressure of steam or electricity, are examples of our working” with nature. It is perhaps rather unsympathetic to use the word conquered, when the fact is that all our power in the world is the result of harmony between man and nature. The man in a boat who sets his sail so that he may go against the wind is not overcoming the wind, but is harmonizing his affairs with its laws. By working with the laws man gains in power, not by fighting against them.

The occultist knows that the same principle is true on every plane, and not only with regard to the matter of each world but also to the forms of life that dwell there, high or low in the scale of evolution. Therefore the knowledge of nature’s mechanical laws, which has led to so much power and wealth for mankind, represents only one aspect of the harmony that should subsist between the two. A feeling of friendly sympathy towards the animal, the plants and even the minerals, and towards the nature spirits and the devas, is equally important, if not more so, for the progress of man. Nature is composed of life as well as matter, and it is through sympathetic feeling that that life becomes known, and harmonized with human life. To look upon the world as a place full of forbidding entities is the unfortunate custom of our age, but the man who faces life with a feeling of kindness to all living things will not only see and learn more than others, but will have a smoother passage on life’s sea. There is a tradition in India of the “lucky hand” of certain persons who have this sympathy, and for whom plants will grow well when for others they fail. It has also been explained many times by authorities in occult science that because of his love for all beings the true yogī or sannyasi may wander among the mountains and in the jungle quite without danger from wild animals or reptiles.

In ordinary human life this sympathy works in many ways. The modern business man knows that the first requisite for his success is to establish friendliness with those with whom he wants to deal. The same quality is necessary for teaching children, who often regard grown-up people as strange, arbitrary beings, not all of their own class, but somewhat foreign, as an earth man might regard one of Mr. Wells’ fanciful men from Mars. But when sympathy is established, all that strangeness goes, and real education becomes possible.

The nature spirits are in the same position as the children, except that they are not dependent upon us and can easily avoid our vicinity, as the more pleasing kinds of them usually do when modern civilized man arrives, with his noisy, clumsy and cruel ways, and his unclean, repellent aura and cloud of thought-forms. It is a fact that were men sympathetic with the other kingdoms, did they plant forests and not only destroy them, and did they feel kindly towards nature in general, we should enjoy more equable climate and more successful cultivation. It must, of course, be said that the modern movement in favour of gardens round houses, and trees and flowers even in the roads of our cities, all tends in the right direction, and that in special ways of cultivation of the earth and of particular flowers and fruits and grains and trees, and even animals, men have done much to help the work of the nature-spirits. But with more sympathy still better results would have accrued.

This sympathy has occasionally been shown, especially by the poets. Dr. Rabindranath Tagore’s essays and poems exhibit it in a very high degree; in fact, the spread of this quality may be regarded almost as his special contribution to modern civilization. Another well-

known instance is that of the philosopher Emerson who, on returning from his winter lecture tours to his home at Concord, used to shake hands with the lower branches of his trees. He declared that he could feel that the trees were glad at his return, and no doubt that quality of sympathy was a great aid to his inspiration.

Men who live in their gardens, like Luther Burbank of California, often say that they are distinctly conscious of the feeling that comes to them from certain plants, bushes and trees. Men in Canada, whose duty calls them to live constantly in the forests – to inspect them, mark trees and do other work – have told me that they feel a life in the woods distinct from that elsewhere, that they know that there are some places and trees which like men, and others which do not.

Such sympathy is perfectly natural. If you feel special love and admiration for a certain human being, there is a tendency on his part to become interested in you and to return the affection. A stage lower, if you are affectionate with an animal it becomes strongly attached to you. Still lower, in the vegetable and mineral kingdoms, the same rule obtains, though its effects are less obvious. From this arises the tradition that flowers and plants will grow better for some persons than for others, other things being equal. It is personal magnetism that calls it out; and that is what at a higher level we call affection.

There is no need to say anything here about the seven gates mentioned in this passage, for the whole of the third Fragment of this book is taken up with the seven portals, and there we shall study them in detail.

CHAPTER 11

THE ONE ROAD

There is but one road to the Path; at its very end alone the Voice of the Silence can be heard. The ladder by which the candidate ascends is formed of rungs of suffering and pain; these can be silenced only by the voice of virtue. Woe then to thee, disciple, if there is one single vice thou hast not left behind; for then the ladder will give way and overthrow thee; its foot rests in the deep mire of thy sins and failings, and ere thou canst attempt to cross this wide abyss of matter thou hast to lave thy feet in waters of renunciation. Beware lest thou should'st set a foot still soiled upon the ladder's lowest rung. Woe unto him who dares pollute one rung with miry feet. The foul and viscous mud will dry, become tenacious, then glue his feet unto the spot; and like a bird caught in the wily fowler's lime, he will be stayed from further progress. His vices will take shape and drag him down. His sins will raise their voices, like as the jackal's laugh and sob after the sun goes down; his thoughts become an army, and bear him off a captive slave.

C.W.L. – We have seen, in *The Masters and the Path*, that there are four ways of coming to the beginning of the probationary path: by contact with those who are already on the Path; by deep thought; by hearing and reading the sacred word, and by the practice of virtue. (*Op. cit.*, Ch. vi.) Then, on the probationary path, there are four qualifications to be attained, of which the last is given in *At the Feet of the Master* as Love, and it is said that without this the other qualifications are in vain. (Volume I, Ch. 24, Liberation, Nirvāṇa and Moksha.)

This, then, is the one road to the path proper – the way of *love*, of unselfishness in thought, word and deed.

All the old selfish habits of body and mind must be overcome by positive virtue. The word virtue as used here cannot mean mere passive goodness or absence of wrong-doing; it must be taken in its old meaning of strength. Virtues are forms of strength of the soul. When the soul dominates the personal life it will be seen to be full of such virtue. In the meantime a great

battle is necessary. In very many cases the candidate for the Path must bring forth all his determination to stamp out completely any fault of selfishness that he may find in himself in the course of his daily self-examination. This can best be done by picturing a scene in which the fault has been exhibited, and then reconstructing it in the imagination, so that in it the corresponding virtue is shown; then one may dwell on that for a little while, and resolve that henceforth, under such circumstances, the virtue, not the fault, will be expressed.

It is sometimes very hard to overcome habitual faults; hence the frequent mention of suffering and pain. It gives great pain, for example, to the drunkard, to resist “just one more, one last drink”. But if he holds firm to his resolves never to take strong drink again, not even once, in time the suffering will disappear, and he will know a higher kind of pleasure than that which he obtained from the stimulus of drink. It is exactly the same with impure or selfish emotions and thoughts; many a man fails because he dwells upon an unworthy thought “just once more”. It is just that one that he must give up, and refuse to harbour in his mind. To give up their faults people have sometimes to suffer great wounds to their pride. In all these cases humility is a great help, because it makes men willing to change themselves.

Still, there are many whose lives have already been considerably purified, who feel little or nothing of this pain. It has, indeed, been suggested that in this passage Āryasanga has exaggerated the suffering. That is not so, but He has expressed it in extreme terms, so that no one will meet with suffering on the Path, expecting the reverse, and all will be ready to pay toll to the past, to face what suffering there is, and to bring it to an end for ever by the practice of virtue. We may remember here the encouraging words of the *Gītā*: “Even if thou art the most sinful of all sinners, yet shalt thou cross over all sin by the raft of wisdom. As the burning fire reduces fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, so doth the fire of wisdom reduce all karmas to ashes.” (*Op. cit.*, iv, 36-37.) And again: “Never doth any who worketh righteousness, O beloved, tread the path of woe.” *Ibid.*, vi, 40.

The necessity of getting rid of vices at the very beginning has been emphasized in all yoga systems, as mentioned before. (Fragment I, Ch. 7.) Only when the virtues were firmly established in his character could the student be allowed to pass on to the later steps of the Path, including practices of posture, breathing, control of the senses and meditation. The reason for this demand is that as the pupil advances on the Path the forces of his will and thought become much more powerful than ever before, and there will come times when the ego pours his energy down into the body. If there be still remnants of any vice in the body that energy will give it new strength, so that the fall of the aspirant will be far greater than anything that is possible for one not so far advanced. Powers are powers, for good or ill, so the candidate should purify himself before seeking them, lest he injure others and himself. There is one place on the Path, just after the Second Initiation, where the danger is greatest of all, especially from the vice of pride, as has been explained at length in *The Masters and the Path*, Ch. xi.

Kill thy desires, Lanoo, make thy vices impotent, ere the first step is taken on the solemn journey.

Strangle thy sins, and make them dumb for ever, before thou dost lift one foot to mount the ladder.

Silence thy thoughts and fix thy whole attention on thy Master, whom yet thou dost not see, but whom thou feelest.

Merge into one sense thy senses, if thou wouldst be secure against the foe. 'Tis by that sense alone which lies concealed within the hollow of thy brain, that the steep path which leadeth to thy Master may be disclosed before thy soul's dim eyes.

Āryasanga's repetition of the injunction to get rid of desires and vices shows the importance which He attached to this part of the work. Not only are any such defects enormously intensified as the powers of the candidate develop, but also his responsibility

increases, and he becomes capable of making far more karma than before.

The sixth sense, the mind, has its physical organ in the brain. People do not usually employ this when faced by the various objects and experiences of life. They live too much in their astral bodies. They “like” certain things, and “dislike” others, quite without reason, quite without considering what they are, and which are really good and bad, or useful and useless. That will not do, of course, for anyone who wants to tread the occult path. He must consider all things dispassionately, and revalue them according to their usefulness to the soul.

In the brain there are also the organs by means of which direct perception of things beyond the reach of the physical senses may be had. The pituitary body is a link between the physical body and the astral body, and so on. In the same hollow in the brain, but a little further back, lies the pineal gland, which is connected directly with the mental body, and serves to bring impressions down from the mental plane. Some people develop the pituitary body first, some the pineal gland – each must follow the method prescribed by his own guru.

Long and weary is the way before thee, O disciple. One single thought about the past that thou hast left behind will drag thee down, and thou wilt have to start the climb anew.

Kill in thyself all memory of past experience. Look not behind or thou art lost.

Once more we find Āryasanga emphasizing the worst aspect of the matter, so that none shall find the path harder than he may have thought it to be before entering upon it. Relatively, that path is not long, when one considers that it is only the last fourteen lives, out of a series of many hundreds or even thousands, which are usually spent between the First and Fifth Initiations. Further, in many cases the work of those fourteen lives is done in but a few, taken consecutively, without devachanic interludes – which makes the time short indeed.

It is true that “the road winds uphill all the way”, but it need not necessarily be weary. It is when one thinks only of the goal that the journey is weary. A student entering College will find his three or four years there intensely weary if he is thinking only of getting his degree and going out into the world with it, and is not really interested in his studies. But if he has planned out his work, which will bring him naturally to his degree if properly carried out, and if he is really interested in the subjects of his study, he may then forget all about the years that lie ahead, and may have a fascinating time. So also on the Path the work is full of interest for heart and mind, and he who finds it so will make it shorter in fact as well as in appearance than he who cares only for reaching a certain prescribed goal.

It is the same in meditation; some who practise it faithfully feel it to be a tedious thing, but do it all the same, for the sake of its results. Others find it full of interest, and therefore gain much more from it. Let the candidate not think of his own progress on the Path; as so often recommended, let him forget himself and work for the world, and his progress will take care of itself. Self-examination and self-training are necessary, but that is only like preparing and oiling machinery; it should not take much time, the work being the important thing.

It is true that sometimes people find it necessary to force themselves at first along certain lines of work and thought, or meditation, which they feel that they ought to take up. Very well, go on with the dreary task, if such it appears to be, and if the motive is pure, you will soon find that the dreariness departs, a new interest arises, and the work becomes full of delight.

The statement that one single thought about the past can drag the candidate right down to earth again should certainly give pause to anyone who proposes to enter the Path, and yet is unwilling to give up some pet vice, however trifling. It is not the act so much as the thought of it that drags one down. Madame Blavatsky says, in *The Secret Doctrine*:

Purity of mind is of greater importance than purity of body. ... An act may be performed to which little or no attention is paid, and it is of comparatively small importance. But if thought of, dwelt on in the mind, the effect is a thousand times greater. The thoughts must be kept pure. *Op.cit.*, Vol, III, 570.

I recollect a story about Colonel Olcott which illustrates this point. A young man who much wanted to live the higher life came to him one day and asked him if he must give up smoking. The Colonel replied: "Well, if you can't you must, but if you can you needn't." Certainly strength of will and purity of thought are of paramount importance, and there is no progress without them, no matter how clean the body; and the Colonel emphasized the fact very successfully. But it might be added also that smoking is a dirty habit; it befouls the bodies, and often causes much annoyance and discomfort to others. The worst of its dirty selfishness physically is that the smoke is made damp with saliva and then sent off to enter other people's lungs. It is a horrible feature of modern life that we are often compelled to contact and breathe smoke which has been so treated.

As to the effect of a thought of a quality belonging to the past, Madame Blavatsky also says:

The student must guard his thoughts. Five minutes' thought may undo the work of five years; and though the five years' work will be run through more rapidly the second time, yet time is lost. *Ibid.*, p. 573.

A distinction must be made here between a thought which is merely a floating form which has entered the mind, and thought proper, which is a deliberate act. It is the latter that can do so much harm. An unworthy thought may drift into the mind, but if it is not dwelt upon, encouraged and strengthened, little harm is done.

That one who falls thus may quickly rise again is encouraging. That old Greek allegory in which every time that the hero falls to earth, worsted in the conflict, he gains new strength from it, applies to man. Better that he should win the battle once and for all without falling; but in any case he is destined to triumph ultimately. Much may be learned by the intelligent and willing pupil without bitter experience, just as one may learn that fire is hot without putting one's hand into it; but all that is necessary will be learnt sooner or later in one way or another.

Do not believe that lust can ever be killed put if gratified or satiated, for this is an abomination inspired by Māra. It is by feeding vice that it expands and waxes strong, like to the worm that fattens on the blossom's heart.

The rose must re-become the bud, born of its parent stem, before the parasite has eaten through its heart and drunk its life-sap.

The golden tree puts forth its jewel-buds before its trunk is withered by the storm.

The pupil must regain the child-state he has lost ere the first sound can fall upon his ear.

Sir Edwin Arnold speaks of Māra, as he is understood by the Buddhists, in vigorous and graphic terms, in connection with the temptation of Buddha just before His illumination:

But he who is the Prince
Of Darkness, Māra – knowing this was Buddh
When he should find the Truth and save the worlds –
Gave unto all his evil powers command.
Wherefore there trooped from every deepest pit
The fiends who war with Wisdom and the Light,
Arati, Trishna, Raga, and their crew
Of passions, horrors, ignorances, lusts,
The brood of gloom and dread; all hating Buddh,
Seeking to shake his mind . . . *The Light of Asia*, Book the Sixth.

Still, Madame Blavatsky says: "But Māra is also the unconscious quickener of the birth of the Spiritual." The resistance that Māra opposes to the aspirant enables him to develop his strength. An athlete might move his arms up and down much easier without dumb-bells than

with them, yet he would not develop the same strength so quickly, if at all. That even evil is made use of for good was once illustrated by the remark of a very spiritual man who took a high Initiation. For some time before it he had been terribly maligned, and the important work on which he had set his heart had been spoiled. One day someone offered him a word of sympathy, which was quite unnecessary, for he said: "The fact is, I owe a debt of gratitude to those people who tried to injure me, though I did not realize it at the time; for without their aid I should not yet have taken that Initiation." An ordinary man would have been full of anger or of depression, but in such a man as this Mara calls out an equal strength only of loving sorrow or compassion. Thus may even the greatest enemy become our friend while we are in the way with him.

It is, of course, not the ignorance but the innocence of childhood that is requisite for real spiritual progress. Mere goodness is not progress; it is only preparatory purification. Progress is the development of the ego on its own planes, which, when shown in the personality, appears as strength of character – in will and love and thought. In the three stages of the relation of a pupil to his Master, it is the third and highest that contains the idea of childhood, for he is first a probationary pupil, then an accepted one, and thirdly a Son of the Master.

CHAPTER 12

THE LAST STEPS

The light from the one Master, the one unfading golden light of Spirit, shoots its effulgent beams on the disciple from the very first.

Its rays thread through the thick, dark clouds of matter.

Now here, now there, these rays illumine it, like sun-sparks light the earth through the thick foliage of the jungle growth. But, O disciple, unless the flesh is passive, head cool, the Soul as firm and pure as flaming diamond, the radiance will not reach the chamber, its sunlight will not warm the heart, nor will the mystic sounds of the ākāshic heights reach the ear, however eager, at the initial stage.

C.W.L. – As the sun is always shining behind the clouds, so is the higher self constantly shedding its beams on the aspirant. The flashes of inspiration and intuition that come now and again into the darkness of our minds in what we call our best moments are derived from that high source. It is a wise policy to try to capture those best moments, to hold them in imagination, and to dwell upon them in meditation, and thus to bring the whole life into that diamond-like condition that is mentioned in the text.

With reference to the "mystic sounds of the akashic heights" Madame Blavatsky adds the following footnote:

The mystic sounds, or the melody, heard by the ascetic at the beginning of his cycle of meditation, called Anāhatashabda by the Yogīs. The Anāhata is the fourth of the Chakras.

The fourth centre or chakra is that at the heart. When the consciousness is centred in the heart during meditation it is most susceptible to the influence of the spiritual soul or higher self. The heart is the centre in the body for the higher triad, ātma-buddhi-manas. The head is the seat of the psycho-intellectual man; it has its various functions in seven cavities, including the pituitary body and the pineal gland. He who in concentration can take his consciousness from the brain to the heart should be able to unite kama-manas to the higher manas, through the lower manas, which, when pure and free from kama, is the antaḥkaraṇa. He will then be in a position to catch some of the promptings of the higher triad. That higher consciousness tries to guide him, through the conscience; he cannot guide it until he is one with buddhi-manas. The foregoing explanation is condensed from notes on some oral teachings of Madame

Blavatsky, appended to the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine. Op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 582-4.

Indian tradition on the subject says that when kuṇḍalinī rises she dissolves the qualities of the various chakras through which she passes and carries their essence upwards. When she reaches the fourth, the heart chakra, the yogī hears the sound from above, called anahata-shabda. *Shabda* is sound; *an-āhata* means “not beaten”; so it is that sound which is made without beating things together. The term is therefore symbolical of that which is above the planes of personality. The practitioner’s touch with the higher triad begins at this point. Those who want to increase the contact between the higher and lower manas should not dwell in meditation on anything below it. The following meditation, translated from the *Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā*, is one of those prescribed for the heart centre. It illustrates the way in which the yogī gradually withdraws his attention from his surroundings and concentrates it upon his Ideal.

Let him find in his heart a broad ocean of nectar,
Within it a beautiful island of gems,
Where the sands are bright golden and sprinkled with jewels,
Fair trees line its shores with a myriad of blooms,
And within it rare bushes, trees, creepers and rushes,
On all sides shed fragrance most sweet to the sense.
Who would taste of the sweetness of divine completeness
Should picture therein a most wonderful tree.
On whose far-spreading branches grow fruit of all fancies –
The four mighty Teachings that hold up the world,
There the fruit and the flowers know no death and no sorrows,
While to them the bees hum and soft cuckoos sing.
Now, under the shadow of that peaceful harbour
A temple of rubies most radiant is seen,
And he who shall seek there will find on a seat rare,
His dearly Beloved, enshrined therein.
Let him dwell with his mind, as his Teacher defines,
On that Divine Form, with His modes and His signs.

See *Concentration*, Ch. x.

Unless thou hear’st thou canst not see. Unless thou seest, thou canst not hear. To hear and see, this is the second stage.

* * * * *

We have already considered the significance of seeing and hearing. (Ch. 4.) Unless the candidate is responsive to the inner voice, that is, unless he understands spiritual laws, he will never see the outer things as they are. He must learn to look at the things of matter with the eyes of the spirit, as a Master once expressed it. When he sees the material or outward things in that way, he will more and more understand the inner voice. This is like the alternation which is necessary between meditation and experience. To go through life in a busy way, without stopping to meditate upon it, is to miss much of the significance of its events; one should spare a little time each day to let the inner light play upon them. On the other hand, to shut oneself in one’s study and give one’s whole time to thought would yield little profit; in that way a man would acquire endless misconceptions, for experience is required to correct and enlarge our meditation. It is the balanced interplay of the inner and the outer that the pupil must seek. He must aim to be harmonized – to use the expression repeated again and again in the *Gītā*.

The inner and outer worlds correspond perfectly to one another, point for point in God’s system. Says Madame Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*:

In the realm of hidden forces, an *audible* sound is but a subjective colour, and a perceptible colour, but an *inaudible* sound. *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 508.

Colour is spoken of here, not form; it makes the statement more accurate, for we really see only colours, not forms.

It is impossible to say with any certainty why this state of hearing and seeing harmonized together is called the second stage. We cannot tell what system of stages Āryasanga was expounding, for a veil is drawn over his instructions at this point. The line of stops marks a missing portion dealing with the third stage. When the teaching emerges again (after this hiatus) we find Āryasanga dealing with later stages exactly as the *Yoga Sūtras* give them, namely (5) pratyāhāra, entire control of the senses, (6) dhāraṇā, concentration, (7) dhyāna, meditation, and (8) samādhi, contemplation.

When the disciple sees and hears, and when he smells and tastes, eyes closed, ears shut, with mouth and nostrils stopped; when the four senses blend and ready are to pass into the fifth, that of the inner touch – then into stage the fourth he hath passed on.

There are some yogīs who do literally stop the mouth and nose when going into meditation or trance. The fingers are so placed as to keep the eyes, the nostrils and the mouth closed, and these men have also trained the tongue so that they can turn it upwards and backwards into the cavity above the mouth, and thus prevent the inlet of air. This is called khechari mudra, as practised by certain haṭha yogīs. It is not done by the rāja yogīs, and is not recommended here. There is a stage at which the pupil can close his eyes and reproduce within himself or experience in the astro-mental region the sensations of smell, taste, sight and touch. Now, in order to withdraw himself to a still higher state he must attend to the *inner* touch, which is hearing. By giving his attention to the sound within, and tracing it into its finer and finer recesses, he brings himself to the point where he may practise pratyahara, the restraint of *all* sensation, the inner as well as the outer, that Of the hall of learning as well as that of the hall of ignorance. This practice is described in the next verse:

And in the fifth, O slayer of thy thoughts, all these again have to be killed beyond re-animation.

The attention is quite commonly withdrawn to a large extent by most people when, for example, they are especially interested in a book; they do not then respond to the impressions made upon the senses by the various odours, sights and sounds surrounding them. To put oneself into that condition at will is pratyāhāra, and it is a preparation for really successful meditation. The killing beyond re-animation means nothing more than that the senses, like good dogs, will lie down when told to do so, and will not get up again until they are called. There is a foot-note at this point, as follows:

This means that in the sixth stage of development which in the occult system, is Dhāraṇā, every sense as an individual faculty has to be “killed” (or paralysed) on this plane, passing into and merging with the seventh sense, the most spiritual.

Dhāraṇā is the sixth step of yoga, as given in the *Yoga Sūtras*. It is that concentration of mind which we have already studied (Ch. 2) and it follows upon pratyahara. Since mind or chitta is regarded as a sixth sense, when dhāraṇā is complete and that mind thereby ceases to function in relation to the things of the external world, intuition, here called the seventh sense, arises. Life teaches us in two ways, by tuition that the world gives us, and by intuition, the working of the inner self. As men proceed on their evolutionary pilgrimage, their intuition increases and they do not depend so much as before on the instruction that the world gives. This is only another way of saying that the man who uses his inner powers can learn much more from a little experience than other men can from a great deal. Because of the activity of his innate intelligence the developed man is able to see the great significance of even small things; but the undeveloped mind is full of curiosity. It is constantly eager for novelty, because, not being good at thinking, it soon exhausts the obvious significance of

commonplace things. This mind is the one that craves miracles in connection with its religious experience, as it is blind to the countless miracles that surround it all the time.

Withhold thy mind from all external objects, all external sights. Withhold internal images, lest on thy Soul-light a dark shadow they should cast. . Thou art now in Dhāraṇā, the sixth stage.

In the practice of concentration it is always necessary to consider both the external and the internal sources of interruption. One must prevent the mind from taking an interest in any external thing, for if this is not done, the slightest sound will awaken its curiosity and spoil the concentration. Also one must stop the mind from bringing up within itself images relating to the past or the future; during the practice one must be completely uninterested in what happened yesterday or what is likely to happen to-morrow. When this concentration has been successfully achieved, the next and seventh stage of practice begins, which is called dhyāna, that is, meditation.

When thou hast passed into the seventh, O happy one, thou shalt perceive no more the sacred Three, for thou shalt have become that Three thyself. Thyself and mind, like twins upon a line, the star which is thy goal burns overhead. The Three that dwell in glory and in bliss ineffable, now in the world of Maya have lost their names. They have become one star, the fire which is the Upādhi of the flame.

And this, O Yogī of success, is what men call Dhyāna, the right precursor of Samādhi.

Passing from dhāraṇā to dhyāna, from concentration to meditation, the aspirant on this Path enters the buddhic consciousness. That is then “thyself”. The mind here spoken of is the higher manas, for the lower manas has been silenced. The manasic principle has been raised into that of buddhi, so the two are like “twins upon a line”, the two lower corners of a triangle, as is indicated by the following foot-note:

Every stage of development in Rāja Yoga is symbolized by a geometrical figure. This one is the sacred triangle and precedes Dhāraṇā. The Δ is the sign of the high chelas, while another kind of triangle is that of high Initiates. It is the symbol “T” discoursed upon by Buddha and used by Him as a symbol of the embodied form of Tathāgata when released from the three methods of the Prajñā. Once the preliminary and lower stages passed, the disciple sees no more the Δ but the – the abbreviation of the – the full septenary. Its true form is not given here, as it is almost sure to be pounced upon by some charlatans and desecrated in its use for fraudulent purposes.

The star that burns overhead is the ātma. But it refers also, as Madame Blavatsky says in another footnote, to the star of Initiation, which shines over the head of the Initiate. As the object to be attained is the Fourth Initiation, that of the Arhat, it is the star of that Initiation, which leads to the atmic or nirvanic plane, that is his goal.

At this stage, instead of looking upwards in thought, and regarding the higher triad (ātma-buddhi-manas) as above oneself, as was the case heretofore, one finds oneself to be in the buddhic state, manas being united with buddhi as manas-tajjasi. The “meditation” of the Initiate at this stage will ultimately lead on to a further union of buddhi and ātma. Upon the attainment of that union the higher triad will have become one star, described in a foot-note as “the basis, Upādhi, of the ever unreachable flame, so long as the ascetic is still in this life”. The fuel is the personality; the fire is this triple spirit; the flame is the Monad. Even the Adept, while remaining in physical incarnation, does not enter fully into the state of the Monad. Says Madame Blavatsky:

Dhyāna is the last stage before the final on this earth unless one becomes a full Mahātma. As said already, in this state the Rāja Yogī is yet spiritually conscious of

self, and the working of his higher principles. One step more, and he will be on the plane beyond the seventh, the fourth according to some schools. These, after the practice of Pratyahara – a preliminary training, in order to control one’s mind and thoughts – count Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi, and embrace the three under the generic name of Saṃyama. Samādhi is the state in which the ascetic loses the consciousness’ of every individuality, including his own. He becomes the All.

It is significant that the three should lose their *names*. They are not forms, for their region is that of consciousness. The lower planes of the personality are planes of form; then come the planes of name or meaning”, but the Monad is beyond name, beyond what men call consciousness.

The text goes on to indicate that, having attained to the practice of samādhi, the aspirant has now become an Arhat, and has reached the goal of the endeavour discussed in this Fragment.

CHAPTER 13

THE GOAL

And now thyself is lost in Self, thyself unto Thyself, merged in that Self from which thou first didst radiate.

Where is thy individuality, Lanoo, where the Lanoo himself? It is the spark lost in the fire, the drop within the ocean, the ever-present ray become the All and the eternal radiance.

And now, Lanoo, thou art the doer and the witness, the radiator and the radiation, light in the sound, and the sound in the light.

C.W.L. – As a man rises in life to a realization that the personality is merely “it”, and thus raises his centre of consciousness to the higher self, so there comes the time when he discovers as a fact of experience that that consciousness is only “you”, not “I”. (See Ch. 5 and Ch. 6.) When that comes about, at or about the Fourth Initiation, the lower self becomes lost in the true Self, and what the man has thought or felt to be his individuality goes. And just as he who has achieved the buddhic state recognizes and accepts the consciousness of others as his own, and feels their joys and sorrows as his own; so now does this man find only one true “I” in all.

The distinction between the realization obtained by the initiate of lower degree, and that of the Arhat, between the consciousness of the buddhic plane and that of the atmic, has been given in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. In the former state the man sees the same Self equally dwelling in all beings; in the latter he sees that all are in the one Self.

This, according to *Yoga Sūtras*, is the state of kaivalya, of “oneness”, of freedom, on the full attainment of which the distinction between seer and seen, between subject and object, is destroyed.

Thou art acquainted with the five impediments, O blessed one. Thou art their conqueror, the master of the sixth, deliverer of the four modes of truth.

The light that falls upon them shines from thyself, O thou who wast disciple, but art Teacher now.

And of these modes of truth:

Hast thou not passed through knowledge of all misery – truth the first?

Hast thou not conquered the Māras’ king at Tu, the portal of assembling – truth the second?

Hast thou not sin at the third gate destroyed, and truth the third attained?

Hast thou not entered Tau, the path that leads to knowledge – the fourth truth?

Madame Blavatsky adds:

The four modes of truth are, in Northern Buddhism: Ku, suffering or misery; Tu, the assembling of temptations: Mu, their destructions; and Tao, the Path. The “five impediments” are the knowledge of misery, truth about human frailty, oppressive restraints, and the absolute necessity of separation from all the ties of passion, and even of desires. The “Path of salvation” is the last one.

There are the Four Noble Truths taught to the world by the Lord Buddha. These were Sorrow, Sorrow’s Cause, Sorrow’s Ceasing and the Way. These have been put before the Western world with wonderful beauty and accuracy in Sir Edwin Arnold’s matchless poem, *The Light of Asia*, from which the following verses are quoted. But all who seek inspiration on the Path should not fail to read the whole work.

Ye that will tread the Middle Road, whose course
Bright Reason traces and soft Quiet smoothes;
Ye who will take the high Nirvāṇa-way,
List the Four Noble Truths.

The First Truth is of *Sorrow*. Be not mocked!
Life which ye prize is long-drawn agony:
Only its pains abide; its pleasures are
As birds which light and fly.

Ache of the birth, ache of the helpless days,
Ache of hot youth and ache of manhood’s prime;
Ache of the chill grey years and choking death,
These fill your piteous time.

Sweet is fond Love, but funeral-flames must kiss
The breasts which pillow and the lips which cling
Gallant is warlike Might, but vultures pick
The joints of chief and King.

Beauteous is Earth, but all its forest-broods
Plot mutual slaughter, hungering to live;
Of sapphire are the skies, but when men cry
Famished, no drops they give.

Ask of the sick, the mourners, ask of him
Who tottereth on his staff, lone and forlorn,
“Liketh thee life?” – these say the babe is wise
That weepeth, being born.

The Second Truth is *Sorrow’s Cause*. What grief
Springs of itself and springs not of Desire?
Senses, and things perceived mingle and light
Passion’s quick spark of fire:

So flameth Trishna, lust and thirst of things.
Eager ye cleave to shadows, dote on dreams;
A false Self in the midst ye plant, and make
A world around which seems;

Blind to the heights beyond, deaf to the sound
Of sweet airs breathed from far past Indra’s sky;
Dumb to the summons of the true life kept
For him who false puts by.

So grow the strifes and lusts which make earth's war,
So grieve poor cheated hearts and flow salt tears;
So wax the passions, envies, angers, hates;
So years chase blood-stained years

With wild red feet. So, where the grain should grow
Spreads the biran-weed with its evil root
And poisonous blossoms; hardly good seeds find
Soil where to fall and shoot;

And, drugged with poisonous drink, the soul departs,
And, fierce with thirst to drink, Karma returns;
Sense-struck again the sodden Self begins,
And new deceits it earns.

The Third is *Sorrow's Ceasing*. This is peace
To conquer love of self and lust of life,
To tear deep-rooted passion from the breast.
To still the inward strife;

For love to clasp Eternal Beauty close;
For glory to be Lord of self; for pleasure
To live beyond the gods; for countless wealth
To lay up lasting treasure

Of perfect service rendered, duties done
In charity, soft speech, and stainless days
These riches shall not fade away in life,
Nor any death dispraise.

Then Sorrow ends, for Life and Death have ceased;
How should lamps flicker when their oil is spent?
The old sad count is clear, the new is clean;
Thus hath a man content.

* * * *

The Fourth Truth is *The Way*. It openeth wide
Plain for all feet to tread, easy and near,
The *Noble Eightfold Path*; it goeth straight
To peace and refuge. Hear!

Manifold tracks lead to yon sister-peaks
Around whose snows the gilded clouds are curled;
By steep or gentle slopes the climber comes
Where breaks that other world.

Strong limbs may dare the rugged road which storms,
Soaring and perilous, the mountain's breast;
The weak must wind from slower ledge to ledge,
With many a place of rest.

So is the Eightfold Path which brings to peace;
By lower or by upper heights it goes.
The firm soul hastes, the feeble tarries. All
Will reach the sunlit snows. *Op. cit.*, Book the Eighth.

The five impediments in the way of the candidate for Arhatship may be taken in various forms. They are the five mentioned by Madame Blavatsky in the foot-note just quoted, or they are the first five fetters, or they are the five kleshas mentioned in the *Yoga Sūtras*, and already discussed (Ch. 3.).

And now, rest ‘neath the Bodhi tree, which is perfection of all knowledge, for, know, thou art the master of Samādhi – the state of faultless vision.

Behold! thou hast become the light, thou hast become the sound, thou art thy Master and thy God. Thou art thyself the object of thy search: the voice unbroken, that resounds throughout eternities, exempt from change, the seven sounds in one, the Voice of the Silence.

