

Articles by PB

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Editor's Note: This file is a compilation of articles written by PB from the 1930s through the 1950s. As is the case for the file "Early Articles," many appeared in The Occult Review; one in Tomorrow (which was a fairly respectable periodical used by the Traditionalists like Frithjof Schuon). Some are extracts (or early drafts, we don't know which) of chapters found in "The Secret Path" as well as an appendix to The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga which PB felt obliged to write after his more mystically inclined readers complained of his shift to a more intellectual approach – and to correct the impression that he was critical of Sri Ramana Maharshi. There is an oft-published version of the chapters in A Search in Secret India on PB's encounter with Sri Chandrasekharendra Shankaracharya.

There are a number of original articles on a variety of topics, including the occult, as was the case with his earlier writings. I think the three articles related to Angkor Wat are of special interest: Night Over Angkor, A Wander in Angkor, and The Secret Doctrine of the Khmers. Also his eulogy to one of his teachers, Allan Bennett, aka Ananda Metteya, titled "A Pioneer Western Buddhist." Unlike some of the "Early Articles" file which has a lot of book reviews of varying depth, the majority of the original writings here are mature and well-written. There are two articles which were not written by PB himself: K.S. Venkataramani's appendix to PB's article on Shankaracharya is typically florid in style, but is nonetheless an accurate account of His Holiness – at least from my own experience of him and the Mutt; the second article was written in Dutch by Catherine de Goede de Koning; we have included both the original Dutch and Google Translate's treatment of that text which proves to be a brief overview of PB's life and works as of 1951.

While PB's later books eschewed the occult and are even strongly critical of nearly all its various practices, PB himself maintained a life-long interest in these matters. He frequently checked out psychics, astrologers, rune-readers and the like – more to test the individuals and their methodologies than to gain counsel, but he did not avoid or reject such things out of hand. In his last years he commented that he had emphasized his criticisms because of the charlatanry and addictive character of those either in contact with the subtle world or merely pretending to be so. I know for a fact that in the case of individuals who sought him out for private guidance (including myself), if they had a genuine gift for channelling, healing, 'reading' and the like that PB encouraged the seeker to develop that skill, albeit with a wariness of becoming too dependent upon it. For in the end we must put aside all artificial means of gaining guidance and look to our own higher self alone. As he said to me, these things, when taken for what they are, can be useful; when mistaken as either necessary or innately spiritual, they can destroy the individual and waste a life or lives.

The vast majority of these pages are pages from the original publication; we have therefore treated them differently in format than we generally treat other PB material. Specifically, the para numbering is different. In theory each article has its own para number, but some have multiple para numbers. One reason for that is if there is an inset paragraph about the article, not written by PB. The other is when the order of the pages is confused and each page needs a para number so that the comments can point through the pages in the right order.

For more information about the people and texts PB quotes or references here, please see the file titled "Wiki Standard Info for Comments." For more information about the editorial standards, spelling changes, and formatting that we have implemented – including page and para numbering – please see the file titled "Introductory Readers' Guide." We have introduced minimal changes to the text; our changes deal with inconsistencies of spelling, educated guesses

at illegible words, and the rare modification of grammar for clarity's sake. Whenever there is any question as to whether what is typed is what PB wrote, please consult the associated scan of the original pages, currently to be found in a PDF of the same name. – Timothy Smith (TJS), 2020

The World and the Prophets

1

THE WORLD AND THE PROPHETS¹

(1-1)² December 1951

The writer believes that religion should be considered as a whole, and the various prophets came, each in his own time, to serve an abiding purpose.

Some age-old queries have persistently confronted mankind. Is life simply a tremendous yet pathetically tragic joke played on mankind by its Creator? Has this vast panorama of glowing stars set in tremendous space a meaning or not? Are we but biological accidents parading uselessly through time? Is man but a guttering candle that throws its little pool of light amid the shadows for a few minutes and then vanishes for ever more?

The primitive answers to these questions were formed by men into the first religions, now lost in the gloomy abyss of pre-history, whose echoes have travelled down to our own time through their successors.

A little research soon shows that no faith is entirely new, that few dogmas are peculiar to any one religion, but all have a mingled ancestry. Just as in linguistics the Sanskrit word *bhrater*, the Latin *frater*, and the French *frere*, the German *bruder* and the English *brother* indicate a common Aryan stock, so, too, does the similarity of several religious doctrines indicate the influence of older contacts.

The recorded researches of comparative religion and the revelations of comparative mythology, have already put a sorry face upon the narrow notion that any one creed contains the only revelation of whatever gods there be.

In each religion we hear more or less of the same sounds: fear of the shadowy other-world, wonder at the pageantry of Nature, praise of a marvellous superior Being who made both the known and the unknown, supplicatory petitions for personal or national favours, consolations for those in personal distress, muffled murmurs of deeply philosophic tenets and faint adumbrations of high truth – all curiously mixed and all ending in beneficent moral injunctions.

(1-2) Religion may briefly be defined as belief in a supernatural Being or Beings. Each religion in its origin was certainly entitled to be called a revelation, for it was an appeal to the faith and fancy, rather than to the critical reason of man.

Most important and most significant of all religions was the consequence of an attempt by a truly wise man, later turned by history into its titular leader, to share his knowledge with illiterate masses in the only way that they could grasp his instructions

¹ PB himself inserted "Prediction Magazine" at the bottom of the page by hand.

² The paras in this document are all unnumbered unless otherwise specified.

- by feeding them with symbolic beliefs and simple fables rather than with straightforwardly-expressed truths. Such men have crossed the orbit of our world-fate but rarely. We need not turn them in imagination into superhuman beings, as their followers generally do, yet we have to recognise that a deep destiny has allotted an unusual importance to their personal lives and spoken words.

Even Macaulay, broadly sceptical as he was, could not resist writing that "to give the human mind a direction which it shall retain for ages is the rare prerogative of a few imperial spirits. It is such spirits who move the men who move the world."

The great teachers of religion - Jesus, Buddha, Muhammad, and Zoroaster - do not differ in their essential doctrines. All these prophets came from God. The chief commandments run through all their teachings like a golden thread.

These divine ones came out into public when their help was most needed, when spirituality was at its lowest ebb and materialism was, apparently, everywhere victorious. Such a time we are fast approaching at present. The whole world is now enmeshed in sensual desires, in racial selfishness and money worship. God is forsaken. True religion is abused.

(1-3) The prophets lay down certain rules and regulations to help the masses lead better lives and to incline them towards God. Gradually these rules become the tenets of an organized religion, but the idealistic spirit and motive force which prevail during the founder's lifetime, disappear gradually after his death.

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THE WORLD AND THE PROPHETS

(continued from the previous page) That is why organizations cannot bring spiritual truth nearer and why true religion is always a personal concern. Dogmas invented centuries after the founder's death frequently differ startlingly, but the fundamentals of all religions are really the same, because all issues from the same source - God.

Every prophet considers the times, the circumstances and the prevailing mentality of the people before his public manifestation. He therefore preaches doctrines best understood and best suited to such conditions.

Such a sponsor of a genuinely-inspired new faith came with lighted torch in hand to dispel some of the ethical darkness of his time and environment, to decipher the first meaning of life for the slumbering many and to open the first gate to ultimate salvation for the seeking few.

Out of wide compassion and noble sympathy he wished to make a little part of his wisdom available to those who were mentally unfit to comprehend its dazzling whole.

He did not want to screen his knowledge from the toiling masses, but he dare not ignore the psychological fact that it could only be imparted in its unabridged plenitude to those who had attained a stage which rendered them fully qualified to grasp it. To all others it would be tiresomely un-intelligible.

(2-1) He had no alternative therefore but to make this presentation in a somewhat crude

manner, using the vesture of mythological anecdote in which to dress his subtle truths, offering the ultimate reality under the heavy veil of a personal Deity as the object of the people's prayers, or as the focus of their concentration in worship, and lifting them to a nobler code of ethical precepts than the one already current amongst them.

He was compelled to put knowledge into symbolic terms, to take that which was most immediate and present to his people – the phenomena of Nature – and to invest them with easily-imagined invisible beings whose power was more extraordinary than the power of human beings, to embed his wisdom in interesting half-historic tales, to appeal to the picturesque sense of immature minds and capture their imagination by dramatising some of its facts in ritualistic ceremonial forms; to hint at a higher reality by expressing it in the form of an immensely exaggerated man, i.e., a personal God, and to harness the whole to its immediate practical object by delineating the pleasant rewards of virtue as against the unpleasant punishments of wrong-doing.

What else could he do when he was dealing with intellectual children? Do not children everywhere love fairy tales and revel in fables?

A religion created by a genuinely wise man was therefore always a significant fable, a tremendous metaphor, whose ultimate purpose was to direct the thought of the masses toward higher ideas and nobler ideals, and whose immediate purpose was to inculcate through the appeal to fear and hope some degree of moral responsibility in their personal lives.

(2-2) What was its practical significance?

It provided a credo to satisfy the curiosity of the minds of ignorant labouring masses, who had no leisure and no capacity to cast far-reaching plummets of inquiry into the stream of life.

It offered a faith to satisfy their strong need of consolation amidst distress, and to bring comfort amidst hardship.

It set up a salutary ethical code to guide their footsteps amid the perplexities of human behaviour, to guard them against their own worst natures, and to erect an elevation ideal for their aspirations.

It was an authority to give practical guidance in the shaping of social forms and the binding of individuals into entire nations.

It was an aesthetic force to inspire and foster the fine arts.

It was a first hint that a grander existence than being tossed and buffeted by circumstance, than this endless harassment of unsought sorrows and short-lived joys, this constant struggle against outer misfortune and inner weakness, this long catalogue of material agitations that end in dust and disappearance, forever awaited man in all its beneficence and serenity.

That even a worth religion may degenerate in the course of time and bring misery to mankind is sadly admitted, that since earnest believers have persecuted and even murdered each other is a testimony of all history, that charlatans, scoundrels and brutes have used religion to satisfy their selfish motives and personal lusts is equally true, and that the world's progress has been periodically been hampered by ignorant and fanatical religionists must be granted.

Colossal sins stain the pages of religious history. In a complete treatment of the subject such criticisms must be dealt with frankly yet constructively by the light of

philosophy.³

Lemuria's Sacred Mountain

3

LEMURIA'S SACRED MOUNTAIN

(3-1)⁴ November 1951

Paul Brunton visits a mountain in South India, said to be part of the vanished continent of Lemuria, and as old as the crust of the earth itself

Arunachala: "the hill of the holy beacon"

(3-2) Somewhere in South India there is a lonely hill which has been honoured with a high status in Hindu sacred tradition and legendary history. It lies near the same latitude as French-ruled Pondicherry, yet does not enjoy the latter's advantage of catching the cooling coastal breezes.

A fierce sun daily flays it with darting rays. Its form is uncouth and ungainly – a tumbled awkward thing whose sides are jagged and broken, whose face is a mass of jumbled rocks and thorny scrubs.

A geologist friend from America who visited me lately proclaimed Arunachala to have been thrown up by the earth under the stress of some violent volcanic eruption in the dim ages before even the coal-bearing strata were formed.

In fact, he dated this rocky mass of granite back to the earliest epoch of the history of our planet's crust, that epoch which long preceded the vast sedimentary formations in which fossil records of plants and animals have been preserved.

It existed long before gigantic saurians of the prehistoric world moved their ungainly forms through the primeval forests that covered our early earth.

He went even further and made it contemporaneous with the formation of the very crust of the earth itself. Arunachala, he asserted, was almost as hoary and as ancient as our planetary home itself.

It was indeed a remnant of the vanished continent of sunken Lemuria, of which the indigenous legends still keep a few memories.

(3-3) I set out one night to make the ascent to the summit. Night was a curious time to begin such an operation, but then, it was nevertheless the coolest – an important consideration in the European eyes in a place where temperatures mount to fantastic degrees.

Stumbling a little, slipping sometimes, jumping occasionally across gaps, I put all my energy into making a speedy climb; and when the eastern sun had softly suffused the horizon with fiery red-coloured masses, a third of my task was at an end.

Night had completely fled, the stars no longer inhabited the sky, day was fully in the ascendant, and I rested on the smooth top of a boulder to sip some tea and to gaze at

³ A footnote here reads: "(Specially selected by the author from *The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga* (Rider & Co., 21/-) and *A Search in Secret India* (Rider & Co., 17/6) by arrangement with the publishers.)"

⁴ This introductory sidebar paragraph was not written by PB. – TJS '20

the panorama spread out at the foot of the hill.

The entire picture was enveloped in that yellow tropic light which gives such a scene its final splendour.

From this height one received an imposing view of the general plan of the temple, which was set amid straight streets and bazaars in the centre of the little township, and the latter again in the centre of a large flat plain.

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LEMURIA'S SACRED MOUNTAIN

(continued from the previous page) Nine lofty storied gate-towers, completely covered with a wealth of carved figures, rose in sculptured magnificence out of the square compound behind high enclosing walls.

Did the gradually diminishing forms of those giant pagodas, with their broad bases and narrow tops, symbolically hint at some point in the sky where solid matter disappeared into infinite spirit?

Did the aspiring structure of the temple, with its upward-pointing pagodas, offer a silent parable in stone?

(4-1) Their curious pyramidal shapes carried my thoughts back again to Egypt, to the land where similar towers could be seen over the old temple gates, but entirely bereft of these profuse and elaborate adornments.

The Egyptian pylons possessed the same sloping sides, the same truncated tops, the same internal narrow stairways, although beyond that the resemblance stopped. The taste they betrayed was simpler and sterner, while, the result was perhaps grander and more impressive.

I meditated anew on the mysterious connection between ancient Egypt and pre-Aryan India and remembered the statement of a great Seer, the Maharshi,⁵ who lived at the foot of the hill, and who told me how the lost continent of Lemuria had once stretched all the way across the Indian Ocean, embracing Egypt, Abyssinia and South India in its confines.

I had seen signs a-plenty that the religion and society and monuments of the Dravidians in South India were derived from Lemuria, and that among those who settled on the Nile were their cousins or closer.

Thus the culture of lost Lemuria was carried in a westward stream to mingle in Egypt with that of Atlantis, which disseminated its civilisation to many a distant place in the Near East.

The Lemurians first settled in Upper Egypt, while the Atlanteans overspread Lower Egypt, and hence the "Two Kingdoms" which endured so long before historic times saw their union.

(4-2) I thought back to that far time in our planet's history when gigantic earthquakes piled the rocky mount high above the ground and made it a part of Lemuria, the companion continent of Atlantis.

⁵ "Maharishee" in the original.

Lemuria today moulders under the dark waters of the Indian and Pacific oceans turning those ancient seas into gigantic mausoleums for dead cities and vanished races. Its surviving detached fragments and cyclopean relics are scattered over the southern world.

And I thought how Nature is not sentimental over transient human life. When whole groups of people defile her body and descend into monstrous wickedness, she has not hesitated to destroy them with awful cataclysms.

It is no superstition. If we can accord a mind and intelligence to the self in our own bodies, why should we not accord a mind and intelligence to the self in the Earth, whence our bodies derive and whither they must return?

It is not less rational to think that a Directing Mind, a Planetary Soul, inhabits our Earth, than it is to think that a directing mind inhabits our own bodies, for flesh and dust are merely two different forms of Matter.

(4-3) The day had fallen. The jagged rocks and piles of boulders of Lemuria's mute relic were now hardly visible. Arunachala was about to disappear. Its silhouette gradually faded as the Indian twilight swiftly increased.

Finally, the Light of Asia was extinguished. Darkness, complete and unrevealing, beset me.

Still I sat on the step, loath to turn back across the threshold and light my waiting lamp. The twilight hour had worked its ancient witchery on me. I could not stir. The beauty of eventide had gently stolen into my senses and through them into my mind.

I felt that if Nature could be pitilessly cruel, as she might have seemed to those distressed Lemurians, she could also be unbelievably kind.

I knew only that the sublime beauty and serene atmosphere had percolated into my inmost heart. The body passed into a steady posture as though it were entranced.

I sat there like an enchanted man, the eyes open and unblinking like the eyes of a nocturnal bird, seeing and yet not seeing the first fireflies that darted through the air.

The hidden bud of the soul broke open and revealed the wonderful flower within. I became aware of the an inner blissful world. I forgot the outer world in order to remember my inner self.

It was a silent reverie so intense that the peace we sometimes experience during that untroubled minute of delectable borderland between waking and sleeping, was but a hint of it.

Every physical faculty was lulled in delicious repose, every wandering thought was quieted, as I lifted myself out of the foaming river of superficial existence to sit upon its felicitous bank.

The hours passed unchained and unrecorded. Face to face with the Divine Silence, I learnt the final message of Arunachala. It was a hopeful message of man's eternal, indestructible goodness.

For at the very centre of his being dwells God.⁶

⁶ A footnote here reads: "(Specially selected by the author from A Message from Arunachala (Rider & Co., 7s, 6d.) by arrangement with the publishers.)"

The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga (Some Misconceptions Cleared)

THE HIDDEN TEACHING BEYOND YOGA (SOME MISCONCEPTIONS CLEARED)

(5-1)

Page	Line	Position	Old Wording	Altered Wording
41	2	after he	reaches the of knowledge	practices the ultramystic contemplation exercises
51	7	after own	yoga-held reasoning	ultramystic insight
56	20	after as	unnecessary super- numeraries	purely provisional aids
159	10	after of	intentional	personal
169	30	after ages	And now he an anti-climax.	He will find his hope amply justified when the higher mysteries of ultramystic meditation come to be revealed in the second volume of this work. Such a new organ exists. It is ultramystic insight. But it cannot be evolved without the preliminary evolution of the trite, commonplace and much talked-of faculty of reason.
172	38	after of	mystic practices Rationalists!	elementary yoga alone but also after long-laboured metaphysical thinking followed by the supreme yoga which swept the ego into the Universal All and stilled both thinking and feeling.
175	28	after being	impossible; another	possible only when he advances into the ultimate path.
176	last	after were	(add new wording)	Having perfected reason, they unhesitatingly left it far behind and then perfected the higher faculty of insight, wherein knowledge and being merge into one.
195	6	after of	mysticism	dogmatism
256	19	after hundredth	smaller	its size
277	35	after are	conscious, invisible and immaterial	conscious and immaterial.

(5-2)⁷ Because of its apparently abrupt divergence from the line formerly taken by me, the publication of my new book bearing the above title has aroused so much comment, controversy and criticism among those familiar with my earlier works that I owe it as a duty to these numerous persons - no less than to myself - to proffer this note of explanation. And when such an explanation involves touching upon principles of vital importance to every seeker after truth its value, even to those who neither know nor care for my work, destroys the last lingering hesitations which may have kept me from descending into a disturbed and disturbing atmosphere.

First of all, let it be frankly stated that there are certain omissions and some obscurities in the book which of themselves have undoubtedly contributed to the creation of this position. These arose from the difficult circumstances under which the book was written. But perhaps the main cause of these obscurities lay elsewhere. For three years a large international group of students had waited patiently for this promised volume and the echoes of their impatience constantly reached my ears. The need of assisting them toward a correct attitude regarding the war was also urgent and imperative. Finally I decided that they could not be asked to wait longer and rather than let them do so I would release for publication what was so far available, however imperfect and incomplete it be, and defer its completion to a second volume. Thus the

⁷ "With Doctor Brunton's Compliments APPENDIX: Please insert at end of the book" appears at the top of the page in the original.

hidden teaching was presented to the extent of only an elementary fragment of its full content.

I have put up with the fact that this new book is so different in character and tone from those which have preceded it that the general reader is going to have a difficult time should he plunge into it with the light-heartedness with which he may have plunged into the others. Its

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THE HIDDEN TEACHING BEYOND YOGA (SOME MISCONCEPTIONS CLEARED)

(continued from the previous page) pages made hard writing for me and must make harder reading for others. It needs sustained and concentrated attention, demands keen thinking and propounds tough problems. For it offers a pabulum which is difficult to digest, being occupied with metaphysical matters rather than with mystic experiences. It is indeed intended more for the select discerning few who have made the pole-star of truth their main guide amid the trials of conflicting doctrine and the temptations of natural prejudice. The difficulties of finding one's own way through such metaphysical subtleties from beginning to end are not less than the difficulties of finding one's way on a black moonless night through a dense forest. The doctrine is so abstruse and so unfamiliar that the minds of most students necessarily bristle with thorny queries and questions. Continued enlightenment of their understanding and continuous elucidation of their perplexities are inevitably required.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that a serious consequence of presenting such knotty material in such an unfinished form is that grave misconceptions concerning the teaching itself easily arise. It avails me little to point out that first sight delivers quick judgment whereas second sight reserves it. The misconceptions have already arisen and must be removed. It was only when the manuscript was being printed off, i.e., when it was too late for me to alter it sufficiently as I was then thousands of miles away in India, that I had the leisure to go through my copy of it. I then perceived how easily certain passages might create these wrong impressions.

First and foremost is the notion that because I have revealed the limitations of yoga and mysticism (the two terms may be roughly equated for our purposes), as ordinarily known, because I have asserted that they do not yield the ultimate experience possible to man, therefore they are vain pursuits and illusory activities and consequently the strong advocacy of meditation made in my former books falls to the ground. Such a misapprehension is queer and fantastic. For the very contrary is the case. I consider the practice of meditation to be as essential for everybody as it ever was and I also consider it to be one of the most useful and most profitable pursuits a man can engage in. And it will be seen when the second volume of this book comes to be completed and published, that certain meditation techniques comprise part of its most valuable content. But because these techniques are impersonal in spirit and universal in outlook, because they seek to provide ultimate realisation rather than personal satisfaction, and because they are separated in time from ordinary mysticism by the metaphysical discipline (largely provided through the studies of the first volume) I have been compelled to call them "ultra-mystic" and "philosophic" and thus avoid confusion with the better-known but elementary ones. If therefore I ventured to

criticise the latter it was only to prepare the way for the coming revelation of these little known but superior techniques. This must not be mistaken to mean that the earlier work in yoga is in vain. On the contrary it is of the greatest value for the higher level cannot be attained if this preparatory stage has not been passed through. To imagine that I was disowning mystical experience altogether is utterly to misconceive my purpose. In spite of the seemingly conflicting tendencies of my earlier writing, the basic doctrines which were there affirmed still remain tenable even though their stretch is now seen to be not far enough.

For precisely the same reason I deliberately emphasised the insufficiencies of ordinary mysticism, the defects of ordinary yogis and the mistakes commonly made by meditators. It was to guard students against possible extravagances that I warned them that their work was not done with the reception of either exaltation or message, vision or voice. Who among them has not fallen into the self-admiring error of imagining that the first ecstatic exaltation is a direct communion with God or of taking the last oracular message from within as being the last word from God? Who has not heard of those who have degenerated into deluded visionaries or have fallen into exaggerated egoism or become foolish sentimentalists or set up a cult to exploit others financially? These are real dangers which surround the yogi, the occultist and the mystic and which claim their victims throughout the world. And they arise because the student does not adequately understand what really happens to him during his mystic reverie, yogic trance, clairvoyant vision or ecstatic absorption.

The seeker begins with faith, yes, but he must end with knowledge. God requires not only his vague belief from afar but his actual perception from close by. Only when his thoughts are made precise, clear and factual, when his feelings are given an almost clairvoyant self-understanding and when his experiences are able to fall with complete comprehension into their proper place, can he hope to escape the aforementioned dangers.

We may grasp this point better by taking the simple analogy of a child and an old man travelling on a trans-continental journey. The one will pass through the same varied changes of environment, vehicle and experience involved as the other. Nevertheless where the old man will thoroughly appreciate the meaning and worth of each change the child will have only a more or less vague idea of it. Where the child enters a bank and is given money for the journey, all the chain of transactions that lie

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THE HIDDEN TEACHING BEYOND YOGA (SOME MISCONCEPTIONS CLEARED)

(continued from the previous page) behind the simple act will be entirely unknown to it whereas the old man will be fully cognisant of them. In consequence of this ignorance the child may tear up and throw away a four-figure cheque merely because it believes the cheque to be a trivial piece of paper whereas it may hug strongly a bag of copper coins merely because the latter's heaviness seems to indicate greater worth. Similarly the mystic may have remarkable experiences or exalted meditations but may not understand accurately what is happening to him. He may, as we so often find in the history of yoga, mistake the unimportant, unessential and passing items for the important, essential and permanent. For instance, the clairvoyant visions, occult

experiences or oracular intuitive messages which may come to him may be taken as being more important than the sense of world-immateriality and of inner peace which he may experience along with them. He will thus be liable to minimise what should be magnified and to magnify what should be minimised. Moreover unless he can tell with certainty the precise origin of each vision, voice, message or experience, he is always liable to make egregious mistakes. Finally he is also likely to exaggerate the importance of his own ego because it has been fortunate enough to receive these wonderful experiences and thus he will strengthen the very barrier which stands in his way to the highest goal. For he will one day find that he has exhausted his exaltation, that the dread experience of "the dark night of the soul," of utter "spiritual dryness," has descended grimly upon him. He did not understand before that when he permitted his ecstatic experiences to please him unduly and to flatter his ego unhealthily, they were weakening him. He may then discover that it is not enough to be as innocent as a child; it is also necessary for him to be as wise as a serpent. For the universal existence of which he is but a part must be understood, and the faculties of thought which are needed to understand it must be developed accordingly. Hence when King Malinda asked the Buddhist sage Nagasena why children could not attain Nirvana the reply was that a child "cannot with a mind so limited comprehend that which is vast and endless."

The yogi who imagines that he has attained to the Overself has really attained the edge but not the centre of its flame. For if he has not undergone a certain kind of discipline belonging to the ultimate path his effort will be a premature leap. In any case he will be unable to remain in the ecstatic state which he fondly believes has been permanently attained. Indeed the very forces which he has evoked will sooner or later hurl him back and this reaction will bring him that terrible and melancholy experience which nearly all advanced mystics have known. St. John of the Cross called it "the dark night of the soul;" St. Teresa called it "the great dereliction;" the medieval Indian mystics like Dadu called it "the phase of separation;" Suso - the medieval European saint - tells how he suffered for ten years from such a sense of abandonment by God; the author of "The Cloud of Unknowing" tells of that terrible period when the mystic "mayest neither see Him clearly by the light of understanding nor feel Him in the sweetness of love;" the Persian Sufi mystics describe eloquently "the agony of separation;" and modern Western students of mysticism like Underhill, Inge, de Sanctis and Barbanson describe it roughly as a period of spiritual lassitude, stagnation, barrenness and dryness following a period of intense mystical activity and ecstatic experience. But it is most important to note that "the dark night" is an experience which happens only to advanced mystics. For it is the automatic effort of Nature to secure balance, it is a pointing finger directing the mystic who has finished his mystical path to take to the ultimate path and thus bring the world which he has disdained or neglected, once again within his purview.

Something is obviously needed to check the gross extravagances of mysticism, to chasten the gullible tendencies of its votary, and to teach him to separate what is essential in his experiences from what is accidental. And this he can find in the metaphysical discipline. He must have the courage coldly to dissect every inner experience, mercilessly using as his instrument a rapierlike sharpened intelligence. He must not take his intuitions for granted but must take the trouble to verify them. He

must have the patience to study the true metaphysical meaning and purpose of the universe as of the Overself, to explore the mystery of space matter and mind, to probe into the constitution of the human ego and to lay bare the most secret workings of its thoughts, words and acts. With the knowledge thus gained he can proceed to test the truth, gauge the value and regulate the course of his inner development. And as the latter passes through this purifying crucible of rational metaphysical examination, he will discover how easy it is to set up mere fictions in the firm belief that they are solid facts, and how hard to keep to the straight and narrow path which leads to the sublime Overself. Metaphysical reasoning has here a twofold utility. It is needed not only to act as a corrective for mystic experience but also to point out the further course which meditation should take. And that course lies in the direction of attunement to the universal impersonal ALL.

All this is a preamble to the explanation that the harmony with all being, the unity with the world, which the yogi certainly experiences is felt but not understood, is temporary and not enduring, is indirect and not immediate, is tentative and not final. So long as the ego lives fruitfully within him, all such cessation of egoistic experience must necessarily

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(continued from the previous page) be transitory. The ego can be mastered and the mystic experience, by dulling the egoistic feelings, affords a powerful, necessary and pregnant hint of this truth, but it remains only a hint so long as the reason cannot take up and irrefutably prove, unshakably know with sharp insight, what the emotion intermittently feels during meditation. Hence metaphysics must step in and be coupled with meditation. The 'I' can finally be defeated in one way alone, and that is by traversing the ultimate path. This combines a twofold process, first, by studying and understanding its true nature, by reaching through repeated and sustained examination and analysis the comprehension of its ultimate character; second, by practising the ultra-mystic contemplation exercises, which lift consciousness above the intellect and the ego altogether. The knowledge got in this manner becomes a weapon wherewith ego can be conquered with surety. The adventure of the yoga of philosophic discernment must join the yogas of devotion and mental concentration; all are necessary if a true and enduring experience of the hidden unity of all existence is to be gotten.

Let it be remembered that the critical points which I make do not come from an opponent of yoga but from one who daily and devotedly practices it, they represent the observations of a friend and it is the friends who have the courage to tell us the truth about ourselves rather than flatter us, who help us most. It is therefore a gross misunderstanding of my new book to say that it counsels the aspirant to end his yoga practice when it really counsels him to mend it. Meditation must not be dropped. Only the foolish will ever do so. For it is a move in the right direction. But it must be deepened and widened. Such deepening and widening constitutes the ultimate path. Because we have passed into a loftier dimension of thought or experience we should not in our enthusiasm for it commit the error of renouncing as worthless what has already been attained. Because we have won an ampler comprehension of things we

are not called upon to reject what is true and useful in its own if more limited place. Thus a case has been made for the need of still higher attainment and such a need can only be satisfied by the ultimate path. In this way the first volume has broken the ground for seeds to be sown by the second, wherein the supreme metaphysical keystone plus the ultra-mystic meditation practices will be offered.

The second misconception which requires to be corrected is the most dangerous of all. It prevails chiefly among European and American readers, for Asiatics grasp the point better. Despite the plain hints and open statements scattered throughout the first volume, they have misunderstood me to assert that the faculty of reason is sufficient of itself to attain the highest truth. This is a gross error and will certainly not receive any support from my pen. I have explained in the book the difference between intellect and reason, showing the superiority of the latter but pointing out that it does not attain its fullest development unless it can be raised from the concrete level of science to function vigorously on the abstract level of metaphysics. I have stressed the need of verifying the findings of authority, so-called intuition, intellect and mystic experience by reason I have not set up its final supremacy. Such an exalted position must be reserved for a grander faculty. Hence if I have given the impression that this ultimate path is purely an intellectual process, then I have not succeeded in communicating my ideas. It is initially rational, yes, but it is ultimately ultra-mystical.

For metaphysics may fall beneath the wheels of as many errors and dangers as mysticism; unless it is checked by the ultra-mystic insight. Its greatest possible error is when it would abstract and set up a single part of man's being - the reason - as alone entitled to satisfaction, when it would thin down all experience to purely logical and rational experience and when it would intellectualise all the fullness of existence into a dried-up formula. Life is more complex than that. For is the ordinary yogi is like a blind man who can move but cannot see clearly where he is going, the ordinary metaphysician is like a cripple who can see clearly enough but cannot move at all.

Metaphysics, because of its intellectualist basis and rationalist bias and because of its disdain of the claims of feeling and experience as illegitimate, can only arrive at one-sided abstractions. For feeling and experience are integral parts of human existence and a sound, adequate and true outlook must be comprehensive enough to stress their claims. We need a wider integration than that which metaphysics gives because it passes everything through the sieve of the reason and therefore does not do justice to what is extra-rational. Its subtlest concept must be inadequate to interpret the Real, i.e., the Overself. Metaphysics certainly points to reality but leaves it as an unattained possibility. It offers the conceptual pattern of truth but leaves it as an unexplored possibility. For metaphysics must in the end point beyond itself. It is but a stepping-stone to ultra-mysticism.

Reason can never give more than mediate knowledge. This is its inescapable limitation. It can only enter into the relational order of things, as I have pointed out in the eighth chapter, and is thus for ever confined to the circle of relativity. Such is the dismal result of the reason's own unprejudicial enquiry and yet a result of the highest consequence to truth-lovers - however humiliating it be to those who would foolishly place reason on the highest pedestal - as clearly shown by

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(continued from the previous page) Kant in the West and Shankara in the East. The true tells us of the real, informs us that it exists and makes its factuality known to us. But the true does not bring the real within our consciousness, does not turn its factuality into actuality and does not enable us to feel it as a content of experience. For the real can neither be known by finite thinking nor communicated in finite thoughts. The Overself cannot be defined in positive conceptual terms. The failure to comprehend this, the insistence on squeezing It into rationalist forms, is to commit the intellectualist fallacy which lurks underneath every metaphysical claim to cognize ultimate truth. Metaphysics finds its fitting nemesis at the culmination of its own activity, when it must always lead to the explicit recognition of its inadequacy to absorb the real. Let it not set up its own limitations on a pedestal as though they were virtues, and worship them. The first service of reasoned thinking is to draw our attention to the fact that the Overself exists but its final service is to perceive its own inability to reveal it. The mediate service is to tell us what that immaterial reality is and is not; but we may think of or about the Overself without actually knowing it. Such knowledge can only come outside thinking, which means that it can only come within some kind of yogic apprehension. Reason rises to its highest metaphysical level when, understanding its own restrictions, it eliminates itself, saying: "I, too, am but an instrument of Being and not Being itself."

The concept of the Overself is thus only an intellectualisation of reality and can never be a substitute for the actualised being of the Overself. It indicates and anticipates this insight and thus prepares us to receive the ineffable illumination, but does not bestow it. What reason establishes as truth can be made real only by the ultra-mystic insight. One primary function of metaphysics is to discover what truth cannot be and to correct the understanding of it. Thus it affords a precautionary check to the questing mind and prevents it from going astray. If it attempts to grasp reality it must then find how inadequate it is. At the point where it finishes it must persuade the mind to have resort to ultra-mysticism. This is not the suppression of reason but the recognition of its limitation. It knows full well what it can and what it cannot do. For metaphysics develops that critical spirit of cold analytical appraisal which is essential to separate the false from the true, the illusory from the real. Such criticism cannot destroy what is true in mysticism but only confirm it, whilst it preserves its practitioner from becoming the dupe of erroneous views or incompetent teachers.

It will now be seen how far away from the truth are those who have thought I have displaced yogic insight for mere reasoning. This article should clear up any further possibility of falling into such an error. If therefore my book praised the power of reason to adjudge the truth of ideas and to verify the deliverances of authority, pseudo-intuition and mystic visions, it was only to prepare the way for the work of the second volume where the reader would be confronted by the grander doctrine of the Overself and where the reason would be forced to confess its own inadequacy, before the subtler problems then to be posited. Thus would emerge the need of the superior faculties, first of intuition and second of insight but only then could they be fully described. Moreover I did not take the first volume farther than the doctrine of mentalism and reason sufficed for that. However reading through the written

manuscript with a leisure which I did not possess in the slightest when writing it, I frankly confess that the sections on intuition and reason in the seventh chapter are likely to leave my readers in a state of confusion about my attitude toward these subjects. Because of my critical evaluation of what is called customarily intuition, but is most frequently pseudo-intuition, they will find it difficult to reconcile my strong emphasis upon reason with further remarks made in the same section, such as "the method of reasoning upon all available facts raised by the utmost concentration to the high stature of immediate insight, is precautionary and preliminary to such a source which is insight and transcends reasoning." I have deliberately selected this sentence because it contains an obvious typist's error, one which I endeavoured to get corrected on discovery but was too late owing to the delays brought about by my being in India and by the book being printed in the West, delays accentuated by the difficulties of wartime communication. The correct sentence is as follows: "the method of reasoning upon all available facts raised by the utmost concentration to the highest stature, is precautionary and preliminary to such a source which is immediate insight and transcends reasoning." The mere fact that the sentence closes with the words and transcends reasoning should have sufficed to indicate to perspicacious readers that reason was not here regarded as being the ultimate faculty for finding truth. But confusions and doubts will arise because I did not attempt to describe this ultimate faculty of immediate insight, merely noting its existence, whereas I went at detailed length into the virtues of reason. The explanation of this course is that for the purposes of the first volume I had to stop with reason because the nature of insight and the ultra-mystic methods of its attainment, as well as the mysterious source and controlling laws of true intuition, properly belonged to the final exposition of the hidden teaching and were therefore reserved for the second volume. For they constitute part of a general revelation concerning both the mind and the Overself. It would have been more helpful to readers had I added a few pages briefly explaining this difference

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(continued from the previous page) between reason and insight as well as between intuition and insight, and I greatly regret not having done so and shall conclude this reparation by touching on the latter point now.

Why have I refused to lend the name of 'intuition' to this culminating process although I admit that it is ultra-mystical? Why instead, following Buddha, do I term it 'insight?' The first answer is that intuition is not often genuine and must needs be checked by reason. The second answer is that intuition is not always at our command; it may be here today but gone tomorrow. But the most important answer is that intuition deals with things and events of our time-space-matter world whereas insight deals only with the timeless sacred world of the Real.

The former extends to thoughts and things whereas the latter is confined to knowledge of one object alone – the supreme reality, the Overself. Nobody can ever succeed in dragging insight down to the level of giving correct guidance to enable him to negotiate material circumstances, whatever they be, whereas anybody may get an intuition about the winning horse in a race, the true character of a human being or the

worth of a doctrine.

Insight shares with intuition the same qualities of spontaneous arising, birth from within the self and unexpectedness, but after this it cannot bear comparison for it works on a different and deeper level.

I call insight an ultra-mystic faculty only to indicate that its nature is nearer intuition than intellect, that it cannot be thought-determined and that it arises more from meditation than from ratiocination. Yogis who cannot understand this point should consider that their own experience may admit of degrees of depth as well as of varying areas of comprehension. Insight is the ultimate degree, the widest possible area.

However it will be easy to misunderstand my attitude toward intuition. I do not for a single moment deny the fact of its existence and indeed could not do so without denying my own daily experience and that of many others. What is really meant is that the average person can never be certain whether a particular intuition which occurs to him at any moment is genuinely such or not. This is why I undertook the task of purifying the use of this much-abused term, of exposing pseudo-intuition and of marking out the precise sphere wherein genuine intuition works. Such certitude can come only to the sage, that is to the man who has comprehended and realised the ultimate truth about the universe. Such a man is the rarest of creatures. I have therefore preferred to name his faculty "insight" so as to differentiate it from this uncertainty which wraps itself around the ordinary man's intuition.

The sage's insight enables him always to act with the assurance that he is right and to think with the confidence that his conclusions are accurate. Moreover it is not a fitful faculty but always at his command, whereas no ordinary man dare honestly claim that he can command intuition at will or that it is always reliable. Insight is infallible and therefore it can be used to check reasoning whereas the ordinary man must check his intuition by reason. Intuition is blind; it may be accurate but it does not know why what it feels is accurate. Insight, on the contrary, is the fruition of complete understanding and fullness of perception.

There are thus two kinds of yoga: ordinary and ultra-mystic. The first is preparatory and disciplinary whereas the other is ultimate and culminatory. The first fits the mind and forms the character while the other fits the metaphysician-yogi for his transformation into a philosopher which is the grand climax of all these preparations. We ought not confuse the two stages which are separated from each other by the metaphysical discipline. Meditation is practised in both but the exercises differ greatly. These higher and formerly secret exercises, which implement the metaphysical doctrines, will be revealed in the second volume of my work which will answer in the fullest possible way for the first time in Western writing, the question: How are we to know the Overself as it is? For thinking gives only a personal view. The solution to our difficulty lies in the unfoldment of insight. And this arises only when feeling surrenders the ego and thought stills itself into quietude, when the reports of feeling refined by calm meditation are checked, scrutinised and confirmed by thought sharpened to a keen edge of rationality, and when both metaphysics and yoga have done their work and departed. This insight is neither intellect nor intuition, as ordinarily understood: it is an ultra-mystical faculty.

What I am trying to say is that it is not right to look for final knowledge and

experience of the Overself to the immature and half-grown yogi but rather to the full-grown, philosophically-trained yogi, and that what is commonly believed to be the final mystic experience is in reality followed by a further and more advanced stage. For a protracted maturation is required to bring the young plant into complete bloom. And it is only at this final stage that metaphysics, which has the higher octave of science, can and must become converted into its own higher octave: philosophy. We must differentiate between metaphysics and philosophy, between rational ratiocinative speculation and actual ultra-mystic verification. A man may be a learned metaphysician when

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(continued from the previous page) seated in his study but an utter fool when moving in the street. A philosopher, however, seeks to live as befits his name, i.e., wisely, whether it be the life of thought or the life of action.

Although we are compelled to make a sharp separation of yoga from metaphysics in the earlier stages of this quest, when the purpose of that separation have been achieved and our mystical experiences have been purified, guided, disciplined and verified by metaphysical reflection, we are later compelled to abolish the distinction between both. In that ultimate stage they are no longer contraries, no longer exclude each other, but merge in the ultra-mystical revelation that is insight. Thus too the currents of feeling and reasoning which formerly diverged from each other, now meet and harmonise. Nor could this insight have been born in any other way except from the marriage of mystical striving and metaphysical activity. The process whereby every metaphysician must become a yogi if he would attain the goal is as inevitable as the process whereby every yogi must become a metaphysician for the same reason. The traditional bifurcation between them ultimately becomes artificial although fully justifiable formerly. The distinction between truth got by reasoning and truth got by feeling is suppressed by the subsequent mysterious experience of insight which embraces and fuses the profoundest elements of both, and yet somehow transcends them also.

Religion may convert a man in a moment; yoga may give him its results in ecstatic hours within a few years; but philosophy is the labour of a life-time.

Reflection has taught me and experience has convinced me that to take any particular factor in life, to set it up alone and to exalt it above all others is a partial and misleading procedure and one therefore to be deprecated. I do not believe that it is possible to arrive at a sound and sane view of life unless it is a general view, unless it is sufficiently well-informed to deposit all the principal factors into their justly-proportioned proper places and finally unless it relates them all together into a complete whole.

Let us not lose ourselves in fanatical extremes of doctrine but remember that wisdom lies in picking out here and there the minute grains of truth amid the widespread mass of theory. It is a mistake to regard Hatha yoga, the yoga of body-control, for instance, with contempt. It deals with the purification, strengthening and healing of that most important part of the self - the body. No amount of wishful

thinking or metaphysical magic on the part of a student can spirit this body away. It is there and has to be reckoned with. If for instance he has a severe toothache and sits down to what he hopes will be a blissful meditation, the pain of the tooth will continue to trouble him, to disturb his thoughts and to destroy his inner bliss. How foolish then for anyone to regard with contempt a method of putting the body into good order so that it shall not hinder the yogi's mental aspirations? Therefore none of the three conventional yoga groups really exclude each other, none is really fit to stand on its own feet but all are inseparably associated with each other and must simultaneously or successively supplement each other in actual study and practice.

The various yogas - physical, emotional, intellectual and ultra-mystical - are traditionally made to follow one another and students usually graduate from the one to the other. But it would be better and wiser under the altered conditions of modern times if they could practise them as simultaneously as possible, so far as the first three are concerned. It is only the fourth - because of its uniqueness and superiority - that is really to be entered independently.

It is unfortunate that this larger view of yoga has been lost with the lapse of time in India, so that pundits come to exaggerate the value of the intellect, ascetics fuss themselves to death with bodily regimes and mystics wallow in a bath of unchecked emotion, whilst all three mutually despise each other. The philosopher does not fall into this error. He realises that human life rests on the tripod of thought, feeling and action, and that genuine growth cannot be made piecemeal but must be balanced and is to be made only integrally. It is as absurd and chimerical to take the intellectual yoga alone as it is to take the emotional yoga alone. All three paths must be followed to prepare for a genuine initiation into philosophy - as distinct from mere metaphysics - and moreover it is better that they be followed as simultaneously as possible. For the whole being of man must be worked upon and not merely a part. We must make use of all parts of human nature if it is to be properly developed. Philosophy therefore deals not merely with the mind alone but also with the feeling and with the flesh. Wisdom is consummated when it has understanding and control of these three.

Despite appearances, the course is consistent throughout. The God whom we find by meditation in the heart is the first step towards the God whom we find in the whole universe. The force which drew us away from the world in our ascetic effort to become self-detached, is inevitably followed by the force which drives us back to the world in selfless service.

I have not abandoned the principles advocated in my earlier books, but a profounder knowledge of them has been achieved. My inner growth has been organic; the branches and leaves are now more widespread

(continued from the previous page) and the roots have not been cut away but have simply penetrated into deeper ground. Hence nobody else need abandon those principles either, nor because I have pointed to further steps complain, as some have complained, that I have cut away the step on which they already stand. Others feel that what they had hitherto regarded as sacrosanct has been relegated to the useless and

illusory, and thus their greatest support has been torn away. I can only reply that they have utterly mistaken my words. They have not been asked to throw personal intuitions or mystical feelings away but only to cleanse them. They have not been asked to renounce yoga but only to readjust the values apportioned to their yogic experiences. Meditation is as indispensable to them now as ever it was. God is not illusory but the greatest reality of human existence; only we have to purify our ideas of Him. Let it be admitted that the Overself of the mystic is not the Overself of the philosopher. The God of the African savage was not the God of Prime Minister Gladstone who laid down the law for him, yet both were right in their attitude of veneration. What I have formerly written about the Overself and the way to it is still true for all those who have not successfully passed through the second degree. They are the great majority. And if they feel that strength or desire or opportunity are lacking for this ultimate path, they need not attempt to tackle it but may rest content with remembering that it exists and occasionally reading a little about it. This too will bear good fruit in time. Nevertheless the few who care to mount higher with me now have the opportunity to do so. And the urge will come to them because they will have the eyes to see that I have prepared the way for a revelation still to come which will be essentially more "spiritual" than any yet vouchsafed in my writings. I may fitly conclude with some words written nearly a century and a half ago by that illustrious Frenchman Louis St. Martin:

"The only initiation which I preach and seek with all the ardour of my soul is that by which we enter into the heart of God and make God's heart enter into us."

(12-1)

APPENDIX II: Author's Alterations to Original Text of First Edition				
Page	Line	Position	Old Wording	Altered Wording
157	1	<i>After</i> From	<i>Intuition</i>	<i>Pseudo-Intuition</i>
157	14-15	<i>After</i> morals ;	in George Fox .. in our own times	in Adolf Hitler, who recognized no other course as being correct than that which felt best to him;
158	6-15	<i>After</i> do so.	If it remains .. emotion for intuition.	Why is this so? Because strong feelings, unconscious complexes, sudden impulses and 'the wish that is father to the thought' are usually mistaken for genuine intuitions. Only the few who have undergone the philosophic discipline are capable of distinguishing all these pseudo-intuitions from the real thing. But as the ordinary person has rarely undergone such discipline he is frequently misled by a masquerader at the very time when he fondly believes that he is being guided by intuition, which actually is as wonderful as it is uncommon. Its nature, working and unfoldment can be laid bare only when we lay bare the higher mysteries of mind in the second volume.
164	28-30	<i>After</i> to the	high..... reasoning.	highest stature, is precautionary and preliminary to such a source which is immediate insight and transcends reasoning.
313	26-31	<i>after that</i>	<i>the God whom .. Berkeley's thinking.</i>	<i>the wise men among these sun worshippers were themselves as well acquainted as he with idealism. But partly because they could not lift the masses to such a metaphysical conception, they pointed to the sun as being the only thing in this earthly world which could fitly bear comparison with God.</i>

Supplement, The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga

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SUPPLEMENT, THE HIDDEN TEACHING BEYOND YOGA

(13-1)⁸ admitted that the Overself of the mystic is not the Overself of the philosopher. The God of the African Savage was not the God of Prime Minister Gladstone who laid down the law for him, yet both were right in their attitude of veneration. What I have formerly written about the Overself and the way to it is still true for all those who have not successfully passed through the second degree. They are the great majority. And if they feel that strength or desire or opportunity are lacking for this ultimate path, they need not attempt to tackle it but may rest content with remembering that it exists and occasionally reading a little about it. This, too, will bear good fruit in time. Nevertheless, the few who care to mount higher with me now have the opportunity to do so. And the urge will come to them because they will have the eyes to see that I have prepared the way for a revelation still to come, which will be essentially more "spiritual" than any yet vouchsafed in my writings. I may fitly conclude with some words written nearly a century and a half ago by that illustrious Frenchman Louis St. Martin:

The only initiation which I preach and seek with all the ardour of my soul is that by which we enter into the heart of God and make God's heart enter into us.

...There is no other mystery to arrive at this holy initiation than to go more and more down into the depths of our being and not let go till we can bring forth the living, vivifying root.

Paul Brunton is author of:

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(13-2) With Dr Brunton's Compliments

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(13-3) Because of its apparently abrupt divergence from the line formerly taken by me,

⁸ This para is the back of the booklet and its final page, and thus is a continuation of the para on page 17.

the recent publication of my new book bearing the above title has aroused so much comment, controversy and criticism among those familiar with my earlier works that I owe it as a duty to these numerous persons – no less than to myself – to proffer this note of explanation. And when such an explanation involves touching upon principles of vital importance to every seeker after truth, its value, even to those who neither know nor care for my work, destroys the last lingering hesitations which may have kept me from descending into a disturbed and disturbing atmosphere.

First of all, let it be frankly stated that the book contains certain defects and some obscurities which of themselves have undoubtedly contributed to the creation of this position. One day, when the difficult circumstances under which most of it was written come to be revealed, the feat of writing, despite them, such a highly philosophical work at all may well be wondered at. For it was written amid the scrappy intervals and stolen leisure time of a time-pressed life, harassed by wartime duties and uncertainties and beset by the varied handicaps and sudden illnesses of existence in the heat-filled tropics. But perhaps the main cause of these obscurities lay elsewhere. For three years a large international group of students had waited impatiently for this promised volume, and the echoes of their impatience constantly reached my ears. The need of assisting them towards a correct attitude regarding the war was also urgent and imperative. Finally I decided that they could not be asked to wait longer, and rather than let them do so I would release for publication what was so far available, however imperfect and incomplete it be, and defer its completion to a second volume. Thus the hidden teaching was presented to the extent of only an elementary fragment of its full content.

I have to put up with the fact that this new book is so different in character and tone from those which have preceded it that the general reader is going to have a difficult time should he plunge into it with the light-heartedness with which he may have plunged into the others. Its pages made hard writing for me and must make harder reading for others. Its pages made hard writing for me and must make harder reading for others. It needs sustained and concentrated attention, demands keen thinking, and propounds tough problems. For it offers a pabulum which is difficult to digest, being occupied with metaphysical matters rather than mystic experiences. It is indeed intended more for the select discerning few who have made the

(continued from the previous page) pole-star of truth their main guide amid the trials of conflicting doctrine and the temptations of natural prejudice. Very few have ever mastered this higher doctrine by their own unaided efforts. Whether known to history or not, a competent personal teacher has usually been present in the background of nearly everyone who has learnt it. The difficulties of finding one's own way through such metaphysical subtleties from beginning to end are not less than the difficulties of finding one's way on a black moonless night through a dense forest. The doctrine is so abstruse and so unfamiliar that the minds of most students necessarily bristle with thorny queries and questions. Continued enlightenment of their understanding and continuous elucidation of their perplexities is inevitably required.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that a serious consequence of presenting such knotty material in such an unfinished form is that grave misconceptions concerning the teaching itself easily arise. It avails me little to point out that first sight delivers quick judgment, whereas second sight reserves it. The misconceptions have already arisen, and must be removed. It was only when the manuscript was being printed off, i.e. when it was too late for me to alter it sufficiently, as I was then thousands of miles away in India, that I had the leisure to go through my copy of it. I then perceived how easily certain passages might create these wrong impressions.

First and foremost is the notion that because I have revealed the limitations of yoga and mysticism (the two terms may roughly be equated for our purposes) as ordinarily known, because I have asserted that they do not yield the ultimate experience possible to man, therefore they are vain pursuits and illusory activities, and consequently the strong advocacy of meditation made in my former books falls to the ground. Such a misapprehension is queer and fantastic. For the very contrary is the case. I consider the practice of meditation to be as essential for everybody as ever it was, and I also consider it one of the most useful and most profitable pursuits a man can engage in. And it will be seen when the second volume of this book comes to be completed and published that certain meditation techniques comprise part of its most valuable content. But because these techniques are impersonal in spirit and universal in outlook, because they seek to provide ultimate realisation rather than personal satisfaction, and because they are separated in time from ordinary mysticism by the metaphysical discipline (largely provided through the studies of the first volume), I have been compelled to call them "ultra-mystic" and "philosophic" and thus avoid confusion with the better-known but inferior ones. If, therefore, I ventured to criticise the latter, it was only to prepare the way for the coming revelation of these almost unknown but superior techniques! This must not be mistaken to mean that the earlier work in yoga is in vain. On the contrary it is of the greatest value, for the higher level cannot be attained if this preparatory stage has not been passed through. To imagine that I was disowning mystical experience altogether is utterly to misconceive my purpose. In spite of the seemingly conflicting tendencies of the earlier writing, the basic doctrines which were there affirmed still remain tenable, even though their stretch is now seen to be not far enough.

For precisely the same reason, I deliberately emphasised the insufficiencies of ordinary mysticism, the defects of ordinary yogis and the mistakes commonly made by meditators. It was to guard students against possible extravagances that I warned them that their work was not done with the reception of either exaltation or message, vision or voice. Who among them has not fallen into the self-admiring error of imagining that the first ecstatic exaltation is a direct communion with God or of taking the last oracular message from within as being the last word from God? Who has not heard of those who have degenerated into deluded visionaries or have fallen into exaggerated egoism or become foolish sentimentalist or set up a cult to exploit others financially? These are real dangers which surround the yogi, the occultist and the mystic, and which claim their victims throughout the world. And they arise because the student does not adequately understand what really happens to him during his mystic reverie, yogic trance, clairvoyant vision or ecstatic absorption.

The seeker begins with faith, yes, but he must end with knowledge. God

requires not only his vague belief from afar but his actual perception from close by. Only when his thoughts are made precise, clear and factual, when his feelings are given an almost clairvoyant self-understanding, and when his experiences are able to fall with complete comprehension into their proper place, can he hope to escape the aforementioned dangers.

We can grasp this point better by taking the simple analogy of a child and an old man travelling on a trans-continental journey. The one will pass through the same varied changes of environment, vehicle and experience involved as the other. Nevertheless, where the old man will thoroughly appreciate the meaning and worth of each change, the child will have only a more or less vague idea of it. Where the child enters a bank and is given money for the journey, all the chain of transactions that lies behind the simple act will be entirely unknown to it, whereas the old man will be fully cognisant of them. In consequence of this ignorance the child may tear up and throw away a four-figure cheque merely because it believes the cheque to be a useless piece of paper, whereas it may hug strongly a bag of copper coins merely because the latter's heaviness seems to indicate greater worth. Similarly the mystic may have remarkable experiences or exalted meditations, but may not understand accurately what is happening to him. He may, as we so often find in the history of mysticism, mistake the unimportant, unessential and accidental items for the important, essential and basal. For instance, the clairvoyant visions, occult experiences or oracular intuitive messages which may come to him may be taken as being more important than the sense of world-immateriality and of inner peace which he may experience along with them. He will thus be liable to minimise what should be magnified and to magnify what should be minimised. Moreover, unless he can tell with certainty the precise origin of each vision, voice, message or experience, he is always liable to make egregious mistakes. Finally he is also likely to exaggerate the importance of his own ego because it has been fortunate enough to receive these wonderful experiences, and thus he will strengthen the very barrier which stands in his way to the highest goal. For he will one day find that he has exhausted his exaltation, that the dread experience of "the

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SUPPLEMENT, THE HIDDEN TEACHING BEYOND YOGA

(continued from the previous page) dark night of the soul," of utter "spiritual dryness," has descended grimly upon him. He could not understand before that when he permitted his ecstatic experiences to please him unduly and to flatter his ego unhealthily, they were weakening him. He may now discover that it is not enough to be innocent as a child; it is also necessary for him to be as wise as a serpent. For the universal existence of which he is but a part must be understood, and the faculties of thought which are needed to understand it must be developed accordingly. Hence when King Malinda asked the Buddhist sage Nagasena why children could not attain Nirvana, the reply was that a child "cannot with a mind so limited comprehend that which is vast and endless."