Auṃ Tat Sat.

The termination Auṃ Tat Sat is one of the Mahā-vākyams or “great sayings” of the Hindus. The meaning of Auṃ we have already considered. (Ch. 6.) Tat refers to the Supreme. Philosophically, the pronouns he and she are unsuitable to refer to the Supreme, so Tat, meaning “That”, is employed. Beyond “it” and “you” is That, which is “I”. So the expression means that it is *That* which is the *Real*. All good works begin and end with this thought.

FRAGMENT II

THE TWO PATHS

CHAPTER 1

THE OPEN GATE

C.W.L. – We come now to the second Fragment which Madame Blavatsky translated from *The Book of the Golden Precepts* – entitled *The Two Paths*. This is not necessarily a continuation of the first Fragment, called *The Voice of the Silence*, although it does begin by addressing one who has just reached the goal of Arhatship. There is nothing to show that the three Fragments stand in any special relation to one another. They are to all intents and purposes three separate books dealing in much the same manner with the same subject. It is, however, a great advantage to the aspirant to hear the teaching about the Path again and again in slightly different forms. It renews his enthusiasm, draws attention to points which he may have overlooked, and generally gives him breadth of vision.

The present Fragment begins by addressing one who has just achieved the summit of the Path, and the question arises: will he go onwards into nirvanic bliss, heedless of those who remain behind, or will he turn back at the threshold and help others who are climbing; will he take liberation for himself, or will he stay to help the world?

And now, O Teacher of compassion, point Thou the way to other men. Behold all those who, knocking for admission, await in ignorance and darkness to see the gate of the sweet Law flung open!

The voice of the candidates:

**Shalt not Thou, Master of Thine own mercy, reveal the doctrine of the heart?
Shalt Thou refuse to lead Thy servants unto the Path of liberation?**

The opening paragraph of this Fragment may at first seem a little strange to us in these modern days. We are familiar with the thought that the Path is open to anyone anywhere, regardless of race, creed, sex, caste or colour, who lives the life that is prescribed for it. Why, then, should any people be waiting in darkness and ignorance for a gate to be flung open for them?

The fact is that at the time when the Lord Buddha taught in India, the religion of the Brāhmaṇas had become very rigid. Originally, that faith had been intensely joyous and free, but in course of time the caste system had been extended by the priests and rulers to all kinds of details. The plains of India were thickly populated with Atlanteans and Atlanto-Lemurians when the Aryans descended into the country about ten thousand years B.C. So the Manu

found it necessary to forbid intermarriage, and about 8,000 B.C. he ordained the caste system in order that no further admixture might be made, and that those already made might be perpetuated. He founded at first only three castes – Brāhmaṇa, Rājan and Vish. The first were pure Aryans, the second Aryan and Toltec, the third Aryan and Mongolian.

The castes were hence called the Varnas, or colours – the pure Aryans white, the Aryan and Toltec intermixture red, and the Aryan and Mongolian yellow. The castes were allowed to intermarry among themselves, but a feeling quickly grew up that marriages should be restricted within the caste. Later, those who were not Aryan at all were included under the general appellation of Shudras, but even here in many cases a certain small amount of Aryan blood may appear. Many of the hill tribes are partly Aryan – some few are wholly so, like the Siaposh people and the Gipsy tribes.

There are passages in the Hindu scriptures to show that it was possible for individuals of exceptional character and ability to be raised in caste rank, but it must have been a very rare occurrence, and certainly for some time before the advent of the Lord Buddha it had been generally held that only a Brāhmaṇa could hope for liberation, and anyone who wished to reach that goal must first contrive to be born as a Brāhmaṇa. This was not a very hopeful doctrine for the majority of the people, since the Brāhmaṇas were never numerous – even to-day there are only about thirteen millions of them in a population of some three hundred millions – and they did not allow the lower caste people to study the sacred books.

But the Buddha's teaching flung the gates wide open. He taught that equal respect should be shown to one of any caste who lived the life, and conversely that a Brāhmaṇa who does not live the life was not worthy of respect, as in the following verse from the *Vasala Sutta*:

Not by birth does one become low caste,
Not by birth does one become a Brāhmaṇa;
By actions alone one becomes low caste,
By his actions alone one becomes a Brāhmaṇa.

Many Brāhmaṇas have told me that they actually feel the truth of this in practical life; they find themselves more drawn to those of lower castes who live the ideals of the Brāhmaṇa life than to members of their own caste who neglect its ideals and live at a lower standard.

The aim of the Lord Buddha was not to found a new religion, but to reform Hinduism. For a time almost all India called itself Buddhist. There were Buddhist Hindus just as at present in the north-west there are many who call themselves Sikh Hindus. Buddhism as a religion has long vanished from India; the twenty million or so of whom we read in statistics as being in India belong to the Province of Burma, which is geographically and ethnographically quite a separate land. But the effect that the Lord Buddha desired to produce still remains to a large extent in the Hindu religion of the present day. As an instance of this one may mention the effect upon animal sacrifices, against which the Buddha spoke very strongly; they were very common before His time, but now they are quite rare. Again, in India today every holy man is regarded with reverence by all, whatever may have been his caste before he became a sannyasi. And people all over the country respect the *Bhagavad-Gītā* as of the highest authority, yet it is a book of the most liberal character. In it the Lord says:

The same am I to all beings; there is none hateful to me nor dear. They verily who worship me with devotion, they are in me, and I also in them. Even if the most sinful worship me, with undivided heart, he too must be accounted righteous, for he hath rightly resolved; speedily he becometh dutiful and goeth to eternal peace, O Kaunteya; know thou for certain that my devotee perisheth never. They who take refuge with me, O Pārtha, though of the womb of sin, women, Vaishyas, even Shūdras, they also tread the highest path. *Op. cit.*, ix, 29-32.

It must not be assumed that Shrī Krishna is here placing women and others on a lower level, but that he is refuting a number of popular superstitions, among them the idea that those who are in female bodies are necessarily inferior and so cannot succeed in high spiritual aims.

Madame Blavatsky explains in a foot-note that there are two Schools of the Buddha's doctrine, the esoteric and the exoteric, respectively called the "heart" and the "eye" doctrine, and that the former emanated from the Buddha's heart while the latter was the work of His brain or head. Another interpretation that was given to me relates the terms to the eye and heart of the candidate: the scheme of things may be learnt by the eye, but the higher path can be entered only when the heart is in tune with the inner life.

The whole passage is based upon an alleged hesitation on the part of the Buddha as to whether He should preach. It is said that as He sat under the Bodhi tree on the morning following His Illumination, He doubted whether the world would understand and follow Him, until He heard a voice as of the earth in pain, which cried: "Surely I am lost; I and my creatures!" And then, again: "Oh, Supreme, let Thy great Law be uttered!" *The Light of Asia*, Book the Seventh.

Quoth the Teacher:

The paths are two; the great perfections three; six are the virtues that transform the body into the tree of knowledge.

To this Madame Blavatsky adds the following footnote:

The tree of knowledge is a title given by the followers of the Bodhidharma (Wisdom Religion) to those who have attained the height of mystic knowledge – Adepts. Nāgārjuna, the founder of the Mādhyamika School, was called the dragon-tree, the dragon standing as a symbol of wisdom and knowledge. The tree is honoured because it is under the Bodhi (wisdom) tree that Buddha received His birth and enlightenment, preached His first sermon, and died.

Swami T. Subba Row had a somewhat different interpretation of this symbol of a tree. He said that the body of the candidate had become a channel of knowledge (and we may add of force as well), so that it was one of the twigs on the Tree which is the total wisdom of the world. We may add, too, the idea that the Initiate is part of the great tree that is the Hierarchy, the Great White Brotherhood, that has its roots far up in the higher planes, and whose branches ramify into every part of human life, and even down to the lower kingdoms. Those who have read the later chapters of *The Masters and the Path* will appreciate this ancient symbol of a tree, for there it is shown how the Occult Hierarchy branches outward from one great Root.

In this statement about the two paths, the three great perfections, and the six virtues, we have an instance of the methodical character of the Buddha's teaching. He always helped His followers to remember His teaching by giving it to them in a tabular form. There were, for example, the Four Noble Truths, each represented by a single word which would call to recollection a quite definite set of ideas. There were also the Noble Eightfold Path, the Ten Sins, classed as three of the body, four of speech and three of the mind, and the Twelve Nidānas, or successive causes of material life and sorrow for man.

The transcendental virtues, or paramitas, are sometimes reckoned as six, sometimes seven, but more commonly as ten. When in Ceylon, I learned of them as ten from the High Priest Sumangala: the first six, he said, are perfect charity, perfect morality, perfect truth, perfect energy, perfect kindness, and perfect wisdom; the other four that are sometimes added especially for the priests are perfect patience, perfect resignation, perfect resolution, and perfect abnegation. In the *Awakening of Faith* of Ashvagoshā, translated into English by Teitaro Suzuki, the Pāramitās are thus enumerated: Charity (dāna) morality (shīlā), patience (kshānti), energy (vīrya), meditation (dhyāna), wisdom (prajñā), and the four additional ones: expediency (upāya), prayer or vow (praṇidhāna), strength (bala), knowledge (jñāna). In the foot-note to the *Voice of the Silence*, 1924 edition, a list taken from Eitel's *Chinese Buddhism* is given thus: charity, morality, patience, energy, contemplation and wisdom; and

in addition for the priests: use of right means, science, pious vows, and force of purpose.

When in Ceylon I compared the statements of Orientalists with the feelings and thoughts of the Buddhists themselves. There is a great difference between the two, for the former are generally very wooden, but the latter are full of life. Yet the learned monks have an accuracy of knowledge at least equal to that of the most erudite Orientalists. Sir Edwin Arnold, in his *Light of Asia*, has given a very remarkably accurate representation of the living side of Buddhism. Some have said that he read Christian ideas and feelings into Buddhism, but that was not so in the least; I can testify that the sentiments described in the poem really exist among the Buddhist people.

Who shall approach them?

Who shall first enter them?

Who shall first hear the doctrine of two paths in h one, the truth unveiled about the Secret Heart? The law which, shunning learning, teaches wisdom, reveals a tale of woe.

Alas, alas, that all men should possess Ālaya, be one with the great Soul, and that, possessing it, Ālaya should so little avail them!

Behold how, like the moon reflected in the tranquil waves, Ālaya is reflected by the small and the great, is mirrored in the tiniest atoms, yet fails to reach the heart of all. Alas, that so few men should profit by the gift, the priceless boon of learning truth, the right perception of existing things, the knowledge of the non-existent!

The Secret Heart is the esoteric doctrine. It is a symbol that comes down to us from Atlantean days. In the innermost shrine of the great temple in the City of the Golden Gate there lay upon the altar a massive golden box in the shape of a heart, the secret opening of which was known only to the high priest. This was called “the Heart of the World”, and signified to them the innermost mysteries that they knew. In it they kept their most sacred objects, and much of their symbolism centred around it. They knew that every atom beats as a heart, and they considered that the sun had a similar movement, which they connected with the sun-spot period. Sometimes one comes across passages in their books which give the impression that they knew more than we do in matters of science, though they regarded it all from the poetic rather than from the scientific point of view. They thought, for example, that the earth breathes and moves, and it is certainly true that quite recently scientific men have discovered that there is a regular daily displacement of the earth’s surface which may be thought of as corresponding in a certain way to breathing.

When Āryasanga uses the term “secret heart” He also means all the inner mysteries. Madame Blavatsky’s foot-note says:

The Secret Heart is the esoteric doctrine.

Here the Teacher by “shunning learning” certainly means that there are times when we must turn our attention away from the mere gaining of knowledge from the outside through the senses, that we may give time to the development of the inner learning through intuition. We cannot be wise without having sufficient learning or knowledge with regard to the things that we have to deal with in the world, in our particular sphere of duty; but on the other hand we should be much in error if we thought that the greatest thing in life was to accumulate great stores of knowledge, or were even to imagine that such knowledge had intrinsic value, apart from the use that we can make of it in the service of mankind.

In Europe there is a tendency to approach things and study them from the outside, while the Eastern method is rather to consider them from within. Both methods are necessary at our present state of evolution. When the buddhic vehicle is developed, and intuition comes down into the physical brain from that level, it will give us true wisdom, perfect knowledge, but in very few people is it yet sufficiently developed.

Even if we are able to keep our heads among the clouds, it is necessary that our feet should rest firmly on the earth, and we must treat impressions coming from within with balanced judgment, just as we apply common sense to the experiences of everyday life. This is necessary, because it is quite easy to mistake impulses, coming from the astral body, for intuitions which come from the higher self. Sometimes it happens, for example, that a dead person seeing that we are interested in some particular point, offers a suggestion on the astral plane, and this may come down into the brain and seem like intuition. Yet, as a matter of fact, that dead person may be a very incompetent observer on the astral plane, and may therefore be giving quite wrong information.

This advice to shun learning is useful not only to those who are on the Path, but also to every one who is at all studious, if we take it to mean, as it does, that we should avoid *more* learning. A great amount of study of the mere outside of things often leads to materialism. Because they see around them great cataclysms, sacrifice, oppression, sorrow and suffering, and a vast amount of praying to which no answer seems to be vouchsafed, many people come to think that conflict and struggle is the law of life, that nature is not compassionate. But to study the world as fully as possible, all the time regarding it as a great school for the life dwelling in its multifarious forms, leads to wisdom, which enables one to see that all things are moving together for good. When one develops astral and higher forms of vision this fact that all is well is no longer a matter to be understood by careful reasoning; it leaps to the eyes. No one with such vision could be a materialist.

The word Ālaya means simply a dwelling or house. Esoterically, Madame Blavatsky says, it has at least a double meaning, as being both the universal soul, and the Self of an advanced Adept. It is the real dwelling or home of man, the universal aspect of that which is buddhi in the spiritual triad in man. It is the male or positive aspect of the universal soul, the Logos. It is the Over-soul of Emerson, the universal Higher Self of all beings. It is what Plato called Nous, a principle free from matter yet acting with design, the jīvātma of the Hindus, the source of the divine creative thought. In other words it is in the Second Logos, the universal spiritual soul, of which the buddhi in each man is a ray. That one should have “knowledge of the non-existent” must certainly look strange to those who do not know the exact philosophical meaning of the last word. To exist means to stand outside of, to have external or objective being. The kind of being that is called existence belongs to all the world that is seen as outside ourselves, but the indwelling life or consciousness has its own state of being – call it “istence” if you like, but not “existence”. Nothing could be more real than the reality of this conscious life, which we also possess because we are part of the same Logos – and that is the “non-existent” of which the aspirant must gain knowledge. Every man is essentially divine; but to realize it he must stand out of his own light – then there will be no shadow, no illusion

CHAPTER 2

HEAD-LEARNING AND SOUL-WISDOM

Saith the pupil:

Teacher, what shall I do to reach to wisdom? O wise one, what, to gain perfection?

Search for the paths. But, O Lanoo, be of clean heart before thou startest on thy journey. Before thou takest thy first step, learn to discern the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the everlasting. Learn above all to separate head-learning from Soul-wisdom, the “eye” from the “heart” doctrine.

C.W.L. – There is nothing that can be said here on the subject of the real and the unreal that has not already been dealt with at length in the comment on “From the unreal lead me to the real” in *At the Feet of the Master*, Ch. IV.

Yea, ignorance is like unto a closed and airless vessel; the Soul a bird shut up within. It warbles not, nor can it stir a feather; but the songster mute and torpid sits, and of exhaustion dies.

But even ignorance is better than head-learning with no Soul-wisdom to illuminate and guide it.

No occult progress at all is possible for a man while he is extremely ignorant, however much he may be developed in other ways. Without some knowledge of the Truth, and of the Path, he will not move in a definite direction. Most people have very little knowledge of what it means to be really a man, what are the qualities and actions which make for progress and what for retrogression, and they have no conception of the great destiny to which all are slowly moving. Therefore their progress is very, very slow. We have investigated clairvoyantly as many as a hundred successive lives of some second class pitris, or men of the second grade, and find scarcely any perceptible growth at the end of that series.

There is, however,, a steady though slow evolution of the whole mass of life going on all the time, and the man has shared in this general progress. Absolutely he has gone forward, but relatively he has done little. Mr. Sinnett compared this advance to that of a person going round and round a tower by a winding staircase; he comes to the same position and outlook again and again, but every time just a little bit higher than before. It would seem almost as though men were being treated a little better than they deserve, for we see that even the ignorant man, whose thoughts are selfish in nine cases out of ten, is advancing in this way. But the fact is that even a little force directed towards the higher things is far more potent than a great deal of force turned towards the lower things. If one tenth of a man's thoughts are spiritual he is beyond the average; even in such a case the man is taking nine steps backward for one step forward, but fortunately the nine steps backward are very short and the one step forward is very long. It takes a bad life to balance good and evil, and to fall back a man must be exceptionally bad. Then again, the effect of a little good is very far-reaching on account of the close association that obtains among men, and he who sets it going receives much good karma.

But if ignorance is a great obstacle to progress, knowledge that is not applied is little better; it also does not count for very much. Even if a man is interested in occult matters he may stay apparently at the same level life after life; for if it is not applied the knowledge does little good. To put knowledge into practice is an absolutely necessary condition for rapid progress.

The seeds of wisdom cannot sprout and grow in airless space. To live and reap experience, the mind needs breadth and depth and points to draw it towards the Diamond Soul. Seek not those points in Maya's realm; but soar beyond illusion, search the eternal and the changeless Sat, mistrusting fancy's false suggestions.

In her foot-note, Madame Blavatsky says that the Diamond Soul, Vajrasattva, is a title of the supreme Buddha, the Lord of all mysteries, called Vajradhara and Ādi-Buddha. In *The Secret Doctrine*, however, she points out the distinction between Vajrasattva and Vajradhara. Vajra is a diamond; sattva in such a connection as this means "by nature", that is, a character or soul, so Vajrasattva is one whose nature or character is like a diamond. *Dhara* means holding or bearing, so Vajradhara is one who holds a diamond. Avalokiteshvara, "the Lord who is seen", is Vajrasattva, the Diamond-Soul or Diamond-Heart, and is the synthetic reality of all the Dhyāni-Buddhas. The First Logos is Vajradhara or Vajrapani, the Diamond-Holder, or the Diamond-Handed One, also called Dorjechang in Tibetan. He is the one beyond all conditioning or manifestation, but He sends into the world of *subjective* manifestation, the expression of His Heart – Vajrasattva or Dorjesempa, the Second Logos. See Ch. 5.

That there should be special points required to draw the candidate into full touch with That is analogous to what we have seen in the process of individualization of an animal. In this case, the points are the finer qualities that it develops, such as affection and devotion, by

means of which it reaches up into the human condition of consciousness. The mind of man must also put out special points in order that it may unite with the Soul, and for the Initiate those points must rise up into buddhi, which is the principle in the reincarnating self corresponding to the Vajrasattva at a still higher level. Swami T. Subba Row said that it referred to the ātma drawing the ego into the Monad. The same simile can thus be employed at many different levels.

For mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects.

This, says Madame Blavatsky, is from the doctrine of Shin-Sien, who taught that the human mind is like a mirror which attracts and reflects every atom of dust, and has to be, like that mirror, watched over and dusted every day. Shin-Sien was the sixth patriarch of North China, who taught the esoteric doctrine of Bodhidharma.

In *The Secret Doctrine* she explains the position of Bodhidharma, as follows:

When the misuse of dogmatical orthodox Buddhist Scriptures had reached its climax, and the true spirit of the Buddha's Philosophy was nearly lost, several reformers appeared from India, who established an oral teaching. Such were Bodhidharma and Nāgārjuna, the authors of the most important works of the contemplative School in China during the first centuries of our era. *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 429.

The dust on the mirror typifies the prejudices, illusions and fancies which are in the astral and mental bodies ' these are clearly visible to the sight of the respective planes as decided obstacles to better thought or feeling. The effects of these impediments and the means to get rid of them we have already considered carefully in the *Talks on At the Feet of the Master*, Part 4, Chapter 1, *Control of Mind*,

It needs the gentle breezes of Soul-wisdom to brush away the dust of our illusions. Seek, O beginner, to blend thy mind and Soul.

Shun ignorance and likewise shun illusion. Avert thy face from world deceptions; 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.

Common experience tells us that the senses must be mistrusted. The impressions of sight, for example, must be corrected by careful study of the facts, and judgment about them, as in the matter of the apparent movement of the sun round the earth. Care must be taken, however, not to read into this statement the idea that the senses are not to be used. They must be employed on every plane for the gaining of knowledge, and for doing the work and duty without which there is no progress.

The eternal man is the reincarnating ego, whose life is age-long as compared with that of the personality, persisting as it does through our complete series of human births and deaths.

The word Buddha is used in three distinct senses. Sometimes, as in this case, it means simply enlightened, illuminated, or wise. Sometimes it is used as a name for the Lord Gautama. In other cases it means the high office in the Occult Hierarchy of the Head of the Second Ray, the great department of teaching and religion, which has been described in *The Masters and the Path*. The Buddhists have a list of twenty-four Buddhas, of whom the present holder of the office is the Lord Gautama, who will be succeeded in the far future by the Lord Maitreya.

Shun praise, O devotee: praise leads to self-delusion. Thy body is not Self, thy Self is in itself without a body, and either praise or blame affects it not.

Self-gratulation, O disciple, is like unto a lofty tower, up which a haughty fool has climbed. There-on he sits in prideful solitude and unperceived by any but himself.

Very many men have been spoiled by undue praise; it leads to pride in all who do not see clearly what lies ahead of them or above them. Those pupils who are sufficiently clairvoyant

to see the Masters frequently are not so prone to this danger as many others are, because they cannot but compare their own littleness with the Master's greatness, their own farthing rushlight with His glorious sunlight. It is the man who is looking downward, and comparing himself with those who are beneath himself, who is most likely to fall through pride.

But the best way of all is not to think of oneself, but to be constantly occupied with the work of the Master. There is for all of us every day far more of that to be done than we can possibly accomplish: and it is only taking energy and time away from that if we spend it in thinking about our little selves. There are no doubt several reasons why the Masters do not show Themselves more than They do to those who are in the earlier stages of Their service. One of these is that the pupil, seeing the Master so far above him, might be overwhelmed with his own insignificance and lose confidence in his own ability to work for the Master. So, while it is necessary to avoid pride on the one hand, one must equally avoid the under-estimation of one's powers on the other. Here, as ever, the middle path is the right one.

The simile of a tower is indeed a good one, for pride does shut a man away from his fellows. If, for example, he is proud of his learning, he will be anxious to keep others more ignorant than himself, so as to enjoy his superior position, and even when he does give out his knowledge it will only be for the sake of displaying it. Such a man is engaged all the time in enlarging the gulf between himself and other people, so that he may look down on them from above.

False learning is rejected by the wise, and scattered to the winds by the Good Law. Its wheel revolves for all, the humble and the proud. The doctrine of the eye is for the crowd; the doctrine of the heart for the elect. The first repeat in pride: "Behold, I know"; the last, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess: "Thus have I heard."

Every religion in course of time gathers round itself many speculations and other accretions. For example, in Hinduism, in the Purāṇas one reads of dozens of things that people are told that they must do or must not do; many of those have been invented by the priests, either for their own convenience and advantage or because of an excessive estimation of the value of many prayers and ceremonies. Also particular interpretations of earlier sayings are developed into dogmas and attached to the original teaching, as, for instance, the horrible eternal hell teaching which still persists among most Christians.

The esoteric teaching at once scatters these to the winds, as it brings the attention back to the essential and vital truths. Still, to act from the heart is the way only of a strong and advanced man. For the masses, wandering slowly along the broad road of evolution which winds gently up the hill-side, the books are still the main guide. Those people are not yet in the position that is described as follows in the *Garuḍa Purāṇa*: "Having practised the Vedas and the Shastras, and having known the Truth, the wise man can abandon all the scriptures, just as one rich in grains abandons the straw."

Every Buddhist scripture begins with, "Thus says —", or, "Thus have I heard." It is a humble beginning. It does not say, "This is absolutely so, and you must believe it," but, "This is what has been said, and it would be well to try to understand it, and so come to a knowledge of the real facts." It is the attitude of enquiry, not of dogmatism. Yet, strange to say, there have been those who have taken it in another, and quite a wrong sense. They say, "It is no use propounding anything different on this subject, for thus it has been said with authority"!

"Great Sifter" is the name of the heart doctrine, O disciple.

The wheel of the Good Law moves swiftly on. It grinds by night and day. The worthless husks it drives from out the golden grain, the refuse from the flour. The hand of Karma guides the wheel; the revolutions mark the beatings of the karmic heart.

True knowledge is the flour, false learning is the husk. If thou would'st eat the bread of wisdom, thy flour thou hast to knead with Amrita's clear waters. But if thou kneadest husks with Maya's dew, thou canst create but food for the black doves of death, the birds of birth, decay and sorrow.

The heart doctrine is called the Great Sifter because as one works in the world in the manner which it directs, the mistakes one makes and the defects one has are gradually sifted out and removed. If one were doing work without the ideals of the inner doctrine, one might go on making the same kind of mistakes again and again, life after life. Madame Blavatsky somewhere wrote that it was one thing to desire to do good, and another to know what is good to do. Yet, with our imperfect knowledge, we must go forth and do the best we can. It is something like learning a language. It is a mistake to try to learn it quite perfectly from books before one makes any attempt to speak it; one must plunge into it, and make mistakes in it, and in the effort one will learn in due course to speak without mistakes. But that will come about, of course, only if one converses in it with others who already know the language correctly.

Similarly the Master, though He may be unseen, will guide the pupil who is sincerely trying to do his best, into the experiences that will sift out his faults and mistakes. Keep in mind the conviction that the final good will inevitably come, and let the heart be full of love; then you may work without fear of mistakes. They will become smaller and smaller, and fewer and fewer, and will eventually die away.

There is a moral to be drawn from the analogy of flour and bread. The true knowledge that you gain does not give you bread, but merely the flour with which the bread of wisdom has to be made. The kneading is the action of the higher self, which works upon experiences and converts them into real wisdom. In ordinary men most of this kneading is done during the devachanic period, but the pupil of the Master has so broadened the channel between the higher and the lower self that he is gaining wisdom all the time.

He who takes only external knowledge, and studies it over with the lower mind, in the light of mere personal necessity and pleasures, is certainly kneading husks with maya's dew. He is not preparing for the triumph of the higher self; he is not treading the Path, but is preparing the karma of future births and deaths, for the future vehicles and personalities that will decay and die.

CHAPTER 3

THE LIFE OF ACTION

If thou art told that to become Arhan thou hast to cease to love all beings – tell them they lie.

If thou art told that to gain liberation thou hast to hate thy mother and disregard thy son; to disavow thy father and call him householder; for man and beast all pity to renounce – tell them their tongue is false.

Thus teach the Tirthikas, the unbelievers.

If thou art taught that sin is born of action and bliss of absolute inaction, then tell them that they err. Non-permanence of human action, deliverance of mind from thralldom by the cessation of sin and faults, are not for Deva Egos. Thus saith the doctrine of the heart.

C.W.L. – To call a man a householder is to say that his interests are still centred in worldly things, but to do this with contempt, as is implied in the text, would certainly indicate the proud and austere qualities of the left-hand path, leading up to the heights of the black magicians, who regard the best of human love as nothing but mere sentimentality. Even

though the candidate may have risen above personal desires, he cannot despise those who are still at the earlier stage of evolution, nor can he ignore them. Compassion and eagerness to help are the qualities of his nature.

That the expression householder must be taken in a metaphorical sense is indicated in a foot-note by Madame Blavatsky, as follows:

Ratṭhapāla, the great Arhat, thus addresses his father in the legend called Ratṭhapāla Sutrāsanne. But as all such legends are allegorical (e.g., Ratṭhapāla's father had a mansion with seven doors) hence the reproof to those who accept them literally.

Madame Blavatsky describes the Tīrthikas as “ascetic Brāhmaṇas, visiting holy shrines, especially sacred bathing-places.” A tīrtha is literally a “crossing-place”. It is thus a landing or bathing place, or any shrine, which is a crossing place to the other worlds or the higher life. A shrine is thus a place where there is a special connection between the inner and the outer worlds. Probably the orthodox Brāhmaṇas and Hindus in general who visit such Tīrthas as, for example, Benares or Hardwar, were called unbelievers because they did not in most cases follow the Buddha in His assertion that “within oneself deliverance must be sought.”

In the talks on *At the Feet of the Master* we have considered at length the necessity for action, and how there may be intense activity of the body, and yet the man within may be calm, steady, serene and strong. The Deva Egos means the reincarnating egos, according to Madame Blavatsky, but Swami T. Subba Row explained the term as meaning those who aspire to work with the Devas and for the helping of the world.

The teaching of the *Book of the Golden Precepts* is obviously intended for those who wish to follow that line of work. At present there are not very many egos in incarnation who are ready for special teaching and training – it would be of little use, for example, to seek among the dwellers in the east end of London for people who are ready to become pupils of the Masters. But as time goes on the numbers requiring attention will increase very rapidly, and within a few hundred years there must be many Arhats prepared to teach them. Thus a large number of helpers will be needed, and it is to that work that many of us are called.

The Dharma of the eye is the embodiment of the external and the non-existing.

The Dharma of the heart is the embodiment of Bodhi, the permanent and everlasting.

The word dharma may here be translated “form of religion” or “belief”, and bodhi is simply “wisdom”.

The lamp burns bright when wick and oil are clean. To make them clean a cleaner is required. The flame feels not the process of the cleaning. “The branches of a tree are shaken by the wind; the trunk remains unmoved.”

Both action and inaction may find room in thee; thy body agitated, thy mind tranquil, thy Soul as limpid as a mountain lake.

Whatever suffering there may be on the path of progress is experienced only by the lower self. The Self seated within knows the value even of the painful experience and is therefore quite satisfied. Many people do not understand that suffering is very largely a question of attitude; in *Esoteric Christianity* our President has explained how some of the great martyrs were filled with joy while undergoing what would be terrible pain to others, because they were thinking of the great honour that was theirs to suffer so for the sake of their Lord. So it is true that at last wrong ideas or ignorance are the basis of all suffering.

Physical suffering is the most difficult to deal with. We may be able sometimes to draw away from the physical body when it is in pain, but that does not mean that we have conquered the pain. If it is the result of a particular disease in which a microbe has to run its course, no amount of assertion will enable an ordinary person to drive it away; but in all cases a cheerful attitude makes a big difference. Most people can conquer astral pain, if they set

themselves the task; they can refuse to permit their feelings to dwell upon the idea that gives them sorrow. Undesirable emotions, such as jealousy, envy, pride and fear, may be described as astral diseases; they can always be eradicated by persistent effort to feel the opposite emotions. Mental suffering, chiefly worry, is even easier to control.

In the causal body a man might have an uneasy sense of incompleteness or insufficiency – but nothing more than that. Though he may feel disappointment at the defects of his lower representative, he knows enough to be patient and to persevere. He is not ignorant; but it is ignorance that makes our suffering so poignant down here. In childhood, when we were still more ignorant, a trouble lasting one day seemed a terrible tragedy; if we failed to pass an examination the idea of waiting a whole year for the next opportunity seemed to us a calamity, though in later life a year does not seem a long period of time. To the personality a life's failure may seem a tragedy, but to the ego, who has known hundreds or thousands of incarnations, it may not appear so vastly important.

The ego has put down a personality much as a fisherman makes a cast. He does not expect that every cast will be successful, and he is not deeply troubled if one proves a failure. To look after a personality is only one of his activities, so he may very well console himself with successes in other lines of activity. In any case, it is the loss of a day, and he may say, "Oh, well, we will hope to do better to-morrow." Often the personality would like more attention from the ego above him, and he may be sure that he will receive it as soon as he deserves it, as soon as the ego finds it worth while. Mr. Sinnett put forward this desire of the personality in a humorous way by saying that what was needed was a school for teaching egos to pay attention to their personalities.

One stage further on, in the buddhic plane, the man begins to touch the intensity of bliss that is the life of the Logos. At the same time he comes closer into touch with other men; on the lower planes he begins to share their suffering, but on the higher side he knows them as sparks of the divine, and that gives indescribable bliss, which makes the suffering seem as naught. Thus sorrow and suffering are for the personality only, and they exist merely while the consciousness is fixed in the lower planes.

Would'st thou become a Yogī of time's circle? Then, O Lanoo:

Believe thou not that sitting in dark forests, in proud seclusion and apart from men; believe thou not that life on roots and plants, that thirst assuaged with snow from the great Range – believe thou not, O devotee, that this will lead thee to the goal of final liberation.

Think not that breaking bone, that rending flesh and muscle unites thee to thy silent Self. Think not that when the sins of thy gross form are conquered, O victim of thy shadows, thy duty is accomplished by nature and by man.

Āryasanga is here once more preaching against the seeking of liberation as mere escape from the wheel of births and deaths. The yogī of time's circle is the one who is willing to remain within the process of time, for the sake of helping others. When one considers the vast period of time for which the Lord Buddha and the Lord Maitreya had been preparing Themselves for Their great work, which has been explained in *The Masters and the Path*, Ch. xiv, one cannot but feel oppressed by the thought of such enormous periods of incarnate existence. Undoubtedly, however, time cannot be to Them exactly what it is to us. Even if "a thousand ages in Thy sight are like an evening gone" does not apply to Them, Their sense of time must be vastly different from ours. Certainly They are also intensely happy in Their work, and where there is happiness, as everybody knows by experience, time is of no account – in fact, under those circumstances we always wish that it could be lengthened.

Very wrong ideas have arisen in most of the religions on the subject of asceticism. In the original Greek the word *asketes* meant simply one who exercises himself as an athlete does. But ecclesiasticism impounded the word and changed its sense, applying it to the practice of

self-denial in various ways for the purpose of spiritual progress, on the theory that the bodily nature with its passions and desires has been the stronghold of the evil inherent in man since the fall of Adam, and that it must therefore be suppressed by fasting and penance. In the Oriental religions we sometimes encounter a similar idea, based on the conception of matter as essentially evil, and following from that the deduction that an approach to ideal good or an escape from the miseries of existence can be effected only by subduing or torturing the body.

In both these theories there is dire confusion of thought. The body and its desires are not in themselves evil or good, but it is true that before real progress can be made they must be brought under the control of the higher self within. To govern the body is necessary, but to torture it is foolish.

There appears to be a wide-spread delusion that to be really good one must always be uncomfortable – that discomfort in itself is directly pleasing to the Logos. Nothing can be more grotesque than this idea. In Europe this unfortunately common theory is one of the many horrible legacies left by the ghastly blasphemy of Calvinism. I myself have actually heard a child say: “I feel so happy that I am sure I must be very wicked” – a truly awful result of criminally distorted teaching.

Another reason for the gospel of the uncomfortable is a confusion of cause and effect. It is observed that the really advanced person is simple in his habits and often careless about a large number of minor luxuries that are considered important and really necessary by the ordinary man. But such carelessness about luxury is the effect, not the cause of his advancement. He does not trouble himself about these small matters because he has largely outgrown them and they no longer interest him – not in the least because he considers them as wrong; and one who, while still craving for them, imitates him in abstaining from them does not thereby become advanced.

It is true that our duty to the world is not accomplished when we have purified ourselves. Then indeed does it become really possible for us to do our best work for our fellow-men, and since in the higher life the maxim “From each according to his power, to each according to his need” prevails, our most serious duty begins at this point, when the shadows, the lower bodies, have been mastered.

The silent Self in this passage, refers, says Madame Blavatsky, to the seventh principle, which is ātma. Our studies in the first Fragment have already shown how this idea of silence is attached to that part of the higher Self.

The blessed ones have scorned to do so. The Lion of the Law, the Lord of Mercy, perceiving the true cause of human woe, immediately forsook the sweet but selfish rest of quiet wilds. From Āraṇyaka he became the Teacher of mankind. After Julai had entered the Nirvāṇa, he preached on mount and plain, and held discourses in the cities, to Devas, men and Gods.

All the Northern and Southern Buddhist traditions agree in the statement that the Buddha quitted His solitude as soon as He had reached inner enlightenment and had solved the problem of life, and that He at once began teaching publicly.

The term Āraṇyaka means a forest-dweller. The books relate that Gautama went into the forest in order to meditate, and there he seated Himself under the bodhi tree and resolved to attain illumination. When that was achieved. He considered, whether He would give His teaching to the world; He knew that most of the people would not understand it, and that it might therefore do harm. But then, as was remarked at the beginning of our study of this Fragment, the voice of the earth came to Him, and begged Him to teach. I do not know exactly what was meant by the voice of the earth, but it is said that that led Him to decide to teach mankind on the physical plane.

In this passage there are several titles given to the Buddha. He is called Julai. That is the Chinese name for Tathāgata, which is the title given to every Buddha. Tathāgata means

literally “he who has gone likewise”, he has followed in the steps of his predecessors.

It is a fact that when the Buddha preached, others besides men gathered round to listen to His teaching and enjoy His aura.

Sow kindly acts and thou shalt reap their fruit. Inaction in a deed of mercy is action in a deadly sin.

I have already quoted this in commenting on *At the Feet of the Master*. Each man has the responsibility for exercising the powers of consciousness that he has so far developed. If he fails to exert himself and neglects to use them, he is guilty of sins of omission, which are just as serious as sins of commission. For example, it is our duty to interfere, when we can do so without doing more harm than good, in cases of wrong or cruelty, such as cruelty to animals or children. The wise man, seeing such things, will not let indignation master him. He must feel also for the man who is guilty of the cruelty. His state is in many ways more pitiable than that of his victim, and he will have to suffer in turn, on account of karmic law. So, if we can induce him to see the error of his ways and stop his cruelty, we have done good to both. When it is our duty to interfere, and we fail to do so, we share the karma of the wrong-doing. The same is true when we allow others to injure ourselves, without resistance. We are making it easy for them to do wrong; we are tempting them, and assisting them, and the karma is partly ours.

Thus saith the Sage:

Shalt thou abstain from action? Not so shall thy Soul gain her freedom. To reach Nirvāṇa one must reach Self-knowledge, and Self-knowledge is of loving deeds the child.

It is not until we begin to work for others that we can acquire real knowledge of life. In the attempt we learn where we stand, and what qualities must be developed. There was an old blind man living in the south of India, who said that his blindness had been indirectly a source of great happiness to him. He was also in the deepest poverty, and had spent his life in wandering from village to village, where he used to advise the people in their difficulties, and also assist them in some cases with his yoga powers. He used to tell how, by meditation, he had managed to awaken the memory of his past lives; and he remembered that, some hundreds of years before, he had been a very rich and powerful man, and had used his power to injure those who happened to do what he did not like. He recognized that his blindness and poverty were due to his wrong deeds in that former life. He said he was sure that if he had gone on being a rich man he might never have learned to love his fellows, as he had been quite set in a selfish path of life. But now he had had to mingle with others, most of whom knew suffering; they had been very kind to him, and he had learned to love them. The happiness of that love, he said, as compared with his previous condition, was something so great and incomparable that no suffering was in his opinion too great to purchase it. This man claimed to be a pupil of one of our Masters, and he certainly was an illustration of the teaching that self-knowledge is of loving deeds the child.

Have patience, candidate, as one who fears no failure, courts no success. Fix thy Soul’s gaze upon the star whose ray thou art, the flaming star that shines within the lightless depths of ever-being, the boundless fields of the unknown.

The disciple fears no failure because he knows that the plan of the Logos will be carried out; no one’s failure can make any difference to that. We may have the opportunity to do a piece of His work. If we should fail to do it, it will be done in some other way through someone else. It makes no difference to the Logos, though it may make a very great difference to ourselves. It happens constantly that people miss their opportunities, but the great plans are made in view of every contingency. Our Masters never appear to notice when we lose an opportunity, but I think that They are quite aware of it. Madame Blavatsky used

sometimes to say about some person: "He has earned the right to have his chance." The Masters always assume that we are going to take our opportunities.

The student who has tried to do some good work and has found the opposing forces too great for him, will not be disappointed or lose patience if he understands that all efforts put forth for good must produce a proportionate result in some way, though the results may be unseen, and though there may be for the personality none of the satisfaction which comes from seeing the good that has been done. It is the same in the case of astral work at night. That work is none the less good and effective when done by those who are not able to bring any memory of it back into the physical brain. The laws of nature do not cease to operate because we cannot see the result, or do not remember what we have done.

Usually the people who have done the greatest work in the world do not see the result of it. Take, for instance, the example of the Christ's three years' of preaching. He died as a malefactor, execrated by the populace, and at his death the number of His followers was only a hundred and twenty; now there are many millions. William Wilberforce, who worked steadily for over forty years against the greatest odds for the abolition of slavery in the British Colonies, heard only three days before his death that total abolition of slavery had at last become law. Impatience and depression would have lost his cause. We are all in the same position, in our lesser ways. There is none who cannot take up some good work, and push on with it with tireless and endless patience, regardless of immediate success or failure.

"The star whose ray thou art" is always that which shines above us; for one it is the ego, for another, more advanced, the Monad, and so on to the Planetary Logos, and even the Logos of our system. To know our own star is also to know the ray to which we belong – which of the seven great rays is the one that especially connects us with the Logos. These seven rays are indicated in the chapter dealing with the Chohans of the Rays in *The Masters and the Path*, and also in *The Seven Rays*, by Prof. Ernest Wood. When the higher self is the master of the personality, it becomes possible for the disciple to specialize in the work of the ray to which that higher self belongs, and then he can make very rapid progress in power and usefulness.

Have perseverance as one who doth for evermore endure. Thy shadows live and vanish; that which in thee shall live for ever, that which in thee knows (for it is knowledge) is not of fleeting life: it is the Man that was, that is, and will be, for whom the hour shall never strike.

Besides patience we need perseverance, and nothing can develop this quality in us better than a clear perception of the fact that we endure all through the ages, and that death is only a passing incident, with no power to deflect us from our path. Sometimes people say: "Why should I take up such and such work? I cannot possibly finish it in this life." But the fact is that there is only one real lifetime – that of the ego, which endures for ever, for all practical purposes. It is wise to begin any work in which you are interested, or the great task of eliminating faults, even in old age, for all the good that is done is carried forward to the next body, and in it the impulse to continue the work will be felt while it is young. If one postpones the work to a future life, once more old age may arrive before one has the opportunity that will draw attention to it. If you are now ninety, and you have just heard of Theosophy, and you want to hear of it in your youth in your next life, throw yourself into it now with whatever vigour you may have. There is also the great benefit to be derived from the stay in devachan (unless you happen to be one of those who have the privilege of being able to renounce that period) for in that state whatever work you have done is dwelt upon and worked up into faculty which will be a great help in the next incarnation.

Perseverance is necessary also because no great work can be completed in *p.* short time. Think, for example, of the artist who is painting a great picture; he will have very little to show for it in the first few days, perhaps even weeks, and it is also quite possible that he may

not be pleased with what he has been able to achieve at the end of a few weeks, so that he has to begin all over again.

A very useful lesson in perseverance may be derived from a study of the history of the Theosophical Society in the early days. The two great founders, Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, could not have succeeded in establishing the Society permanently, and giving it the material for future growth, had they not had a clear vision of the inner side of things, a realization that their work was part of a plan lasting throughout eternity, and was therefore sure to succeed. They founded the Society in New York in 1875, and worked prodigiously at *Isis Unveiled*, which was duly published. Still, some five years later they were almost alone in the work, and they found it necessary to go to India, to some friends there, to make a new start. Even then there were endlessly varied troubles, year after year, which would have crushed almost anybody else- Madame Blavatsky, with a body seldom free from pain, could still work tirelessly, could produce *The Secret Doctrine* and other great works, because of her knowledge of the Masters and the inner side of things.

CHAPTER 4

THE SECRET PATH

**If thou would'st reap sweet peace and rest, disciple, sow with the seeds of merit
the fields of future harvests.**

Accept the woes of birth.

C.W.L. – Āryasanga is all the time endeavouring to persuade' the disciple to follow the higher path of renunciation, and not to accept the peace of nirvāṇa. Life in the atmic or nirvanic plane has been defined as rest in omniscience, but we must understand that it is rest only in the sense that there is no consciousness of exertion followed by fatigue. There is on that plane the most tremendous activity; that is the very essence of the nature of being on that plane, as I have already tried to explain. (Ch. 7.) People want rest because they feel fatigue, but when one is out of the body in full consciousness one finds that the fatigue is gone, and then one no longer desires rest. In such conditions we look upon rest rather as we do upon death down here; we do not want less but more of the power and energy that we enjoy. The Solar Logos does not rest, even for a moment. If He did so, even for a second, we should all cease to be.

Many of those who have reached nirvāṇa have nothing further to do with the world's evolution; yet it does not seem possible for anyone to have reached that level and not to be pouring forth glory and splendour on those below. Even in the case of one so devoted that he continually turns all his thought upwards, and none downwards, one would think he could not help shedding devotion on those below.

There are seven paths open to the Adept, and most of them take the candidate away from the earth, yet they are all equally ways of serving the Logos. Presumably every Adept is willing to go where he is most needed and can be most serviceable, but at least it seems necessary to be perfectly willing to remain and accept "the woes of birth", if called upon. Any other attitude, and especially the idea of selfish escape from the world, liberation for one's separate self, could not carry the aspirant so high. To us it may seem that to stay with and help our humanity is the kindest thing to do, and that is very natural, for if we cannot thus love those who are already near and known to us, how shall we love others who are not known? Still, we must not forget that if the Lords of the Flame from Venus had not left Their system and come down into ours to help us, we should be at least one round behind the position that we have so far achieved. It may be the duty of some of us in the future to go to the help of some other system less advanced than ours.

At the same time, there is no question that more and more advanced pupils of the Masters will be needed to carry on Their work on earth. It is open to the Arhat to take no more physical births if he so chooses; but it is evident that our Masters wish us to continue taking birth for the sake of the work.

Step out of sunlight into shade, to make more room for others. The tears that water the parched soil of pain and sorrow bring forth the blossoms and the fruits of karmic retribution. Out of the furnace of man's life and its black smoke, winged flames arise, flames purified, that soaring onward, 'neath the karmic eye, weave in the end the fabric glorified of the three vestures of the Path.

The opening portion of this passage seems to imply that there is not enough sunlight for all; but that is surely not so. All can be happy. We make our own shadow, as the earth does. Sorrows and trouble are of our own making; they are our own karma, as is everything that comes to us. What Āryasanga means is that one should always be ready to help others, even at the cost of trouble or loss to oneself.

There are few kinds of action that bring great karmic suffering. Cruelty does, of course, and there are some others. But most of people's actual suffering comes from the way in which they take the inconveniences of life that karma brings to them. The suffering is then very distinctly "ready-money karma". Such, for example, is the selfish mourning for those who have passed on to a happier state of existence, which causes suffering to everybody concerned, often including the dead, who feel the depression and sorrow very greatly. What karma brings to a man is never more than he can bear, and bear easily; but that is not the case with what he adds to it of foolish thought, and feeling and action.

These vestures are: Nirmāṇakāya, Sambhogakāya and Dharmakāya, robe sublime.

The three vestures will be discussed fully in our study of the third Fragment. They represent three possibilities which lie open to the man who has attained Adeptship. He can at once accept nirvāṇa, or take it after having gone through other high spiritual experiences, or remain in touch with the earth as a Nirmāṇakāya in order to fill the spiritual reservoir, or he can take up work in other globes or systems. This last choice is by no means selfish, of course; it is an impossible supposition that any selfishness could be possible at such a level.

There was a reference in the first edition of this book to "selfish Buddhas", but Madame Blavatsky, after her death, asked our President to remove the passage which contained it, because it was causing so much dangerous misunderstanding. It referred to those who are called the Pratyeka Buddhas. These are great Adepts at the level of the Buddha, but on the first ray. Because "eka" means "one", some Northern Buddhists have thought that a Pratyeka Buddha is one who works for himself alone, which appears a blasphemous idea to anyone who knows where They stand. The three Lords of the Flame, who are the pupils of the Lord of the World, are Pratyeka Buddhas. They came to the earth to serve it and hasten its evolution along the line of the first ray, while the Buddha works on the second. It is foolish to criticize Them for not doing work which is not Theirs. It would be as sensible to find fault with a magistrate for not being a schoolmaster, saying, "See how little he cares about the education of children!" Of these great Beings I have tried to give some slight account in *The Masters and the Path*, Ch. xv.

The Shangna robe, 'tis true, can purchase light eternal. The Shangna robe alone gives the Nirvāṇa of destruction; it stops rebirth, but O Lanoo, it also kills compassion. No longer can the perfect Buddhas, Who don the Dharmakaya glory, help man's salvation. Alas! shall selves be sacrificed to self; mankind, unto the weal of units?

Know, O beginner, this is the open path, the way to selfish bliss, shunned by the

Bodhisattvas of the Secret Heart, the Buddhas of compassion.

The Shangna robe is something very far beneath any of the three vestures above mentioned. It means here the balancing of karma, and the destruction of the personality by quenching all desires, including that for life. It implies an evolution of the causal body far higher than most men have attained, but without the development of love and compassion and the desire to help the world. A man who has thus freed himself from the necessity of rebirth may live as an ego on the higher levels of the mental world for an enormously long time.

In this passage, it is almost as though Āryasanga were complaining against those who take the Dharmakāya vesture, and retire to distant planes or systems. But it would be really impossible for him to do that. He could not have thought that there were selfish Buddhas. The Pratyeka Buddhas certainly are at the same level of attainment as the Lord Buddha; They have the same quality of compassion that He has, but it is not Their duty to fill the office. For thousands of years before Their attainment of such heights these Great Ones must have been utterly incapable of anything like selfishness. We must remember that *The Voice of the Silence* was written down by a disciple of Āryasanga after the death of the latter, so He is not wholly responsible for it, and it appears that here the disciple must have allowed his own misconception to colour the ideas of his Teacher.

To live to benefit mankind is the first step. To practise the six glorious virtues is the second. To don Nirmāṇakāya's humble robe is to forego eternal bliss for self, to help on man's salvation. To reach Nirvāṇa's bliss but to renounce it, is the supreme, the final step – the highest on renunciation's path.

Know, O disciple, this is the secret path, selected by the Buddhas of perfection, who sacrificed the Self to weaker selves.

The six glorious virtues are the pāramitās, already considered in Chapter 1 of Fragment II. They represent one of the systems of travelling on the path. Another is given in the set of qualifications expounded in *At the Feet of the Master*, followed by the four stages of the Path proper.

It is not quite true that the Nirmāṇakāya gives up bliss, for Adeptship is itself the attainment of bliss. What is true is that the Adept could remain always on the stupendous levels which He has reached but instead He comes down to help. By doing that, however, He does not forego the eternal bliss which is inherent in Him; He merely decides to work at lower levels.

Yet, if the doctrine of the heart is too high-winged for thee, if thou needest help thyself and fearest to offer help to others – then, thou of timid heart, be warned in time: remain content with the eye doctrine of the Law. Hope still. For if the secret Path is unattainable this day, it is within thy reach tomorrow. Learn that no efforts, not the smallest – whether in right or wrong direction – can vanish from the world of causes. E'en wasted smoke remains not traceless. "A harsh word uttered in past lives is not destroyed, but ever comes again." The pepper plant will not give birth to roses, not the sweet jessamine's silver star to thorn or thistle turn.

Thou canst create this day thy chances for thy morrow. In the great journey, causes sown each hour bear each its harvest of effects, for rigid justice rules the world. With mighty sweep of never-erring action it brings to mortals lives of weal or woe, the karmic progeny of all our former thoughts and deeds.

Take then as much as merit hath in store for thee, O thou of patient heart. Be of good cheer and rest content with fate. Such is thy Karma, the Karma of the cycle of thy births, the destiny of those who, in their pain and sorrow, are born along with thee, rejoice and weep from life to life, chained to thy previous actions.

If one cannot rise immediately to the resolve to be utterly unselfish there is no need to despair. One must work on in the right direction until one reaches the position where that

ideal will seem perfectly natural and comparatively easy of accomplishment. Sometimes people feel that because they cannot fulfil a great ideal that is put before them there is nothing that they can do which is worth doing. They collapse, and do nothing at all, in consequence. But that is a great mistake. The Lord Buddha was very wise in dealing with all kinds of people, and He took care to avoid this kind of discouragement, by speaking of the highest path to His monks alone. He preached the middle path to the general public, and told them to live the highest and noblest life of which they were capable, so that later on they would be in a position to enter His Order. He said that they were today creating their opportunities for tomorrow, that is for their next incarnation. There is no need to despair, for the man who takes one opportunity receives tenfold more opportunities, and he who uses what powers he has as fully as possible, without overstraining himself, certainly develops those powers at a surprising rate.

The last paragraph makes reference to those who are born together. It is a fact that people evolve in groups, the same people coming closely together in different relationships again and again. What happens to one in any such group reacts very much upon the others, for both good and ill. It should be an additional incentive to those who are aspiring to realize that whatever they are able to attain will be of great benefit to a number of people whose destinies are thus bound up closely with their own.

CHAPTER 5

THE WHEEL OF LIFE

Act thou for them today, and they will act for thee tomorrow.

'Tis from the bud of renunciation of the self, that springeth the sweet fruit of final liberation.

To perish doomed is he who out of fear of Māra refrains from helping man, lest he should act for self. The pilgrim who would cool his weary limbs in running waters, yet dares not plunge for terror of the stream, risks to succumb from heat. Inaction based on selfish fear can bear but evil fruit.

The selfish devotee lives to no purpose. The man who does not go through his appointed work in life has lived in vain.

Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasures as to pain. Exhaust the law of karmic retribution. Gain Siddhis for thy future birth.

C.W.L. – There are people who feel that because they cannot do great things or make rapid advance no effort is worth making. That is a great mistake. At least they can live to help those with whom karma has brought them into contact. They will never find themselves in a better position until they make the most of their present environment. If they will do this, when the time comes for them to make the great effort involved in taking the First Initiation, loving friends will be there to help. Real friends are those who are the friends of the ego. These never bind one down for the satisfaction of their own very limited and human, and often really selfish, emotions. They always give one the freedom that is required to follow the higher path.

Some good people refrain from helping others, fearing that they themselves may be prompted by a selfish motive. Very often charity is bestowed upon the unfortunate not really with the desire to help them, but to relieve the giver of the unhappiness that he feels at the sight of suffering. Such a person would never go out of his way to find people in trouble, in order that they might be helped. Again, there are others who systematically give a portion of their large incomes to charitable organizations, so that they may enjoy the remainder with no qualms of conscience. Knowing this, a disciple sometimes questions himself as to whether his

own motive is pure. But to refrain from helping because he doubts his own motive is surely a form of selfishness. Whatever our motive may be, we must help, though only that counts for real progress on the Path which is done purely to help the sufferer, without thought of self.

It is necessary to use discrimination in helping. As the Hindus say, help should be given to the right person, at the right time, and in the right place. Yet the necessity for thought should not cause hesitation. We may not always be certain which is the wiser of two courses of action, but we must nevertheless decide upon one of them, so that the opportunity to do good may not be entirely overlooked. Sometimes it is only by thought that we can help, but that, as I have said before, is very important. (Vol. I, Part II, Ch. 2, 5; Part IV, Ch. 1; Part V, Ch. 6.) The strength of many a man who is doing vigorous work in the world comes largely from others who are engaged in radiating spiritual force in meditation.

The wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, does, as a matter of fact, offer the best of opportunities for progress. The Lords of Karma see to it that each person is given the conditions which are suited to his growth. They give a man the particular work that is likely to develop the qualities that he needs. At a low level of development there may be ten thousand places where a man can have the conditions needed for his progress. But when a man is more highly evolved his environment has to be chosen with the greatest care, for everyone must be put absolutely in the position where he can best advance. It is therefore quite inaccurate to say that a man succeeds in spite of his circumstances; difficulties are put in his way in order that he may transcend them, and that his character and powers may grow.

The man who does his daily duties well, will soon be trusted with higher ones. Every one who can be trusted to do good and conscientious work is eagerly wanted by Those who guide the destiny of mankind. Be faithful in small things, and you will be made ruler over many things, as the Bible says. To be ruler over many things is a responsible position, and in occultism it is given only to those who have proved themselves faithful in the small things. That is the test that the Master gives. Many people neglect plain everyday duty for some visionary work in the future, perhaps of doubtful utility, and not intended specially for them. Many also regret the ties that they formed before they knew of Theosophy, when they now find them hampering. But they do their duty. Unsuitable ties will drop away when the time comes when that freedom will be most useful for the aspirant's development, and what is more important, for the world's work. But if they are broken prematurely they will only entangle the man again and much trouble and pain will be caused.

If sun thou canst not be, then be the humble planet. Aye, if thou art debarred from flaming like the noon-day sun upon the snow-capped mount of purity eternal, then choose, O neophyte, a humbler course.

Point out the way – however dimly, and lost among the host – as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness.

Behold Migmar, as in his crimson veils his eye sweeps over slumbering Earth. Behold the fiery aura of the hand of Lhagpa extended in protecting love over the heads of his ascetics. Both are now servants to Nyima, left in his absence silent watchers in the night. Yet both in Kalpas past were bright Nyimas, and may in future days again become two suns. Such are the falls and rises of the karmic law in nature.

Be, O Lanoo, like them. Give light and comfort to the toiling pilgrim, and seek out him who knows still less than thou; who in his wretched desolation sits starving for the bread of wisdom and the bread which feeds the shadow, without a Teacher, hope or consolation, and let him hear the Law.

In a foot-note, H.P.B. says:

Nyima, the sun in Tibetan astrology. Migmar or Mars is symbolised by an eye, and Lhagpa, or Mercury, by a hand.

There are here several points of interesting analogy. The two planets mentioned give their light at night, when the sun is out of sight, and all is dark. It is so with us. We have to help those who are in greater darkness than ourselves; there is no one who cannot find someone more ignorant than himself whom he may teach. Even if those around us are not ready to enter the Path, we can lead them in the right direction towards it.

At the time of the transference of life from the moon to the earth, the planets glowed and shone like small suns. But Mars is mainly a desert now, and that is why he reflects the yellow or reddish light. From the standpoint of the poetic author of these verses, they are doing their best work in giving light to man now. The idea illustrates the fact that we are not necessarily doing our best work when we shine most. Also, when a building has to be erected, the foundations must be put in first. They do not count for anything in the matter of appearance, being hidden out of sight, but on them the building will be erected. So in the common work of every day the candidate is performing useful service to society, and at the same time developing the higher siddhis which are the spiritual powers of the ego.

The Teacher now tells the candidate what to say to those whom he is trying to bring to the Path.

Tell him, O candidate, that he who makes of pride and self-regard bond-maidens to devotion; that he, who cleaving to existence, still lays his patience and submission to the Law as a sweet flower at the feet of Shakya-Thub-pa, becomes a Srotāpatti in this birth. The Siddhis of perfection may loom far, far away; but the first step is taken, the stream is entered, and he may gain the eye-sight of the mountain eagle, the hearing of the timid doe.

Tell him, O aspirant, that true devotion may bring him back the knowledge, that knowledge which was his in former births. The deva-sight and deva-hearing are not obtained in one short birth.

Shakya-Thub-pa is the Lord Buddha. The Srotāpatti is, as has been explained, “he who enters the stream “. An analogy can be drawn between the outward act of laying one’s service at the feet of the Teacher, and the inner change when the well-developed manas realizes the presence of buddhi, and bows down before that higher principle, resolving henceforth to use all its powers in obedience to its behests. In the ordinary life of men it is generally the mental nature that is allowed to have the last word. For example, in the matter of vivisection, (Vol. I, Part V, Chapter 4.) many people whose feelings shrink from the practice with loathing, still decide that it must go on, because they think it is the only way to obtain certain knowledge which will help humanity. But the minority, who are in the right, say: “No, it is impossible that vivisection can lead to good. Our higher nature says with a clear voice that it is utterly wrong.” If these people were in the majority they would stop it, and then some other way would be found to secure human health; the mind would be set to work in obedience to the higher intuition to find a better way.

Every one who feels enthusiasm on hearing about the Path is sure to have worked for it in a former birth, perhaps in many previous lives. It is encouraging to know this, for then one may expect to recover quickly the attainments of former lives, the deva-sight and deva-hearing which are the faculties of responding to the inner voice and of seeing life and the world with the eyes of the spirit.

Be humble, if thou would’st attain to wisdom: be humbler still, when wisdom thou hast mastered.

Be like the ocean which receives all streams and rivers; The ocean’s mighty calm remains unmoved; it feels them not.

Restrain by thy divine thy lower self. Restrain by the eternal the divine.

Aye, great is he who is the slayer of desire: still greater he in whom the Self divine has slain the very knowledge of desire.

Guard thou the lower lest it soil the higher.

As I have said before, he who stands in the presence of the Masters cannot but be humble, conscious as he is of the great gulf that exists between Them and himself. Not that even the physical presence of the Master, however, causes any uneasiness or depression; on the contrary, in His Presence we feel at our best and we realize that we can achieve because He has achieved. It is so also with the gaining of knowledge. The man who can grasp some big ideas can also see what remains to be learned that he does not yet know, and how much mystery there is in familiar things that others think to be quite simple and well-understood. So he who has much knowledge is likely to be humble, and the aspirant is warned that when pride rises in him, it is a sign that he is unconsciously shutting in front of himself the door to further and higher knowledge.

The candidate must also practise moving among the disturbances of the world, which play upon him all the time – physically, astrally and mentally – without permitting them to agitate him. He must so train the lower vehicles that they will respond not to these outer calls, but to the inner commands. The ego is divine; with its aid the lower self must be controlled; and when that is done even the ego will have to be controlled by the Monad, the eternal Self. That all this may be done, the pupil must constantly guard the vehicles, attending to purity of food and drink and magnetism, of words and feelings and thoughts, as has been fully explained in *The Masters and the Path*.

The way to final freedom is within thy Self. That way begins and ends outside of self.

Unpraised by men and humble is the mother of all rivers in Tīrthika's proud sight; empty the human form, though filled with Amrita's sweet waters, in the sight of fools. Withal the birth-place of the sacred rivers is the sacred land, and he who wisdom hath is honoured by all men.

The orthodox Christian usually considers that there are three stages in the growth of a soul. First, the man acts rightly for fear of hell. Secondly, he does so with the desire of reaching heaven. Thirdly, he does right for love of Christ, who sacrificed Himself to bring men to that condition of feeling. There is, however, a fourth stage, when the way is found by realizing ourselves as one with the Self. Then the man does right because it is right, not even for the sake of making the Master happy or of expressing gratitude to Him. Our deliverance is thus from within. No external consideration can determine our steps of progress on the Path. It is not a question of how long we have been at a certain level; we shall take the next step when we have developed the necessary qualities and powers within ourselves. No one need be anxious about this, for as the Tamil proverb says: "Ripe fruit does not remain upon the branch."

The Tīrthika, as we saw before, is the Brāhmaṇa ascetic who visits the sacred shrines, and is evidently regarded here as feeling somewhat proud of having done so. Just so, some of the Hadjis – the Muhammadans who have made a pilgrimage to Mecca – are proud because they have done that. Such men are somewhat like the society people of our own day who are proud to say they have seen the latest play or have read the book of the day – though what they have learned in the process it may be difficult to say. Perhaps Āryasanga's scribe, being a Buddhist, was not above sectarian feeling, for He seems to regard all the Tīrthikas as being of this type!

The great attraction of Benares, Hardwar, Kumbhakonam and other Tīrthas is the bathing in the sacred rivers. At the place last named the pilgrims resort to a huge tank, but they believe that it is fed from underground by the Ganges. But our Buddhist scribe points out, with some apparent pride, that the source of the principal sacred rivers of India is the sacred land, that is, Tibet. It is a remarkable fact that the great rivers, the Ganges, the Indus and the Airāvātī or Irrawadi do rise all very near together in the Himālayas, and, going in different direction, east,

south and west, sweep round and enclose the upper part of India in their giant embrace of thousands of miles. Those proud ascetics do not recognize that Tibet, a country which they despise, is the mother of their sacred rivers, says the writer, and he draws an analogy between Tibet and India, making India the body, which contains the sweet waters of immortality only in the incorrect vision of fools, and Tibet the source of wisdom, to be honoured by all men, that is all those who are not fools!

CHAPTER 6

THE WAY OF THE ARHAT

Arhans and Sages the boundless vision are rare as is the blossom of the Udambara tree. Arhans are born at midnight hour, together with the sacred plant of nine and seven stalks, the holy flower that opens and blooms in darkness, out of the pure dew and on the frozen bed of snow-capped heights, heights that are trodden by no sinful foot.

C.W.L. – At the present stage of evolution men who have attained the Arhat level are very rare. That is quite natural, since humanity is expected to attain the Asekha initiation only at the end of the seventh round, and the Arhat stage precedes that usually by only seven lives. Still, Arhatship is quite within our reach; it is principally a matter of our understanding what to aim at, and then using our wills to achieve that goal. Under the influence of the Lord Buddha thousands became Arhats. All that was due to His tremendous magnetism. Soon His successor will be with us, and we shall then also have unusual advantages.

The symbolism of this passage is probably capable of several different interpretations. The midnight hour may very well be taken as that darkest moment before the dawn when the candidate seems to be forsaken by everybody, even by his Master. It is at the fourth Initiation that the seventh principle comes into operation, as the candidate advances to the atmic plane. The sacred plant of seven stalks may symbolize this, and the number nine also, because that seventh principle is really three in one, which with the other six makes nine. The number nine is considered most sacred by the Hindus.

It is only by going through the greatest trials, by descending into the very depths of darkness, that the qualities required in the candidate for this initiation may be attained. The holy flower opens and blooms in that darkness, yet it comes as a result of development on the buddhic plane.

No Arhan, O Lanoo, becomes one in that birth when for the first time the Soul begins to long for final liberation. Yet, O thou anxious one, no warrior volunteering fight in the fierce strife between the living and the dead, not one recruit can ever be refused the right to enter on the path that leads toward the field of battle.

For either he shall win or he shall fall.

Yea, if he conquers, Nirvāṇa shall be his. Before he casts his shadow off, his mortal coil, that pregnant cause of anguish and illimitable pain, in him will men a great and holy Buddha honour.

And if he falls, e'en then he does not fall in vain; the enemies he slew in the last battle will not return to life in the next birth that will be his.

But if thou would'st Nirvāṇa reach, or cast the prize away, let not the fruit of action and inaction be thy motive, O thou of dauntless heart.

Know that the Bodhisattva who liberation changes for renunciation to don the miseries of secret life, is called thrice honoured, O thou candidate for woe throughout the cycles.

Swami T. Subba Row interpreted the fight between the living and the dead as the opposition between those who know and those who do not know. It will be remembered that this distinction was also made by the Master Kūthūmi when teaching Alcyone; he said that there were only two classes of people, those who know and those who do not know, those who have seen the way and those who have not yet seen it. He also said that those to be pitied most were not the bigoted and intolerant, but the millions who do not know that there is anything beyond the world worth striving for, and are happy in their ignorance. Madame Blavatsky interpreted the strife to be between the immortal higher ego and the lower personal ego, these being the living and the dead respectively.

The door is never closed against those who really wish to draw nearer to the occult path. He who wants to do so must be given his opportunity to try. And then, even if he fails it will not be in vain, for some of his enemies, his vices and weaknesses, will have been destroyed, and will not trouble him again. It is rare for anyone to blunder so badly as to be put himself back into a distinctly lower grade in life, as for instance, in India into a lower caste; but if a man takes up black magic containing a great deal of powerful evil and exerts himself very much in that line, he may wrench away the personality altogether from the ego, and create such bad karma as to make it necessary for him to go back to primitive conditions. Such cases are very rare. A person who has been really unworthy of his class or caste, is usually thrown back into unpleasant surroundings in the same class or just below it. It would, however, be great unwisdom not to try to rise because there may be danger of a fall from a higher and more responsible position.

On the other hand, a man who attains, it is said in the text, will be honoured as a great and holy Buddha. Of course, the Arhat is not technically a Buddha. But he is Buddha, that is to say, wise or enlightened.