The mystic who imagines that he has attained to the Overself has really attained the edge but not the centre of its flame. For if he has not undergone a certain kind of discipline belonging to the ultimate path, his effort will be a premature leap, and he will

be unable to remain in the ecstatic state which he fondly believes has been permanently attained. Indeed, the very forces which he has evoked will sooner or later hurl him back, and this reaction will bring him that terrible and melancholy experience which nearly all advanced mystics have known. St. John of the Cross called it "the dark night of the soul;" St. Teresa called it "the great dereliction;" the medieval Indian mystics like Dadue called it "the phase of separation;" Suso – the medieval European Christian saint – tells how he suffered for ten years from a sense of sheer abandonment by God; the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* tells of that terrible period when the mystic "mayest neither see Him clearly by the light of understanding nor feel Him in the sweetness of love;" the Persian Sufi mystics describe eloquently "the agony of separation;" and modern Western students of mysticism like Underhill, Inge, de Sanctis and Barbanson describe it roughly as a period of spiritual lassitude, stagnation, barrenness and dryness following a period of intense mystical activity and ecstatic experience. But it is most important to note that "the dark night" is an experience which happens only to highly advanced mystics. For it is the automatic effort of Nature to secure balance, it is a pointing finger directing the mystic who has finished his mystical path to take to the ultimate path and thus bring the world which he has disdained or neglected once again within his purview. Something is obviously needed to check the gross extravagances of mysticism, to chasten the gullible tendencies of its votary, and to teach him to separate what is essential in his experiences from what is accidental. And this he can find in the metaphysical discipline. He must have the courage coldly to dissect every inner experience, mercilessly using as his instrument a rapier-like sharpened intelligence. He must not take his intuitions for granted, but must take the trouble to verify them. He must have the patience to study the true metaphysical meaning and purpose of the universe as of the Overself, to explore the mystery of time, space, matter and mind, to probe into the constitution of the human ego and to lay bare the most secret workings of his thoughts, words and acts. With the knowledge thus gained, he can proceed to test the truth, gauge the value and regulate the course of his inner development. And as the latter passes through this purifying crucible of rational metaphysical examination, he will discover how easy it is to set up mere fictions in the firm belief that they are solid facts, and how hard to keep to the straight and narrow path which leads to the sublime Overself. Such a pioneer researcher as a Blavatsky, whose name is so often invoked for support to mysticism, occultism and yoga, herself admitted in the guarded hints given on page 169 of *The Secret Doctrine* (Vol. 1, Los Angeles facsimile edition) that philosophy alone could "throw absolute and final light" and that "outside of metaphysics no occult philosophy, no esotericism is possible," although her monumental book does not itself deal with the universe from this ultimate standpoint. Metaphysical reasoning has here a twofold utility. It is needed not only to act as a corrective for mystic experience but also to point out the further course which meditation should take. And that course lies in the direction of attunement to the universal impersonal ALL.

All this is a preamble to the explanation that the harmony with all being, the unity with the world, which the mystic certainly experiences, is felt but not understood, is temporary and not enduring, is indirect and not immediate, is tentative and not final. So long as the ego lives fruitfully within him, all such cessation of egoistic experience must necessarily be transitory. The ego can be mastered and the mystic experience, by

dulling the egoistic feelings, affords a powerful, necessary and pregnant hint of this truth, but it remains only a hint so long as the reason cannot take up and irrefutably prove, unshakably know with sharp insight, what the emotion intermittently feels during meditation. Hence metaphysics must step in and be coupled with meditation. The "I" can finally be defeated in one way alone, and that is by traversing the ultimate path. This combines a twofold process, first, by studying and understanding its true nature, by reaching through repeated and sustained examination and analysis the comprehension of its ultimate character; second, by practicing the ultra-mystic contemplation exercises, which lift consciousness above the intellect and the ego altogether. The knowledge had in this manner becomes a weapon wherewith ego can be conquered with surety. The adventures of the yoga of philosophic discernment must join the yogas of devotion and mental concentration; all are necessary if a true and enduring experience of the hidden unity of all existence is to be gotten.

Let it be remembered that the critical points which I make do not come from an opponent of yoga but one who daily and devotedly practices it; they represent the observations of a friend, and it is the friends who have the courage to tell us the truth about ourselves rather than flatter us who help us most. It is therefore a gross misunderstanding of my new book to say that it counsels the aspirant to end his yoga practice when it really counsels him to mend it. Meditation must not be dropped. Only the foolish will ever do so. For it is a move in the right direction. Only it must be deepened and widened. Such deepening and widening constitutes the ultimate path. Because we have passed into a loftier dimension of thought or experience we should not in our enthusiasm for it commit the error of renouncing as worthless what has already been attained. Because we have won an ampler comprehension of things, we are not called upon to reject what is true and useful in its own if more limited place. I have made a case for the need of still

(continued from the previous page) higher attainment, and such a need can only be satisfied by the ultimate path. In this way the first volume has broken the ground for seeds to be sown by the second, wherein the supreme metaphysical keystone plus the ultra-mystic meditation practices will be offered.

The second misconception which requires to be corrected is the most dangerous of all. It prevails chiefly among European and American readers, for Asiatics grasp the point better. Despite the plain hints and open statements scattered throughout the first volume, they have misunderstood me to assert that the faculty of reason is sufficient of itself to attain the highest truth. This is a gross error and will certainly not receive any support from my pen. I have explained in the book the difference between intellect and reason, showing the superiority of the latter, but pointing out that it does not attain its fullest development unless it can be raised from the concrete level of science to function vigorously on the abstract level of metaphysics. I have stressed the need of verifying the findings of authority, intuition, intellect and mystic experience by reason, but I have not set up its final supremacy. Such an exalted position must be reserved for a grander faculty. Hence if I have given the impression that this ultimate path is purely an

intellectual process, then I have not succeeded in communicating my ideas. It is initially rational, yes, but it is ultimately ultramystical.

For metaphysics may fall beneath the wheels of as many errors and dangers as mysticism. Its greatest possible error is when it would abstract and set up a single part of man's being – the reason – as alone entitled to satisfaction, when it would thin down all experience to purely logical and rational experience, and when it would intellectualise all the fullness of existence into a dried-up formula. Life is more complex than that. For is the ordinary yogi like a blind man who can move but cannot see clearly where he is going, the ordinary metaphysician is like a cripple who can see clearly enough but cannot move at all.

Metaphysics, because of its intellectualist basis and rationalist bias and because of its disdain of the claims of feeling and experience as illegitimate, can only arrive at one-sided abstractions. For feeling and experience are integral parts of human existence and a sound, adequate and true outlook must be comprehensive enough to stress their claims. We need a wider integration than that which metaphysics gives, because it passes everything through the sieve of the reason and therefore does not do justice to what is extra-rational. Its subtlest concept must be inadequate to interpret the Real, i.e. the Overself. Metaphysics points to reality, but leaves it as an unattained possibility. It offers the conceptual pattern of truth but leaves it as an unexplored actuality. For metaphysics must in the end point beyond itself. It is but a stepping-stone to ultramysticism.

Reason can never give more than mediate knowledge. This is its inescapable limitation. It can only enter into the relational order of things, and is thus for ever confined to the circle of relativity. Such is the dismal result of the reason's own unprejudicial enquiry and yet a result of the highest consequence to truth-lovers – however humiliating it be to those who would foolishly place reason on the highest pedestal – as clearly shown by Kant in the West and Shankara in the East. The true tells us of the real, informs us that it exists and makes its factuality known to us. But the true does not bring the real within our consciousness, does not turn its factuality into actuality and does not enable us to feel it as a content of experience. For the real can neither be known by finite thinking nor communicated in finite thoughts. The Overself cannot be defined in positive conceptual terms. The failure to comprehend this, the insistence on squeezing it into rationalist forms, is to commit the intellectualist fallacy which lurks underneath every metaphysical claim to cognise ultimate truth. Metaphysics finds its fitting nemesis at the culmination of its own activity when it must always lead to the explicit recognition of its inadequacy to absorb the real. Let it not set up its own limitations on a pedestal as though they were virtues, and worship them. The first service of reasoned thinking is to draw our attention to the fact that the Overself exists, but its final service is to perceive its own inability to reveal it. The mediate service is to tell us what that immaterial reality is and is not; but we may think of or about the Overself without actually knowing it. Such knowledge can only come outside thinking, which means that it can only come within some kind of mystical apprehension. Reason rises to its highest metaphysical level when, understanding its own restrictions, it eliminates itself, saying: "I, too, am but an instrument of Being and not Being itself."

The concept of the Overself is thus only an intellectualisation of reality, and can

never be a substitute for the experience of the Overself. It indicates and anticipates this experience, but does not bestow it. What reason establishes as truth can be made real only by the ultra-mystic insight. One primary function of metaphysics is to discover what truth cannot be, and to correct the understanding of it. Thus it affords a precautionary check to the questing mind and prepares it to receive the ineffable illumination. If it attempts to grasp reality it must then find how inadequate it is. At the point where it finishes it must persuade the mind to have resort to ultra-mysticism. This is not the suppression of reason but the recognition of its limitation. It knows full well what it can and what it cannot do. For metaphysics develops that critical spirit of cold analytical appraisal which is essential to separate the false from the true, the illusory from the real. Such criticism cannot destroy what is true in mysticism, but only confirm it, whilst it preserves its practitioner from becoming the dupe of unworthy or incompetent teachers.

It will now be seen how far away from the truth are those who have thought I have displaced mystic insight for mere reasoning. This article should clear up any further possibility of falling into such an error. If, therefore, my book praised the power of reason to adjudge the truth of ideas and to verify the experiences of authority, intuition and mystic visions, it was only to prepare the way for the work of the second volume, where the reader would be confronted by the grander doctrine of the Overself and where the reason would be forced to confess its own inadequacy. Thus would emerge the need of the superior faculty of insight, but this could be fully described only then. Moreover, I did not take the first volume farther than the doctrine of mentalism and reason sufficed for that. However, reading through the written manuscript with a leisure which I did not possess in the slightest when writing it, I frankly confess that the last section of

(continued from the previous page) Chapter VII is likely to leave my readers in a state of confusion about my attitude towards reason. Because of my critical evaluation of what is called intuition, they will find it difficult to reconcile my strong emphasis upon reason with further remarks made in the same section, such as "the method of reasoning upon all available facts raised by the utmost concentration to the high stature of immediate insight, is precautionary and preliminary to such a source which is insight and transcends reasoning." I have deliberately selected this sentence because it contains an obvious clerical error, one which I endeavoured to get corrected on discovery, but was too late owing to the delays brought about by my being in India and by the book being printed in the West, and accentuated by the difficulties of wartime communication. The correct sentence is as follows: "the method of reasoning upon all available facts raised by the utmost concentration to the highest stature, is precautionary and preliminary to such a source which is immediate insight and transcends reasoning." The mere fact that the sentence closes with the words and transcends reasoning should have sufficed to indicate to perspicuous readers that reason was not here regarded as being the ultimate faculty for finding truth. But confusions and doubts will arise because I did not attempt to describe this ultimate

faculty of immediate insight, merely noting its existence, whereas I went at detailed length into the virtues of reason. The explanation of this course is that for the purposes of the first volume I had to stop with reason because the nature of insight and the ultra-mystic methods of its attainment properly belonged to the final exposition of the hidden teaching and were therefore reserved for the second volume. It would have been more helpful to readers had I added a few pages briefly explaining this difference between reason and insight as well as between intuition and insight, and I greatly regret not having done so, and shall conclude this reparation by touching on the latter point now.

Why have I refused to lend the name of "intuition" to this culminating process, although I admit that it is ultra-mystical? Why instead do I term it "insight?" The first answer is, as explained in my new book, that intuition is not always reliable, and must needs be checked by reason. The second answer is that intuition is not always at our command; it may be here today but gone tomorrow. But the most important answer is that intuition is something which come to you, whereas insight is something which you have earned, which you have consequently made your own. Therefore the sage can never lose his insight, whereas the mystic may lose his intuition at any time. The sage can always know the truth about existence because his insight is always there, whereas the mystic may sometimes feel the truth of existence and sometimes not! However, it will be easy to misunderstand my attitude towards intuition. I do not for a single moment deny the fact of its existence, and indeed could not do so without denying my own past experience and the present experience of many others. What is really meant is that the average person can never be certain whether a particular intuition which occurs to him at any moment is genuinely such or not. Such certitude can come only to the sage, that is to the man who has comprehended and realised the ultimate truth about the universe. Such a man is the rarest of creatures. I have therefore preferred to name his faculty "insight," so as to differentiate it from the uncertainty which wraps itself around the ordinary man's intuition. The sage's insight enables him always to act with the assurance that he is right, and to think with the confidence that his conclusions are accurate. Moreover, it is not a fitful faculty but always at his command, whereas no ordinary man dare honestly claim that he can command intuition at will or that it is always reliable. Insight is infallible, and therefore it can be used to check reasoning, whereas the ordinary man must check his intuitions by reason. Intuition is blind; it may be accurate, but it does not know why what it feels is accurate. Insight, on the contrary, is the fruition of complete understanding and fullness of perception.

A further difference between intuition and insight is this: the former extends to thoughts and things, whereas the latter is confined to knowledge of one object alone – the supreme reality, the Overself. Nobody can ever succeed in dragging insight down to the level of giving correct guidance to enable him to negotiate material circumstances, whatever they be, whereas anybody may get an intuition about the winning horse in a race, the true character of a human being or the worth of a doctrine.

Insight shares with intuition the same qualities of spontaneous arising, birth from within the self and unexpectedness, but after this it cannot bear comparison, for it works on a different and deeper level.

I call insight an ultra-mystic faculty only to indicate that its nature is nearer intuition than intellect, that it cannot be thought-determined and that it rises more from meditation than from ratiocination. Mystics who cannot understand this point should

consider that their own experience may admit of degrees of depth as well as of varying areas of comprehension. Insight is the ultimate degree, the widest possible area.

There are thus two kinds of mysticism: ordinary and ultra-mystic. The first is preparatory and disciplinary, whereas the other is ultimate and culminatory. The first fits the mind and forms the character, while the other fits the metaphysician-mystic for his transformation into a philosopher, which is the grand climax of these preparations. We must not confuse the two stages which are separated from each other by the metaphysical discipline. Meditation is practised in both, but the exercises differ greatly. These higher and formerly secret exercises, which implement the metaphysical doctrines, will be revealed in the second volume of my work, which will answer in the fullest possible way for the first time in Western writing the question: How are we to know the Overself as it is? For thinking gives only an indirect view of existence, whilst feeling gives only a personal view. The solution to our difficulty lies in the unfoldment of insight. And this arises only when feeling surrenders the ego and thought stills itself into quietude, when the reports of feeling refined by calm meditation are checked, scrutinised and confirmed by thought sharpened to a keen edge of rationality, and when both metaphysics and mysticism have done their work and departed. This insight is neither intellect nor intuition, as ordinarily understood: it is an ultra-mystical faculty.

What I am trying to say is that it is not right to look for final knowledge and experience of the Overself to the immature and half-grown mystic, but rather to the full-grown, philosophically-trained mystic, and that what is commonly believed to be the final mystic experience is in reality followed by a further and more advanced stage. For a protracted maturation is required to bring the young plant into complete bloom. And it is only at this final stage that metaphysics, which was the higher octave of science, can and must become converted into its own higher octave: philosophy. We must differentiate between metaphysics and philosophy, between rationally ratiocinative speculation and actual ultra-mystical verification. A man may be a learned metaphysician when seated in his study, but an utter fool when moving in the street. A philosopher, however, seeks to live as befits his name, i.e., wisely, whether it be the life of thought or the life of action.

Although we are compelled to make a sharp separation of mysticism from metaphysics in the earlier stages of the quest, when the purpose of that separation has been achieved and our mystical experiences have been purified, guided, disciplined and verified by metaphysical reflection, we are later compelled to abolish the distinction between both. In that ultimate stage they are no longer contraries, no longer exclude each other, but merge in the ultra-mystical revelation that is insight. Thus, too, the currents of feeling and reasoning which formerly diverged from each other, now meet and harmonise. Nor could this insight have been born in any other way except from the marriage of mystical striving and metaphysical activity. The process whereby every metaphysician must become a mystic is as inevitable as the process whereby every mystic must become a metaphysician for the same reason. The traditional bifurcation between them ultimately becomes artificial although fully justifiable formerly. The distinction between truth got by reasoning and truth got by feeling is suppressed by the subsequent mysterious experience of insight which embraces and fuses the profoundest elements of both, and yet somehow transcends them also.

Religion may convert a man in a moment; mysticism may give him its results in ecstatic hours within a few years; but philosophy is the labour of a lifetime.

Reflection has taught me and experience has convinced me that to take any particular factor in life like mysticism, to set it up alone and to exalt it above all others, is a partial and misleading procedure, and one therefore to be deprecated. I do not believe that it is possible to arrive at a sound and sane view, unless it is sufficiently well-informed to accept all the principal factors into their justly-proportioned proper places, and finally, unless it relates them all together into a complete whole.

Let us not lose ourselves in fanatical extremes of doctrine, but remember that wisdom lies in picking out here and there the minute grains of truth amid the widespread mass of rubbish. It is a mistake to regard the yoga of body-control, for instance, with contempt, and to term it a lower path. It deals with the purification, strengthening and healing of that most important part of the self - the body. No amount of wishful thinking or metaphysical magic on the part of a student can spirit this body away. It is there and has to be reckoned with. If, for instance, he has a severe toothache and sits down to what he hopes will be a blissful meditation, the pain of the tooth will continue to trouble him, to disturb his thoughts and to destroy his inner bliss. How foolish then for anyone to regard with contempt a method of putting the body into good order so that it shall not hinder the yogi's mental aspirations. Therefore none of the three conventional yoga groups really exclude each other, none is really fit to stand on its own feet, but all are inseparably associated with each other and must simultaneously or successively supplement each other in actual study and practice.

The various yogas - physical, emotional, intellectual, and ultra-mystical - are traditionally made to follow one another and students usually graduate from the one to the other. But it would be better and wiser under the altered conditions of modern times if they could practise them as simultaneously as possible, so far as the first three are concerned. It is only the fourth that is really to be entered into independently.

It is unfortunate that this larger view of yoga has been lost with the lapse of time in India, so that pundits come to exaggerate the value of the intellect, ascetics fuss themselves to death with bodily regimes and mystics wallow in a bath of unchecked emotion, whilst all three mutually despise each other. The philosopher does not fall into this error. He realises that human life rests on the tripod of thought, feeling and action, and that genuine growth cannot be made piecemeal but must be balanced and is to be made only integrally. It is as absurd and chimerical to take the intellectual yoga to be high and holy as it is to take the emotional yoga to be inferior and illusory. All three paths must be followed to attain a genuine initiation into philosophy - as distinct from mere metaphysics - and moreover they must be followed as simultaneously as possible. For the whole being of man must be worked upon and not merely a part. We must make use of all parts of human nature if it is to be properly developed. Philosophy therefore deals not merely with the mind alone but also with the feeling and with the flesh. Wisdom is consummated when it has understanding and control of these three.

Despite appearances, the course is consistent throughout. The God whom we find by meditation in the heart is the first step towards the God whom we find in the whole universe. The force which drew us away from the world in our ascetic effort to become self-detached, is inevitably followed by the force which drives us back to the world in selfless service.

I had not abandoned the principles advocated in my earlier books, but have merely put them where they properly belong. Hence nobody else need abandon them either, nor because I have pointed to further steps complain, as some have complained, that I have cut away the step on which they already stand. Others feel that what they had hitherto regarded as sacrosanct has been relegated to the useless and illusory, and thus their greatest support torn away. I can only reply that they have utterly mistaken my words. They have not been asked to throw personal intuitions or mystical feelings away but only to cleanse them. They have not been asked to renounce yoga, but only to readjust the values apportioned to their yogic experiences. Meditation is as indispensable to them now as ever it was. God is not illusory but the greatest reality of human existence; only we have to purify our ideas of Him. Let it be⁹

The Secret Doctrine of the Khmers

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THE SECRET DOCTRINE OF THE KHMERS

(19-1) I leave the thorny jungle and mount a frail bamboo ladder. The few wooden steps lead to a large grass-roofed hut. The latter is built on timber piles some six feet from the ground – a mode of domestic architecture which prevails throughout the interior villages of Cambodia. In the regions where a feeble effort to cultivate the land is made with the help of the River Mekong both dwelling and dwellers would be overwhelmed by the great and annual floods were it not for this elevated style of living. And in the large forest tracts it is equally efficacious against fierce tigers, which do not hesitate to claw their way into the lightly built butts.

This little clearing amidst thick trees and undergrowth was made by monks who have lately returned – after hundreds of years absence – to settle near the shadow of the Wat, the great temple of Angkor. They have put up a tiny village and today after waiting for the oppressive heat of the afternoon to abate, I enter as their guest.

The bonzes squat smilingly around the floor, their eyes narrow slits, their Mongoloid cheek-bones set high, their slim short bodies wrapped tightly in cheerful yellow cloth. Some hold fans in their small hands, while others bend their shaven heads over palm-leaf books. Copper spittoons are placed here and there for their relief, because the moist hot climate creates asthmatic tendencies. A wild-looking man approaches me and mutters something unintelligible. Long ago he gave himself the title of “King of Angkor” and now everyone calls him by the name in good-humoured derision. His mind is half-unhinged, poor fellow, and he illustrates in its wreckage the serious dangers in incorrectly practised yoga.

On the ground outside a boy heaps together a pile of dead branches, and sets them alight. Another servant fills two round vessels at a pool close by, ties one to each end of a flexible pole which rests across his shoulders, and then bears them to the hut. The first boy pours some of the water into a black iron bowl and rests it over the fire. Before long he appears among us with tea. It is a fragrantly-scented milkless infusion which we sip from tiny bowls. The life of these men is primitive indeed, for they have

⁹ This para continues on page 13.

hardly any possessions. They are the historic descendants of the Khmers who had built Angkor, but my repeated questions reveal that they now keep but a pitiful remnant of their old culture. It consists of a few scraps of tradition mingled with an imperfect knowledge of the Hinayana form of Buddhism which was brought to the country from Ceylon not long before the Cambodian empire approached its final fall. The oldest of the bonzes tells me some more of their curious lore.

“Our traditions say that three races have mixed their blood in Kambaja (Cambodia). The first dwellers were unlettered savages, whose tribes still live in parts where no white man’s foot has trod. They are guarded by poison darts stuck all over the ground, let alone by the huge tigers, rhinoceros and wild elephants which fill their forests. Our primitive religion survives among them in the form of ruined temples which are cherished as mascots. This religion together with a government was given us by the great sage ruler, Svayambhuva,¹⁰ who came across the western sea. He established the worship of {BRAHMA},¹¹ the Supreme Being.

The other races who settled here were the Indian and Chinese. Brahmin priests became powerful and taught our kings to add the

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THE SECRET DOCTRINE OF THE KHMERS

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THE SECRET DOCTRINE OF THE KHMERS

(continued from the previous page) “Its chief tenet was the demonstration to ripe seekers of the existence of a single universal Life-Principle which sages named the ‘First’ or the ‘Origin.’ In itself it has no shape, cannot be divided into parts and is quite impersonal – like a man’s mind when in a state of deep sleep. Yet it is the root of every shaped thing, creature, person, and substance which has appeared in the universe. Even mind has come out of it. There is no room or necessity for a personal God in the Khmer secret doctrine but the popular religion accepted diverse gods as limited beings who were themselves as dependent on the First as the weakest man. Apart from these gods, the sages gave the people symbols suitable for worship. These symbols had to represent the First as faithfully as possible. They were three in number. The sun was chosen because everybody could easily understand that it created, sustained and destroyed the life of this planet. From the tiny cell to the great star, everything is in a state of constant growth or decay thanks to the sun’s power. Even substances like stone, wood and metal come into existence through the working of sun force. The sages knew also, however, that even the human mind gets its vitality from the same force, causing it to reincarnate again and again upon the earth. The people of Angkor worshipped Light as a very god and the rite of sun-worship was carried on in vast stone-paved courts which were open to the sky and faced the temples.

“The second symbol was the male organ of sex. It appeared as a cone-like tower on some temples and as a tapering single column set up in the centre of the building.

¹⁰ “Svayambuva” in the original. Referring to The First Manu.

¹¹ We have changed “BRA” to “BRAHMA” (referring to Svayambhuva’s son). – TJS ‘20

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To Western eyes it is a strange and unsuitable symbol. But the people were plainly taught to look upon it as a picture of the Source of Life. Orientals in general and primitive people everywhere feel less shame about natural organs and functions than Westerners. Anyway the temples of Angkor never linked this symbol with the worship of lust. Its existence never degraded them. The Khmer people were so pure-minded that Sulayman, an Arab merchant who wrote an account of a voyage in which he ventured as far as China in the year 851, wrote of his visit to Cambodia: "All fermented liquors and every kind of debauchery were forbidden there. In the cities and throughout the empire one would not be able to find a single person addicted to Debauchery!"

The third symbol is also thought of in the West as connected with evil, but the adepts of Angkor held a different view. They gave the previous symbol because hardly a man escapes seeing a miracle of sex, whereby a tiny seed slowly grows into a fully-matured human being composed of different parts, thus teaching the possibility of the First becoming the Many. They also gave the serpent as an emblem of worship for three reasons. In the course of a single lifetime its skin periodically dies and is thrown off, permitting new skin to appear each time. The constant transformations, reincarnations and reappearances of the First as Nature are thus represented. And when a snake likes in its hole, it usually coils itself into the shape of a circle. It is not possible to mark where and when a circle begins. In this point the reptile indicates the infinity and eternity of the First. Lastly there is a strange mesmeric influence in the glittering eyes of the snake which is found in no other animal. During the operation of the mysteries, which have now been lost to the Western world, the adept initiated the seeker into the elementary stage by a mesmeric process which enables him to get a glimpse of his origin. Therefore, the carvings of every temple in Angkor showed the serpent, while on the lake of

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THE SECRET DOCTRINE OF THE KHMERS

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(continued from the previous page) worship of the gods Siva and Vishnu and to make Sanskrit a second court language. Such was their power that even today, after our country has been purely Buddhist for many hundred years, their direct descendants conduct all important ceremonials for our king according to Hindu rituals. You have seen in the royal palace at Phnom-Penh a sword made of dark steel inlaid with gold. It is guarded day and night by these Brahmins. We believe that if the slightest rust appears on the blade, disaster will come to the Khmer people. That sword belonged to our great king, Jayavarman, who built the grand temple of Angkor, spread the limits of our empire far and wide, yet kept his mind in control like a sage. He knew the secrets of both Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism, which dwelt in friendship side by side in our country. Indeed the Mahayana was spread among us even before it reached

¹³ Blank page

China.”

The afternoon passes. The magic of the evening sun begins to work. A stream of reddening light pierces the grotesquely tiny windows and plays upon the uneven floor. It reveals the teeth of the smiling monks, some glittering but most betel-stained. We adjourn to a larger structure for the evening rites. While joysticks burn freely before the gilded image of their faith and long litanies are softly chanted, I leave the assembly and settle down in the great Temple of Angkor to savour its sanctified darkness.

I hold to the modern attitude, which has proved so significant in science that the era of mystery-mongering is past, that knowledge which is not verifiable cannot be received with certitude and that the overmuch profession of the possession of secrets opened the door of imposture and charlatanry. He who is unable to offer adequate evidence has no right to the public ear. I have generally followed this line of conduct in all my writing even though it has compelled me in the past to leave undescribed that which I consider the most valuable of personal encounters and to record the minor mystics as though they were the highest sages. If therefore I now reluctantly break my own rule it is for two reasons: that it would be a pity to withhold information which many might appreciate and that political amity has put my informant's head in danger. Let it suffice to say that somewhere in South-east Asia I met a man who wears the High Lama's robe, who disclaims any special knowledge at first, but who breaks his reticence in the end. A part of what he tells me about Angkor is worth reconstructing here, but the statements are his not mine.

“You are the first white man to prostrate himself before me for many years. I am deeply moved... The key which unlocks understanding of Angkor's mystery needs to be turned thrice. There is first a secret tradition which has combined and united Hinduism, the religion of many Gods and Buddhism, the religion without a God. There is next an unbroken line of sages who held and taught this doctrine as being the real and final truth about life. There is thirdly a connection between Angkor and, on one side South India, on the other side Tibet. In all three lands there was a time when both faiths even dwelt outwardly together in complete harmony, with interchangeable rites, symbols and dogmas. The tradition itself was limited by the mental incapacity of the masses to the circle of a few sages and their immediate disciples. Vedanta and Mahayana are corruptions of this pure doctrine but of all known systems they come closest to it.”

(continued)

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THE SECRET DOCTRINE OF THE KHMERS

(continued from the previous page) Pra Reach Dak nearby there is an islet on which a small shrine stands entirely encircled by two great stone snakes.

“The line of sages which had penetrated into the secret of the First and gave

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these symbolic religions to the masses has shifted its headquarters from epoch to epoch. From the sixth to the thirteenth centuries it flourished in Angkor, but for seven hundred years before that period it flourished in South India. Reminders of this earlier centre exist in plenty in the architectural forms and sculptural details. Even the Sanskrit used by the old Brahmin priests in Cambodia is of Pallava (South Indian) origin. But the wheel of Karma turned, the Cambodian empire declined and disappeared with a rapidity which outran the fall of the Romans. The rulers were dazzled by wealth and conquest and failed to heed the advice of the sages. The latter withdrew and migrated to Tibet.

“You ask me if they are the same adepts as those spoken of by HP Blavatsky. When she was a girl and fled from her husband, she accidentally met a group of Russian Buddhist Kalmucks who were proceeding by a roundabout route on pilgrimage to the Dalai Lama of Tibet. She joined the caravan as a means of escape from her husband. One of them was an adept. He took care of her and protected her and brought her to Lhasa. She was initiated in due course into the secret tradition. She visited other parts of Tibet and also India. Before the existence of Angkor ruins was known in the West, she was sent there to continue her studies and to receive a certain contact by meditation in the temples. HPB¹⁵ went but experienced great difficulty in travelling through the uncleared jungle; however she bravely suffered all discomforts like a man. Later, she was introduced to a co-disciple, who eventually became a High Lama and a personal advisor to the Dalai Lama. He was the son of a Mongolian prince, but for public purposes took the name of “The Thunderbolt” i.e., “Dorje.” On account of his personal knowledge of and interest in Russia, he gradually altered it to “Dorjieff.”¹⁶ Before their guru died, he instructed Blavatsky to give a most elementary part of the secret tradition to the Western people, while he instructed Dorjieff to follow her further career with watchful interest. Dorjieff gave her certain advice; she went to America and founded the Theosophical Society. Her guru had forbidden her to give out his name. Moreover, she knew much more of the teachings than she revealed. But she was always fearful of saying too much so she constantly created what she called ‘blinds’ and wrapped her truthful secrets in imaginary clothes. I may say no more. However, the poor woman was unjustly maligned by her enemies. Her sole desire was to help humanity. They could never understand her peculiar character nor her Oriental methods. Her society did an enormous service to white people by opening their eyes to Eastern truths. But its real mission is over; hence its present weak condition. A new instrument will take up the work in 1939 and give a higher revelation to the world which is now better prepared. But the beginning of this work will be as quiet and unnoticed as the planting of a seed. It is 108 years since HPB’s birth. There are 108 steps on the path to Nirvana. Amongst all the yogis of the Himalaya, 108 is regarded as the most sacred number. It is also kabalistically connected with the year 1939 in a most important way. Therefore, this year will witness the departure of the adepts from Tibet. Their location was always a secret; even most of the High Lamas never knew it. Tibet has lost its value for them; its isolation had begun to disappear rapidly and its rulers no longer respond faithfully to them. They leave Tibet seven hundred years after their

¹⁵ “Helena Petrovna Blavatsky”

¹⁶ “Dorjieff” in the original.

arrival.”

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THE SECRET DOCTRINE OF THE KHMERS

I Interview an Indian Yogi! My Meeting with the Most Famous Occultist in all India

27

I INTERVIEW AN INDIAN YOGI!¹⁷

(27-1) So many readers have written to me expressing an interest in the Sage whom I had the privilege of first bringing to the notice of the West – and now, I find, practically to that of India also – that some further impressions of him, coming from his hermitage where I have been living for the last few months, may satisfy their curiosity.

The Maharshi¹⁸ is indeed one of the last of India’s vanishing race of spiritual supermen called Rishis.¹⁹ There are others, I know, but they are not so easily accessible and they veil their existence in mystery, whereas the Maharshi does not deny anyone access to himself, although he will not go out of his way to visit other parts of India. In fact, he has not left his hermitage for many years, not even to visit the nearest village. He welcomes everyone, although always maintaining the reserve and dignity to be expected from one who has surpassed all Western attainment.

(27-2) Man of Great Psychic Development

He enjoys perpetually the state which all intelligent Yogis seek, the state called samadhi or continuous super-consciousness. Whereas most Yogis have to enter into profound trance in order to experience this unique condition, the Maharshi has now this great good fortune without appearing in any way abnormal and without the necessity of entering trance.

He is now rising rapidly to fame throughout South India – a matter which makes not the slightest difference to his personal modesty – and so this once quiet hermitage under Arunachala, the Hill of the Holy Beacon, has now become a noted place of pilgrimage. Incidentally, the eastern tower of the Temple of Arunachala is the loftiest in all India.

When I first came here more than five years ago, I had the privilege of having many private chats with the Sage, wherein many problems were solved, but since my return to him last November, our communication has been almost entirely silent and telepathic. I am content to leave my tiny cottage nearby and visit him twice daily, sitting for a couple of hours in meditation each time to contact his mind more closely.

¹⁷ “By Paul Brunton

The distinguished author of “A Search in Secret India” and “A Search in Secret Egypt” in the original.

This section is a duplicate of pages 7 through 11 in Collected Writings 4.

¹⁸ “Maharishiee” in the original.

¹⁹ “Rishees” in the original.

He has himself said that it is no use clinging to the physical presence of a Master. One must find him internally and then it will not matter where one goes.

I have seen him perfectly clearly, in what people would call astral or clairvoyant vision, on several occasions during my travels in the West – and on each occasion he manifested in order to give me an important message or guidance at some critical period, and this is an experience which many of his Indian disciples can duplicate.

(27-3) His Astral Body Seen

Even some of my mediumistic and occult friends in England, who have never travelled to India, but who have become interesting in the Maharshi, claim that he has appeared most clearly to them and done the same thing. One among them is “Billy” Parish, the healer, who tells me of many such astral visits.

The ability of the Maharshi to manifest these powers is due to the fact that he has completely and permanently freed his spirit from his body, thus achieving death in the midst of life.

Yet he takes care to place emphasis on the fact that occult powers are side-issues, that they are incidental to this spirit liberation and not to be made ends in themselves. Spiritual rebirth is to be the aim and the occult powers can be left to come of their own accord. They are apt to prove too fascinating for most minds and therein lies their danger. We must keep a sane proportion between these powers and the quest of enduring varieties.

His peaceful hermitage near the Temple of Arunachala, is situated at the foot of that strange hill which is described in the oldest South Indian sacred text, the Skanda Puranam, as the secret and sacred heart-centre of the god-Shiva, and as a holy place and the spiritual hub of the world. But he lived for several years in a gloomy, solitary cavern high up on that hill, plunging his mind deeply into profound concentration upon the divine element that hides in man. He sought for the real Self, that infinite Being which invisibly and intangibly supports the lives of all creatures. And he found it.

(continued from the previous page) You may discover him today in a long tiled hall, set down on the jungle’s edge, giving audience to numerous Tamil visitors who flock to see him from nearly every part of South India. The poor and the rich, the illiterate, and the educated, the silken-garbed and the rag-clothed – all prostrate themselves before him and then sit for a few minutes or a few hours with eyes closely watching his every movement. Scarcely a word passes ever between them, for the Maharshi is a taciturn man. They may drop into silent meditation, or chant Tamil scriptures, or just content themselves with watching him. And then, prostrating themselves once more, they depart.

(29-1) What do these Hindu devotees find in the presence of the Maharshi, who speaks so little and has no earthly good to bestow on them?

They find, first of all, Peace. Coming from a worldly life that is harassed by the

cares, troubles and misfortunes that none can escape, tortured often by economic woes, they feel their burdens slipping off their shoulders in his own care-free presence.

Their racked minds are stilled and their unhappy hearts are soothed. Thus they return homewards with a serene memory that will recur again and again.

They find, secondly, Wisdom. The Maharshi has conquered the deepest problems by his irresistible faculty of inward-turned concentration. As a result, he knows the mystic laws which govern human life and directly perceives the spiritual basis upon which our entire panorama of existence is stretched. He knows why men suffer, what is Truth, where is God and what we really are – whether mere mortal creatures who perish into dust, or divine entities capable of becoming gods ourselves. Intellectual minds receive hints from uttered replies or teachings which enable them to solve problems whose solutions have eluded them for years. All visitors, however, carry away from fragment of his wisdom, however tiny it be, culled from his words, awakened by his glance, or felt in his powerful mental atmosphere.

They find, thirdly, Strength. Conscious of their own human weaknesses, their own inborn frailties, they receive inspiration from the mere sight of the great soul, this true Superman. He has adventured far beyond the confines of mortal limitations and has sacrificed all that the world holds dear for the sake of following Truth. He has therefore become embodied Power and sits before us as a Master of {self}²⁰ and life. Some of that Power touches his devotees and disciples, affects them markedly and sends them home with fresh hope and courage wherewith to cling to the lofty ideas which truth demands from them.

(29-2) When I first travelled around India, interviewing her holy and learned men, I was amused to note how their numerous theories and explanations contradicted each other. The trouble was that the dust of too many generations had gathered upon the sacred texts and scholarly books: the real meaning of those volumes {having}²¹ been overlaid. Scarcely one of those who granted me audience could speak from personal experience; most could only quote from the opinions of others. But the Maharshi's teachings flow out of his own original realisation of truth, and to that extent he stands almost as solitary as the Hill of the Holy Beacon itself. He illustrates perfectly those words of the great Yogi master, Patanjali, "The Seer abides within himself," for he ever dwells within that sacred centre wherein the gods speak to man.

His doctrine is as old as the Lemurian Hill of Arunachala itself; yet it is self-found as the result of his overwhelming youthful spiritual illumination and not as the result of studying other men's books. It comes to us

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I INTERVIEW AN INDIAN YOGI!

How to Enter The Silence²³

²⁰ The word is cut off by the right margin. Only "se-" is visible in the original.

²¹ The word is cut off by the right margin. Only "hav-" is visible in the original.

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(continued from the previous page) fresh in presentation as the latest words of the pundits of Western science. If you can plumb the mind's depths, he teaches, you will eventually arrive at a point where both the thinking intellect and personal self seem to disappear, becoming re-absorbed by the hidden element out of which they were created. That element is none other than the Absolute Being, the Partless Reality, the One Self, and the Underlying Spirit which subsists eternally amid births and deaths of moral men and material worlds.

The Maharshi's practical course of effort for discovering this reality is extremely simple – so simple that our modern, over-active minds may turn away unsatisfied and seek complicated and elaborate Yoga disciplines – and yet extremely simple. It is as effective for the devotional type of person as for the intellectual.

Set up a mental current of self-questioning, teaches the Sage, attempting to ferret out what you really are, and to trace the living being who thinks and feels within your body. Watch your thoughts in the process and then endeavour to pin them down to the Stillness out of which they arise. If you persist and apply yourself rightly to frequent meditation on this topic, you will ultimately track thought to its origin, self to its laid, and consciousness to its primal partless state. The personal sense of "I" will collapse and disappear, being replaced by the impersonal sense of That, the Absolute Spirit which breathes life into us all, which not only maintains the existence of your mind {and body}²⁴ but also the minds {and bodies of all creatures.}²⁵

This technique of self-enquiry is really simpler than the ancient systems of Yoga, because of its subtle nature and of our numerous tendencies towards excessive mental and material activity, it becomes difficult. Hence the need of personal contact with an adept or with one of his channels, i.e., one of his disciples.

The Maharshi has made it possible to many of us to understand what seems to exist today only as a mere echo of the words of the great spiritual Teachers of former ages – the blessed Nirvana of Buddha, the Kingdom of Heaven of Jesus, the Liberation of Sri Krishna, and the Supreme Good of the early philosophers. The Maharshi enjoys that divine condition and demonstrates in his own person this unique attainment. While metaphysicians argue vainly about the reality of the world, while scientists throw wet blankets around the order of the religionists, and while the average man meekly looks on, this serene sage knows the eternal Reality, experiences the everlasting bliss and expresses the highest truth in his teachings. Withal, he radiates these things to every sensitive person who comes within his orbit, to every humble and teachable soul entering his sanctified presence.

This intrepid investigator of the soul's domain has solved stubborn questions which have puzzled the thinkers amongst men since reason first evolved. Western scientific psychology is heading straight for the explanation which he gives of that apparent mixture of beast and angel called man. The Maharshi's method of psycho –

²³ "Prediction" at the top of the page in the original indicates this comes from "Prediction Magazine."

²⁴ Two words were cut off in the original, we have inserted "and body" per the duplicate on page 10 of Collected Writings 4.

²⁵ The final words of this sentence were cut off in the original; we have inserted "and bodies of all creatures" per the duplicate on page 10 of Collected Writings 4.

analysis is far removed from the queer muddled method of Freud, whose materialistic and sexual emphases caused him to miss the divine.

The rewards which wait for those who practise the former is nothing less than Nirvana itself, at the most, and mental tranquillity at the least. Those that think that the Nirvana of the Sage is a kind of never-ending boredom should spend a few months in his society. The experience will correct their mistake and make good their ignorance.

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I INTERVIEW AN INDIAN YOGI!

The Practical Technique of Fasting

33

THE PRACTICAL TECHNIQUE OF FASTING²⁶

I

(33-1)²⁷ Because of its great benefits, the fast is given a temporary place in the philosophic A B C of principle. These are both psychological and physical. Not only are the toxic matters eliminated, but obstructive waste matters and noxious sticky slimes too. Such purification of the body lets it function more freely through all its organs and parts. This, in turn, lets the brain, the nervous system, and the intestinal tract offer less hindrance to spiritual currents generated by prayer, meditation, aspiration, or transmutation.

The fast starts in the evening by missing the dinner meal, and, by taking instead to help empty the bowels completely, a mild dose of herbal laxative tea, preferably, hot senna leaf infusion, using (2) or (3) leaves in a cup of water. The next morning, take a cupful of herbal stomach cleanser, such as a strained mild infusion of a half teaspoonful of golden seal herbs in hot water. For those who wish to avoid the work of preparing, it is also available in concentrated liquid form commercially, as fluid of hydrastis. Follow this, a half-hour later, by drinking a cupful of warm or hot water. Both these purges should be repeated on the last morning of the fast, if the latter extends to a three-day period.

The night after the first complete day's fast, using a rubber fountain syringe of (one) or (two) quart capacity, take an enema in a crouching position. Use warm perfectly clean water, hold it, within the body as long as possible, vary the position by lying flat for a minute or two. Turn over on the left side for a further minute or two, and then turn over on the right side for the same period. Repeat enema on last night if fasting for three days. Each morning take a warm bath, because of the body's weakened condition, this must not exceed five minutes. Because the elimination of toxic matter through

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²⁶ "(PAGE 1)" in the original.

²⁷ This entire page is uppercase in the original. For readability we have changed it to sentence case.

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(35-1)²⁹ Because of its great benefits, the fast is given a temporary place in the A B C Philosophic Discipline. These are both psychological and physical. Not only are the toxic matters eliminated, but obstructive waste matters, and noxious sticky slimes too. Such purification of the body lets it function more freely through all its organs and parts. This in turn lets the brain, the nervous system, and the intestinal tract offer less hindrance to spiritual currents generated by prayer, meditation, aspiration, or transmutation.

The fast starts in the evening by missing the dinner meal, and by taking instead, to help to empty the bowels completely.

(35-2) Correction as noted above
...also below, indicated
by red under-line.

(35-3) (Page V 1
It is then that the cleansing of man's body prepares him for these changes.
The end of a course in fasting should be followed by a reformed diet.

(35-4) Saturday
15th 111
19 58

(35-5) Dear PB
Discovered the above errors in re-checking original notes from you.
Gil³⁰

(37-1)³¹ (A) Insert page II at (A)

²⁹ This entire page is uppercase in the original. For readability we have changed it to sentence case.

³⁰ Possibly referring to the Gil Norcutt mentioned in the KTH letters. – TJS '20

³¹ This para is entirely handwritten by PB himself.

Or pour a couple of pints of boiling water on a half pound of raising or dates with a peeled apple. Let it get cold. Strain off the fruit and squeezing it dry. Then add a teaspoon of lemon juice, mix well. All these drinks are to be prepared fresh in the morning of each day, and to be sipped slowly every two or three hours.

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THE PRACTICAL TECHNIQUE OF FASTING

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THE PRACTICAL TECHNIQUE OF FASTING

Paul Brunton

II

(39-1) The skin will be more active, use soap.

For the same reason, in the morning at toilet, and again in the early evening, use a scraper upon the tongue. These long, slim, narrow strips of light-weight plastic are stocked by some metropolitan drug stores. You will be surprised at the quantity of noxious mucous it can remove. It is recommended that only distilled water be drunk during the period of the fast and that the herbal infusion be also made from such water. It can be bought in jars from better food or drug stores.

As an alternative to the full fast you may conserve your strength for work by engaging in semi-fasts of the same duration. During these periods eat no solid food and subsists on available fruit juices well diluted with lukewarm water, or else, on lemonade containing a half teaspoon of lemon juice with one teaspoon of raw honey or [brown]³³ sugar to each tumbler of warm water; or else on vegetable extract water made by soaking diced carrots, with a little watercress, tomato, celery, or parsley, for five or six hours in distilled water, then straining off the juice and discarding the solids. This drink may be mixed with the lemonade drink to render it more palatable, if desired. When unmixed vegetable extracts contains no significant quantity of proteids, and no starches, so that it belongs more closely to the category of full, rather than semi-fasts and may enable the hunger to be better born. [Insert A]³⁴

While fasting do not exercise the body or undertake physically strenuous tasks. If you are working during the week it is advisable to carry out the fast during a week-end. It offers a convenient time to catch up on reading and meditation assignments. Experience demonstrates conclusively that if most of this period is spent sitting in a chair, reclining on a couch, or resting in a bed, it is passed through more easily, more swiftly, and more effortlessly, whereas if spent active and moving about it is passed through with difficulty and feels slowly dragged out. So do not

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THE PRACTICAL TECHNIQUE OF FASTING

II

³² Blank page

³³ PB himself deleted "dried fruit" and inserted "brown" before "sugar" by hand.

³⁴ PB himself inserted "Insert A" by hand, referring to the para on page 37.

(continued from the previous page) spend more than the least possible energy. To pray for guidance in self-improvement and for help in self-purification during these rest periods is good.

Headaches and fatigue often appear during the first and second days of fasting. They usually begin to disappear, along with hunger, during the third day.

To end the fast be careful to break it gently and by degrees. This preconditions the stomach for normal eating. It is a serious and sometimes a dangerous mistake to break a fast with hard or clogging solid food. The longer the fast, the more dangerous it is. The correct way is to take a mild dose of warm liquid herbal laxative like senna leaves infusion and wait for half an hour. Then take liquid refreshment only - warm water mixed with grape juice, or other sweet non-acid fruit juices slowly sipped.

Within an hour, clear vegetable broth, may be sipped. It should be unsalted and unsalted. It should be made from one-third part at least, of carrots, and the remainder of spinach and mixed seasonable vegetables. The first solid meal may be some fresh soft fruits, the second, a thick, heavy vegetable soup, but no dried beans or lentils may be included. For the first ordinary solid meal avoid sharp, hard, crisp foods, such as toast, as these can damage the temporarily tender stomach lining: avoid also such heavy, clogging starches as potatoes - as they retard the recovery of digestive activity.

A beginner should experiment with an 18-hour fast, repeated every week or two weeks. He may extend it to 24-hour periods in a month or two, and still later, to 36 or 48 hours at a stretch. Having thus well prepared himself, he should finish the regime with a single fast of 3 or 3 1/2 days.

A series of intermittent fasts with one week between the 24-hour fast, or two weeks, between the 2, 3, or 4-day ones, is preferable to very

(continued from the previous page) long abstinences. They are less drastic, much safer, and not less efficacious at the end of a course.

For several years, I took an annual ten-day fast, but abandoned the practice when I discovered that three 3 1/2-day fasts, separated by intervals, gave equal results while being less disturbing to work, and much easier socially.

Beginners who insist on taking a fast longer than six days, ought to prepare themselves for it, by a semi-fast of the kind described on the previous page.

³⁵ Blank page

Although people have safely fasted for periods as long as – 14, 20, or even 40 days, this is undesirable in most cases, and to be considered only in extreme cases of physical distress, or personal crisis, and even then, under the safeguard of proper supervision. Here a fasting warning must be given of the possible injuries, if practiced without discrimination. When prolonged beyond the capacity of the bodily organism to endure, it may end in coma, or sometimes even in death. The correct length of a fasting period, depends partly upon the vitality and weight of the individual. Weak and thin persons cannot endure so long a one as strong or fat persons.

The period following any fast must not be regarded as unimportant. The body, being weakened, will not be able to endure strains that it can ordinarily endure, therefore, rest must be continued, and only slowly discontinued. Take particular care not to lift heavy weights. Since pulsation of the heart and blood-pressure are noticeably reduced by the abstinence from food, those persons who have already low blood-pressure, and, even some of those who are older than 50 years, should take care to avoid either a total fast, or a long one. The dizziness which is felt by some fasters, when they

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IV

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THE PRACTICAL TECHNIQUE OF FASTING
V

(continued from the previous page) get up from lying in a bed, or, reclining on a couch, can be lessened or prevented if they will be careful, when arising from this position, to move more slowly.

The physical dangers can be adequately safeguarded against by taking the precautions mentioned already, and, by setting three, three and a half days as the maximum period for any single fast. The sick and the old must take all needed precautions to modify the fast to suit their individual condition, or else, adopt the semi-fast only. Sufferers from serious lung or heart disease must not attempt any form of fasting. It is harmful not to take a mild laxative just at the beginning of the fast and at the end. The bowel motions stop, and previous accumulations, having no intake of food to move them, remain clogged and constipating. The membrane lining the stomach is rendered delicate by the fast, so those who use strong mineral salts, when mild herbal ones are available are ill-advised.

The psychical dangers also do not usually arise, except on fasts extended for periods longer than three and one half days. The chief one is a negative condition of mediumship, which might open the mind to the influence of other persons, and the body to control by discarnate entities. No aspirant who shows mediumistic tendencies should practice fasting longer than one or two days at a time.

It is inadvisable to fast in winter as the cold weather is then much less easily

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borne. The best times are spring, summer, and early autumn. Especially suitable times are:

A.) At the two equinoxes, March 21st, when the sun crosses the equator on its northward journey and thus inaugurates the spring season, and September 20th, when it again crosses the equator on its southward journey and inaugurates the autumn season.

B.) At the summer solstice, when the sun changes

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V

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THE PRACTICAL TECHNIQUE OF FASTING
VI

(continued from the previous page) Its course and reverses its direction. This happens about June 21st.

At these three dates, nature is preparing her great cyclic changes throughout the world and in man. It is then that the cleansing of man's body prepares him for these changes.

The end of a course in fasting should be followed by a reformed diet. It is much less difficult after such a course to drop from one's diet, any article of food or drink of which one has been fond for many years and to which one has been so addicted that its absence would be highly disturbing. The same is true of adding any new dietary articles which may seem unattractive and unpalatable. This fact makes the fast an easier and useful way of making the transition from wrong eating habits to better ones.

Aum

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THE PRACTICAL TECHNIQUE OF FASTING
VI

Early Psychic Experiences

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EARLY PSYCHIC EXPERIENCES³⁹

(49-1)⁴⁰ [However, I learnt the rudiments of Spiritualism doctrine from him, and so I am grateful. The fringe of the curtain began to move slowly; I was coming to a

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³⁹ PB himself inserted "BIO" in the upper right margin by hand.

⁴⁰ The beginning of this para was covered by a piece of paper when it was photocopied. This first section has been imported from the duplicate in Collected Writings 4, para 11-1; but even there the first part of the article was physically cut out of the page.

comprehension of the mystery of existence.

My clairvoyance was sometimes sporadic and uninvited. At other times, it was under the complete control of my will. But my clairaudience was quite beyond my control, being something which came and went of its] own accord. Let me explain how these faculties operated in my case. Whenever I sat down quietly, or reclined upon a bed with closed eyes, with the full force of my attention placed upon an imaginary spot in the frontal brain, clairvoyance usually began to manifest itself. This spot was roughly midway between the eye sockets.

I know now that it was no imaginary point but a real thing, being none other than the pineal gland, which is the physical organ of the psychic vision, the atrophied "third eye" of the ancients.

The next thing of which I became aware was a long dark tube which seemed to project itself forward from this spot. By concentrating my attention at the far end of this "psychic telescope," where there was a tiny circle of white light, I found that the light came gradually nearer and grew in size.

(49-2) THE ETHERIC TUBE

Then the tube would disappear. One saw clearly the forms of beings in the spirit world, or else one saw persons and scenes afar off but belonging to our own physical world. At first, one could only discern faces, but later on it was possible to see the full forms.

Thus both spirit clairvoyance and long or short distance physical clairvoyance were both working. In the latter case, I frequently experimented by projecting my vision to the far side of the room. Then, by means of an effort of greater will power, piercing the wall until objects which were outside the room being plainly visible.

The clairaudience worked in the following manner. At first there came an intense buzzing within the ear. It was something like the loud humming of a bee. It seemed to be just inside the ear drum. The sound swiftly increased in tone until it seemed to fill the whole of one's head.⁴¹

(49-3) AUTHOR SEES SPIRIT MURDERER - After that, he lost his clairvoyance - (continued from page 5)

Presenting a sight which sent cold shivers down my spine. His ashen face wore the most haggard look of misery I had ever seen; worse than that, it carried an intense bitterness, a diabolic expression of hatred.

I intuitively knew at once that he had been both a murderer and suicide on earth. Moreover, he carried a blood-stained dagger in his hand. But he most ghastly thing about him was his throat. It was slit and bloodied.

He looked at me with grim menace in his eyes and held the dagger in a threatening attitude. It seemed that in another minute or two he would attack me. In a brief while, I lived through one of those ordeals which leave their memory behind for all time.

Had the incident occurred on the earth, I could not have suffered less, so real did it seem to me, so intensely felt was this psychic experience. Of course, he was only a

⁴¹ This para continues on page 51.

spirit and could not really injure my body. But in those days, the spirit world meant no less to me than the physical world.

THE ANSWERED PRAYER

I went off into a swoon. Next day, I prayed to the gods to take away the gift of psychic sight and sense from one who was too young and inexperienced to bear it. The prayer was answered. I lost my clairvoyance and clairaudience though I could never lose my sensitivity.

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EARLY PSYCHIC EXPERIENCES

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EARLY PSYCHIC EXPERIENCES

(51-1) "STRANGE VOICES"

When it reached its crescendo, something snapped within the ear - in fact there was a most audible click - and the buzzing stopped at once. One almost forgot one's physical surroundings because strange voices would immediately break in upon one's attention, which was concentrated within the ears.

The process was not dissimilar to listening through a telephone receiver. Anyway the spirit voices sounded perfectly *real*. They were not mere mental impressions. One heard them as plainly as one hears a living person speak.

Although these two faculties opened up many interesting and informative hours for me, I must candidly confess that they also brought new miseries of an unforeseen nature. This was the period of the great war and the sights and sounds of souls who had been violently flung into the corridors of death sickening my heart and frightened my youthful mind.

Apparently, I had chiefly contacted the earth-bound spheres. My inability to have any really effective control over these faculties cause me to become the victim of some extremely unpleasant experiences.

The climax came, one day, when a spirit unexpectedly arrived as I was reclining on a couch. He approached with slow tread and stood at my side,

(Turn to page 8.)

[Continued on p.10]⁴³

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EARLY PSYCHIC EXPERIENCES

Western Thought and Eastern Culture

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⁴³ PB himself inserted "Continued on p. 10" by hand.