Madame Blavatsky explained that “the secret life” is that of the Nirmāṇakāya. His greatness is hidden from the sight of man, and yet he continues to live in this world. The term is here used in a general way not only for those who remain on the threshold of liberation in order to fill the reservoir of spiritual force, but for all who remain behind, thus including the official Members of the Hierarchy, such as our Masters. We generally reserve the term in these days, however, for those who follow one of the seven great lines after taking the Fifth Initiation – Those who fill the reservoir.

We meet here once more the idea of the path of woe. The statement is somewhat misleading, and rather a misuse of the term woe. It is true that a Master who is using the physical body does not obtain the enjoyment of working on the nirvanic plane, but He would smile at the suggestion that He was in woe. When a man gains the nirvanic consciousness, He does not lose it because He keeps a physical body, except when He is actively engaged on the lower planes. At any moment, between writing two letters or any two pieces of work on the physical plane, He can slip away at once into the higher consciousness, and carry on its work, which is infinitely more satisfying, and altogether more glorious and blissful than anyone can imagine down here.

It is true that coming back from the higher planes to physical existence is like going down from the sunlight into a very dark dungeon; but you would not think of that if in that place there was someone whom you very much loved and wished to help. Physical life does involve the renunciation of the higher glory but the definite object of helping fills the soul to such an extent that certainly there is no suffering. Indeed, at a much lower stage of evolution, a person who knows that someone else is suffering and needs real help that he can give, and yet neglects that call and goes away to enjoy himself somewhere else, would afterwards be deeply troubled by remorse, so that his suffering would ultimately be greater than if he had renounced his pleasure in the first place. Really, the greatest happiness for all of us comes from doing the best that we know.

There is a large number of candidates who do not actually fall, but are not conscious of making progress. Many of these are subject occasionally to depression, and have the feeling that their efforts have been in vain, since there is nothing to show for them. They should not allow themselves to be depressed, because that spoils the astral atmosphere for other people, and is therefore selfish. But quite apart from that, it is foolish, because they ought to know that all the time they are making real inner progress. Long before they become aware of it in the physical brain, the astral and perhaps the mental body have been organized by their meditation, and they may be doing very definite and useful work in the inner worlds in a variety of ways. The whole life may seem to be a failure, but nevertheless much has been done which will be carried forward into the next life, and will then make possible some conspicuous progress, perhaps even on the physical plane. In any given life a man develops both good and evil qualities. The latter show themselves in the four lower sub-planes of the astral world. As these reflect their influence in the mental plane only on its four lower sub-planes, they do not affect the ego at all. The only emotions that can appeal in the three higher astral sub-planes are those which are good, such as love, sympathy and devotion. These affect the ego in the causal body, since it resides on the corresponding sub-planes of the mental world. Therefore every feeling and thought of a higher kind can be seen, even in this mechanical way, to have a permanent result in the higher self. And since it is the ego that treads the Path, he is making quite definite steps of progress with every right effort. So there is no reason to despair, nor to put off until tomorrow what we can do today just because we cannot do everything at once.

The Path is one, disciple, yet in the end, twofold. Marked are its stages by four and seven portals. At one end bliss immediate, and at the other bliss deferred. Both are of merit the reward: the choice is thine.

The one becomes the two, the open and the secret. The first one leadeth to the goal, the second to self-immolation.

When to the permanent is sacrificed the mutable, the prize is thine; the drop returneth whence it came. The open Path leads to the changeless change – Nirvāṇa, the glorious state of absoluteness, the bliss past human thought.

Thus, the first Path is liberation.

Yes, there is only one way, and that is by the unfolding of character. There is no limit to the possibilities of the ego in that respect; the noblest qualities of the greatest men exist in bud in all our fellow-men and will unfold into flower sooner or later. And at the end, when one has done all that is possible in the human kingdom, with the limitations of the human brain and environment, the path becomes twofold, and one must choose between liberation and renunciation. Here the term liberation means the acceptance of nirvāṇa, though sometimes it is used for mere escape from the wheel of births and deaths at a lower level, as we have already seen in studying *At the Feet of the Master*.

Those who do not follow the White Lodge use other methods, which often develop psychic powers to a relatively high point. But as the path of grey magic is not hedged round by restrictions, as is that taught by the Great White Lodge, sooner or later the man misuses his powers – for the temptation is too great. Sometimes, however, the followers of other lines end by coming into touch with the true teaching and pledging themselves to the Lodge. In America especially there is a great amount of more or less public teaching of occultism of the grey variety. But the real path is one – the Path of Holiness, the building of character.

The four portals mentioned here are the four initiations leading to Arhatship, described at length in *The Masters and the Path*. Another arrangement divides it into seven stages, as we shall see in the third Fragment of this book.

At the highest levels of attainment on this path the aspirant will recover the memory of his past lives, though at the same time his consciousness will have widened enormously, so as to

take in that of great hosts of beings, and he will realize that his power and love are not his own, but God's. Only separateness will have been lost, and looking back he will see that he has been living under a delusion of separateness. He will see, too, that his past lives were very commonplace; that the turning-point in them were not usually the events that he considered to be the most striking and important while he was experiencing them, but that very often the little things of daily life were the events that really made for the greatest progress.

But Path the second is renunciation, and therefore called the Path of woe.

The secret path leads the Arhan to mental woe unspeakable; woe for the living dead, and helpless pity for the men of karmic sorrow; the fruit of Karma Sages dare not still.

For it is written: "Teach to eschew all causes; the ripple of effect, as the great tidal wave, thou shalt let run its course."

By the "mental woe unspeakable" of the Arhan, which is another form of the word Arhat, on the secret path is meant the suffering that comes through sympathy. He sees all the pain and sorrow of the world; but at the same time he sees all the joy as well. He feels the greatest compassion for the "living dead", that is, for the great majority of mankind, who do not even know that there is something to strive for. Then, secondly, there is "helpless pity" that is aroused by seeing the karmic suffering, the results of foolishness, which he cannot – we should say, rather, dare not – still. We can explain to people the principle of karma, so that they will take their painful experiences in the best way, and thus mitigate the suffering to some extent, but we cannot do away with the results of past actions.

Even in exoteric Christianity, the "forgiveness" of sins is not explained as meaning that the results of sins will be abolished. In the Anglican Church, for instance, when a priest is ordained and the power is conferred on him to forgive sins, in accordance with the words which in the Christian scriptures are attributed to the Christ: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained", it is explained to him that what he has power to do is to set the offender right again with God, when by his sin he has put himself in the wrong, or, in other words, he can turn the man once more into the current of evolution, after he has set himself athwart it and so blocked his own advance. Behind that Christian conception there is a beautiful idea, but more beautiful still is the Theosophical realization that one can never get away from the Divine, that even the man who falls into avichi is still part of the Deity.

It has repeatedly happened that good and earnest students have refrained from giving help lest they should be interfering with a person's karma. No one can interfere with the law of karma, any more than with the law of gravitation. If you hold up a book in your hand, it contains the potential energy of gravitation, and the moment that the force you are employing to hold it up is withdrawn the book falls. The law of karma operates in the same way. Karma not paid off is similar to potential energy; it may be suspended for thousands of years or for hundreds of lives, but when the time comes it will manifest itself.

People sometimes think of karma as merciless. But it is not so. It is just as impersonal as any other law of nature. On the physical plane laws work without any regard to good or bad intentions. If a child falls over a precipice the amount of injury it sustains depends upon the height of the fall, and whether the ground is hard or soft, and not at all on such moral considerations as whether it was trying to pull a companion out of danger, or wanted to pick a flower for its mother, or whether it threw itself over in a fit of passion. Similarly, if a man catches hold of a hot bar of iron, he may do it to prevent its falling on someone else, or with intent to strike someone with it; the injury done to the hand will be the same in either case. That is the way in which karma works on the physical plane. But on the mental plane intentions count for a great deal, for we make our own character for the future by our thinking. So one should never abstain from giving help when possible. If when you have done

your best you fail, then you may say: “His karma did not allow of his being helped,” or else: “My karma did not give me the privilege of helping him”, but that is all. All that really matters is that we work for others. Work is expansive and cumulative; if you bring one person into Theosophy, he may bring another ten, and each of those, ten more.

Another sense in which we can take this verse, “the fruit of karma sages dare not still”, is that even if a great Adept were to do away with some apparent evil – with all poverty, for instance – He would effect no real good, but only go against the law of the Logos. I do not mean that the Logos wills such evil; it would be blasphemous to say that His scheme includes necessary suffering, that He causes it. Suffering comes only by doing what He has expressly told us not to do. It is true that all have suffered; no one, so far as we know, has always chosen the right thing and never made mistakes; but the suffering has always put us right when we have refused to learn in any other way, and thus the law has made certain for all of us the ultimate attainment of the indescribable bliss of nirvāṇa.

The open way, no sooner hast thou reached its goal, will lead thee to reject the Bodhisattvic body, and make thee enter the thrice glorious state of Dharmakāya, which is oblivion of the world and men for ever

The secret way leads also to Paranirvāṇic bliss – but at the close of Kalpas without number; Nirvāṇas gained and lost from boundless pity and compassion for the world of deluded mortals.

But it is said: “The last shall be the greatest.” Samyak Sambuddha, the Teacher of perfection, gave up his Self for the salvation of the world, by stopping at the threshold of Nirvāṇa, the pure state.

We have already considered the three vestures, and seen that no idea of selfishness can attach to one who takes any of them. The Nirmāṇakāyas are like the contemplative orders, filling the reservoir of spiritual force for the use of the Adepts who are in touch with our world. There are some fifty or sixty posts which the latter may fill. The Nirmāṇakāya still retains his permanent atoms, and so could, I suppose, if he wanted, fill one of these posts if it became vacant. The post of Bodhisattva falls vacant once in each root-race, but there are already many appointed to fill the office far into the future, who are now being prepared. Many of those who became Arhats during the incarnation of the Lord Buddha remain as Nirmāṇakāyas, because of His teaching.

All these offices and positions must be filled, and those who renounce nirvāṇa are only volunteering to do what we might call the dirty work. The Adept, if one may put it so, feels not so much the loss of pleasure, as the knowledge that working on the nirvanic level would be a million times more effective than down below. And yet someone must do that lower work. In the scheme of the Logos, the smallest bit of work is as necessary as the greatest, just as the oiling of a great locomotive is as necessary as the driving of it.

The Bodhisattvic body here alluded to is that of all those who remain to help the world – not only that of the very limited number of those who will be Buddhas.

Stopping at the threshold of nirvāṇa means that one does not enter in and entirely leave the lower planes, as some do, and as the Buddha might have done had He so chosen. He who thus remains has the higher consciousness to the fullest extent, and also retains His consciousness even down to the physical plane, and so can work on any plane required. It is said that the Buddha is, at His level, free of the solar system, that He can move to any of the planets of the system, just as some of us can move to other planets of our chain. Yet even for Him there must be a limit, because He has not yet entered into the consciousness of the Logos. I do not know whether His consciousness includes the sun; Swami T. Subba Row once spoke of the sun as a place of life so intense that even a Dhyān Chohan can hardly enter it.

The buddhic plane appears to take us anywhere through our chain of worlds. Nirvanic consciousness would mean consciousness anywhere in the solar system. At the Fourth

Initiation a touch of nirvāṇa is given, but that does not mean the full consciousness of that plane. It is entry into the lowest part of it, and one has still to rise, sub-plane by sub-plane, until full consciousness of the plane is acquired.

Of the Buddha it is said that He attained Paranirvāṇa. Thus it is possible to consider different levels of nirvāṇa – the different sub-planes of the atmic plane, then the two planes of our system beyond that, and on into the higher cosmic planes.

Thou hast the knowledge now concerning the two ways. Thy time will come for choice, O thou of eager Soul, when thou hast reached the end and passed the seven portals. Thy mind is clear. No more art thou entangled in delusive thoughts, for thou hast learned all. Unveiled stands Truth and looks thee sternly in the face. She says:

“Sweet are the fruits of rest and liberation for the sake of self; but sweeter still the fruits of long and bitter duty: aye, renunciation for the sake of others, of suffering fellow-men.”

The Bodhisattva who has won the battle, who holds the prize within his palm, yet says in his divine compassion:

“For others’ sake this great reward I yield” – accomplishes the greater renunciation.

A Saviour of the world is he.

* * * *

Behold! The goal of bliss and the long Path of woe are at the furthest end. Thou canst choose either, O aspirant to sorrow, throughout the coming cycles!

Auṃ vajrapāṇi hūṃ.

The greater renunciation is renouncing the higher work, after seeing it, in order to do the lesser work, which we have seen to be just as necessary. Such a matter as the renunciation of the desires of the personality is an altogether lower renunciation.

We must not import into our thought here any tinge of the popular Christian idea of a Saviour who comes to save us from eternal torment. The idea is, of course, nothing but a horrible distortion of the earlier and truly Christian teaching, as for example that of Origen, who believed in the deification of man through Christ. Every one who has risen into true communion with the Master has become identified with Him, and is safe or sure to complete the treading of the Path in the present cycle. The original meaning of the term “saved” has been explained in *The Masters and the Path*, p. 146.

When we speak of the *Nirmāṇakāyas* as the Guardian Wall, we do not for a moment imagine that they are protecting us against evil powers who are waiting for an opportunity to pounce upon mankind. They are engaged, as said before, in filling the reservoir with force used by the Great White Brotherhood, to give help and guidance intelligently wherever it is possible, and to save mankind from many mistakes which it might otherwise commit, and from the suffering which would then ensue.

This Fragment ends not with “Om maṇi padme hūṃ”, as did the first, but a different formula: “Auṃ vajrapāṇi hūṃ.” Vajra means a thunder-bolt, as well as a diamond. The term reminds us of Jove with his thunderbolts and of the Norse God Thor. This thunderbolt is the dorje, the rod of power, of which I have given a sketch in *The Masters and the Path*, p. 325.

FRAGMENT III

THE SEVEN PORTALS

CHAPTER 1

THE PĀRAMITĀ HEIGHTS

Āchārya, the choice is made, I thirst for wisdom. Now hast Thou rent the veil before the secret path, and taught the greater Yāna. Thy servant here is ready for Thy guidance.

C.W.L. – There is a foot-note to the word Āchārya, which means a spiritual preceptor or guru. It explains that among the Northern Buddhists these are chosen from among the saintly men learned in gotrabhū-jñāna. The gotrabhū is the man who is ready for any one of the Initiations, he who has all the qualities and only awaits permission to present himself. Gotrabhū-jñāna is the knowledge of those qualifications. The Masters – Adepts who take pupils or apprentices – are They who have that knowledge.

The term Yāna has already been discussed in Chapter 1 of the first Fragment.

‘Tis well, Shrāvaka. Prepare thyself, for thou wilt have to travel on alone. Thy teacher can but point the way. The Path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the pilgrims.

The word shrāvaka comes from the root *shru* which means to listen. The “listener” is one who attends to the religious instructions, says a foot-note, and when from theory he passes into the practice or performance of asceticism, he becomes a Shramaṇa, from *shrama*, exertion. The two terms have much the same meaning as the *akoustikoi* and *asketai* among the Greeks.

All who tread the Path must gain the same qualities or virtues, but the modes of training for this are very varied. There are seven great types of men, or seven rays, and along each of these aspirants are drawn to teachers of their own rays. Even within the same type the teaching is adapted to individual needs, so the pupils of one Master often receive quite different treatment. Thus a Master may send one of His pupils into seclusion and another out into the struggle of the world. He may give one the satisfaction of knowing that he is being taught, and leave another without that knowledge for a great length of time. Of this training and the different types some considerable account has been given in *The Masters and the Path*.

Which will thou choose, O thou of dauntless heart? The Samtan of eye doctrine, fourfold Dhyāna, or thread thy way through Pāramitās, six in number, noble gates of virtue leading to Bodhi and to Prajñā, seventh step of wisdom?

The rugged path of fourfold Dhyāna winds uphill. Thrice great is he who climbs the lofty top.

The Pāramitā heights are crossed by a still steeper path. Thou hast to fight thy way through portals seven, seven strongholds held by cruel, crafty powers – passions incarnate.

Little is said in this Fragment about the fourfold dhyāna, but much about the paramitas. The steps in meditation or dhyāna are always spoken of as three, as we have seen in studying the first Fragment, and these taken together are called saṃyama. These three are dhāraṇā, dhyāna and samādhi, or concentration, meditation and contemplation, and there is the preliminary practice of pratyāhāra, making the fourth. We have also studied the pāramitās in the second Fragment. Here the path for the attainment of those virtues is spoken of as having seven

portals, at each of which the candidate has to struggle with and slay a great fault or sin.

It seems a little misleading to put meditation and the development of these qualities one against the other, for both are necessary. One cannot meditate without having these qualities, and one cannot develop the qualities to perfection without meditation. It may have been that even at His day Āryasanga was contrasting the path of retirement, of the man who avoided the difficulties and distractions of the world in order to go by himself to meditate apart from men, with the path of the spiritual life lived in the midst of the world of men, which requires the practice of ideals in all the affairs of daily life. He would then have been speaking of the former as a lofty path, but of the latter as greater still, or rather steeper still. Instances of men achieving perfection amidst the business of daily life are quite common in the Hindu books. The great gurus of the *Mahābhārata* were active in the council-chamber and on the battlefield, and a merchant is also mentioned, in the person of Tulādhāra. In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* the path of duty and action is taught, and Shrī Krishna tells Arjuna, His pupil, that Janaka and others attained to perfection by action, and he should do the same, performing action without personal attachment to the fruit of it, but for the sake of mankind. (*Op. cit.* III. 20.)

A glance at the opposites of the paramitas will show the nature of the cruel, crafty powers which must be fought. The man who is self-centred forgets that he is one unit in a whole, that, as Epictetus said, without mankind around him he would not even be a man. Charity and general ethical development or morality in its full sense do away with this self-centredness, and open the man up so that he thinks more of others than of himself, and becomes a benefactor to those who suffer, a good companion to his peers, and a responsive pupil to his teacher.

People often allow their patience to be ruffled by resentment. They “feel hurt”, and are discontented, complaining inwardly, if not outwardly. This means that they forget that just because there is a law of justice, which is all the time engaged in repaying past debts between man and man, there must be some apparent injustice. Sometimes a man wants to see the result of his own work at an early stage, because he is thinking of himself, not of the work, and he wants to boast about it or at least to congratulate himself upon its achievement. At a later stage, he is sorry because his efforts made for a good purpose seem to fail; there is still something of discontent and impatience in that. Later he will see that it was the effort that was the important thing, not the results. When these feelings trouble him no more, he will have acquired patience.

Again, the natural man is lazy. He likes to bask in the sun, and will not exert himself until hunger moves him, or there arises a vainglorious desire to hang more scalps to his belt, which urges him to rise while his fellow-savages are sleeping. Tireless, dauntless energy is not “natural”. Observe our President, utilizing every moment of the day, always working, never wasting time. Do you suppose it was natural to her in the past to be always at work? She does it because she has seen the beauty of the goal – to be a helper of mankind.

Meditation also is not “natural”. It calls for much trouble, a strong exertion of the mind, and the keeping of the body in subjection. The acquirement of wisdom also involves study and effort, and sometimes the courage to face uncomfortable and even dangerous experiences.

Be of good cheer, disciple; bear in mind the golden rule. Once thou hast passed the gate Srotāpatti, “he who the stream hath entered”; once thy foot hath pressed the bed of the nirvanic stream in this or any future life; thou hast but seven other births before thee, O thou of adamantine will.

Seven lives is the average period between the First Initiation and the Fourth, but if the will is sufficiently strong, a man can attain the goal in less. It is analogous to the preparation of a student for an examination; it is considered that a certain period of time spent in study should fit the average candidate to pass, but any given man may take a longer or a shorter time. Two lives have often brought a man from his First Initiation to Arhatship; some few people have

achieved that goal in one life. The same rule then holds good for the attainment of Adeptship, for the Arhat is just half way.

Look on. What seest thou before thine eye, O aspirant to God-like wisdom?

“The cloak of darkness is Upon the deep of matter; within its folds I struggle. Beneath my gaze it deepens, Lord; it is dispelled beneath the waving of Thy hand. A shadow moveth, creeping like the stretching serpent coils. ... It grows, swells out, and disappears in darkness.”

It is the shadow of thyself outside the Path, cast on the darkness of thy sins.

Here one would prefer to say faults and failings rather than sins. These become much more dangerous on the Path than ever they were before. Therefore an iron determination to eradicate them utterly and at once is required for treading the way. When one sees a fault in oneself, one should go and do exactly the opposite, unflinchingly and steadily, until it is completely gone. Few people are willing to do this. Sometimes they beg one to be open with them and tell them just what it is that keeps them back. If one does it, one risks losing their friendship. Generally they become indignant and say that they know that they have many faults but not the one to which you have drawn their attention and that they do not think much of your judgment or intuition. There are exceptions, but that is the general rule.

On the Path a man has to live by his own rules, not simply to follow the rules or conventions of the social environment in which he finds himself. This increases his difficulties and dangers. He is trying his utmost – of that we may be sure, for if he were not, he would be throwing away the fruits of the efforts of many lives, and that would be madness. Others have no means of judging him. He holds in his hand a key which others do not possess, and for him therefore all things wear a new aspect. He needs the kind thoughts of others – not criticism of what they do not understand – for he is not insensitive, and they will aid him to rise rapidly and become a power to uplift the world.

“Yea, Lord; I see the Path; its foot in mire, its summit lost in glorious light nirvāṇic; and now I see the ever-narrowing portals on the hard and thorny road to Jñāna.”

Thou seest well, Lanoo. These portals lead the aspirant across the waters on to the other shore.

“The other shore” is a phrase that is constantly used. There are two distinct forms of symbology which make use of this metaphor. In one, the whole of life is likened to the ocean, and men are ferried to the other shore, to the state beyond death’ and rebirth, by the Mahāyāna or the Hinayāna. The second is a more technical meaning. At the first great Initiation, a man steps out from the general evolution, which he has now completed, and begins the special one. As much as is permissible of the ceremony that then takes place has been printed in *The Masters and the Path*, including the words: “You have entered upon the stream. May you soon reach the further shore.” (*Op, cit.*, Ch. VII.) That shore is, of course, Adeptship.

**Each portal hath a golden key that openeth its gate; and these keys are:
Dāna, the key of charity and love immortal.**

This is not mere charity in the sense of giving alms, nor what is commonly called a charitable attitude, though that is much more than the former. It means utter readiness to give oneself and all one has in service. There are not many people in the world who have reached that stage, who are ready to employ all their time, energy, money, feelings and thoughts to this end. And even for those who have reached that point there is a further stage, for there may still exist the fault of identifying the work with oneself instead of oneself with the work. There are many who are willing to take up great work, but few who will forget themselves to the point of doing any insignificant piece of work of which no notice will be taken and for which no thanks are given. The disciple of the Master has to look round and see what has to

be done that he can do that is not being done. He must not look with disfavour upon the humblest task, thinking, “I am too good for this.” In the Master’s work no part is more important than any other, though some portions are more difficult than others, and therefore require special training or unusual faculties or ability.

To sacrifice yourself thoroughly, you must also sacrifice your feelings. If these are liable to be hurt, you will waste a lot of force in being offended that should have been put into the work. We must always do our best, and not stop to think: “What a fine fellow I am.”

Then we must also have “love immortal”. Tennyson said of the dead:

They watch like God the rolling hours
With larger, other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

God knows all, and He does not lose patience. We are apt to lose patience with one another, and quickly get tired of making allowances, but He does not. It has been well said: “*Tout comprendre, c’est tout pardonner.*” “To understand all is to pardon all.”

Shīlā, the key of harmony in word and act, the key that counterbalances the cause and the effect, and leaves no further room for karmic action.

The word shīlā is generally translated simply “conduct”, but here the writer emphasizes the idea of harmony. He who practises shila will be ever attentive to his own dharma, studious of what he can do with the powers that he has in the position in which karma has placed him. This is the quality also which will close up his karmic account as quickly as possible, and enable him to enjoy ever-increasing freedom and opportunity to do good.

Kshānti, patience sweet, that nought can ruffle.

While the candidate at this stage of his journey must acquire a great measure of this quality, it still remains to be perfected later on. To be utterly unruffled is a very high condition. The Arhat is spoken of as the perfect – the venerable – yet he has five fetters to cast off before reaching Adeptship, and of these the last but one is the possibility of being ruffled by anything whatever.

Vairāgya, indifference to pleasure and to pain, illusion conquered, truth alone perceived.

The whole of the third part of our commentary on *At the Feet of the Master* is taken up with the quality of vairāgya, which is there translated desirelessness. As was said before, it is usually translated indifference or dispassion.

This quality is possessed by the man who is keenly alert about his work, but never allows personal considerations to stand in his way. He has got rid of feelings that can be hurt, but has not lost sympathy. He is indifferent to the things which commonly sway men, is not disturbed by passions, but has calm, cool judgment. This so-called indifference does not mean that the man will not put enthusiasm into his work, but that he will do so when it is painful and troublesome just as much as when it is full of pleasure. When the quality is well developed, the man will see that most of our pleasures and pains are illusions, and are caused by a wrong way of taking things. He will see the truth of the saying of the ancient Stoic that it is our opinions about things that trouble us more than the things themselves.

Vīrya, the dauntless energy that fights its way to the supernal truth, out of the mire of lies terrestrial.

Each person who approaches the Path has his own special qualities, on account of which he will find Some of these portals especially easy to pass and others difficult. The quality of patience, for example, would generally be much easier for the Eastern disciple, and the quality of energy for the Western. When this list was first placed before us, some of us wondered why the more difficult qualities were placed at the beginning. Really it was not so. The Lord

Buddha was an Indian and he drew it up for the Indian people, and probably He placed first on the list the steps which they were likely to find the easiest.

It certainly is difficult, when one has first developed a great deal of energy, or virya, to acquire the sweet patience, or kshānti, afterwards. A person who has this energy and hears about the path wants immediately to tread it to the very end – but without patience he will cause such a disturbance all along the way, and create such a quantity of troublesome karma that he will delay himself considerably. On the other hand the man who has the patience and not the energy will perhaps be content to go along very slowly – and his progress will then be slow indeed.

There is a tendency of this kind at present in the East. I remember that in Ceylon I was once told that in ancient times people really attained nirvāṇa, but that now times were evil – it was what was called a dark age, a kali yuga – and these achievements were no longer possible, though perhaps in some far-distant, golden future they would again become so. But the great teachers are with us still, and though, as the Christian Scripture says, strait is the gate and narrow is the way, yet now as ever that gate can be found and that way can be trodden.

In these matters, no man can tell where he stands. To many Theosophy comes as a recollection; that means that they knew something about it in former lives. If in those lives a man has worked hard to reach the Path, in this life a little more work will bring him to it. But if he is only now beginning that effort he has a long way to go, and it would be an almost superhuman feat for him to enter the stream in this incarnation.

The efforts that many Theosophists are making imply a great strain; that is why there is sometimes so much disturbance in the Theosophical Society, so much irritability and quarrelling. I have heard people say that other Societies have far less trouble of this kind. That is naturally the case. If you join a geographical or geological or other similar society, you are simply joining a set of people who are working together to acquire more knowledge, generally of a particular kind. But in the Theosophical Society many people are putting a great strain upon their astral and mental bodies and that reacts upon their physical bodies. I think, therefore, that as we shall continue to deal with a set of sensitive and not yet perfect people, who are pressing forward more rapidly than nature in its normal course intended, the history of the Society will probably continue to record many disturbances, though the time is bound to come for each one of its members when he will acquire the “patience sweet that naught can ruffle”.

Dhyāna, whose golden gate once opened leads the Narjol towards the realm of Sat eternal and its ceaseless contemplation.

In earlier editions of this book, you will find that the word narjol is mis-spelt naljor. This was a mistake, corrected in the later editions. The mis-spelling was due to the fact that Madame Blavatsky read the word astrally, and reading a book astrally you see at the same time what is written on the front of the page, and also the reverse of the characters as from behind. Of course, you would not focus your attention on the reverse aspect of the print or writing; you would normally notice only the pages spread out before you – those would be quite distinct, and the reverse would then be out of focus. Still, reading in this way it is quite easy to make mistakes and get some things reversed. This is especially true of numbers; you can see at once if you are looking at 7 the wrong way about, but 18 can easily be mistaken for 81.

Madame Blavatsky sometimes got numbers reversed in this way. She used often to look astrally at rare books, of which only one or two copies exist, and some of us would go to the British Museum to verify a quotation which she had stated as being, let us say, on page 139, and would find that it was on page 931. Generally we found her quotations accurate, though sometimes there were small inaccuracies; once, I remember, she left out the word “not”, which did make quite a difference to the sense! Seeing that Madame Blavatsky did not

know Sanskrit, Pali or Tibetan, and had to depend entirely on her memory when using words in those languages, as she so frequently did, the wonder is not that she made some mistakes, but that she made so few.

The word narjol, which has led us into this little digression, is a Tibetan word which means adept or saint, or, even better, yogī. Its derivation is from a word meaning “peace”. The narjol is therefore one who strives after the inner peace.

It is dhyāna or meditation which opens the gates of the higher self. Most of our Theosophical information, and of what is written in the ancient Scriptures, has come to us by way of clairvoyance. There is a mass of investigation waiting to be done by clairvoyance. In occult chemistry, for example, we have examined the elements and some compounds, but there is a vast work to be done in that field by someone who has the faculty of etheric vision and magnification, and the patience to observe and count the atoms over and over again.

The Stanzas of Dzyan must have been written by one who could read the minds of the directing Devas, and thus see what they were aiming at. What we say about rings and rounds may not be exact, but the information given about the astral and mental planes, being the result of thousands of observations, is reasonably sure to be so. There may still arise errors from premature generalization – that happens in every science – from the mistaking of the abnormal for the normal, or from the oversight of some class of phenomena bearing on a general theory. Such, for example, was our former idea about the interval between lives, and the way in which egos incarnated regularly in successive sub-races, which was announced as the normal course of evolution until we discovered another type of egos who kept mostly to one sub-race and reincarnated twice as frequently as the others. There may be half a dozen more types for all we know; all we can say is that we have not yet come across them.

The old Scriptures are especially valuable because they were largely written by people who could see clairvoyantly. Many are repelled from them because of the way in which they present their ideas, sometimes by their archaic flavour. Every age has had its own methods of expression. Our modern way is quite bald; we put things as plainly as we can. In ancient Egypt, to take a different example, everything was told in a very poetic garb. The Gnostic books also wrapped everything up in elaborate symbology. Therefore, if one wants to study the *Book of the Dead*, or *Pistis Sophia*, even supposing one gets an accurate translation, which is not always the case, one has still to try to put oneself back into the attitude of mind of the times when they were written, and that is very difficult. It also takes time – more than the modern man can usually give to it, if he is also engaged in earning his livelihood in some other way.

In the old days in every part of the world life was much more leisurely. It was the custom to make things comfortable and easy for everybody, and generally to put off till tomorrow any business that could possibly be avoided today. In looking up a great number of past lives, I found the same thing everywhere. There were no trains to catch or newspapers or magazines to bring out by a certain time of day or on a certain date. The nearest approach that I have found to a regular serial publication was a series of letters, brought out at intervals which were very long and quite irregular – so that sometimes months elapsed between the issues.

In spite of all this, men did attain Adeptship in those old days, but they must have found it hard to acquire virya, the dauntless energy required for the path. Still, the unrelenting activity, the ceaseless hurry of our modern Western world, is not exactly the same thing as virya. It is often by outward compulsion that people show their energy. If they are not punctual and assiduous in business, the competition is such that other men will pass ahead of them and they will not be able to make a living. But the student of occultism is moved by his own inner compulsion, and is always working steadily – but without hurry or flurry, for he wants his work to be well done.

Probably the principal danger in this matter is that of doing too little, of letting things go

undone which ought to be done. Yet some people spoil their work by undertaking too much. Mrs. Besant is a magnificent example of the middle course; she is always at work, and plans all her time to the best advantage, but she does not attempt more than she can do. She will often say about a thing: “This is not my work, for I have no time for it.”

There is truth in the saying that the busiest man always has the most time. It is so because he does not mismanage his time. But there are men who take upon themselves more work than they can really do, sometimes because they have the feeling, which may be well founded, that no one else among the people around them can do the work quite as well. This was once the case many years ago with a certain General Secretary of one of the Sections of the Theosophical Society. He was a splendid worker of great ability, and his opinion that he could do things best was probably justified. But he undertook so much that work left undone for lack of time accumulated until, when his successor came into office, things were in an almost hopeless muddle.

It is better to tread the middle path in this matter, to portion out your work carefully, and to spare some of the time to teach and to train other workers. It is often much more trouble to show someone else how to do a piece of work than to do it oneself, but one hopes that, when one has shown him once or twice, or if necessary ten times, he will be able to do it alone a hundred times, so that in the end there will be gain.

Prajñā, the key to which makes of a man a God, creating him a Bodhisattva, son of the Dhyānis.

Such to the portals are the golden keys.

We have now come to the last of these qualities. Prajñā, which means, once more, wisdom – more in the sense of a faculty of consciousness than of knowledge that is wisdom because it penetrates to the life behind the form. Jñāna, also translated wisdom, is not a faculty, but prajñā is.

It is said that this quality makes the Bodhisattva. This latter term is used here in a wide sense. Technically, a Bodhisattva is one who is destined to become a Buddha, who has given to a living Buddha the pledge that in a future life he will take up that office. But all men alike will pass through the level of the Bodhisattva, on their various lines. There are seven great planetary lines, and Masters taking pupils are at work along each of them. Every man, going along his own line, will ultimately be drawn into contact with a Master standing at the head of that line. There is, however, the possibility of a man's changing from one line to another through devotion to a particular Master, but this requires a certain extra amount of study and effort; for a man most readily adapts himself to occult training on his own line.

He who becomes a Buddha must thousands of years beforehand have made his vow to a living Buddha, and it is said that from that time onward the influence of the Buddha overshadows him, and that when in due course he attains Buddhahood, the great influence of the spiritual Buddha hovers over the incarnate Buddha. The Lord Gautama is said to have taken His vow to Buddha Dipankara, and the latter is supposed to have been also present in the background during the years when the Buddha Gautama was preaching. One can only repeat what has been said on these high matters, but certainly it is a very beautiful idea. It is also a natural one, for we know that on a much lower level the Master is always overshadowing the disciple, who is part of His consciousness.

CHAPTER 2

TUNING THE HEART

Before thou canst approach the last, O weaver of thy freedom, thou hast to master these Paramitas of perfection – the virtues transcendental six and ten in number – along the weary path.

For, O disciple! before thou wert made fit to meet thy Teacher face to face, thy Master light to light, what wert thou told?

Before thou canst approach the foremost gate thou hast to learn to part thy body from thy mind, to dissipate the shadow, and to live in 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.

C.W.L. – To meet thy Master light to light expresses a wonderful truth. When the pupil comes into touch with his Master's consciousness, and the latter enfolds him for the first time, his aura shines forth brilliantly with the Master's light, as I have explained in *The Masters and the Path*, Ch. V.

These verses go again over much of the ground traversed at the beginning of the First Fragment. To part the body from the mind means literally that one must learn to make the mayavi rupa, and metaphorically that one must discriminate what is reality and understand that one is not the body. The astral body is the shadow of the physical one; this must not be destroyed, but its influence over the pupil must be done away with. One must use it, but not allow it to dominate one. To live in the eternal is not to leave the world, but to judge things all the time from the standpoint of the eternal life. All these things we have considered in studying *At the Feet of the Master*.

He who learns to live from the point of view of the eternal, of the reincarnating ego, soon learns that nothing that happens to one from the outside matters at all. When we read the *Lives of Alcyone*, we see that many of the characters in them went through much suffering. Some of those characters were ourselves, and we know that the suffering was temporary and does not affect us now. Looking back, we sometimes wonder how some of the characters endured such suffering. Well, they did, and came through it safely. It is not always so easy to feel that one will come through present suffering all right, because one is in the midst of it, instead of looking at it in perspective. One cannot expect to see clearly the whole of an experience or an event in which one is actually immersed. A soldier on the battlefield, for example, sees very little of what is going on, and does not usually know the importance of the particular movement or manoeuvre in which he is taking part; his share of the work may seem trivial, and yet it may be an important factor in deciding the battle, or it may be spectacular and prominent and yet not be really vital to the success of his side.

Nevertheless, I do not think we can overrate the importance of the Theosophical Society. It is one of the most important movements that the world has ever seen. To the outer world, the rulers and statesmen, it looks like any other Society – a mere handful of people. Yet it was founded by the two Masters who will be the heads of the sixth root-race, and They are choosing from among us the people who are fit to take part in that race in its early development. But we can very easily overrate our own personal share in the work of the Society. No one is indispensable, as we have had occasion to find out in the course of the Society's history. Even our great leaders, Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, have departed, but the Society has survived their loss, and gone on spreading its ideals and permeating the world with them, because the Masters remain.

Disciples of the Masters have to learn to identify their consciousness with that of their fellow-men and therefore certain exercises are often set for the purpose. The results are often

surprising when the pupil begins by trying to enter the consciousness of various animals. They have very limited lines of thought, and actions for which people will often credit them with motives drawn from human experience are often due to something different. On the other hand, they follow their few lines of thought much further than is commonly realized; so that in some ways we credit them with very much more than is in them, but in others with very much less.

Often a pupil is put into the body of someone else, in order that he may understand that other's position, and also that he may realize himself in different forms. A rather drastic experience of the kind was related to me by Mr. Damodar K. Mavalankar many years ago. He was one day taken out of his body, and flung into that of a drunken sailor in some dock in a foreign country. He was a Brāhmaṇa, with all the Brāhmaṇa's hereditary shrinking, if it may be so described, from contact with what is low or unclean – a feeling stronger than almost any Western person can quite understand. Naturally, it was a terrible shock. He found himself immersed in what to him was unspeakable filth. Yet in the midst of this horror which had suddenly fallen upon him he was able to continue to realize himself, and to say to himself: "I am not this; I am Damodar." And he was able to remain calm, and to think: "This too is humanity; I have to sympathize also with this." So he came out of the test with credit.

Many people, if subjected to such a test, would have got into a great flurry, would have thought it a dreadful nightmare, and in struggling madly to get free would have injured themselves. To most, perhaps, the first feeling would have been one of disgust. But an Adept does not feel like that. He does not condone any wrong; He would realize that very much more than we could, but He is not disgusted. He recognizes all the stages of human life. He remembers that He has been through something like this Himself – ages ago, perhaps on some other planet. His buddhic consciousness is also perfectly unfolded, and when that is the case one is able to enfold sinners within oneself. There is no repulsion for the man who is doing wrong; one feels only the desire to give whatever help is possible. Generally, however, only a little can be given to people in those stages, and that must be given cautiously. Not only sympathy is necessary, but also wisdom to understand what he can respond to, and patience and tact to make him realize the excellence of a life a little superior to that which he has been leading.

It is through this experience of identification that one learns wise sympathy, and I think that is the only way in which it can be done perfectly. One sees then why a man does certain things, and how they appear to him. Those who have not that experience must do their best to try to see things from the point of view of others.

Thou shalt not let thy senses make a playground of thy mind.

Thou shalt not separate thy being from Being, and the rest, but merge the ocean in the drop, the drop within the ocean.

So shalt thou be in full accord with all that lives; bear love to men as though they were thy brother-pupils, disciples of one Teacher, the sons of one sweet mother.

The first of these verses reminds one of the earlier portion of the first Fragment, where it says: "The mind is the great slayer of the real. Let the disciple slay the slayer." It is such a slayer because we have allowed prejudices to grow up in it. It is commonplace knowledge that we never see another person, but only our thought of him. To slay the slayer, however, does not mean that we are to try to get along without the intellect, and trust solely to our impulses, which are a stage lower. We must rise to the intuitional level, which is above the intellect, and allow that to determine to what objects our thoughts shall be directed.

If people could see the effect of prejudice in the mental body, they would be surprised. The matter of that body is, or should be, in a constant rhythmical flow, and different parts of it, or rings, have to do with thought along different lines. If one has a prejudice along some one line of thinking, there is a congestion in the ring which has to do with that line; the matter in that

place no longer flows freely. The appearance made on the mental body by this congestion is exactly like that of a great wart. We ought to be able to look out through any portion of the mental body, but the effect of that wart is to interfere with our vision. When we try to look out through this part of the mental body things will appear distorted, as has been explained before. (Vol. I, Part IV, Chapter 1, *Control of Mind*.)

It is in this way that the mind is the slayer of the real. Even the best people have some prejudices. Someone, for example, who prides himself on being free from them in one direction – let us say about caste or colour – will have them in another, perhaps in regard to manners. He does not mind whether a man's skin be brown, or white, or red, or yellow; but if the man should happen to eat off his knife, or pronounce words in a provincial way, he is not at all indifferent.

The worst of these prejudices are generally those of the existence of which we are quite unaware, with which perhaps we have grown up from childhood. They are exceedingly hard to eradicate. The only way to conquer them completely is by love. If the man's manners offend us, he will learn better ones in time – if not in this incarnation, then in the next – but the man is part of the Logos, just as we are. The love of God, like the peace of God, passeth understanding, and not only excuses all, but feels no need to excuse.

We must learn to bear love to all men as though they were our brother-pupils. The tie between pupils of the same Master is the strongest in the world, except that which exists between members of the Brotherhood. In time, the pupil will learn to extend the quality of love that he has acquired under these conditions of unity, until he feels it towards all whom he sees.

**Of teachers there are many: the Master-Soul is one, Ālaya, the universal Soul.
Live in that Master as its ray in thee. Live in thy fellows as they live in it.**

This is the same idea of unity, put even more beautifully.

**Before thou standest on the threshold of the Path; before thou crossest the
foremost gate, thou hast to merge the two into the one and sacrifice the personal to
the Self impersonal, and thus destroy the path between the two – Antaḥkaraṇa.**

The general meaning of this verse is quite clear to us, but the use of the word antaḥkaraṇa is a little unusual, especially as Madame Blavatsky has annotated it. She says: “Antaḥkaraṇa is the lower Manas, the path of communication or communion between the personality and the higher Manas or human Soul. At death it is destroyed as a path or medium of communication, and its remains survive in a form as a Kāmarūpa – the shell.”

In the latter part of the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, Madame Blavatsky sometimes uses the word kama-manas for what we now call the lower mind, meaning a mind the character of which is built up during the personal life under the influence of kama. The antaḥkaraṇa could then be regarded as the lower manas pure and undented, the ray of the higher manas. During life, it is possible for a man to get into touch with the higher manas through that channel, and as we have seen in *The Masters and the Path*, Ch. VIII, the pupil addresses himself to the task of so widening the channel that it is always fully open, and the active higher manas may express himself all the time in the personality. But after death the average man has not the freedom that he had before to initiate new activities or to try new experiments; he is now in the world of the effects of the causes he set going during earth life, and must first work out his collected lower emotions on the astral plane, and then his collected higher emotions on the lower mental plane, in the devachanic condition. So, in a sense, his antaḥkaraṇa has ceased to function as a downward channel. This does not apply, however, to the man who is the master of his own feelings and thoughts or to the pupil who ranges the astral and lower mental planes at will.

During life the ego in the causal body has entrusted some of his own energy, as it were, to

the search for useful experience to which his personality was adapted, and in so far as the personality failed in its mission, that energy, those rays of the higher manas, have been lost, remaining but as a centre for the shell, or even for the production of a dweller on the threshold if they are strong enough to last over to the next incarnation.

In current Theosophical terms, after death the man remains in the astral plane for a period, longer or shorter, according to the quantity and virility of his selfish desires, be they gross or refined or mixed. Then he meets with his second death, the death of the astral body, and goes on into devachan, a special condition on the lower mental plane, in his lower mental body, in which he works up to perfection all his unselfish ambitions and desires. While he is in this latter state, some part of the discarded astral corpse may still be roaming about in a congenial environment, if that body was coarse. All this has been very fully explained in my little works *The Astral Plane* and *The Devachanic Plane*. Anything like a full description of these after-death states here would swell this book to unwieldy proportions.

When writing the article on Lost Souls, which has been incorporated in *The Inner Life*, I thought of a simple explanation of the connection between the higher and lower mind. By far the greater part of the ego belongs to the highest sub-plane of the mental; a lesser portion belongs to the second sub-plane, and still less to the third. We may therefore imagine a diagram representing the ego on those three sub-planes, as being shaped something like a conventional heart, tapering to a point at the bottom. In the ordinary person only that little point comes down into the personality – so that a very small portion of the ego is in activity in reference to it.

Probably not more than a hundredth part of it is active in people who are unevolved. With occult students a little of the second sub-plane is generally in activity also. More advanced students have a great deal of that sub-plane in activity, and in the stage below that of the Arhat, about one half the ego is active.

The hold that the ego has over his lower vehicles is only very partial, and the antahkaraṇa may be regarded as the arm stretched out between the little piece of the ego that is awakened, and the part put down, the hand, which frequently forgets about the higher and often even works against it. When the two are perfectly joined this attenuated thread ceases to exist.

In Sanskrit the word antahkaraṇa means the inner organ or inner instrument, and the destruction of that would imply that the ego would no longer need an instrument, but would work directly on the personality. The ego actually loses a part of himself when the cohesion of the ego as a whole is weaker than the forces of entanglement, but he has also gained something during the life, and generally (always excepting the case of a very wicked life) the gain is more than the loss sustained through the entanglement with the lower manas. A little of himself and a little of the lower manas is left in the kama-rupa at the second death. The antahkaraṇa should therefore be thought of as the link which joins the higher and the lower self, and which disappears when one will operates the two.

Thou hast to be prepared to answer Dharma, the stern law, whose voice will ask thee at thy first, at thy initial step:

“Hast thou complied with all the rules, O thou of lofty hopes?

Hast thou attuned thy heart and mind to the great mind and heart of all mankind? For as the sacred river’s roaring voice whereby all nature-sounds are echoed back, so must the heart of him who in the stream would enter thrill in response to every sigh and thought of all that lives and breathes.”

Madame Blavatsky here gives us a long foot-note, explaining that the Northern Buddhists, and indeed all Chinamen, find in the deep roar of some of the great and sacred rivers the key-note of nature. She points out that it is a well-known fact in physical science, as well as in occultism, that the aggregate sound of nature – such as is heard in the roar of great rivers, the noise produced by the waving tops of trees in larger forests, or that of a city heard at a

distance – is a definite single tone of quite an appreciable pitch. All that is true, and one who has learned to do so can always hear the underlying tone of nature. Every planet also has its own sound; it intones its own notes as it moves through space, and by this tone the Logos knows whether all is going well, with His worlds, somewhat in the same way that a practised engineer can tell by the sound of his engine whether all is well with his machinery. So must the aspirant listen constantly to the life in all around him. This brings us back to that quality of sympathy which this book so strongly insists upon. Often we think we understand our nearest friends, but really we do not, as is often quite apparent to an outside observer. (Vol. I, Part II, Ch. 4, and Part V, Ch. 2.) But a Master always understands; He cannot possibly misunderstand. He may say that He does not approve of something that He sees; yet He is always in perfect sympathy, and understands without our needing to say a single word. We must try to understand others by endeavouring to see things as they see them, by understanding what their thoughts are, not by doing what they do.

Disciples may be likened to the strings of the soul-echoing vina; mankind, unto its sounding-board; the hand that sweeps it to the tuneful breath of the great World-Soul. The string that fails to answer neath the Master's touch in dulcet harmony with all the others, breaks and is cast away. So the collective minds of Lanoo Shrāvakas. They have to be attuned to the Āchārya's mind – one with the Over-Soul – or break away.

The Occult Hierarchy makes use of disciples as the strings of a vina, on which it may sound the splendid music of the march of evolution, that all that music may then resound among mankind. What would you do, were you a musician, with a string that did not wish to blend itself with the rest, but tried to force itself into more prominent notice? You would throw it away. Anyone who has an axe of his own to grind, who wants knowledge or liberation, or anything else for himself, is not fit to be a pupil of the Master. With this in view every pupil will be tested. He will be given pieces of work which, if he neglects them, will be left undone. If the work is important, the Master will always have an understudy ready, but when it is just on the fringe of things it may be left, and that string will be cast aside.

The disciple must have not only harmony with the great purpose of the Master, but also with the rest of the workers. A man must do the work of his own department and not interfere with that of others; when their work touches his, he can only either help or hinder them, and it is his duty to help, to make things as easy as possible for a brother. This mutual forbearance and help acts like oil in machinery; when oil is lacking it may still work, but not so smoothly or well, and more energy will be needed to make it go. If one puts all one's energy into the work, and yet wastes much of it in friction, that is almost the same as giving but a part of it. One must have in mind, not his own advancement, nor even the success of his own department, but the good of the whole.

Thus do the brothers of the shadow – the murderers of their Souls, the dread Dad-Dugpa clan.

All through her writings Madame Blavatsky applies the name Dugpa to the brothers of the shadow – black magicians, as we often call them. Perhaps it is rather an unfortunate name to have chosen, because the dugpas do not quite deserve all the hard things she has said about them.

In Tibet, before Buddhism penetrated that land, there was much worship of elementals and nature-spirits, and offerings of a propitiatory character were regularly made to them. The religion was on a low level, as all religions of a propitiatory nature must be. “The Bhons and Dugpas,” says Madame Blavatsky, “and the various sects of the ‘Redcaps’, are regarded as the most versed in sorcery. They inhabit Western and Little Tibet and Bhutan.” The old religion thus still lives.

The same thing has happened in other religions. In Christianity, for example, as I have before pointed out. (Vol. I, Part V, Ch. 5: *Superstition*.) Jehovah still lingers – a tribal deity, who was jealous of other gods. The Jews knew nothing of one supreme Deity until they were carried away into Assyrian captivity; then they tried to identify the Supreme God whom they then heard of with their own tribal god, and much confusion resulted. Unhappily Christianity became entangled in this, and it still appears in the English Communion’ Service. In the early part of that service the Jewish Ten Commandments are read, where a jealous god is spoken of, but later on in the same service we find that God is called “God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God”. The old idea of propitiation also passed on into Christianity, in the curious idea that God was bought off by the death of His own Son.

In Tibet, though Buddhism sent no less than three missions to that country, and the people are mostly Buddhists of a sort, the old religion comes up again and again, for it had a great hold on the hearts of the people. The same phenomenon may be found in the Italian Apennines, where the old Etruscan religion, far older than the Roman, is still to be seen. The Catholic Church has set itself against this in vain. Another instance is evident in Ceylon. The people there are Buddhists, and there are some Christians, descendants of those who were converted by the Portuguese. Still, in moments of real necessity – of serious illness or calamity – Buddhists and Christians alike revert to the old “devil-worship”. If you ask them why they do so, they will reply: “Of course we are Buddhists or Christians, and are civilized; but there may, after all, be something more in the old faith, and there is no harm in making things quite safe.”

The termination *pa* means simply “people”. Thus, the followers of the Master Kūthūmi are called in Tibet Kut-Hum-pa. The Bhon-pa are the followers of the aboriginal religion. The descendants of the converts made by the first mission are called Ninma-pa. That first incursion of Buddhism rapidly became corrupted by the old faith. The Kargyu sect represents the converts of the second mission, which was sent to Tibet some centuries later than the first. The Dug-pa, or Red-caps, belong to this sect, and so are two removes from the Bhon-pa. It also became impure, and allowed the old beliefs to creep in.

Then came the third and last reform, by Tsong-kha-pa. The followers of this are the Gelug-pa, or Yellow-caps. To this sect belong the Dalai Lama and the Teshu Lama, and the present government of the country. To it also belong outwardly our two Masters. The people of this sect wear, on great occasions, yellow robes, and curious high-pointed helmet-like caps.

Āryasanga belonged to the Yellow-caps; so, of course, did Alcyone, in His last incarnation, as the former’s disciple. Perhaps Alcyone somewhat strengthened His teacher’s expressions when speaking of the Red-caps. To call them “murderers of their souls” is hardly in keeping with the spirit of the Buddhist religion.

The Dug-pa clan, then, is not quite so bad as it has been painted. They are Buddhists, with nature-worship super-imposed. This old worship, its enemies say, included animal sacrifices, and even human sacrifices at one time.

The Yellow-caps are opposed to them, because they are striving to maintain a purer Buddhism. Their rules are stricter, and admit much less of nature-worship, though even they have not been able to keep entirely free from it, so that some day a fresh reform may well be undertaken. From the Dug-pa clan some have joined the Yellow-caps, and have even attracted the attention of our Masters, so they cannot be altogether bad. The Bhon-pa are not a very advanced or dignified kind of black magicians, so to call them “brothers of the shadow” gives them more credit than they deserve, even on their own line.

Hast thou attuned thy being to humanity’s great pain, O candidate for light?

Thou hast? . . . Thou mayest enter. Yet, ere thou settest foot upon the dreary path of sorrow, ‘tis well thou should’st first learn the pitfalls on thy way.

Once more we have that idea of the path of woe. There is no sorrow on this Path; strenuous

effort there is, but with it the greatest joy in the work. Of this joy many teachers have spoken, with the result sometimes that their pupils, encountering the early difficulties, have been disappointed. Āryasanga evidently was anxious not to mislead any pupil of his, so he laid stress on the difficulties.

There is a difficult stage through which all have to pass – a stage between two certainties. Many in this position care nothing for the things of the world. They do not care, for example, whether they have money, fine houses and clothes, or not. If wealth should come to them, it would be a responsibility that they would meet like any other, but they would be equally content if they had just sufficient. The lower things have fallen away, and yet the higher ones are still matters of faith, not of knowledge and experience. In this condition the man inevitably has a monotonous and sometimes a miserable time, which may last for a longer or shorter period, and may possibly occur several times.

But when the higher is clearly seen, all is changed, and the Path becomes radiant with happiness. Then the lower things have lost all attraction. Take the case of our President. If she devoted her time and talents to worldly ends, she could certainly win great fame and position along one or other of several lines; but if you were to ask her whether it would be a pleasure to give up what she has chosen and follow a line of worldly ambition, she would surely say; “Certainly not; why should I? Nothing could possibly equal the delight of the Master’s service.”

There is far greater joy in the life of the disciple than in any worldly life, however beautiful the surroundings may be. He renounces personal possessions of every sort, but what does he want with them? In India often a great man, who has been perhaps the Prime Minister of a State, and has had great influence, fame and wealth, one day quietly drops the whole thing, puts on a yellow robe, and goes out owning nothing whatever. He does it knowing quite well both forms of life, and clearly seeing that the life that he has left is poor in real wealth and joy in comparison with that which he will lead as a hermit or a wandering sannyasi. It is often the case that one in a prominent position, such as the late Czar of Russia, can do very little to help the world. Such a position does not therefore appeal to the occultist. I remember the case of a highly advanced student who was given the choice between remaining an obscure person and rising to a leading position in one of the greatest countries of the world. He chose the latter alternative, and in due course became Prime Minister of Britain. In that position he found himself cramped by powerful and selfish interests, and opposed by the tower of the Church. Feeling the weight of his responsibility he was driven into a policy of Conciliation. Though his objects were to give greater freedom to the people and to consolidate the Empire, and he did achieve success in the latter aim, he always regretted his choice – perfectly unselfish as it had been – and he died a disappointed man.

CHAPTER 3

THE FIRST THREE GATES

Armed with the key of charity, of love and tender mercy, thou art secure before the gate of Dāna, the gate that standeth at the entrance of the Path.

C.W.L. – Āryasanga now runs over once again the seven portals, taking them as stages on the path, and looking at them especially from the standpoint of the pitfalls that endanger the aspirant. The brighter side of the matter, the encouragement and strength that the candidate receives, are for the moment not being thought of; it is desirable to remember this, lest the Path should seem too sad.

Dana, as already explained, means more than simple almsgiving, more even than the feeling of charity; it implies the complete giving of oneself to the service of humanity,

holding nothing back.

Behold, O happy pilgrim! The portal that faceth thee is high and wide, seems easy of access. The road that leads therethrough is straight and smooth and green. Tis like a sunny glade in the dark forest depths, a spot on earth mirrored from Amitābha's paradise. There nightingales of hope and birds of radiant plumage sing, perched in green bowers, chanting success to fearless pilgrims. They sing of Bodhisattva's virtues five, the fivefold source of Bodhi power, and of the seven steps in knowledge.

Pass on! For thou hast brought the key; thou art secure.

This verse gives us a beautiful and poetic description of the Path as its first part appears to the happy pilgrim. At first he thinks it is full of joy and very pleasant and easy to tread. It is easy, when one has seen the Holy Grail to give up all else and follow it. But after a while the vision may fade, the first enthusiasm wears itself out, and the man begins to grow weary. It is the way of human nature to want constant change. See how people rush after a novelty, and how, after a short time their interest slackens, the pursuit becomes monotonous, and they turn their attention to something else.

Studies in the lives of Alcyone showed us that most people make very little progress, even in a series of twenty or thirty lives. One man wrote, after hearing what name he bore in the *Lives*, and learning that he was very much the same fifty thousand years ago as he is now: If anyone had told me before that twenty-five thousand years ago I was anything but a savage in the woods, I could not have believed it. I answered him: "If twenty-five thousand years ago you had been a savage in the woods, the chances are that you would still be one today."

If, however, a person does become enthusiastic for a spiritual object, he at once makes a rapid move forward; if he cannot continue his enthusiasm it is a pity, but probably in the rush he has accomplished as much as was intended for him in the present life. Now we have not only the motive to go forward, but we have also a great deal of knowledge to enable us to do so, and that helps to prevent us from falling back.

We must try to keep our enthusiasm always, and not allow ourselves to be affected by moods so that it is at the mercy of what happens to influence us on the physical plane, or on the psychical planes. We had a great testing of our enthusiasm when Madame Blavatsky died. I remember how it tended to fade when she left us. She had the faculty of keeping us all going, and when she went we felt limp, though some of us had succeeded in getting into direct touch with the Masters.

And to the second gate the way is verdant too, but it is steep and winds uphill; yea, to its rocky top. Grey mists will overhang its rough and stony height, and all be dark beyond. As on he goes, the song of hope soundeth more feeble in the pilgrim's heart. The thrill of doubt is now upon him; his step less steady grows.

Beware of this, O candidate; beware of fear that spreadeth, like the black and soundless wings of midnight bat, between the moonlight of thy Soul and thy great goal that loometh in the distance far away.

Fear, O disciple, kills the will and stays all action. If lacking in the Shila virtue, the pilgrim trips, and karmic pebbles bruise his feet along the rocky path.

The pupil generally comes in with a splendid outburst, and then slackens down. This is because he expected, though he may not have confessed it even to himself, that his life was going to be all changed; perhaps he imagined that he would have a life full of phenomena or that he would always realize the presence of the Master, and so be able to keep constantly at his highest level. His life *is* changed, but not in the way he thought.

When doubt appears it is for some students doubt of the entire body of Theosophical knowledge; they have not yet come into conscious touch with the Masters, and they begin to doubt Their very existence, and to wonder whether they are following an *ignis fatuus*. I hope

no such doubt will come to any of us, but if it does it is best to fall back on first principles. Go back to the beginning; inspect your motives; examine the evidence.

Then there is doubt of oneself, which sometimes assails the beginner; one may not be showing out the divinity that one wishes. But one must go on trying, without doubting, because success is absolutely assured for every man, and doubt is a great obstacle to attainment. Let a person who is sure from the outset that he will not be able to do it try to learn swimming. He will never learn. The doubt sends him under the water more than any real difficulty. Another, who has confidence, will learn almost at once.

The trouble with many aspirants to the Path is that they have this doubt as to whether they can achieve. Well, they must go on working for it, and get rid of their prejudice against themselves, for that is what it is, by reasoning it away. They must say to themselves: "I am going to do it, whether I can or not!"

Āryasanga's similes are always beautiful. He speaks here of the moonlight of the soul. It shines with a reflected light from the Logos, the sun, and also from the spiritual soul, buddhi, and the spirit, ātma. He must let nothing come between, or the soul will be left in darkness.

"The soundless wings of the midnight bat" gives a vivid picture of the way in which fear steals upon a man. Fear is one of the most deadly things, and it is pressing in upon us on every side, for the world is full of it in a multitude of varieties of form. The man in business, for example, is in a constant little turmoil of fear; the employee is afraid of what his superior will think of him, or of losing his place. Religious people are afraid of death, of hell, of the fate of their departed friends, and all sorts of absurd things. Many children live in constant fear of their elders, their fathers and schoolmasters, as I have explained in the earlier commentary. (Vol. I, Part V, Ch. 4, *Cruelty*.)

Āryasanga well says: "Beware of fear." It darkens the soul, and makes it a dimmer reflection of the Logos. The Logos is love, and, said S. John, "Perfect love casteth out fear." John, 4, 18.

The Shīlā virtue is harmony, good conduct. The occultist has a moral code different from that of the world – different in being far more strict. He is not bound by the rules and conventions of society, but by something far stronger – the principles of the spiritual life, which allow not the slightest deviation from truth, love and a life of service, with no room at all for personal self-indulgence.

Be of sure foot, O candidate. In Kshānti's essence bathe thy soul; for now thou dost approach the portal of that name, the gate of fortitude and patience.

We have come to the third portal. Kshānti is patience and fortitude. Steady enthusiasm is required; not the nervous, anxious, spasmodic kind of enthusiasm that wears out its possessor before it has accomplished anything useful.

Close not thine eyes, nor lose thy sight of Dorje; Māra's arrows ever smite the man who has not reached Vairāgya.

Mara is the king of desire, the personification of desire; so it is said that his arrows ever strike those who have not reached the condition of vairāgya or desire-lessness.

Madame Blavatsky gives us a note about Dorje, or Vajra, the thunderbolt, the Rod of Power, which was also mentioned in the second Fragment. She says:

Dorje is the Sanskrit Vajra, a weapon or instrument in the hands of some Gods (the Tibetan Dragshed, the Devas who protect men), and is regarded as having the same occult power of repelling evil influences by purifying the air as ozone in chemistry. It is also a Mudrā, a gesture and posture used in sitting for meditation. It is, in short, a symbol of power over invisible evil influence, whether as a posture or a talisman. The Bhons and Dugpas, however, having appropriated the symbol, misuse it for purposes of black magic. With the yellow-caps, or Gelugpas, it is a

symbol of power, as the cross is with the Christians, while it is in no way more superstitious. With the Bhons, it is, like the double triangle reversed, the sign of sorcery.

The Rod of Power which is kept at Shamballa and used in Initiations and at other times, is probably the strongest talisman on this planet. At the same time it is a great symbol of that power which is resistless, which, felt in ourselves, makes fear impossible for us.

Talismans are not mere relics of mediaeval superstition, as some people think. If anyone who is in the least degree sensitive will go to the case in the British Museum that contains old Gnostic gems, he may easily convince himself of that fact, for the influence emanating from some of them is very plainly to be felt. A talisman is a small object loaded with magnetism, and its purpose is to repel all influences that do not harmonize with the magnetism with which it is charged. Its action may be compared to that of a gyroscope, which revolves in such a way that it will sometimes break to pieces rather than allow its motion to be changed in direction.

A jewel makes the best talisman, since it preserves 'magnetism best, being the highest type of mineral. In ordinary circumstances, fear begins faintly, and only gradually gathers strength. In all such cases, a talisman charged with the right kind of magnetism is a help, for it repels those first faint vibrations. The wearer thus has time to gather himself together, to call up his own strength and to set in motion in his astral body vibrations of the opposite kind.

Āryasanga returns to the subject of fear:

Beware of trembling. 'Neath the breath of fear the key of Kshānti rusty grows; the rusty key refuseth to unlock.

The more thou dost advance, the more thy feet pitfalls will meet. The path that leadeth on is lighted by one fire – the light of daring burning in the heart. The more one dares, the more he shall obtain. The more he fears, the more that light shall pale – and that alone can guide. For as the lingering sunbeam that on the top of some tall mountain shines is followed by black night when out it fades, so is heart-light. When out it goes, a dark and threatening shade will fall from thine own heart upon the Path, and root thy feet in terror to the spot.

Beware, disciple, of that lethal shade. No light that shines from Spirit can dispel the darkness of the nether Soul unless all selfish thought has fled therefrom, and that the pilgrim saith: "I have renounced this passing frame; I have destroyed the cause; the shadows cast can, as effects, no longer be." For now the last great fight, the final war between the higher and the lower self, hath taken place. Behold, the very battlefield is now engulfed in the great war, and is no more.

But once thou hast passed the gate of Kshānti step the third is taken. Thy body is thy slave.

It is clear from these verses that the candidate must learn to put the lower self aside utterly. Fear belongs to that, for the higher self can have nothing to fear in all the world – the only fear that a real man can have, said an old Roman philosopher, is that he himself should fail to use to the full all his virtues or powers for good.

Selfishness also belongs to it, and in this matter the habit of hundreds of incarnations may have to be reversed; for some time one may find oneself somewhat selfish even when the heart is definitely turned against it; it is comparable to what happens when the engines of a steamboat are suddenly reversed, in order to stop it – the boat still goes forward, against the engines. But presently the forward momentum will be entirely neutralized, and then the boat will obey the engines perfectly.

Until one gets rid of this selfishness the higher self cannot shine fully into the personality. The ego or soul itself may have what looks like selfishness, though it is quite different from that of the personality. It may ignore others, if it remains just manas, and not manas-tajasi, manas strongly connected with buddhi, and so may be selfish in that way; but it could never

make the mistake of thinking that it can gain through the loss of another, an error that is common enough down here. Men often do things in trade, for example, which they know to be wrong; they think they have gained, that they have over-reached their neighbours, but they make a great mistake. Quite apart from the law of karma, which is bound to operate, the man has set his mind to plan how to cheat, and he will have to suffer the reaction of all the force of thought and desire that he has set going in that direction. He has set up a habit, and the next time that an opportunity occurs to do some underhand thing, it will be a little easier for him to yield to the temptation, and a little harder to check himself and do the right. If he could see the whole of the transaction and not merely one little corner of it, he would realize that he has not gained, but has lost enormously.

An ego could not be as blind as that. The man who cheats, because he sees only the immediate results on the physical plane, is like a general who should neglect all the rest of the battle-field in order to take one small position. He might capture that position, but he would lose the battle.

If you have reached the stage where you have destroyed selfishness, you can say: "I have destroyed the cause"; – the cause of all trouble and sorrow down here.

The battle-field that is now engulfed and is no more is the antaḥkaraṇa, which disappears when the higher has swallowed up the lower, and no longer exists.

It appears that Āryasanga had in the background of his mind an idea of the correspondence between these seven portals and the seven principles in man. The first three are related in some way to the three lower principles in the personality, while the fourth is concerned with that pure lower mind which is the ray of higher manas, and is the antaḥkaraṇa. At this point the temptations begin to be those of the higher principles, and thus belong to the inner man.

CHAPTER 4

THE FOURTH GATE

Now for the fourth prepare, the portal of temptations which ensnare the inner man.

Ere thou canst near that goal, before thine hand is lifted to upraise the fourth gate's latch, thou must have mastered all the mental changes in thyself, and slain the army of the thought sensations that, subtle and insidious, creep unasked within the Soul's bright shrine.

C.W.L. – It is within the experience of many aspirants to the Path that the common faults which have been met and conquered in ordinary life reappear later on in a different form. You may have killed pride, for example, in its ordinary worldly forms, but it will reappear again as spiritual pride. So also you may have got rid of desire for worldly gain, but it comes up again as desire for personal progress or knowledge for personal satisfaction, for the sake of feeling that one has knowledge. Then, even when sympathy has begun to make itself a power in the life, selfishness tries to capture it and make you desire only to get rid of the cause of your own discomfort and unhappiness, by putting the object of suffering out of sight. It is something like the case of a housewife – if there be one of this kind – who dislikes to see dust in the room, so sweeps it under the carpet, instead of keeping the place properly clean.