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(53-1) WESTERN THOUGHT and EASTERN CULTURE
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WESTERN THOUGHT AND EASTERN CULTURE

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WESTERN THOUGHT AND EASTERN CULTURE

(55-1) WESTERN THOUGHT and EASTERN CULTURE
By PAUL BRUNTON
Author of A Search in Secret India, &c.
The Theosophical Publishing House, London
68 GT. Russell Street
London, W.C.1

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WESTERN THOUGHT AND EASTERN CULTURE

(56-1) WESTERN THOUGHT and EASTERN CULTURE

The recent appointment of Sir S. Radhakrishnan to the Spalding Chair of Eastern Philosophy and Religions at Oxford stands in symbolic relation to our time as illustrating a trend which is creeping, for the most part silently and unnoticed, across the Western world. Out of the once-slumbering East, there comes this gifted man to teach its one-time conquerors the ancient lore and wisdom of his own people.

But now, like some compensatory adjustment by the forces of evolution, we are witnessing in the West the appearance of an at present thin, but slowly deepening current of interest in those very thoughts and ideas which the young men of India are at present doing their best to reject as inadequate to their needs and which constitute the faith and traditions of their forefathers. Like the psycho-analyst's contention that a repressed force will reappear in another form and through an outlet other than its normal one, it might almost seem as if the beliefs which are being repressed in the soul of the East are reappearing in the soul of the West.

If world trends mean anything at all, do they not mean that we are moving towards a realisation of the cultural oneness of mankind? The knowledge which is being spread by book and mouth, by wireless and cinema, is becoming a common knowledge in which all men may share. It is therefore in the fitness of things that a distinguished Indian like Sir S. Radhakrishnan should have been appointed as

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⁴⁵ Blank page

(continued from the previous page) the first Oriental to teach at England's most famous and most ancient seat of learning. Surely we have nothing to fear and nothing to lose by such frank interchange of ideas. The result can only be better understanding of those who happen to be born in the Eastern hemisphere of our globe, and especially of their best minds, an understanding which should inevitably lead to more mutual goodwill. And in a world full of strife and misunderstanding of which many of us are becoming increasingly aware, the growth of goodwill is no little thing.

Since that fateful day when the year 1600 made its last diurnal movement and witnessed the foundation of the first English Company to trade with the East under a royal charter received from the hands of Queen Elizabeth, British trade and British arms have been the heralds who have prepared the path for the spread of Western ideas in the East on a scale never envisaged by the Portuguese and French intruders whom they eventually displaced. For we not only gave India our manufactured goods and internal security, but also we gave her later the system of public instruction under which the whole of the younger school-going generation is today growing up.

For more than a century, ever since Macaulay drew up his famous Memorandum that was to become the basis of India's modern educational system, we have imposed upon the young men of that land an instruction along lines that are completely out of keeping with their traditional education. The result has been that nowadays we witness the spectacle of a hybrid generation here in India which has become Westernised from top to bottom, which lives, moves, acts, dresses and talks like most young Europeans, but which at heart struggles vainly to reconcile its own inherent traditions with an alien culture of which it has assimilated as yet only the more outward and obvious forms. The students in the college halls of Calcutta, Bombay and a dozen other places laugh openly at the wisdom of their ancient sages, but are nevertheless uneasy inwardly.

India in her turn once gave us her silks and today she still gives us her tea, spices and precious stones. But she

(continued from the previous page) has also given us a thin trickle of literature and ideas, mainly at first through the enterprising efforts of inquisitive Western scholars, and with Sir S. Radhakrishnan's appointment, we may regard the value of these thoughts and this culture as having been definitely recognised and triumphantly established.

Since the gates of Oriental learning were first opened to those imperious Western students who followed in the tracks of Western armies, a part of its scriptures and literary gems has been eagerly collected and translated into European tongues. Yet those who roam the East today know that among the untouched lore lies many a book that is filled with rare psychological knowledge or imbued with profound spiritual inspiration.

Scholars like the French Duperron and Bernouf, who discovered and translated the Persian Bible Zend-Avesta and the Indian Upanishads in the eighteenth century; like Professor Max Muller, whose monumental series Sacred Books of the East first made accessible much of this varied lore; like Rhys Davids, who turned to many

Buddhist Pali texts into English, and some others have tilled the religious field for us.

We of the West owe a debt to that much-maligned man, Warren Hastings, because he was the first European to initiate the study of Sanskrit and the Hindu sacred books. It was through his inspiration that Charles Wilkins published the first translation of the Hindu's most famous short classic, the Bhagavad Gita. In 1786, when he was staying in Benares, he sat down to write a preface to the first English edition of this book, under whose spiritual influence he had fallen.

Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, *Oriental Poems* and other works have given us a hint of the beauty of Eastern poetry; Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* and *In Black and White* picture the external life of an India that is passing, as Lafcadio Hearn's *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* and other works pictured the inner and external life of a Japan which is passing still more rapidly. Fielding Hall's "*Soul of a People*" did the same for Burma. FitzGerald's translation

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(continued from the previous page) of the priceless Rubaiyat, and the wise and witty verse of Sadi, rendered us aware of the luxuriant imagery of Persian poetry.

Japanese art came to the West in the middle of last century. The prints of Hokusai and Hiroshige, with the flat perspectives, profoundly influenced Whistler and gave birth to the Post-impressionist school of painting. Chinese art arrived even earlier and its productions of lacquered furniture and delicate porcelain became the rage as well as the model of eighteenth-century aristocratic France.

When I lived in Benares for a while, staying in a monastery in order to get a deeper insight into the mind of its inhabitants, I had many a discussion with those learned Brahmin pundits who, in Matthew Arnold's lines:

"In patient deep disdain,
Let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again."

I could not help being somewhat amused by their ready assumption of religious and philosophic superiority of Western thinkers. Apparently they knew next to nothing of the history of the inner life of Europe during past ages. They did not know that there were analogues for many of their own doctrines and geniuses in the annals of European culture. Their world was circumscribed by their ancient texts, the Vedas.

A similar parochialism in our attitude towards the thoughts and faiths of Asia's highest thinkers and holiest men can no longer be justified in this day and age of world communion. We should therefore welcome whatever may emerge from Asiatic culture as being scientifically sound and philosophically true, even though the methods of modern investigation were not employed in arriving at these notions.

The inter-fusion of the peoples in both hemispheres in the domain of culture increases with the years. We have learned to live down our early contempt of races once thought to be but barbarians and we have learned to value and even to respect some of the spiritual and philosophical explorations of the brown and yellow races. Tennyson's

(continued from the previous page) dream of a world people by a humanity able to live like one great family in amity, tolerance and understanding is unhappily very far off, but this is not to say that world movements will not imperceptibly force us to its accomplishment. Alexander dreamt of this ultimate fate of the human race and attempted to mingle the cultures of many Eastern and Western races in the newly established city which was named after him. His efforts bore fruit for a time and flourished well, and if we cannot trace any continuance, it is because he was premature and undoubtedly ages before his time. These things when they do come about must come about naturally, not by artificial forcing, but by that silent, slow and steady growth which is evidenced in the flower.

Norman Douglas once ironically declared that: "Curry is India's greatest contribution to mankind." One might supplement his statement with the declaration that: "Tea is the most meritorious of China's cargoes to the West."

Indian culture is extremely wealthy in the domain of psychology, philosophy and religion, so wealthy that there are few doctrines which appeared out of original Western sources that have not already been anticipated and developed in India. Most of the advances in modern Western psychology are practically duplicating in their discoveries ideas which already exist, even if in a cruder and less scientific form, in India's ancient systems of religion and psychology. Quite a number of Oriental ideas have been adopted independently by our own thinkers in some similar or transformed shape, and expressed in a manner that suits our own time and outlook. This is no new process, for it has been going on through the centuries. Thus we have Henri Bergson's teaching of Creative Evolution closely paralleled by the Shakta teaching of the Tantrik school. Even the agnostics have their paradoxical parallel too, in this most religious of all lands, for the founder of the Samkhya school asserted that "the existence of a Supreme Creator is not proved." Thousands of years before Charles Darwin was born, he hurled his philosophical tenets of Evolution against the doctrines of Creation which was upheld by the Brahmins

(continued from the previous page) of his day. His system received the following eulogy from the German Orientalist, Professor Richard Garbe: "In Kapila's doctrine for the first time in the history of the world the complete independence and freedom of the human mind, its full confidence in its own powers are exhibited." Nietzsche called the Greeks "the best heirs and scholars of Asia" and Professor Garbe has drawn attention to the profound influence of Hindu thought upon Greek philosophy in the period of its greatest splendour.

We have Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal rhythm in the universe which echoes the theory of recurrent cycles expressed in India's major epic, the Mahabharata. Sir James Jeans suggests that the universe will ultimately dissolve into radiation and that a reverse process will follow. In short, he returns to the belief in cyclic creation which has

been a fundamental doctrine of Hindu thought. Indeed, the idea that the universe is ultimately annihilated and then re-created anew after a period of rest possesses a history which extends from China to Persia also, and according to the most ancient Hindu philosophers, as expressed in their cosmological histories The Puranas, universes are born out of the womb of infinite space, exist for countless ages, are subject to decay and finally to dissolution. In this dissolved state which can be nothing other than a state of ray existence, in scientific terms, they exist latently. Then there is a re-creation, and the latent universe reappears and slowly evolves once again through long aeons of time. Sir Arthur Eddington has advanced nearly the same view in his theory that the whole universe is steadily and irrevocably running down like a clock, a theory which drew from Dean Inge the pertinent question, "Is it not reasonable to assume that whatever power wound up the clock once may probably be able to wind it up again?"

However, the vital difference arises that whereas the ancients laid these doctrines down without detailed explanations, without giving their why and wherefore, we of the West are arriving at them through a step-by-step process. Our scientists are moving those these conclusions by a series of experiments and investigations which prove and demonstrate

(continued from the previous page) the correctness of their views. They endeavour to satisfy man's reasonable desire to understand the detailed workings of the universe, both hidden and apparent. If ancient and Eastern people were satisfied with mere assertion, we moderns are not. Science itself owes its very existence to the growth of this modern outlook.

When the atom, once the solid foundation of materialistic doctrines, was found to be resolvable into congeries of whirling electrons and matter itself scientifically disappeared into energy, the intuitive perceptions of the Hindu seers in the Upanishads were vindicated; no longer were their statements the mere childish babble as they were called by Macaulay, but simply they had said that a subtle energy pervaded the universe and all space, that matter was but a densification of this subtler energy, and that even behind this subtle energy there exists a still subtler essence which in itself was indestructible. The Katho Upanishad says: "On this indestructible being the ether is verily woven and interwoven." The Bhagavad Gita declares: "Beings are unmanifest in origin, manifest in the mid-way stage, un-manifest again in dissolution. What ground is there for regrets?"

The scientific view of matter has changed so much under pressure of the latest discoveries that one can perceive its increasing approximation to the Brahminic view that the apparent solidity of the universe is illusory. Our crude material substances have dissolved into mists of subtle atoms and subtler electrons and ions. In short, Shakespeare's intuitional statement that we and the world are made of "such stuff as dreams are made of" has been verified in the modern laboratory. When a respected scientist like J.B.S. Haldane asserts in one of his lectures that "the physical world is not the real world, but only an ideal and quite insufficient representation of it. The real world is the spiritual world," he is echoing, perhaps unconsciously, an assertion which

was a typical concept of the Brahmin philosophy five thousand years ago, and which, with the traditional tenacity characteristic of the East, has been handed down from generation to generation until it is still taught today as I heard it taught

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(continued from the previous page) in the monastery of Benares. Nevertheless, again, a vital difference of approach is manifest. The ancient Hindus took these statements in the nature of a revelation from on high, for they were made originally by their seers as a result of personal self-experience in the spiritual domain. Our Western scientists have no such experience, and if they are reaching similar conclusions, it is because they are working their way from the profoundest depths of this material world up to its farther frontier where the ions elude them and vanish into pure spirit. It is not a question of which method of approach is superior to the other; it is rather a matter for self-congratulation that, on some of the most important topics, the wisest men of the ancient East and the modern West, starting from totally different premises, have arrived at precisely the same conclusions. It is on such a basis therefore that we may establish our hopes for an ultimate exchange in a freer and franker way between East and West of ideas, experiments and experiences which shall help mankind to establish the truth about this universe wherein it dwells.

There is much, of course, in Eastern ways which will never float across to the West. If the Orientals have a livelier appreciation of the reality of Eternity, and if their tropical climate emphasises this appreciation throughout their general attitude to life, we in the West are unlikely to entertain such views as deeply as they do. We may not, for instance, ever arrive at the stage of that wealthy money-lender whom I met several years ago in Lahore. He boasted to me, "Whenever I have an appointment with a client for ten in the morning, I invariably turn up at the hour of two." On my replying that this was surely bad for business, he laughed and said, "If I turned up at ten, then my client would turn up at two."

The foundations of our belief in the reality of time have been upset somewhat by recent thinkers. Mr J.W. Dunne has contributed not a little in his much-discussed book *An Experiment with Time*. Not long ago, a London newspaper gave an example of how electrical shock could change the sense of time. One victim who watched a bicycle pass

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(continued from the previous page) by at high speed after he had received a shock declared that he could see every spoke in the cycle wheel and that the latter barely seemed to him to be turning. Indian thinkers of antiquity have pictured the more or less parallel incident involving the prolongation of time until it lapses into Eternal. Indeed, they never tired of declaring that apart from man's own mind, time has no separate existence and that changes in the functioning of his mind could bring about such complete changes in his sense of time that he could veritably find himself imbued with the sense of eternity. This continuous flux of time which to us seems to go on for

ever, to them is but a by-product of consciousness, an illusion produced by the succession of our thoughts. For them, there is only the Eternal Now, never-ending.

Bishop Berkeley's metaphysics runs very close to that of the Indian school of Vidnyanavadin Buddhas.

The school of behaviourism of which we have heard so much recently from America, the combative criticisms of atheism of which we heard so much during the last century possess their parallel and even forerunners in analogous schools of ancient Indian thought. There is, however, one vital difference between the Occidental and Oriental methods of approach, and that is, that whilst Western psychologists carry out most of their experiments on other persons, the proponents and exponents of Indian systems are expected, and do, carry out their experiments upon themselves first and foremost. This difference in such a subtle and intangible field and the human mind works out to the advantage of Indian psychology because, obviously, no amount of communication to another person can reproduce with perfect exactness mental states and ranges of awareness.

The East indeed has cradled every type of creed. There is a faith for the illiterate, credulous and superstitious boor and a faith for the cultured, thoughtful philosopher.

Superstition is, of course, widespread and fantastic in most parts of the East, but its extent is noticeably decreasing. Most Asiatic peasants still look upon life much as most European peasants did in our own medieval period. They still see the punishing hand of God in a pestilence whose

(continued from the previous page) cause we see to be dirty surroundings; they still spend much time and energy and even money to placate the unheeding deities of Rain where we would spend our time and energy in creating a system of irrigation canals. Even after making all allowances for the enervating influence of a tropical climate, I have been forced to conclude that India, despite its having harboured so many keen thinkers, was prevented for a thousand years and more from moving forward by the misguided efforts of a superstitious priesthood.

Nevertheless, if there is any contribution to be made to our quest of truth by Eastern thought, whether ancient or modern, the loftiest, I believe, would be the idea that until there is a re-orientation of our own search from its objective phase to a purely subjective one, the realisation of the highest truth, as opposed to its mere intellectual discernment, will continue to elude us. For let us not forget that even the Western scientist who postulates a spiritual basis for the universe has done nothing more than perform an intellectual operation; he has not come into personal contact with that spiritual basis as the ancient Asiatic thinkers assert that he should. But can man really transcend the intellect? The wisest men of the East have always declared that he can, and it will be Sir S. Radhakrishnan's none too easy, but nevertheless congenial task at Oxford to expound this possibility in a manner and language conformable with our best educational traditions.

Before returning to Europe I came down from the Himalaya mountains to live in a little South Indian township which is somewhat off the beaten track, but which

through its possession of one of the largest Temples in India is also a place of pilgrimage. For some years, however, another kind of pilgrim has been coming here, intent not so much on seeing the Temple and obtaining some boon from its supposed Patron Deity, but on visiting a certain hermit who lives a couple of miles away and in obtaining his blessing. This holy man happens also to be quite an intellectual sage in his way, with the result that he engaged my deepest interest when I first came across him seven years ago. He seems to me to be symbolic of the vanished India of antiquity when such men as himself

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(continued from the previous page) were far more numerous and were held in the highest esteem. Although, of course, there are still plenty of so-called holy men wandering the Indian roads or living around the Temple precincts, most of them are recognised for what they are – idle, irresponsible beggars with very little “holiness” about them. This individual to whom I am now referring shines out, however, as one of the rare exceptions. His name is Sri Ramana Maharshi,⁴⁶ generally called “The Maharshi” for short, the latter name being a compound of two Sanskrit words meaning “great sage” or “great seer.” For forty years he has lived either on or at the foot of the hill of Arunachala – a solitary peak which rises abruptly from the flat fields and scrub jungle that form the local scenery. The Maharshi talks at times like a Grecian philosopher and constantly reiterates the dictum of Socrates: Man, know thyself.” For he repeats the words of the ancient scriptures of his people which teach that a ray of God lies buried in the human soul. He teaches this, however, not by reference to any scripture or book, but by reference, with the utmost humility, to his own personal experience. He lived for several years as a young man, and as the hermits of antiquity were wont to live, in a gloomy cavern high up on the hillside, devoted to a life of mental abstraction and spiritual contemplation, his mind steeped in an introspective world which was as dark to normal human beings as the cave in which he habitually sat. When finally he emerged to a larger life, it gradually became known in wider and wider ripples throughout South India that here was a man like unto their ancient sages, a race almost gone from modern India. For he had attained union with Brahma, the Universal Soul. Be that as it may, the Hindus regard him as a Divine Man, as a living Temple to whom it is their privilege and duty to pay homage and to make of him an object of pilgrimage. To a European mind, however, his interest lies less in his divinity, for he works no miracles whatever, than in his illustration in the flesh of the kind of thing which was held to be so important in the remote past of this land.

Curiously enough, nearly all the visitors to the Maharshi, including the present writer and Europeans he has brought

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⁴⁶ “Maharishi” in the original.

(continued from the previous page) with him, feel a profound peace descending upon them whenever they sit for awhile in the Sage's presence. It is as though human beings carried their atmosphere around them, as in some invisible magnetic field. This is a fact which has been noticed so many times as to become a commonplace through mere familiarity. It would be interesting to have a scientific explanation of this phenomenon. Or, is there really something in the claims for the Maharshi's uniqueness?

He is a Brahmin, of course, for the Brahmins have been the keepers of India's wisdom. The Maharshi knows little of our sciences of the West. Darwin, Kelvin, Thomson, Lodge, Jeans and Einstein are not even names to him. Yet, sometimes, I hear him saying things which seem to be but Western science wearing Hindu dress or Yogi's loin-cloth. For instance, "without the infinite power which subsists behind all phenomena and dwells as their hidden source, this incense stick would not burn, the atoms of this table would not hold together and this universe even would cease to exist. This power is in all forms. It alone gives them reality." I hear again the electronic theory reappearing under an Oriental guise. The thing that interests me, however, is that he says these things not out of any book-learning, but out of an inner mystical perception at which he claims, in absolute modesty of soul, to have arrived.

With his passing one day there will pass a figure like unto one out of the East's remote past, a symbolic personage who today represents an almost vanished, but once potent period of Asia's spiritual history.

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WESTERN THOUGHT AND EASTERN CULTURE

(68-1) [Reprinted from the Cornhill Magazine, Dec. 1937.]

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WESTERN THOUGHT AND EASTERN CULTURE

(69-1) C.F. Hodgson & Son, Ltd.,
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2 Newton St., London, W.C.2.

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Books on Eastern Culture

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My Tour Among the Yogis

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MY TOUR AMONG THE YOGIS

⁴⁹ Void page. The end of the article that precedes PB's in The London Forum. The original page reads:

"Naturally this danger does not apply to non-physical seances; but the mere existence of it will cause one to appreciate why professional physical mediums can be counted on the fingers of the hand. It is a dangerous game because of the ignorance and folly of investigators.

There is another curious and difficult psychological source of danger. When a medium is in a state of high sensitivity, he or she is receptive to the thoughts and impulses of those around. Where the sitters are expecting fraud, a form of suggestion may produce it.

Another factor which we must take into consideration is that mediums are not necessarily highly moral persons. Some are models of integrity; others utterly unprincipled. Possession of the psychic faculty does not imply honesty. Unfortunately too many people hold the view that it implies the reverse, but that, also, is not true.

Professional mediums are in danger when they allow their powers to become prostituted for gain, sitting sometimes a dozen times in one evening, burning up their lives for the sake of money. The danger cannot be overestimated. A long experience of this unfortunate class has revealed tragedy after tragedy.

These cases, however, are extreme ones, and no analogy can be drawn between them and those of the earnest seekers after truth who in thousands of homes throughout the country are testing these things."

(74-1) MY TOUR AMONG THE YOGIS

By PAUL BRUNTON

(Author of "A Search in Secret India")

In⁵⁰ view of the notable success of "A Search in Secret India" (in its second thousand three days after publication), the author, Paul Brunton, writer of the Book Causerie for the "London Forum," on the invitation of the Editor gives an outline of the causes and motives which led up to his pilgrimage to India

(74-2) With this issue the Book Causerie appears under another signature; for I am preparing to turn my face Eastward once more and explore the less frequented haunts of the Himalayas and China in quest of the Fakirs,⁵¹ yogis, magicians and sages whom white men seldom contact. I hope also to spend a period of training in advanced meditation with the Maharshi, whose mysterious personality is portrayed to some extent in my book.

In the pages of a magazine like this it is possible to express oneself more freely upon occult subjects than could be done in a work that was written largely for the general reader. My book attempted to make clear to the man in the street subtle and recondite matters which are usually difficult enough to make clear even to specialised students. Nevertheless, there is something for the latter in its pages also, some new information which has been drawn out of the taciturn lips of those reclusive men, the yogis. Such students will probably realise that I have been compelled to withhold from print certain items which would be out of place except in a specialised thesis.

The roots of the story behind my book go back to boyhood, when I found myself taking a keen interest in the subject of Spiritualism. From the very first I quickly developed mediumistic powers, particularly clairvoyance and clairaudience, and thus obtained the best kind of proof of the existence of the psychic world, i.e., by first-hand personal experience, without resort to paid mediums. After I had completely established the truth of survival for myself, I turned to the study of Theosophy and joined the Theosophical Society.

I am grateful for what I learned during this second phase;

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⁵⁰ This prefatory para was not written by PB. — TJS '20

⁵¹ "Faqueers" in the original.

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(continued from the previous page) but after two years membership I resigned from the Society. I felt that the adepts who had sponsored its foundation had now withdrawn and left the Society to its own devices. But theosophical study provided my first introduction to Oriental thought, and set me off upon a line of investigation which has become more fascinating still with the passage of time.

I moved among some of the occult groups and compared their teachings for awhile. From time to time I came into contact with advanced students of Indian, Burmese and Chinese nationality, and they helped me to a clearer understanding of their own doctrines.

I was fortunate enough to become a close friend of the Bhikku Ananda Metteya,⁵⁴ who was undoubtedly the first great authority on Buddhism to step out of the cloistered retreat of an Eastern Monastery and come to Western shores. He taught me something of the inner side of his faith; he initiated me into Buddhist methods of meditation; and he provided an unforgettable lesson in ethics by the beauty of his own personality. He lived the doctrine of love for all beings in its fullest extent; none was exempt from the sweep of his compassion. Let me relate one anecdote.

When he was living in the interior of Ceylon, he went out for a walk one day. In the middle of his path he came across a krait (this is a venomous and dangerous little snake), but the Bhikku made no attempt to kill it with the sun umbrella he was carrying; he greeted it itself with the words, "Good day, brother krait!" and then presently strolled away. I know that Ananda possessed extraordinary yogic powers. He could influence animals to an amazing degree. He could take poisons without injury, and on one occasion he took enough hemlock to kill several men, yet suffered no inconvenience. He had developed a breath control which enabled him at times to alter the specific gravity of his body, so that while sitting in Yoga posture he could rise a foot or two into the air and then float gently down to the floor again a little distance from the spot where he first sat. Our friendship endured until his death, and the latter was in fit consonance with the whole tenor of his life, because he sacrificed his body in an effort to extricate me from a dangerous position - a secret I am now making public for the first time. He too, stirred up anew my interest in the East.

(continued from the previous page) The years passed. For various reasons I dropped my mystic studies and concentrated upon professional work in journalism and editing. I made an intense effort to try to understand and fit in with the busy, active material world around me; this was probably a counterpoise to my earlier and strenuous efforts to abstract myself from it! Yet through all those years of ambitious striving I still felt, however dimly, a secondary desire to go out one day to the Orient and to find those yogis, fakirs and wonder-workers about whom I had heard so much.

When, however, my ambitions were on the point of being realised, a strong inner voice suddenly interposed and persistently urged me not to take the culminating step;

⁵⁴ Also known as Allan Bennett.

had I done so, the next few years would have been contracted away to still more strenuous professional activity. Naturally there was a struggle, but in response to this strange spiritual monitor I let slide the most attractive opportunity of my professional career, withdrew from all activities for a time, and took up the old studies once more.

I entered into correspondence with a young Parsee who was editing a journal out in India. He was an ardent disciple of Sri Meher Baba, who has since achieved some notoriety in the world as the "New Messiah." My correspondent sent tremendously enthusiastic letters about his guru, so much so that I was tempted to go out and investigate the matter for myself. It must be remembered that, at the time, Meher Baba was quite unknown to the Western world, and that many of us felt that the emergence of some world teacher was not an unlikely thing. I thought also that I could combine this enquiry with my long-deferred investigation of the whole question of Indian Yoga.

So I set my face towards the Orient. With regard to Meher Baba it did not take long to discover that he was a prophet who could give excellent advice to others, but unfortunately was unable to live up to it himself; in short, his Messianic claims were nothing more than claims, while the less I say about the peculiar antics of Meher Baba and his circle the better. With regard to the yogis and fakirs I found that religious fanatics, self-deluded gurus and foolish sentimentalists could be discovered in plenty, but genuine sages and fakirs possessed of demonstrable occult powers were rare enough to make one despair sometimes of ever locating them. However, the tides of my quest turned soon after a strange ring was given me by the man

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(continued from the previous page) whom I call in my book the Anchorite of the Adyar River. Thereafter I experienced no difficulty in meeting the objects of my quest.

Some of the stories may seem amazing, yet even as I write this article I find on my desk a letter from an Indian correspondent describing some astonishing feats of Yoga magic which were carried out this year at Mangalore, on the Western coast of India. The Yogi's name was Das, and his display of the power of Yoga took place in the Government College before a select audience which included the District Judge and the Municipal Chairman. His performance lasted three hours; he rubbed nitric acid over his hands, he ate burning coals and broken glass, he stopped the beating of his heart and pulse, he was hanged by the neck, and he permitted himself to be buried alive under the earth. Perhaps the strangest feat of all was his last one, when he let a ten-ton steam road roller pass over his body. At the end of his display he arose unharmed and

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unhurt.

I am not propagating Yoga or any other Eastern "ism" or cult, but I am trying to call attention to a few worthwhile ideas which can be picked up from the East. Neither am I of those who praise the so-called spirituality of the East in order to deride Western materialism. All such comparisons are foolish and incorrect. Sacredness is in ourselves, not in any spot on this planet. Nevertheless the fact remains that Asia and Africa, on account of their age and their more leisurely existence, had had time to discover some profound secrets, both of a spiritual and material nature, which seem to me to have some value for us. Those secrets are now to be traced out with the greatest difficulty, because time has narrowed their ownership down to a reclusive few, yet they do exist, and may be found.

Some of these secrets are really a part of what is known as the Ancient Wisdom, some fragments of which were brought to us from the East by H.P. Blavatsky. She founded the Theosophical Society, which seemed destined to have a brilliant future, but which unfortunately now seems to be falling to pieces.

That, in brief, is a history of how my book came to be written.

The observant reader will discover a few pages in the last chapter which have been set in italics. Those pages contain my own credo, my confession of faith. I am frequently asked what creed I hold: the answer is that I am a Christian to the

(continued from the previous page) extent that I concur with Saint Paul in saying, "And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and have not love, I am nothing." I am a Buddhist to the extent that I realise, with Gautama, that only when a man forsakes all desires is he really free. I am a Jew to the extent that I believe profoundly in the saying, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One." I am a Hindu to the extent of believing and practising the kindly science of Yoga, the science of union with spiritual self. I am a Muhammadan to the extent that I rely on no mediatory to carry me into the courts of heaven. And finally, I am a follower of Lao-Tzu⁵⁷ to the extent that I accept his perception of the strange paradoxes of life.

But I will go no farther into these faiths than the points indicated; they are the boundary posts at which I turn back. I will not walk with Christians into an exaltation of Jesus - whom I love more deeply than many of them - over the other messengers of God. I will not walk with Buddhists into a denial of the beauty and pleasure which existence holds for me. I will not walk with Jews into a narrow shackling of the mind to superficial observances. I will not walk with the Hindu into a supine fatalism which denies the innate divine strength in man. I will not walk with Muhammadans into the prison-house of a single Book, no matter how sacred it be. And finally, I will not walk with the Chinese Taoists into a system of superstitious mummery which mocks the great man it is supposed to honour.

⁵⁷ "Lao-Tse" in the original.

Rosicrucianism and Rudolf Steiner

(85-1) The work of turning into English and putting into print the enormous mass of unpublished lecture material left behind by Dr Rudolf Steiner since his death a quarter of a century ago, has steadily gone forward. Although so many volumes are now available, the number which has yet to appear is still larger.

The book [Rudolf Steiner: Christian Rosenkreutz. Translated by Dorothy Osmond and Mary Adams. 189 pages. 12/6d. The Rudolf Steiner Publishing Company. London]⁶¹ now under discussion is the latest addition to the series. It brings together within one pair of covers two separate but related courses in lectures. If they are separated by twelve years in time they are related by blood ties of Rosicrucian interest. The full title of Part I is The Mission of Christian Rosenkreutz: Its Character and Purpose, while that of part II is Rosicrucianism and Modern Initiation.

The historical forward by Frau Marie Steiner is most useful in telling us how and why the subject came to be dealt with in these lectures. It contains however what must be regarded as an important error. The lecturer's widow writes: "Annie Besant had also been so deeply influenced by spiritualistic communications that on the advice of William Stead she went to Madame Blavatsky towards the end of the latter's life and became her ardent follower." It is not correct to say that Annie Besant was a spiritualist. She was a pupil of Charles Bradlaugh, the brilliant atheist, before she became a pupil of Helena Blavatsky. I remember quite clearly my personal talks with her more than thirty years ago. The impression held ever since is that she was associated with William Stead as a journalist on the Pall-Mall Gazette, the London newspaper, he was editing. He handed her the two bulky volumes of H.P.B.'s The Secret Doctrine and suggested that she might like to write a review of them. She agreed to do so. It was the reading of this extraordinary production that turned her into a Theosophist, and the subsequent meeting with Madame Blavatsky clinched the [conversion.]⁶²

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⁶⁰ "Unexpurgated copy" and "Dup discard" were inserted in the top left and top right margins, respectively, by PB himself. Pages 85 and 86 were x'd out entirely in the original.

⁶¹ PB himself inserted "Rudolf Steiner: Christian Rosenkreutz. Translated by Dorothy Osmond and Mary Adams. 189 pages. 12/6d. The Rudolf Steiner Publishing Company. London" by typing it at the bottom of the page and indicating its location with a star. PB himself deleted "Pub: Co. London" before "Publishing Company. London." by hand.

⁶² PB himself changed "conversation" to "conversion" by hand.

The first of Steiner's lectures is called "The Dawn of Occultism in the Modern Age." He brings in the principle of historical development in connection with the higher culture of humanity, particularly spiritual culture. The different kinds of civilisation to which the human being is exposed become full of meaning when we accept the idea that he returns again and again to earth. In this way he is

(continued from the previous page) schooled in different periods of culture and gains from each one what he could not gain from the others. The differences between these periods are quite marked and would alone justify the need of reincarnation.

The thirteenth century was a time of transitional importance, for it was a time of secret preparation for that intellectual culture which later characterised the modern world. Twelve men [who]⁶³ were then living in Europe met privately for this purpose and took over the care and education of a child who, they foresaw, would one day be the most powerful and vital figure of their group. They were themselves highly spiritual individuals and brought out all his finer possibilities. He was kept rigidly from the world and untouched by its influences. At the age of twenty he was ready to go through a trance experience, similar to Paul's before Damascus, which led to an exceptional degree of wisdom and illumination. Although he died soon afterwards, he reappeared in the following century as Christian Rosenkreutz and dwelled in a body which had an unusually long life.

Steiner asserts that each of the twelve teachers stood as representative of a different ancient culture, mainly Atlantean but also Persian, Babylonian, Indian and Graeco-Latin. Each brought out in his pupil perceptions, qualities, feelings and tendencies peculiar to that special culture, as well as provided him with its special knowledge. His personality was thus well-integrated and well-balanced, developed on all sides and bearing within itself an admirable and harmonious synthesis of the highest attributes.

It is this remarkable genius who has repeatedly stepped into incarnation since then for the purpose of influencing the Christian world in certain ways. He even calls through the subconscious mind on a number of individuals, that they may awaken to the spiritual needs of the times and dedicate their lives to co-operation with him in service to humanity. Yet in their conscious minds they may not know that he is the hidden source of this call.

His general aim appears to be the broadening of Christian faith, so as to include and unite what is the core of the other religions, and the deepening of Christian purpose, so as to promote the progress of human evolution. Esoteric and Rosicrucian Christianity is thus not only the true form of Christianity but also the true synthesis of all religions. Steiner, following Blavatsky's example, also calls it occultism but the term has since her day acquired too many connotations on the widely different levels to be either sufficiently useful or precise.

⁶³ PB himself inserted "who" by hand.

(continued from the previous page) In the chapter called "Hidden Centres of the Mysteries in the Middle Ages," the founder of the Anthroposophical Society reveals that although the Mysteries in their traditional form disappeared from the Western world, since the fourth century their dynamic factor survived in changed forms and through other channels. This was the work of initiating candidates into esoteric knowledge and mystical experience. In our times it is possible to find a teacher through the means of books but in the Middle Ages it was possible only through a more personal way. However it remains true now as then that the contact with book or teachers does not really happen by chance, however much it may seem to do so. It happens by the working of intelligent forces.

Among the pupils of such teachers during medieval times, Steiner includes Raimon Lull (1235-1315) on the basis of Lull's views about alphabetical sounds, zodiacal signs and geometrical figures. Steiner traces in these views an attempt to express certain secrets of the World-Mind, the Logos.

Throughout all this work he consistently puts forward the view that with the efflux of time changes took place in the inner constitution of man which led to a loss of certain senses. Early man was instinctively clairvoyant; he saw and knew what modern man no longer believes in, much less perceives. This is why all primitive peoples without exception accepted the existence of other worlds of being and freely allowed themselves to be guided by prophets, seers, sages, holy men, oracular mediums, witch-doctors or sorcerers. But the necessities of individual and intellectual development slowly brought about an enfeeblement of clairvoyant powers until the visions faded away, the intuitions were no longer felt and the contact with other worlds was lost.

This view, which the evidence of history and of true esoteric tradition shows to be the correct one, contradicts the view of short-sighted contemporary occultists in America that the human race is on the verge of manifesting psychic faculties on a wider scale as a result of its own progressive evolution, that these faculties will appear in the whole race instead of being limited as (formerly)⁶⁴ to a few individuals. It is misleading to suggest that we are at the dawn of a new age, that only recently has a start been made to unfold spiritual capacities and develop psychical faculties. We are merely recovering the first and losing the second. The fact is that the twilight of inner sensitivity meant the dawn of intellectual faculty. The practical achievements of science became possible through such a change. If today those achievements threaten us with suicidal self-destruction, if the hopes for human welfare once raised by nineteenth-century science now seem absurdly

(88-1)⁶⁵ to regain the lost sensitivity of the past while holding fast to the intellectual

⁶⁴ PB himself inserted parentheses around "formerly" by hand.

⁶⁵ This page is an assemblage of two pages pasted together. The beginning of this para is pasted over and missing.

gains of the present. This is indeed the most important mission of mystical teaching in our tragic times. If the generality of mankind does not soon retrace its steps and seek a healing of its own disordered psyche, then the course of events will continue to fulfil the dire predictions of those who have insight into the mystery and meaning of the tremendous forces now operative, both for good and for evil, in the Occident and Orient alike. The worst cause in the visible world, it is also the psychical paralysis they cause in the invisible world to beings torn so abruptly out of their bodies at death.

To return to this book, it must be said that although so much of Rudolf Steiner's teaching is acceptable, some of it is disputable. But what remains indisputable is that the times call for more eager inquiry into what men like him have found through penetration into spiritual and cosmical facts, more dedication to self-ennoblement and self-upliftment, and more reverence for a higher power. As we calm the mind and cleanse the heart, we shall feel neither despair at humanity's contemporary tragedy nor exasperation at humanity's contemporary folly. It may be old-fashioned religion but it is nevertheless still up-to-date philosophy to repeat the familiar verse which was lately repeated to me by one of the world's great [Christian]⁶⁶ mystics:

"O God our strength in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home."

On Roy Burkhart's Book "The Freedom to Become Yourself"

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ON ROY BURKHART

(89-1) I expected that Roy Burkhart's latest literary production would also be his best one. It is satisfying to find that expectation creditably fulfilled. In "The Freedom To Become Yourself"⁶⁷ he has tried very thoroughly to help a large class of readers, and he has succeeded in doing so. I refer to the class of religiously-minded people with ordinary capacities who live in average circumstances and who want to bring their life into great harmony with God's will and plan. [Dr]⁶⁸ Burkhart shows them how to beget a more sustaining and stronger faith. He explains how to bring more love into family, business and other relationships. He reveals ignored or unsuspected practical values in the attempt to forgive others. He [instructs]⁶⁹ the everyday person in the art of unfolding some of his powers of mental and spiritual healing. He too that such a person can learn not only to negotiate the disappointments and difficulties - that come to us all - in such a way as to win much profit from them, but also to become really free from the anxieties and fears that may precede or accompany them.

Anyone who seriously aspires to moral growth and is willing to work for

⁶⁶ PB himself inserted "Christian" by hand.

⁶⁷ Published in 1956. - TJS '20

⁶⁸ PB himself inserted "Dr." by hand.

⁶⁹ PB himself changed "intrusts" to "instructs" by hand.

personal wellbeing can find in this well organised, easy-to-read book several sensible rules, self-analysis questionnaires and valuable programs. They are so simple that he can apply them in whatever circle he finds himself; he can use them at home, in the workshop, the office and in society generally. With them he can improve both himself and his circumstances.

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ON ROY BURKHART

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ON ROY BURKHART

(continued from the previous page) The psychological counsel is ample and fruitful, it is not theory alone but well illustrated by specific homely instances from the author's own wide experience and from that of others.

As a practicing mystic, I recognise the mysticism which is also present in those pages, but it is commendably devoid of mystery-mongering and imparted in language of newspaper-like directness, simplicity and plainness.

PAUL BRUNTON

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ON ROY BURKHART

Science and the Sunken Continent of Atlantis

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SCIENCE AND THE SUNKEN CONTINENT OF ATLANTIS

(93-1) (Talk by Dr Paul Brunton broadcast from Akash-Vani on 11-10-43)

We often say and believe that the present world war is unique in history both on account of its colossal dimensions and of its momentous character as a struggle between the forces of good and evil for the soul and body of mankind. This is certainly correct if we confine ourselves to the meagre few thousand years of which we have acceptable records. But in those still earlier times of shadowy antiquity, if we are willing to believe that under all the fantasies and fabrications of mythological tradition there may yet be an original nucleus of factual truth, there once developed a war of similar character and of trans-continental dimensions.

According to very old and widely scattered American, Asiatic and Egyptian legends, this happened on a vast land-mass where the grey waters of the Atlantic Ocean now roll to and fro and it reached its climax with the total wreck of that great continent and its submergence beneath those now deep waters. This startling story is also alluded to by Plato, who not only wrote about the sunken continent which he gave the name of Atlantis, but also claimed that it had been peopled by a race who raised an

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advanced civilisation. It might seem that even if this legend were true, the last proof that such a continent ever existed and that such a civilisation ever developed, lies buried deep in the silt at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, and that therefore it will for ever remain nothing more than a mere legend, an interesting fairy story for intellectual children.

But this is not altogether the case. For science is gradually accumulating facts which begin to show that there is some probability at least in the theory of its existence. It is obvious that until science has developed methods and perfected apparatus to enable divers to explore the bed of the Atlantic Ocean, which is 21,000 feet below the surface in its deeper part, the only source of possible evidence must lie in comparison between the Old and New Worlds, together with a study of the existing Atlantic islands. This means that it has to take up the testimony of deep-sea soundings; it must compare the distribution of animals and plants in the Euro-African and American continents; it must look for the similarities of language and ethnological types; and finally it must consider the early religious beliefs, rituals and architecture which have left their remnants on both sides of the Atlantic.

During the nineteenth century the British and American Admiralties despatched expeditionary ships to investigate the depths of the Atlantic at various parts. As a result of these deep-sea soundings the ocean bed has been carefully charted. The maps reveal the existence of an immense elevated land-mass beginning not far from the Irish coast and stretching in a south-westerly direction as far as the South American coast near French Guiana. This great plateau lies in deep mid-ocean at an average height of about 9,000 feet above the bed out of which it rises.

The higher parts of this land ridge are only a hundred to a few hundred fathoms from the surface of the water, while islands like the Azores are considered to be its peaks. We know from the study of geology that the earth's surface has provided a stage for the successive appearance and disappearance of land. Continents have been submerged beneath water more than once; and the surfaces of existing parts of Europe, Africa and America show plainly, by geological evidences, that in former times they were washed by ocean waters. Even today these phenomena continue before our eyes. The western coast of Greenland, for example, is sinking so rapidly that ancient buildings erected on low rock-islands, are now submerged.

We see therefore that it is not impossible for the great land-belt in the Atlantic to have once stood out of the vast sheet of water which now engulfs it. Geological history stretches away into the remotest periods of time until it loses itself. Nature does not remain stagnant for ever but shakes the giant body of this planet at wide intervals, producing the different epochs about which geologists are slowly collecting information. Vast volcanic disturbances even now occur in the bed of the Atlantic and evidence the probability of past and future changes.

In 1923 the Western Telegraph Company sent out of a ship to search for a lost telegraph cable which had been laid down about twenty-five years previously. Marine soundings were taken at the exact place where the cable had been deposited. The captain of the vessel was astounded to discover that the surface of the ocean bed had risen during the quarter century by two miles! This surprising and striking fact reveals what might be discovered if the opportunities for such investigation were more widespread and more frequent.

The late M. Pierre Termier, Director of Science of the Geological Chart of France, when advancing his own belief in Atlantis, mentioned that a French ship which was used in laying the cable from Brest to Cape Cod during the summer of 1898, tried to fish up a broken strand at a spot about 560 miles north of the Azores. The depth was seventeen hundred fathoms. The grappling-iron drew up oceanic debris, soil and rock. The nature of the last two was such as to indicate that the Atlantic bed, in that locality, was mountainous, high peaked.

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SCIENCE AND THE SUNKEN CONTINENT OF ATLANTIS

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(continued from the previous page) and deep-valleyed. Among this material was a kind of vitreous lava which I have seen preserved at the museum of the School of Mines in Paris. These broken pieces, belonging to the species known as tachylyte, could solidify into their existing condition only under atmospheric pressure. Had they been thrown up under the depth of water in which they were found, they would have assumed different form; they would have become crystallised. Every eminent geologist would support this contention.

The grappling-iron also tore off some splinters of rock from an irregular peak. These were discovered to consist of lava too. They were subjected to microscopic examination later by Dr Fredrick F Strong. Geologists know that lava decomposes to a certain extent under sea water in a period of roughly fifteen thousand years. Dr Strong found these splinters had not decomposed to this extent and that, as in the former instance, the lava had solidified under air pressure. This indicates that the crater which had thrown it forth must have had its head above the ocean; a further conclusion is that a part of the Atlantic bed now seventeen hundred fathoms deep, was dry land less than fifteen thousand years ago.

What has the distribution of animals and plants to tell us concerning the probability of the existence of an Atlantean continent? There are species on both sides of the Atlantic which have existed in the same habitations as long as history records. Those species are identical, yet three thousand miles of water separate the continents on which they are found. Biologists and botanists can offer no plausible theory to account for this undeniable fact. But those who have begun to take the Atlantean theory seriously, find a simple answer. Here are three instances. First, in the existing Atlantic island we find today earth-worms precisely similar to those which we can find in Europe and North America. It must be obvious to any intelligence that the rolling ocean waves provide an impassable region for earth-worms. The logical conclusion is that dry land once connected those islands with the Old World.

Second, Geologists, digging the earth in different places, have found remains of such huge creatures as the hairy mammoth and the woolly-haired rhinoceros on

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⁷³ The top margin reads "1st-15th November 1943" and "Tarangara" in the original.

continents separated by vast sheets of water, the European and the American. The beds in which the remains are deposited, always belong to the post-glacial period. Professor Edward Hull's judgment was (here I quote): "there was a common centre in the Atlantic where this life began, and during and prior to the glacial epoch great land-bridges north and south spanned the Atlantic Ocean."

Third, a curious and enlightening instance which has been a standing puzzle to botanists, is the case of the banana. Here we have a tropical plant which is to be found in America, Asia and Africa. We know that it existed freely on the American side before Columbus sighted his first West Indian island. Now the banana is seedless, and its bulb is not easily transportable like that of the potato. It cannot be propagated by cutting as we can propagate many trees. Even if some way had been found to transport it from one side of the Atlantic to the other, it could never have successfully endured the long voyage which a primitive type of vessel would have slowly made. Finally, as plant possessing no seeds it must have been under culture for a considerable period on one side of the Atlantic before it appeared on the other. How then was it carried by its cultivators across the seas?

This problem remained a riddle till Otto Kuntze, a German botanist who spent many years in the tropics, propounded the first plausible solution. He pointed out that the only conclusion was that the banana had been brought to a high state of cultivation on land now submerged beneath the Atlantic waves, land once peopled by inhabitants who had developed agricultural arts.

This question whether Atlantis, granting its one-time existence, was ever peopled by human beings who raised on it a high degree of civilisation, as Plato claims, is also provocatively interesting but more difficult of solution. Modern investigation of this question must necessarily be limited to comparisons of the culture existing among the earliest races of the Old and New Worlds. If the similarities are sufficiently striking, we may decide that the connecting link has been lost since Atlantis sank into the sea, and that both cultures spread out from this once-inhabited central area.

Take the case of the architectural form known as the pyramid, for instance. At Teotihuacan in Mexico there are two giant pyramids still standing. They date back to pre-historic times. They were built towards the points of the compass. So also were the Egyptian pyramids built. The interior arrangements of the galleries and chambers in the Mexican pyramids are almost identical with those of the Egyptian ones.

In Peru among the architectural ornaments there are puzzling reproductions of ancient Greek designs. These likenesses have been pointed out by Professor G. Elliot Smith and he asks whether they are merely fortuitous or due to some causal relationship.

Thus we may ponder upon the strange history of this planet, upon the gigantic changes which Nature makes at her will in laughing defiance of man, when she tosses a whole continent into the sea.

Les Portes Du Temple by Henri Durville

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LES PORTES DU TEMPLE BY HENRI DURVILLE

(97-1) Les Portes Due Temple. By Henri Durville. Paris: Bibliotheque Eudiaque. Pp. 162.

Widely known in France, Spain and South America for his researches in hypnotism and psychotherapy, M. Durville adds this fine volume to the lengthy list of his publications. He turns for inspiration to his favourite country, Egypt.

“Seven thousand years ago – ten thousand, perhaps – the Sages of the land of Khem, the initiates of Osiris, codified the principles of the Eternal Science, the Divine Science which assures to persons of goodwill peace and happiness here below, and after the tomb,” declares the brilliant author. His book attempts to explain those principles by the interesting method of picturing in vivid style the step-by-step progress of a student, who is initiated into the Egyptian Mysteries. We watch the young aspirant from his first entrance, mark his gradual awakening to a deeper understanding of life, and accompany him until the twelfth gate, where he receives the Supreme Revelation. Henceforth “he possesses the key of all the Mysteries, he has established equilibrium within his heart, and, despite the turmoil of ever-changing existence, he knows only Light and Peace.”

The book is embellished by several valuable drawings of Egyptian symbols, and of scenes from the famous Book of the Dead. It is to be recommended to all who would learn what the adepts of ancient Egyptian Occultism taught their pupils.

PAUL BRUNTON.

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LES PORTES DU TEMPLE BY HENRI DURVILLE

A South Indian Sage - Sri Ramana Maharshi and his Message

99

A SOUTH INDIAN SAGE⁷⁶

(99-1) “(Author⁷⁷ of A Search In Secret India, A Search in Secret Egypt, A Message from Arunachala, etc.)

I have been asked to write upon the essential teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi, a theme which pleases my pen well and which suits my silent secluded Himalayan

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⁷⁶ The right side of this page contains the article “Italian Delegation Leaves Geneva” which we have not typed.

⁷⁷ PB himself inserted “The Leader May 15 / 1936 (Allahabad)” and “Parts of this article must have been included in “The Quest of the Overself” and possibly some of the books like A Hermit,” “Check,” and “Parts of it are duplicated in The ‘Inner Culture’ article adjoining” into the margin of the page by hand.

retreat.

But to this request, I might pose a counter-question.

What teachings do you mean? Do you mean his philosophical teaching, his religious teaching, his Yoga teaching or his silent teaching?

For the Maharshi touches life at all these points, yet permits himself to be cramped and confined by none. No school of philosophy, no sacred creed nor way of Yoga can claim him. He remains free and lets everyone else remain free likewise.

He does not fit easily into any ready-made classification. You may call him a sage, a Yogi, a recluse, a saint, a philosopher, an Incarnation of God, or what not, but I do not think that any one of those terms describes him accurately. For he is unique. And in that uniqueness lies his special appeal to me. In this revolutionary age, when so many of us are tired of the old formulations and teachings worn threadbare, it is distinctly refreshing to find a Guide who subscribes to no special cult or creed or shibboleth but transcends them all. He is not the present-day product of some past tradition, as so many think, simply because whatever traditional knowledge he now possesses was acquired after his spiritual realisation, and not before. No guru illuminated him, no pondering over the shastras and bhashyas gave him his understanding; he is what he is through being himself and remaining true to himself. After all, the Maharshi's call is not into the old Yogas, the old religions or the old philosophies, but into oneself.

When, in no distant period, Western travellers will gaze meditatively on his shrine and lightly observe, 'Ha, another Hindu saint!' they will make a mistake. Sri Ramana Maharshi is not a Hindu, not a saint, nor anything else so rigid. He belongs to the universe.

You may understand this Sage of South India better, when you understand something of his life. Up to the age of sixteen he was a normal Brahman boy, enjoying the fun and sports which came his way during an American Mission school education at Madura. Then destiny suddenly set to work – for what else can we call it? – and turned him into a serious youth, fond of solitude and engrossed in his own thoughts, so much so that an elder brother tauntingly called him 'Yogi!'

A VIRTUOUS ENTERPRISE

(99-2) Young Ramana took his brother at his word, left a comfortable home secretly, and set forth into the adventure of becoming a real Yogi, without, however, possessing any clear notion of Yoga. He was determined to keep his relatives from tracking him down and recapturing him for the household life, and so he left no clue for their guidance. He did leave, however, a brief note scribbled in Tamil characters which informed them that, 'I have gone in search of my Father. This is a virtuous enterprise. Therefore let no money be spent on tracing me out.'

For two years none knew where he had gone. Then an uncle, who was making the pilgrimage to the great Dravidian temple of Tiruvannamalai, in North Arcot district, chanced to hear of a boy Swami who was living in a cave high up on the sacred hill of Arunachala, which overlooked the temple. He felt an urge to go and see this boy and lo! – it was none other than his nineteen-year-old nephew.

But the young Yogi was mowni, keeping silence, and no word could be extracted

from his closed lips. So his relative hastened back to his native village of Tirchuzi and informed the widowed mother of her son's whereabouts. Together they journeyed to Tiruvannamalai and begged, beseeched and commanded the truant's return.

He was adamant. He sat silent and unmoved for hours. The next day they returned to the attack and again on the third day. This time he could bear his mother's natural plaints no longer. He took up a piece of charcoal and scribbled the following words on the ground. More, they could not get out of him.

"There is a Higher Power which controls our lives and ordains our lives and ordains our destiny. What is fated to happen cannot be changed by all your words. It is best, therefore, to remain silent.

The mother returned home, disappointed. Her son continued his meditations undisturbed thenceforward. It is significant and interesting to note the play of fate. Several years later his mother came again to the hill, but this time as her son's own disciple, spending the last six years of her life as cook to his Ashram and enjoying spiritual peace while doing so.

Ramana did not retain his taciturnity for more than a few years. His self-imposed task accomplished, he began to speak again. Although yet so young, he had spent what should have been the most joyous part of a life in a pitch-dark cavern on a lonely rocky hill, enwrapped in the profoundest meditations which drew his mind into that inner world of spiritual being over whose fact Nature seems to have thrown a veil for the ordinary man.

What was his accomplishment, you may ask?

He himself has never claimed anything more than the simple fact of self-knowledge. Somehow he got behind the veil and discovered that there is a part of human nature deeper than thought and desire: In psychological terminology it might be said that he explored both the subconscious and superconscious minds.

A STATE OF UNTELLABLE PEACE

(99-3) In the result he found a state of untellable peace, unbroken and unbreakable. 'It is the Self,' he told my once, 'but Christians call it the kingdom of heaven, Hindus call it Moksha and Buddhists Nirvana; all mean one and the same thing. The deepest Self of man is by its own nature true unchanging happiness.

That cave was his habitation for years. There he lived a life of barest simplicity, subsisting on a meal brought to him once daily by a widow of the village at her own desire. Slowly the news trickled down into the locality that he was more than a mere sadhu, while the advent of a famous Sanskrit scholar and guru, Ganapati Shastri, definitely established his status as a man of the highest-grade-spirituality. The visitor was dumbfounded at the wise answers which he received to questions put to the young man. He was sensitive enough to feel the atmosphere of exalted peace which surrounded and still surrounds the Maharshi. He did not hesitate to throw himself to the ground in prostration and bade his own group of disciples to follow one who was wiser than himself.

But the Maharshi was as indifferent to fame as he was indifferent to the acquisition of disciples. People might come and look at him, talk to him, shoot their questions at him, but to all outward seeming he did not seem to care whether they

accepted his teaching. When, later, the present commodious Ashram was built at the foot of the hill by those who were interested in him, he had almost to be cajoled to descend and occupy it on the plea that it would save visitors the toilsome climb up the hillside. When, nearly six years ago, I asked him if I might be permitted to become his disciple, he seemed annoyed and said: 'What is all this talk of teachers and disciples? The man who has realised the Self is the same to all people. He makes no differences.'

Nevertheless, his answer needed some commentary and in the years that followed, experiences supplied that commentary. I have since learned that he does admit the vital necessity of an inspired and inspiring teacher, but only from the standpoint of aspirants. In the Absolute realm there are neither teachers nor taught, just Be-ing!

Within the last few years the fame of this fame-scorning man has spread all over South India, like a dawning sun spreading its golden haze over the horizon. Each day brings its quota of curious, reverent or Truth-hungry visitors, and the solitude of the Maharshi's early years is now

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A SOUTH INDIAN SAGE

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A SOUTH INDIAN SAGE

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A SOUTH INDIAN SAGE

(continued from the previous page) amply compensated. I ventured to predict some time ago that his would become a nationally-known name within a decade, no less renowned than Sri Ramakrishna's and the prediction will indubitably be verified. Already querents or devotees come from the northern and western provinces of India in small numbers, while this winter more than a score of Americans and Europeans took the opportunity of making pilgrimage to this real Mahatma.

'WE ARE ALL RAYS OF CENTRAL SPIRITUAL SUN'

(102-1) I do not think it possible to condense his message into terser or better phraseology than that which once adorned the beautiful Greek temple at Delhi: Man, Know Thyself! For Sri Ramana Maharshi declares that we are all rays of the Central Spiritual Sun, and just as you cannot separate the golden orb from its individual rays, so you cannot really separate the Absolute Being from the individual human souls

emanating from it. Because of this fact in Nature, the way to the discovery of our Self-divinity exists unbroken for each one of us.