Even hatred turns up again, incredible as it may seem that so coarse a vice should appear among those who are striving to live the higher life. Some of our students come perilously near it, if another differs from them on any subject, let us say that of the planetary chains, or the question as to whether Mars and Mercury belong to our earth chain or not! Of course, if one asks point-blank, "Do you hate So-and-so because his opinion on this point is different from yours?" he will deny it; but he will not go to visit the other man, and if they should

chance to meet he will feel much disturbed and be disagreeable, or else he will cover that feeling up with an artificial ease, a smooth surface, like oil on water.

This is a singularly persistent fault, and it has been responsible for some of the world's big troubles. Was not the whole Christian world convulsed and rent asunder in the fourth century because of one dot on one letter of a word? It made the difference in the word as to whether the Second Logos was of the *same* substance as the First or of *like* substance. This was the whole dispute which raged round Alexandria between the so-called Arians and the orthodox. And now, are not millions of Christians on the one side and millions of Christians on the other kept apart, all because of the question as to whether the Third Logos came out direct from the First, or from the First through the Second? This is the famous "filioque controversy" on what is called the Procession of the Holy Ghost, which led to the disruption between the two great sections of the Christian Church. The Eastern, or Greek, Church holds that the Holy Ghost, the Third Logos, proceeded from the Father – single procession – but the Western, or Roman, Church, holds that He proceeded from the Father and the Son – double procession. The quarrel is all about something of which no one can know anything, and is of no practical importance to anybody. From diagrams shown to us, we Theosophists can infer that both sides are right, but neither will welcome the suggestion.

In Buddhism, to take another example, two large sections of co-religionists are divided by the question as to whether the platform erected on the water for the performance of certain ceremonies should be composed of three planks or of four. They have to perform their ceremonies separately on this account!

What does it matter whether Mars and Mercury belong to our chain or not? We can be just as good men and women, just as good citizens, just as earnest Theosophists, just as good servants of the Masters, and one hopes just as good friends, whatever our opinions may be. Personally, I study and observe as carefully as I can, and then give out what I know, as it seems to me my duty to do, but I have never pretended to infallibility, and am learning more every day. I should never think of finding fault with anybody who disagrees with what I say. I have indeed more than once heard our great President say how deeply she hopes that no one will ever make a dogma of anything she has said, and put her up as an obstacle to future progress in our Society, and as a cause of division. If she has any anxiety at all, it is in regard to this danger.

Theosophists are supposed to have given up the idea of the infallibility of any particular source of knowledge. The question for us when a new idea is promulgated is, "Does it ring true? Does it inspire, elevate, illuminate?" – not, "Who said it? What book did you get that from?" There are, however, some who, having given up blind faith in the Bible, have transferred it to *The Secret Doctrine*, which, though a mine of wonderful wisdom, is not perfect, as its author said. It is, she said, but a selection of fragments of the fundamental tenets of the secret doctrine, paying special attention to some facts which have been seized upon by various writers, and distorted out of all resemblance to the truth. And she quoted the words of Montaigne: "I have here made only a nosegay of culled flowers, and have brought nothing of my own but the string that ties them." *The Secret Doctrine* will be a treasure house for Theosophists for hundreds of years; let us not attach to it the curse of dogmatism. No one can say the last word in occultism. The knowledge that we have acquired up to the present is only like the lifting of a little corner of a great veil; we have no idea of what may be revealed by the raising of another part.

Before one can hope to pass this fourth portal, says Āryasanga, one must have mastered the mental changes in oneself. Moods come and go, and colour one's outlook very effectually. It is difficult for a man to realize that when he is in a cloud of depression the world outside is really no blacker than it was before. When a great, upsetting sorrow has fallen upon him, it is with something of a shock that he goes out and sees that the sun is still shining and people are

smiling and even laughing.

A man who is very miserable himself sometimes feels quite angry at seeing others as happy as usual. He thinks the world is very hard, and that it does not care much about *him*. He forgets that yesterday, when he was happy, some others were distressed, and he did not care about them, but went along quite comfortably. I know that depression is a very real thing, but it is always self-created or self-permitted. Sometimes it comes from ill-health, over-fatigue or nervous strain. At others it comes from the astral world, where there are many so-called dead people in a state of depression. It is therefore not always one's own fault that the depression should come, but it is one's own fault if one allows it to stay.

Quite a large number of people seem to imagine that their attitude towards things makes a difference. "Oh, no, you will never get me to believe that!" such a person will say, imagining that his disbelief disposes of the matter in question. But if a thing is a fact, it remains a fact, whether he believes it or not. This is one of the queer little ways in which human conceit shows itself.

One must also take care that casual thoughts do not interfere with one's being of service, nor be blind to a chance of doing a good service to a man because one does not like something about him – the way he cuts his hair, for example. Such a thing sounds trifling, but it shows the condition of one's mind and character. Often it is a thought about race, class or caste that stands in the way. The Brāhmaṇa in India frequently neglects his duty to the pariah on account of this. No one denies the enormous difference of class, but every one ought to have a fair opportunity to raise himself socially and morally as much as is possible for him. Of course, one cannot change the condition of millions of people very greatly in a short time, one cannot raise the Panchamas to the state of Brāhmaṇas, but one can always show the greatest kindness and consideration to these people, and help any one of them who can receive the help.

If thou would'st not be slain by them, then must thou harmless make thy own creations, the children of thy thoughts, unseen, impalpable, that swarm round humankind, the progeny and heirs to man and his terrestrial spoils. Thou hast to study the void-ness of the seeming full, the fulness of the seeming void.

The fulness of the seeming void is a phrase replete with meaning. It applies to many different conditions. First one thinks of the koilon, the aether of space. Commonly people think of space as something that is empty, but the fact is that it is filled with a density of substance that can scarcely be imagined. It is the apparently solid matter that is "empty". The matter that we see consists of holes in the real matter, of bubbles blown in koilon.

As a French scientist recently said: "Il n'y a plus de matière. Il n'y a que des trous dans l'éther." ("There is no longer any matter. There is nothing but holes in the ether.") The latest verdict of science with regard to the aether of space is that its density is ten thousand times that of water, and about five hundred times the density of the heaviest metal, the densest thing you can think of.

The Hindus speak of root-matter or mūlaprakriti; of which koilon is a densification, I think. They say that when the Logos realizes Himself, when He differentiates Himself from the Absolute and looks back, as it were, upon that Absolute, He does not see it, but a veil thrown over it – and that veil is mūlaprakriti. In *The Secret Doctrine*, Madame Blavatsky quotes the words of Swāmī T. Subba Row on this subject, as follows:

When once it [*i.e.*, the Logos, "... the first manifestation (or aspect) of Parabrahman ‘[’ starts into existence as a conscious being, ... from its objective standpoint, Parabrahman appears to it as Mūlaprakriti. Please bear this in mind ... for here is the root of the whole difficulty about Purusha and Prakriti felt by the various writers on Vedantic philosophy ... This Mūlaprakriti is material to it (the Logos), as any material object is to us. This Mūlaprakriti is no more Parabrahman than the bundle of attributes of a pillar is the pillar itself; Parabrahman is an unconditioned and absolute reality, and

Mūlaprakriti is a sort of veil thrown Over it. Parabrahman by itself cannot be seen as it is. It is seen by the Logos with a veil thrown over it, and that veil is the mighty expanse of Cosmic Matter ..." *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 462. See also Ch. 5.

The Logos here mentioned is the Logos of our Universe, in which are millions of solar systems – not the Logos of one solar system. It was He who blew His breath into the root-matter, who dug holes in space, so that the universe came into being. Fourteen thousand millions of these bubbles make a physical atom, and eighteen of these make an atom of hydrogen, which is the lightest of the chemical elements.

It is therefore a fact that all that we know as matter is nothing else but holes in the real matter. The pressure of that root-matter is several million tons per square inch. When men learn to exclude this pressure, they will be able to use that tremendous force to run their machinery. They will be able to utilize the force of the Logos that is in the atom, which holds itself against that great pressure. But it will first be the force involved in the disintegration of the physical atom that will be tapped.

The fulness of the seeming void and the voidness of the seeming full can be studied in a variety of familiar experiences. The atmosphere is full of the thoughts of other people and other beings. As it says in *The Occult World*:

Every thought of man upon being evolved passes into the inner world, and becomes an active entity by associating itself, coalescing we might term it, which an elemental – that is to say, with one of the semi-intelligent forces of the kingdoms. It survives as an active intelligence – a creature of the mind's begetting – for a longer or shorter period proportionate with the original intensity of the cerebral action which generated it. Thus good thought is perpetuated as an active, beneficent power, an evil one as a maleficent demon. And so man is continually peopling his current in space with a world of his own, crowded with the offspring of his fancies, desires, impulses and passions; a current which re-acts upon any sensitive or nervous organization which comes in contact with it, in proportion to its dynamic intensity. *Op. cit.*, p. 111.

Again, one may be meditating in a room that is empty or full of other people. In the latter case, it may be empty for him, because those other people are not greatly affecting him. In the former case it may yet be full of powerful unseen presences and influences attracted there by the meditation, and engaged in pouring out their force upon him who seems to be alone.

Something similar is to be seen in the varied circumstances of life. Many seemingly big events pass over us and leave us unaffected, while some tiny occurrence may affect the whole life. The death of a near relation, or the loss of one's fortune, looks so great when it happens that one thinks it will make a permanent landmark in one's life, and yet it may make scarcely any difference in the end. That has been my experience. As a young man I lost all the considerable money which I possessed, in the great financial disaster of 1866. It seemed a great event at the time; yet it has made no difference to me. But my meeting casually with a person who told me about Madame Blavatsky has made all the difference to my life. The meeting seemed to be by chance, but it must have been intended and arranged in that seeming void that is really so full in every possible way.

In the same way, a passing Deva looked in upon me one Sunday morning when I was giving a talk to some Theosophists at Adyar. He showed me some of the ways in which the Devas would influence men through religion in the beginnings of the sixth root-race. I then thought it but the kindly act of a friend passing by, but now I am sure it was much more than that, in view of what has resulted from it. It led to our knowledge of very much about the beginnings of the new race, to the investigation on which the second part of *Man: Whence, How and Whither* was based, and a little later to joint investigation by Dr. Besant and myself, which resulted in the first part of the same book. Looking forward into that community of the future, I saw that she would be remembered by that book when all that she has written before it will have been forgotten; but her greatest book, by which she will be remembered in history, has still to be written.

**Fearless aspirant, look deep within the well of thine own heart, and answer.
Knowest thou of Self the powers, O thou perceiver of external shadows?**

Purity is a great thing, but it is not enough. The little baby is pure, because it knows nothing of good or evil. Knowledge also is needed in order that we may act, and also the will to put that knowledge into action. The animals are purer than man, the vegetables purer still; they have not the imagination of man, that causes him to seek material pleasure in defiance or disregard of natural laws. Yet it is necessary that man should go through this experience with matter in order that he may have knowledge, and may then return to the Divine from which he descended, regaining his purity. We come out from the Logos a divine cloud, but return to Him a divine being with definite powers.

The man on the Path has recognized the divine Self in himself, and is emerging from the influence of the world of shadows. Their reality is only relative, and is now no reality to him beside that of the indwelling life, which offers him a far richer field of conscious experience than the excitement produced by the impacts of external things. He has thought the shadows to be real, absolutely real, more real than anything else, throughout many incarnations, and it was all necessary, for without their attraction he would never have awakened, never have paid attention, never have learned anything at all.

If thou dost not, then thou art lost.

For, on path fourth, the lightest breeze of passion or desire will stir the steady light upon the pure white walls of the Soul. The smallest wave of longing or regret for Māyā's gifts illusive, along Antaḥkaraṇa – the path that lies between thy Spirit and thy self, the highway of sensations, the rude arousers of Ahaṃkāra – a thought as fleeting as the lightning flash will make thee thy three prizes forfeit – the prizes thou hast won.

Āryasanga is now talking about vairāgya, and He says that when one is striving to perfect that, the least response to the attractiveness of things, or desire for them throws one back again into the ranks of those who are disturbed. This recalls the simile of the soul as limpid as a mountain lake in the second Fragment. (Fragment II, Ch. 3.) Here He takes the simile of a lamp to express the steadiness that must be attained in this stage. Even a casual thought will throw one back; that is true, but we must remember the qualification: if it is one's own thought. As I have before explained, if it is merely a reflection of someone else's thought, merely a drifting thought-form that has attracted the attention, and that is not taken up and made one's own, then there is not the same disturbance to one's purity and tranquillity, to one's vairāgya.

Sometimes very good people are distressed by such passing thoughts, and they feel that they must be very wicked to have such ideas. But if they do not take them up and nourish them and send them out reinforced to do greater work of destruction, they have not really committed a fault. It is quite true that we should not be conscious of an evil or impure thought if it did not touch something akin to itself in us. But that is only saying that we are not yet perfect. If a thought of that nature floated through the mind of an Adept, He would not even notice it; but if there were many of them round Him, He might require to brush them aside, as one brushes away flies and mosquitoes. Do not, therefore, be troubled unnecessarily about the instinctive stirrings of anger, or selfishness, or undesirable stray thoughts; they are a legacy from the past or they belong to your environment. But do not adopt them, for if you do you will not only fail to attain vairāgya, but will forfeit the three prizes already won, and start climbing again from the very beginning of the Path.

Antaḥkaraṇa is here called the highway of sensations. It is the mysterious means by which material things can affect consciousness, the channel between object and subject, that which causes an impact upon a sense-organ to appear in consciousness as a sensation. Such sensation, direct perception of things, is more vivid than any description in words. To have

heard, seen or felt something gives one a greater sense of its reality than merely to have thought about it. That is why clairvoyant perception of the other planes is worth so much more than the descriptions that we can give. It is also the reason why the yoga books say that all the testimony of others, and all his judgments about things as yet unseen by him, will at last have to be replaced by the aspirant with his own direct perception, which alone can give a clear vision of the truth.

Sensations are here called the rude arousers of ahamkara. *Aham* means “I” and *kāra* is “making”; therefore ahaṁkāra means the “I-maker”. The very vividness of that direct experience calls out the vividness of our sense of our own existence by the contrast. And as this process occurs at all levels, it calls out the vividness of the false personality while the man is still in the world; but when he is well on the Path and the illusion of the personal self has been quite destroyed, it calls out the Self that is the Ātma, the will, in the spiritual man. We have already studied this higher form of ahamkara, often mentioned in Hindu philosophy, in the first Fragment. (Fragment I, Ch. 5.)

For know that the Eternal knows no change.

Briefly, one must be willing to give up the lower for the sake of the higher; one cannot take worldly goods into the kingdom of heaven. The laws and conditions of the higher world will not change to suit the desire of any aspirant.

“The eight dire miseries forsake for evermore; if not, to wisdom sure thou canst not come, nor yet to liberation,” saith the great Lord, the Tathāgata of perfection, “he who has followed in the footsteps of his predecessors.

The eight dire miseries are: malice, sloth, pride, doubt, desire, delusion, ignorance and future lives. The last one seems curious at first sight; but the meaning is quite clear – that life in this world is misery in comparison with what the higher planes have to offer us.

The title Tathāgata is here translated “He who walks in the steps of his predecessors “. In Ceylon we were told that it meant “He who has been rightly sent”. That means one who has been sent by the Great White Brotherhood as its Messenger to the world; and one so sent would necessarily follow in the steps of those who came before Him. That is why the story of Initiation appears with little variation in the traditions of different nations, especially in the form of what is called the solar myth.

Stern and exacting is the virtue of Vairāgya. If thou its path would’st master, thou must keep thy mind and thy, perceptions far freer than before from killing action.

Thou hast to saturate thyself with pure Ālaya, become as one with nature’s Soul-thought. At one with it thou art invincible; in separation, thou becomest the playground of Saṁvritti, origin of all the world’s delusions.

Then there is a long foot-note explaining Saṁvritti:

Saṁvritti is that one of the two truths which demonstrates the illusive character or emptiness of all things. It is relative truth in this case. The Mahāyāna school teaches the difference between these two truths – Paramārthasatya and Saṁvrittisatya (Satya, truth). This is the bone of contention between the Mādhyamikas and the Yogāchāras, the former denying and the latter affirming that every object exists owing to a previous cause or by a concatenation. The Mādhyamikas are the great Nihilists and deniers, for whom everything is Parikalpita, an illusion and an error in the world of thought and the subjective, as much as in the objective universe. The Yogāchāras are the great spiritualists. Saṁvritti, therefore, as only relative truth, is the origin all illusion.

It is discrimination, the first of the four qualifications, that can enable one always to distinguish between the real and the relatively real which we sometimes call the unreal. Every time that one pierces the unreal and sees the real it becomes easier to do it again, because that

by which we recognize the real is the God within us. The more that is awakened the easier will it be to see its purpose in all things, and its life in other people.

The same pure Ālaya, which is in us and also behind the Divine Mind in nature, has been realized by the seers of all religions. A learned Muhammadan once told me that the well-known sentence of Islam; “La ilaha illa ’llah”, means not “There is no God but God,” as it is generally translated, but “There is nothing but God.” He explained that the Arabic words could be literally taken to have the former meaning, but the latter was the esoteric meaning, imparted secretly among themselves. This is the true proclamation of monotheism; not simply that there are many Gods, but one only is worthy of the name, and of adoration. This esoteric interpretation, if accurate, constitutes a strong link with Hinduism, which speaks of “One only, without a second”, the One in whom, they say, is both being and non-being.

All is impermanent in man except the pure bright essence of Ālaya. Man is its crystal ray; a beam of light immaculate within, a form of clay material upon the lower surface. That beam is thy life-guide and thy true Self, the watcher and the silent thinker, the victim of thy lower self. Thy Soul cannot be hurt but through thy erring body; control and master both, and thou art safe when crossing to the nearing “gate of balance”.

Nothing but the One is permanent. The personality of a man lasts a very short time – till the end of his devachanic period; the ego lasts through the whole series of human incarnations, perhaps to the extent of a chain-period; the monad no doubt lasts longer still, but even that is impermanent. Only the One remains. Not that we shall lose ourselves. We can truly say, with Emily Brontë:

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou wert left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

The Monad in man is a spark of the one flame. As long as it is in time it will appear to be evolving. Speaking with the deepest reverence, even the Logos appears to be doing the same. He answers to all that is best and greatest in our conception of God, yet it is true that He will not be the same at the end of the solar system as He was at the beginning; for that to Him is an incarnation.

The “form of clay material” is only useful to man in so far as it helps the development of the divine spark in him. The material part cannot affect the divine spark in the sense of actually harming it, but it can advance or retard its unfolding, which for it are the equivalents of help or injury. Therefore it is called the victim of the lower self.

The fourth portal is here called the gate of balance, as it concerns the middle principle in man. It is always a question as to whether the outer or the inner will now gain the ascendancy; the candidate having developed and purified his lower principles, physical, astral and mental, must now put his weight on the side of the higher principles, and make their development his chief business.

Be of good cheer, O daring pilgrim to the other shore. Heed not the whisperings of Mārā’s hosts; wave off the tempters, those ill-natured sprites, the jealous Lhamayin in endless space.

There is a note to the word Lhamayin, which says they are elementals and evil spirits adverse to men, and their enemies. There are no creatures that do evil for evil’s sake, but there are elementals who are harmful to man; they are living their own life, and we get in their way. The elementals are much like the wild creatures. They are not man’s enemies, but they dislike man’s intrusion into their domain, and they feel resentment because men have treated them badly.

Nature-spirits are joyous creatures; the worst that can be said of them is that they play little mischievous tricks which are tiresome to the people concerned. They object to man because he does so many things which to them are odious and a source of trouble. They live a glad and contented life in the countryside, and love to frolic about with the young of the wild creatures, and they love them and the flowers and trees. They have no trouble in their innocent life; and they feel no pressure of necessity, for they need not toil for food and clothing as man has to do.

Into this sylvan happiness comes man; he hunts and kills the animals who are their friends: he cuts down the trees they love, in order to plant crops or build houses: he pollutes the air with the filthy emanations of alcohol and tobacco. All their beautiful country is made to them a horrible wilderness, and they are forced to flee away. They may feel somewhat as an artist does when he sees some beautiful landscape spoilt and made hideous with factories, whose chimneys belch forth black smoke, and fumes kill the grass and flowers and trees. We call it progress; it may be so for us, but the nature-spirit feels it differently, for his home is ruined and his friends are killed.

So it comes about that the nature-spirits shun man, and when a man takes a walk in a wood or along a lane they slip away at his approach. He may be able to overcome this aversion of theirs, just as one can sometimes overcome the timidity of the wild creatures. A Yogī can caress the wild animals that come near him as he sits in meditation. If one goes into the country and forces oneself to lie quiet and still for an hour or two, the little wild things, such as squirrels and birds, will come near. Similarly, if one lives for a long time in one place the nature-spirits gradually find out that one is a harmless specimen of mankind, and in time will be quite willing to make friends, and at last they will sport round one, and be quite proud of having a human friend. In the astral plane these creatures regard men as intruders of a troublesome and dangerous character, much as we should regard an invading army. They therefore make it their business to try to frighten the new-comer. These are not, however, tempters. It is principally the evil thought-forms of man himself that play that role.

There are certain men, whom we sometimes call the black magicians, who work to oppose the spiritual progress of humanity, believing quite honestly that our high emotions are not good things, but relics of animal desires and sentiments. Such magicians may see a person in some special situation, one who is making swift progress on the Path, and may at the time be in a condition to be affected by them. It may then seem worth their while to send against him an elemental calculated to upset him, and so cause a disturbance which will block the Masters' work. This is the nearest thing that exists to the tempting demon of popular Christian belief. Still, no aspirant should fear these, for the worst black magician can do nothing to or through a man who is one-pointed, thinking only of the Master's work, not of himself.

Hold firm! Thou nearest now the middle portal, the gate of woe, with its ten thousand snares.

Have mastery o'er thy thoughts, O striver for perfection, if thou would'st cross its threshold.

Have mastery o'er thy Soul, O seeker after truths undying, if thou would'st reach the goal.

Thy Soul-gaze centre on the one pure light, the light that is free from affection, and use thy golden key.

Āryasāṅga may well speak of ten thousand snares, for many times does the candidate imagine that he has achieved vairāgya or desirelessness, only to find that in some subtle way he encounters the same snares over and over again. Even the soul, the higher manas, has to be under the control of the buddhic nature. As we have seen, at the first Initiation the buddhic life begins, if not before, and the candidate treads that plane sub-plane by sub-plane. This work can only be carried to perfection if the soul itself, the higher manas, co-operates,

becoming a servant in turn to that higher principle. Then, when that work is done, and the candidate is ready for the next plane, he will take his Fourth Initiation, and step over another threshold.

To be free from affection here means from being affected; as we have already seen, that is the significance of *vairāgya*.

CHAPTER 5

THE FIFTH AND SIXTH GATES

The dreary task is done, thy labour well-nigh o'er. The wide abyss that gaped to swallow thee is almost spanned.

* * * * *

Thou hast now crossed the moat that circles round the gate of human passions. Thou hast now conquered Mara and his furious host.

Thou hast removed pollution from thine heart and bled it from impure desire.

C.W.L. – We must not misunderstand the statement that the candidate's labour is well-nigh over. The *Nirmānakāya*, at His far higher level, still labours, and the same may be said of the Logos Himself. But perhaps a distinction should be drawn between the drudgery of the labour of getting rid of the faults of the personality, and the glorious work that continues on the higher planes after the personality is conquered.

The same thought applies to the question of strain. Incessant work is a great strain on the physical body, but in the planes of the ego work is pure joy; there is then no difference between work and play, such as exists on the lower planes. (Fragment I, Ch. 7.) Once a man has seen the great sacrifice of the Logos, and the way in which the Masters throw Themselves into His work, there remains no possibility for him but to plunge into the stream of it, and do all that he can to help.

We are still considering a man who is not quite pure, because he is still capable of a little selfishness. A thought is impure that has the slightest tinge of self in it, however good it may otherwise be. There may be a little thought of pride, such as: "People will think well of me for doing this." That would be called impure, when we are considering this high level of the Path. Not only must we keep impurity away, but we must see that it never occurs to us at all.

But, O thou glorious combatant, thy task is not yet done. Build high, Lanoo, the wall that shall hedge in the holy isle, the dam that will protect thy mind from pride and satisfaction at thoughts of the great feat achieved.

A sense of pride would mar the work. Aye, build it strong, lest the fierce rush of battling waves, that mount and beat its shore from out the great World Maya's ocean, swallow up the pilgrim and the isle – yea, even when the victory's achieved.

Thine 'isle' is the deer, thy thoughts the hounds that weary and pursue his progress to the stream of life. Woe to the deer that is o'ertaken by the barking fiends before he reach the vale of refuge – "Jñāna-mārga," "path of pure knowledge" named.

To hold the position that he has now gained, against the strong pressure of the thoughts of millions of other people around him, of which we have so often spoken, the aspirant now needs strong concentration and positive power of thought. This strength is necessary before he can successfully carry out that meditation which will raise him to the highest levels of the buddhic plane.

The "isle", Madame Blavatsky tells us, is the higher ego or thinking self. From it all lower thoughts must be wiped out, so that the higher may manifest. Yet one must become in no

sense a medium. There is a vast difference between making a place empty, and letting someone from the outside enter into it and take possession; that is the difference between the yogī and the medium. Here also lies the difference between the Theosophist and the Spiritualist. Both agree that man is eternal and that his progress has no limit. But the latter considers that it is good for a man to be a medium for good spirits, while the former insists upon the preservation of his own positive consciousness under all circumstances, and maintains that there is nothing which passive mediumship can give which is not obtainable by conscious clairvoyance.

Āryasanga says, “Woe to the deer that is overtaken.” That means woe to the ego that falls into prejudice because he has been overcome by the pressure of outside thoughts. He cannot then reach the place of true thought. Madame Blavatsky says of the path of pure knowledge, or Jñāna-mārga, that it “is literally the path of Jñāna, or the path of pure knowledge, of Paramartha or (Sanskrit) Svasamvedana, the self-evident or self-analysing reflection.” Jñāna is, among the Hindus, the higher knowledge, wisdom, not the lower knowledge concerning the world, which is called vijñāna.

Ere thou canst settle in Jñāna-mārga and call it thine, thy Soul has to become as the ripe mango fruit: as soft and sweet as its bright golden pulp for others’ woes, as hard as that fruit’s stone for thine own throes and sorrows, O conqueror of weal and woe.

Make hard thy Soul against the snares of self; deserve for it the name of Diamond-Soul.

For as the diamond buried deep within the throbbing heart of earth can never mirror back the earthly lights, so are thy mind and Soul; plunged in Jñāna-mārga, these must mirror nought of Māyā’s realm illusive.

Of our personal sorrow Longfellow has sung:

But now it has fallen from me.
It has sunken into the sea,
And only the sorrows of others
Throw their shadows over me.

We must go a step further than that and not let any sorrows cast shadows over us. When you merely feel the sorrow of another you are not helping him, but adding to his trouble; but when you feel real sympathy you are pouring out vibrations of love, and are giving real help to him. The Master always feels the sympathy, but never the sorrow. He cannot suffer, even though he be truly one with those who are suffering, because He is one with them and knows the joy of their existence on higher planes and the wonderful glory of that state towards which they are evolving with unerring certainty. The danger for most people is that when they cast out sorrow from their hearts, they tend to lose sympathy as well, and in such a case they may enter the left-hand path, the path of black magic. The brothers of the shadow become perfectly callous to the feelings of others, as well as to their own; they ruthlessly repress all feelings on the ground that they are a waste of force.

When thou hast reached that state, the portals that thou hast to conquer on the path fling open wide their gates to let thee pass, and nature’s strongest might possess no power to stay thy course. Thou wilt be master of the sevenfold Path; but not till then, O candidate for trials passing speech.

It seems probable that the trials passing speech are not dangers and difficulties so great as to be quite indescribable, but of a kind unknown to ordinary men, and known only to the ego. The path along which Āryasanga is guiding his people is an inner path for the ego. When the personality has been conquered in the outer worlds, the ego has to scale the heights of planes above him, and therefore has to do what cannot be described.

Another possible interpretation is that the candidate finds himself now able to do what at first he was unable to believe that he could. The ordinary man would be inclined to say, for example, that the purity and unselfishness of which we have constantly been speaking are beyond him, and quite impossible of attainment, that they are a counsel of perfection. But some day, if he tries to acquire them, if he keeps on desiring it and trying, he will awake to find that it is perfectly natural and easy for him to have these qualities.

The ordinary man says that a thing is impossible, and so he does not try; but we have learned, like Napoleon, to erase that word from our dictionary. It is not impossible for the reader of this page to attain Adeptship within twenty-four hours; that would be possible if he had sufficient will – a will, however, which no one seems to have. But leaving time out of the question, it is possible for him to attain Adeptship; if he fixes his eye on the goal, and goes straight ahead without thinking about the passage of time, he will comparatively soon find himself there.

Till then, a task for harder still awaits thee; thou hast to feel thyself all thought, and yet exile all thoughts from out thy Soul.

Thou hast to reach that fixity of mind in which no breeze, however strong, can waft an earthly thought within. Thus purified, the shrine must of all action, sound, or earthly light be void; e'en as the butterfly, o'ertaken by the frost, falls lifeless at the threshold – so must all earthly thoughts fall dead before the fane.

Behold it written:

“Ere the gold flame can burn with steady light, the lamp must stand well guarded in a spot free from all wind.” Exposed to shifting breeze, the jet will flicker and the quivering flame cast shades deceptive, dark and everchanging, on the Soul's white shrine.

Here is a poetical description of concentration – such fixity of the higher manas that even on that plane nothing can enter from the outside. This is the same thing as dhāraṇā, mentioned in the first Fragment. (Fragment I, Ch. 2.) though in this Fragment it is called vīrya, which means strength – not physical strength, of course, but the dauntless and unshaken manhood of the *ego*.

Dhāraṇā is called the sixth stage, in the first Fragment, but here virya is the fifth portal. There is no confusion of numbers in this, for the fifth portal leads to the sixth stage; in that stage the man is using the quality which he acquired in the fifth stage to admit him to the sixth through the fifth portal.

The same quality is the passport to the buddhic plane; when the man has risen to this level he has silenced the higher mental activity for the time, and now, instead of his own thoughts he feels himself all thought – he is one with others, and their thoughts are his. At this stage he feels the quality of unity of the Solar Logos; to him it is now a definite reality, a matter of direct experience, no longer a beautiful idea or an occasional thrilling inspiration. As to whether all this will come down to any extent into the physical brain – that is another matter; most of it cannot. And the concentration and meditation of these high stages are done for the most part out of the body during sleep.

We often talk of fighting earthly thoughts and feelings. That is a stage in which one is putting oneself on an equality with them; but the stage of which we are now speaking is one in which they fall dead at the threshold of the aura. The rates of vibration of the respective bodies are so tremendous that the lower thought-forms are knocked aside and cannot penetrate. There are many illustrations of this in the physical plane. If a wheel is rotating slowly, one can throw a ball through the spokes, but not if it is turning rapidly. If a jet of water is sufficiently strong, one cannot cut it with a sword; the weapon is thrown back as though the water were solid. One of the well-known children's fairy stories tells of a man who could stand out in the rain, and whirl his sword so rapidly above his head that not one drop

could get through the circle and fall upon him!

The quotation about the lamp is taken from the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. It further says: “To such is likened the Yogī of subdued thought, absorbed in the yoga of the Self,” (*Op. cit.*, VI, 19.) and goes on to explain that he then sees the Self by the Self, and in the Self is satisfied, that he thinks there is no greater gain beyond it, and is not shaken any more, even by heavy sorrow. *ibid.*, VI, 22.

This experience of the yogī is a true intuition, because it comes from within, from a deeper part of the nature than even the causal levels. How such an intuition will come down into the personality, if it does so, depends upon the type of person who experiences it. There are two main modes for its transmission – one which comes through the higher to the lower mental plane, and the other direct from the buddhi to the astral body.

Which of these lines one will more easily follow depends upon the manner in which one was individualized from the animal kingdom long ago. Some attained that level through deep understanding, others through a rush of high emotion, probably of devotion to a human master. In the former mode it will come into the lower mind as a conviction, requiring no reasoning to establish its truth at present, though it must have been understood in previous lives or out of the body in the lower mental plane. In the case of those who individualized by emotion the intuition is received through the feelings, not the mind.

In neither case can these intuitions come through satisfactorily unless the vehicles are steady. It is like transmitting a musical note. If it has come not only through the air, but through a thick wall, it may be muffled, and the sound may become quite different from what it was. If it has to pass through some disturbance – a hurricane for example – it will be still less clear.

The latter simile very well indicates the case when the astral and mental bodies are full of disturbance.

And then, O thou pursuer of the truth, thy mind-soul will become as a mad elephant, that rages in the jungle. Mistaking forest trees for living foes, he perishes in his attempts to kill the ever-shifting shadows dancing on the wall of sunlit rocks.

I do not know whether such a thing as this really happens in the jungle; but the idea is that when an elephant goes mad, he either mistakes the trees for living foes or, what is even worse, charges against the rocks and perishes. In the same way, some have had the experience that when the mind feels the newly awakened energy of the higher self coming from above, it rebels with a last burst of ferocity against its new master, unwilling in its pride and fear to give up its independence, which it has enjoyed so long. Then it rages, and the last reserves of the army of doubts and suspicions are routed out from every depth and corner, and come forth to do battle against the light, mistaking its every movement for a hostile foe. The mind is a stronghold of pride, and what there is left of that quality rises up in hatred against its superior, just as the persecutors of Jesus rose and killed Him, unable to bear the comparison of His purity and greatness with their own earthly mould.

Beware, lest in the care of Self thy Soul should lose her foot-hold on the soil of Deva-knowledge.

Beware, lest in forgetting Self thy Soul lose o'er its trembling mind control, and forfeit thus the due fruition of its conquests.

Deva-knowledge here refers, as before, to the knowledge of the divine underlying all manifestation. There is a danger that the candidate, anxious to see that he is going the right way, should become, not selfish, but self-centred. There is a real distinction between these two. None of us would willingly take anything for ourselves knowing that it would injure another person. That defect would be indicated in the aura by a dull brown-grey. But there is a danger of being self-centred, taking things too much from one's own point of view. That is

indicated in the aura by a hardening of the outer surface, which prevents impressions from coming in.

The other warning relates to the one Self, which must not be forgotten. The aspirant must ever remember that all are one, that the divine unity is in each. This is a practical instruction for every plane. Physically a man must be clean, honest and true, so as not to contaminate society; astrally and mentally his feelings and thoughts must be pure and lofty, not that he may have the pleasure of being so, but for the sake of all around.

Beware of change, for change is thy great foe. This change will fight thee off, and throw thee back out of the path thou treadest, deep into viscous swamps of doubt.

The warning against change looks a little curious at first, especially when we remember that we are all the time changing and that in treading the Path we have become that Path, and are thus very busily engaged in changing ourselves. What is meant is that one must take care, during the period of change, not to change one's basis, or essential attitude. There is a trying time when one gives up the worldly things that one used to value, and has not yet a permanent hold on the new and higher things. These latter have been visible in special moments when we have been at our best, but we have fallen away from them again and again, into that condition of spiritual dryness mentioned by so many mystics. What is required is that one shall hold to the vision all through those fluctuations, not changing that essential position.

These changes may be caused in several ways. Sometimes it is merely that the physical brain gets a little congested or anaemic; that affects the vehicles, but must not be allowed to affect the real man. When the fluctuations come, we should say: "I knew this would come. I know that I saw clearly before. Now the vision is dim and I begin to doubt; but I know I shall come out of this depression, that it is merely a fluctuation in my astral body."

Sometimes it is a great shock and trial for people to give up the picturesque faith of their childhood, when they realize that it cannot fit the facts of life, and can no longer satisfy the needs of mind and heart. Then there often comes doubt of everything, and a rudderless condition which has in extreme cases been known to last for several lives. In that case one must listen and read and think, and hold on to the hypotheses that best explain the facts, until doubt has been laid to rest by the knowledge that sooner or later will surely come. It is, of course, not necessary to pass through a sceptical stage; it is quite possible to drop the accretions and widen out one's religion little by little, until one arrives at the Theosophical understanding of its message.

Prepare, and be forewarned in time. If thou hast tried and failed, O dauntless fighter, yet lose not courage; fight on, and to the charge return again and yet again.

The fearless warrior, his precious life-blood oozing from his wide and gaping wounds, will still attack the foe, drive him from out his stronghold, vanquish him, ere he himself expires. Act then, all ye who fail and suffer, act like him; and from the stronghold of your Soul chase all your foes away – ambition, anger, hatred, e'en to the shadow of desire – when even you have failed . . .

Remember, thou that tightest for man's liberation, each failure is success, and each sincere attempt wins its reward in time. The holy germs that sprout and grow unseen in the disciple's Soul, their stalks wax strong at each new trial, they bend like reeds but never break, nor can they e'er be lost. But when the hour has struck, they blossom forth.

* * * *

But if thou can'st prepared, then have no fear

In the course of a foot-note to this, H.P.B. refers to the well-known belief that every additional saint is a new soldier in the army of those who work for the liberation of mankind, and that in Northern Buddhist countries, where the doctrine of the Nirmāṇakāyas is taught,

every new Bodhisattva is called a liberator of mankind. We must remember, of course, that she refers to all who have become Arhats, not only to the great being who fills the office of Bodhisattva. Every one who makes progress makes it for all.

The candidate cannot have personal ambition on this path. The idea of glory for oneself is selfish, and long before this stage is reached the aspirant has set his will resolutely against such desires. The pupil of the Master thinks not “What do I want?”, but “What does the Master want?” When we realize that we are sparks of the divine Fire we can think only of what God wants. We are parts of Him; separately we can have no glory; so the idea of glory for oneself is quite a delusion.

No man who goes on trying can possibly fail. He may not succeed in doing just what he wanted to do at a given time; but if he has put force into his effort it cannot be wasted, and as action and reaction are equal and opposite, every time he tried it reacted upon himself to give him greater strength for the future. Further, every man who tries must succeed, because the whole trend of evolution is on his side. He does not know what may be the thickness of the karmic wall of obstacles through which he must break, nor at what moment he may come through to light on the other side.

Under these circumstances it is simply foolish to despair, or to stop trying, because as yet one has no visible success. In Frederick Myers’ grand poem, *St. Paul*, we find it said: “O man, why art thou despairing? God will forgive thee all but thy despair.” To despair is the sin against the Holy Ghost; to despair of your own power is to despair of His power that is working through you, so that you shut yourself off from Him.

Āryasanga tells the candidate to be like the warrior who fights, and wins the battle just as he himself expires. He must hold out to the very last, and never give in. The teacher knew that death is but a trivial thing, not to be taken into account in our work. It will come to each of us at its proper time; some who are old may still have many years to live, and others who are young will be suddenly taken away. We shall go on with our work just the same after it comes as we did before.

Henceforth thy way is clear right through the Vīrya gate, the fifth one of the seven portals. Thou art now on the way that leadeth to the Dhyāna haven, the sixth, the Bodhi portal.

The Dhyāna gate is like an alabaster vase, white and transparent; within there burns a steady golden fire, the flame of Prajñā that radiates from Ātma.

Thou art that vase.

We have here a wonderfully beautiful illustration – the alabaster vase, with a steady golden fire within. It well typifies the buddhic body or sheath, which is utterly transparent and offers no obstruction to the unity of life at that level. Dhyāna is the higher meditation in that body – in which one takes something and tries to understand its innermost meaning, or in which one fixes one’s thought upon a Great One and tries to understand oneself as part of Him. There is no longer any outer knowledge; no standing outside and thinking of the object as apart from oneself; one realizes its nature by becoming one with it, contemplating it from within.

Thou hast estranged thyself from objects of the senses, travelled on the path of seeing, on the path of hearing, and standest in the light of knowledge. Thou hast now reached Titikshā state.

Narjol, thou art safe.

The same word titikshā has been applied, as we have seen, to one of the qualifications, one of the points of good conduct, meaning endurance. The term is now applied again at a higher stage. In a foot-note Madame Blavatsky says it means “supreme indifference; submission, if necessary, to what is called ‘pleasure and pain for all’, but deriving neither pleasure nor pain from such submission – in short, the becoming physically, mentally and morally indifferent

and insensible to either pleasure or pain.”

That is not very clearly put. The candidate does not act from considerations of pleasure and pain; he simply does what he knows to be his duty. He still feels pleasure and pain in his vehicles, as other people do. Yet it may be said that so great is the joy of this level, so intently are the thoughts fixed upon the goal, that pleasure and pain have lost their power. Though the Christ might feel to the full and cry out, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” still there rings in his heart the cry, “My God, My God, how Thou dost glorify me,” as I have explained in describing the Fourth Initiation, in *The Masters and the Path*, Ch. X

CHAPTER 6

THE SEVENTH GATE

Know, conqueror of sins, once that a Sowani hath crossed the seventh path, all nature thrills with joyous awe and feels subdued. The silver star now twinkles out the news to the night-blossoms, the streamlet to the pebbles ripples out the tale; dark ocean waves will roar it to the rocks surf-bound, scent-laden breezes sing it to the vales, and stately pines mysteriously whisper: “A Master has arisen, a Master of the Day.”

C.W.L. – The Master of the Day means one who has become safe for the present cycle; therefore it refers to the candidate who has taken the first Initiation, as well as to him who has reached the further shore. That all nature rejoices at such an event is the simple fact, which is here so beautifully and poetically expressed. Many people at such a time find themselves unaccountably happy, and sometimes are conscious of a decided spiritual thrill. The majority of people of our civilized races are scarcely sufficiently sensitive to be conscious of these events, but sensitive individuals might very well feel: “I am curiously happy to day. I wonder what has happened.” It is felt in nature in that way – as a general sense of well-being.

Most people are busy developing the mind, and they have in consequence lost much sensitiveness, which arises much more with the development of feelings and emotions than with that of the mind. The higher types of savages are far more sensitive in many ways, but usually only in a vague and indefinite manner and without any control over their sensitiveness. They receive impressions, and are often able to foretell events in a general way. All this comes back to us, but in a clear and definite form on a higher turn of the spiral, with the development of the higher emotions. When that unfoldment comes we shall not only feel the sense of well-being and happiness of these great occasions, but will also know why we feel, and from what centre comes the great song of joy. The rest of nature, although below our level, is not yet centred on material things as much as many men are. Unless he is busily occupied with a desire rising from hunger or some other need of the body, an animal will generally be somewhat responsive to the thrill.

The great object of the Theosophical Society is not so much to provide the mental development, as to raise those who are ready into responsiveness to buddhic influences, to reawaken the sensitiveness of its people on a higher turn of the spiral, and prepare them for the new race. It does not deprecate mental development – far from it – but it prepares for the next stage, when intuitional love will produce harmony and brotherhood; and will employ the developed intellect to build a new civilization, based on those ideals. Our Society, being in close sympathy with the higher planes, is very sensitive to the forces liberated when another “Son of Man” comes to birth. It receives the first touch of the great outrush, and this gives it new impetus; its work increases and spreads, and there is an advance in numbers and in brotherly feelings.

Sometimes, however, this stimulation of life produces friction, due to a loss of the sense of

proportion. Some great idea arises in the mind of a member; the inrush of force intensifies it – and that is very good if he is a well-balanced man, and can pursue his own ideas without depreciating those of other people. But where there is unbalance and narrowness, differences of opinion may be made stronger. We have our special lines of work in Theosophy. Some take up one form of activity and some another, but danger arises when a man begins to think that his line is the one which the whole Society ought to take up and emphasize. When other people try to follow out their ideas, he tends to think that they are not doing the best for the Society, because they do not come and help him. It is not unnatural that enthusiasm should sometimes cause friction in such cases, when brotherly love and real tolerance fall a little behind.

Our great President has occasionally explained how she has often worked with others at a “second or third best idea” of theirs. She knew what was best, but would quietly yield for the sake of harmony, and that people might have the experience of carrying out their ideas. If a person comes to her with some plan of which he is very full, though it is often not the best thing, she does not discourage him, but says, “Go ahead, try it, and prosper.” The man tries it, and perhaps after a year or two he finds that it was not the best, and he modifies it; but sometimes good results have been brought about in this way.

It is nearly always wise to let people try their ideas, but always sad when they urge them too strongly upon others. Experience tells us ever more and more that the most important thing in the Society is harmony among the workers. Indeed, it may be said that harmony among the workers is more important than success in any piece of work. So, let each man follow the best inspiration that comes to him, but let him have the fullest possible sympathy for others also in their individual ideas. If without peril to the spirit of harmony which makes the Society a perfect channel for higher forces, an open door to the Great Ones, we can engage in vigorous activity, it is well indeed, but not otherwise.

The silver star mentioned in the text may also be thought of as the star of Initiation. It is the sign of the thought and the presence of the King. In the ceremony of Initiation the one who acts for Him, the One Initiator, calls to Him to ratify that which has been done, and the answer is the flashing out of the silver star.

He standeth now like a white pillar to the west, upon whose face the rising sun of thought eternal poureth forth its first most glorious waves. His mind, like a becalmed and boundless ocean, spreadeth out in shoreless space. He holdeth life and death in his strong hand.

Yea, he is mighty. The living power made free in him, that power which is Himself, can raise the tabernacle of illusion high above the Gods, above great Brahma and Indra.

Through the Great White Brotherhood comes to the world all the Light that relieves the darkness of human life, and accelerates enormously the evolution of mankind. Often the symbol of the East has been used to typify the position of the Brotherhood, and the member thereof who has his face turned to help the outer world may therefore be said to be turned to the West.

The illusion referred to here is that of separateness. The aspirant has now won his freedom from that illusion, and on the Path he will raise himself step by step, plane by plane, until he has destroyed the illusion on each of them, and is master of himself on all the planes of human life. There seems to be no limit to the height to which a man can rise, so the reference to Brahma and Indra is no exaggeration, though it is no doubt intended in a general sense. It reminds us also of the line in *The Light of Asia*: “Higher than Indra’s ye may lift your lot.” (*Op. cit.*, Book the Eighth).

A practical bearing of this illustration is to be found in the change of ray, described in *The Masters and the Path*. It is possible in the Hierarchy of our earth to advance further on the

first ray than on the second, and further on the second than on any of the remaining five; so, anyone who has raised himself to the Seventh Initiation on one of the last five rays must change to the second or the first ray, if he wants to go on to the Eighth Initiation, and on to the first ray only if he wishes to go still further. *The Secret Doctrine* compares Indra to the Second Logos, the Sun-God, and Brahmā is the Third Logos, the Creator. In the Hierarchy these two are represented by (1) the Head of the second ray, the Buddha, and (2) the Mahāchohan, who governs the five rays, three to seven. The Lord of the World is on the first ray, and He has raised His lot higher than that of the other two.

Now he shall surely reach his great reward!

Shall he not use the gifts which it confers for his own rest and bliss, his well-earned weal and glory – he, the subduer of the great delusion?

Nay, O thou candidate for nature's hidden lore! If one would follow in the steps of holy Tathāgata, those gifts and powers are not for self.

Would'st thou thus dam the waters born on Sumeru? Shalt thou divert the stream for thine own sake, or send it back to its prime source along the crests of cycles?

Once more we come to the question of liberation from the wheel of births and deaths, with its attendant idea of rest. At this stage there can be no feeling of fatigue and labour such as we have down here, but looking from below the lot of an Adept who remains embodied for millions of years does appear appallingly tedious. Still, the candidate to whom Āryasanga is speaking is looking from below, and the Teacher desires that he shall have no unwillingness to face that future, though he may at present be able to see only the darker side of the picture. It is perhaps impossible for Him to describe the joys of that higher life; they cannot be expressed in terms of any worldly happiness that we know; it is somewhat dangerous therefore to hold out its joys as an attraction to the candidate, as it might cause him to fix his mind on some lower form of happiness, all unwitting, and that would delay his progress.

Mount Meru or Sumeru, is the Mount of the Gods, corresponding in a general way to the Olympus of the Greeks. All good flows from that source; that stream flows into every member of the Brotherhood, and it should flow through him to the world – otherwise he is literally damming up the stream. But in that case, of course, he will become one of the failures.

If thou would'st have that stream of hard-earned knowledge, of wisdom heaven-born, remain sweet running waters, thou should'st not leave it to become a stagnant pond.

Know, if of Amitābha, the Boundless Age, thou would'st become co-worker, then must thou shed the light acquired, like to the Bodhisattvas twain, upon the span of all three worlds.

On this Madame Blavatsky has the following note:

In the Northern Buddhist symbology, Amitābha or boundless space (Parabrahman) is said to have in his paradise two Bodhisattvas – Kwan-shi-yin and Tashishi – who ever radiate light over the three worlds where they lived, including our own, in order to help with this light (of knowledge) in the instruction of Yogīs, who will, in their turn, save men. Their exalted position in Amitābha's realm is due to deeds of mercy performed by the two, as such Yogīs, when on earth, says the allegory.

This is a little complicated, and requires some explanation. Madame Blavatsky here makes Amitabha the equivalent of Parabrahman, but it is difficult to see how that could be so, when the former is the Boundless Light, the Boundless Wisdom, the Essence of all the Buddhas. Parabrahman is the first member of the great Trinity, and Avalokiteshvara is the second,

which is also Amitabha, described as the “middle principle” of the Buddha. With that second or middle principle it is possible for us to become co-workers, but not with Parabrahman.

However, she often speaks of the two as one, as the Parabrahman is the concealed wisdom, and He manifests as Avalokiteshvara, the manifested Ishvara, the Logos. Looking upward from below, there is in us, and in all, a God who is seen (the second of the Three) and a God who is concealed (the first of the Three). (Fragment I, Ch. 5).

The middle principle is also called the Bodhisattva, and is described as dual, male and female, namely, Kwan-shi-yin, the male aspect, and Kwan-yin the female aspect of Avalokiteshvara. The latter, it is said, “assumes any form at pleasure in order to save mankind.”

All the three worlds, says a foot-note, refers to “the three planes of being, the terrestrial, astral and spiritual.” Madame Blavatsky is here using the term “astral” in an unusual way, as she has also done in *The Secret Doctrine* when touching on the present topic. She takes the whole of man, from the Monad down to the material bodies, and divides him into three parts, first the spiritual, which is the Monad; secondly, the astral, which comprises our ātma-buddhi-manas, or the rupa beyond sense; and thirdly the material or terrestrial, comprising our lower mental, astral and physical bodies.

We may take the reference to the two Bodhisattvas also in another sense, as referring to the two great Brothers, the Lord Gautama and the Lord Maitreya, who represent the middle principle in the Hierarchy, the former dealing with the higher worlds, and the latter turned downwards, as it were, to deal with the personalities of men in the lower planes. The story of the wonderful effort and sacrifice of these two Brothers has been told in *The Masters and the Path*, Chapter xiv.

But perhaps the most practical interpretation of the allegory from the human point of view is this. Gautama became one with Amitabha – that is, He became the Buddha. He continues His work on the higher planes, but in the world of men He works through the dual Bodhisattva, whose male form is Kwan-shi-yin, the Lord Maitreya, and whose female form is Kwan-yin, the mysterious companion and shakti of the former in almost all religions.

Know that the stream of superhuman knowledge and the Deva-wisdom thou hast won, must, from thyself, the channel of Ālaya, be poured forth into another bed.

Know, O Narjol, thou of the secret path, its pure fresh waters must be used to sweeter make the ocean’s bitter waves – that mighty sea of sorrow formed of the tears of men.

The superhuman knowledge refers probably to the key of knowledge which is given to the Initiate when he takes his first step. The man who has passed through several Initiations has certain blocks of knowledge which he is not allowed to communicate to others. He acts under that knowledge, and necessarily it makes certain differences in what he does and the way he lives. Others may observe these things, and follow them by imitation or through devotion. Those who are natural protestants object to this kind of imitation of great people. They draw attention to the fact that a person may be great in some directions but not at all so in many others, that one who follows may easily fall into superstition, as the people did in the story of the cat and the bedpost. (Vol. I, Part IV, Ch. 3, *Tolerance*.) They also say that a life of self-reliance develops power. All that is true; but there is benefit to be gained and danger to be faced in both methods; so each should go the way that is natural to him, taking care at the same time to try to understand and respect the man who follows the other path. If we imitate the action of a person who knows a little more than we do, it is not unreasonable. A child imitates grown-up people because he is convinced that they know more than he does, and in most cases he is right. It is just as well that the average child regards his father as the greatest man in the world, and one would not think of telling him that his idea is wrong.

The Deva-wisdom is probably the Divine Wisdom, which we call Theosophy. It is

knowledge of the worlds as the dwelling-place of God's life, not merely as external regions. Āryasanga always makes a distinction between what one really knows and what one only believes. If He were speaking at one of our Theosophical meetings He might say: "You ought to believe in the existence of the astral and mental planes, because it is a rational necessity. But you do not know it unless you have direct experience." Such knowledge is superhuman only in the sense that it is beyond the reach of normal humanity at the present time, though it will be within the reach of the average person in due course.

Direct experience makes a great difference to one's realization of these verities. I remember Mr. W. T. Stead once saying that he had made extensive studies and investigations into things psychic, but one day he had a clairvoyant vision which gave new colour and reality to it all. He was falling asleep when he saw before him a little picture of the sea-shore, with the waves dashing against the rocks. It was a small thing, but it taught him much. "Now," he said, "I understand what a clairvoyant means when he says he sees this or that."

It made an enormous difference to Dr. Besant and myself when we began to see the inner planes for ourselves. We were familiar from the outside with facts about the astral and mental worlds, but direct vision gave them life for us. Even with regard to physical plane matters, the man who learns only from books has a cut and dried type of knowledge, but the man who has *lived* his knowledge has it full of colour and light. I remember well this difference among the Buddhist monks whom I used to meet in Ceylon. One would be perfect master of the books, and could quote from them to illustrate every point about his religion; while another, who had had some experience in meditation, would quote less but say far more.

Clairvoyance does not spring suddenly into existence, in a form in which it can be relied upon. Much careful training is required to enable a person to see accurately, to realize the significance of what he sees, and to eliminate the personal equation. One may put a telescope into a man's hands and expect that he will then know all about the stars – but he will know very little until he has been trained to use it properly, and has brought to bear upon what he sees a great deal of knowledge and intelligence. Astronomers have found that they must also make allowance for the personal equation in their considerations.

In clairvoyance this appears in many forms – one may see things a little too large, a little too blue, or too red, and so forth. Personal bias also is evident in the form of prejudice – one lady clairvoyant, for example, who was also an ardent Christian, would persist in associating ideas of baptism with any pouring out of water that she might happen to see, and she was quite offended when others could not agree with her view. With all our efforts we cannot see things fully, as would be necessary for perfect accuracy. It may be that even at Their level of Adeptship, the Masters make allowances for Their "personal equations" when working in the lower planes.

The Initiate has, however, absolute certainty, from experience, of a number of matters, which enables him to be a channel for the higher forces. It alters the polarity of his mental and causal vehicles, so that he can be used as others cannot, however highly they may be developed along other lines.

Alas! When once thou hast become like the fixed star in highest heaven, that bright celestial orb must shine from out the spatial depths for all, save for itself; give light to all, but take from none.

It must not be assumed that the star is sorry to have to shine; it does so because it cannot help it. "Beings follow their own nature; what shall restraint avail?" says *The Bhagavad Gītā* (III, 33). Restraint always produces sorrow; he who loves the world wants to shine upon it for ever; the sorrow would be if he could not do so.

One great example of this is given by the mighty entities who live in the forms of the rice grains or willow leaves of the sun, in order that through them light, heat and vitality may be shed upon the system. This is always spoken of as a sacrifice on their part. But it is

spontaneous, their way of expressing their inner nature. Instead of living a life of splendid activity on some higher plane of which we have no idea, they keep physical bodies, and live there for the benefit of the worlds which float around our sun. They form a guardian wall in very truth, a channel through which Ālaya may flow into another bed.

Alas! When once thou hast become like the pure snow in mountain vales, cold and unfeeling to the touch, warm and protective to the seed that sleepeth deep beneath its bosom – 'tis now that snow which must receive the biting frost, the northern blasts, thus shielding from their sharp and cruel tooth the earth that holds the promised harvest, the harvest that will feed the hungry.

The simile of the snow is very beautiful, but must not be pushed too far. The disciple has to become like pure snow – white, stainless, spotless. No doubt when Āryasanga spoke of this to his disciples, he pointed to the snow-covered peaks which were always in sight.

The snow is unfeeling not in the sense of being harmful in any way, but as being not itself affected by the cold. No matter how much colder the temperature of the air may become, the snow remains just the same. Because it is itself unaffected it is able to protect the earth from the more intense cold. That is the position to which the aspirant must rise. He must be unfeeling only in the sense that he does not mind if he himself is troubled or injured by any outward thing, whatever it may be, but he must remain protective to the seed that sleeps below.

The seed is the deity in man. It is beginning to awaken in all those who are turning their attention to higher things and are striving to develop themselves. It is this seed that must be cherished in others. An Upanishad tells us that in the acorn exists the oak tree potentially; it has only to unfold itself, and draw in from the air, the earth and the sunlight that which will enable it to manifest. In the same way the divine spark within us, the Monad, has the whole possibility of the Logos that we shall be one day, but it has still to unfold itself.

We must provide for those divine seeds the conditions under which they can best unfold themselves in the lower worlds. We must therefore receive the biting frost, the northern blast, so as to shield the other people, who might be affected and kept back by it. There are some who are ready for spiritual teaching, and they must be fed with spiritual food. These are the hungry, and we must give them the food they need for growth. They do not quite know what they want, but as soon as it is put before them they grasp it. That has been the experience of some of us with regard to Theosophy. The moment that it came before us we felt: "That is exactly what I have been waiting for," although before we heard of it we did not know what we wanted. There are many other people waiting in the same way to recognize it, and we must be like the snow, whose function is to protect while the cold lasts, and then, when the sun shines, to melt away and efface itself.

That is exactly what we do for children in the home; when times are hard or there is trouble of any kind, we take care that the children do not know of it. If there is a lack of food the children are fed first, and the father and mother go short. Mercifully there is so much of the divine instinct in us that we know that it is our duty to protect the young and helpless.

The same spirit has to be carried into other branches of life. We are a little ahead of the people who know nothing. They are the people to be pitied most, not those who think they are in great mental trouble and difficulty, struggling towards the light, such as the people who are worried because their religion does not express to them all that they need; these are not the people who most need sympathy, because at least they are awake and struggling towards the light. It is the great orphan humanity, those who do not know there is anything to struggle for, who most need sympathy. We cannot do much for them. The only thing one can do for a chick in a shell is to keep it comfortably warm. The warmth is the life that we can pour out. We must be kindly, brotherly and upright, When they need teaching, we can give it to them; but we can *always* give them love and make beautiful thoughts for them, for though they will

not receive the exact thought they will feel the warmth, as the chicken does in the egg.

It has been said that it is very well to preach and teach, but the greatest of all sermons is a noble life. One reason for that is that such preaching affects the people who do not yet know what they want. The mass of people are engaged in making a living and looking after their families, and they do not trouble themselves about Theosophy or religion. In England, which is regarded in Europe as a religious country, the accommodation provided in places of worship is insufficient for one-tenth of the population. The churches and chapels of various kinds are generally not even half-full, so we may say that not more than a twentieth of the population habitually attend any sort of religious service. Our beautiful Theosophical lectures make little or no impression on this mass of people; one might just as well whistle a tune or read a piece of poetry. But they are always watching the more educated and developed people, and they form their own opinion of those who are better placed educationally or socially. The man who leads a good, honest, pure, unselfish life is thus actually preaching all the time to all those people who cannot be affected by anything that is said.

An objection to many missionary efforts is that they put preaching before example. A missionary settles, for example, in a bungalow in an Indian country town, close to the European magistrate and tax collector, who is almost a king in his division. Nearly all the Hindus round about are strict vegetarians and teetotallers; but the missionary has meat killed for himself, and generally he keeps a decanter of whiskey or other strong drink at hand, even when he does not share in the shooting of birds and small animals in which his European friends indulge. Then he preaches the purity and love of Christ, and sometimes dares to abuse the objects of worship of the people. Usually he produces no effect, except among some hypocrites who can obtain material benefits through connection with him. In schools, he often manages to undermine the children's religion without implanting his own. He rarely converts a good Hindu into a good Christian, which in any case would be no advantage, but occasionally he changes a good Hindu into an indifferent Christian. It would be better if he would set himself to live a saintly life such as the Hindus can understand, and then speak of Christ as his divine Guru, who has inspired him and made him what he is. Even for his own purpose this would be better propaganda, because the Hindus are broad-minded, and are generally willing to allow Those whom others worship a place beside their own Divine Incarnations.

We often hear people say that Eastern lands are being rapidly Christianized when what is meant is that they are taking up modern civilization – such as electric light and sanitation, and are dropping certain social customs, such as the seclusion of the better-class women and early marriage, which were common enough in Christian Europe a century or two ago. Perhaps they forget how the orthodox Christians in Europe fought against science and social reform, and how these improvements had to win their way in the teeth of the kind of “Christianity” which the missionaries are themselves for the most part still preaching. The situation would be comical, were it not both hypocritical and cruel.

**Self-doomed to live through future Kalpas, unthanked and unperceived by men;
wedged as a stone with countless other stones which form the Guardian Wall, such
is thy future if the seventh gate thou passest. Built by the hands of many Masters of
compassion, raised by their tortures, by their blood cemented, it shields mankind,
since man is man, protecting it from further and far greater misery and sorrow.**

**Withal man sees it not, will not perceive it, nor will he heed the word of wisdom ...
for he knows it not.**

**But thou hast heard it, thou knowest all, O thou of eager, guileless Soul ... and
thou must choose. Then hearken yet again.**

I cannot help thinking that Āryasanga's pupils must have been rather inferior in certain ways, because again and again He seems to find it necessary to reiterate that they must not

expect anything for themselves. That has been said to us too, but I venture to hope that we who are students of occultism have reached a stage where we do not mind being unthanked and unperceived by men.

The idea of wanting these recognitions seems to be significant of rather a lower stage. One is not looking for any thanks or pleasure in connection with the results of one's work, yet one acts carefully and with prevision. It is the duty of the occultist to see beforehand what will be the probable consequence of his action or speech, and not to do anything rash. It is our business to do our best, and to see that failure is not due to our lack of effort, but it is all the same to us whether we see results or not.

Suppose, for example, that a member of our Society is sent out to start a Lodge in some new district. He gives all the devotion that he has, shows all the tact at his command, and does his best in every way. Then, whether many or few join does not trouble him. It would be foolish for him to say regretfully: "If somebody else had been here they would have succeeded." The man was sent there to do his own best, not that of some other person. It is a mistake for a man to compare himself with others.

The expression "Guardian Wall" has caused a great deal of misunderstanding. It is a beautiful symbol, but, like other symbols, it must not be pressed too far. There is no evil of any sort menacing humanity which is not of its own generating. We ourselves are our only possible enemies. No one can hurt a man save himself, and no one can really help him save himself. Others can only put him in the way to learn how to help himself, or put him in a position where if he is not careful he may injure himself. The man in the outer world says that he is injured by another man who defames him; but the fact is that when he is angry the man in his anger injures himself. He need not feel angry. People say that it is natural to do so; that may be so for the undeveloped man, but it is not so for him who has learned a little more.

The expression "since man is man" is capable of two meanings. It may be taken as indicating that the Guardian Wall has existed ever since man became man, or it may mean that it was brought into existence because man is only man, and is therefore liable to injure himself very seriously, unless he receives help and protection and guidance from above. Probably both meanings are true. We know that the Lodge of Adepts is very ancient, that it existed long before our humanity reached the level when it could produce Adepts, and in those days They belonged to other and previous chains.

CHAPTER 7

THE ĀRYA PATH

On Sowan's Path, O Srotāpatti, thou art secure. Aye, on that Mārga, where nought but darkness meets the weary pilgrim, where torn by thorns the hands drip blood, the feet are cut by sharp, unyielding flints, and Māra wields his strongest arms – there lies a great reward immediately beyond.

Calm and unmoved the pilgrim glideth up the stream that to Nirvāṇa leads. He knoweth that the more his feet will bleed, the whiter will himself be washed. He knoweth well that after seven short and fleeting births Nirvāṇa will be his ...

Such is the Dhyāna path, the haven of the Yogī, the blessed goal that Srotāpattis crave.

C.W.L. – The term Sowan is another Buddhist expression, which has the same meaning as Srotapatti – the man who has taken the First Initiation. At the end of what is here called the path of dhyāna, the meditation by which he steadily works his way upward through the levels of the buddhic plane, he takes his Fourth Initiation, and immediately enters the nirvanic plane.

He does not rest at that point, however, but then treads the Arhat path to the gate of Prajñā.

That term is no doubt connected with the casting off of the last fetter, which is ignorance or avidya. It has been suggested that the translation ignorance, which is so common, is somewhat unfortunate, and that unwisdom would have been better. The idea is that no matter how much knowledge about things as seen from the outside a man may have he is still ignorant; but when he realizes those things from within, when he has realized the same Self, the One dwelling equally in all, he can see the inner side of all these things, and then he has wisdom. Jñāna is wisdom, and the *jñā* in *prajñā* has the same meaning, the *pra* being a prefix implying activity or moving forth. Therefore *prajñā* is sometimes translated consciousness, and sometimes intelligence, discernment or simply wisdom.

It means in practice not that the Adept has all knowledge, but that He is in a position to obtain the result of any knowledge he wishes. For example, the Master Morya, when first I had the privilege of meeting Him, spoke English very imperfectly and with a strong accent. Since then he has acquired far greater fluency in English, though something of the accent still remains. The Master Kūthūmi has always, within our experience, spoken English with the greatest fluency and without any trace of accent, but at the same time with one or two little peculiarities such as any man might have, which enable one to identify His style.

I remember an early experience when one of the Masters wished to send a letter in the Tamil language. As He did not know that tongue, He instructed a pupil of His, who did know it, to think what He wanted to say; then He watched in that man's mind how the thoughts would be expressed, and so precipitated a letter which was correct, though He did not in His body know the meaning of the written symbols used.

I remember that my inner feelings of devotion and reverence received a little shock at the idea that a Master did not know Tamil; but I discovered very soon that it would not be worth while for an Adept to know everything from our point of view. I remembered a remark made by an exceedingly clever man with regard to some matter of astronomy or some other science. A friend of his had expressed surprise when he showed ignorance of the matter, and said: "What, do you mean to say you didn't know that?" He replied: "No, I did not know it, and even now that you have told me, I shall put the thought aside and probably forget all about it. My brain will hold only a certain amount of information, and I am going to be a specialist on my own line."

Brain capacity is limited, and to acquire a vast amount of information that has scarcely any bearing on our life and work is not wise. I once knew a young man who told me that he had been a very ardent reader of the books of a large reference library in, the north of England, until one day he made a calculation as to how long it would take him merely to read all the books that he wanted to study in that particular library alone. His computation showed that it would take him about five hundred life-times if he spent eight hours a day in that occupation! He then decided to select his future reading very carefully.

It is one of the big problems of life to decide just what knowledge one should try to acquire. Karma brings within our reach all that we need to know for our immediate progress. It is possible for us to go beyond that and spend our time and energy on study which is not useful in our lives, though it may be of importance to someone else. The more we learn the more we realize the paralyzing immensity of things; we are like small insects in a great room, looking at it from one corner.

We realized something of this immensity when looking up a long series of lives. For the long time involved we had to use the precession of the equinoxes to mark periods of time; the astronomers make that period about twenty-five thousand years, but higher vision showed it to be thirty-one thousand. The inexactitude of scientific information in these matters is due to the limited period of time over which the investigations could extend – a few hundred years, or a few thousand if the records of the Chaldeans are to be taken into account. The observations have thus been limited to a very small arc of a circle, from which the dimensions

of the whole had to be calculated, so the least error in approximation becomes multiplied many times. But that is nothing beside an Age of Brahmā, with its 311,040,000 million years. And the greatest distances we can clearly imagine are naught besides the light-years which separate the stars.