Normally, we are aware only of that part of us which may conveniently be denominated the personal ego. It is nothing more than the thinking intellect and emotional functioning upon a basis of the physical body. If this represents all there is to man, then it is clear that the hope of immortality is a delusion, the soul is a mere figment of the imagination and religion and philosophy mere shows put up by professionally-interested persons.

The Maharshi claims, however, that by accepting such limitations we turn the long stretch of life itself into a delusion. Mathematically put, it might be said that we are working merely to one-thousandth part of our potential capacity. We are not to blame, nevertheless, for the delusion is world-wide. Yet whether we attempt to remove it or not, the fact remains that our basic essential being is of a divine order, that because we cannot escape from our Selves the end of life cannot be mere unconsciousness, and that this unfathomable man, having completely uprooted his personal ego, sits before us as a living exemplar of what others may attain.

He sets before us, as the goal of life, the recovery into full consciousness of our own real nature, by ceasing to identify ourselves with this personal ego. We are like the lion which was reared from cubhood among sheep, and grew up to think itself a sheep too. Then one day, in the forest, it heard for the first time the roar of another lion. The hidden nature of the animal was awakened; it spontaneously roared back and in that moment it knew itself also to be a lion.

The gospel of all men who have attained the divine region of para-personal being must come to intuitive auditors like the first-heard roar of that lion. It is a call that {affects}⁷⁸ the mysterious depths of our hearts, and one which either troubles or delights us. For we can never be fully satisfied with the limitations, afflictions and ephemerality of human life today; none of us can honestly assert that he has found untainted enduring happiness in the frail and fear-filled essence of the personality. Even admitting a hypothetical case of a life adorned with every material luxury imaginable and unsullied by any grief or want (despite a very wide experience of the world I have yet to find such a case exemplified in fact), there still stands the dread figure Death to mock at all hopes for the future.

Sri Ramana Maharshi proclaims and re-proclaims the essential happiness which lies buried within human nature: it is not something which has to be created for it exists already, nor is it something to be attained either. Its very nature is Consciousness and therefore it is fully aware of itself, with an awareness that can neither begin nor end; it is eternal.

The Maharshi has frequently quoted of late that sentence in the Hebrew Bible where the Lord answers Moses, saying 'I AM THAT I AM.' He points out the importance of the statement since it is invariably printed in capital letters. He explains the meaning to be that the Absolute is the 'I AM' in each individual life, the very sense of Being itself. He makes it clear, in short, that the man who finds himself is the ray which returns to its divine source. If you could follow the 'I AM' in you to its hidden root, he says, you would ultimately enter a condition of impersonality, freedom,

⁷⁸ The word is cut out by a hole punch. Only "af-" is visible in the original.

timelessness, and utter peace. And finally he testifies that the august revelation stands at our very doorstep.

If the ego-entity disappears we need not assume that there is nothing at all left. Consciousness is left, Being is left, Life is left, Reality is left. The personality is but a shell which, once broken, reveals the valuable kernel inside. Why then should we fear to break it? Do we treasure nuts for their inedible outsides or for the tasty fruit they contain?

What are the Master's concrete proposals for the way of realisation?

He returns always to the sole factor which he places as pre-eminent, whether in theoretical philosophy or practical life - the knowledge of the Self. Hence the only proposal that he cares to make is one which goes directly to this goal: a mental analysis of the personal self which shall result in a discovery of the spiritual Self. Such a discovery can never arise by leaning over the laboratory table. Deep meditation upon the theme, Who Am I? Is essential.

The components of our personality are subjected to rigid analysis during the period of meditation. The body and its parts, organs and senses, is carefully examined in thought with a view to trace out whether the self resides in it and, by various arguments, it is seen that the sense of selfhood is not to be found there. It is then eliminated from the analysis and the emotions are subjected to a like examination. Here again their transiency and the implications of the naturally-uttered phrase, 'I feel,' indicate the self to be something apart. The faculties of the mind - imagination, ratiocination and perception - are likewise observed and analyzed away; the self is found not to be inherent in any of these functions. Then the intellect itself is critically cut to pieces and ascertained to be nothing but a succession of thoughts. Finally the conscious 'I' is traced to a single thought.

Out of the great stillness and blankness at the back of the mind, that thought of 'I' is the first arising of the personal ego within consciousness. Out of it has sprung the whole accumulation of other thoughts, which have created the notion of a personal being existing independently by itself. The entire personality has sprung up around this single thought-root. Uproot this primal thought and nothing but impersonal conscious Life will be left.

At the end of our mental analysis, therefore, the mind must be stilled, so far as possible, and a devotional semi-prayerful mood must be superimposed. That stillness out of which the 'I' has sprung should become the object of the devotion. The 'I' itself is pinned down and rendered inert. All one's attention should be focused upon the mysterious blankness behind it. It is at this point that the electrifying touch of a true guru becomes a potent help.

'PEACE THAT PASSETH INTELLECT'

(102-2) What will next happen? If the effort has been rightly made a kind of vacuum is created temporarily in consciousness, but Nature, abhorring a vacuum, swiftly re-adjusts matters. The banished thoughts are replaced by the divine Overself, which steps into the field of our awareness. It brings with it 'the peace that passeth understanding,' as St Paul phrased it: (A better translation would be 'the peace that passeth intellect.')

Once the leap-over is successfully accomplished, the true self thus reveals itself to the dumbfounded mind. We are then stricken into utter mental silence, for we realise that we stand now in a divine presence. It is an experience which cannot be surpassed. It will break all foolish illusions and dispel all erroneous dreams. Confusion and contradiction will go out with the night. Illumination will flood the dark places of the mind with glorious light. We shall know, and knowing, accept. For we shall discover that the heart of our Being is the heart of the Universe also. And it is good.

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A SOUTH INDIAN SAGE

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A SOUTH INDIAN SAGE

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Peace: Wisdom: Strength: What Devotees Get in Maharshi's Presence

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PEACE: WISDOM: STRENGTH

(105-1) UNIQUE PROPHET WITH SIMPLE TECHNIQUE

By Paul Brunton

Author of

A Search in Secret India, The Secret Path, A Search in Secret Egypt

(105-2) What comment can you offer upon middle-class Europeans who have travelled seven thousand miles or more to South India; who have sailed {across}⁷⁹ the seas not to earn more money but to spend it, not to criticise the "heathen" Hindu but to applaud him, not even to idle around the celebrated places trodden by tourists feet but to venture into the comfortless interior far from the beaten track? They can hope for no material and little intellectual gain; while all the time they have all the difficulties of an irksome climate to contend against. Yet they come - experienced men and educated women - and will indubitably continue to come on these unusual visits.

Why?

The magnet which draws them is a living one and dwells in human flesh. It is none other than a simple man, outwardly not much different in appearance from

⁷⁹ The word is cut out by a hole punch. Only "-s" is visible in the original.

hundreds of thousands of South Indian Brahmin-born people; a man unhonoured by degree or title, unknown to Government circles, and possessing no external social status. He holds no office, is penniless and possessionless. His mode of living is so primitive as to be scarcely likely to attract comfort-blinded Westerners.

That man is Sri Ramana Maharshi.

ALL WILL KNOW

(105-3) If the name conveys nothing to you at present – and I venture to predict that within a decade or less it will be famous throughout the Presidency and at least known throughout India – let me tell you that he is the sage of Arunachala, the one-time Hermit of the Hill of the Holy Beacon, and one of the last representatives of Hindustan's vanished race of noble Rishis.⁸⁰

He lives today in a peaceful ashram near the North Arcot town of Tiruvannamalai, situated at the foot of that strange hill which is described in the Skanda Puranam as the secret and sacred heart-centre of the God Shiva, a holy place and the spiritual hub of the world. But once he lived for years in a gloomy solitary cavern high up on that hill, plunging his mind ever deeper into profound concentration upon the divine element which hides in man. He sought for the real Self, THAT infinite Being which invisibly and intangibly supports the lives of all creatures. And he found it.

IN SILENT WORSHIP

(105-4) You may discover him today in a long tiled hall, giving audience to numerous Tamil visitors who flock to see him from nearly every station on the South Indian Railway. The poor and the rich, the illiterate and the educated, the silken-garbed and the rag-clothed – all prostrate themselves before him and then sit for a few minutes or a few hours with eyes closely watching his every movement. Scarcely a word ever passes between them, for the Maharshi is a taciturn man. They may drop into silent meditation, or sing Tamil hymns or just content themselves with watching him. And then, prostrating themselves once more, they touch their hands and depart.

What do these Hindu devotees and Western visitors find in the presence of the Maharshi who speaks so little and who has no earthly goods to bestow on them?

They find, first of all, PEACE. Coming from a worldly life that is harassed by the cares, troubles and misfortunes that none can escape, tortured often by economic woes, they feel their burdens slipping off their shoulders in his own care-free presence. Their racked minds are stilled and their unhappy hearts are soothed. Thus they return homewards with a serene memory that will recur again and again.

WISDOM AND STRENGTH

(105-5) They find, secondly, WISDOM. The Maharshi has conquered the deepest problems by his irresistible faculty of inward-turned concentration. In the result he knows the mystic laws which govern human life and directly perceives the spiritual

⁸⁰ "Rishees" in the original.

basis upon which our entire panorama of existence is stretched. He knows why men suffer, what is Truth, where is God and what we really are – whether mere moral creatures who perish into dust or divine entities capable of becoming gods ourselves. Intellectual minds receive hints from his uttered replies or written teachings which enable them to solve problems whose solutions have eluded them for years. All visitors, however, carry away some fragment of his wisdom, however tiny it be, culled from his words, awakened by his glance, or felt in his powerful mental atmosphere.

They find, thirdly, STRENGTH. Conscious of their own inborn frailties, they receive inspiration from the mere sight of this great soul, this true Mahatma. He has adventured far beyond the confines of moral limitations and has sacrificed, all that the world holds dear – for the sake of following Truth. He has therefore become embodied Power and sits before us as a Master of self and life. Some of that Power touches his devotees and disciples, affects them markedly, and sends them home with fresh hope and courage wherewith to cling to the lofty ideals which Truth demands from them.

A UNIQUE DISTINCTION

(105-6) Such is a glimpse of the Maharshi that I know, the revered Guru whom I was privileged to meet for the first time exactly five years ago. The world seldom recognises a prophet at his true worth during his own lifetime, but the Maharshi has been more fortunate;

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PEACE: WISDOM: STRENGTH

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PEACE: WISDOM: STRENGTH

(107-1) General opinion here seems to be that all of us in the West live in a {sort}⁸¹ of spiritual darkness; that knowledge of such things as Yoga is only just beginning to penetrate Europe and that a new book, however inferior, from the East (by which I find they mean only India,) is acclaimed immediately as a new revelation. Of course this is not really the case. We have had our Mystics, who have written largely on such subjects ever since Christ, though the special colour given to Religion by Indian thought, it is true, has been a more recent arrival in Europe, but even that has grown increasingly familiar during the last hundred years. I preface my remarks by this so that the reader will be the better able to understand, how, I, an ignorant westerner could have found my spiritual way to Tiruvannamalai and the great Saint whose earthly appearance is found there.

THE FIRST RAY

⁸¹ The word is cut off by a hole punch. Only "s-" is visible in the original.

(107-2) For many years I have been interested in Mysticism and it is now a long time since a friend of mine gave me a copy of the Bhagavad Gita, which has been my constant companion ever since. For a long time, too, I prayed for a Master as I felt I had reached such a point in my meditations that only the personal contact of a Guru could carry me further on my road. This I was unable to find in the West though I have no doubt they exist, though not perhaps for me. But I prayed in vain. There is a saying that, when a pupil is ready the Master will appear. I suppose that I was not yet ready.

One day, while I was at a reception in Budapest, the strong conviction suddenly came to me that I must go to India. At the same time I was unable to understand why this obvious decision had not come to me long ago. This happened in April 1934 and I planned that I would put my house in order and leave in the October of the following year. Though I had not the least idea where I should go except that I vaguely thought somewhere in Madras and thought that the Theosophists were the right people to consult I confidently relied on their help. They knew of no Teacher and could not see their way to facilitate my search by allowing me to make Adyar my headquarters while I pursued my quest, although I had become a member of the Society for the purpose of asking their help.

THE HAPPY CLUE

(107-3) Ten months after I⁸² had made this momentous decision to go to India I was still just as ignorant as to {why}⁸³ the destination as originally. In fact as I had not sufficient money to make an extensive tour of India, staying at her most expensive hotels, and even should I do so I saw no possible way in which to achieve my end if I did decide, I reluctantly came to the conclusion that my voyage must be postponed. It was too much groping in the dark. Perhaps my faith had been tried enough; for shortly after I had reached this decision I came across the information I required in the strangest manner.

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PEACE: WISDOM: STRENGTH

{Editor's note: the contents of this page are a continuation of the previous page, which was oversized and had to be scanned in multiple portions. As such, we have moved the text onto the previous page.}

Night over Angkor

109

NIGHT OVER ANGKOR⁸⁴

⁸² This refers to Major Chadwick; it is an excerpt from an article "How I Came to Bhagavan."

⁸³ The word is cut out by a hole punch in the original. Only "-y" is visible in the original.

⁸⁴ "The Modern Mystic

August 1939" and "by Paul Brunton

Author of A Search in Secret India, A Search in Secret Egypt, The Quest of the Overself, The Inner Reality, etc., etc.**" in the original.

(109-1)⁸⁵ After I write from the sun-stippled ruins of Angkor, in languorous French Indo-China, to an Indian friend, he carries the news of my work and whereabouts to a certain Indian yogi, whose name and power I have made favourably known in five continents. The mystic smiles tolerantly and observes: "Brunton always carries a small notebook and a couple of fountain pens in his pocket. He travels to these ancient sacred places like this Angkor and immediately writes down his inner impressions. Later he collects these notes together and puts them into print to interest people. That is his destiny."

It is a true remark, although many of these notes will not become embodied in print for many years because there is always a right hour of all such revelations as those which fate has forced upon me as an unwilling medium to an unbelieving age. So I dip now into my records of Asiatic research and present the following pieces.

The spiritual side of Angkor is almost unknown to Europe, but the highest Buddhist Lama who placed the key to its mysteries in my hands thereafter bade me give some hints of that side to waiting minds in the West.

I

(109-2) It happens that I am travelling from Japan to China, where certain esoteric contacts are to be established, some information to be acquired and a few ancient treasures are to pass out of that war-bitten land into my safe keeping. But China is not my ultimate destination, for I intend to hurry thence to the familiar surf-laden shores of Hindustan. There I foresee that the Rubicon of my spiritual life will have to be resolutely crossed and my boat burnt behind me; that the last tight-holding threads of an entire cycle of outer and inner life have to be cut and cut forever. The experience will not be a pleasant one, therefore I seek to get it over quickly.

I gaze over the ship's rail into the swirling sea, into those waters whose cold clasp is one day to give my wandering life its final peace, if the dark predictions of Oriental seers are to be credited. The propeller races around below the surface, vibrating the old hull. The sea charges on the steamer as fiercely as a sullen and resentful beast, but the vessel bears the attack with unflinching if groaning patience.

Imagine my surprise when a young well-dressed Siamese man who had come on board at Kobe presents himself at my side and, before the first lengthy conversation has ended, hands me a letter and bids me proceed to Bangkok where further orders await me. I realise in a flash that destiny has shown its usual sudden hand in my affairs. Thus my exit from danger-filled China is followed by my arrival, not in India but in a canal-filled Bangkok.

There, as I have been foretold, His Holiness the Supreme Priest of Siam, aged ruler of 200,000 monks, receives me most graciously in his monastery, presents me with a signed and sealed certificate for past services rendered, entrusts me with a further spiritual mission, and after a few more meetings sends me away with the gift of a heavy centuries-old bronze Buddha taken from his private sanctuary.

"1" was inserted at the top of the page by hand.

⁸⁵ The paras on this page are partly a duplicate of the paras on page 282.

I continue my usual researches in Siam whilst awaiting the promised orders. Before long they come, in the most unexpected of places and at the most untimely of hours. It is midnight. A black starless sky winds a mournful shroud around the entire landscape. In a lofty candle-lit room, a solitary building surrounded by deserted fields, the message is delivered to me phrased in imperative tones. Meanwhile the unpleasant odour of roasting human flesh assails my nostrils from a nearby primitive crematorium.

A tall grey-bearded Buddhist monk sits less than a yard away from me, with his young disciple on the right. The old man is not a Siamese. He has been resident in the country for seven years, but received his initiation into the holy order forty odd years ago in Mongolia. His powerful voice resounds with a strength which brooks no opposition. He puts his curious little rosary, with a minute picture of the Buddha cunningly hidden inside one of its yellow wooden beads, into my jacket pocket and then commands me to journey to the ruins of the lost civilisation of Angkor!

The following day I begin my travels anew. Once the French Indo-China border is crossed, the autocar speeds for hours across flat colourless country until at last it follows a road cut through dense entangled forest. Monkeys leap from branch to branch and scowl irritably at our intrusion. Then night falls, the birds cease their short cries, the jackals end their long howls, the cicadae drop their brittle chirping and the foxes call no more to their cubs. All-embracing silence entombs the jungle's diurnal noises.

The quietude lengthens. In this darkness the wheels must run more slowly. And after the moon's arc rises triumphantly in the sky and countless stars have appeared to keep it company there breaks suddenly upon my straining eyes the shadowy silhouettes of prodigiously-tall towered buildings. Their heads top the forest trees abruptly and are spread out over a wide area.

The lonely jungle road leads for miles through uninhabited and uncleared tracts, and then without warning skirts these vast deserted monuments of a dead city that once held a million living men and women. The whole scene grips my fascinated attention and involuntarily I apply the brakes and descend from the car.

I have reached the last relics of the lost civilisation of the Khmers and stand on the mysterious ground of Angkor!

II

(109-3) In the cooler hours that immediately follow dawn, I begin exploration of these vast ruins which lay forgotten in their hidden lair amongst virgin vegetation until not much more than two generations ago. Then they were discovered accidentally, by Mouhot, the French naturalist-hunter, whilst collecting specimens of tigers, leopards and apes for scientific purposes. Even so it was not till the opening years of the twentieth century⁸⁶

^A See The Modern Mystic's Bookshelf, page iii

⁸⁶ This para is continued on page 111.

⁸⁷ This page is a black and white picture of the Temple of Bayon.

(110-1) ANGKOR: The Temple of Bayon

111

NIGHT OVER ANGKOR⁸⁸

(111-1)⁸⁹ that European hunters of lost Asiatic culture were able to set to work in real earnest. They dug out of their tombs in the soft red North Cambodian soil these dulled architectural gems which had been waiting for time and man to disinter them.

I turn my feet towards one of the oldest relics of Angkor, towards the most original and most artistic of all the hundreds of its still-standing monuments. Where the four main roads of the vanished town converged on a common centre, there stood and still stands the amazing temple of Bayon. Where on this world's surface exists another precisely like it?

Grim, grotesque, fantastic, monstrous ultra-primitive, benign, or beatific – each onlooker interprets at his will and carries away a different impression according to his taste, temperament and knowledge. For the first eye-arresting features of the Bayon are four titanic heads which are repeatedly carved on every one of the fifty domed towers which themselves rise about fifty feet into the air above the corridors they crown, except the central summit which is nearly one hundred feet higher still. Each of the four giant's faces varies but slightly from the other in its tremendously powerful expression.

The solemn eyes are half closed and gaze vaguely down at the surrounding scenes. The lids droop precisely to the same degree as the lids of the eyes of those yellow Chinese mystics with whom I sat in meditation but a month ago, their unseeing but unshut narrow slits holding provocatively fascinating mystery for the Occidental beholder.

The grandiose features are heavy, the full cheeks and thick lips, the large flat semi-negroid nose belong to a type of race which is neither Mongol nor Aryan but, to my mind, definitely Dravidian. The general effect of these domes with unfamiliar human visages is to bring me back again to Egypt, to set me down once more within the sandy precinct of the colourful Sphinx.

Forest, brush and creeper still half hold the Bayon in the grasp. I enter the sacred building through the eastern gate. As in so many other important Oriental temples, the side which greets the dawning sun is the most honoured; so here the entrance is wider, the stone steps more numerous, and a specially decorative setting of lion-guards and serpent-balustrades greets the visitor. The sandstone lions half-squat on their hind legs angrily and show their teeth. They are placed here – as were those other lions which I saw so often at the porch of the Temple of Dair-El-Bahari, in Upper Egypt – to protect the structure from evil spirits by some priestly magically-invested power. The monstrous serpents assist them in this work, as do the serpents painted on the walls in so many of the dark Tombs of Luxor. I wander warily through its inner galleries and disorderly cloisters, climbing them here and descending them there, moving over

⁸⁸ "2" was inserted at the top of the page by hand.

⁸⁹ The paras on this page follow the paras on page 109.

broken stones and ruined floors and thickly tangled weeds.

Carvings are everywhere, on pillars, walls and porticoes. Life-like pictures represent the home, market-place, battlefield and sports ground; the pleasures and histories of kings and commoners – only the world of ordinary everyday life of a people whose close-cropped hair and distinctive features label them as Khmers. That there is a definite plan behind this arrangement of themes becomes clear when I ascend to the second storey, where the scenes change their character and unroll as beautiful tableaux of religious story and mythical incident from the sacred Hindu scriptures.

[Seven]⁹⁰ hundred years ago the Khmer sculptors stood before these sandstone blocks with mallet and chisel and incised hundreds of panels with these patterns which cover nearly every inch of the Bayon's surface. A little sympathetic study enables me to appreciate fully this primitive perfection of carving.

Thus the physical ascension to a higher platform clearly symbolises the ascension of heart and thought from material worldly interest to otherworldly religious emotion. I find an interesting bas-relief on a wall whose lower panel depicts some thin Brahmin yogis practising their system of mind control in the solitude of a dense forest.

A further flight of worn steps brings me to the third and highest terrace which is lined with little sanctuaries and filled with scores of squeaking bats. I penetrate this labyrinth of dim corridors and triangular chapels until a door admits me into a large oval room. It is austere empty and mysteriously gloomy. For it is "the holy of holies," the most important sanctuary in the entire structure of the Bayon.

I place my shining pocket torch on the floor and squat amid the Indo-Chinese dust which lies thickly heaped all around. My mind, trained to work by intuitive as much as ratiocinative processes, leaps suddenly to a particular perception like a jungle tiger on a long-awaited prey. There is all the magnificent exhilaration, the intellectual intoxication which is born when the mind alights upon a newly-found truth. I know that subsequent examination, whether rationally scientific or clairvoyantly psychic, will but verify this truth, although it may require weeks where the intuitive faculty requires but a single second.

For I slip back in memory to the massive pile of the mighty Egyptian Pyramid, whose invisible malignant guards I had once braved throughout an entire night and whose unforgettable

(continued from the previous page) gigantic mask-like faces which adorn each of the other domes as well as the central cupola itself, totalling two hundred heads and altogether appearing like an assembly of the gods. The men who conceived and carved these half-smiling, half-ironic visages manage to convey the atmosphere of sphinx-like remoteness which is undoubtedly their aim. Yet who dwells behind these cold masks? What do they mean? Archaeologists at different dates have named them Siva, Brahma, Lokesvara and Buddha. All these have been honoured or worshipped in ancient

⁹⁰ PB himself changed "Six" to "Seven" by hand.

⁹¹ "4" was inserted at the top of the page by hand.

Cambodia by turns and the attribution is therefore not incorrect. But Western archaeologists rarely know more than the external rites, names and dogmas of religion at its most orthodox; they ignore or despise its innermost secrets and hidden history. Yet the latter are known by every Oriental, not rendered indifferent to his own culture by modern education, to have had a previously-guarded existence.

Once again my mind flashes back to Egypt and to her sacred scripture, the *Book of the Dead*, wherein the soul during his ascension to the most sacred condition perceives the four points of solstice and equinox. For divine beings are seated in front of these cardinal points. The soul prays to them: "*O ye who send forth truth to the universe...*" The Ritual then declares that he is freed from his sins "after he has seen the face of the gods." Grateful and happy, he thanks these heavenly beings.

Not only in Egypt but in every ancient land where I have sought truth and studied her history has this strange tradition of the four gods who watch the guide the spiritual life of mankind appeared. The Chinese still adorn the vestibules of many temples with tall coloured effigies of "the four Protectors." The Hindus still tell me of "the four celestial Maharajahs" who guard the Tree of Higher Knowledge. The few Mexicans who still secretly cherish their pagan tradition hold "the four Holy Spirits" in the highest esteem.

Now I remember the last words of the native Cambodian legend which came previously to memory: "The invisible genii built this temple, the Bayon, and over it erected the towers *with heads made in their own image.*"

The Bayon is an inheritance from a people whose initiated priests knew the tradition of the Sacred Four. It is therefore their masterpiece and unique among the monuments of the Khmers. Therefore too they paid it an honour denied to other temples. For they covered the head of its central four-faced dome in precisely the same manner that the prehistoric Egyptians once covered the heads of their own chief sanctuaries of the Mysteries, the Pyramid and Sphinx, that is, with solid gold!

III

(112-1) The Angkor sky is tinted a resplendent sapphire blue the while my days pass in continuous research beneath this beautiful canopy. Whenever I wander the stone ruins mingle with a network of long banyan-tree branches or of liana-creepers which meander and twine themselves into patterns of dark-green decoration for the grey walls and doorways. Here are twelve little laterite towers without windows or doors set along one side of the great grassy promenade, the Veahl, where the men and women of Angkor met to walk and talk both before and after the heat of the day. There, on a man-made hill is the battered and broken fragment of the main porch of a thousand-year-old pyramidal house of God - the Baphuon, which comes second in importance to the Bayon and therefore received much of the best efforts of the Khmer artists and architects. Tchou-Ta-Kwan, the Chinese scholar, visited Angkor during the thirteenth century and mentions the Baphuon in his diary as providing one of the most impressive views in the city. But fate and time brought medieval invading troops from east and west, from Annam and Siam, who brutalised by the passions of war, desecrated the flower-filled gardens of its tranquil courts, and dismembered the stone blocks of its rising tiers and turrets. Yet enough of its charm remains to attract me inside.

This four-hundred feet long building is simpler than the Bayon and similar in possessing three lofty storeys, several towers and a central dome covering the chief sanctuary. But the motif of the faces of four gods is entirely absent here. I climb the ancient stone steps and make my passage along a terrace which leads to a broken gallery pathetically lined with leaning and half-tumbled columns. Little yellow lizards with long tails stuck upright in the air fix their quaint gaze at me. Blue and gold coloured butterflies cross and re-cross the deserted thresholds. Vegetation has forced its way into the building, but its invasion now holds firmly together what the earlier human invaders had endeavoured to tear apart. Giant torturous banyan and fig trees imprison floors and wall and terraces – even the summits of half-tottering towers – in their monstrously thick roots and creeping branches of white wood. Such is their tremendous strength and age that these tentacles cannot be pulled away and they appear to have embedded themselves in the very stones.

Thus both man and Nature have tried to squeeze and crush the body of the Baphuon like serpents attacking a defenceless beast. They have maimed it but the soul is still untouched, the majestic atmosphere remains, the superb carvings of the sacred epic of Rama, the divine avatar, done in low relief on plain panels are unforgettable, whilst inside the austere holy of holies the haunting echo of its best days withdraws my mind into a state of unearthly felicity.

Yet I leave the Baphuon with the depressing memory of that terribly significant verse penned by the poetic Tent-Maker of Naishapur:

“They say the Lion and the
Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshed
gloried and drunk deep;
And Bahram, that great
Hunter –
The Wild Ass stamps o’er
his Head,
But cannot break his Sleep!”

As if to impress the lesson of these lines I find the adjoining ruins to be those of the vast royal palace, which is enclosed within a⁹²

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(113-1) Initiation brought a bitter aftermath of misfortunes along with its dramatic opening of the pages of the Book of Death. The King’s Chamber, which constitutes the supreme sanctuary of the Pyramid, is placed architecturally highest, and is as ascetically free from image or ornament and as forbiddingly deprived of light as this holy of holies of the Khmer people, which was likewise the highest of the Bayon’s chambers. Both rooms are thus well fitted for the difficult interiorisation of attention and rapt concentration of thought which are as superior to religious life as the latter is superior to mere animal life. Then again just as the King’s Chamber stands exactly beneath the

⁹² This para is continued on page 115.

apex of the Pyramid, so the room in which I sit has been built exactly beneath the summit, the huge central domed tower which out-tops all the other towers of the Bayon. Finally I find that each storey of the latter structure decreases in length and breadth as it increases in height, thus roughly following a pyramidal plan. It is really an ornate Pyramid in three lofty stages crowned with domes.

The most ancient legends of Egypt have linked the Great Pyramid's origin with a race of vanished foreign builders who were instructed and guided in their efforts by invisible spiritual beings. Similar legends haunt the history of this unique Asiatic monument. For the native chronicle, still held in faith by the Cambodians of today, repeats the bold statement: "The invisible genii built this temple, the Bayon, and made {it}⁹³ their abode."

The highest purpose of the Pyramid was carried out in the darkness of the King's Chamber; the highest purpose of the Bayon was fulfilled in the room which surrounds {me.}⁹⁴ And that was none other than initiation into the sacred Mysteries which represented the grandest knowledge of the ancient world.

Such initiations witnessed the transmission of both power and knowledge to sensitive candidates by the High Priest of the land. They have vanished today, except from Tibet. Their purpose varied according to the grade assigned to the candidate, but in every case they brought him within grasp of a diviner existence. The hierophant became but the selfless vehicle of the Universal Mind during these secret rites. The disciple, who was previously prepared for the experience through a long training, had to concentrate keenly until he was either lost in trance or else telepathically receptive to the hierophant's silent instruction. What was learned during initiation constituted the most valuable part of a man's education. Even time itself can never antiquate the spiritual antiquities of these Mysteries. They are time-conquering because they contain eternal truths. They arise out of the enduring reality behind human life, and not out of mere momentary phantasy. Hence they can never become out of date, as the materialistic historian of our epoch arrogantly assumes.

I wander out of the sanctuary through a door which opens on a high-vaulted passage and proceed thence through ante-chambers and porches till I find the friendly light in a carved stone window. Here I stand for a while to survey the forest and jungle remnants of the city alone is about sixteen miles in length. A medieval Imperial Chinese envoy to the Cambodian Court estimates the population of the town as being not less than one million inhabitants. Caesar's Rome was smaller and less populous. The lightly-built wood, grass and mud cottages of the common herd have disappeared into dust today, under the attack of strong winds, rains and sun, but I see numerous relics of larger stone buildings profusely piled - palaces, temples, royal terraces and monasteries - which have withstood the action of time since the rest of the town was abandoned to the invasion of thick forest trees and thorny jungle bushes. Angkor is now a dead city and tropical torpor holds these half-buried monuments in its paralysing arms.

I make my passage around the picturesque terraces and suddenly find myself at another opening, confronted again by the most marked feature of the Bayon - the four

⁹³ The word is entirely cut off by the left margin.

⁹⁴ The word is cut off by the left margin. Only "-e" is visible in the original.

(115-1)⁹⁷ wall two thousand feet long. Its one-time luxury is now mocked by the few cows and buffaloes which wander lazily to feed on the grass that grows around its fallen stones. Almond-eyed Tcheou-Ta-Kwan saw window frames made of solid gold when he sat in the palace audience chamber nearly seven hundred years ago, but I, alas ! perceive only crumbling grey walls and aimless wandering ghosts.

I have not yet seen the half of the ruined Khmer capital, when I return in the evening to ponder over the sight of its largest temple, the Wat, so large that the enclosing wall is nearly two and a half miles in perimeter. The reign of the sun has ended; the reign of the moon has begun. The first soft starlight twinkles down upon stone and vegetation alike.

Night has fallen over Angkor. Here and there the walls are ominously cracked; mutilated statues of the Ramayana's gods strew the ground; lichen and creeper lace themselves around the panels of carved goddesses; thorns flourish thickly around me as advance-guards of the invading jungle; lizards crawl blasphemously over the calm faces of fallen Buddhas; bats coat the holy shrines with their excrement; gone are the proud glories of the Khmers; but the sacred truths taught by sage and priest of Angkor still remain through their lips are dumb and their bodies annihilated by time. Highest and holiest of these verities is that which was whispered in the penetralia of the Mysteries, that which is most needed by blinded man today:

"THE SOUL OF ALL IS ONE"

(To be continued)

A Wanderer in Angkor

(116-1) I FOLLOW A ROUGH RED-EARTHED narrow footpath through the thick jungle, disturbing the little creatures which make their home in the bush. The torturous way disappears at places and it is the easiest thing in the world to lose oneself entirely in this dense undergrowth where there are no landmarks. Two hours' rambling are needed to bring in sight a most important Buddhist relic of the lost Hindu-Buddhist civilisation of Cambodia. With what pleasure do I greet the great paved platform,

⁹⁵ Blank page

⁹⁶ "5" was inserted at the top of the page by hand.

⁹⁷ This para is a continuation of the paras on page 112.

⁹⁸ "September 1939

The Modern Mystic" and "(Continued from the August number) in the original.

"6" was inserted at the top of the page by hand.

shaped like a gigantic fallen cross, which suddenly thrusts itself up amongst all this tangled forest of slender areca-palms, dark banana trees and feathered coco-groves whose foliage hems me in like an encircling wall!

A Sandstone stela still remains to tell unwittingly the mournful story of life's impermanence. It is carved with lengthy inscriptions which cover each of the four sides in the usual style of the country. Two languages are used, the one Sanskrit and the other, old Khmer. It bears a thousand-year-old date and narrates the foundation by King Yasovarman of a Buddhist monastery which stood upon this platform. The refuge was clearly a wooden and brick structure for nothing at all remains today; the monastic hall has crumbled into dust, the monks' houses have vanished and their little chapel is as dead as themselves.

Yet one thing was not made of such perishable stuff and has therefore lived to appear to modern gaze. It is an enormous isolated statue of the teacher Gautama,⁹⁹ well preserved and calmly defiant of the test of time. Some pious living monks of the neighbourhood have built a tiled roof to protect the enduring granite of their Master's head, but their act seems more of a gesture of reverence than one of need.

The once-worshipped image of the Buddha of Tep Pranam is beautiful even in its desertion, even after the wreck and death of the monastery which surrounded it. I know that I am in the presence of an art-work of ineffable charm.

The relic gazes down without reproach at the few who come to witness its pathetic loneliness. It expects nothing from men and women, though men and women still expect much from it. Do not occasional pilgrims still find their way across the steaming jungles and forests of Indo-China to tremble to the ground at its feet and beg for strength, wisdom, peace, children, health, truth or fortune - things which we poor humans need to make us happy? Do they not still piously place a few wild jasmines or some fragrant tuberose or a handful of freshly-gathered lovely lotuses on its ornately carved throne?

For the Mongolian mind looks upon important images of the Buddha as being invested with special spiritual power. The belief is not without its justification. For when the Chinese first dedicate such a figure a reverential magical rite called "Kai kuang" is performed. This means "opening the light" and is accompanied by the actual cutting open of the pupils in the image's eyes. With this act some fragment of the Buddha's magnetism is thought to have entered the figure. Ever idol which has been properly prepared by initiated lamas is therefore regarded as being enveloped with an invisible aura of authentic power.

The bright glare of the sun dazzles my pupils as I look upward at the fine lineaments of the attractive face which confronts me. The characteristically long lobes of its ears are symbolic; thus they hear the whole world's anguished cries. The half-open eyes which stare so abstractedly upon this mundane existence convey a peculiar sensation to my mind. Something seems to *live* within them, some archaic spirit who has attained to the apogee of human wisdom, and who now dwells immersed in transcendence, appears to hide behind the serene curtain of those lids.

The woolly curls of hair are arranged, according to the stiff conventional fashion, in regular rows all over the Buddha's head. The cotton monk's robe hangs tightly and

⁹⁹ "Gotama" in the original.

assumes the mould of the body's lines. The mild gently-expressive stone lips speak to me silently with a message that comes like an unexpected voice out of the Infinite. The legs are crossed upon a lotus-shaped throne. The left palm is placed on the folded knees, but the fingers of the right hand point downwards, for Gautama is thus symbolically taking the whole earth as a witness that Nirvana has truly been

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(continued from the previous page) attained, that the baffling mystery of the finite ego has been solved.

I squat on a moss-grown flagstone before the Buddha, my mind lulled into a half-reverie, my nostrils sensing the weird scent of the jungle close at hand. Timid squirrels with bushy tails scurry up and down the trees, a parakeet is perched on the end of a bough, other birds perch between the gables of the modern roof and whistle gaily over the statue's head or swoop down to its feet. It has been sunk in perpetual dream through the centuries, the whistling birds and humming mosquitoes unheard, its splendours gone, and the great gilded altars as though they never were.

Somehow its peace is inviolate. By its size alone the benign figure dominates the forest clearing, where it lies unfettered by buildings, but it dominates my soul by its silent communication of self-sovereignty, of world-wide compassion, and of luminous understanding. All the immemorial wisdom of old Asia is gathered within that graven head, held behind those half-lowered eyes and compressed into this beatific smile. I am reminded of that still more gigantic figure, the colossal golden-eyed Daibutsu, the "Buddha of Infinite Light" at Kamakura, set in the most spiritually magnetised garden in Japan, where I fell into a trance of unforgettable ecstasy whence none could bring me back from noon till eve.

II

(117-1) Dawn brings a sky of purest blue. At the forest's edge both bird and insect chant in delirious joy at the sun's arrival. Butterflies with enormous wings but frail bodies flutter gaily among the wild flowers. I gaze upward at five tremendous domed towers which point from the base earth through the warm windless air to high heaven and which announce abruptly the neighbourhood of the Wat, Angkor's largest and most impressive monument. Even the portion which is visible at this distance above its screen of lofty palm trees seems complacently satisfied with its own grandeur and possesses the "pyramidal pride" of Byron's lines.

I cross an old paved causeway which spans an immensely deep moat that surrounds the leviathan structure of the entire temple, and thus turns it into an island. The moat is nearly four miles long and broader than any which ever encircled feudal castle in the West. The raised causeway is long too, no less than seven hundred feet. It is the only approach to the forecourt which presents a broad flight of steps. On each side a gigantic stone cobra rears a sevenfold head, like the sentinel that it symbolically

¹⁰⁰ "7" was inserted at the top of the page by hand.

is, whilst other serpents frame a balustrade for the front portion with their bodies.

I plunge into a jungle of stonework and walk rapidly around for more than an hour merely to take bearings and form a rough mental picture of the place. The Wat must be the heaviest stone building set up on our planet's surface after the Egyptian Pyramid and before the skyscraper era began. It is a veritable artificial hill. The mind is arrested by the strange architectural plan which seeks to impose all its formidable massiveness on the beholder at a single glance. For here are ten acres of ground covered with a colossal building, galleries; chambers and courts sheath the central pile which is arranged by cleverly graded perspectives to assume the general outline of a truncated *pyramid* adorned by domes.

As at the Pyramid the enormous blocks are put together with joints of paper-thin fineness and fitted with the same absolute precision. As at the Pyramid the modern beholder must wonder gapingly how such intimidating blocks were brought here and hauled into position by the primitive appliances then available. For several of the smooth delicately-grained sandstones and limonites which I see must weigh six tons each and I know that there are no quarries less than twenty miles distant. As at the Pyramid the square base is brought by successive terraces to a tapering summit. Here, however, the terraces as they recede inwards are set with surrounding courts to rise in and above the last, whilst they increase in proportionate height as they ascend farther from the ground. This pyramidal rise imparts an aspiring sublimity to the Wat. "What archaeologist will dare to assert that the same hand which planned the Pyramids of Egypt, Karnak, and the thousand ruins now crumbling to oblivion on the sandy banks of the Nile, did not erect the monumental Nagkon^A -Wat of Cambodia," wrote Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*.

Why is the Pyramid, a *four-sided figure*, the most mysterious and most ancient monument-form to be found in either the western or eastern hemispheres? Hitherto nobody has revealed its connection with the equally most ancient and most mysterious esoteric doctrine - that of "the Sacred Four."

I stand again at the frontal portico, whence a long avenue of grey columns stretches to the right and left, enclosing a dim corridor and a darker wall. I pass under the pediment and project a light upon the carvings of men, beasts, and gods which ornament the wall in crowds. Here are fragments¹⁰¹

^A Originally named with the Sanskrit "Nagaram," i.e., "City," by the Indian priests. The Khmers twisted the pronunciation to Nagkon. The word degenerated still further until it became our modern Angkor. — PB

¹⁰¹ This para continues on page 119.

¹⁰² Void page: an unrelated article.

¹⁰³ "8" was inserted at the top of the page by hand.

(continued from the previous page) of the old Indian epics unrolled as storied tableaux whilst I walk. They run in a continuous frieze, not in panels, and bear the appearance of time-blackened tapestry. And they run for not less than half a mile around the temple. Valmiki's verse is re-inscribed here as a wordless mural and appears in a tumultuous profusion of chiselled pictures, once painted and gilded but now bereft of all original colouring. The Mahabharata and the Harivamsa are here too. I observe the familiar faces of ancient gods – Yama and Shiva¹⁰⁴ and Surya and Vishnu.

I rise up two staircases to an altitude of at least a hundred feet in the air. Carved doorways, roofed galleries and little side-chapels flank the court. To approach the edge is to be rewarded by an ample view of the environing countryside. I gaze down; all around there stretches the apparent infinitude of the green Cambodian forest which brushes the very walls of the temple, as the enveloping sand once brushed the very face of the buried Sphinx. Here an ape swings from branch to branch, disturbed the nested kites and minahs; there a gleam of distant water betrays the Nile of Cambodia, the river Mekong, which with its tributaries and lakes, supported Khmer life and soil with its annual overflow. But as I return and pace the uneven stone floor I am struck by the Quaker-like plainness of supporting pillar and surrounding wall; and as I advance through a profoundly shadowy corridor, as my eyes grow accustomed to the darkness, I search for and find at last at its farthest end the penumbral shrine, the holy of holies of Angkor Wat, placed as in all Khmer-built fanes in the precise centre of the topmost tier. Over its head rears the sumptuously ornamented central cupola, two hundred feet high and shaped like a delicate lotus bud. The Chinese envoy who visited Angkor more than seven hundred years ago, found the tower covered with gold and noticed that its gleaming height could be seen from any point in town.

Here and there I perceive the charred ends of joss-sticks, which have been stuck between the joints of paving stones in the floor. I am not alone. A pious gentle-faced bonze appears within the circle of light cast by my torch, chanting some half-whispered words before glowing incense sticks and a few flowers thrown around the statue. He seems simple, a man of primitive mentality, I doubt whether he can comprehend the profound significances of his Master's doctrine, but I do not doubt the fervency of his prayers nor the depth of his faith.

I show him my own rosary and let him marvel at the tiny Buddha-picture hidden within one of the beads. We soon fall into conversation. His voice drops back to a whisper as he begins to narrate a strange story connected with this holy of holies. "Once an Indian king wanted to send a priceless gift to the great Genghis¹⁰⁵ Khan {of}¹⁰⁶ China. So he chose a small Buddha-image, one of his greatest treasures. It was carved out of a flawless emerald. Hundreds of years earlier the Buddhist Arhat Nagasena^A had the image made under his orders and then bestowed his power upon it. Much mystic virtue was given it. It became famous. The Emerald Buddha passed through the dangers of war and fire. It was brought to Ceylon. Thirteen hundred years ago exactly to the present year it was sent to the Great Emperor with an escort of attendant priests and a set of the Buddhist scriptures. But the convoy was wrecked in the China Sea off the Cambodian coast. The figure was brought to the king of the Khmers who took the

¹⁰⁴ "Siva" in the original.

¹⁰⁵ "Genghiz" in the original.

¹⁰⁶ The word is cut off by the right margin in the original.

event as a sign and thenceforth did much to make Buddhism flourish in his kingdom. From that time too the Cambodian worldly power began to triumph, and its wealth to increase. After the building of the Wat the Emerald Buddha was enthroned in this shrine which you now behold. It had been among us for nearly seven hundred years; our capital had risen to the height of luxury; much gold had enriched our rulers and warriors but weakened their fibre; then Karma struck down our empire. The Thai people of Siam attacked

^A Nagasena's name is known to the West through his discussions on Buddhism with Menander, King of the Ionians. — PB

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(continued from the previous page) mercilessly in large numbers, devastated the country and broke into Angkor. Our king hastily walled up the four doors of the shrine, hoping to protect the image. The entire population fled to the south. But its whereabouts was guessed and the walls re-opened. The Thais carried it away in triumph. Thereafter our land never recovered and sank into a pitiful state."

The old monk showed me the four openings which formerly surrounded the innermost cubicle but which were later walled up under such tragic circumstances. There comes to my mind a picture of the palace at Bangkok. I see the gorgeously beautiful royal temple. Set on an ornate lofty throne, which is heavy with gold and studded with gems, there rests a green stone figure of the Buddha. It is the mascot of Siam, the power-talisman behind the country's fortunes, and above all — so a member of the Government assures me — the precious-guarded protector of her political independence in a land-hungry world. At the request of my monk-companions, I take part in a rite of homage to the figure — to receive, mayhap, a shadow of its protective influence. For it is the famous Emerald Buddha, now jealously marked by Japanese,¹⁰⁸ Chinese and Hindus, not to speak of treasure-hunting white men. But sentries with bayoneted rifles perpetually confront the temple door.

III

(120-1) Other wanderings on other days bring me to many ruins which lie within and beyond Angkor. Hundreds of miles away there still remain imprisoned in jungle, which spreads with such swift and extraordinary abundance, many scattered ruins of this lost Khmer world. But I must keep my pen within bounds of Angkor and tell briefly of one more place that impresses itself upon memory, of Pre Rup, a grandiose temple topped by a terraced pyramid and stretched on an elaborate base four hundred feet long. A long flight of wide steps intimidate me with their steepness, but once climbed I stroll between carved goddesses into a shrine of the pyramid. A couple of lacquered Buddhas fit with some uneasiness into this Brahmanically-styled fane. The sun, which gleams so weakly near the forest-filled horizon, has passed eleven hundred

¹⁰⁷ "9" was inserted at the top of the page by hand.

¹⁰⁸ "Japs" in the original.

times around the zodiacal circle since Pre Rup was planned.

The view around is admirable and demands my immediate homage, but sight of an unusual little structure resting on a paved platform within the east portal sends me scurrying down the steps again. A close examination confirms the first thought. It is a rectangular sarcophagus, which save for a double line of reeded ornament running around the external face appears to be strangely like the famed sarcophagus which has rested for thousands of years inside the King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid. A grooved edge at the top indicates where a lid once fitted the stone box. Common folklore calls it a crematorium and imagine the bodies of aristocratic dead being once brought here for burning. But a French archaeologist placed in charge of the Angkor ruins confesses that this seems mere myth and is certainly unhistorical. However he has no other explanation to advance.

The key to the problem can be quickly found. It is the symbolic vessel of resurrection. In this coffin-like box there was placed the body of a chosen candidate for initiation into the Grand Mysteries, - an institution belonging not only to Cambodian Faith but also to the chief pagan religions. He was plunged through the power transmitted by his hierophant into a profound trance, the "yoga-nidra" or yoga-sleep of the Hindus. From this he arose at dawn psychologically changed, emotionally calmer, and spiritually "aware."

The temporary tomb symbolised death or end of the unenlightened period of the candidate's life. Henceforth he bore on his soul the fundamental imprint of esoteric knowledge. Secluded caves, underground crypts, and hidden grottoes served the same purpose as these sarcophagi guarded behind locked doors. Buddha initiated his closest disciple in the Saptaparni¹⁰⁹ cave near Mount Baibhar, and the methods of Druid high priests were not dissimilar.

With the decay and final disappearance of this system of initiation, these sarcophagi fell into disuse until priests appropriated them again for use as royal burial graves or as aristocratic crematoriums. Hence arose the later legends of the Pyramid being a Pharaoh's tomb and of the Pre Rup being a burning place for the dead.

A few broken standing columns alone remain of the sanctuary in which the sarcophagus was confined and guarded. The queer Khmer roof, famed for its tortuous jutting horned cornices set at odd angles, has vanished and the centuries of mystic rites with it. I leave through a doorway fringed with creepers and bearded with moss. The air of neglected loneliness lies pathetically on this place, now abandoned to snakes which hide in dark holes and centipedes which creep under the mossy stones.

Such is the city of ruins which I found in Northern Cambodia; but seven centuries ago the capital of a great empire and now silhouetted on the nightly horizon of tigers when they emerge from their diurnal sleep.

Mr. Brunton will write next month on "The Secret Doctrine of the Khmers."¹¹⁰

(120-2) Our Point of View - (continued from page 311)

and institutions. We expect the institutions to criticise us, - why not? And we exercise our right to show cause for our own existence by replying to them. We have

¹⁰⁹ "Saptaparna" in the original. - TJS '20

¹¹⁰ The rest of the page is the end of an unrelated article on page 188.

had letters from time to time advising us to be “constructive” in our criticism. What nonsense is this? How on earth can any kind of criticism be constructive? It is possible to disagree either in whole or in part, but any attempt to split hairs is sheer hypocrisy. All that we must be careful to do is to recognise the indisputable right of all men and institutions to have their say equally with us. Dogmatism even is good and healthy; the evils are fanaticism, bigotry and intolerance. How often has the dogmatic man by virtue of his dogmatism cleared away the cobwebs from his own mind to be illumined by the fact that for most of the time he was really talking to himself?

The Editor

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A WANDERER IN ANGKOR¹¹¹

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A WANDERER IN ANGKOR

The Secret Doctrine of the Khmers

123

THE SECRET DOCTRINE OF THE KHMERS¹¹³

(123-1) I leave the thorny jungle and mount a frail bamboo ladder. The few wooden steps lead to a large grass-roofed hut. The latter is built on timber piles some six feet from the ground – a mode of domestic architecture which prevails throughout the interior villages of Cambodia. In the regions where a feeble effort to cultivate the land is made with the help of the River Mekong, both dwellings and dwellers would be overwhelmed by the great annual floods were it not for this elevated style of living. And in the large forest tracts it is equally efficacious as a protection against fierce tigers, which do not hesitate to claw their way into the lightly built huts.

This little clearing amidst thick trees and undergrowth was made by monks who have lately returned – after hundreds of years’ absence – to settle near the shadow of the Wat, the great temple of Angkor. They have put up a tiny village and today, after waiting for the oppressive heat of the afternoon sun to abate, I enter it as their guest.

The bonzes squat smilingly around the floor, their eyes narrow as slits, their Mongoloid cheek-bones set high, their slim short bodies wrapped tightly in cheerful yellow cloth. Some hold fans in their small hands, while others bend their shaven heads over palm-leaf books. Copper spittoons are placed here and there for their relief, because the moist [climate]¹¹⁴ creates asthmatic tendencies. A wild-looking man approaches me and mutters something unintelligible. Long ago he gave himself the title of “King of Angkor” and now everyone calls him by the name in good-humoured derision. His mind is half unhinged, poor fellow, and he illustrates in its wreckage the serious dangers of incorrectly practised yoga.

¹¹¹ “6” was inserted at the top of the page by hand.

¹¹² Blank page

¹¹³ “The Modern Mystic, October 1939” in the original.

“10” was inserted at the top of the page by hand.

¹¹⁴ PB himself deleted “hot” before “climate” by hand.

On the ground outside a boy heaps together a pile of dead branches and sets them alight. Another servant fills two round vessels at a pool close by, ties one to each end of a flexible pole which rests across his shoulders, and then bears them to the hut. The first boy pours some of the water into a black iron bowl and rests it over the fire. Before long he appears among us with tea. It is a fragrantly-scented milkless infusion which we sip from tiny bowls. The life of these men is primitive indeed, for they have hardly any possessions. They are the historic descendants of the Khmers who built Angkor, but my repeated questions reveal that they now keep but a pitiful remnant of their old culture. It consists of a few scraps of tradition mingled with an imperfect knowledge of the Hinayana form of Buddhism which was brought to the country from Ceylon not long before the Cambodian empire approached its final fall. The oldest of the bonzes tells me some of their curious lore:

“Our traditions say that three races have mixed their blood in Kambuja (Cambodia). The first dwellers were unlettered savages, whose tribes still live in parts where no white man’s foot has trod. They are guarded by poison darts struck all over the ground, let alone by the huge tigers, rhinoceros and wild elephants which fill their forests. Our primitive religion survives among them in the form of ruined temples which are cherished as mascots. This religion together with a government was given us by the great sage-ruler Svayambhuva,¹¹⁵ who came from across the western sea. He established the worship of {BRAHMA,}¹¹⁶ the Supreme Being.

“The other races who settled here were the Indian and Chinese. Brahmin priests became powerful and taught our kings to add the worship of the gods Shiva and Vishnu, and to make Sanskrit a second Court language. Such was their power that even today, after our country has been purely Buddhist for many hundred years, their direct descendants conduct all important ceremonies for our king according to Hindu rituals. You have seen in the royal palace at Phnom-Penh a sword made of dark steel inlaid with gold. It is guarded day and night by these Brahmins. We believe that if the slightest rust appears on the blade, disaster will come to the Khmer people. That sword belonged to our great king Jayavarman, who built the grand temple of Angkor, spread the limits of our empire far and wide, yet kept his mind under control like a safe. He knew the secrets of both Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism, which dwelt in friendship side by side in our country. Indeed, the Mahayana was spread among us even before it reached China.”

The afternoon passes. The magic of the evening sun begins to work. A stream of reddening light pierces the grotesquely tiny windows and plays upon the uneven floor. It reveals the teeth of the smiling monks; some glittering but most betel-stained. We adjourn to a larger structure for the evening rites. While joss-sticks burn freely before the gilded image of their faith, and long litanies are softly chanted, I leave the assembly and settle down in the great Temple of Angkor to savour its sanctified darkness.

I hold to the modern attitude, which has proved so significant in science, that the era of mystery-mongering is past, that knowledge which is not verifiable cannot be received with certitude, and that overmuch profession of the possession of secrets opens the doors of imposture and charlatanry. He who is unable to offer adequate

¹¹⁵ Referring to The First Manu. – TJS '20

¹¹⁶ We have changed “BRA” to “BRAHMA” (referring to Svayambhuva’s son). – TJS '20

evidence has no right to the public ear. I have generally followed this line of conduct in all my writing, even though it has compelled me in the past to leave undescribed that which I consider the most valuable of personal encounters and to record the minor mystics as though they were the highest sages. If therefore I now reluctantly break my own rule, it is for two reasons: that it would be a pity to withhold information which many might appreciate, and that political enmity has put my informant's head in danger. Let it suffice to say that somewhere in South-east Asia I met a man who wears the High Lama's robe, who disclaims any special knowledge at first, but who breaks his reticence in the end. A part of what he tells me about Angkor is worth reconstructing here, but the statements are his and not mine.

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THE SECRET DOCTRINE OF THE KHMERS¹¹⁷

(124-1)¹¹⁸ The Secret Doctrine of the Khmers (continued from page 350)

imaginary clothes. I may say no more. However, the poor woman was unjustly maligned by her enemies. They could never understand her peculiar character nor her Oriental methods. Her society did an enormous service to white people by opening their eyes to Eastern truths. But its real mission is over; hence its present weak condition. A new instrument will take up the work in 1939 and give a higher revelation to the world, which is now better prepared. But the beginning of this work will be as quiet and unnoticed as the planting of a seed. It is 108 years since H.P.B.'s¹¹⁹ birth. There are 108 steps on the path to Nirvana. Amongst all the yogis of the Himalayas, 108 is regarded as the most sacred number. It is also kabbalistically connected with the year 1939 in a most important way. Therefore this year will witness the departure of the adepts from Tibet. Their location was always a secret, even most of the High Lamas never knew it. Tibet has lost its value for them, its isolation has begun to disappear rapidly and its rulers no longer respond faithfully to them. They leave Tibet seven hundred years after their arrival."

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THE SECRET DOCTRINES OF THE KHMER¹²⁰

(125-1)¹²¹ "You are the first white man to prostrate himself before me for many years. I am deeply moved... The key which unlocks understanding of Angkor's mystery needs to be turned thrice. There is first a secret tradition which has combined and united Hinduism, the religion of many Gods, and Buddhism, the religion without a God. There is next an unbroken line of sages who held and taught this doctrine as being the real and final truth about life. There is thirdly a connection between Angkor and, on one side, South India, on the other side, Tibet. In all three lands there was a time when both faiths even dwelt outwardly together in complete harmony, with interchangeable

¹¹⁷ "12" was inserted at the top of the page by hand.

¹¹⁸ The paras on this page follow the paras on page 125.

¹¹⁹ Properly "Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's"

¹²⁰ "11" was inserted at the top of the page by hand.

¹²¹ The paras on this page follow the paras on page 123.

rites, symbols and dogmas. The tradition itself was limited by the mental incapacity of the masses to the circle of a few sages and their immediate disciples. Vedanta and Mahayana are corruptions of this pure doctrine by of all known systems they come closest to it.

“Its chief tenet was the demonstration to ripe seekers of the existence of a single universal Life-Principle which the sages named, ‘The First’ or ‘The Origin.’ In itself it has no shape, cannot be divided into parts, and is quite impersonal – like a man’s mind when in the state of deep sleep. Yet it is the root of every shaped thing, creature person and substance which has appeared in the universe. Even mind has come out of [it.]¹²²

There was no room or necessity for a personal God in the Khmer secret doctrine but the popular religion accepted diverse gods as limited beings who were themselves as dependent on The First as the weakest man. Apart from these gods, the sages gave the people symbols suitable for worship. These symbols had to represent The First as faithfully as possible. They were three in number. The sun was chosen because everybody could easily understand that it created, sustained and destroyed the life of this planet. From the tiny cell to the great star, everything is in a state of constant growth or decay thanks to the sun’s power. Even substances like stone, wood and metal come into existence through the workings of sun force. The sages knew also, however, that even the human mind gets its vitality from this same force, causing it to reincarnate again and again upon the earth. The people of Angkor worshipped Light as a very god and the rite of sun-worship was carried on in vast stone-paved courts which were open to the sky and faced the temples.

“The second symbol was the male organ or sex. It appeared as a cone-like tower on some temples and as a tapering single column set up in the centre of the building. To Western eyes it is a strange and unsuitable symbol. But the people were plainly taught to look upon it as a picture of the source of life. Orientals in general and primitive people everywhere feel less shame about natural organs and functions than Westerners. Anyway the temples of Angkor never linked this symbol with the worship of lust. Its existence never degraded them. The Khmer people were so pure-minded that Sulayman, an Arab merchant who wrote an account of a voyage in which he ventured as far as China during the year 851, wrote of his visit to Cambodia: ‘All fermented liquors and every kind of debauchery are forbidden there. In the cities and throughout the empire one would not be able to find a single person addicted to debauchery.’

“The third symbol is also thought of in the West as connected with evil, but the adepts of Angkor held a different view. They gave me the previous symbol because hardly a man escapes seeing the miracle of sex, whereby a tiny seed slowly grows into a fully-matured human being composed of different parts, thus teaching the possibility of The First becoming the Many. They also gave the serpent as an emblem of worship for three reasons. In the course of a single lifetime its skin periodically dies and is thrown off, permitting a new skin to appear each time. The constant transformations, reincarnations and reappearances of The First as Nature are thus represented. And when a snake lies in its hole, it usually coils itself into the shape of a circle. It is not possible to mark where and when a circle begins. In this point the reptile indicates the

¹²² PB himself inserted a paragraph break here by hand.

infinity and eternity of The First. Lastly there is the strange mesmeric influence in the glittering eye of the snake which is found in no other animal. During the operation of the Mysteries, which have now been lost to the Western world, the adept initiated the seeker into the elementary stage by a mesmeric process which enabled him to get a glimpse of his origin. Therefore the carvings of every temple in Angkor showed the serpent, while on the lake of Pra Reach Dak near by there is an islet on which a small shrine stands entirely encircled by two great stone snakes.

“The line of sages which had penetrated in the secret of The First and gave these symbolic religions to the masses has shifted its headquarters from epoch to epoch. From the sixth to the thirteenth centuries it flourished in Angkor, but for seven hundred years before that period it flourished in South India. Reminders of this earlier centre exist in plenty in architectural forms and sculptural details. Even the Sanskrit alphabet used by the highest Brahmin priests in Cambodia is of Pallava (South Indian) origin. But the wheel of Karma turned, the Cambodian empire declined and disappeared with a rapidity which outran the fall of the Romans. The rulers were dazzled by wealth and conquest and failed to heed the advice of the sages. The latter withdrew and migrated to Tibet.

“You ask me if they are the same adepts as those spoken of by H.P. Blavatsky? When she was a girl and fled from her husband, she accidentally met a group of Russian Buddhist Kalmucks who were proceeding by a roundabout route on pilgrimage to the Dalai Lama of Tibet. She joined the caravan as a means of escape from her husband. One of them was an adept. He took care of her and protected her and brought her to Lhasa.¹²³ She was initiated in due course into the secret tradition. She visited other parts of Tibet and also India. Before the existence of Angkor ruins was known in the West, she was sent there to continue her studies and to receive a certain contact by meditation in the temples. H.P.B. went but experienced great difficulty in travelling through the uncleared jungle; however she bravely suffered all the discomforts like a man. Later she was introduced to a co-disciple, who eventually became a High Lama and personal adviser to the Dalai Lama. He was the son of a Mongolian prince, but for public purposes took the name of “the Thunderbolt,” i.e. “Dorje.”¹²⁴ On account of his personal knowledge of and interest in Russia, he gradually altered it to “Dorjjeff.”¹²⁵ Before their guru died he instructed Blavatsky to give a most elementary part of the secret tradition to the Western people, while he instructed Dorjjeff to follow her further career with watchful interest. Dorjjeff gave her certain advice, she went to America and founded the Theosophical Society. Her guru had forbidden her to give out his name. Moreover she knew much more of the teachings than she revealed. But she was always fearful of saying too much, so she constantly created what she called ‘blinds’ and wrapped her truthful secrets in

(continued in page 378)

¹²³ “Lhasa” in the original.

¹²⁴ Also known as “Tsanzhab Ngawang Lobzang”.

¹²⁵ “Dorjjeff” in the original.

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An Answer to a Critic

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AN ANSWER TO A CRITIC¹²⁷

(127-1) An article in December 1943 issue of "The Vision" written by Dewan Bahadur K.S. Ramaswami Sastri has been brought to my attention as its subject is a critique of my book "The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga." It is evident therefrom that your contributor has, like many others, misunderstood my present views. For example, he appears to think I have advocated the path of Jnana alone. This is an error. On the contrary, I fully agree with his own conclusion, "The Yoga and Jnana and Bhakti must go hand in hand."

Then he says, relative to my attitude towards Yoga, that I have "turned in anger against my old love and flung mud at her." This too is an error. I have only turned, not in anger but in sorrow, against the exploitations and abuses, the superstitions and delusions in which my old love is so often found dressed today. The practice of Yoga is itself something which I esteem too highly ever to give up or to advise others to give up but it urgently needs to be set free from certain undesirable entanglements.

What he says in his reference to Sri Ramana Maharshi is also inaccurate. The humble recognition of Maharshi's lofty spiritual status remains with me. But this is one thing and acquiescence in all his acts or the sharing of all his views is another. If certain regrettable circumstances, experiences and reflections presented me with no other alternative than a severance of external relations with the Maharshi and especially his Ashram, if their painful character forced me to look henceforth for a Guru to no human being but to God

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AN ANSWER TO A CRITIC

(continued from the previous page) alone, this has not altered my reverent respect for the Maharshi.

A similar inaccuracy occurs when Sri Aurobindo's name is mentioned as though I had disparaged him. On the contrary, the only reference made to him in my book was surely suggestive of praise. I have too great a personal admiration for him to adopt any other attitude. Indeed I would like to say that in Sri Ramana Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo and Swami Ramdas, South India possesses three great Yogis, of whose power and purity she can well be proud. But there are other factors which need to be considered.

May I draw Dewan Bahadur Ramaswami Sastri's attention to the fact that my book was the first volume of a two-volume work and that his misunderstandings of my position probably arose out of its incompleteness. Had he read the supplementary appendix, which was included with many copies, or its sequel, which has since appeared under the title of "The Wisdom of the Overself," he might have perceived this. However, I wish to thank him for the good-natured way in which he has

¹²⁷ "March 1944 The Vision" in the original.

expressed his criticisms. The personal abuse, ill-informed prejudice and even hysterical animosity to which I have become accustomed from so-called spiritual quarters caused me to sustain a long distressed silence. But courtesy calls for courtesy and this is why I have now troubled to break it for once.

(N.B. No further matter in this connection will be accepted for publication – Editor)

Whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men.
– Colossians 3: 33

The Arrows of Antagonism

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THE ARROWS OF ANTAGONISM

(129-1) It was pleasant to feel that one had justified one's existence by such a creative contribution, but it was unpleasant to discover that this business of being a writing philosopher for whom fate had marked out an unusual course, was not so easy as it appeared. Like everything else in our imperfect life, there were two sides to this matter. One soon realised that one's mission in life was not merely to make contributions of words and string phrases together. Some strange power, possibly Life itself, took one at his word and tested his phrases for sincerity, truth and solidity. It gave him such experiences as were apt and fitted to his paragraphs. One began to dread the power of his own pen for one knew that if he set down a sentence today then destiny would appear tomorrow and make him experience blood and tears, trial and temptation, so as to make him see for himself whether his sentence rang true or not. Thus writing became a form of powerful magic and he learnt to add every sentence to [his]¹²⁸ pages with care and dread.

This, however strange, was quite bearable and quite just. What was at first sight unbearable was the surprising discovery [of antagonism]¹²⁹ to such an extent that my British publisher, who was in touch with these circles, wrote to me eventually and reported: "You have very many [enemies.]"¹³⁰ It appeared that when I wrote books about others, like my travel books on India and Egypt, these opponents were indifferent to me, but when I began to write books expounding my own ideas on impersonal subjects like meditation they were aroused to the point of furious personal antagonism. I was informed by various sources that the animosity displayed was less against my ideas than against me, and that invariably originated less from the rank and file than from the heads of cults, the teachers of schools and such disappointed individuals as had endeavoured to gain my personal friendship but had failed. The entire opposition was summed up by well-informed persons as being actuated by jealousy of my speedy success in accomplishing within a few years what it had toiled at but failed to do in

¹²⁸ PB himself changed "one's" to "his" by hand.

¹²⁹ PB himself changed "that the attempt to introduce these ideas met with hostility and opposition not [only] from the quarters of religious bigotry or scientific materialism, where it was expected and natural, but from the leaders of so-called 'spiritual' theosophic and occult circles" to "of antagonism" by hand.

¹³⁰ PB himself deleted "in the West" from after "enemies" by hand.

many, as well as by fear of my starting a school or movement whose success would leave it bereft of many of its followers. It accordingly exhausted its imagination in stooping to paint wholly false pictures for others of this wicked person PB. Had my books been received with chilling indifference, hardly read and soon forgotten, my enemies might never made an appearance.

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THE ARROWS OF ANTAGONISM

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THE ARROWS OF ANTAGONISM

(continued from the previous page) Another group of enemies had arisen in India and, of all places, in an ashram which my earlier work had made famous both within and beyond its own land. This institution had so changed its character and inhabitants during the years that I had abruptly severed all connection with it and left, disappointed and disillusioned. They had not hesitated to published abusive articles against me in the local gutter-press, and to indulge in a malicious whispering campaign behind my back. Here the motives were more complicated but I would not sully my mind by remembering them.

[I]¹³² had no intention of permitting the inner peace I had gained take its departure because similar arrows were being shot at me.

The situation was an amusing but pathetic commentary on the low level of ethics which prevailed among individuals who claimed to have outstripped the common evolution but had really failed to catch up with it; as well as of their total misunderstanding of PB. They themselves deserved ironic smiles but the dupes who accepted their satanic whispers deserved melancholy tears. I was too disgusted to deal with this opposition as a less-peace-loving man would have done but resolved to take the sting out of its scorpion-tail by reassuring these jealous detractors that I had no intention of developing either a cult, a movement or a school. The prefaces of no less than three of my books were therefore so worded as deliberately, plainly and repeatedly to repel those who sought to become personal followers and to rebuff all attempt on the part of those who wished to become intimate students or disciples; in short to keep the gulf between me and my readers uncrossable.

In an age when nearly everybody who had something to offer for the spiritual guidance of humanity sought, for platforms wherefrom he could expound his teachings and counted every new follower with increasing delight; when nearly everybody who believed he had experienced some kind of religious or mystic illumination started a new cult or formed a new organisation with the frankly avowed object of acquiring

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¹³² PB himself deleted "As that esteemed Indian Yogi and philosopher Sri Aurobindo has more than once mentioned, those who are working for the survival of Truth in a truthless world thereby become the target for powerful forces of hatred wrath and falsehood. Blavatsky received to the full all the arrows of malignity and venom which robbed the last fifteen years of her life of whatever sweetness they might have possessed." Before "I" and inserted "Evil" in the left margin by hand.

disciples; when the hunt for personal publicity, personal aggrandisement and personal wealth had spread to a degree unknown before in society it seemed strange that a man could bring himself to set down

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THE ARROWS OF ANTAGONISM

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THE ARROWS OF ANTAGONISM

(continued from the previous page) such rebuffs as those which were put into my prefaces. Yet such was the case.

Each new volume of instruction or illumination brought me fresh enmity but I could not forego writing it, however much I personally disliked the notion of setting myself up as a teacher. This dislike was much more powerful than the disgust with my enemies. The consequence was that the initial pages of such books were extracted from my obstinate pen by a kind of higher compulsion against which my personal will and desire could offer little resistance. Each word of the first chapter was literally dragged, drop by drop, out of the ink barrel of my fountain pen. But once under way, I soon surrendered to the realisation that these tutorial books were given to me to write irrespective of my wishes, that the call to prepare them had come from a higher source, and so I had never regretted obeying it. I knew they would enlighten many individuals who would otherwise remain enveloped in greater darkness and depression. I knew then as I knew now that its appearance would be the signal for fresh opposition and more abuse, but I had been well taught by my greatest master how to keep my outer silence and my inner peace amid the clamour. I knew that the attacks of lying envy and the blights of malice would show no prospect of discontinuing whilst I lived, for even the feeblest light always threw shadow. I had finally to consider whether I was justified in taking my own ease when so many were suffering under the despairs of our [time.]¹³⁴

My definition of a friend, in short, was someone who had complete confidence in you and in whom you had complete confidence too. But such confidence could not come in a day; it must gradually mature as both come to know through personal experience the kind of person with whom they are dealing. Then only could it become so strong that when the slanderer told his endless lying tales to you against your friend, you immediately rose, refusing to listen and withdrew; so profound that, his sins took him to Hades itself you could not desert him; and so self-sacrificing that the memorable and mournfully prophetic words of Jesus might at any moment become literally illustrated: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But alas, few were those who fell within such narrow categories.

¹³³ Blank page

¹³⁴ PB himself deleted the para after this by hand. It originally read: "In the end I made my choice and [take] the advice of a wise old Tamil book of proverbs The Kural, which [says]: 'Patience is the first of virtues. It enables us to bear with those that revile us, even as the earth bears with those that dig it.' So [sheds his shyness] and offer malevolent enmity the silent indifference of one who [knows] in what sublime cause he [is] striving."

A South Indian Master

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A SOUTH INDIAN MASTER

(135-1)¹³⁶ Paul Brunton, whose books on India's true spiritual life have won wide acclaim, sends to Inner Culture readers this fascinating account of his great Hindu guru. Swami Yogananda visited both the Maharshi and Paul Brunton during his recent tour of India.

(135-2) It is timely to supplement the description of the Maharshi¹³⁷ in my book, *A Search in Secret India*, as given in the concluding chapters, because so many Western people ask me for further details about his life, personality and teaching.

This is a theme which pleases my pen well, for with none other of the adepts and yogis whom I have encountered during my travels in Africa and Asia have I been in touch so long: eight years have passed since my first intrusion into his divine presence.

The Maharshi does not fit easily into any ready-made classification. You may call him a sage, a yogi, a recluse, a saint, a philosopher, or what not, but I do not think these terms describe him accurately. For he is unique. And in that uniqueness lies his special appeal. When, in no distant period, Western travellers will gaze meditatively on his shrine and lightly observe, "Ha, another Hindu saint!" they will make a mistake. The Maharshi is not Hindu, not a saint, nor anything else so rigid. He belongs to the universe. He is a phenomenon in Nature.

You may understand this sage of South Indian better when you understand something of his life. Hence I shall relate a few stories. When he was a young man he spent some years in a pitch-dark cave high up on the lonely rocky hill of Arunachala, near the small town of Tiruvannamalai. For three years he never spoke a word to anyone, for he was enwrapped in the profoundest meditations which drew his consciousness into that inner world over whose face there is thrown a veil for ordinary men. For his food he went down twice a week to the town, carrying a begging bowl, but very soon an old widow insisted on fetching his food to his cave, so¹³⁸

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A SOUTH INDIAN MASTER

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A SOUTH INDIAN MASTER

¹³⁵ Blank page

¹³⁶ This para begins with an introductory insert in the bottom right corner of the text, then returns to the main body of the article in the next para.

¹³⁷ "Maharishiee" in the original.

¹³⁸ The paras on this page continue on page 139.

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¹⁴⁰ The word is cut off by the left margin. Only "-R" is visible in the original.

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A SOUTH INDIAN MASTER

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A SOUTH INDIAN MASTER

(139-1)¹⁴² The Maharshi illustrates perfect power in repose. Not once during his hours of quiet sitting does he betray the slightest sign of impatience. Once I asked him whether he would like to visit Madras City with me and see a cinema, a telephone and an electric tram, three inventions he has never yet seen. He replied "I find the universe within me: why then do I need to go to Madras?"

(139-2) that he was saved the trouble of the journey.

The sage's mother came to live with him during the last six years of her life and became his disciple. On her death-bed, he placed his right hand on her head and his left on her solar plexus and remained in that position for twelve hours. When asked why he was doing so, he answered: "Her spirit is already witnessing the scenes of the past and the tendencies toward the material world are struggling within her. I am lifting her spirit steadily towards Nirvana, so that she shall not have to reincarnate again on earth, but attain everlasting happiness."

MIRACLES NOT GOAL

(139-2) The Maharshi does not approve of performing miracles because that will increase one's vanity and egoism. He says that they will come of their own accord very often if one realises the Self; in that case it is the Higher Power which performs them, not the personal. Hence he never displays one consciously, but all the same they keep on happening. Thus when his mother's corpse had to be washed previous to cremation, according to Hindu customs, it was the height of midsummer and no water was available in sufficient quantity without sending to a considerable distance. The sage quietly walked to a spot nearby and said, "Dig here!" His instructions were followed and about two feet from the surface water was found, and a well has since been made

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¹⁴² The paras on this page follow the paras on page 135, though again, the first para is an unconnected insert in the body of the next.

there. Nevertheless, he says that the occult powers are not the chief thing to gain; we must find the kingdom of heaven first.

He has not left his hermitage for forty years, even to visit the nearest village. He welcomes everyone, although always maintaining the reserve to be expected from one who has surpassed all human attainment. He enjoys perpetually the state which all intelligent Yogis seek, the state called samadhi or continuous superconsciousness. Whereas most Yogis have to enter into a profound trance in order to experience this unique condition, the Maharshi

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A SOUTH INDIAN MASTER
Miracles not Goal

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A SOUTH INDIAN MASTER
Miracles not Goal

(continued from the previous page) has now this great good fortune without appearing in any way abnormal and without the necessity of entering external trance.

And now I shall report, in the form of questions and answers, unpublished conversations I had with him eight years ago and which I have kept in a private diary.

“Maharishi, do you teach that we are born again and again until we realise perfection?”

“What is it that is born? Not the true self. Once we are born into that it is final. All others are but fleeting incarnations of the vasanās” (tendencies of feeling, thought and action).

“Many yoga postures are impossible for a European to adopt. What do you advise?”

“The best posture is to rest the mind in the Self! However, if one finds that sitting in a chair, or even walking, is easiest for meditation, that is the right posture for him. But Hatha Yoga (body control) is for beginners. Look for the Self and you will not be concerned with postures.”

“How is it that all the Vedas (scriptures), the systems of occultism and theosophy describe the psychic words, the cosmogony of the universe et cetera, and you remain silent about them?” The sage replied, “The main object or central teaching of these systems is the attainment of Supreme Spirit, the divine reality. But as all sorts of aspirants have to be reached and appealed to, the beginners and the advanced, the dull and the keen alike, a graded cosmogony is given which can be easily followed up to a point even by the materialistic. Thus, the spiritual world is shown as giving birth to the mental world, the latter to the astral, and this again to the physical world. But to the advanced aspirant who thirsts for Absolute Reality, all this is unnecessary; he has only to keep his mind fixed on the Self and he will have no need of studying what is lower. If happiness is his real goal, he will have ultimately to come back from all these diversions with astral experience and so on. It is not true that one must travel through

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these experiences in every case; one gets what one seeks. The meditation on the Self is the quickest, most direct route to realisation, as well as the easiest, whereas the methods of occultism and theosophy are roundabout and circuitous, but of course they arrive at the same goal."

CONTROLLING THE MIND

(141-1) "But Maharishi, everyone complains that the mind is fickle and wandering. How do you control it?"

"If you once direct your attention to the question who is the individual to whom this fickleness occurs, the tossing of the mind will begin to cease. Keep up the questioning attitude. And of course this can be done outside of meditation during ordinary life."

One day I went to the Sage and told him that during meditation I had found thoughts to die away and stillness to reign within me. Within that stillness I became aware of a tiny atom or point in my breast

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A SOUTH INDIAN MASTER
Controlling the Mind

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A SOUTH INDIAN MASTER
Controlling the Mind

(143-1)¹⁴⁴ The Maharshi does not talk much with the visitors who come to him. Hours often pass by before he utters a word in response. But when he does indulge in the luxury of a conversation with an inquirer or spiritual aspirant he usually adopts the Socratic method. There is probably no more powerful or effective method of compelling a man to think, to exercise his own reason, instead of repeating parrot-like phrases, than this of thrusting question after question at him.

(143-2) upon which all my attention was centred. I asked him if this was the Self he talked about. He replied:

"Yes, that is the Self, but you will have to go deeper still in order to perfect your realisation. Hold on to it. Do not lose the current by having the wrong idea, 'I am meditating on the Self.' At such a point try to remember that you are the Self, that this is your natural condition - not that you are practising meditation. Watch vigilantly that you do not fall away from that."

On the journey home to Europe after my first visit to India, I rested at Colombo and later caught a homeward-bound Orient liner from Australia. The second evening out to see I swooned and fell on the bed of the cabin. Within a few hours a mild attack of the fever which I had somehow kept at arm's length until then, was upon me.

¹⁴⁴ The paras on this page follow the paras on page 141. Again, the first para is an unconnected insert in the body of the next.

Followed a troublous time. But through it all, and through the intense physical weakness caused by Indian fever, as soon as my burning brain could shape a thought, a picture appeared ever and again before my sight. It was the pleasant, placid face of the Maharshi; the close-cropped head with a few days growth of beard upon the chin: above all, his wonderful eyes that shone with such brilliance beneath a lofty brow, upon which rested the lofty composure of a true philosopher. This mysterious Maharishi had touched something in my nature which responded eagerly. The image of his enigmatic face constantly obtruded itself upon my mind. At unexpected moments and in incongruous places I found myself thinking of him. I formed the impression that he was calmly but powerfully radiating the subtle aura of his personality into my own orbit. The sense of his actual nearness to me was sometimes overpowering, so that my visual evidence of his absence would prove unconvincing. It was an inexplicable phenomenon, this awareness of another being by my side.

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Controlling the Mind

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A SOUTH INDIAN MASTER
Visions of the Master

(continued from the previous page) Thus, it came about, that some deep change within me moved to birth and finally found expression until I could never wander from the Way nor surrender myself to a purely animal life without seeing his enigmatic face as in the distance. At first the vision was so ethereal, so unusual, that I turned around with puzzled mind and wondered if I saw aright, or whether I was merely the victim of some visual auto-suggestion. The passage of time, however, established the thing as a veridic experience, for it also came at critical moments, to offer tangible inspiration, a wisdom better than my own, and higher strength. So when, later in France, Switzerland and Egypt, he appeared quite clearly before me and gave me messages at critical periods, I thought that this was enough to constitute discipleship.

But not so. The truth was not revealed to me until some time later, when I lived on the Tibetan border, among the Himalayan Mountains, whither I had gone at his telepathic request.

There, one day I found that the picture of the Sage disappeared and his true Spirit, his Self, entered into me as though I were a spiritualist medium. Of course, at first it did not remain permanently, but left me soon. However, this experience repeated itself many times. When I returned to his hermitage and sat before him again, he told me telepathically that this was the true way to find the Master.

A Yogi friend who came down from his secluded sanctuary in the Himalayas near Almora, said to me apropos of the Maharshi, after his first meeting: "How like the Himalayas he is! What richly harmonious and yet dynamic Life-silence! Yes, the Maharshi towers above us all, and has solved the supreme secret; but like the vast peaks he can keep his silence well."

"What," I once asked the Maharshi, "is the purpose of God creating our

universe?"

CREATION HELPS INDIVIDUALS

(145-1) "God has no purpose for himself," he replied. "There is a purpose, however for the individual souls. For their sake He creates this evolution in a universe. But God has nothing to gain by it. He just looks on, like the sun. But the individuals evolve and benefit by it. Those who say that God is trying to become self-conscious through man, are ignorant. He is already fully conscious."

Among his last words was a warning: "Do not tell this path to everyone, but only to the few who manifest an anxiety to know the Absolute Truth and an eagerness to find it. With others, be silent."

The Maharshi has now risen rapidly to fame throughout South India - a matter which makes not the slightest difference to his personal modesty - and so this once quiet hermitage under Arunachala, the Hill of the Holy Beacon, has become a noted place of pilgrimage.

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A SOUTH INDIAN MASTER

Know Thyself - And Know Truth

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KNOW THYSELF - AND KNOW TRUTH

(147-1) The Maharshi, the subject of this article, passed away this year. Dr Paul Brunton wrote this special introduction when he heard of the death of his beloved teacher: -

One night in spring this year, at the very moment that a flaring starry body flashed across the sky and hovered over the Hill of the Holy Beacon, there passed out of his aged body the spirit of the dying Maharishi. He was the one Indian mystic who inspired me most, the one yogi whom I revered most, and his power was such that both Governor-General and ragged coolie sat together at his feet with the feeling that they were in a divine presence.

Several factors combined to keep us apart during these past ten years, but the inner telepathic contact and close spiritual affinity between us remained and remains - vivid and unbroken. Last year he sent me this final message through a visiting friend: "When heart speaks to heart, what is there to say?"

(147-2) We are approaching the Maharshi's hermitage. We turn aside from the road and move down a rough path which brings us to a thick grove of coconut and mango trees. We cross this until the path suddenly comes to an abrupt termination before an unlocked gate. The driver descends, pushes the gate open, and then drives us into a large unpaved courtyard. I stretch my cramped limbs, descend to the ground, and look around.

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Twenty brown-and-black faces flash their eyes upon us. Their owners are squatting in half-circles on a red-tiled floor. They are grouped at a respectful distance from the corner which lies farthest to the right hand of the door. Apparently everyone has been facing this corner just prior to our entry. I glance there for a moment and perceive a seated figure upon a long white divan, but it suffices to tell me that here indeed is the Maharshi.

My guide approaches the divan, prostrates himself prone on the floor, and buries his eyes under his folded hands.

The divan is but a few paces away from a broad high window in the end wall. The light falls clearly on the Maharshi and I can take in every detail of his profile, for he is seated gazing rigidly through the window in the precise direction whence we have come this morning. His head does not move, so thinking to catch his eye and greet him as I offer the fruits, I move quietly over to the windows, place a gift before him, and retreat a pace or two.

(147-3) A small brass brazier stands before his couch. It is filled with burning charcoal, and a pleasant odour tells me that some aromatic powder has been thrown on the glowing embers. Close by is an incense burner filled with joss sticks. Threads of bluish grey smoke arise and float in the air, but the pungent perfume is quite different.

I fold a thin cotton blanket upon the floor and sit down, gazing expectantly at the silent figure in such a rigid attitude upon the couch. The Maharshi's body is almost nude, except for a thin narrow loin-cloth, but that is common enough in these parts. His skin is slightly copper-coloured, yet quite fair in comparison with that of the average South Indian. I judge him to be a tall man; his age somewhat in the early fifties. His head, which is covered with closely cropped grey hair, is well formed. The high and broad expanse of forehead gives intellectual distinction to his personality. His features are more European than Indian. Such is my first impression.

The couch is covered with white cushions and the Maharshi's feet rest upon a magnificently marked tiger skin.

Pin-drop silence prevails throughout the long hall. The sage remains perfectly still, motionless, quite undisturbed at our arrival.

(147-4) A swarthy disciple sits on the floor at the other side of the divan. He breaks into the quietude by beginning to pull at a rope which works by a punkah-fan made of bamboo matting. The fan is fixed to a wooden beam and suspended immediately above the sage's head. I listen to its rhythmic purring, the while I look full into the eyes of the seated figure in the hope of catching his notice. They are dark brown, medium-sized and wide open.

If he is aware of my presence, he betrays no hint, gives no sign. His body is supernaturally quiet, as steady as a statue. Not once does he catch my gaze, for his eyes continue to look into remote space, and infinitely remote it seems. I find this scene strangely reminiscent. Where have I seen its like? I rummage through the portrait-gallery of memory and find the picture of the Sage Who Never Speaks, that recluse whom I visited in his island cottage near Madras, that man whose body seemed cut from stone, so motionless it was. There is a curious similarity in this unfamiliar stillness of body which I now behold in the Maharshi.

(continued from the previous page) It is an ancient theory of mine that one can take the inventory of a man's soul from his eyes. But before those of the Maharshi I hesitate, puzzled and baffled.

(149-1) The minutes creep by with unutterable slowness. First they mount up to a half-hour by the hermitage clock which hangs on a wall; this too passes by and becomes a whole hour. Yet no one in the hall seems to stir; certainly no one dares to speak. I reach a point of visual concentration where I have forgotten the existence of all save this silent figure on the couch. My offering of fruits remains unregarded on the small carved table which stands before him.

My guide has given me no warning that his master will receive me as I had been received by the Sage Who Never Speaks. It has come upon me abruptly, this strange reception characterised by complete indifference.

There is something in this man which holds my attention as steel filings are held by a magnet. I cannot turn my gaze away from him. My initial bewilderment, my perplexity at being totally ignored, slowly fade away as this strange fascination begins to grip me more firmly. But it is not till the second hour of the uncommon scene that I become aware of a silent, resistless change which is taking place within my mind.

(149-2) One by one, the questions which I have prepared on the train with such meticulous accuracy drop away. For it does not now seem to matter whether I solve the problems which have hitherto troubled me. I know only that a steady river of quietness seems to be flowing near me, that a great peace is penetrating the inner reaches of my being, and that my thought-tortured brain is beginning to arrive at some rest.

How small seem those questions which I have asked myself with such frequency! How petty grows the panorama of the lost years! I perceive with sudden clarity that the intellect creates its own problems and then makes itself miserable trying to solve them. This is indeed a novel concept to enter the mind of one who has hitherto placed such high value upon intellect.

I surrender myself to the steadily deepening sense of restfulness until two hours have passed. The passage of time now provokes no irritation, because I feel that the chains of mind-made problems are being broken and thrown away. And then, little by little, a new question takes the field of consciousness.

"Does this man, the Maharshi, emanate the perfume of spiritual peace as the flower emanates from its petals?"

(149-3) I do not consider myself a competent person to apprehend spirituality, but I

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have personal reactions to other people. This dawning suspicion that the mysterious peace which has arisen within me must be attributed to the geographical situation in which I am now placed, is my reaction to the personality of the Maharshi. I begin to wonder whether, by some radio-activity of the soul, some unknown telepathic process, the stillness which invades the troubled waters of my own soul really comes from him. Yet he remains completely impassive, completely unaware of my very existence, it seems.

Comes the first ripple. Someone approaches me and whispers in my ear: "Did you not wish to question the Maharshi?"

He may have lost patience, this quondam guide of mine. More likely he imagines that I, a restless European have reached the limit of my own patience. Alas, my inquisitive friend! Truly I came here to question your master, but now... I, who am at peace with all the world and with myself, why should I trouble my head with questions? I feel that the ship of my soul is beginning to slip its moorings; a wonderful sea waits to be crossed; yet you would draw me back to the noisy port of this world, just when I am about to start the great adventure!

(149-4) But the spell is broken. As if this infelicitous intrusion is a signal, figures rise from the floor and begin to move about the hall, voices float up to my hearing and – wonder of wonders! – the dark brown eyes of the Maharshi flicker once or twice. Then the head turns, the face moves slowly, very slowly, and bends downward at an angle. A few more moments, and it has brought me into the ambit of its vision. For the first time the sage's mysterious gaze is directed upon me. It is plain that he has now awakened from his long trance.

The intruder, thinking perhaps that my lack of response is a sign that I have not heard him, repeats his question aloud. But in those lustrous eyes which are gently staring at me, I read another question, albeit unspoken.

"Can it be – is it possible – that you are still tormented with distracting thoughts when you have now glimpsed the deep mental peace which you – and all men – may attain?"

The peace overwhelms me. I turn to the guide and answer: "No. There is nothing I care to ask now. Another time –"

(149-5) "The wise men of the West, our scientists, are greatly honoured for their cleverness. Yet they have confessed that they can throw but little light upon the hidden truth behind life. It is said that there

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KNOW THYSELF – AND KNOW TRUTH

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KNOW THYSELF – AND KNOW TRUTH

(continued from the previous page) are some in your land who can give what our

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Western sages fail to reveal. Is this so? Can you assist me to experience enlightenment? Or is the search itself a mere delusion?"

I have now reached my conversational objective and decide to await the Maharshi's response. He continues to stare thoughtfully at me. Perhaps he is pondering over my questions. Ten minutes pass in silence.

At last his lips open and he says gently:

"You say I: 'I want to know.' Tell me, who is this I?"

What does he mean? He has now cut across the services of the interpreter and speaks direct to me in English. Bewilderment creeps across my brain.

"I am afraid I do not understand your question," I reply blankly.

"Is it not clear? Think again!"

I puzzle over his words once more. An idea suddenly flashes into my head. I point a finger towards myself and mention my name.

"And do you know him?"

"All my life!" I smile back at him.

"But that is only your body! Again I ask: 'Who are you?'"

I cannot find a ready answer to this extraordinary query. The Maharshi continues:

"Know first that I and then you shall know the truth."

(150-1) My mind hazes again. I am deeply puzzled. This bewilderment finds verbal expression. But the Maharshi has evidently reached the limit of his English, for he turns to the interpreter and the answer is slowly translated to me:

"There is only one thing to be done. Look into your own self. Do this in the right way and you shall find the answer to all your problems."

It is a strange rejoinder. But I ask him:

"What must one do? What method can I pursue?"

"Through deep reflection on the nature of one's self and through constant meditation, the light can be found."

"I have frequently given myself up to meditation upon the truth, but I see no sign of progress."

"How do you know that no progress has been made? It is not easy to perceive one's progress in the spiritual realm."

"Can a master help a man look into his own self in the way you suggest?"

"He can give a man all that he needs for this quest. Such a thing can be perceived through personal experience."

"How long will it take to get some enlightenment with a master's help?"

"It all depends on the maturity of the seeker's mind - the gunpowder catches fire in an instant, while much time is needed to set fire to the coal."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ The rest of this page is unrelated advertisements.

Maharaja of Pithapuram

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MAHARAJA OF PITHAPURAM¹⁴⁹

(153-1) A character Sketch of the Leader of the New People's Party of Madras

By Paul Brunton

(best known in India by his A Search in Secret India, now in its seventh impression.)

(153-2) With his entry into the political arena more prominently as the founder of the People's Party, the Maharaja Saheb has inevitably drawn upon himself the attention of many eyes in the southern presidency. And because I fear that the usual misunderstandings will come to his lot, I have ventured to write this article.

I hope I shall not be misunderstood. I have the pleasure of knowing Indians who are firebrand Congressites and Europeans who are obstinate die-hards and Liberals who balance themselves between both these attitudes. Personally I am no political propagandist. I take an independent and detached view of politics, and especially of Indian politics. This has been possible only because of a unifying tie in a totally different sphere. Believing as I do that men of the most opposite and inimical political ideas may yet meet on a common spiritual platform, I have sought to help in the building of such a platform, sought to spread more goodwill in this distracted world.

There is room in public life for me who sincerely seek to serve India no less than for those whose chief desire is to carve out a career, and nothing more. Fools and politicians yearn for fame; wise men spurn it; but a few accept it as the inevitable resultant of their efforts to leave their land better than they found it.

The Maharaja Saheb has started the People's Party, whatever the merits or demerits of its programme, indubitably 'as a matter of solemn duty with the sole purpose of serving the best interests of our country,' to use his own words. Such words, coming from other lips, might carry little more value than their sound; but coming from the Maharaja of Pithapuram they are certain to have been well-weighed and deeply meant.

PERFORMANCE AND NOT PROMISE

(153-3) I know him well enough to know that he carefully considers such statements before making them, because he fully intends to make performance and not promise, the basis of his political existence. He will not knowingly offer anything verbally to the electorate, unless he is reasonably certain of carrying it out in action, if placed in power. Possibly, he errs on the side of over-prudence in this connection, and sacrifices potential votes to over-scrupulous honesty.

The Maharaja Saheb is a realist and will not play like a child with fantastic dreams impossible of realisation. He wants to do whatever he sees in his mind can really be done, and not pretend that India can be changed by glowing phrases and pat formulas.

¹⁴⁹ "Thursday, September 17th, 1936" appears along the left margin in the original.

The growth of bitterness and hatred in the modern world, engendered generally by political, economic, caste and national strife, is something which he views with grave concern. He feels that his work is not to take the easy path of destroying and attacking defective institutions, but to build and create, to adopt an attitude which shall be constructive and helpful. He holds very strongly the integrating ideals which are so needed today, and he is prepared to work with all castes and communities, with Brahmans and non-Brahmans, British as well as Indians, poor as well as rich.

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MAHARAJA OF PITHAPURAM
Performance and Not Promise

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MAHARAJA OF PITHAPURAM
Goodwill and Understanding

(155-1) The world's greatest need today is more goodwill and understanding. The Maharaja of Pithapuram would subscribe to this view, I am sure. In an age of shouting politicians and raging revolutionaries, he pursues his calm sedate way, working quietly for the things that are within India's reach now. He does not regard the British as a race of devils, as so many do, nor is he blind to their defects. He sees that the way of orderly constitutional effort to secure more from their hands for India is no less entitled to consideration than the noisier ways of others. I do not think he is satisfied with the present Reforms, as I doubt whether any thinking Indian can be. But he does not propose to squat like a sulky child outside the council chambers whilst others pass laws which affect the lives of his fellow men, nor does he propose to rush inside like a rampaging bear and destroy what has been won with so much effort, so much sacrifice. His attitude is to make the utmost possible use of the present Reforms, whilst keeping in view and calmly working for, a further instalment of better ones.

I would like to point to an ancient truth; *Character counts*. Nothing wrong can happen to a country when it places men of sterling character at its head, nothing but good can come of such an act. If the man at the head of a party is honest, unselfish, noble-minded and balanced, then we may expect political fruits in accordance. Such a man exists in the subject of this article. These qualities of soul must inevitably and ultimately materialise into tangible benefits to the people.

One of the dangers which admittedly exists in India as in many other countries is that the arrival of political power into hands unaccustomed to wielding it may easily lead to nepotism and even corruption, the temptations to place personal ties and personal relationships before public interest are strong and only {with those who stand on a platform}¹⁵¹ of highest integrity in the key positions can these temptations be avoided. The Maharaja, should he succeed, is determined to select such men only as will maintain this exacting ideal which is so essential to justice.

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¹⁵¹ This section of the article was folded over in the copy and is difficult/near impossible to read. This is largely a contextual guess.

(155-2) The physical appearance of the Maharaja Saheb fits his nature. His voice is soft, his manner modest, his movements quiet, yet withal he is a cheery personality. A man of middle height and kindly bearing, he has attained an age when life experience has been ascertained and thoughtfully digested to the full - fifty!

He has the broad religious views and tolerant understanding of a Brahmo Samajist, and avows himself a keen admirer of the illustrious Raja Rammohun Roy. He draws much inspiration from the life and ideas of that famous pioneer of India's awakening.

His interest in the cause of culture has been very definite. Every one of the 1,800 students at the Pithapur Raja's College in Coconada is indirectly indebted to him for the munificent help which has been given to this first grade institution in the way of new buildings, financial endowments and scholarships. He has made it possible for an encyclopaedic Telugu lexicon to be prepared and for rare or ancient Telugu books of merit to be published.

I have seen at Cocanada the finest orphanage in South India, where poor boys and girls receive a home and education - another fruit of the Maharaja's generosity. Finally it is worth mentioning that he was the prime mover in an attempt to get the Madras Legislative Council to provide for the care of ailing, aged and disabled destitutes.¹⁵²

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MAHARAJA OF PITHAPURAM
A Cheery Personality

157

MAHARAJA OF PITHAPURAM
Goodwill and Understanding

(continued from the previous page) Anyone who has wandered around the world as I have, finds that certain ideas are fairly common amongst most people, no matter where they are born, and amongst most races, no matter the colour of their skin.

One of these ideas, for instance, is that people whom life and birth have financially favoured are likely to be spiritually bankrupt. I have heard this said in Europe, and I hear it said again in India of that class called zamindars. Well, they may be so, but on the other hand they may not.

Anyway, I know one zamindar who most definitely and assuredly is not but who, on the contrary, is spiritually rich.

That man is the Maharaja of Pithapuram.

Underneath the robes of education and the cap of convention, human nature differs far less than persons who lack wide experience generally imagine. No single class - whether working men or aristocrats - can claim to have the sole monopoly of

¹⁵² Ed McKeown note at the bottom of the page reads "(continued)"

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faith in God. Nor does the Truth favour anyone; she reveals herself to the worthy with complete indifference to their status or their possessions.

In these democratic days it is the fashion in certain circles to talk either with disparaging sneers or bated envious breath of one who belongs to the higher ranks of society. Such persons never dream that the subject of their remarks is as human as they are and therefore [cannot]¹⁵⁴ escape from the inevitable troubles and trials which beset us all without exception.

A MAN OF HUMBLE FAITH IN GOD

(157-1) The skeleton of suffering is in every family cupboard, be it that of a king or a commoner. The tales of woe which I have heard from the lips of poor labourers have their precise counterparts in the tales of woe which I have heard from the lips of not a few royalties. The comradeship of the trenches during the way did more for democracy than dozens of boring statistical volumes. A good cure for bolshevist agitation might be to put both bolshevist proletarians and their fancied oppressors in the same club, where they could meet on equal terms and learn something about the troubles of one another!

The Maharaja of Pithapuram too has not escaped sorrows. He has been bereaved by a terrible agonising domestic tragedy, whilst painful illness has pursued him, but this is a theme upon which I need not enlarge. In spite of all, he has remained a man of humble faith in God and kindly disposition toward his fellows. His hours of suffering may have scarred him but they have not been permitted to destroy his ideals. In fact his genial face is frequently wreathed in smiles and his bespectacled eyes often carry a humorous twinkle.

If he accepts his privileges, he does not forget his obligations
[END]¹⁵⁵

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MAHARAJA OF PITHAPURAM
A Man of Humble Faith in God

Civilisation Through the Ages: The Pageant of the East

159

CIVILISATION THROUGH THE AGES

(159-1) THE STORY OF CIVILISATION: OUR ORIENTAL HERITAGE:
By Will Durant. (New York: Simon and Simon and Schuster. \$5)

(159-2) He prepared himself for writing this first volume alone by twice journeying through the Near and Far East to examine at first hand the existing remains of their ancient civilisations, as well as the condition of their modern ones. Seven years' solid

¹⁵⁴ PB himself inserted "cannot" by hand where the text in the copy was illegible.

¹⁵⁵ Ed MeKeown inserted "END" by hand.

research work involving the reading of some five hundred books by famed specialists, has likewise been distilled down into a thousand pages for the benefit of those who have to do their own reading in a hurry, as alas! so many of us have. The resulting volume stands, and will ever stand, as a monument to his own wide learning and noble culture. It will become a classic, without doubt.

Let us take a rapid stride across the centuries and through the chief contents of *The Story of Civilisation*, which is so weighty that it tires the hand to hold it. Durant opens by picturing the beginnings of social and civilised existence upon this planet. He goes on to analyse the economic, mental and moral elements which condition the organisation of human beings into societies. And then the story itself begins to unfold its picturesque detail in Sumeria, the mid-Asiatic country which once had its habitat in Iraq, which no map marks today but which has left a scattered legacy throughout the East.

Durant does for this vanished empire what he does for every other country which the book covers – he describes its culture, trade, people, government, science, religion, law, art and literature, and gives a succinct summary of its history. He writes with commendable clarity and makes the cobwebbed past live anew before our eyes with startling freshness. A multitude of curious and little known facts have been mingled into the story.

The Sumerians allowed a husband whose wife had committed adultery to place her in a subordinate position and take a second wife.

The oldest written records at present known to historians are the inscriptions on polished stone and baked clay tablets written down nearly six thousand years ago by the scribes of Sumeria. The characters on these writings run from right to left.

Durant next applies his creative reconstruction to Egypt. He points out that women were held in such high esteem in early Egypt that, contrary to Indian custom, obedience of the husband to the wife was required in the marriage bond. He quotes Diodorus Siculus's statement that women took the initiative in courtship and made direct proposals of marriage. Moreover the 'devadasi' institution was not limited to India but was equally extant in Egypt and Babylon. The most beautiful girls of the noblest families of Egypt were dedicated to the temples of Thebes.

Most striking of the ancient monuments which have survive to our own time are those triangular massifs near Cairo. "All the world fears time," says an Arab proverb, "But time fears the Pyramids." I regret however that Durant accepts without questioning the common conception that their purpose was but to act as tombs. I have elsewhere tried to show, on the basis of physical evidence alone, that this theory is disprovable; beyond that I do not expect people to accept the psychic investigations which have forced me to conclude that the Pyramids were temples of spiritual initiation. The necessity of evolving a psychic method to supplement the scientific one when investigating vestiges of remote civilisations will nevertheless justify itself during this century.

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CIVILISATION THROUGH THE AGES

(continued from the previous page) Figures of the Sacred Bull are still common enough among the Egyptian ruins. On this theme Durant writes: "The bull was especially sacred to the Egyptians as representing sexual creative power; it was not merely a symbol of Osiris but an incarnation of him." He may be right so far as unphilosophic and illiterate men may comprehend these animal gods, but I am sure that the cultured and learned amongst the Egyptians, as amongst the Hindus, saw them as symbols of something deeper also; as emblems of a spiritual relation. Here in the South Indian township where I write, a row of stone bull-figures recline along the top of the temple wall that juts up high above my courtyard, whilst inside the buildings a gigantic bull occupies the central place. My revered Master Sri Ramana Maharshi, once explained this point to me when I told him of the striking similarities between the customs of Dravidian India and early Egypt and instanced this bull worship.

"Nandi, the sacred bull, represents the individual ego of man," remarked the sage. "It is always shown in our temples facing the figure of the deity in the shrine, whilst a flat circular sacrificial stone altar is in front of it. The whole thing is a symbol. It means that the personal ego must be sacrificed and must always be turned towards the real self, the inner God."

This similarity of custom and faith strikes the reader again and again. The river Tigris was sacred to the Babylonians as is the Ganges to the Hindus and the same practices took place on its banks as take place at Benares.

Assyria and Judea are storied in the further chapters, and then Persia. One of the most attractive figures of the past was the Persian King Cyrus. He was one of those natural rulers at whose coronation, as some writer said, all men rejoice. The Greeks regarded him as the greatest before Alexander, although he was alien to them. He built a big empire but it was founded on kindness and magnanimity. Wherever he went he freed the oppressed instead of oppressing them still more. He preserved the religions and temples of the peoples whom he conquered and sympathetically studied their different divinities. His travels took him to the borders of India. In the Persian empire he built up the largest and best governed political organisation of pre-Roman times.

Dr Durant reserves his highest praise for India and his loftiest literary style for her culture. His description of the British conquest is blunt and outspoken; despite his daring criticisms, he admits, however, that the chaos and internal scars had left the country ripe for conquest and that the only question was which of the European powers should undertake the [task.]¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ PB himself deleted the paragraph after this by hand. It originally read: [Dr Durant] shows the whole background of the Indian peoples' rise from earliest to modern times - a cavalcade from the invasion of Alexander to the vast ferment inspired by Gandhi in our own time - and how they worked and dwelled and enjoyed and suffered. He presents their codified systems of religion, philosophy and science, as well as the vicissitudes of her art, music, painting, {illegible}.

Durant's final phrases on this peninsula whereon {illegible} are wise and {illegible} and discerning. "Perhaps in return for conquest, arrogance and spoilation," he writes, "India will teach us the tolerance and gentleness of the mature mind, the quiet content of the unacquisitive

Passing on to China, we learn that political philosophers thousands of years ago tried to work out a system of government based on carrying {illegible.}¹⁵⁸

The delicate poetry and fragile art of the flowery land, the inventions of paper and ink and printing, the stoic life of poverty-stricken peasantry – all these pass before our eyes are they are conjured up by the writer's fluent pen.

(161-1) International Press-Cutting Bureau
110, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4
Extract from Hindu Madras

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CIVILISATION THROUGH THE AGES

Fire Walking – How is it Done?

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FIRE WALKING – HOW IS IT DONE?

(163-1) A REPORT ON TWO EXPERIMENTAL FIRE WALKS: By Harry Price (With 20 illustrations and a bibliography, University of London Council for Psychical Investigation. 5sh.)

(163-2) It is a significant sign of the times that half a dozen European and American universities have thrown open their doors to psychical research, while the more cautious and conservative University of London has now even formed a Council for the same purpose. Adverse critics asserted that these universities were encouraging superstition and countenancing charlatanry, as well as running the risk of disturbing the intellectual balance of their students, but nevertheless they kept determinedly to their course.

The booklet under review is the London Council's second official publication. The visit of a young Kashmiri named Kuda Bux provided it with an opportunity to examine, test and report upon the Oriental phenomenon of fire-walking. The latter has never been seen in Europe but exists in Africa, India and the Polynesian Islands.

A group of London scientists and medical men took part in two spectacular tests for Kuda Bux's strange powers and I, too, would have accepted an invitation had not exigencies of time and space prevented me. A trench was dug in the open ground and filled with charcoal, whose temperature was then raised to the astounding height of four hundred and thirty degrees. Bux strode upon this fiery path with naked unprepared feet. He did this several times, but when two spectators tried to copy his performance they had to retire quickly, badly burned and blistered.

The investigation committee air two or three vague opinions and some far-fetched theories of individual members; these theories would never work out in practice

soul, the calm of the understanding spirit, and a unifying pacifying love for all things."

¹⁵⁸ The rest of this line is cut off by a wrinkle in the photocopy.

¹⁵⁹ Blank page

if the feat were attempted under the strictly test conditions which Bux willingly accepts. In fact, the old materialistic explanations explain nothing. However, a definite advance has been registered inasmuch as a learned body of Westerners is now willing to investigate patiently before dismissing the claims of Oriental fakirs as mere nonsense.

To my knowledge the fire-walking feat has been common enough in India to excite no under surprise. There was as well lately in Benares a family of professional fire-walkers among whose members the secrets have been passed down for generations. In obscure South Indian villages until recently the entire population would turn out on the occasion of certain religious festivals and indulge unharmed in a day's fire-walking.

When I discussed the subject of yoga with the Maharani¹⁶⁰ of Baroda last year, she mentioned incidentally that His Highness the Gaekwar, together with some members of his staff had once walked unharmed through a fire-trench after a fakir had made his mystic preparations and given the lead.

Fakirs whom I have questioned on the matter attribute the phenomenon to a lower order of spirits, whose aid is invoked. Kuda Bux himself attributes his immunity to the protection of a "higher power in India whom I have to ask whether I might perform the feat." Who dare say that they are romancing, when no other satisfactory explanation has yet come forth? The prudent modern mind will not be excited, either to acceptance or denial, but will weigh matters and wait.

Paul Brunton

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FIRE WALKING - HOW IS IT DONE?

Prophecies of the Past

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PROPHECIES OF THE PAST¹⁶²

(165-1) THE STORY OF PROPHECY; By Henry J. Forman (London; Cassel & Cp/ 10sh. 6d.)

(165-2) When I last visited England I discovered, not without some surprise, that a boom in astrology was growing apace. Widely circulated newspapers did not hesitate to devote regular space to instructive or predictive articles on the subject, while their advertising columns contained announcements of professional astrologers who evidently did a flourishing business. This occasions no comment in India but for a country like England, where everything that savours of occult intangible influences has usually been contemptuously dismissed by {educated}¹⁶³ people as superstition. {These}¹⁶⁴ innovations are highly significant straws which show plainly which way the

¹⁶⁰ "Maharanee" in the original.

¹⁶¹ Blank page

¹⁶² "The Hindu Madras," "28 FEB, 1937" appears at the top of the page in the original. PB himself inserted "by PB" at the top of the page by hand.

¹⁶³ The word is cut off by a hole punch in the original. Only "-ated" is visible in the original.

¹⁶⁴ The entire word is illegible in the original.

wind of belief is now blowing.

(165-3) {illegible}¹⁶⁵ a comparatively wide following that stretches from the highest to the lowest classes, from the ranks of the well-educated to those of the compulsorily educated. That cult rejoices in the name of the British-Israel agreement and promulgates doctrines of a queer [character.]¹⁶⁶

Here in South India I have found lengthy volumes written by learned Tamilians to prove that Christ was really a Tamilian himself, and that the Bible stories have reference, not to Palestine and Egypt, but to places situated within the Madras Presidency. So in the West I have found lengthy volumes written by enthusiastic advocates of the doctrine that the Israelites have left their best descendants in the Anglo-Saxon race, and that Christ was brought to Britain as a boy. Many other peculiar notions of a religious, anthropological, political and historical character emanate from the same source and are being sedulously propagated in England, America and the Colonies by means of books, magazines and cheap pamphlets, as well as a host of free tracts.

Although the present book does not appear under the imprint and aegis of the British-Israel Movement, a perfunctory examination alone reveals the spiritual impression of its hands, whilst a prolonged study confirms the deduction. Never-¹⁶⁷

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PROPHECIES OF THE PAST

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PROPHECIES OF THE PAST

(167-1) {Here}¹⁶⁹ is a book which deals with prophecies on a big scale, and which takes nationally-known historic figures and the fortunes of empires for its theme. It begins with a brief summary of famous prophets and oracles of the ancient world. Delphi was first. The priestess of the Delphic Oracle breathed a gas which emerged from a fissure in the rock beneath the tripod on which she sat, passed into a trance-like state, and then answered written questions in a cryptic and incoherent manner. Those answers were clarified by the attendant priests and put into dignified verse. For more than a thousand years all Greece respected and utilised this oracular shrine, which, incidentally was the one which pronounced Socrates to be the wisest of mankind.

The author points out that the Hebrew prophet Isaiah correctly foretold the captivity of the Israelites by the Babylonians 124 years before its occurrence, offering chapter xxxiv, verses 5-7, as evidence. Another interesting prediction appearing in the Old Testament was made by the prophet Zechariah. "Yea, many people and strong nations will come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem and to pray before the Lord,"

¹⁶⁵ There is a gap here in the original. This para begins partway down a clipped column, so the first line, and of course the missing lines, are illegible.

¹⁶⁶ PB himself inserted "by PB in the left margin by hand."

¹⁶⁷ Incomplete para - the rest of this para was not found in this file.

¹⁶⁸ Blank page

¹⁶⁹ This is a dark copy and difficult to read. Only "-ere" is visible in the original.

he asserted. It is historically true that many did come to the Second Temple of Jerusalem from Syria, Greece and Asia Minor, as well as from the Euphrates country, bearing gifts and desirous of acquainting themselves with the religion of the Israelites during one of its triumphant periods.

Yet the complement to this prediction was uttered by Jesus: "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Mark, xiii). Forty years later the Roman Emperor Titus took Jerusalem and destroyed the city, entirely erasing the famous temple from the ground.

Mr Forman devotes much space to Nostradamus (1503-1566), whom he calls "Europe's greatest prophet!" This celebrated man was a French physician of Jewish descent, and a student of ancient Egyptian books of astrology, according to his own claim. At one time his predictions caused such a sensation in medieval Europe that kings and queens sent for him, while hosts of lesser personages made long journeys to the little French town of Salon where he lived.