We can imagine two kinds or types of learned men. One might become learned by acquiring an immense amount of knowledge; another, by surrounding himself with a well-chosen set of books and having the knowledge how to turn to those books and get from them the information which he needed. The knowledge of the Adept is somewhat of the second type; He does not necessarily possess books, but He has the power to get at any knowledge that He wants almost in a moment. If the Adept wants knowledge on a particular subject, He can make Himself one with it and get at the core of it instantly, and then observe the surrounding details as He may require them.

The Adept approaches the subject from a higher plane, and therefore it might appear to us on lower levels that there were many things which He did not know. It seems to me possible that if an Adept moved among us now, we might find that we knew more than He along certain lines; but if we came to deal with realities, with the core of the matter, with the real grasp of its essentials, the Master would know more than any of us. Let us try to understand it by considering the study of geology. The student buys a number of manuals, and studies the subject month after month, and perhaps year after year. What would a Master do if He wanted to know geology? Somewhere on the buddhic or nirvanic plane, He would grasp the idea that lies at the back of the science and make Himself one with that; then, from that point of view, He would reach down into any details He might require. Therefore, while undoubtedly some of us may have detailed information of which a given Master is not possessed, He has powers of knowledge different from ours.

An Adept, wishing to occupy His physical energies and time with the very definite purposes that He always has in view, may very well put aside many things and not bother about them. But in addition to that, we must take into account the fact that His consciousness is not only definitely greater than ours, but also different in kind, and no doubt quite indescribable to us who have not yet reached that state.

The Arhat has still seven lives before him as a general rule, before he attains Adeptship, but they need not be lived in a physical body. He must descend as far as the astral plane, but the taking of a physical vehicle for those seven lives is quite optional. While in the astral body he may at any moment that he chooses enjoy the nirvanic consciousness, but as in the physical body it is only possible for one to reach a plane below the highest that one can reach while in the astral body, the Arhat incarnated physically can have that nirvanic experience only when he leaves his body during sleep or in trance. The normal home of the Arhat's consciousness is the buddhic plane. If he were speaking to anyone on the physical plane, or doing a piece of work that required attention, his consciousness would be fixed in the physical brain, but when he turns aside and rests for a moment it slips back to its normal home. He has a number of planes open to him, and can focus his consciousness at any particular level, as he chooses, although there will always be a background of the buddhic or the nirvanic consciousness.

One must be careful not to misjudge people who habitually use the higher consciousness. There have been cases where such a person was misunderstood by some people who spoke to him and did not immediately get a comprehensible reply, because of the fact that his attention was abstracted at the time. Sometimes people have got an impression of coldness or aloofness under these circumstances. It is wiser to be on the alert to understand what is happening, and if we receive a preoccupied answer, to go away and try another time. Many a time I have approached the Master in His home, and noticed by the appearance of His aura that He was preoccupied; in such a case one waits until the Master has finished, or one goes away to do some other work and then returns.

All the symbolism, in this and similar passages, about the weary pilgrim being torn by thorns and washed with blood and so forth is rather unpleasant to me. It is, of course, a materialistic way of symbolizing difficulties which all aspirants feel to some extent, but I should prefer to employ more agreeable illustrations. People differ, naturally, and one recognizes that what seems almost repulsive to some is taken very much as a matter of course by others. I have never been able to bring myself to like the Sufi symbolism in which they speak of drinking wisdom as wine, or some parts of the symbolism in the Puranas typifying quite materially the devotion of the Gopīs to Shrī Krishna. Of course, I know what the Sufi means – that just as the man is entirely filled with his wine and forgets everything else, so must he be filled with the divine wisdom until it is everything to him. I would rather say, with the Psalm, “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.” (*Psalm*, 42, 1.) Nevertheless, we do not wish to criticise those who use a symbolism different from our own.

Not so when he hath crossed and won the Ārhata Path.

There Klesha is destroyed for ever, Tanhā’s roots torn out. But stay, disciple . . . yet one word. Canst thou destroy divine compassion? Compassion is no attribute. It is the law of laws – eternal harmony, Ālaya’s Self; a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting right, and fitness of all things, the law of love eternal.

The more thou dost become at one with it, thy being melted in its being, the more thy Soul unites with that which is, the more thou wilt become compassion absolute.

Such is the Ārya path, path of the Buddhas of perfection.

In foot-notes to this passage Madame Blavatsky writes: “Klesha is the love of pleasure or of worldly enjoyment, evil or good,” and “Tanhā, the will to live, that which causes rebirth.” The kleshas are technically considered among the Hindus as five forms of attachment to the world which are the great troubles and obstacles of the path. They have been dealt with in our comments on the first Fragment. (Ch. 3.) Tanhā, as explained before, is the thirst of the ego for the strong vibrations of material existence, which, in the early stages of his evolution, help to awaken him to a more vivid realization of his own existence.

There is also a foot-note on the subject of compassion, as follows:

This compassion must not be regarded in the same light as “God, the divine Love” of the Theists. Compassion stands here as an abstract, impersonal law, whose nature, being absolute harmony, is thrown into confusion by discord, suffering and sin.

I have always felt that perhaps our great Founder did a little less than justice to the Theists there. She says that one must not think of the Absolute Compassion as God, the Divine Love. I believe myself that one should so think of it, only that one should make one’s idea of God, the Divine Love, a higher, a greater and nobler thing than many have made it.

In many devotional books it has been made very personal indeed. In some of the Roman Catholic books of devotion, and in books of the Quietists we find expressions such as “Christ, the Lover of his Church” which are more suited to love between people on the physical plane. In India also those who follow Chaitanya, and some others, employ similar material expressions; they speak of a love like human love, though glorified.

Probably Madame Blavatsky was thinking of these things, and warning us not to identify absolute compassion with that idea of divine love. Divine love is stronger than that, yet too abstract to be put into words; it is not a quality of God, but it is *He*; He is all love and there is nothing that is not love. So I think this compassion absolute is simply what we mean by God, not a personal God, but the utter Reality which lies behind all. And because that is absolute love we, being one with all others in that, must feel the need to help others.

Withal, what mean the sacred scrolls which make thee say:

“Aum! I believe it is not all the Arhats that get of the nirvanic path the sweet fruition.”

“Aum! I believe that the Nirvāṇa-dharma is entered not by all the Buddhas.”

Yea, on the Ārya path thou art no more Srotāpatti, thou art a Bodhisattva. The stream is crossed.

When it is said that the nirvāṇa-dharma is not entered by all the Buddhas, the term buddha is used in a general way, meaning those who are illuminated or enlightened or wise. Madame Blavatsky said: “In the Northern Buddhist phraseology all the great Arhats, Adepts and saints are called Buddhas.” And when it says “Thou art a Bodhisattva” it means one who is preparing to become a Buddha in that general sense, and may be taken as equivalent to the term Arhat. Here the text speaks of the arya path, where before it said “the arhata path.” The word jirya means noble, and it may be that the term arhat applied to the path has a tinge of its general meaning of worthy or venerable, so that it would be not simply the path of the Arhat, but the venerable or noble path, as distinguished from the other path, that *pi* accepting nirvāṇa, which, as we have seen before, Āryasanga or His reporter is inclined to slight.

It has already been explained that the word bodhisattva has at least three meanings, of which one is that it names the office in the Hierarchy of the future Buddha who is the Teacher of Devas and men for a particular root-race. In a foot-note here Madame Blavatsky says that popular feeling rightly places this great being even higher in its reverence than a perfect Buddha. The Buddha is, of course, a higher official, but inasmuch as the Bodhisattva who for our root-race is the Lord Maitreya, is the great Teacher in the lower worlds, He may be said to be more directly and closely in touch with them, and therefore may take a more vital and living place in their devotion, in much the same way as affection and loyalty for some Prince who is in charge of a province may be greater than that felt for the great Emperor far away, who is seldom or never seen.

It has often been asked “Do the Buddhists worship Buddha?” Colonel Olcott, when writing his *Buddhist Catechism* had to deal with the question: “Was the Buddha God?” To his answer, “No”, the Burmese Buddhists raised objection, though the Sinhalese Buddhists were quite satisfied. The Lord Buddha is regarded in Ceylon as the Perfect Man, a Teacher towards whom the deepest gratitude is felt. But in Burma the religion is more coloured with devotion, and the Lord Buddha is practically worshipped. In a sense, both views are correct. All men are divine in essence; in imperfect men the divinity is veiled, but in the Lord Buddha God was shining forth.

These local differences of philosophical and devotional outlook are due to the temperament of the people of the two countries; Buddhism contains both aspects. Every great religion has begun by providing for all types of men; but in each case as the centuries rolled on certain portions or aspects of the teaching were allowed to fade while others were brought into prominence. Christianity nowadays provides almost exclusively for the devotional type of people; of the knowledge and philosophy that it had in the form of the Gnostic teaching but little is left. The Muhammadan religion also appeals principally to the devotional element, though there is philosophy among the Sufis. The Jewish religion is in the same plight; in it, however, the Talmud offers a philosophical system. Of all religions, it is perhaps only Hinduism that at present shows out both the philosophical and devotional sides with equal brilliance and fervour.

CHAPTER 8

THE THREE VESTURES

‘Tis true thou hast a right to Dharmakāya vesture; but Sambhogakāya is greater

than a Nirvāṇī and greater still is a Nirmāṇakāya – the Buddha of Compassion.

C.W.L. – We come now to the three vestures, on which Madame Blavatsky has a very long note, which I will comment upon piecemeal. The vestures refer to the lines of activity open to him who has taken the Fifth Initiation. Very little has ever been said about the seven paths that lie beyond Adeptship, but we have summarized what information is available in the following passage:

When the Human Kingdom is traversed, and man stands on the threshold of His superhuman life, a liberated Spirit, seven paths open before Him for His choosing: He may enter into the blissful omniscience and omnipotence of Nirvāṇa, with activities far beyond our knowing, to become, perchance, in some future world an Avatāra, or divine Incarnation: this is sometimes called, ‘taking the Dharmakāya vesture’. He may enter on ‘the Spiritual Period’ – a phrase covering unknown meanings, among them probably that of ‘taking the Sambhogakāya vesture’. He may become part of that treasure-house of spiritual forces on which the Agents of the Logos draw for Their work, ‘taking the Nirmāṇakāya vesture’. He may remain a member of the Occult Hierarchy which rules and guards the world in which He has reached perfection. He may pass on to the next Chain, to aid in building up its forms. He may enter the splendid Angel – Deva – Evolution. He may give himself to the immediate service of the Logos, to be used by Him in any part of the Solar System, His Servant and Messenger, who lives but to carry out His will and do His work over the whole of the system which He rules. As a General has his Staff, the members of which carry his messages to any part of the field, so are These the Staff of Him who commands all, “Ministers of His that do His pleasure.” From *Man: Whence, How and Whither*, pp. 12-13.

In earlier days, in the moon chain, these paths probably opened before the Arhat, because that was the level of attainment set for humanity in that chain. The line of those who remain in the Hierarchy on our earth leads to the Sixth Initiation, that of the Chohan, and still further to a seventh, that of the Mahāchohan. That is the last Initiation that is possible on rays three to seven, but on the second ray a further step may be taken, that of the Buddha, and on the first ray yet one more, that of the Lord of the World.

In the division of the seven ways into three sections as given here, no doubt the path of work in the Hierarchy would be included among those described as Nirmāṇakāyas, along with the other path of the Nirmāṇakāya proper. Our Masters, who keep Their physical bodies for certain purposes connected with Their work, still give most of Their help to men on higher levels. They work habitually on the causal bodies of men, and sometimes on the buddhic and atmic sheaths.

The Nirmāṇakāya usually retains his causal body, that is the Augoeides, the glorified form which he has been building up in the course of his evolution. With that he usually also retains the permanent atoms of the lower mental and the astral and physical bodies, so that he can whenever he chooses (which is a very rare thing) make for himself a vehicle on any of those planes, and show himself in it. Ordinarily, he lives in his causal body, and spends his time in the generation of spiritual force, which is poured into the reservoir, and is then distributed by the members of the Hierarchy and Their pupils. Both these classes, Madame Blavatsky said, “prefer to remain invisibly (in spirit, so to speak) in the world, and contribute towards men’s salvation by influencing them to follow the good Law.”

Further on she speaks of the Nirmāṇakāya as “that ethereal form which one would assume when leaving his physical he would appear in his astral body – having in addition all the knowledge of an Adept. The Bodhisattva develops it in Himself as he proceeds on the path. Having reached the goal and refused its fruition, he remains on earth, as an Adept; and when he dies, instead of going into Nirvāṇa, he remains in that glorious body he has woven for himself, invisible to uninitiated mankind, to watch over and protect it.”

Madame Blavatsky is here using the term astral body in quite a different sense from that in which she commonly employed it and in which it is now used, but she used it in this way also in her article on The Mystery of Buddha in the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*. She there

explains that Shrī Shankarāchārya, who appeared in India shortly after the death of the Lord Buddha, was *in a sense* a reincarnation of the Buddha, inasmuch as He used the “astral” remains of Gautama, and she says, such “astral bodies” must be regarded in the light of separate or independent Powers or Gods rather than material objects. She concludes: “Hence the right way of representing the truth would be to say that the various principles, the Bodhisattva, of Gautama Buddha, which did not go to Nirvāṇa, re-united to form the middle principle of Shankarāchārya, the earthly Entity.” *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. III, p. 381.

In order to understand this mystery of Buddha we must first realize the constitution of the physical atoms and then how these evolve by being used in the human body both in a general way to build up its particles and in a special way as permanent atoms. When you look at a physical ultimate atom with etheric sight you first of all see that it resembles a wire cage; then, looking more closely, you find that each wire is made up of a finer coil, and that in all there are seven sets of such spirillae. One of these spirillae is developed into activity in each round of evolution, so, as we are now in the fourth round of our earth chain incarnation, there are only four spirillae in activity at present in the majority of atoms. In each round a new set will be developed, so that in the seventh round the entire seven spirillae will be active; the atoms will therefore be better atoms in the seventh round than they are now, and the people who will live in that round will therefore find it far easier than people do today to respond to inner things and to live the higher life.

This awakening or evolution of the atoms is due to their being used in the bodies of living creatures, from the mineral to man. Everything is built of atoms, which are floating around us in unthinkable numbers. There must be some of them which have never been used at all, but others have frequently been taken into and thrown off from the bodies of living beings. Some few have experienced constant association with man, having been adopted as permanent atoms, to be carried from life to life through the man’s cycle of reincarnations. The atoms thus live with us and form our bodies. It is said that once in seven years every particle in the physical body is changed; some scientists have stated the period as three years. It is probable that the bony structure changes much more slowly, but it seems to me reasonable to imagine that the fleshy material is renewed entirely in about three years. The particles of the blood change more rapidly still; one would not be surprised to learn that they are entirely replaced every few days.

All atoms absorbed into living things are changed considerably. Those which form part of the earth are very little evolved by that, but those which compose precious stones are considerably developed. Vegetables and animals offer a still better opportunity, but the best possible evolution for atoms is to be drawn into the bodies of human beings. Among men, those who are living the occult life offer better conditions than men less advanced, since they have purer bodies because of what they eat and drink (or rather because of what they do not eat nor drink). As we evolve we also attract better atoms and our bodies more and more tend to reject those less evolved.

When a man reaches Adeptship he cannot express himself through the ordinary atoms that we find about us. They must be specially advanced and refined atoms, because his various vehicles are required to be so very much purer than ours, and capable of vibrating at rates which ours cannot maintain. When a person reaches the level of a Buddha, it is quite impossible for him to find atoms useful to him, except such as have been used as permanent atoms, and have therefore been in the human body all the time, except during the intervals between incarnations. Permanent atoms are very much more evolved than others. They are at the fullest development of seventh round atoms in men who are about to become Adepts. They are as highly developed as atoms can possibly be, and are charged with all the qualities which they have brought over from previous births.

All the permanent atoms of all who, in connection with this world or probably even this

chain of worlds, have attained Adeptship and have cast them off, have been collected together by the Lord Gautama, or for Him. He was the first Buddha of our human race. All those who had been Buddhas before Him had come from some other evolution, and had no doubt brought whatever they needed in the way of bodies with them. But the Lord Gautama, who was the first really human Buddha, had to find His bodies from the material of this chain. Therefore He, or some greater Ones for Him, made these bodies. His causal body was built up of the “remains”, or permanent atoms of all the causal bodies which had been used by such great Ones; His mental body was built of the mental units gathered from such people, and His astral body was made of Their permanent astral atoms. There were not quite enough of these to make the entire vehicle, so some ordinary atoms, the best available, had also to be employed; but these were galvanized into activity, by the others, and they are replaced by permanent atoms obtained from every new Adept who takes the Sambhogakāya or the Dharmakāya vesture. Thus has been built up a set of bodies which is absolutely unique. There are no other such bodies in the world, and there is no material to make another such set. They were used by Gautama Buddha, and afterwards preserved. We are now in a position to understand Madame Blavatsky’s statement that the principles of the Buddha were employed as the middle principles of Shrī Shankarāchārya, but the physical Shankarāchārya was quite a different man, and the Ātma of Shankarāchārya was absolutely distinct from that of the Buddha. These three intermediary bodies were used by Shankarāchārya, and are now being used by the Lord Maitreya. Madame Blavatsky employed a curious nomenclature in her article. S. Paul divided man into three parts – spirit, soul and body. By the spirit he meant what we call the Monad; by the soul the ego, and by the body the personality, no doubt. Madame Blavatsky is alluding to the same triple division; but she says that the Buddha is a person so exalted that you cannot think of His component principles in the same way as those of a man. So instead of speaking of the Monad of the Buddha, she speaks of it as the Dhyāni Buddha. Then she calls the intermediate principles His Bodhisattva. Thirdly, she calls the physical body of the Buddha the Manushya Buddha. And so we have these three things as the principles of the Buddha: the Monad of the Buddha, which, because He is one with it in a way which is not the case with us now, is called the Dhyāni Buddha; the Bodhisattva; and then the Manushya Buddha, which is His manifestation on the physical plane. The astral and mental bodies, which have not been dissipated, are also included in the Bodhisattva.

At first many of us were much confused by Madame Blavatsky’s terminology, but as the facts became more fully known to us we began to see what she means when she says that the Manushya Buddha dies and passes away, the Dhyāni Buddha enters Nirvāṇa, and the Bodhisattva remains on the earth to carry on the work of the Buddha. The Bodhisattva means the principles of the Buddha, which the present Bodhisattva uses. As the Lord Maitreya is using these, it is not these which we see on the Wesak day, for that is called the Shadow of the Buddha. (See *The Masters and the Path*, Ch. XIV.) It is but a reflection of Him in the same way as the living image is a reflection of the astral and mental bodies of the pupil, (*Ibid.*, Ch. V.) but He functions through it and uses it.

I have explained in *The Masters and the Path* that the work of the Lord Buddha was, in some way incomprehensible to us, not entirely successful. He and the Lord Maitreya were both far in advance of the rest of humanity, but at the time when the first human Buddha was needed, neither of Them was quite sufficiently advanced to take that high position. When the time came, the Lord Gautama, in his great love for humanity, said that He would at any cost fit Himself to fill this position, that He would make the great sacrifice necessary to push Himself on very much more quickly. See *The Masters and the Path*, Ch. XIV.

He did this, and the whole of the Buddhist world venerates Him for it to an extent which no one can understand unless, he has lived there. He lived the life of the Buddha and did the work, and it would seem to us looking at it a wonderful life. It is impossible to find any defect

in it, to discover anything short of perfection in His life and teaching and work, and yet it is said that some parts of it were not fully completed. In order to compensate for whatever was lacking, two arrangements were made. The first was that the Lord Buddha Himself undertook to appear once a year and give His blessing – He appears on Wesak day, and gives an outpouring of spiritual force which helps the world very much. Then there was to be an incarnation almost immediately after His death, and that requirement was fulfilled by the birth of Shrī Shankarāchārya.

The first we ever heard about the occult relation between the Lord Buddha and Shrī Shankarāchārya was from the teaching given in *Esoteric Buddhism*, by Mr. Sinnett. In that he said that the Buddha reincarnated as Shrī Shankarāchārya, that Shankarāchārya was simply Gautama in a new body. Now very early we knew that that was not so, for the reason – besides many others – that Shankarāchārya was a first ray man, and the Lord Buddha was the head of the second ray. Madame Blavatsky quotes that remark of Mr. Sinnett's, and says that it is true in a certain occult way, but that it was very misleading as it was put. She was asked if Shankarāchārya was the Lord Gautama under a new form. Her answer was that there was the astral Gautama inside the outward Shankarāchārya, whose Ātma was nevertheless His own divine prototype, the heavenly mind-born son of Light.

When Madame Blavatsky says that Shrī Shankarāchārya was a Buddha, but not an incarnation of the Buddha, she means that He is a Pratyeka Buddha, that is a Buddha on the first ray. He still lives at Shamballa in the body which He brought from Venus. The bodies of the Lords of the Flame are not like ours at all. They do not change their particles, but have been compared to bodies of glass; they look like ours, but very much more glorified, and I suppose that They brought them entire from Venus, and that they are built of the physical matter of that evolution. Madame Blavatsky says that Shankarāchārya was an Avatāra in the full sense of the word, the abode of a flame of the highest of manifested spiritual beings. As an Avatāra is literally one who “crosses over” or “descends”, not one of our humanity, the term is strictly applied in this case, as He is one of the three Lords of the Flame from Venus who remain on our earth as assistants and pupils of the Lord of the World.

To return to the general subject of the Nirmānakāyas, Madame Blavatsky's foot-note further says: “It is part of the exoteric Northern Buddhism to honour all such great characters as saints, and even to offer prayers to them, as the Greeks and Catholics do to their saints and patrons; on the other hand, the esoteric teachings countenance no such thing.” By Greeks she means members of the Greek Church – the ancient Greek did not usually make it a custom to offer prayers, and certainly not to saints. When she says that the esoteric teachings do not countenance prayer to the Nirmānakāyas, she means that no esoteric student would pray to a Nirmānakāya to give him help, because he knows that They are not connected with individuals at all, but are fully engaged in pouring out Their splendid energies in Their own line of work.

Still, it is said that these Great Beings, the Buddhas of Compassion, are revered popularly more than those who have taken the other paths. Madame Blavatsky also says “This same popular reverence calls ‘Buddhas of Compassion’ those Bodhisattvas who, having reached the rank of an Arhat (*i.e.*, having completed the fourth or seventh Path), refuse to pass into the nirvanic state or ‘won the Dharmakaya robe and cross to the other shore,’ as it would then become beyond their power to assist men even so little as Karma permits.”

The main ideas here are perfectly clear, but the terminology is a little confusing. Every Adept has crossed to the other shore; that is the termination of the path which he began to tread when he entered upon the stream. As is said in the text, “the stream is crossed” before the choice of these three vestures is made; and it is the Adept, not the Arhat in the ordinary sense, who makes the choice. He who dons the Dharmakāya vesture crosses to the other shore, but in a fuller sense.

The Sambhogakaya, Madame Blavatsky continues, “is the same but with the additional lustre of three perfections, one of which is entire obliteration of all earthly concerns.” He enters a spiritual line of evolution, and takes nirvāṇa at a later stage. He retains the nirvanic atom, the nirvanic body, but I think none of the lower atoms. He usually shows himself at that level as the triple spirit. Included in this class is probably that order of perfected men who have joined the Staff Corps of the Logos. They are no longer especially attached to our earth, but are in the service of the Logos, to be sent by Him anywhere within His system.

Then comes the Dharmakāya robe, which is “That of a complete Buddha, *i.e.*, no body at all, but an ideal breath; consciousness merged in the universal consciousness, or soul devoid of every attribute.” This means that the man who takes the Dharmakāya vesture retires into the Monad. He drops his permanent atoms altogether, and works only on high planes, the lowest for him being the nirvāṇic. He burns his boats behind him, as it were, and starts out on cosmic life, but I believe that if he chooses he may yet show himself as the triple spirit, but he does not retain, I think, even the nirvanic atom.

All through our evolution we keep the same causal body until we are able to raise our consciousness to the buddhic plane, and then the mere act of focusing oneself in the buddhic body causes the causal vehicle to vanish. As soon, however, as one brings one’s consciousness down again on to the higher mental plane the causal body reappears; it is not the same as it was before, because the particles have been dissipated, but it seems in every way exactly the same body. A similar process takes place in the case of the Dharmakāya vesture. The man has dropped his nirvāṇic atom, his manifestation on the nirvanic plane, but I believe if he puts himself down to that level for a moment he instantly draws to himself an atom exactly similar, a nirvanic vesture through which he may manifest as the triple spirit.

Comparing the three, it may be said that the Dharmakāya keeps nothing below the Monad, though what the vesture of the Monad may be on its own plane we do not know. The Sambhogakaya retains his manifestation as a triple spirit, and I think he can reach down and show himself in a temporary Augoeides. The Nirmāṇakāya appears to preserve his Augoeides and keeps all his permanent atoms, and therefore has the power to show himself at whichever level he chooses. Yet the three are all equal in development; the difference is only that he who casts aside the permanent atoms is therefore unable to make himself visible on the lower levels, and he throws them away because he no longer needs them for his kind of work. The man who retains them has the power to come down to those levels and work upon them, but it cannot rightly be said that those who choose to do the other work are in any way less important, lower in value or honour. We might think of him who is dealing at a higher level with great solar forces as the more important, but that would be a mistake, for the whole solar system is a manifestation of the Logos.

Madame Blavatsky speaks of all these kayas as buddhic bodies. In so doing, she is using the term buddhic as an adjective of buddha, and is using buddha as the equivalent of our term Asekha Adept, one who has passed the Fifth Initiation. We have restricted the term to those who have taken the Buddha Initiation; our Masters stand two steps lower than that, but They are spoken of as “living Buddhas” in Tibet.

The closing passage in the note says: “The esoteric school teaches that Gautama Buddha, with several of His Arhats, is such a Nirmāṇakāya higher than whom, on account of His great renunciation and sacrifice for mankind, there is none known.” We must not take this to mean that Gautama Buddha and several of His Arhats make one Nirmāṇakāya, but that He is such a Being, and several of His followers have also taken the same line. Then it is said that none higher is known to mankind. This statement is perfectly accurate if it means that of our humanity no other has yet reached so high a level as the Lord Gautama.

Even the Bodhisattva, the Lord Maitreya Himself, who long ago was equal with Him, as I have explained in *The Masters and the Path*, has not yet taken the step which would make

Him a Buddha. Had He done so, He could not occupy His present position as Head of the teaching department of the world. He is often called Maitreya Buddha by the Buddhists, but that is an honorific title.

There is one level in the Hierarchy, higher even than that of the Buddha – the level of the great King who is the One Initiator, but as He is one of the Lords of the Flame who came from Venus, it remains true that Gautama Buddha is the highest of our humanity.

**Now bend thy head and listen well, O Bodhisattva – compassion speaks and saith:
“Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the
whole world cry? “**

**Now thou hast heard that which was said: Now thou shalt attain the seventh step
and cross the gate of final knowledge, but only to wed woe – if thou would’st be
Tathāgata, follow upon thy predecessor’s steps, remain unselfish to the endless end.**

Thou art enlightened- – choose thy way.

Once more Āryasanga brings forward His prevailing idea, and urges His followers to take the path of compassion. He says one cannot desert one’s brothers when they are suffering. We have already considered the question of suffering quite fully, and realized that though the Arhat may still work in the world that is full of suffering, his consciousness on the higher planes knows the glory that is behind it all, knows the heights of happiness which all men will infallibly reach, so that it is impossible for him to suffer as ordinary men do who see so little of the glory of life. The Arhat, who is here addressed as a Bodhisattva, is in a position to share the triumphant song of the Lord Buddha, so well expressed in *The Light of Asia*:

Ye are not bound! The Soul of things is sweet,
The Heart of Being is celestial rest;
Stronger than woe is will: that which was Good
Doth pass to Better – Best.
I, Buddh, who wept with all my brothers’ tears,
Whose heart was broken by a whole world’s woe, *Op. cit.*. Book the Eighth.

When Āryasanga urges His followers to remain unselfish to the endless end, He uses an expression curiously similar to a phrase which in Christianity is translated “World without end”; the Latin form is *in secula seculorum*, in the ages of the ages. It means until the end of our set of worlds, or perhaps until the end of our present chain. The suggestion is that we should remain in touch with humanity until the work of the present human cycle is complete, and humanity has reached its goal.

Our own method of offering, ourselves is a little different from that; we have put ourselves completely at the disposal of the Masters, not asking that They should send us to this work or that, but leaving it absolutely to Them, saying: “Here am I; send me.” Āryasanga’s desire was that His pupils should follow the line that He Himself had chosen. Perhaps He felt that many more workers were urgently needed in that particular field. He was speaking at a certain period of Indian history, in the reign of King Harsha, when there seems to have been a decay of religion, when people were thinking more of outward forms than of the real life behind, when everything had become much specialized and somewhat artificial; under these circumstances perhaps he felt the necessity for more teachers, for the revival of the religious life and the ideal of service.

Finally he urges the pupils to be Tathāgata, to follow in the steps of the Lord Buddha. He tells them that they are now enlightened and should choose their way. Next comes a line of dots – while the person is choosing, apparently, and then he breaks out into a magnificent peroration:

**Behold, the mellow light that floods the eastern sky. In signs of praise both heaven
and earth unite. And from the four-fold manifested powers a chant of love ariseth,**

both from the flaming fire and flowing water, and from sweet-smelling earth and rushing wind.

Hark! ... from the deep unfathomable vortex of that golden light in which the Victor bathes, all nature's wordless voice in thousand tones ariseth to proclaim:

Joy unto you, O men of Myalba. A pilgrim hath returned back from the other shore. A new Arhan is born.

I have already spoken of the way in which all nature rejoices when a new Initiate is born. In this, it is now said, both heaven and earth unite. The spirit of the earth gains an added sense of well-being. That spirit is a great entity, not on our human line at all, for whom the whole earth acts as a physical body. It is difficult to grasp the nature of such a being. When we think of the earth as merely a huge globe, whirling through space, without specialized organs, we might wonder how it can serve any being as a body. But if all the creatures that live upon it contribute to the consciousness of the spirit of the earth it needs no other eyes than theirs. It lives in their life and so gains experience. Again, the earth moves on its way as one of a mighty choir of planets, each one sounding its own note in the music of the spheres, possessing within itself all the things which we have to reach out to get.

This entity lives on a scale very different from ours. Our bodies happen to have a certain size and to live for a certain time; that seems to us the correct standard, so a tiny creature with a small span of life seems despicable, and a large creature with a long life-period is respected. But size and length of life are no criteria of development or advancement. Some antediluvian animals were enormously bigger than the elephant, but they were much less intelligent, just as today the rhinoceros and hippopotamus have less mind than the dog. We need not assume, therefore, that because the spirit of the earth has a globe eight thousand miles in diameter for a body, and because for him one incarnation is an entire world period, he is more intelligent than we are. Consciousness is a point in each of us. That of the spirit of the earth seems to be curiously multiplex, and, notwithstanding his great size, to be less advanced in some ways than that of many of the great Devas who move about his body.

If we stand upon a hill and look over the surrounding country we find it permeated with something of the life of the spirit of the earth. That life seems to divide itself into parts, temporarily or permanently. A beautiful view, which has been admired by many people, is ensouled by a vague individuality which is part of that spirit. Such admiration, whether from human beings or great Devas, seems to excite the life in that portion, so that it answers to the feeling of delight. When we admire a fine view it is acting upon us, but we also are acting upon it. This response is in addition to what is felt by the life in the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms.

When a man is initiated the influence to which he has tuned himself on higher planes rushes through every part of his being. Though there is little effect in the solids, liquids and gases of the physical plane, there is a great deal of radiation from the etheric double, and from his astral and mental bodies, and this is felt, as we have already seen by the kingdoms of nature, and by such men as are in a condition to respond.

The fourfold manifested powers are those of earth, water, fire and air – the four Devarājas or Mahārājas, who are the administrators of karma for us down here, the under-servants, as it were, of the Lipika, the Great Lords of Karma. Their names among the Hindus are, it is said, Dhritarāshtra, Virūdhaka, Virupaksha and Vaishravaṇa, and each of them is at the head of one line of development. Dhritarāshtra is said to be the head of the Gandharvas, the spirits of the air, the great Devas who express themselves by music; to them is always assigned the east and they are always symbolized by the colour white, as horsemen arrayed in white, riding white horses, and carrying targets of pearl. Under Virūdhaka come the Kumbhandas. They are the Angels of the south, the spirits of water, so connected because the southern part of the world has far more water than earth. They are represented as blue, the colour of water, and are said

to carry sapphire shields. Under Virupaksha are the Nāgas, Angels of the west, spirits of the fire, whose colour is red and who carry coral shields. These Ezekiel described as fiery creatures full of eyes within, and also as winged wheels. Then come the Yakshas, ruled by Vaishravaṇa. To them the north is consecrated; they are the earth Devas or Angels, and their colour is always gold – that of the gold hidden in the earth. See *The Light of Asia*, Book the First.

Madame Blavatsky explains Myalba as “our earth – pertinently called hell, and the greatest of all hells, by the esoteric school. The esoteric doctrine knows of no hell or place of punishment other than a man-bearing planet or earth. Avīchi is a state, not a locality.” Although some people suffer after death in the astral plane, it cannot quite be regarded as punishment. They are suffering from their own disordered imaginations or low desires, and although things may sometimes be had on that plane, the worst of it is not so mean and sordid as some of the things which happen down here; all who have had experience on higher planes will agree with Madame Blavatsky that there is nothing quite so bad as physical life anywhere else.

“A pilgrim hath returned back from the other shore” evidently means that someone has gained the higher level, but still chooses to remain and work among men in this world. Generally we think of the other shore as the Fifth Initiation, not as the Fourth, but here it is used in the more restricted sense.

Āryasanga closes with the salutation:

PEACE TO ALL BEINGS

Similar blessings are to be found at the end of every Buddhist or Hindu religious book. Āryasanga closes His book with very great rejoicing. He has sometimes spoken of the path of woe, but He ends with a paean of wonderful joy and beautiful peace.