Nostradamus astonished his epoch by writing a book of versified predictions which foretold the destiny of Europe for the next two thousand years. {illegible}¹⁷⁰ of the verses, however, were hidden under a veil of obscure symbolism and were not easily interpreted. Those which were clearer generally proved remarkably correct. Thus he said that the reigning king of France would be blinded in a duel and die soon after, and that civil war would follow. All these things happened exactly as predicted.

Writing of the seventeenth century, he predicted that "The London Senate will put to death its King." The execution of Charles I was the fulfilment of these words. Concerning the future of England he said:

"The great empire of England will be all-powerful for more than three centuries;
Great armies and wealth will traverse the land and sea,
The Portuguese will not rejoice thereat."

At the time these lines were written, England was still one of the lesser Powers of Europe whilst Portugal controlled a flourishing empire. When we remember that the Portuguese were the first Europeans to become dominant in India, we may well understand that they did not "rejoice thereat."

Nostradamus writes without obscurity with reference to the city of Paris. During the present (twentieth) century a terrible leader will invade Paris from the sky, using frightful weapons. Fire from above will often fall. About the year 3420 the flames will prove inextinguishable and the great city will be utterly destroyed. "Not one of its dwellers will be left," he adds gloomily.

The recent revival of pagan Germanic deities may be indicated by the following lines: -

"In Germany will spring up different sects.
Strongly resembling a happy paganism."

¹⁷⁰ The word is entirely cut off by a hole punch in the original.

¹⁷¹ Blank page

(continued from the previous page) But what is this strange quatrain, which follows:

“A new sect of philosophers,
 Despising death, honour,
 riches,
 Will have the support of followers
 and (printing) presses.”

Is this some prophetic pointer to the influence of Indian thought on Europe now making itself felt in ever-widening ripples?

The book goes on to detail many other predictions made by astrologers and clairvoyants nearer to our own time. Most of them seem to agree that the worst war of all is yet to come, but in consolation it will be followed by the appearance of a great spiritual leader. These recurrent prophecies of the destruction of old conditions are therefore balanced by their hopes of the coming of a new age. How far these statements are correct we must leave to the test of time. Astrology as a “science” is still fragmentary and however great be the mystery of destiny, greater still is the mystery of Man himself. The anxious fears and transient hopes which are our reward for delving into the veiled future are better replaced by the sublime serenity which results from anchoring the mind in the deep waters of the divine Self, the Atman.

Paul Brunton

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PROPHECIES OF THE PAST

Among the Mystics and Spiritualists

171

AMONG MYSTICS AND SPIRITUALISTS¹⁷³

(171-1) We still look to the lands of the rising sun as lands holding both mystery and magic, despite the inevitable and unavoidable incursion of Western ways of thought, life and action.

Though Oriental beliefs and customs are everywhere being sapped by this impact, there remains a diminishing residue of occult tradition and spiritual culture. The exponents of these latter have largely forsaken the cities and retired to quieter places in the interior. The traveller who is interested in studying them and their lore can find them if he is willing to go off the beaten track.

(171-2) Spiritualism in its common Western forms is little known in India. By that I mean we do not find seances held in darkened rooms, we do not come across little

¹⁷² Blank page

¹⁷³ “THE INTERNATIONAL PSYCHIC GAZETTE - LONDON” in the original.

groups of people sitting around a table in a home circle or around a Medium in a public circle, and we do not hear of trance addresses and public clairvoyance. It is only lately that this sort of thing has been introduced into India and then only through the pioneer efforts of the indefatigable and gifted Mr V. D. Rishi, who has formed the Indian Spiritualist Society. Its influence, however, is very slight, although it will certainly extend itself greatly in the future.

In contrast to India, one finds a vast amount of Spiritualistic practice in China, due in part to the cult of Ancestor Worship which prevails in many parts of that country. The planchette, for instance, is very well known in China and the Chinese call it "the flying spirit-pencil." Then, {illegible,}¹⁷⁴ the Chinese belief is that the Ego, the individual {being,}¹⁷⁵ turns into a ghost-being, the kwei as they call it, which keeps in the sphere of this earth and may be contacted through mediumistic seances. The Chinese Spiritualists go even further than this, for they also seek direct messages from the gods themselves at these seances.

To return to India, one may say that a good deal of the phenomena which have been produced in Spiritualist circles of Europe and America can also be found in that country - with this difference that in the latter case they are frequently ascribed to the magical powers of the Fakirs¹⁷⁶ themselves. These fakirs do not usually call themselves Mediums but claim to exercise they own supernatural faculties and powers. Nevertheless, they do not deny their contact with spirits, or pitries as they call them, but say that they control the spirits and use them, instead of being controlled and used themselves as our Mediums are.

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AMONG MYSTICS AND SPIRITUALISTS

The Bhagavad Gita Explained

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THE BHAGAVAD GITA EXPLAINED

(173-1) HAS BEEN ACCLAIMED BY BOTH READERS AND REVIEWERS ALIKE - SAYS ... PAUL BRUNTON, Famous Author on Spiritual and Occult Subjects:-

"Prof. Wood has set himself to do what previous translators have not done. He has given his readers a modern, rational rendering, yet none the less faithfully correct one. He has transmitted the inner spirit and the idiomatic form of the Sanskrit original."

(173-2) SAYS ... DR RADHAKRISHNAN, Vice President of the Republic of India, Former Professor of Religion and Ethics, Oxford University, and World Recognised Authority on Sanskrit:-

"Prof. Ernest Wood has made a deep study of the India classics, philosophical

¹⁷⁴ The word is entirely blank in the photocopied original. It might be Guilao - "ghost man".

¹⁷⁵ The word is partly blank. Only "-ing" is visible in the original.

¹⁷⁶ "Faqueers" in the original.

¹⁷⁷ Blank page

and religious, and more than that he has got into the Spirit of Indian Wisdom ... His fresh rendering of The Bhagavad Gita in English and his running commentary on the verses have the contemporary man's interest in view .. THIS TRANSLATION HAS A POINT OF VIEW FRESH AND INTERESTING THROUGHOUT."

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THE BHAGAVAD GITA EXPLAINED

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THE BHAGAVAD GITA EXPLAINED

(continued from the previous page) Now ... Prof. ERNEST WOOD'S New Book THE BHAGAVAD GITA EXPLAINED

This work is a Literal translation of the Great Book of the science of life of the East. It provides the necessary explanations for every verse of Sanskrit teaching in "The Bhagavad Gita." It also helps the more advanced student to find new viewpoints and new information.

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THE BHAGAVAD GITA EXPLAINED

Review of Rudolf Steiner's Christian Rosenkretz

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(177-1) CHRISTIAN ROSENKREUTZ

by Rudolf Steiner, translated by Dorothy Osmond and Mary Adams

(The Rudolf Steiner Publishing Co. 12/6)

Review by Dr Paul Brunton

(177-2) The work of turning into English and putting into print the enormous mass of unpublished lecture material left behind by Dr Rudolf Steiner since his death a quarter of a century ago, has steadily gone forward. Although so many volumes are now available, the number which has yet to appear is still larger.

The book now under discussion is the latest addition to the series. It brings together within one pair of covers two separate but related courses of lectures. If they are separated by twelve years in time they are related by blood ties of Rosicrucian interest. The full title of Part I is The Mission of Christian Rosenkreutz: its Character and Purpose, whilst that of Part II is Rosicrucianism and Modern Initiation.

[A]¹⁸⁰ The first of Steiner's lectures is called "The Dawn of Occultism in the Modern Age." He brings in the principle of historical development in connection with the higher culture of humanity, particularly spiritual culture. The different kinds of civilisation to which the human being is exposed become full of meaning when we accept the idea that he returns again and again to earth. In this way he is schooled in different periods of culture and gains from each one what he could not get from the others. [B]¹⁸¹

The thirteenth century, Steiner continues, was a time of transitional importance, for it was a time of secret preparation for that intellectual culture which later characterised the modern world. Twelve men who were then living in Europe met privately for this purpose and took over the care and education of a child who, they foresaw, would one day be the most powerful and vital figure of their group. They were themselves highly spiritual individuals and brought out all his finer possibilities. He was kept rigidly from the world and untouched by its influences. At the age of twenty he was ready to go through a trance experience, similar to Paul's before Damascus, which led to an exceptional degree of wisdom and illumination¹⁸²

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CHRISTIAN ROSENKREUTZ REVIEW

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CHRISTIAN ROSENKREUTZ REVIEW

(179-1)¹⁸⁴ contact with other worlds was lost.

This view, which the evidence of history and of true esoteric tradition shows to

¹⁸⁰ PB himself inserted "A" by hand in the original.

¹⁸¹ PB himself inserted "B" by hand in the original.

¹⁸² Incomplete para - the rest of this para was not found in this file.

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¹⁸⁴ The paras on this page are not consecutive with the previous page.

be the correct one, contradicts the view of short-sighted contemporary occultists in America that the human race is on the verge of manifesting psychic faculties on a wider scale as a result of its own progressive evolution. [F]¹⁸⁵ It is misleading to suggest that only recently has a start been made to unfold spiritual capacities and develop psychical faculties. We are merely recovering the first and losing the second. The fact is that the twilight of inner sensitivity meant the dawn of intellectual faculty. The practical achievements of science became possible through such a change. If today those achievements threaten us with suicidal self-destruction, if the hopes for human welfare once raised by nineteenth-century science now seem absurdly extravagant, that is the warning signal to restore the balance and to regain the lost sensitivity of the past while holding fast to the intellectual gains of the present. This is indeed the most important mission of mystical teaching in our tragic times. [G]¹⁸⁶

To return to this book, it must be said that although so much of Rudolf Steiner's teaching is acceptable, some of it is disputable. But what remains indisputable is that the times call for more eager inquiry into what men like him have found through penetration into spiritual and cosmical facts, more dedication to self-ennoblement and self-upliftment, and more reverence for a higher power. [H]¹⁸⁷

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CHRISTIAN ROSENKREUTZ REVIEW

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CHRISTIAN ROSENKREUTZ REVIEW

(181-1)¹⁸⁹ handkerchief from a box-table, the bulging outwards from the cabinet of a pair of curtains weighing 14 lbs., etc. Last, but most assuredly not least, there are photographs automatically recorded at the twenty-~~illegible~~¹⁹⁰ sitting indicating fraud on the part of Rudi Schneider; for it can clearly be seen that the left hand has been disengaged from control; thus ~~illegible~~¹⁹¹ ever phenomena occurred during that particular seance, lose their value because of this alleged trickery.

This discovery obviously upset Harry Price very considerably; but he remarks, philosophically, that although it may well be alleged that the medium did on one occasion resort to trickery - and this is proved by the photographs - nevertheless some of the phenomena which did occur at other of the seances were undoubtedly genuine. Of this series of seances, some seventeen were negative, and Harry Price is forced to conclude that Rudi Schneider is swiftly losing his power.

¹⁸⁵ PB himself inserted "F" by hand in the original.

¹⁸⁶ PB himself inserted "G" by hand in the original.

¹⁸⁷ PB himself inserted "H" by hand in the original.

¹⁸⁸ Blank page

¹⁸⁹ The paras on this page are not consecutive with the previous page. It appears that none of them are by or about PB. The top of the page reads "THE OCCULT REVIEW" but we cannot determine the year.

This para is by Israel Regardie. - TJS '20

¹⁹⁰ The word is entirely cut off by the right margin in the original photocopy.

¹⁹¹ The word is cut off by the right margin. Only "w-" is visible in the original photocopy.

I. REGARDIE.

(181-2) THE ELEMENTS OF HEAVEN. Script received by Marjorie Livingston. Author of The New Nuctemeron, etc. London: Wright & Brown. Pp. 158. Price 4s. 6d. net.

Chronologically, this is the first of four books received inspirationally by the same medium. The present script will have a double appeal to Spiritualists, as it is said to be communicated by Zabdiel, a spirit-entity familiar to all readers of the Vale Owen Script. "I hear Zabdiel's voice as clearly as I hear a voice speaking through a telephone," Mrs Livingston explains: yet on the jacket of The Elements of Heaven it is granted, a little contradictively, that these messages are coloured by the medium's mentality. Thus a critic has the ground cut out from under him; since it is well-nigh impossible for any to decide save the medium herself, who is responsible for each opinion advanced.

Zabdiel's teaching is, in conformity with his mode of expression, mostly of a precious and pretentious type; he is ever, as it were, "on tiptoe for a flight," but seldom rises above the level of flower, and sometimes rather sickly, emotionalism. While we quite appreciate the honesty of presenting the matter just as it came through, we feel, none the less, that these communications would have lost nothing by a little judicious editing. However, those who have enjoyed reading other volumes of Mrs Livingstone's "inspirational" writing will, without question, derive equal pleasure from the perusal of this one.

FRANK LIND.

(181-3) THE SAMARITAN ORAL LAW AND ANCIENT TRADITIONS. Vol. I. SAMARITAN ESCHATOLOGY. By Moses Gaster, Ph. D. Demi 8vo. Pp. 278. London: The Search Publishing Co. 12s. 6d.

In the field of scholarship generally, little or nothing is known about the Samaritans, for which reason a work by Dr Gaster on this subject is doubly welcome. He has been in close touch with the high priests and learned men of the Samaritans for some thirty-five years, and has,

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CHRISTIAN ROSENKREUTZ REVIEW

Title Page Insert

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TITLE PAGE INSERT

(183-1)¹⁹³ HIS HOLINESS SRI SHANKARACHARYA SWAMI OF KAMAKOTI PEETAM

Extract with preface by PB. Published in INDIA by Ayyar for B.G. Paul & Co. 1936

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¹⁹³ This entire page is handwritten, and not by PB. — TJS '20

(183-2) THE MAHARAJAH SAHEB OF PITHAPURAM
A Character Sketch by PB

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The Maharajah Saheb of Pithapuram

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(187-1) THE MAHARAJAH SAHEB OF PITHAPURAM
By Paul Brunton
(Author of "a Search in Secret India" etc.)

(187-2) Anyone who has wandered around the world, as I have, finds that certain ideas are fairly common amongst most people, no matter where they are born, and amongst most races, no matter the colour of the skin.

One of these ideas, for instance, is that people whom life and birth have financially favoured are likely to be spiritual bankrupts. I have heard this said in Europe, and I hear it said again in India of that class called Zemindars. Well, they may be so, but on the other hand they may not.

Anyway, I know one Zamindar who most definitely and assuredly is not but who, on the contrary, is spiritually rich.

That man is the Maharajah Saheb of Pithapuram.

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(continued from the previous page) Underneath the robes of education and the cap of convention, human nature differs far less than persons who lack wide experience generally imagine. No single class – whether working men or aristocrats – can claim to have the sole monopoly of faith in God. Nor does Truth favour anyone: she reveals herself to the worthy with complete indifference to their status or their possessions.

In these democratic days it is the fashion in certain circles to talk either with

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¹⁹⁵ "1936" appears at the bottom of the page in the original.

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disparaging sneers or hated envious breath of one who belongs to the higher ranks of society. Such persons never dream that the subject of their remarks is as human as they are and therefore cannot escape from the inevitable troubles and trials which beset us all, without exception.

The skeleton of suffering is in every family cupboard, be it that of a king or a commoner. The tales of woe which I have heard from the lips of poor labourers have their precise counterparts in the tales of woe which I have heard from the lips of not a few Royalties. The comradeship

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(continued from the previous page) of the trenches during the War did more for democracy than dozens of boring statistical volumes.

The Maharajah of Pithapuram, too, has not escaped sorrows. He has been bereaved by a terribly agonising domestic tragedy, whilst painful illness has pursued him, but this is a theme upon which I need not enlarge. In spite of all, he has remained a man of humble faith in God and kindly disposition towards his fellows. His hours of suffering may have scarred him but they have not been permitted to destroy his ideals. In fact, his genial face is frequently wreathed in smiles and his bespectacled eyes often carry a humorous twinkle.

If he accepts his privilege, he does not forget his obligations. With his entry into the political arena more prominently as the Founder of the People's Party, the Maharajah Saheb has inevitably drawn upon himself the attention of many eyes in the southern presidency. And because I fear that the usual misunderstandings will come to his lot, I have ventured to write this article.

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(continued from the previous page) I hope I will not be misunderstood. I have the pleasure of knowing Indians who are firebrand Congressites and Europeans who are obstinate die-hards and Liberals who balance themselves between both these attitudes. Personally I am no political propagandist. I take an independent and detached view of politics, and especially of Indian politics. This has been possible only because of a unifying tie in a totally different sphere. Believing as I do that men of the most opposite and inimical political ideas may yet meet on a common spiritual platform, I have sought to help in the building of such a platform, sought to spread more goodwill in this distracted world.

There is room in public life for men who sincerely seek to serve India no less than for those whose chief desire is to carve out a career, and nothing more. Fools and politicians yearn for fame; wise men spurn it; but a few accept it as the inevitable resultant of their efforts to leave their land better than they found it.

The Maharajah Saheb has started the People's Party, whatever the merits or demerits of its programme

(continued from the previous page) indubitably "as a matter of solemn duty with the sole purpose of serving the best interests of our country," to use his own words. Such words, coming from other lips, might carry little more value than their sound; but coming from the Maharajah of Pithapuram they are certain to have been well-weighed and deeply meant.

I know him well enough to know that he carefully considers such statements before making them, because he fully intends to make performance, and not promise, the basis of his political existence. He will not knowingly offer anything verbally to the electorate, unless he is reasonably certain of carrying it out in action, if placed in power. Possibly, he errs on the side of over-prudence in this connection, and sacrifices potential votes to over-scrupulous honesty.

The Maharajah Saheb is a realist and will not play like a child with fantastic dreams impossible of realisation. He wants to do whatever he sees in his mind can really be done, and not pretend that India can be changed by glowing phrases and party formulas.

(continued from the previous page) The growth of bitterness and hatred in the modern world, engendered generally by political, economic, caste and national strife, is something which he views with grave concern. He feels that his work is not to take the easy path of destroying and attacking defective institutions, but to build and create, to adopt an attitude which shall be constructive and helpful. He holds very strongly the integrating ideals which are so needed today, and he is prepared to work with all castes and communities, with Brahmins and non-Brahmins, British as well as Indians, poor as well as rich.

The world's greatest need today is more good-will and understanding. The Maharajah of Pithapuram would subscribe to this view, I am sure. In an age of shouting politicians and raging revolutionaries, he pursues his calm sedate way, working quietly for the things that are within India's reach now. He does not regard the British as a race of devils, as so many do, nor is he blind to their defects. He sees that the way of orderly constitutional effort to secure more from their hands for India is no less entitled to consideration than the noisier ways of others. I

(continued from the previous page) do not think he is satisfied with the present Reforms, as I doubt whether any thinking Indian can be. But he does not propose to rush inside like a rampaging bear and destroy what has been won with so much effort, so much sacrifice. His attitude is to make the utmost possible use of the present Reforms whilst keeping in view and calmly working for a further instalment of better

ones. I would like to point to an ancient truth: –

Character counts. – Nothing wrong can happen to a country when it places men of sterling character at its head, nothing but good can come of such an act. If the man at the head of a party is honest, unselfish, noble-minded and balanced, then we may expect political fruits in accordance. Such a man exists in the subject of this article. These qualities of soul must inevitably and ultimately materialise into tangible benefit to the people.

The physical appearance of the Maharajah Saheb fits his nature. His voice is soft, his manner modest, his movements quiet, yet withal he is a cheery personality. A man of middle height

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(continued from the previous page) and kindly bearing. He has attained an age – fifty – when a life's experience has been accumulated and thoughtfully digested to the full.

He has the broad religious views and tolerant understanding of a Brahmo-Samajist, and avows himself a keen admirer of the illustrious Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He draws much inspiration from the life and ideas of that famous pioneer of India's awakening.

His interest in the cause of culture has been very definite. Every one of the 1800 students at the Pithapur Rajah's College in Cocanada is indirectly indebted to him for the munificent help which has been given to this First Grade institution in the way of new buildings, financial endowments and scholarships. He has made it possible for an encyclopaedic Telugu lexicon to be prepared and for rare or ancient Telugu books of merit to be published.

I have seen at Cocanada the finest orphanage in South India, where poor boys and girls receive a home education – another fruit of the Maharaj's generosity. Finally it is worth mentioning

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(continued from the previous page) that he was the prime mover in the an attempt to get the Madras Legislative Council to provide for the care of ailing, aged and disabled destitutes.

Finally one recent act of his amply demonstrates his interest in the improvement of conditions for the working class. Spontaneously and voluntarily, the Mahrajah Saheb raised the pay of all menial servants and workers on his estates – a step whose total cost was not less than about thirty thousand rupees annually.

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His Holiness Sri Shankaracharya Swami of Kamakoti Peetam

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HIS HOLINESS SRI SHANKARACHARYA¹⁹⁸

(197-1) By PAUL BRUNTON

(Author of A Search in Secret India, A Search in Secret Egypt and The Secret Path)

Published by D. BALASUBRAMANIA AYYAR

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(continued from the previous page) FOR CIRCULATION IN INDIA ONLY

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Preface

(continued from the previous page) India holds an ancient heritage of spiritual thought from its past that stands unparalleled for profundity and unmatched for width. Indians, therefore, should claim this birthright, finding what is worthy and applicable to present needs. They should neither be awed by Western scepticism, nor corrupted by modern materialism, nor stupefied by religious wrangling, but go to their best leaders for guidance. And among the latter, His Holiness Sri Shankaracharya¹⁹⁹ of Kamakotipeetam, is a note-worthy figure, serving as an exemplar, guiding as a teacher and shining as an incarnation of a lofty soul.

Only when the world will consent to become inspired by spiritual principles can it hope to find the real solution of the multitude of economic, political and social problems that face it. All solutions that lack these principles are but paint and varnish that hide but do not change. Only by raising the public conscience through the efforts of inspired men and true religious teachers, will real change come about. The almost complete exclusion of higher principles and ethical considerations from the ruling

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Preface

(continued from the previous page) policies of most modern States is something

¹⁹⁸ "SANKARACHARYA" in the original.

¹⁹⁹ "Shri Shankara Acharya" in the original.

to deplore, something that is bringing its own Nemesis upon the modern world.

India, from time immemorial, has supplied history with the figures of outstanding spiritual personages, who embodied the highest teachings in themselves. That supply may be diminished today but it has not quite failed. In His Holiness Sri Shankaracharya the line continues, while in his constant re-assertion of those fundamental truths which are the jewels set upon the casket of Hinduism, the truth is re-proclaimed to the world. His Holiness's own personality and doctrine testify anew to the inalienable human necessity of worship, of reverence, and of trust in that Higher Power Whom men name variously.

I am happy to give permission for the reprint of the following chapter from my book, A Search in Secret India.

Feb. 1936

PB

Tiruvannamalai,

South India

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Preface

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Preface

(202-1) HIS HOLINESS, THE JAGADGURU, SRI CHANDRASEKHARENDRA SARASWATI SWAMIGAL OF THE KANCHI KAMAKOTI PEETAM, KUMBAKONAM

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An Extract from A Search in Secret India

(203-1) I - THE SEARCH FOR A SPIRITUAL GURU

About the time of tiffin, that is, tea and biscuits, the servant announces a visitor. The latter proves to be a fellow member of the ink-stained fraternity, to wit, the writer Venkataramani.

Several letters of introduction lie where I have thrown them, at the bottom of my trunk. I have no desire to use them. This is in response to a curious whim that it might be better to tempt whatever gods there be to do their best or worst. However, I used one in Bombay, preparatory to

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²⁰¹ This page is composed primarily of a rare picture of Sri Shankaracharya as a young man.

(continued from the previous page) beginning my quest, and I used another in Madras because I have been charged to deliver a personal message with it. And this, this second note has brought Venkataramani to my door.

He is a member of the Senate of Madras University, but he is better known as the author of talented essays and novels of village life. He is the first Hindu writer in Madras Presidency, who uses the medium of English, to be publicly presented with an inscribed ivory shield because of his services to literature. He writes in a delicate style of such merit as to win high commendation from Rabindranath Tagore in India and from the late Lord Haldane in England. His prose is piled with beautiful metaphors, but his stories tell of the melancholy life of neglected villages.

As he enters the room I look at his tall, lean person, his small head with its tiny tuft of hair, his small chin and bespectacled eyes. They are the eyes of a thinker, an

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(continued from the previous page) idealist and a poet combined. Yet the sorrows of suffering peasants are reflected in their sad irises.

We soon find ourselves on several paths of common interest. After we have compared notes about most things, after we have pulled politics to pieces and swung the censers of adoration before our favourite authors, I am suddenly impressed to reveal to him the real reason of my Indian visit. I tell him with perfect frankness what my object is; I ask him about the whereabouts of any real Yogis who possess demonstrable attainments; and I warn him that I am not especially interested in meeting dir-besmeared ascetics or juggling fakirs²⁰².

He bows his head and then shakes it negatively.

"India is no longer the land of such men. With the increasing materialism of our country, its wide degeneration on one hand, and the impact of unspiritual Western culture on the other, the men you are seeking,

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(continued from the previous page) the great masters, have all but disappeared. Yet I firmly believe that some exist in retirement, in lonely forests perhaps, but unless you devote a whole life time to the search, you will find them with the greatest difficulty. When my fellow Indians under-take such a quest as yours, they have to roam far and wide nowadays. Then how much harder will it be for a European?"

"Then you hold out little hope?" I ask.

"Well, one cannot say. You may be fortunate."

²⁰² "faqueers" in the original.

Something moves me to put a sudden question:

“Have you heard of a Master who lives in the hills of North Arcot?”

He shakes his head.

Our talk wanders back to literary topics.

I offer him a cigarette, but he excuses himself from smoking. I light one for myself and while I inhale the fragrant smoke of the Turkish weed, Venkataramani pours out his heart in passionate praise of the

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(continued from the previous page) fast disappearing ideals of old Hindu culture. He makes reference to such ideas as simplicity of living, service of the community, leisurely existence and spiritual aims. He wants to lop off parasitic stupidities which grow on the body of Indian society. The biggest thing in his mind, however, is his vision of saving the half-million villages of India from becoming mere recruiting centres for the slums of large industrialised towns. Though this menace is more remote than real, his prophetic insight and memory of Western industrial history sees this as a certain result of present day trends. Venkataramani tells me that he was born in a family with property near one of the oldest villages of South India, and he greatly laments the cultural decay and material poverty into which village life had fallen. He loves to hatch out schemes for the betterment of the simple village folk, and he refuses to be happy whilst they are unhappy.

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(continued from the previous page) I listen quietly in the attempt to understand his view point. Finally, he rises to go and I watch his tall thin form disappear down the road.

Early next morning I am surprised to receive an unexpected visit from him. His carriage rushes hastily to the gate, for he fears I might be out.

“I received a message late last night that my greatest patron is staying for one day at Chingleput,” he bursts out.

After he has recovered his breath, he continues:

“His Holiness Sri Shankaracharya of Kumbakonam is the Spiritual Head of South India. Millions of people revere him as one of God’s teachers. It happens that he has taken a great interest in me and has encouraged my literary career, and of course he is the one to whom I look for spiritual advice. I may now tell you what I refrained from mentioning yesterday. We regard him as a master of the highest

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(continued from the previous page) spiritual attainment. But he is not a Yogi. He is the Primate of the Southern Hindu world, a true saint and great religious philosopher. Because he is fully aware of most of the spiritual currents of our time, and because of his attainment, he has probably an exceptional knowledge of the real Yogis. He travels a good deal from village to village and from city to city, so that he is particularly well informed on such matters. Wherever he goes, the holy men come to him and pay their respects. He could probably give you some useful advice. Would you like to visit him?"

"That is extremely kind of you. I shall gladly go on. How far is Chingleput?"

"Only thirty-five miles from here. But stay - ?"

"Yes?"

"I begin to doubt whether His Holiness would grant you an audience. Of course I shall do my utmost to persuade him. But -"

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(continued from the previous page) "I am a European!" I finish the sentence for him. "I understand."

"You will take the risk of a rebuff?" He asks, a little anxiously.

"Certainly. Let us go."

After a light meal we set out for Chingleput. I ply my literary companion with questions about the man I hope to see this day. I learn that Sri Shankara lives a life of almost ascetic plainness as regards food and clothing, but the dignity of his high office requires him to move in regal panoply when travelling. He is followed then by a retinue of mounted elephants and camels, pundits and their pupils, heralds and camp followers generally. Wherever he goes he becomes the magnet for crowds of visitors from the surrounding localities. They come for spiritual, mental, physical and financial assistance. Thousands of rupees are daily laid at his feet by the rich, but because he has taken a vow of poverty, this income is applied to worthy purposes

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(continued from the previous page) He relieves the poor, assists education, repairs decaying temples and improves the condition of those artificial rain-fed pools which are so useful in the riverless tracts of South India. His mission, however, is primarily spiritual. At every stopping-place he endeavours to inspire the people to a deeper understanding of their heritage of Hinduism, as well as to elevate their hearts and minds. He usually gives a discourse at the local temple and then privately answers the multitude of querents who flock to him.

I learn that Sri Shankara is the sixty-sixth bearer of the title in direct line of succession from the original Shankara. To get his office and power into the right

perspective within my mind, I am forced to ask Venkataramani several questions about the founder of the line. It appears that the first Shankara flourished over two thousand years ago, and that he was one of the greatest of the historical Brahmin sages.

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(continued from the previous page) He might be described as a rational mystic, and as a philosopher of the first rank. He found the Hinduism of his time in a disordered and decrepit state, with its spiritual vitality fast fading. It seems that he was born for a mission. From the age of eighteen he wandered throughout India on foot, arguing with the intelligentsia and the priests of every district through which he passed, teaching the doctrines of his own creation, and acquiring a considerable following. His intellect was so acute that, usually, he was more than a match for those he met. He was fortunate enough to be accepted and honoured as a prophet during his lifetime, and not after the life had flickered out of his throat.

He was a man with many purposes. Although he championed the chief religion of his country, he strongly condemned the pernicious practices which had grown up under its cloak. He tried to bring people into the way of virtue and exposed the

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(continued from the previous page) futility of mere reliance on ornate rituals, unaccompanied by personal effort. He broke the rules of caste by performing the obsequies at the death of his own mother, for which the priests excommunicated him. This fearless young man was a worthy successor to Buddha, the first famous caste breaker. In opposition to the priests he taught that every human being, irrespective of caste or colour, could attain to the grace of God and to knowledge of the highest Truth. He founded no special creed but held that every religion was a path to God, if sincerely held and followed into its mystic inwardness. He elaborated a complete and subtle system of philosophy in order to prove his points. He has left a large literary legacy which is honoured in every city of sacred learning throughout the country. The pundits greatly treasure his philosophical and religious bequest, although they naturally quibble and quarrel over its meaning.

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(continued from the previous page) Adi Shankara travelled throughout India wearing an ochre robe and carrying a pilgrim's staff. As a clever piece of strategy, he established four great institutions at the four points of the compass. There was one at Badrinath in the North, at Puri in the East, and so on. The central headquarters,

together with a temple and monastery, were established in the South where he began his work. To this day the South has remained the holy of the holies of Hinduism. From these institutions there would emerge, when the rainy seasons over, trained bands of monks who travelled the country to carry Shankara's message. This remarkable man died at the early age of thirty-two, though one legend has it that he simply disappeared.

The value of this information becomes apparent when I learn that his successor, whom I am to see this day, carries on the same work and the same teaching. In this connection, there exists a strange tradition.

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(continued from the previous page) The first Shankara promised his disciples that he would still abide with them in spirit, and that he would accomplish this by the mysterious process of "overshadowing" his successors. A somewhat similar theory is attached to the office of the Grand Lama of Tibet. The predecessor in office, during his last dying moments, names the one worthy to follow him. The selected person is usually a lad of tender years, who is then taken in hand by the best teachers available and given a thorough training to fit him for his exalted post. His training is not only religious and intellectual, but also along the lines of higher yoga and meditation practices. This training is then followed by a life of great activity in the service of the people. It is a singular fact that through all the many centuries this line has been established, not a single holder of the title has ever been known to have other than the highest and most selfless character.

Venkatamarani embellishes his narrative

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(continued from the previous page) with stories of the remarkable gifts which Sri Shankara the sixty-sixth possesses. There is an account of the miraculous healing of his own cousin. The latter has been crippled by rheumatism and confined to his bed for many years. Sri Shankara visits him, touches his body, and within three hours the invalid is so far better that he gets out of bed; soon, he is completely cured.

There is the further assertion that His Holiness is credited with the power of reading the thoughts of other persons; at any rate, Venkataramani fully believes this to be true.

(216-1) II - WITH THE SPIRITUAL HEAD OF SOUTH INDIA

We enter Chingleput through a palm-fringed highway and find it a tangle of white-washed houses, huddled red roofs and

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(continued from the previous page) narrow lanes. We get down and walk into the centre of the city where large crowds are gathered together. I am taken into a house where a group of secretaries are busily engaged handling the huge correspondence which follows His Holiness from his headquarters at Kumbakonam. I was in a chairless anti-room while Venkataramani sends one of the secretaries with a message to Sri Shankara. More than half an hour passes before the man returns with the reply that the audience I seek cannot be granted. His Holiness does not see his way to receiving a European; moreover, there are two hundred people waiting for interviews already. Many person have been staying in the town overnight in order to secure their interviews. The secretary is profuse in his apologies.

I philosophically accept the situation, but Venkataramani says that he will try to get into the presence of His Holiness as a privileged disciple, and then plead my

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(continued from the previous page) cause. Several members of the crowd murmur unpleasantly when they become aware of his intention to pass into the coveted house out of his turn. After much talk and babbling explanations, he wins through. He returns eventually, smiling and victorious.

“His Holiness will make a special exception in your case. He will see you in about one hour’s time.”

I fill the time with some idle wandering in the picturesque lanes which run down to the chief temple. I meet some servants who are leading a train of grey elephants and big buff-brown camels to a drinking-place. Some one points out to me the magnificent animal which carries the Spiritual Head of South India on his travels. He rides in regal fashion, borne aloft in an opulent howdah on the back of a tall elephant. It is finely covered with ornate trappings, rich cloths and gold embroideries. I watch the dignified old creature step forward

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(continued from the previous page) along the street. Its trunk coils up and comes down again as it passes.

Remembering the time-worn custom which requires one to bring a little offering of fruits, flowers or sweetmeats when visiting a spiritual personage, I procure a gift to place before my august host. Oranges and flowers are the only things in sight and I collect as much as I can conveniently carry.

In the crowd which presses outside His Holiness’s temporary residence, I forget another important custom. “Remove your shoes,” Venkataramani reminds me promptly. I take them off and leave them out in the street, hoping that they will still be

there when I return!

We pass through a tiny door-way and enter a bare ante-room. At the far end there is a dimly lit enclosure, where I behold a short figure standing in the shadows. I approach closer to him, put down my little offering and bow low in salutation.

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(continued from the previous page) There is an artistic value in this ceremony which greatly appeals to me, apart from its necessity as an expression of respect and as a harmless courtesy. I know well that Sri²⁰³ Shankara is no Pope, for there is no such thing in Hinduism, but he is teacher and inspirer of a religious flock of vast dimensions. Nearly the whole of South India bows to his tutelage.

I look at him in silence. This short man is clad in the ochre-coloured robe of a monk and leans his weight on a friar's staff. I have been told that he is on the right side of forty, hence I am surprised to find his hair quite grey.

His noble face, pictured in grey and brown, takes an honoured place in the long portrait gallery of my memory. That elusive element which the French aptly term spiritual is present in his face. His expression is modest and mild, the large dark eyes being extraordinarily tranquil and beautiful. The nose is short, straight and classically

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(continued from the previous page) regular. There is a rugged little beard on his chin, and the gravity of his mouth is most noticeable. Such a face might have belonged to one of the saints who graced the Christian Church during the Middle Ages, except that this one possesses the added quality of intellectuality. I suppose we of the practical West would say that he has the eyes of a dreamer. Somehow I feel in an inexplicable way that there is something more than mere dreams behind those heavy lids.

"Your Holiness has been very kind to receive me," I remark, by way of introduction.

He turns to my companion, the writer, and says something in the vernacular. I guess its meaning correctly.

"His Holiness understands your English, but he is afraid that you will not understand his own. So he prefers to have me translate his answers," says Venkataramani.

I shall sweep through the earlier phases

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²⁰³ "Shri" in the original.

(continued from the previous page) of this interview, because they are more concerned with myself than with this Hindu Primate. He asks about my personal experiences in the country; he is very interested in ascertaining the exact impressions which Indian people and institutions make upon a foreigner. I give him my candid impressions, mixing praise and criticism freely and frankly.

The conversation then flows into wider channels and I am much surprised to find that he regularly reads English newspapers, and that he is well informed upon current affairs in the outside world. Indeed, he is not unaware of what the latest noise at Westminster is about, and he knows also through what painful travail the troublous infant of democracy is passing in Europe.

I remember Venkataramani's firm belief that Sri Shankara possesses prophetic insight. It touches my fancy to press for some opinion about the world's future.

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(continued from the previous page) "When do you think that the political and economic conditions everywhere will begin to improve?"

"A change for the better is not easy to come by quickly," he replies. "It is a process which must needs take some time. How can things improve when the nations spend more each year on the weapons of death?"

"There is nevertheless much talk of disarmament today. Does that count?"

"If you scrap your battleships and let your cannons rust, that will not stop war. People will continue to fight, even if they have to use sticks!"

"But what can be done to help matters?"

"Nothing but spiritual understanding between one nation and another, and between rich and poor, will produce goodwill and thus bring real peace and prosperity."

"That seems far off. Our outlook is hardly cheerful, then."

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(continued from the previous page) His Holiness rests his arm a little more heavily upon his staff.

"There is still God," he remarks gently.

"If there is, He seems very far away," I boldly protest.

"God has nothing but love towards mankind," comes the soft answer.

"Judging by the unhappiness and wretchedness which afflict the world today, He has nothing but indifference," I break out impulsively, unable to keep the bitter force of irony out of my voice. His Holiness looks at me strangely. Immediately I regret my hasty words.

"The eyes of a patient man see deeper. God will use human instruments to

adjust matters at the appointed hour. The turmoil among nations, the moral wickedness among people and the suffering of miserable millions will provoke, as a reaction, some great divinely-inspired man to come to the rescue. In this sense, every country has its own saviour. The process works

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(continued from the previous page) like a law of physics. The greater the wretchedness caused by spiritual ignorance, materialism, the greater will be the man who will arise to help the world."

"Then do you expect some one to arise in our time, too?"

"In our country," he corrects. "Assuredly the need of the world is so great and its spiritual darkness is so thick that an inspired man of God will surely arise."

"Is it your opinion, then, that men are becoming more degraded?" I query.

"No, I do not think so," he replied tolerantly. "There is an indwelling divine soul in man which, in the end, must bring him back to God."

"But there are ruffians in our Western cities who behave as though there were indwelling demons in them," I counter, thinking of the modern gangster.

"Do not blame people so much as the environments into which they are born. Their surroundings and circumstances

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(continued from the previous page) force them to become worse than they really are. That is true of both the East and West. Society must be brought into tune with a higher note. Materialism must be balanced by idealism; there is no other real cure for the world's difficulties. The troubles into which countries are everywhere being plunged are really the agonies which will force this change just as failure is frequently a signpost pointing to another road."

"You would like people to introduce spiritual principles into their worldly dealings, then?"

"Quite so. It is not impracticable, because it is the only way to bring about results which will satisfy everyone in the end, and which will not speedily disappear. And if there were more men who had found spiritual light in the world it would spread more quickly. India, to its honour, supports and respects its spiritual men, though less so than in former times. If all the

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(continued from the previous page) world were to do the same, and to take its guidance

from men of spiritual vision, then all the world would soon find peace and grow prosperous."

Our conversation trails on. I am quick to notice, that Sri Shankara does not decry the West in order to exalt the East, as many in his land do. He admits that each half of the globe possesses its own set of virtues and vices, and that in this way they are roughly equal! He hopes that a wiser generation will fuse the best points of Asiatic and European civilisations into a higher and balanced social scheme.

I drop the subject and ask permission for some personal questions. It is granted without difficulty.

"How long has your Holiness held his title?"

"Since 1907. At that time I was about twelve years old."

"You rarely remain at your headquarters in Kumbakonam, I take it?"

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(continued from the previous page) "Yes, I've been travelling for 15 years from village to village in these districts. But I am slowly moving North towards Benares. But during all these years I have not been able to advance more than a few hundred miles because a tradition of my office requires that I stay in every village and town which I pass on the route or which invites me, if it is not too far off. I must give a spiritual discourse in the local temple and some teaching to the inhabitants."

I broach the matter of my quest and His Holiness questions me about the different Yogis or holy men I have so far met. After that, I frankly tell him:

"I would like to meet some one who has high attainments in Yoga and can give some sort of proof as demonstration of them. There are many of your holy men who can only give one more talk when they are asked for this proof. Am I asking too much?"

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(continued from the previous page) The tranquil eyes meet mine.

There is a pause for a whole minute. His Holiness fingers his beard.

"If you are seeking initiation into real Yoga of the higher kind, then you are not seeking too much. Your earnestness will help you, while I can perceive the strength of your determination; but a light is beginning to awaken within you which will guide you to what you want without doubt."

I am not sure whether I correctly understand him.

"So far I have depended on myself for guidance. Even some of your ancient sages say that there is no other god than that which is within ourselves," I hazard.

And the answer swiftly comes:

"God is everywhere. How can one limit Him to one's own self? He supports the entire universe."

I feel that I am getting out of my depth and immediately turn the talk away from this semi-theological strain.

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(continued from the previous page) "What is the most practical course for me to take?"

"Go on with your travels. When you have finished them, think of the various Yogis and holy men you have met; then pick out the one who makes most appeal to you. Return to him, and he will surely bestow his initiation upon you."

I look at his calm profile and admire its singular serenity.

"But suppose, Your Holiness, that none of them makes sufficient appeal to me. What then?"

"In that case you will have to go on alone until God Himself initiates you. Practise meditation regularly; contemplate the higher things with love in your heart; think often of the soul and that will help to bring you to it. The best time to practise is the hour of waking; the next best time is the hour of twilight. The world is calmer at those times and will disturb your meditations less."

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(continued from the previous page) He gazes benevolently at me. I begin to envy the saintly peace which dwells on his bearded face. Surely, his heart has never known the devastating upheavals which have scarred mine? I am stirred to ask him impulsively:

"If I fail, may I then turn to you for assistance?"

Sri Shankara gently shakes his head.

"I am at the head of a public institution, a man whose time no longer belongs to himself. My activities demand almost all my time. For years I have spent only three hours in sleep each night. How can I take personal pupils? You must find a master who devotes his time to them."

"But I am told that real masters are rare, and that a European is unlikely to find them."

He nods his assent to my statement, but adds;

"Truth exists. It can be found."

"Can you not direct me to such a master,

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(continued from the previous page) one who you know is competent to give me proofs

of the reality of higher Yoga?"

His Holiness does not reply till after an interval of protracted silence.

"Yes. I know of only two masters in India who could give you what you wish. One of them lives far away in the South, hidden away in deep jungle. He is observing the vow of silence. Few people attain access to him; certainly, no European has yet been able to intrude upon his seclusion. I could send you to him. But I fear that he may refuse to admit a European."

"And the other - ?" My interest is strangely stirred.

"The other man lives in the interior. I know him to be a high master. I recommend that you go to him."

"Who is he?"

"He is called the Maharshi. His abode is on Arunachala the Hill of the Holy Beacon, which is near the town of Tiruvannamalai, in the district of North Arcot.

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(continued from the previous page) Shall I provide you with full instructions, so that you may discover him?"

A picture flashes suddenly before my mind's eyes.

I see the yellow robed friar, who has vainly persuaded me to accompany him to his teacher. I hear him murmuring the name of a hill. It is;²⁰⁴ "The Hill of the Holy Beacon."

"Many thanks, your Holiness" I rejoin, "But I have a guide who comes from the place."

"Then you will go there?"

I hesitate.

"All arrangements have been made for my departure from the South tomorrow," I mutter uncertainly.

"In that case I have a request to make."

"With pleasure."

"Promise me that you will not leave South India before you have met the Maharshi."

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(continued from the previous page) I read in his eyes a sincere desire to help me. The promise is given.

A benignant smile crosses his face.

"Do not be anxious. You shall discover that which you seek."

²⁰⁴ Throughought this document the semicolon is sometimes used where we now would use a colon. We have retained this outdated punctuation since its usage is fairly obvious. —TJS '20

A murmur from the crowd which is in the street penetrates the house.

"I have taken up too much of your valuable time," I apologise. "I am indeed sorry."

Sri Shankara's grave mouth relaxes. He follows me into the anti-room and whispers something into the ear of my companion. I catch my name in the sentence.

At the door I turn to bow in farewell salutation. His Holiness calls me back to receive a parting message;

"You shall always remember me, and I shall always remember you;"

And so, hearing these cryptic and puzzling words, I reluctantly withdraw from this interesting man, whose entire life has been dedicated to God from childhood. He

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(continued from the previous page) is a pontiff who cares not for the worldly power, because he has renounced all and resigned all. Whatever material things are given to him, he at once gives again to those who need them. His beautiful and gentle personality will surely linger in my memory.

I wander about Chingleput till evening, exploring its artistic, old world beauty, and then seek a final glimpse of His Holiness before returning home.

I find him in the largest temple of the of the city. The slim, modest, yellow-robed figure, is addressing a huge concourse, of men, women and children. Utter silence prevails among the large audience. I cannot understand his vernacular words, but I can understand that he is holding the deep attention of all present, from the intellectual Brahmin to the illiterate peasant. I do not know, but I hazard the guess that he speaks on the profoundest topics in the

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(continued from the previous page) simplest manner, for such is the character I read in him.

And yet, though I appreciate his beautiful soul, I envy the simple faith of his vast audience. Life, apparently, never brings them deep moods of doubt. God is; and there the matter ends. They do not appear to know what it means to go through dark nights of the soul when the world seems like the grim scene of jungle-like struggle; when God recedes into shadowy nothingness; and when man's own existence seems nothing more than a fitful passage across this small, transient fragment of the universe which we call Earth.

We drive out of Chingleput under an indigo sky gemmed with stars. I listen to palms majestically waving their branches over the water's edge in an unexpected breeze.

My companion suddenly breaks the silence between us.

"You are indeed lucky;"

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(continued from the previous page) "Why?"

"Because this is the first interview which His Holiness has granted to a European writer."

"Well - ?"

"That brings his blessing upon you."

It is nearly midnight when I return home. I take a last glimpse overhead. The stars stud the vast dome of the sky in countless myriads. Nowhere in Europe can one see them in such overwhelming numbers. I run up the steps leading to the verandah, flashing my pocket torch.

Out of the darkness, a crouching figure rises and greets me.

"Subramaniya!" I exclaim, startled. "What are you doing here?" The ochre-robed Yogi indulges in one of his tremendous grins.

"Did I not promise to visit you, Sir?" He reminds me reproachfully.

"Of course!"

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(continued from the previous page) In the large room, I fire a question at him.

"Your master - is he called the Maharshi?"

It is now his turn to draw back, astonished.

"How do you know, Sir? Where could you have learnt this?"

"Never mind. Tomorrow we both start for this place. I shall change my plans."

"This is joyful news, Sir."

"But I shall not stay there long, though. A few days may be."

I fling a few more questions at him during the next half hour, and then, thoroughly tired, go to bed. Subramanya is quite content to sleep on a piece of palm matting which lies on the floor. He wraps himself up in a thin cotton cloth, which serves at once as a mattress, sheet and blanket, and disdains my offer of more comfortable bedding.

The next thing of which I am aware is

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(continued from the previous page) suddenly awakening. The room is totally dark. I feel my nerves strangely tense. The atmosphere around me seems like electrified air. I pull my watch under the pillow and, by the glow of its radium-lit dial, discover the time to be a quarter to three. It is then that I become conscious of some bright object at the

foot of the bed. I immediately sit up and look straight at it.

My astounded gaze meets the face and form of His Holiness Sri Shankara. It is clearly and unmistakably visible. He does not appear to be some ethereal ghost, but rather a solid human being. There is a mysterious luminosity around the figure which separates it from the surrounding darkness.

Surely the vision is an impossible one? Have I not left him at Chingleput? I close my eyes tightly in an effort to test the matter. There is no difference and I still see him quite plainly!

Let it suffice that I receive the sense of a

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(continued from the previous page) benign and friendly presence. I open my eyes and regard the kindly figure in the loose yellow robe.

The face alters, for the lips smile and seem to say:

“Be humble and then you shall find what you seek!”

Why do I feel that a living human being is thus addressing me? Why do I not regard it as a ghost, at least?

The vision disappears as mysteriously as it has come. It leaves me feeling exalted, happy and unperturbed by its supernormal nature. Shall I dismiss it as a dream? What matters it?

There is no more sleep for me this night. I lie awake pondering over the day's meeting, over the memorable interview with His Holiness Sri Shankara of Kumbakonam, the Hierarch of God to the simple people of South India.

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(241-1) Our Adi Jagat Guru, or our first World Teacher, is the great Shankara.²⁰⁵ He was the Saviour of Hinduisim at a critical moment of religious unrest and decay, and its most virile and combative exponent. We reckon him an avatar, with an exceedingly intellectual and practical mission in an age of all-round decadence. He is our greatest thinker. His memory is more sacred to us than the Ganges and the Cauvery, or even the sages who laid the foundations of the Hindu polity. Great in the achievements of his own life, he is still greater in the legacy of thought and institutions he founded for world service and knowledge. So grateful is the memory of man for his remarkable deeds, that to this day, his institutions flourish in their popular religious appeal. They

²⁰⁵ “Sankara” in the original.

are the seats of purity, culture and philosophy.

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(continued from the previous page) They are the centres of conservative yet enlightened Hinduism.

At any rate such is the Kamakoti Peetam, nestling on the Cauvery, which has nourished in its deltaic bosom five dynasties of kings from the third century B. C. It is now located at Kumbhakonam, the centre of Tamil culture and refinement. The great Shankara originally founded the Kamakoti Peetam at Conjeevaram, the noblest of ancient cities, where it prospered down to the eighteenth century. But in the early days of the East India Company and the unsettled times of the Moghuls, Conjeevaram was the storm centre of the Carnatic wars. Then the Kamakoti Peetam was changed for ever from Conjeevaram to Kumbhakonam at the invitation of the Tanjore kings. Ever since, it has thriven well indeed in the peaceful, sheltered home of the Cauvery Delta.

The Kamakoti Peetam signifies the End of all Desires. It aims at an enduring code of values. It stands for strenuous, desireless action in daily life. Human activity gains its true focus of peace only from a real knowledge of the self. Therefore the best rules of self-expression are just the rules for self-realisation. This gives us Sanatana Dharma, an impersonal and eternal code of action.

Desire is the fuel that feeds the fires of the body

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(continued from the previous page) and keeps alive the illusion of duality. The Kamakoti Peetam strives to end all desire, at the same time keeping action in its original strength and purity. Nay, it strives to free the body itself that imprisons the soul in an endless cycle of births and deaths, and become one with the self.

The Kamakoti Peetam is the most comprehensive definition of the mind and mood of man. It takes in the Heaven and the Earth in one view. It bridges the void. It names and guides all the higher impulses of creation. It is a full-blooded gospel. It resolves into harmony the dualities of life by revealing to you the true nature of Reality. It converges into the white ray of light the myriad hues of life. On the wings of a sublime philosophy of work, work unburdened with the desire to enjoy its fruits, it seeks to carry you to the heights wherefrom you catch a glimpse of the nature of Reality.

The Kamakoti Peetam is the seat of self-realisation. By worship, surrender and self-experience it seeks to show the Divine Path liberating the true Self from the transient bondage and tyranny of the mind. Like a cloud that can only cloud the sun, mind befoes the Absolute. Still it by worship, self-enquiry and surrender of the ego,

and self-experience the supreme ananda. This is the message of the Kamakoti Peetam.

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(continued from the previous page) The Kamakoti Peetam is a rare place on earth. Every inheritor of its proud name for over thirty generations has, for each generation, been the living symbol and exponent of a great and moving faith. Strong and strenuous in the day's work, simple in habits, high in culture, and fervid in temper, calm and impersonal in action and pure in personal life, they have preserved the tradition and record and the glory of the Kamakoti Peetam – a gentle and even flow of work in the crowded midst of every uneven and conflicting man.

Such is the inheritance to which he may be called who is by birth a Brahmin. And only a Brahmacharin, yet in the liquid glow and plastic mould of pure youth, is eligible for ascension to the Kamakoti Peetam. The moment he is nominated and ordained by his predecessor-in-office, usually in his last dying moments, he becomes the Acharyaswami, or the Jagat Guru, to whom all Hindus render homage more royal than the allegiance they owe to their sovereign.

The first five years after ascension are usually allotted for the training and education of the young Acharyaswami. It is a period of study and meditation in an inspiring environment, and he is aided in the task by some of the best Sanskrit pundits of Southern India, and the blessings of Kamakshi.

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(continued from the previous page) The qualities of the World Teacher are naturally developed in the isolation of his exalted office and in the daily worship of Chandramouliswar. Worship releases the consciousness in its purest and noblest form. Work in worship sublimates man like celestial fire. No wonder my Acharyaswami easily becomes the centre of learning and the final arbiter of the first problems of life. He lives the life he preaches. Words and deeds gain in him the crowning unity that is Advaita.

The personal life of the Acharyaswami is one of the plainest living and the highest thinking. He is the hardest worked of all the workers yet the most harmonious in this painfully toiling world. Early morning he bathes in flowing water. Then the prescribed ceremonies and the meditations occupy more than three hours of the busy and solemn forenoon. Then he bathes again and begins the puja of Chandramouliswar, the radiant pebble Lingam, anointed and dedicated by the great Shankara himself as the secret and the inspiration of the Kamakoti Peetam. So the puja of Chandramouliswar is the very soul of the peetam. The devotional mind of mind these countless years has gathered and poured without stint or economy at the feet of the radiant pebble Lingam, herbs and flowers, milk and

(continued from the previous page) honey, and every rare and precious spice in the world. It is sacrifice at the highest. Because it is motiveless; it is impersonal; it is absolute.

The puja takes more than two hours, and is performed to music, before a large concourse of devotees who wait for a spoonful of abhishekam water that has dripped over Chandramouliswar which incidentally enfranchises one for a hearty dinner at the expense of the Jagat Guru.

The sun has already declined in the west, and my Acharyaswami retires for his single meal a day, which is itself considered a 'limb' of the puja of God Chandramouliswar. After dinner he again sets to work. The afternoon is taken up with disquisitions and the reception of visitors, learned and rich, from distant parts. And what a thronging variety, from fascinating excellence to maddening boredom! And what a child-like laugh greeting all – the laugh of the saint.

My Acharyaswami is royal and urbane, dignified and courteous, calm, shining and free. Sits lofty the spiritual glow and eminence of Shankara on his brow. Lambent beams the light of cosmic intelligence on his face. He is full of knowledge. Such is the acquisitive power of the meditative mind in worship, he knows everything – from the imperial craft

(continued from the previous page) of British statesmanship to the travail agonies of Soviet Russia, from the scientific method of agriculture in modern Japan to the most trivial Sartorial fashions of the day at Paris.

My Acharyaswami is always open and ready for philosophical discussion, and commands the speech of classic Sanskrit with ease and terseness. The afternoon is one of intellectual combat with every variety of men, from the graduate fresh from the University to the orthodox pundit with his camel load of learning. He goes through the task, unwearied by ignorance and undismayed by talent, stating and re-stating the grand concept of the Oneness of Life and the infinite grace and bliss of self-realisation. The conference goes on animated and lively, till the evening calls my Acharyaswami to the calm of meditations, and the evening worship of Chandramouliswar which take well-nigh over two hours. Then he retires, calm and free, to a sleep that itself is a yogic reverie.

But my Acharyaswami is at his very best while he journeys administering spiritual solace to the country people. Whenever he feels a call to go out and stir the religious consciousness and advance the power and blessings of the peetam, he moves

out in his antique palanquin with utter stateliness and

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(continued from the previous page) pomp, accompanied by horses, camels and elephants, trumpets and fanfares, and a large concourse of people with shops, sweetmeats and sundries. His Holiness is then a moving city and the talk and sight of the neighbourhood. He visits every sacred place and temple, and bathes in all the holy waters of the village. He evokes the religious zeal of the people, and every one dressed in flawless Indian Aryan style, is in full evidence around. At the bidding of my Acharyaswami, the miser willingly parts with his gold and the voluptuary restrains himself for a day from the call of pleasure. Then rural life is inspired with a true religious fervour that seeks a higher aim in life.

The visit of my Acharyaswami is a godly event to every Indian village. It spells prosperity, at least for a quinquennium. Every one does his best to make the short stay of His Holiness a success. Everything else is forgotten. All activities, even agricultural, are suspended; and the whole village, men, women and children, are literally at his feet. All pay their tribute in coin and kind as they can afford. But there is a standard minimum. The recognised padakanikkai (tribute at the feet) is one hundred and eight coins, gold or silver. For one hundred and eight is a weird number in Hindu

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(continued from the previous page) rituals. It has a mysterious sanction and power. From the chanting of the Gayatri to the entertainment of Acharyaswami, one hundred and eight is our standard number. There is yet a super number - one thousand and eight. Its efficacy is naturally even greater. Therefore the tribute of a rich man is one thousand and eight, which my Swami collects and spends promptly on religious and Sanskrit education.

My Acharyaswami belongs to the most ancient and selfless order of monks in the world. He is the holiest of Brahmanas, but transcends the distinctions of caste and creed. The poor and the panchama are as dear to his heart for social and spiritual reclamation. His temper and outlook are most democratic, though the ritual would seem exclusive. He is the rallying point of Hinduism and undying hope of its strength and purity in its darkest hour of need.

Wherever my Acharyaswami is, men, women and children gather round him with home-feeling and adoration, and each sits with patience and watches with eager eyes for his or her turn of the spoonful of abhishekam water that has dripped over God Chandramouliswar, a sign of devotion that helps to still the mind and free it on the path of self-enquiry.

Wherever my Acharyaswami is, there you find

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(continued from the previous page) burning steady and pure, the lamp of life and knowledge. He has surrendered everything at a tender age – youth, wealth and all the civic pleasures – for the service of man and continuance of a mission. He is dear to us, even as the rolling sea is to the land-soiled air. Passionate and deep-rooted is our attachment to Shankara. He is our greatest birth and our Adi Jagat Guru.

His Holiness Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal sits now on this ancient throne of Peace and Wisdom. His Holiness is the sixty-sixth in a long line of long-lived succession to the Kamakoti Peetam, ever since its consecration by the Great Shankara himself in the fullness and transcendental maturity of his closing years.

His Holiness Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal is one of the most dynamic personalities of modern India. He has a magnetic presence. Thirty years ago as a boy of ten he ascended this throne over the unstable empire of man's mind, before which even kings kneel with pleasure in pursuit of the Divine. Ever since, this illustrious saint of modern India has been carrying on with sleepless vigil, unremitting labour and loving courage an ancient and hallowed tradition that is most supreme as a way of life to self-realisation.

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(continued from the previous page) Look at His Holiness for a moment. From top to toe there is the tenderness of austerity and the glow of purity radiating in the atmosphere of his presence. The innocence of the child and the freshness of the morning dew live on his ever smiling face. There is the divine ache of compassion in the timbre of his voice. The throb of ethereal love and the soft glow of spreading sunlight are in the gleam of his eyes. His Holiness, in the utter rhythm of his dynamic nature, is a reservoir of peace which, like a lake among the valleys, lashes no restless wave or ripple to the shore for all its depth and plenty. But Nature, in her infinite pity for the plains, bows a little even amidst craggy hills and lets down the fresh water at one trailing end of the reservoir which in its dynamic course fertilises and renews all it touches even once. The Grace of Adi Shankara has truly descended on His Holiness Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, to make again a New India, and thus vitalise the original purpose of the Kamakoti Peetam.

The Huxley Press, Madras.

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(252-1) The Educational Institutions at Nalanda, founded some 2,500 years ago though not the product of the combined influence of the East and West, wonderfully upheld the ideals of the Gurukuls and Viharas of the Vedic and the Buddhistic India; at the same time discharging the functions of a seat of Universal learning known as the University in the West. It was a University also in the sense that it attracted students from all parts of the world; and Nalanda was nothing if not a residential University par excellence. Nalanda with the pursuit of theology, as its cardinal aim, with all the advantages that a residential University has, imparted to its students not merely knowledge, but culture that would make its recipients perfect "Gentlemen." The students not only gained knowledge but a sense of reverence was also inculcated in them.

The book is printed on antique paper of 300 pages in Demy size with 22 plates on art paper.

B.G. PAUL AND Co.

PUBLISHERS

12. Francis Joseph Street, MADRAS

A Technique of Self-Analysis, Extracts from "The Secret Path"

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A TECHNIQUE OF SELF-ANALYSIS²⁰⁷

The First Step

(253-1) Seated comfortably in your chair or squatting tailor-fashion on a rug, breathing quietly and evenly, [you]²⁰⁸ close your eyes and let your thoughts run over the question of what you really are.

You are about to begin your great adventure of self-inquiry.

One key to success in your practice is to think very slowly. The wheel of mind is to be slowed down and consequently it will be unable to rush around from one thing to another, as it did formerly. Think slowly. Next formulate your words mentally with great care and precision. Choose and select each word accurately. Doing this will clarify your thought, for you cannot find a clear and definite phrase to fit it until you have done so.

First watch your own intellect in its working. Note how thoughts follow one another in endless sequence. Then try to realise that there is someone who thinks. Now ask: "Who is this Thinker?"

Who is this "I" that sleeps and wakes up; that thinks and feels; that works and speaks? What is it in us that we call the "I?"

²⁰⁶ "WITH A PREFACE BY The Rev. Henry Heras, S.J., M.A" in the original.

²⁰⁷ "(From the chapter: A Technique of selfanalysis)" in the original. This is an extract from PB's book "The Secret Path"

²⁰⁸ PB himself inserted "you" by hand.

Those who believe that matter is the only thing existing will tell you that it is the body; and that the sense of "I Am" arises within the brain at birth and disappears at the death or disintegration of the body...

(253-2)²⁰⁹ ...There is one thing which no man ever doubts. There is one thing to which every man always clings throughout the varied vicissitudes of life. And that is his own self-existence. He never stops for a moment to ask: "Do I exist?" He accepts it unflinching.

I exist. That consciousness is real. Throughout life that remains ever. Of this we can be completely certain; but of its limitation to the fleshy frame we cannot be so certain. Let us, therefore, concentrate entirely upon this certainty – the reality of self-existence. Let us endeavour to locate it by confining our attention solely to the notion of self.

This, therefore, forms a good starting-point for our inquiry since it is of such universal acceptance. The body changes; it gets feeble or strong, it remains sound or is injured. The mind changes; its outlook alters with time, its ideas are ever in flux. But the "I" consciousness persists from cradle to grave unchanged.

I am happy today, I am miserable tomorrow – these moods are but accidents or incidents in the continuity of the I. Moods of mind and heart change and pass but through them all the ego can name itself as that which remains unchanging amid the changing, spectator of the Passing Show of this world. We are aware of all these things through the "I," the self; without it all would be a total blankness. The sense of "I am" cannot pass away. Therefore to know oneself is to find that point of consciousness from which observation of these changing moods may take place.²¹⁰

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A TECHNIQUE OF SELF-ANALYSIS

The First Step²¹²

(continued from the previous page) ...We cannot be body alone because, when a man's body is completely stricken with paralyses even his sight, touch, hearing, taste and smell destroyed, he yet remains undiminished as a self-conscious being. Strike off both his hands, both his legs, take his eyes and parts of other organs – still he does not feel less than himself, still the sense of "I" is as strong as ever. Why should it not be possible that the fleshly body is only a mass of matter which I move, I exercise, and I use – thus indicating that there is someone who moves it, exercises it and uses it?

As your mind plays around the word self accept for consideration a strange idea. Your first response to this thought may be an attempt to shake off as being too fantastic, but in the sequence you will be compelled to consider it seriously, if you wish to get at its truth.

Here is the idea:

If the body is the real self, then sleep could never supervene nor death arrive.

²⁰⁹ PB himself inserted a bracket around these ellipses by hand.

²¹⁰ PB himself inserted underline by hand.

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²¹² PB himself inserted "B" by hand.

If the body is the real self, awareness of one's existence would persist through every hour of the twenty-four. Self is at the centre of consciousness, and when sleep arrives the self has withdrawn from the body, thus blanking our awareness of the latter as one blanks out a scene when the camera lens is covered. This unconsciousness of the body during sleep is an indication that the self is merely a visitant in the house of flesh...

(255-1)²¹³ ...In the dreamless deep-sleep state I become absolutely unconscious the body – yet somehow “I” still exist. What is that “I” doing, then and where is it? When I fall into a dreamless sleep, I forget the world entirely. Even the keenest agony of the body is not strong enough to keep me permanently awake; even the very thought “I” is forgotten. But self-existence, though temporarily blotted out, still persists in fact, for I awake later and remember my identity.

The American doctor Crile has produced some cases illustrating this principle, drawn from the abnormal conditions produced by the war. In one case he tells how an abandoned church was used as a temporary receiving station for soldiers suffering from terrible wounds. The doctor stole into the church at dead of night and found it perfectly silent. Then men had had no sleep for five days and such was their extreme fatigue that not even their ghastly mutilations could keep them awake, and so all of them slept on peacefully unaware of their bodies. The incident, if it means anything at all, means that there is no self-consciousness in the body itself, that the mental sense of selfhood can withdraw from the body...

...You have now been inquiring how to think of “I.” You have been cutting a psychological cross-section through your own personality in the endeavour to reveal its true working. You have inquired whether the “I” is the body and you could not definitely find it there. All that you could say with certainty is [that]²¹⁴

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The First Step

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A TECHNIQUE OF SELF-ANALYSIS
The First Step²¹⁶

(continued from the previous page) it is being used by the self; that the self inheres in it alone you cannot trace with equal certainty.

The sense of being yourself has remained. What is this sense? Can you grasp it?

No, you are forced to penetrate deeper than the body and to explore the subtler realm of thoughts and feelings in your quest of the self...

THE SECOND STEP

²¹³ PB himself inserted a bracket around these ellipses by hand.

²¹⁴ PB himself deleted “is” from after “that” by hand.

²¹⁵ Blank page

²¹⁶ PB himself inserted “B” by hand.

(257-1) ...The second stage of your inquiry into the true nature of self should be devoted to subjecting your emotional nature to critical analysis. You have tentatively repudiated the physical body as being the sum total of your "I" consciousness and so now you turn to the next principal part of yourself.

Are you desire, doubt, hate, anger, like and dislike, passion, lust, hope, fear or any of the other feelings which sway a man in changing sequence from time to time?

The argument which applies to the sleeping body applies equally to the sleeping emotions. When the latter are utterly quiescent and dead in dreamless sleep, the "I" notion still re-emerges upon waking after the apparent death of the emotions. And when, in the waking state, we sometimes experience moments of complete emotionlessness, the sense of personal being nevertheless remains. To transfer the earlier argument, if self-consciousness in the desires and emotions is due to the fact that self is but a visitant to them, then the disappearance of conscious being when we enter sound sleep is explicable. The sense of selfhood has withdrawn, we know not where, and left behind a collection of feelings which are born out of the attractions and repulsions of the sleeping body's sense-organs, or else out of the intellect.

This would also explain why the sense of selfhood remains unaffected by changes of experience. Feelings, desires and passions carry us hither and thither, but the self continuously exists. And it is perfectly possible for a man to retire from all experience of the outer world and therefore from all the emotions which such experience brings with it, as in the conscious trance of the medieval Christian mystic or modern Indian Yogi, and yet retain a clear notion of selfhood. If self can divorce itself from motion in this way and still continue its existence, then self and emotion are two different things and we cannot consider desires, fears, hates, sympathies or antipathies or other emotional states as our real being.

Then again the fact that feelings change so largely, that you might like a person one week and dislike him the next, that the feelings of ten years ago may no longer represent you are you are today, indicates that they are transient in their essential nature, whereas the sense of "I" has remained unchanged through all those years.

Thus you arrive at the tentative position that neither emotion nor body is

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The Second Step

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The Second Step²¹⁸

(continued from the previous page) your true self. When this point of view commends itself to you the third stage may be entered.

THE THIRD STEP

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²¹⁸ PB himself inserted "B" by hand.

(259-1) ...The third stage is devoted to a consideration of the question: "Am I the thinking intellect?" Now the intellect usually received its knowledge through the five senses or from memory of such sense-channeled knowledge. The truth we expect to find within the domes of the average man's skull is therefore based on external experience.

I put forward what might seem to be an astounding proposition. Assuming that the intellect is not dependant on the flesh for its sole existence, I suggest that it is composed of nothing more than the endless sequence of thoughts, the endless series of ideas, concepts and memories which normally make up the waking day, and that therefore there is no true selfhood even in the intellect. If all this aggregate of thoughts could be eliminated, then we should find that there is no such thing as a separate reasoning intellectual faculty. The intellect is but a name we give to a series of individual ideas.

This final proposition is more difficult to substantiate for it is rather a question to be decided by personal experience. For I do not hesitate to say that if the intellect is but the continuous train of thoughts which pass and re-pass in procession through the brain, then, under certain conditions man may cease to think and yet remain clearly conscious of himself. This has occurred several times and the history of mysticism, both Oriental and European, attests the fact.

Every argument which was applied to the denial of emotion of the true self can now be applied to the denial of the intellect. Think - and you will realise that it must be so.

Intellect is that which thinks within ourselves. It is not our true self and this is indicated by the fact that during thinking we feel vaguely that something in us is quietly watching those thoughts.

The fact that some insane people lose their intellect and that it is sometimes restored to them, is another indication that it is a property which can be taken away from, or restored to, a possessor...

...Thinking is a power which may bind us or set us free. The average man unconsciously uses it for the former purpose; the practitioner of this way of self-inquiry consciously uses it to gain freedom.

The unstopping wheels of our brain whirl endlessly on in revolutions of petty or important thoughts, and whether they deal with merely trivial matters or with noble and high subjects, it does not seem that we can stop their movement. Perhaps the intellect is only a machine for thinking, rendering its account to logic in a purely mechanical manner...

...By this introspective analysis we have subjected our own being to

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A TECHNIQUE OF SELF-ANALYSIS
The Third Step

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A TECHNIQUE OF SELF-ANALYSIS

(continued from the previous page) critical examination, and taken in turn each principal part of it, endeavouring to discover whether it is the essential self we are seeking, the foundation of the notion of "I."

We have penetrated our inner being, and thus learnt that the outer world, which is revealed to us by our senses need not be the only condition of our conscious existence.

One result of this meditation is that it will eventually enable you to watch how the intellectual, emotional and bodily machine works in reference to your self, to get you outside of your personal self. There is no danger of becoming ultra-introspective through this exercise, because it renders you more impersonal instead of emphasising the personality. It draws you away from purely personal moods into utterly impersonal ones.

.....

(261-1) (from THE AWAKENING TO INTUITION)²²⁰

...OBSERVE YOURSELF

...You may considerably assist your development at this state by beginning to watch yourself at odd times during the day. You may stop yourself, almost unexpectedly and observe what you are doing, feeling, saying or thinking, letting your self-observation be made in a detached, impartial and impersonal spirit.

- Who is doing this?
- Who is feeling this emotion?
- Who is speaking these words?
- Who is thinking these thoughts?

Put such silent questions to yourself as often as you wish, but put them abruptly suddenly and then wait expectantly, quietly for some intuitive inner response. So far as you can, drop all thoughts during this pause. Such introspective inquiry need not occupy you more than a minute or two at odd times. The placid breathing may profitably be induced in conjunction with this exercise in self-observation and self-inquiry.

In this manner you will begin to break up the complacent attitude which accepts the personal self's body-based outlook and to free yourself from the illusion that the outer person is the complete being of man. The practice of suddenly observing oneself, one's desires, moods and actions, is especially valuable because it tends to separate the thoughts and desires from the sense of selfhood which normally inheres in them, and thus tends to keep consciousness from being everlastingly drowned in the sea of the five physical senses. Furthermore, it will reinforce in a helpful manner the work which is being done to penetrate the so-called unconscious during the periods of mental quiet. Indeed, it might be said that the three practices, self-observation, daily quiet and placid breathing, are complementary. All aim at overcoming the tendencies towards complete self-identification with the body, the desires and the intellect which are today

²¹⁹ PB himself inserted "B" by hand.

²²⁰ These phrases are all extracts from Chapter VII of PB's book "The Secret Path". – TJS '20

A Pioneer Western Buddhist

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A PIONEER WESTERN BUDDHIST²²²

(263-1) To the younger generation of today, the Bhikku Ananda Metteya is little more than a half-forgotten name. It may not be amiss to give some details about the extraordinary personality and exceptional career of a man who did much to introduce Buddhism to the West and who initiated me into its study.

During earlier visits to Ceylon I was able to follow up some of the tracks of my old teacher and a recent Sinhalese contact with the learned Dr Cassius Pereira revived afresh this pleasant memory of a human flower, who shed the powerful fragrance of sincerity, purity, kindness, humility and simplicity. More than that he was, in my belief and so far as my experience went, the most advanced Western Yogi of the first two decades of this [century.]²²³

He was born in London as Allan Bennett in 1872. His father was an engineer who died early. The orphaned boy was adopted by S. L. McGregor, who was Head of a secret society called the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn which was devoted to magical and Rosicrucian studies. He was educated partly at Hollesley College and partly at Bath. A precocious love of science became a great force in his nature and he took the keenest theoretical and practical interest in the subject. He decided on the profession of scientific research as the vocation of his heart and, such was his genius that even in his 'teens he was able to earn a living by chemical laboratory work. But his knowledge of electricity and magnetism was almost as advanced and it would not be too much to say that the age of seventeen found him with a profounder and wider scientific knowledge than that possessed by any other youth in England. He developed decided inventive ability which found full scope in the then young electrical industry.

His mother had put him on the path of Roman Catholicism but he drifted away from its ornate ceremonies as he grew,²²⁴ and remained anchorless in agnosticism for a time. The halt was brief, however, for through the opportunities provided by his foster-father he passed thence into occult investigations and particularly those dealing with ritual magic. It was inevitable that he should be initiated into Mather's own Order in which he was known as Frater I. A. He put his whole zest into these investigations with the result that his genius once again showed itself and he even surpassed the grade attained by the Head himself. All the members stood in awe of this astonishing young man. Thus he lived for a while amid kabbalistic utterances and spectres from the

²²¹ Blank page

²²² "By Dr Paul Brunton, Ph. D." and "'CEYLON DAILY NEWS' VESAK NUMBER MAY, 1941." In the original.

²²³ PB himself changed "country" to "century" by hand.

²²⁴ PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

shadow-world. During his

(continued from the previous page) endeavours to penetrate the mystery of the subconscious and super-normal mind, he tried various drugs upon himself and from that went on to experiment with poisons until once he took a tremendous overdose which would have instantly killed another man but which left him quite unharmed!

SPARTAN EXISTENCE

(264-1) Even during those early days the future monk revealed his innate tendency towards simple and spartan existence by dwelling in a little room in an obscure corner of London. It was there that he read for the first time Sir Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia," which filled his mind with shoreline thoughts of Nirvana, and through this beautiful portal he entered into the grand and ancient religion of Buddhism, whose study and practice thereafter gradually replaced his zest for occultism, becoming his greatest passion.

In his twenty-eighth year came the greatest change of his external life – emigration to the Orient. Two factors drove him to take this decisive step. The first was his love of Buddhism and his desire to learn the art of meditation in the continent of its origin. The second was his failing health; every fresh winter in England increased his sufferings from asthma until the doctors prescribed a change of climate as necessary.

He travelled to Ceylon in 1900. At Kamburugamuwa he made an intensive study of Pali, the language in which the Southern Buddhist texts are written. Within six months his brilliant mind had conquered this ancient tongue and he talked quite easily in its archaic accents. He paid visits to various monks, monasteries, and sacred places and familiarised himself with the general atmosphere of Buddhist Ceylon. In Colombo he met a highly-advanced yogi named Sri Parananda who was of Tamil birth. The young Englishman took a whole course of practical lessons in yoga practice from him until he succeeded in mastering the postures, breathings and mental concentrations involved in an incredibly short period. The extraordinary powers which he already possessed became augmented as a result. Years later I myself had personal evidence of this development but was forbidden to talk about it, even as he himself would smilingly turn the subject or remain silent.

ORDAINED A BHIKKU

(264-2) The day arrived when he felt ready to renounce the world, where life seemed too purposeless and perfunctory to him, and join the Order of Buddhist Monks, for he had no ties to keep him back. Various reasons made him prefer to do this in Burma and so, after two years stay, he left Ceylon. He took the yellow robe in the monastery of Akyab, on the picturesque west of the Burmese Coast, and was ordained a Bhikku in the presence of seventy-five priests under the name of Anana Metteya. The suns which had risen over this land witnessed such a scene but once before. He was the second

white man to enter the Order. The English meaning of his name was "Bliss of Loving Kindness." It is no exaggeration to say that the Bhikku was one of the most compassionate men I had ever known. Nobody was exempt from the wide sweep of his love.

He became fascinated by Burma which was then more primitive and less spoilt than it is now. He founded the International Buddhist Society in 1903, and settled down quite cheerfully to life in various monasteries.

Annie Besant had a kindly corner of her heart for him. She gave him a standing invitation to come and stay as her guest at Adyar whenever he wished. She did not fail to recognise the sterling worth of the man although he was emphatically not a Theosophist and disagreed with her on fundamental points.

The tropical climate did little to improve his chest, however, whilst it brought him new ailments peculiar to the East. As a consequence his health completely broke down and he was sent by the doctors to California, where it was thought that the mild or drier semi-tropical air would help to preserve his life. He travelled to England as the first stage on his way to the States, but the outbreak of war in 1914 cut him off for a time from financial support (which had come from the East) and forced him to stay in his native land. Clifford Bax, the playwright,

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A PIONEER WESTERN BUDDHIST

(continued from the previous page) came to his rescue. He gradually got caught up in the Buddhist Society work again and for some years gave all his time and energy to it. Somehow he never got to California. Once he met Rudolf Steiner, the famous anthroposophist, and greatly admired his character, but just as greatly disagreed with his clairvoyant views on the Christ-mystery.

KNOWLEDGE OF MEDITATION

(265-1) It was during this period that I met him and was at once impressed by his deep knowledge of Buddhist meditation and his lovable personality. The Bhikku could not cope with the mass work which the publication of "The Buddhist Review," the organisation of the Society, the granting of interviews and the compilation of literature forced upon him. He requested me to assist him and out of affection for his fine person, respect for his spiritual attainment, and reverence for the name of Buddha, I gladly agreed, devoting my week-ends or evenings for the purpose.

To serve Ananda Metteya was an honour and a privilege. However I occupied an anomalous position because I could not honestly join the Society as I could never bring myself either then or now to wear a doctrinal label. So it came about that although technically a non-Buddhist I carried through some of his secretarial work, assisted the editorial preparation of the "Review," arranged lectures and even delivered them. He lived in the same humble room which he had occupied during his youth.

There he would sit amid heavy Victorian furniture, his table covered with books and palm-leaf classics, the floor around his chair littered with a miscellaneous assortment of manuscripts, letters and scientific instruments. Some statuettes of

Gautama would rest on the mantleshelf, gazing benignly down at the disorderly scene. The white yogi would lean back in the large and battered arm-chair, in which I invariably found him, through his head up and to one side, gaze reflectively through the window into the little garden and answer my questions in lengthy sentences. For the remaining few years until his death we were close friends. He taught me the lofty ethic and stern ascetic philosophy of his faith, as embodied in its central and cardinal doctrines. He helped me towards two precious possessions: a rational balanced outlook and a desire to bring some light from archaic Asia to help the adolescent West.

His work for Buddhism was not that of a scholar so much as it was to provide a living example of its meaning as well as an inspiring advocate of its value. However two excellent little books remain as his written legacy to posterity, "The Wisdom of the Aryas," and "The Religion of Burma."

It is now nearly a score of years since he died at the age of fifty, and vanished from our time-fronted and space-backed existence, but it will be difficult to forget the terrible agonies which he calmly and uncomplainingly endured for months at a time. Shocking spasms of asthmatic cough racked his lungs every day. Yet his serene face would immediately break into a smile the next moment and he would utter some light humorous phrase or profoundly spiritual remark, as his mood went. Here one saw how his meditation, training and Buddhistic detachment had proved their worth, for although his body was stricken his mind proved invulnerable.

YOGA PRACTICES

(265-2) His appearance was striking. He was quite a tall man but he walked with a pronounced stoop, due partly to illness and partly to long hours bent over the palm-leaf text or the laboratory table. His face constantly wore a tragic look, but it was frequently illuminated by fitful smiles. Its skin had turned quite yellow through tropical liver trouble. His hair was raven-black and was flung wild and unbrushed over his forehead. His eyes were set deep beneath heavy brows and their intensity evidenced the profound mind which dwelt behind them. In England he wore ordinary Western clothes, in order not to make himself conspicuous, but in the Orient he was clad in the monk's robe and sandals. His sombre yet tranquil face was so unusual that it still haunts my fancies.

His knowledge of Buddhism was immense. He eagerly travelled through all the labyrinths of its psychological system, and its varied yoga practices yielded quickly to his remarkable powers of concentration. He could sit, sunk in profound

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Yoga Practices

(continued from the previous page) meditation, for hours at will; or equally at a moment's notice, he could busy himself in the laboratory with batteries, chemicals and instruments. Such was the perfect balance which he had achieved. He never quite gave up his scientific researches and even in the Burmese monasteries a cell was usually fitted up as a laboratory for him. Few of the Indian yogis I met could hold a candle to

him. He had realised the phenomenal character of all things in this parade of flickering shadows which we call life, as most of them have never done. Moreover his Buddhist teaching could not be separated from his personality: the one expressed what the other demonstrated. I have honoured and revered him, as he is still honoured and revered by some in Burma and Ceylon, because he stimulated me spiritually and quickened my dawning determination to decipher the profound enigmas of life.

Such was the man I have storied in this brief memoir, this white Buddhist whose ship has sailed for the infinite waters of Nirvana.

Meditation in Mid-Pacific

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MEDITATION IN MID-PACIFIC²²⁵

(267-1) I slipped into the snug canvas of a deck chair, which I had established on a lonely spot at the far end of the ship, and watched the ocean spray dash twenty feet high and fling itself upon the smooth teakwood planks. The steamer, built a trifle too high amidship, reeled now and then and my chair with it. When I looked up into the sky's face, there was not the faintest slip of a moon, nor even one light from a pale star, but only a vast all-pervading and all-enveloping inky blackness, as impenetrable to the gaze as powdered onyx. The hushed stillness was broken by the rhythmic breathing of the cool trade winds as they fanned the illimitable night, blew across the deserted decks and fluttered my clothes. The ship itself was like a fantastic ghost figure which moved mysteriously through a titanic mirage. Its bow cut into the water almost noiselessly.

Here I was, I reflected in mid-Pacific some forty degrees from land and forty centuries from the civilisation of skyscraping cities. The curved hull of the ship was actually riding over the rocky giant's skeleton of that vanished archaic continent, which the Tamil people call Gondwana, the Haiwaiians call Kahoopokane and the modern scientists Lemuria. I drank the wine of a curious languor, as I mused dreamily over the phenomenon of this incredible cemetery of mouldering continents and sub-continents lying mutely stretched and water-buried that was the Pacific.

The surviving unburied fragments which still remained – such as the Polynesian Archipelagos, East Indian islands, Ceylon, South India, Alcutian Isles, Madagascar, Malaya, Sumatra, Australia, and New Zealand – hardly hinted at the unbelievable extent of a land which had touched the African soil in the west and American soil in the east. Yet millions of human lives which it once supported were swept away by a stupendous fiery hurricane of subterranean eruptions and volcanic outbursts which seared and charred the earth amid cataclysmic earthquakes. Furious infernal fires,

²²⁵ "TOMORROW" appears at the top of the page in the original. December 1941 appears on the next page.

Tomorrow was an American magazine, published by Creative Age Press, published beginning in 1941. It specialized in parapsychology and mystical subjects. The magazine also included literary contributions as well as articles on current events. The editor, Eileen J. Garrett, was one of America's best-known mediums. Associate editors included Mercedes de Acosta. In a 1963 issue, Frithjof Schuon contributed an article on "Some Notes on the Shamanism of North America", and in 1964 he wrote "Reflections on Ideological Sentimentalism".

sulphurous smoke, acrid steam, and poisonous gases filled the skies. Dante saw no grimmer vision of horror during his peregrinations of Purgatory. For the earth which seized and swallowed the human peoples into its flame-hissing mouth, was itself seized and swallowed by the great waters. Thus Nature, more thousands of years ago than history can conveniently record, finally washed away a stage which had out-served its purpose.

I let my thoughts play further around the same theme, for in this watery solitude I was in a fit position to take an impartial view of the world at large.

What did this mean to humanity? The perspective of rolling centuries, the study of written history and the fragmentary revelations of pre-history would be worthless if they did not contain instruction for the living present. The fate of Lemuria constituted both a warning and a reminder to our own twentieth century world. It was a dread warning that nothing material may abide with us forever. The sufferings of the individual and the transitoriness of the world possessed a higher purpose than their immediate karmic one. They existed also to remind us that material existence was not our true home. When we were constantly made aware of the changeability of things and creatures, we eventually got tired of and dissatisfied with such existence and commenced to seek for something that would not change but be permanent, for something that was free from misery and disappointment. Such was the commencement of our initiation into the path of wisdom. Such was our first

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MEDITATION IN MID-PACIFIC²²⁷

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MEDITATION IN MID-PACIFIC²²⁸

(continued from the previous page) step towards finding the eternal changeless reality. It was also a mournful reminder of the frailty of human character, which had gone so far in the long passage of time since those misty Lemurian days, but so little in the awakening to awareness of its own spiritual source.

II

(269-1) The night became somewhat chilly, so I turned up the collar of my coat and wrapped a blanket around my shoulders. The great bronze propellers swished quietly through the waves astern as the steamer sped over the dark waters. The utter isolation of its position on the world's largest and deepest ocean, which actually contained more than half of the earth's volume of water, filled me anew with a sense of proper perspective. I had taken a glance at the antediluvian world; now I proposed to take a glance at the contemporary world.

When, during the year before, I had been in Europe, it was plain for all to see that its unfortunate inhabitants were merely waiting for the cauldron of national greeds and

²²⁶ Void page

²²⁷ "December 1941" appears at the top of the page in the original.

²²⁸ "TOMORROW" appears at the top of the page in the original.

racial hates, narrow prejudices and ancient selfishnesses to boil over into scalding war. It was equally plain to see that the epoch which had made Europe the leader of the West was drawing amid much crisis and many convulsions to a destined close. The European world was trembling. It was afflicted with over-organisation in some parts and under-organisation in others. Its people were bewildered and its leaders were afraid in their hearts. It was supposed to have progressed, but signs were a-plenty that this progress was towards a precipice. Stupidity in some high places straddled its form whilst malignity in others was plotting devilish work.

When I was visiting Geneva and saw the massive new buildings being completed for the League of Nations I said to a companion, "There is the birth of a great idea, but the death of a great hope. The League must perish because it has put heads together but not hearts."

War would come and come soon. Humanity would bear ugly scars to tell of blurred vision and mistaken choice; it would invite deep wounds by wrong action and cowardly inaction. No pact or peace treaty was nowadays worth the paper it was written on. Meanwhile men waited fatalistically with sinking hearts and clouded brow, amid universal tension and universal fears, for the thunderclap of fratricidal war to strike upon the tympanum of the world's ear.

I had wandered the full circle around this melancholy globe of ours and could not recollect one country where there was not talk of this universal dread which touched every heart. Some felt this more lightly than others, but there were lands where it hung like a thick, oppressive fog over an entire nation. The Japanese professor who gravely shook his head over continuous cups of green tea in a Kyoto cafe; the Chinese officer who stood with his men on guard in a devastated countryside; the poor Indian peasant who lifted his bent back from the sun-baked field for a few minutes; the Arab Sheikh who broke the desert silence by the powerful tones of his voice; the Sudanese Negro trader who exchanged an ornate new leather belt for a few gadgets; the great connoisseur who displayed his priceless paintings in a gallery near the Place Vendome; the Viennese editor who sat amongst a mountain of papers piled on his desk; the shifty-eyed but sun-tanned adventurer who shared a compartment in a Hungarian train; the stockbroker who blew fragrant cigar smoke around the drawing-room of his London apartment; the American police detective who unhitched his pistol to sit in mystic meditation for fifteen minutes – all these betrayed dissatisfaction with the present epoch and their nervous fears of a war-clouded future, soon after our talk had strayed from the first greetings.

When one surveyed the state of the world and made up a catalogue of the trials and tribulations and senseless stupidities that surrounded us, one could readily play the cynic and come to the quick conclusion that the only way to abolish the miseries of mankind was to abolish man!

Yet the tremendous area, imposing scale of tragedy, and colossal mercilessness of what would be the most destructive of all wars would surely affect the minds of all mankind and arouse them from their habitual ethical torpor. The very uniqueness of the historic circumstances attending it would invite universal attention and foster some reflection thereon, however little. What else would it turn out to be but a bold and unforgettable demonstration of the fact that suffering was inseparably allied to life in this world? It was, in fact, forever with us, albeit on an unimpressive and unimposing

scale – it was so familiar indeed that we tended to remain untouched by its normal existence. Only the

(continued from the previous page) extremely thoughtful who sought truth or peace took notice of its ever-presence and sought also for some solution of its meaning or escape from its burden. Nevertheless, the agonising calamity through which mankind would pass would daze people by its mechanised terror and modernised size. They might demand some explanation to still their perplexity. But alas: what lesson could be derived other than this age-old one which Buddha taught and Jesus gave?

It was not good for man to become so strongly attached to this earth that when the time came to part from it – whether suddenly or slowly – he raised a loud lament in surprise. And what was true of his physical life was equally true of his physical possessions. The element of destiny was forever at work in his midst. It played chess with his fortunes, his family, his property, and his satisfactions. There was no more permanence here than there was in the length of his days. Nature was what she was. Wisdom lay in facing facts, not in ignoring them. And because one of the stupendous facts of life and property was that they were perishable, it behoved man to seek whilst he had the chance for a higher kind of life that should be imperishable and a superior kind of property which he could bear with him wherever he went. Hence war, man-made though it be, would also be a practical initiation of the whole world into this need of inner detachment.

War was an awakener. It strained our characters to the utmost. Its stress and danger brought out both our hidden strength and disguised weakness. This enforced psychoanalysis was necessary if we were to make real and not sham progress. We might make alarming or assuring discoveries about ourselves; we might even find that we had been living in a world of make-believe, but in any case we would know better what we really were and what was the intrinsic worth of our social institutions.

Even totalitarian movements represented a violent and frantic reaction against the blindness of stupid governments or the weakness of cowardly ones, but it was a reaction whose fundamental unreason only delayed and could not stop the advance of decent civilised society. If war was catastrophic for the individual, it was also a catalyser for society in general.

All that warred against human unity, that would turn the hand of man against his brother, would one day infallibly perish. None of us dared hope to see such a day, for quick millenniums were the cheap delusions of wishful thinkers, but all of us might hope to find within ourselves even now that same sacred principle and thus assure ourselves of its truth. We might safely take our stand on the oneness of essential being. We could wait quietly for the Infinite Mind to reclaim its own progeny. We must endeavour to aspire meanwhile toward that region where the atmosphere was timeless.

One need not lose heart, therefore. No single defeat and no violent devolution was really definite in the more ancient war of light against night.

²²⁹ “TOMORROW” appears at the top of the page in the original.

Hope was the beautiful message of the unknown goal, the star that blazed when all else was dark, the encouragement of the sublime Perfect to the struggling imperfect. It was the unconscious turning of the flower to the sun. It bestowed strength on the weak and endurance on the sorrowful. It was a way up from flinty tracts to the level plateau where the worst troubles vanished. And those of us who had planted their feet on the grander path that led to ultimate wisdom, had to go on, whether it be through sorrow or joy, weakness or strength, world turmoil or world peace. For us there was no turning back.

The sun darted its early rays across the horizon. Dawn had come. I awoke with a sudden start. Huddled in the chair, I had slept throughout the night. The terminus of my meditations had let me pass into that other dimension of being, which is sleep. I got up and walked to the handrail, lingering there to watch the white curls of foam swirling and churning upon the angry waves.

How far from the world's folly and stupidity, from mankind's hatred and passion were these waxing beams which were soon to glow with friendly warmth! How grand was this solar message! For as the sun's beams had eventually broken through the night's heavy darkness, so might we hope that when Time, that dread figure with the scythe of death, came sweeping near us his strokes could not touch this ancient truth: if man would listen in silent reverie to the rare and subtle intimations of his hidden being, he would one day find his heart put under enchantment and his brain made mute, the while an indefinable peace and indescribable love proclaimed that something unearthly dwelt within and about him.

Science and the Sunken Continent of Atlantis

271

SCIENCE AND THE SUNKEN CONTINENT OF ATLANTIS²³⁰

(271-1) We often say and believe that the present world war is unique in history both on account of its colossal dimensions and of its momentous character as a struggle between the forces of good and evil for the soul and body of mankind. This is certainly correct if we confine ourselves to the meagre few thousand years of which we have acceptable records. But in those still earlier times of shadowy antiquity, if we are willing to believe that under all the fantasies and fabrications of mythological tradition there may yet be an original nucleus of factual truth, there once developed a war of similar character and of trans-continental dimensions.

According to very old and widely scattered America, Asiatic and Egyptian legends, this happened on a vast land-mass where the grey waters of the Atlantic Ocean now roll to and fro and it reached its climax with the total wreck of that great continent and its submergence beneath those now deep waters. This startling story is also alluded to by Plato, who not only wrote about the sunken continent which he gave the name of Atlantis, but also claimed that it had been peopled by a race who raised an

²³⁰ "(Talk by Dr. Paul Brunton broadcast from Akash Vani on 11-10-43.)" appears at the top of the page in the original. Akash Vani literally means "Voice from the Sky" and is the name taken by All India Radio in 1957 after the end of the British Raj.

advanced civilisation. It might seem that even if this legend were true, the last proof that such a continent ever existed and that such a civilisation ever developed, lies buried deep in the silt at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean and that therefore it will for ever remain nothing more than a mere legend, an interesting fairy story for an intellectual children.

But this is not altogether the case. For science is gradually accumulating facts which begin to show that there is some probability at least in the theory of its existence. It is obvious that until science has developed methods and perfected apparatus to enable divers to explore the bed of the Atlantic Ocean, which is 21,000 feet below the surface in its deeper part, the only source of possible evidence must lie in a comparison between the Old and New Worlds, together with a study of the existing Atlantic islands. This means that it has to take up the testimony of the deep-sea soundings; it must compare the distribution of animals and plants in the Euro-Africa and American continents; it must look for the similarities of language and ethnological types; and finally it must consider the early religious beliefs, rituals and architecture which have left their remnants on both sides of the Atlantic.

During the nineteenth century the British and American Admiralties despatched expeditionary ships to investigate the depths of the Atlantic at various parts. As a result of these deep-sea soundings the ocean bed has been carefully charted. The maps reveal the existence of an immense elevated land-mass beginning not far from the Irish coast and stretching in a south-westerly direction as far as the South American coast near French Guiana. This great plateau lies in deep mid-ocean at an average height of about 9,000 feet above the bed out of which it rises.

The higher parts of this land ridge are only a hundred to a few hundred fathoms from the surface of the water, while islands like the Azores are considered to be its peaks. We know from the study of geology that the earth's surface has provided a stage for the successive appearance and disappearance of land. Continents have been submerged beneath water more than once; and the surfaces of existing parts of Europe, Africa and America show plainly by geological evidences, that in former times they were washed by ocean waters. Even to-day these phenomena continue before our eyes. The western coast of Greenland, for example is sinking so rapidly that ancient buildings erected on low rock-islands, are now submerged.

We see therefore that it is not impossible for the great land-belt in the Atlantic to have once stood out of the vast sheet of water which now engulfs it. Geological history stretches away into the remotest periods of time until it loses itself. Nature does not remain stagnant for ever but shakes the giant body of this planet at wide intervals, producing the different epochs about which geologists are slowly collecting information. Vast volcanic disturbances even now occur in the bed of the Atlantic and evidence the probability of past and future changes.

In 1923 the Western Telegraph Company sent out a ship to search for a lost telegraph cable which had been laid down about twenty-five years previously. Marine soundings were taken at the exact place where the cable had been deposited. The captain of the vessel was astounded to discover that the surface of the ocean bed had risen during the quarter century by two miles! This surprising and striking fact reveals what might be discovered if the opportunities for such investigation were more widespread and more frequent.

The late M. Pierre Termier, Director of Science of the Geological Chart of France, when advancing his own belief in Atlantis, mentioned that a French ship which was used in laying the cable from Brest to Cape Cod during the summer of 1898, tried to fish up a broken strand at a spot about 560 miles north of the Azores. The depth was seventeen hundred fathoms. The grappling-iron drew up oceanic debris, soil and rock. The nature of the last two was such as to indicate that the Atlantic bed, in that locality, was mountainous, high-peaked

(continued from the previous page) and deep-valleyed. Among this material was a kind of vitreous lava which I have seen preserved at the museum of the School of Mines in Paris. These broken pieces, belonging to the species known as tachylyte, could solidify into their existing condition only under atmospheric pressure. Had they been thrown up under the depth of water in which they were found, they would have assumed different form; they would have become crystallised. Every eminent geologist would support this contention.

The grappling-iron also tore off some splinters of rock from an irregular peak. These were discovered to consist of lava too. They were subjected to microscopic examination later by Dr Frederick F. Strong.²³² Geologists know that lava decomposes to a certain extent under sea water in a period of roughly fifteen thousand years. Dr Strong found that these splinters had not decomposed to this extent and that, as in the former instance, the lava had solidified under air pressure. This indicates that the crater which had thrown it forth must have had its head above the ocean; a further conclusion is that a part of the Atlantic bed now seventeen hundred fathoms deep, was dry land less than fifteen thousand years ago.

What has the distribution of animals and plants to tell us concerning the probability of the existence of an Atlantean continent? There are species on both sides of the Atlantic which have existed in the same habitations as long as history records. Those species are identical, yet three thousand miles of water separate the continents on which they are found. Biologists and botanists can offer no plausible theory to account for this undeniable fact. But those who have begun to take the Atlantean theory seriously, find a simple answer. Here are three instances. First, in the existing Atlantic islands we find to-day earth-worms precisely similar to those which we can find in Europe and North Africa. It must be obvious to any intelligence that the rolling ocean waves provide an impassable region for earth-worms. The logical conclusion is that dry land once connected those islands with the Old World.

Second, geologists, digging the earth in different places, have found remains of such huge creatures as the hair mammoth and the woolly-haired rhinoceros on continents separated by vast sheets of water, the European and the American. The beds in which the remains are deposited, always belong to the post-glacial period. Professor

²³¹ "1st-15th November 1943] [Tarangaranga" appears at the top of the page in the original.

²³² Referring to Frederick Finch Strong. This particular paragraph seems to be referencing "The Problem of Atlantis" by James Lewis Thomas Chalmers Spence (25 November 1874 - 3 March 1955).

Edward Hull's judgment was (here I quote): "there was a common centre in the Atlantic where this life began, and during and prior to the glacial epoch great land-bridges north and south spanned the Atlantic Ocean."

Third, a curious and enlightening instance which has been a standing puzzle to botanists, is the case of the banana. Here we have a tropical plant which is to be found in America, Asia and Africa. We know that it existed freely on the American side before Columbus sighted his first West Indian island. Now the banana is seedless, and its bulb is not easily transportable like that of the potato. It cannot be propagated by cutting as we can propagate many trees. Even if some way had been found to transport it from one side of the Atlantic to the other, it could never have successfully endured the long voyage which a primitive type of vessel would have slowly made. Finally, as a plant possessing no seeds it must have been under culture for a considerable period on one side of the Atlantic before it appeared on the other. How then was it carried by its cultivators across the seas?

This problem remained a riddle till Otto Kuntze, a German botanist who spent many years in the tropics, propounded the first plausible solution. He pointed out that the only conclusion was that the banana had been brought to a high state of cultivation on land now submerged beneath the Atlantic waves, land once peopled by inhabitants who had developed agricultural arts.

This question whether Atlantis, granting its one-time existence, was ever peopled by human beings who raised on it a high degree of civilisation, as Plato claims, is also provocatively interesting but more difficult of solution. Modern investigation of this question must necessarily be limited to comparisons of the Old and New Worlds. If the similarities are sufficiently striking, we may decide that the connecting link has been lost since Atlantis sank into the sea, and that both cultures spread out from this once-inhabited central area.

Take the case of the architectural form known as the pyramid, for instance. At Teotihuacan in Mexico there are two giant pyramids still standing. They date back to pre-historic times. They were built towards the points of the compass. So also were the Egyptian pyramids built. The interior arrangements of the galleries and chambers in the Mexican pyramids are almost identical with those of the Egyptian ones.

In Peru among the architectural ornaments there are puzzling reproductions of ancient Greek designs. These likenesses have been pointed out by Professor G. Elliot Smith and he asks whether they are merely fortuitous or due to some causal relationship.

Thus we may ponder upon the strange history of this planet, upon the gigantic changes which Nature makes at her will in laughing defiance of man, when she tosses a whole continent into the sea.

Night Over Angkor

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NIGHT OVER ANGKOR²³³

²³³ "Vol. 3 OCTOBER 1939 No. 9" appear at the top of the page in the original.

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and monthly science review

(273-2) READ
PAUL BRUNTON
ON THE MYSTERIOUS CITY OF ANGKOR

(273-3) TWO SHILLINGS
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274
NIGHT OVER ANGKOR

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NIGHT OVER ANGKOR

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NIGHT OVER ANGKOR

(277-1)²³⁵ Night over Angkor (continued from page 290)
wall two thousand feet long. Its one-time luxury is now mocked by the few cows and buffaloes which wander lazily to feed on the grass that grows around its fallen

²³⁴ Void page

²³⁵ This para is a continuation of the paras on page 286. This entire section is also the original printing of the photocopies found on page 112.

stones. Almond-eyed Tcheou-Ta-Kwan saw window frames made of solid gold when he sat in the palace audience chamber nearly seven hundred years ago, but I, alas! perceive only crumbling grey walls and aimless wandering ghosts.

I have not yet seen half of the ruined Khmer capital, when I return in the evening to ponder over the sight of its largest temple, the Wat, so large that the enclosing wall is nearly two and a half miles in perimeter. The reign of the sun has ended; the reign of the moon has begun. The first soft starlight twinkles down upon stone and vegetation alike.

Night has fallen over Angkor. Here and there the walls are ominously cracked; mutilated statues of the Ramayana's gods strew the ground; lichen and creeper lace themselves around the panels of carved goddesses; thorns flourish thickly around me as advance-guards of the invading jungle; lizards crawl blasphemously over the calm faces of fallen Buddhas; bats coat the holy shrines with their excrement; gone are the proud glories of the Khmers; but the sacred truths taught by sage and priest of Angkor still remain though their lips are dumb and their bodies annihilated by time. Highest and holiest of these verities is that which was whispered in the penetralia of the Mysteries, that which is most needed by blinded man to-day:

"THE SOUL OF ALL IS ONE."

(to be continued)

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NIGHT OVER ANGKOR

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NIGHT OVER ANGKOR

(279-1) READ

PAUL BRUNTON

ON THE MYSTERIOUS CITY OF ANGKOR

[A) 3 Articles from The Modern Mystic, London]²³⁷

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NIGHT OVER ANGKOR

(280-1) The September Modern Mystic

And Monthly Science Review

Paul Brunton

A profusely illustrated article on the mysterious city of Angkor (contd.).

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NIGHT OVER ANGKOR

²³⁶ Void page

²³⁷ PB himself changed "B) pages typewritten unpublished" to "A) 3 Articles from The Modern Mystic, London" by hand.

²³⁸ Void page

(282-1)²⁴⁰ Night over Angkor

After I write from the sun-stippled ruins of Angkor, in languorous French Indo-China, to an India friend, he carries the news of my work and whereabouts to a certain India yogi, whose name and power I have made favourably known in five continents. The mystic smiles tolerantly and observes: "Brunton always carries a small notebook and a couple of fountain pens in his pocket. He travels to these ancient sacred places like this Angkor and immediately writes down his inner impressions. Later he collects these notes together and puts them into print to interest people. That is his destiny."

It is a true remark, although many of these notes will not become embodied in print for many years because there is always a right hour of all such revelations as those which fate has forced upon me as an unwilling medium to an unbelieving age. So I dip now into my records of Asiatic research and present the following pieces.

The spiritual side of Angkor is almost unknown to Europe, but the highest Buddhist Lama who placed the key to its mysteries in my hands thereafter bade me give some hints of that side to waiting minds in the West.

I

(282-2) It happens that I am travelling from Japan to China, where certain esoteric contacts are to be established, some information to be acquired and a few ancient treasures are to pass out of that war-bitten land into my safe keeping. But China is not my ultimate destination, for I intend to hurry thence to the familiar surf-laden shores of Hindustan. There I foresee that the Rubicon of my spiritual life will have to be resolutely crossed and my boat burnt behind me; that the last tight-holding threads of an entire cycle of outer and inner life have to be cut and cut forever. The experience will not be a pleasant one, therefore I seek to get it over quickly.

I gaze over the ship's rail into the swirling sea, into those waters whose cold clasp is one day to give my wandering life its final peace, if the dark predictions of Oriental seers are to be credited. The propeller races around below the surface, vibrating the old hull. The sea charges on the steamer as fiercely as a sullen and resentful beast, but the vessel bears the attack with unflinching if groaning patience.

Imagine my surprise when a young well-dressed Siamese man who had come on board at Kobe presents himself at my side and, before the first lengthy conversation has ended, hands me a letter and bids me proceed to Bangkok where further orders await me. I realise in a flash that destiny has show its usual sudden hand in my affairs. Thus my exit from danger-filled China is followed by my arrival, not in India but in a canal-filled Bangkok.

There, as I have been foretold, His Holiness the Supreme Priest of Siam, aged ruler of 200,000 monks, receives me most graciously in his monastery, presents me with

²³⁹ "August 1939 The Modern Mystic" and "by Paul Brunton, author of A Search in Secret India, A Search in Secret Egypt, The Quest of the Overself, The Inner Reality, etc., etc." appears at the top of the page in the original.

²⁴⁰ The paras on this page appear to be original printings of the copies on page 109.

a signed and sealed certificate for past services rendered, entrusts me with a further spiritual mission, and after a few more meetings sends me away with the gift of a heavy centuries-old bronze Buddha taken from his private sanctuary.

I continue my usual researches in Siam whilst awaiting the promised orders. Before long they come, in the most unexpected of places and at the most untimely of hours. It is midnight. A black starless sky winds a mournful shroud around the entire landscape. In a lofty candle-lit room, a solitary building surrounded by deserted fields, the message is delivered to me phrased in imperative tones. Meanwhile the unpleasant odour of roasting human flesh assails my nostrils from a nearby primitive crematorium.

A tall grey-bearded Buddhist monk sits less than a yard away from me, with his young disciple on the right. The old man is not a Siamese. He has been resident in the country for seven years, but received his initiation into the holy order forty odd years ago in Mongolia. His powerful voice resounds with a strength which brooks no opposition. He puts his curious little rosary, with a minute picture of the Buddha cunningly hidden inside one of its yellow wooden beads, into my jacket pocket and then commands me to journey to the ruins of the lost civilisation of Angkor!

The following day I begin my travels anew. Once the French Indo-China border is crossed, the autocar speeds for hours across flat colourless country until at last it follows a road cut through dense entangled forest. Monkeys leap from branch to branch and scowl irritably at our intrusion. Then night falls, the birds cease their short cries, the jackals end their long howls, the cicadae drop their brittle chirping and the foxes call no more to their cubs. All-embracing silence entombs the jungle's diurnal noises.

The quietude lengthens. In this darkness the wheels must run more slowly. And after the moon's arc rises triumphantly in the sky and countless stars have appeared to keep it company there breaks suddenly upon my straining eyes the shadowy silhouettes of prodigiously-tall towered buildings. Their heads top the forest trees abruptly and are spread out over a wide area.

The lonely jungle road leads for miles through uninhabited and uncleared tracts, and then without warning skirts these vast deserted monuments of a dead city that once held a million living men and women. The whole scene grips my fascinated attention and involuntarily I apply the brakes and descend from the car.

I have reached the last relics of the lost civilisation of the Khmers and stand on the mysterious ground of Angkor!

II

(282-3) In the cooler hours that immediately follow dawn, I begin exploration of these vast ruins which lay forgotten in their hidden lair amongst virgin vegetation until not much more than two generations ago. Then they were discovered accidentally, by Mouhot, the French naturalist-hunter, whilst collecting specimens of tigers, leopards and apes for scientific purposes. Even so it was not till the opening years of the twentieth century

^A See The Modern Mystic's Bookshelf, page iii

(continued from the previous page) that European hunters of lost Asiatic culture were able to set to work in real earnest. They dug out of their tombs in the soft red North Cambodian soil these dulled architectural gems which had been waiting for time and man to disinter them.

I turn my feet towards one of the oldest relics of Angkor, towards the most original and most artistic of all the hundreds of its still-standing monuments. Where the four main roads of the vanished town converged on a common centre, there stood and still stands the amazing temple of Bayon. Where on this world's surface exists another precisely like it?

Grim, grotesque, fantastic, monstrous ultra-primitive, benign, or beatific – each onlooker interprets at his will and carries away a different impression according to his taste, temperament and knowledge. For the first eye-arresting features of the Bayon are four titanic heads which are repeatedly carved on every one of the fifty domed towers which themselves rise about fifty feet into the air above the corridors they crown, except the central summit which is nearly one hundred feet higher still. Each of the four giant's faces varies but slightly from the other in its tremendously powerful expression.

The solemn eyes are half closed and gaze vaguely down at the surrounding scenes. The lids droop precisely to the same degree as the lids of the eyes of those yellow Chinese mystics with whom I sat in meditation but a month ago, their unseeing but unshut narrow slits holding provocatively fascinating mystery for the Occidental beholder.

The grandiose features are heavy, the full cheeks and thick lips, the large flat semi-negroid nose belong to a type of race which is neither Mongol nor Aryan but, to my mind, definitely Dravidian. The general effect of these domes with unfamiliar human visages is to bring me back again to Egypt, to set me down once more within the sandy precinct of the colourful Sphinx.

Forest, brush and creeper still half hold the Bayon in the grasp. I enter the sacred building through the eastern gate. As in so many other important Oriental temples, the side which greets the dawning sun is the most honoured; so here the entrance is wider, the stone steps more numerous, and a specially decorative setting of lion-guards and serpent-balustrades greets the visitor. The sandstone lions half-squat on their hind legs angrily and show their teeth. They are placed here – as were those other lions which I saw so often at the porch of the Temple of Dair-El-Bahari, in Upper Egypt – to protect the structure from evil spirits by some priestly magically-invested power. The monstrous serpents assist them in this work, as do the serpents painted on the walls in so many of the dark Tombs of Luxor. I wander warily through its inner galleries and disorderly cloisters, climbing them here and descending them there, moving over broken stones and ruined floors and thickly tangled weeds.

Carvings are everywhere, on pillars, walls and porticoes. Life-like pictures represent the home, market-place, battlefield and sports ground; the pleasures and histories of kings and commoners – only the world of ordinary everyday life of a people whose close-cropped hair and distinctive features label them as Khmers. That there is a definite plan behind this arrangement of themes becomes clear when I ascend to the

second storey, where the scenes change their character and unroll as beautiful tableaux of religious story and mythical incident from the sacred Hindu scriptures.

[Seven]²⁴¹ hundred years ago the Khmer sculptors stood before these sandstone blocks with mallet and chisel and incised hundreds of panels with these patterns which cover nearly every inch of the Bayon's surface. A little sympathetic study enables me to appreciate fully this primitive perfection of carving.

Thus the physical ascension to a higher platform clearly symbolises the ascension of heart and thought from material worldly interest to otherworldly religious emotion. I find an interesting bas-relief on a wall whose lower panel depicts some thin Brahmin yogis practising their system of mind control in the solitude of a dense forest.

A further flight of worn steps brings me to the third and highest terrace which is lined with little sanctuaries and filled with scores of squeaking bats. I penetrate this labyrinth of dim corridors and triangular chapels until a door admits me into a large oval room. It is austere empty and mysteriously gloomy. For it is "the holy of holies," the most important sanctuary in the entire structure of the Bayon.

I place my shining pocket torch on the floor and squat amid the Indo-Chinese dust which lies thickly heaped all around. My mind, trained to work by intuitive as much as ratiocinative processes, leaps suddenly to a particular perception like a jungle tiger on a long-awaited prey. There is all the magnificent exhilaration, the intellectual intoxication which is born when the mind alights upon a newly-found truth. I know that subsequent examination, whether rationally scientific or clairvoyantly psychic, will but verify this truth, although it may require weeks where the intuitive faculty requires but a single second.

For I slip back in memory to the massive pile of the mighty Egyptian Pyramid, whose invisible malignant guards I had once braved throughout an entire night and whose unforgettable

(continued from the previous page) initiation brought a bitter aftermath of misfortunes along with its dramatic opening of the pages of the Book of Death. The King's Chamber, which constitutes the supreme sanctuary of the Pyramid, is placed architecturally highest, and is as ascetically free from image or ornament and as forbiddingly deprived of light as this holy of holies of the Khmer people, which was likewise the highest of the Bayon's chambers. Both rooms are thus well fitted for the difficult interiorisation of attention and rapt concentration of thought which are as superior to religious life as the latter is superior to mere animal life. Then again just as the King's Chamber stands exactly beneath the apex of the Pyramid, so the room in which I sit has been built exactly beneath the summit, the huge central domed tower which out-tops all the other towers of the Bayon. Finally I find that each storey of the latter structure decreases in length and breadth as it increases in height, thus roughly following a pyramidal plan. It is really an ornate Pyramid in three lofty stages crowned with domes.

²⁴¹ PB himself changed "Six" to "Seven" by hand.

The most ancient legends of Egypt have linked the Great Pyramid's origin with a race of vanished foreign builders who were instructed and guided in their efforts by invisible spiritual beings. Similar legends haunt the history of this unique Asiatic monument. For the native chronicle, still held in faith by the Cambodians of today, repeats the bold statement: "The invisible genii built this temple, the Bayond, and made it their abode."

The highest purpose of the Pyramid was carried out in the darkness of the King's Chamber; the highest purpose of the Bayon was fulfilled in the room which surrounds me. And that was none other than initiation into the sacred Mysteries which represented the grandest knowledge of the ancient world.

Such initiations witnessed the transmission of both power and knowledge to sensitive candidates by the High Priest of the land. They have vanished today, except from Tibet. Their purpose varied according to the grade assigned to the candidate, but in every case they brought him within grasp of a diviner existence. The hierophant became but the selfless vehicle of the Universal Mind during these secret rites. The disciple, who was previously prepared for the experience through a long training, had to concentrate keenly until he was either lost in trance or else telepathically receptive to the hierophant's silent instruction. What was learned during initiation constituted the most valuable part of a man's education. Even time itself can never antiquate the spiritual antiquities of these Mysteries. They are time-conquering because they contain eternal truths. They arise out of the enduring reality behind human life, and not out of mere momentary phantasy. Hence they can never become out of date, as the materialistic historian of our epoch arrogantly assumes.

I wander out of the sanctuary through a door which opens on a high-vaulted passage and proceed thence through ante-chambers and porches till I find the friendly light in a carved stone window. Here I stand for a while to survey the forest and jungle remnants of the city alone is about sixteen miles in length. A medieval Imperial Chinese envoy to the Cambodian Court estimates the population of the town as being not less than one million inhabitants. Caesar's Rome was smaller and less populous. The lightly-built wood, grass and mud cottages of the common herd have disappeared into dust today, under the attack of strong winds, rains and sun, but I see numerous relics of larger stone buildings profusely piled - palaces, temples, royal terraces and monasteries - which have withstood the action of time since the rest of the town was abandoned to the invasion of thick forest trees and thorny jungle bushes. Angkor is now a dead city and tropical torpor holds these half-buried monuments in its paralysing arms.

I make my passage around the picturesque terraces and suddenly find myself at another opening, confronted again by the most marked feature of the Bayon - the four

(continued from the previous page) gigantic mask-like faces which adorn each of the other domes as well as the central cupola itself, totalling two hundred heads and altogether appearing like an assembly of the gods. The men who conceived and carved these half-smiling, half-ironic visages manage to convey the atmosphere of sphinx-like

remoteness which is undoubtedly their aim. Yet who dwells behind these cold masks? What do they mean? Archaeologists at different dates have named them Siva, Brahma, Lokesvara and Buddha. All these have been honoured or worshipped in ancient Cambodia by turns and the attribution is therefore not incorrect. But Western archaeologists rarely know more than the external rites, names and dogmas of religion at its most orthodox; they ignore or despise its innermost secrets and hidden history. Yet the latter are known by every Oriental, not rendered indifferent to his own culture by modern education, to have had a previously-guarded existence.

Once again my mind flashes back to Egypt and to her sacred scripture, the Book of the Dead, wherein the soul during his ascension to the most sacred condition perceives the four points of solstice and equinox. For divine beings are seated in front of these cardinal points. The soul prays to them: "O ye who send forth truth to the universe..." The Ritual then declares that he is freed from his sins "after he has seen the face of the gods." Grateful and happy, he thanks these heavenly beings.

Not only in Egypt but in every ancient land where I have sought truth and studied her history has this strange tradition of the four gods who watch the guide the spiritual life of mankind appeared. The Chinese still adorn the vestibules of many temples with tall coloured effigies of "the four Protectors." The Hindus still tell me of "the four celestial Maharajahs" who guard the Tree of Higher Knowledge. The few Mexicans who still secretly cherish their pagan tradition hold "the four Holy Spirits" in the highest esteem.

Now I remember the last words of the native Cambodian legend which came previously to memory: "The invisible genii built this temple, the Bayon, and over it erected the towers *with heads made in their own image.*"

The Bayon is an inheritance from a people whose initiated priests knew the tradition of the Sacred Four. It is therefore their masterpiece and unique among the monuments of the Khmers. Therefore too they paid it an honour denied to other temples. For they covered the head of its central four-faced dome in precisely the same manner that the prehistoric Egyptians once covered the heads of their own chief sanctuaries of the Mysteries, the Pyramid and Sphinx, that is, with solid gold!

III

(285-1) The Angkor sky is tinted a resplendent sapphire blue the while my days pass in continuous research beneath this beautiful canopy. Whenever I wander the stone ruins mingle with a network of long banyan-tree branches or of liana-creepers which meander and twine themselves into patterns of dark-green decoration for the grey walls and doorways. Here are twelve little laterite towers without windows or doors set along one side of the great grassy promenade, the Veahl, where the men and women of Angkor met to walk and talk both before and after the heat of the day. There, on a man-made hill is the battered and broken fragment of the main porch of a thousand-year-old pyramidal house of God - the Baphuon, which comes second in importance to the Bayon and therefore received much of the best efforts of the Khmer artists and architects. Tcheou-Ta-Kwan, the Chinese scholar, visited Angkor during the thirteenth century and mentions the Baphuon in his diary as providing one of the most impressive views in the city. But fate and time brought medieval invading troops from east and

west, from Annam and Siam, who brutalised by the passions of war, desecrated the flower-filled gardens of its tranquil courts, and dismembered the stone blocks of its rising tiers and turrets. Yet enough of its charm remains to attract me inside.

This four-hundred feet long building is simpler than the Bayon and similar in possessing three lofty storeys, several towers and a central dome covering the chief sanctuary. But the motif of the faces of four gods is entirely absent here. I climb the ancient stone steps and make my passage along a terrace which leads to a broken gallery pathetically lined with leaning and half-tumbled columns. Little yellow lizards with long tails stuck upright in the air fix their quaint gaze at me. Blue and gold coloured butterflies cross and re-cross the deserted thresholds. Vegetation has forced its way into the building, but its invasion now holds firmly together what the earlier human invaders had endeavoured to tear apart. Giant torturous banyan and fig trees imprison floors and wall and terraces – even the summits of half-tottering towers – in their monstrously thick roots and creeping branches of white wood. Such is their tremendous strength and age that these tentacles cannot be pulled away and they appear to have embedded themselves in the very stones.

Thus both man and Nature have tried to squeeze and crush the body of the Baphuon like serpents attacking a defenceless beast. They have maimed it but the soul is still untouched, the majestic atmosphere remains, the superb carvings of the sacred epic of Rama, the divine avatar, done in low relief on plain panels are unforgettable, whilst inside the austere holy of holies the haunting echo of its best days withdraws my mind into a state of unearthly felicity.

Yet I leave the Baphuon with the depressing memory of that terribly significant verse penned by the poetic Tent-Maker of Naishapur:

“They say the Lion and the
Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshed
gloried and drunk deep;
And Bahram, that great
Hunter –
The Wild Ass stamps o’er
his Head,
But cannot break his Sleep!”

As if to impress the lesson of these lines I find the adjoining ruins to be those of the vast royal palace, which is enclosed within a²⁴²

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NIGHT OVER ANGKOR

A Wanderer in Angkor

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²⁴² The paras on this page continue on page 277.

²⁴³ Void page

(287-1) FOLLOW A ROUGH RED-EARTHED narrow footpath through the thick jungle, disturbing the little creatures which make their home in the bush. The torturous way disappears at places and it is the easiest thing in the world to lose oneself entirely in this dense undergrowth where there are no landmarks. Two hours' rambling are needed to bring in sight a most important Buddhist relic of the lost Hindu-Buddhist civilisation of Cambodia. With what pleasure do I greet the great paved platform, shaped like a gigantic fallen cross, which suddenly thrusts itself up amongst all this tangled forest of slender areca-palms, dark banana trees and feathered coco-groves whose foliage hems me in like an encircling wall!

A Sandstone stela still remains to tell unwittingly the mournful story of life's impermanence. It is carved with lengthy inscriptions which cover each of the four sides in the usual style of the country. Two languages are used, the one Sanskrit and the other, old Khmer. It bears a thousand-year-old date and narrates the foundation by King Yasovarman of a Buddhist monastery which stood upon this platform. The refuge was clearly a wooden and brick structure for nothing at all remains today; the monastic hall has crumbled into dust, the monks' houses have vanished and their little chapel is as dead as themselves.

Yet one thing was not made of such perishable stuff and has therefore lived to appear to modern gaze. It is an enormous isolated statue of the teacher Gautama,²⁴⁴ well preserved and calmly defiant of the test of time. Some pious living monks of the neighbourhood have built a tiled roof to protect the enduring granite of their Master's head, but their act seems more of a gesture of reverence than one of need.

The once-worshipped image of the Buddha of Tep Pranam is beautiful even in its desertion, even after the wreck and death of the monastery which surrounded it. I know that I am in the presence of an art-work of ineffable charm.

The relic gazes down without reproach at the few who come to witness its pathetic loneliness. It expects nothing from men and women, though men and women still expect much from it. Do not occasional pilgrims still find their way across the steaming jungles and forests of Indo-China to tremble to the ground at its feet and beg for strength, wisdom, peace, children, health, truth or fortune – things which we poor humans need to make us happy? Do they not still piously place a few wild jasmines or some fragrant tuberose or a handful of freshly-gathered lovely lotuses on its ornately carved throne?

For the Mongolian mind looks upon important images of the Buddha as being invested with special spiritual power. The belief is not without its justification. For when the Chinese first dedicate such a figure a reverential magical rite called "Kai kuang" is performed. This means "opening the light" and is accompanied by the actual cutting open of the pupils in the image's eyes. With this act some fragment of the Buddha's magnetism is thought to have entered the figure. Ever idol which has been properly prepared by initiated lamas is therefore regarded as being enveloped with an invisible aura of authentic power.

The bright glare of the sun dazzles my pupils as I look upward at the fine lineaments of the attractive face which confronts me. The characteristically long lobes

²⁴⁴ "Gotama" in the original.

of its ears are symbolic; thus they hear the whole world's anguished cries. The half-open eyes which stare so abstractedly upon this mundane existence convey a peculiar sensation to my mind. Something seems to *live* within them, some archaic spirit who has attained to the apogee of human wisdom, and who now dwells immersed in transcendence, appears to hide behind the serene curtain of those lids.

The woolly curls of hair are arranged, according to the stiff conventional fashion, in regular rows all over the Buddha's head. The cotton monk's robe hangs tightly and assumes the mould of the body's lines. The mild gently-expressive stone lips speak to me silently with a message that comes like an unexpected voice out of the Infinite. The legs are crossed upon a lotus-shaped throne. The left palm is placed on the folded knees, but the fingers of the right hand point downwards, for Gautama is thus symbolically taking the whole earth as a witness that Nirvana has truly been

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A WANDERER IN ANGKOR

(continued from the previous page) attained, that the baffling mystery of the finite ego has been solved.

I squat on a moss-grown flagstone before the Buddha, my mind lulled into a half-reverie, my nostrils sensing the weird scent of the jungle close at hand. Timid squirrels with bushy tails scurry up and down the trees, a parakeet is perched on the end of a bough, other birds perch between the gables of the modern roof and whistle gaily over the statue's head or swoop down to its feet. It has been sunk in perpetual dream through the centuries, the whistling birds and humming mosquitoes unheard, its splendours gone, and the great gilded altars as though they never were.

Somehow its peace is inviolate. By its size alone the benign figure dominates the forest clearing, where it lies unfettered by buildings, but it dominates my soul by its silent communication of self-sovereignty, of world-wide compassion, and of luminous understanding. All the immemorial wisdom of old Asia is gathered within that graven head, held behind those half-lowered eyes and compressed into this beatific smile. I am reminded of that still more gigantic figure, the colossal golden-eyed Daibutsu, the "Buddha of Infinite Light" at Kamakura, set in the most spiritually magnetised garden in Japan, where I fell into a trance of unforgettable ecstasy whence none could bring me back from noon till eve.

II

(289-1) Dawn brings a sky of purest blue. At the forest's edge both bird and insect chant in delirious joy at the sun's arrival. Butterflies with enormous wings but frail bodies flutter gaily among the wild flowers. I gaze upward at five tremendous domed towers which point from the base earth through the warm windless air to high heaven and which announce abruptly the neighbourhood of the Wat, Angkor's largest and most impressive monument. Even the portion which is visible at this distance above its screen of lofty palm trees seems complacently satisfied with its own grandeur and possesses the "pyramidal pride" of Byron's lines.

I cross an old paved causeway which spans an immensely deep moat that

surrounds the leviathan structure of the entire temple, and thus turns it into an island. The moat is nearly four miles long and broader than any which ever encircled feudal castle in the West. The raised causeway is long too, no less than seven hundred feet. It is the only approach to the forecourt which presents a broad flight of steps. On each side a gigantic stone cobra rears a sevenfold head, like the sentinel that it symbolically is, whilst other serpents frame a balustrade for the front portion with their bodies.

I plunge into a jungle of stonework and walk rapidly around for more than an hour merely to take bearings and form a rough mental picture of the place. The Wat must be the heaviest stone building set up on our planet's surface after the Egyptian Pyramid and before the skyscraper era began. It is a veritable artificial hill. The mind is arrested by the strange architectural plan which seeks to impose all its formidable massiveness on the beholder at a single glance. For here are ten acres of ground covered with a colossal building, galleries; chambers and courts sheath the central pile which is arranged by cleverly graded perspectives to assume the general outline of a truncated *pyramid* adorned by domes.

As at the Pyramid the enormous blocks are put together with joints of paper-thin fineness and fitted with the same absolute precision. As at the Pyramid the modern beholder must wonder gapingly how such intimidating blocks were brought here and hauled into position by the primitive appliances then available. For several of the smooth delicately-grained sandstones and limonites which I see must weigh six tons each and I know that there are no quarries less than twenty miles distant. As at the Pyramid the square base is brought by successive terraces to a tapering summit. Here, however, the terraces as they recede inwards are set with surrounding courts to rise in and above the last, whilst they increase in proportionate height as they ascend farther from the ground. This pyramidal rise imparts an aspiring sublimity to the Wat. "What archaeologist will dare to assert that the same hand which planned the Pyramids of Egypt, Karnak, and the thousand ruins now crumbling to oblivion on the sandy banks of the Nile, did not erect the monumental Nagkon^A-Wat of Cambodia," wrote Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*.

Why is the Pyramid, a *four-sided figure*, the most mysterious and most ancient monument-form to be found in either the western or eastern hemispheres? Hitherto nobody has revealed its connection with the equally most ancient and most mysterious esoteric doctrine - that of "the Sacred Four."

I stand again at the frontal portico, whence a long avenue of grey columns stretches to the right and left, enclosing a dim corridor and a darker wall. I pass under the pediment and project a light upon the carvings of men, beasts, and gods which ornament the wall in crowds. Here are fragments²⁴⁵

^A Originally named with the Sanskrit "Nagaram," i.e., "City," by the Indian priests. The Khmers twisted the pronunciation to Nagkon. The word degenerated still further until it became our modern Angkor. — PB

²⁴⁵ This para continues on page 119.

(continued from the previous page) of the old Indian epics unrolled as storied tableaux whilst I walk. They run in a continuous frieze, not in panels, and bear the appearance of time-blackened tapestry. And they run for not less than half a mile around the temple. Valmiki's verse is re-inscribed here as a wordless mural and appears in a tumultuous profusion of chiselled pictures, once painted and gilded but now bereft of all original colouring. The Mahabharata and the Harivamsa are here too. I observe the familiar faces of ancient gods – Yama and Shiva²⁴⁶ and Surya and Vishnu.

I rise up two staircases to an altitude of at least a hundred feet in the air. Carved doorways, roofed galleries and little side-chapels flank the court. To approach the edge is to be rewarded by an ample view of the environing countryside. I gaze down; all around there stretches the apparent infinitude of the green Cambodian forest which brushes the very walls of the temple, as the enveloping sand once brushed the very face of the buried Sphinx. Here an ape swings from branch to branch, disturbed the nested kites and minahs; there a gleam of distant water betrays the Nile of Cambodia, the river Mekong, which with its tributaries and lakes, supported Khmer life and soil with its annual overflow. But as I return and pace the uneven stone floor I am struck by the Quaker-like plainness of supporting pillar and surrounding wall; and as I advance through a profoundly shadowy corridor, as my eyes grow accustomed to the darkness, I search for and find at last at its farthest end the penumbral shrine, the holy of holies of Angkor Wat, placed as in all Khmer-built fanes in the precise centre of the topmost tier. Over its head rears the sumptuously ornamented central cupola, two hundred feet high and shaped like a delicate lotus bud. The Chinese envoy who visited Angkor more than seven hundred years ago, found the tower covered with gold and noticed that its gleaming height could be seen from any point in town.

Here and there I perceive the charred ends of joss-sticks, which have been stuck between the joints of paving stones in the floor. I am not alone. A pious gentle-faced bonze appears within the circle of light cast by my torch, chanting some half-whispered words before glowing incense stick and a few flowers thrown around the statue. He seems simple, a man of primitive mentality, I doubt whether he can comprehend the profound significances of his Master's doctrine, but I do not doubt the fervency of his prayers nor the depth of his faith.

I show him my own rosary and let him marvel at the tiny Buddha-picture hidden within one of the beads. We soon fall into conversation. His voice drops back to a whisper as he begins to narrate a strange story connected with this holy of holies. "Once an Indian king wanted to send a priceless gift to the great Genghis²⁴⁷ Khan of China. So he chose a small Buddha-image, one of his greatest treasures. It was carved out of a flawless emerald. Hundreds of years earlier the Buddhist Arhat Nagasena^A had the image made under his orders and then bestowed his power upon it. Much mystic virtue was given it. It became famous. The Emerald Buddha passed through the dangers of war and fire. It was brought to Ceylon. Thirteen hundred years ago exactly to the present year it was sent to the Great Emperor with an escort of attendant priests and a set of the Buddhist scriptures. But the convoy was wrecked in the China Sea off the Cambodian coast. The figure was brought to the king of the Khmers who took the

²⁴⁶ "Siva" in the original.

²⁴⁷ "Genghiz" in the original.

event as a sign and thenceforth did much to make Buddhism flourish in his kingdom. From that time too the Cambodian worldly power began to triumph, and its wealth to increase. After the building of the Wat the Emerald Buddha was enthroned in this shrine which you now behold. It had been among us for nearly seven hundred years; our capital had risen to the height of luxury; much gold had enriched our rulers and warriors but weakened their fibre; then Karma struck down our empire. The Thai people of Siam attacked

^A Nagasena's name is known to the West through his discussions on Buddhism with Menander, King of the Ionians. — PB

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(continued from the previous page) mercilessly in large numbers, devastated the country and broke into Angkor. Our king hastily walled up the four doors of the shrine, hoping to protect the image. The entire population fled to the south. But its whereabouts was guessed and the walls re-opened. The Thais carried it away in triumph. Thereafter our land never recovered and sank into a pitiful state."

The old monk showed me the four openings which formerly surrounded the innermost cubicle but which were later walled up under such tragic circumstances. There comes to my mind a picture of the palace at Bangkok. I see the gorgeously beautiful royal temple. Set on an ornate lofty throne, which is heavy with gold and studded with gems, there rests a green stone figure of the Buddha. It is the mascot of Siam, the power-talisman behind the country's fortunes, and above all — so a member of the Government assures me — the precious-guarded protector of her political independence in a land-hungry world. At the request of my monk-companions, I take part in a rite of homage to the figure — to receive, mayhap, a shadow of its protective influence. For it is the famous Emerald Buddha, now jealously marked by Japanese,²⁴⁸ Chinese and Hindus, not to speak of treasure-hunting white men. But sentries with bayoneted rifles perpetually confront the temple door.

III

(120-1) Other wanderings on other days bring me to many ruins which lie within and beyond Angkor. Hundreds of miles away there still remain imprisoned in jungle, which spreads with such swift and extraordinary abundance, many scattered ruins of this lost Khmer world. But I must keep my pen within bounds of Angkor and tell briefly of one more place that impresses itself upon memory, of Pre Rup, a grandiose temple topped by a terraced pyramid and stretched on an elaborate base four hundred feet long. A long flight of wide steps intimidate me with their steepness, but once climbed I stroll between carved goddesses into a shrine of the pyramid. A couple of lacquered Buddhas fit with some uneasiness into this Brahmanically-styled fane. The sun, which gleams so weakly near the forest-filled horizon, has passed eleven hundred times around the zodiacal circle since Pre Rup was planned.

²⁴⁸ "Japs" in the original.

The view around is admirable and demands my immediate homage, but sight of an unusual little structure resting on a paved platform within the east portal sends me scurrying down the steps again. A close examination confirms the first thought. It is a rectangular sarcophagus, which save for a double line of reeded ornament running around the external face appears to be strangely like the famed sarcophagus which has rested for thousands of years inside the King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid. A grooved edge at the top indicates where a lid once fitted the stone box. Common folklore calls it a crematorium and imagine the bodies of aristocratic dead being once brought here for burning. But a French archaeologist placed in charge of the Angkor ruins confesses that this seems mere myth and is certainly unhistorical. However he has no other explanation to advance.

The key to the problem can be quickly found. It is the symbolic vessel of resurrection. In this coffin-like box there was placed the body of a chosen candidate for initiation into the Grand Mysteries, - an institution belonging not only to Cambodian Faith but also to the chief pagan religions. He was plunged through the power transmitted by his hierophant into a profound trance, the "yoga-nidra" or yoga-sleep of the Hindus. From this he arose at dawn psychologically changed, emotionally calmer, and spiritually "aware."

The temporary tomb symbolised death or end of the unenlightened period of the candidate's life. Henceforth he bore on his soul the fundamental imprint of esoteric knowledge. Secluded caves, underground crypts, and hidden grottoes served the same purpose as these sarcophagi guarded behind locked doors. Buddha initiated his closest disciple in the Saptaparna cave near Mount Baibhar, and the methods of Druid high priests were not dissimilar.

With the decay and final disappearance of this system of initiation, these sarcophagi fell into disuse until priests appropriated them again for use as royal burial graves or as aristocratic crematoriums. Hence arose the later legends of the Pyramid being a Pharaoh's tomb and of the Pre Rup being a burning place for the dead.

A few broken standing columns alone remain of the sanctuary in which the sarcophagus was confined and guarded. The queer Khmer roof, famed for its tortuous jutting horned cornices set at odd angles, has vanished and the centuries of mystic rites with it. I leave through a doorway fringed with creepers and bearded with moss. The air of neglected loneliness lies pathetically on this place, now abandoned to snakes which hide in dark holes and centipedes which creep under the mossy stones.

Such is the city of ruins which I found in Northern Cambodia; but seven centuries ago the capital of a great empire and now silhouetted on the nightly horizon of tigers when they emerge from their diurnal sleep.

Mr. Brunton will write next month on "The Secret Doctrine of the Khmers."²⁴⁹

(120-2) Our Point of View - (continued from page 311)

and institutions. We expect the institutions to criticise us, - why not? And we exercise our right to show cause for our own existence by replying to them. We have had letters from time to time advising us to be "constructive" in our criticism. What nonsense is this? How on earth can any kind of criticism be constructive? It is possible

²⁴⁹ The rest of the page is the end of an unrelated article.

to disagree either in whole or in part, but any attempt to split hairs is sheer hypocrisy. All that we must be careful to do is to recognise the indisputable right of all men and institutions to have their say equally with us. Dogmatism even is good and healthy; the evils are fanaticism, bigotry and intolerance. How often has the dogmatic man by virtue of his dogmatism cleared away the cobwebs from his own mind to be illumined by the fact that for most of the time he was really talking to himself?

The Editor

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A WANDERER IN ANGKOR

The Secret Doctrine of the Khmers

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THE SECRET DOCTRINE OF THE KHMERS

(293-1) I leave the thorny jungle and mount a frail bamboo ladder. The few wooden steps lead to a large grass-roofed hut. The latter is built on timber piles some six feet from the ground – a mode of domestic architecture which prevails throughout the interior villages of Cambodia. In the regions where a feeble effort to cultivate the land is made with the help of the River Mekong, both dwellings and dwellers would be overwhelmed by the great annual floods were it not for this elevated style of living. And in the large forest tracts it is equally efficacious as a protection against fierce tigers, which do not hesitate to claw their way into the lightly built huts.

This little clearing amidst thick trees and undergrowth was made by monks who have lately returned – after hundreds of years' absence – to settle near the shadow of the Wat, the great temple of Angkor. They have put up a tiny village and today, after waiting for the oppressive heat of the afternoon sun to abate, I enter it as their guest.

The bonzes squat smilingly around the floor, their eyes narrow as slits, their Mongoloid cheek-bones set high, their slim short bodies wrapped tightly in cheerful yellow cloth. Some hold fans in their small hands, while others bend their shaven heads over palm-leaf books. Copper spittoons are placed here and there for their relief, because the moist [climate]²⁵¹ creates asthmatic tendencies. A wild-looking man approaches me and mutters something unintelligible. Long ago he gave himself the title of "King of Angkor" and now everyone calls him by the name in good-humoured derision. His mind is half unhinged, poor fellow, and he illustrates in its wreckage the serious dangers of incorrectly practised yoga.

On the ground outside a boy heaps together a pile of dead branches and sets them alight. Another servant fills two round vessels at a pool close by, ties one to each end of a flexible pole which rests across his shoulders, and then bears them to the hut. The first boy pours some of the water into a black iron bowl and rests it over the fire. Before long he appears among us with tea. It is a fragrantly-scented milkless infusion which we sip from tiny bowls. The life of these men is primitive indeed, for they have

²⁵⁰ Void page

²⁵¹ PB himself deleted "hot" from before "climate" by hand.

hardly any possessions. They are the historic descendants of the Khmers who built Angkor, but my repeated questions reveal that they now keep but a pitiful remnant of their old culture. It consists of a few scraps of tradition mingled with an imperfect knowledge of the Hinayana form of Buddhism which was brought to the country from Ceylon not long before the Cambodian empire approached its final fall. The oldest of the bonzes tells me some of their curious lore:

“Our traditions say that three races have mixed their blood in Kambuja (Cambodia). The first dwellers were unlettered savages, whose tribes still live in parts where no white man’s foot has trod. They are guarded by poison darts struck all over the ground, let alone by the huge tigers, rhinoceros and wild elephants which fill their forests. Our primitive religion survives among them in the form of ruined temples which are cherished as mascots. This religion together with a government was given us by the great sage-ruler Svayambhuva,²⁵² who came from across the western sea. He established the worship of {BRAHMA,}²⁵³ the Supreme Being.

“The other races who settled here were the Indian and Chinese. Brahmin priests became powerful and taught our kings to add the worship of the gods Shiva and Vishnu, and to make Sanskrit a second Court language. Such was their power that even today, after our country has been purely Buddhist for many hundred years, their direct descendants conduct all important ceremonials for our king according to Hindu rituals. You have seen in the royal palace at Phnom-Penh a sword made of dark steel inlaid with gold. It is guarded day and night by these Brahmins. We believe that if the slightest rust appears on the blade, disaster will come to the Khmer people. That sword belonged to our great king Jayavarman, who built the grand temple of Angkor, spread the limits of our empire far and wide, yet kept his mind under control like a safe. He knew the secrets of both Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism, which dwelt in friendship side by side in our country. Indeed, the Mahayana was spread among us even before it reached China.”

The afternoon passes. The magic of the evening sun begins to work. A stream of reddening light pierces the grotesquely tiny windows and plays upon the uneven floor. It reveals the teeth of the smiling monks; some glittering but most betel-stained. We adjourn to a larger structure for the evening rites. While joss-sticks burn freely before the gilded image of their faith, and long litanies are softly chanted, I leave the assembly and settle down in the great Temple of Angkor to savour its sanctified darkness.

I hold to the modern attitude, which has proved so significant in science, that the era of mystery-mongering is past, that knowledge which is not verifiable cannot be received with certitude, and that overmuch profession of the possession of secrets opens the doors of imposture and charlatanry. He who is unable to offer adequate evidence has no right to the public ear. I have generally followed this line of conduct in all my writing, even though it has compelled me in the past to leave undescribed that which I consider the most valuable of personal encounters and to record the minor mystics as though they were the highest sages. If therefore I now reluctantly break my own rule, it is for two reasons: that it would be a pity to withhold information which many might appreciate, and that political enmity has put my informant’s head in

²⁵² “Svyambuva” in the original. Referring to The First Manu. — TJS ‘20

²⁵³ We have changed “BRA” to “BRAHMA” (referring to Svayambhuva’s son). — TJS ‘20

danger. Let it suffice to say that somewhere in South-east Asia I met a man who wears the High Lama's robe, who disclaims any special knowledge at first, but who breaks his reticence in the end. A part of what he tells me about Angkor is worth reconstructing here, but the statements are his and not mine.

(294-1) "You are the first white man to prostrate himself before me for many years. I am deeply moved... The key which unlocks understanding of Angkor's mystery needs to be turned thrice. There is first a secret tradition which has combined and united Hinduism, the religion of many Gods, and Buddhism, the religion without a God. There is next an unbroken line of sages who held and taught this doctrine as being the real and final truth about life. There is thirdly a connection between Angkor and, on one side, South India, on the other side, Tibet. In all three lands there was a time when both faiths even dwelt outwardly together in complete harmony, with interchangeable rites, symbols and dogmas. The tradition itself was limited by the mental incapacity of the masses to the circle of a few sages and their immediate disciples. Vedanta and Mahayana are corruptions of this pure doctrine by of all known systems they come closest to it.

"Its chief tenet was the demonstration to ripe seekers of the existence of a single universal Life-Principle which the sages named, 'The First' or 'The Origin.' In itself it has no shape, cannot be divided into parts, and is quite impersonal - like a man's mind when in the state of deep sleep. Yet it is the root of every shaped thing, creature person and substance which has appeared in the universe. Even mind has come out of [it.]²⁵⁴

There was no room or necessity for a personal God in the Khmer secret doctrine but the popular religion accepted diverse gods as limited beings who were themselves as dependent on The First as the weakest man. Apart from these gods, the sages gave the people symbols suitable for worship. These symbols had to represent The First as faithfully as possible. They were three in number. The sun was chosen because everybody could easily understand that it created, sustained and destroyed the life of this planet. From the tiny cell to the great star, everything is in a state of constant growth or decay thanks to the sun's power. Even substances like stone, wood and metal come into existence through the workings of sun force. The sages knew also, however, that even the human mind gets its vitality from this same force, causing it to reincarnate again and again upon the earth. The people of Angkor worshipped Light as a very god and the rite of sun-worship was carried on in vast stone-paved courts which were open to the sky and faced the temples.

"The second symbol was the male organ or sex. It appeared as a cone-like tower on some temples and as a tapering single column set up in the centre of the building. To Western eyes it is a strange and unsuitable symbol. But the people were plainly taught to look upon it as a picture of the source of life. Orientals in general and primitive people everywhere feel less shame about natural organs and functions than Westerners. Anyway the temples of Angkor never linked this symbol with the worship

²⁵⁴ PB himself inserted a paragraph break here by hand.

of lust. Its existence never degraded them. The Khmer people were so pure-minded that Sulayman, an Arab merchant who wrote an account of a voyage in which he ventured as far as China during the year 851, wrote of his visit to Cambodia: 'All fermented liquors and every kind of debauchery are forbidden there. In the cities and throughout the empire one would not be able to find a single person addicted to debauchery.'

"The third symbol is also thought of in the West as connected with evil, but the adepts of Angkor held a different view. They gave me the previous symbol because hardly a man escapes seeing the miracle of sex, whereby a tiny seed slowly grows into a fully-matured human being composed of different parts, thus teaching the possibility of The First becoming the Many. They also gave the serpent as an emblem of worship for three reasons. In the course of a single lifetime its skin periodically dies and is thrown off, permitting a new skin to appear each time. The constant transformations, reincarnations and reappearances of The First as Nature are thus represented. And when a snake lies in its hole, it usually coils itself into the shape of a circle. It is not possible to mark where and when a circle begins. In this point the reptile indicates the infinity and eternity of The First. Lastly there is the strange mesmeric influence in the glittering eye of the snake which is found in no other animal. During the operation of the Mysteries, which have now been lost to the Western world, the adept initiated the seeker into the elementary stage by a mesmeric process which enabled him to get a glimpse of his origin. Therefore the carvings of every temple in Angkor showed the serpent, while on the lake of Pra Reach Dak near by there is an islet on which a small shrine stands entirely encircled by two great stone snakes.

"The line of sages which had penetrated in the secret of The First and gave these symbolic religions to the masses has shifted its headquarters from epoch to epoch. From the sixth to the thirteenth centuries it flourished in Angkor, but for seven hundred years before that period it flourished in South India. Reminders of this earlier centre exist in plenty in architectural forms and sculptural details. Even the Sanskrit alphabet used by the highest Brahmin priests in Cambodia is of Pallava (South Indian) origin. But the wheel of Karma turned, the Cambodian empire declined and disappeared with a rapidity which outran the fall of the Romans. The rulers were dazzled by wealth and conquest and failed to heed the advice of the sages. The latter withdrew and migrated to Tibet.

"You ask me if they are the same adepts as those spoken of by H.P. Blavatsky? When she was a girl and fled from her husband, she accidentally met a group of Russian Buddhist Kalmucks who were proceeding by a roundabout route on pilgrimage to the Dalai Lama of Tibet. She joined the caravan as a means of escape from her husband. One of them was an adept. He took care of her and protected her and brought her to Lhasa.²⁵⁵ She was initiated in due course into the secret tradition. She visited other parts of Tibet and also India. Before the existence of Angkor ruins was known in the West, she was sent there to continue her studies and to receive a certain contact by meditation in the temples. H.P.B. went but experienced great difficulty in travelling through the uncleared jungle; however she bravely suffered all the discomforts like a man. Later she was introduced to a co-disciple, who eventually

²⁵⁵ "Lhasa" in the original.

became a High Lama and personal adviser to the Dalai Lama. He was the son of a Mongolian prince, but for public purposes took the name of "the Thunderbolt," i.e. "Dorje."²⁵⁶ On account of his personal knowledge of and interest in Russia, he gradually altered it to "Dorjjeff."²⁵⁷ Before their guru died he instructed Blavatsky to give a most elementary part of the secret tradition to the Western people, while he instructed Dorjjeff to follow her further career with watchful interest. Dorjjeff gave her certain advice, she went to America and founded the Theosophical Society. Her guru had forbidden her to give out his name. Moreover she knew much more of the teachings than she revealed. But she was always fearful of saying too much, so she constantly created what she called 'blinds' and wrapped her truthful secrets in

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THE SECRET DOCTRINES OF THE KHMER

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imaginary clothes. I may say no more. However, the poor woman was unjustly maligned by her enemies. They could never understand her peculiar character nor her Oriental methods. Her society did an enormous service to white people by opening their eyes to Eastern truths. But its real mission is over; hence its present weak condition. A new instrument will take up the work in 1939 and give a higher revelation to the world, which is now better prepared. But the beginning of this work will be as quiet and unnoticed as the planting of a seed. It is 108 years since H.P.B.'s²⁵⁸ birth. There are 108 steps on the path to Nirvana. Amongst all the yogis of the Himalayas, 108 is regarded as the most sacred number. It is also kabbalistically connected with the year 1939 in a most important way. Therefore this year will witness the departure of the adepts from Tibet. Their location was always a secret, even most of the High Lamas never knew it. Tibet has lost its value for them, its isolation has begun to disappear rapidly and its rulers no longer respond faithfully to them. They leave Tibet seven hundred years after their arrival."

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THE SECRET DOCTRINES OF THE KHMER

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THE SECRET DOCTRINES OF THE KHMER

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THE SECRET DOCTRINES OF THE KHMER

²⁵⁶ Also known as "Tsanzhab Ngawang Lobzang".

²⁵⁷ "Dorjjeff" in the original.

²⁵⁸ Properly "Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's".

²⁵⁹ Void page

²⁶⁰ Void page

²⁶¹ Void page

Catherine de Goede de Koning: Dr Paul Brunton: Een Waarheidszoeker en Zijn Werk (A Truth Seeker and His Work)

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EEN WAARHEIDSZOEKER EN ZIJN WERK
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(299-1) De vraag: Wat is waarheid? is de vraag van alle eeuwen. Velen hebben gepoogd op deze vraag het antwoord te vinden, slechts enkelen zijn er in geslaagd. Boeddha en Jezus behoorden tot die enkelen, maar de uitzonderlijkheid van hun bereiken bracht de mensheid er toe hen als bovennatuurlijke wezens te beschouwen. Toch hebben beiden tot hun discipelen over de waarheid gesproken als iets dat ook voor hen bereikbaar was. Boeddha leerde het Edele Achtvoudige Pad en Jezus gaf de belofte: Gij zult de waarheid verstaan en de waarheid zal U vrijmaken. Wat is het anders, dat de mens belet de objectieve, onpersoonlijke waarheid te vinden, dan zijn eigen egocentriciteit, die hem als een zwarte schaduw telkens in de weg treedt, wanneer hij poogt een glimp van het stralende zonlicht der waarheid op te vangen? Geketend aan een hardnekkig egoïsme heeft de mens van alle tijden zonder hoop rondgetast in duistere nacht en het is daarom geen wonder dat het westerse denken, geboren uit deze egoïstische mentaliteit, door de eeuwen het bestaan van een absolute waarheid heeft betwijfeld en heeft ontkend, dat, in geval zij onverhoopt mocht bestaan, de mens met al zijn droevige beperkingen in staat zou zijn haar te kennen.

De oosterse mentaliteit, minder gehecht aan het aardse en aan de persoonlijkheid van de mens, had reeds in vroeger tijden een filosofie voortgebracht die niet gezeten was in het gestoelte der sceptici. Deze Indische wijsbegeerte leerde niet alleen het bestaan van een absolute waarheid, maar zeide ook dat zij door de mens te kennen was en dat enige weinige wijzen haar inderdaad gekend hadden.

Tot de negentiende eeuw gaapte tussen oosterse en westerse gedach - tenwereld een wijde kloof, maar in die eeuw was de volheid des tijds gekomen, waarin het Lot de brug begon te bouwen die beide tot elkaar zou brengen. De westerse wijsbegeerte was haar materialisme moe en richtte versmachtend van dorst haar blik naar het meer spirituele Oosten, in de hoop vandaar het levenswater te mogen ontvangen. Zeide zelfs niet de aarts-pessimist Schopenhauer van de Oepanisjaden - vroege Indische wijsgerige leringen - dat zij de troost van zijn leven waren geweest en dat zij dit ook van zijn

²⁶² Blank page

sterven zouden zijn? Het materialisme, dat over zoveel dierbare theorieën de doodsklok had geklept, ligt aan het einde van de negentiende eeuw zelf op zijn sterfbed. Talrijke secten en culten – vele min of meer beïnvloed door oosterse leringen – zijn in het Westen ontstaan, de uitwisseling van oosterse en westerse denkbeelden wordt mede bevorderd door de activiteit van de theosofische beweging, terwijl door de snelle toeneeming van het mechanische transport en de uitvinding van nieuwe communicatiemiddelen de Aziatische wijsheid een gereeder toegang vindt tot westerse oren.

In het jaar 1898, wanneer deze era van geestelijk reveil en wegzijdse beïnvloeding van Oost en West over de wereld begint te dagen, wordt Paul Brunton geboren.

Het toverwoord "India," uitgesproken door de droge stem van de

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(continued from the previous page) aardrijkskundeleraar, wekt sluimerende gevoelens en gedachten in het hart van de jongen, die van nu aan een brandend verlangen begint te koesteren dit wonderland met eigen ogen te aanschouwen. Een fantastisch plan de avontuurlijke reis te ondernemen in gezelschap van een schoolmakker, wordt ontdekt en verijdeld tot diepe teleurstelling van de jeugdige aspirant-globetrotters. Jaren gaan voorbij waarin zijn diepgewortelde belangstelling voor India, ja voor heel Azië steeds toeneemt, maar als hij de mannelijke leeftijd heeft bereikt, moet het verlangen en de Orient te bereizen voorlopig plaats maken voor andere interessen en plichten die hem binden.

Dit verlangen is echter niet het enige dat zijn gedachten tijdens zijn jongensjaren in beslag heeft genomen. Wat is de betekenis van 's mensen bestaan? Wat is de "ziel?" Ziedaar de grote problemen waarmee hij zijn hersenen heeft gepijnigd en waarover hij telkens weer heeft nagedacht in diep verlangen de oplossing te mogen vinden, terwijl zijn minder meditatief gezinde makkers opgingen in sport en spel. Bij deze zwaarmoedige knaap hebben zich wondere gaven geopenbaard. Zonder gids verkent hij het mysterieuze land der mystiek, zonder menselijke hulp ontwikkelt hij de gave der gedachtenconcentratie, zonder leraar verwerft hij het vermogen der innerlijke contemplatie en ervaart hij herhaaldelijk de extase der mystieke trance.

Deze hemelse schatten zijn in het bezit van de jongeman als hij het volle leven ingaat. Maar hijzelf beschouwt zich als een onbeholpen beginner. Hij hunkert naar hogere vooruitgang op het geestelijke pad en waar zal hij beter onderricht kunnen ontvangen dan aan de voeten van India's yogi's en wijzen? Het Lot heeft echter voorlopig iets anders met hem voor. Na zijn studiejaren gaat hij in de journalistiek. Hij wordt medewerker aan verschillende tijdschriften, later redacteur van "London Forum" en "The Occult Review." Ondergedompeld in een zee van drukke en inspannende arbeid moet hij zijn geestelijke oefeningen tot een minimum beperken en wordt hij gedwongen enige van 's levens minder verheven lessen te leren.

Maar er komt een dag waarop hij de stem van zijn hart niet langer hoeft te weerstaan: de hartstochtelijk gekoesterde jongensdroom gaat in vervulling, de reis naar

India wordt werkelijkheid.

Van zijn merkwaardige belevenissen onder een blakerende zon, zijn vele vreemde ontmoetingen met fakirs, yogi's en wijzen verhaalt zijn eerste boek: *A Search in Secret India* (1934), Ned. vert. *Verborgene wijsheid, bij de yogi's van Voor-Indie* (1938). Dit boek geeft echter meer dan alleen een fascinerende aaneenschakeling van levendig gekleurde Indische taferelen, het is de - vaak moeizame - pelgrimstocht van een zoekende ziel. Paul Brunton kan niet met minder tevreden zijn dan met het beste, het heiligste dat India te bieden heeft, want hij is op zoek naar waarheid, niet naar geestelijke acrobatiek en magische goocheltoeren. En de bloem der waarheid bloeit niet langs drukke wegen, maar in de rust van verborgen valleien. Hij moet de volle prijs van lichaam en ziel betalen, alvorens hij die waarheid van India vindt, welke belichaamd is in de persoon van de Maharisji, de Wijze van Aroenachala, de Heilige Rode Berg. Deze grate mens wekt de schone geestelijke ervaringen van zijn voorjournalistieke jaren weer tot nieuw leven, hij smaakt opnieuw de onuitsprekelijke vrede en het extatisch

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(continued from the previous page) geluk van zijn vroegere meditatie. Aldus brengt hij in dit boek uit eigen ervaring de blijde boodschap, dat's mensen diepste wezen een eeuwigdurende wereld van goedheid en schoonheid herbergt. Juist die troost had de zoekende westerse geest van de depressievolle dertiger jaren het meest van node. Ook in India wek te de verschijning van dit boek veel belangstelling, want in 1934 was de Maharisji onbekend buiten het dicht bij zijn verblijf gelegen dorp.

Brunton's eerste reis naar het Oosten wordt na enige tijd gevolgd door een tweede. Maar aan de vooravond van zijn vertrek ontvangt hij, in diepe mijmering verzonken aan de oever van de Theems, een belangrijke opdracht. Voor zijn innerlijk oog verrijst het gelaat van een zijner Indische leraren. Zachtken maar met nadruk toont deze Wijze hem zijn plicht jegens zijn medemens. Brunton had de leidster der waarheid gevolgd, zeker, maar tot nu toe alleen voor zichzelf en hoevele zoekers waren er niet die smachtten naar een beker water uit de hemelse fontein? Zou zijn eigen ziel niet verdorren, wanneer hij de ogen afwendde van hun smekende blikken en zijn oren sloot voor hun smartelijk geroep? Wie het goud des levens heeft uitgedolven, moet bereid zijn die schat met anderen te delen, of deze zal tot stof uiteenvallen. Brunton erkent zijn tekortkomingen en ofschoon hij voor een wijle terugschrikt voor het omhangen van de profetenmantel, buigt hij voor de goddelijke wil.

Door het beschreven blad kan hij het grootste aan tal mensen bereiken. Dus beschrijft hij in een klein werkje zijn eigen ervaring in meditatie en een methode van zelfonderzoek hem door de Maharisji geleerd, benevens enige yoga-leringen die van bijzonder belang voor het Westen zijn. In dit boekje, verschenen in 1935 en getiteld: *The Secret Path* (Ned. vert. *De geheime weg*, 1949), is een kennis vergaderd, welke voor het grootste deel voor de moderne wereld was verloren en die in oude tijden slechts mondeling en in het geheim aan aangenomen en leerlingen werd medegedeeld.

In verheven maar eenvoudige taal wijst de schrijver de westerse mens hoe het

Hoogste Zelf – door hem het “Overself” genoemd – te ontdekken. Door een intellectuele analyse van de persoonlijkheid zal de zoeker uiteindelijk tot de intuïtieve overtuiging komen, dat zijn ware Zelf niet het lichaam, het gevoel of het intellect is. Om de gedachten tot rust te brengen, wordt een gemakkelijke maar zeer doeltreffende adem-oefening gegeven, welke in tegenstelling met sommige door anderen aangeprezen yoga-oefeningen gedaan kan worden zonder toezicht van een persoonlijke leraar, omdat zij absoluut ongevaarlijk is. Een bijzondere methode van zelfonderzoek helpt de aspirant zich open te stellen voor de intuïtie.

Deze oefeningen, tezamen met de ontwikkeling van de hogere gevoelens, doen de zoeker langzamerhand rijp worden voor de gelukzalige ervaring van vereniging met het hoogste Zelf, wanneer het persoonlijke ego opgaat in het onpersoonlijke, eeuwige Zijn. De juiste dag van deze nieuwe geboorte hangt echter niet alleen af van de pogingen van de zoeker, maar voornamelijk van de genade van het Hoogste Zelf.

Wanneer Paul Brunton zich aldus van de taak, hem door de Wijze opgedragen, heeft gekweten, vangt hij zijn tweede grote reis aan, waarop hij ook Egypte aandoet. De pennevrucht van zijn Egyptische

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(continued from the previous page) reisavonturen is: *A Search in Secret Egypt* (1936), Ned. Vert. *Geheim Egypte* (1941). Dit boek brengt uiterst interessante beschrijvingen van merkwaardige mensen en plaatsen, psychische ervaringen, schone gedachten en nieuwe kennis omtrent het oude occulte Egypte. Evenals zijn werk over India, is ook dit werk een boek met een boodschap. Deze boodschap is ook hier weer gebaseerd op eigen ervaring – zijn verheven inwijding gedurende zijn nachtelijk verblijf in de Grote Pyramide – en zij is de reeds door de mysterie-priesters van het oude Egypte gekende waarheid, dat de mens meer is dan zijn lichaam en dat de ziel voortleeft na de dood.

Brunton's psychisch avontuur in de Grote Pyramide is vele lezers voorgekomen als een ongeloofwaardige hallucinatie. Hij heeft echter de schrijfster van dit artikel persoonlijk verzekerd, dat hij voor de waarheid ervan ten voile kan instaan en waar deze man zijn gehele leven aan de zaak der waarheid heeft gewijd, is iedere twijfel aan zijn woorden volkomen ongerechtvaardigd.

Het tweede werk dat zijn ontstaan te danken heeft aan deze reis, is: *“A Hermit in the Himalayas”* (1936), Ned. vert. *Een heremiet in de Himalaya* (1940). Het bevat dagboek-notities van des schrijvers eenzaam verblijf in de serene wereld van majestueuze witte bergen en breedgetakte cederbomen, waar de zuivere atmosfeer hem hielp zijn “yoga der stilte” te beoefenen, totdat hij zichzelf een voelde met de Stilte der Eeuwigheid. Dit boek van diepe gedachten en poëtische natuurbeschrijvingen heeft als “Leitmotiv” de woorden van de Psalmist: Wees stil en weet dat Ik God ben.

Was “De Geheime Weg” slechts een beknopte inleiding geweest tot de methode het hoogste Zelf te ontdekken, met zijn werk *“The Quest of the Overself”* (1937), Ned. vert. *“Het wezen van de mens, een onderzoek naar het Super-Ego”* (1951), geeft de schrijver een uitgebreide handleiding, waarin op grond van zijn rijker geworden ervaring en verdiepte realisatie ditzelfde onderwerp behandeld wordt op een meer

filosofische, wetenschappelijke en analytische wijze. Zonder oosterse termen te bezigen, die zelfs in vertaling tot het merendeel der westerse lezers niet zouden spreken, zonder vaagheid of langdradige omschrijvingen, zonder ook occulte zijpaden in te slaan, wijst de auteur in heldere en exacte woorden de kortste weg naar het doel van beide westerse mystiek en oosterse yoga: de vereniging met God, of gelijk hij het noemt, met het "Overself." Weer worden zelf-analyse en zelfonderzoek, ofschoon in uitgebreider vorm, gegeven als krachtvolle hulpmiddelen bij het onderzoek. Deze laatste methode, onderwezen door de Maharisji, is zeer effectief, omdat vooruitgang hier niet alleen afhangt van de vaak zo moeizame pogingen van de zoeker. Op de duur brengt de door deze oefening gekweekte geesteshouding, die een nederig ondervragende inplaats van een intellectueel bevestigende is, een hogere factor dan het intellect in werking, namelijk het diepste deel van's mensen wezen, dat zijn vragen met onweerlegbare mystieke ervaring beantwoordt.

Behalve de mentale training wordt de ontwikkeling van de aesthetische en mystieke gevoelens in bijzonderheden beschreven als een onmisbaar onderdeel van dit pad. Aan de adem oefening, reeds bekend uit De Geheime Weg, wordt een staar-oefening toegevoegd. Beide zijn

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(continued from the previous page) fysieke hulpmiddelen om de steeds in beweging zijnde gedachten te kalmeren en een staat van intense mentale abstractie teweeg te brengen, waardoor de zoeker geholpen wordt het hoogste stadium van het pad te bereiken: geconcentreerde aandacht op het geestelijk Hart, het microscopisch kleine goddelijke atoom, dat doorstraald van het hoogste Zelf, gelegen is in de rechter hartkamer van het fysieke hart. Uiteindelijk zal de zoeker door de verheven daad van volledige zelf-overgave aan het hoogste Zelf ontwaken tot de sublieme werkelijkheid van dit Zelf. Wat hij in de meditatie bereikt, zal langzamerhand zijn gehele dagelijkse leven doortrekken en zal hem in staat stellen de hem toebedeelde taak in de maatschappij op een betere en meer doeltreffende wijze te vervullen. Zelfs een gering contact met het hoogste Zelf kan reeds opmerkelijke veranderingen in zijn leven en karakter te weeg brengen. Men hoeft niet bang te zijn, door deze methode een ijdele dromer te worden; het pad dat in dit boek gewezen wordt, is bedoeld om de westerse werkende mens in alle omstandigheden des levens van nut te zijn. Aanhangers van iedere godsdienst of van geen, zelfs atheïsten kunnen het met succes beoefenen, omdat de tegenwoordigheid van het hoogste Zelf in ieder mensenhart geen fictie maar een bewijsbaar feit is en niet afhangt van het aanvaarden van enige geloofsbelijdenis of enig dogma.

Dit boek heeft in de geestelijke noden voorzien van vele zoekers, die nu in staat waren te profiteren van het beste uit de oosterse yoga, aangepast aan het westerse actieve leven en de westerse mentaliteit. De oogst van geestelijke ervaring, die Paul Brunton tot dusver had bijeenvergaaard en in zijn boeken zo mild had uitgedeeld, was ongetwijfeld een rijk bezit. Met het vermogen in een mystieke trance te kunnen gaan, de gedachten naar believen en voor lange tijd te kunnen concentreren en een

onuitsprekelijke vrede te genieten, zouden de meeste mensen voor de rest van hun leven meer dan tevreden zijn geweest. Paul Brunton was echter niet voldaan. Zijn geest was er een die – om met een Amerikaans geleerde te spreken – “niet bevredigd is in zijn onderzoek naar de waarheid, alvorens hij de wereld heeft begrepen.”

Inderdaad, hij had de waarheid omtrent zichzelf gevonden, hij was dikwijls tot de goddelijke Stilte ingegaan, maar wanneer hij de ogen opsloeg na zijn mystieke verzonkenheid, was daar altijd weer de wereld met al haar koortsachtige haast en onrust, waarvoor de stilte der meditatie langzaam maar zeker het veld moest ruimen. Om deze stilte steeds te kunnen ervaren, moest men de wereld ontvluchten, als een asceet in een kluis of een spelonk gaan wonen en zich het grootste deel van de dag aan meditatie overgeven. Vele westerse mystici en oosterse yogi's hadden dit pad der eenzaamheid gekozen, maar Brunton zag duidelijk dat de oplossing van het wereldprobleem niet kon liggen in een vlucht. Hij wilde een waarheid die te ervaren was in iedere staat des levens, niet slechts in de stilte der meditatie.

De gevorderde yogi en mysticus hadden hun gevoelens ten volle ontwikkeld, maar hun intellect meestal slechts weinig. Dit was een onevenwichtige toestand. Denken en voelen moeten elkaar in balans houden. Door zijn eigen meditaties wist Brunton, dat yoga het vage

(continued from the previous page) gevoel gaf de waarheid bereikt te hebben, maar zij gaf zekerlijk geen onweerlegbare kennis der waarheid, want het door haar verkregen inzicht was van voorbijgaande aard. Alleen wanneer het intellect ontdekt zou hebben wat het gevoel in de meditatie ontwaarde, wanneer het deze ontdekking gefundeerd had op de vaste grond van bewezen feiten en wanneer uit de volmaakte vereniging van rede en gevoel het spontane handelen zou zijn geboren, dan alleen zou het gehele wezen van de mens een onverbreekelijke en harmonische eenheid vormen. Dan zou meditatie niet langer onontbeerlijk zijn voor het handhaven van inzicht in Waarheid of Werkelijkheid, maar zou dit inzicht zonder onderbreking voortduren, zelfs gedurende de meest actieve ogenblikken van de mens.

Om dus de waarheid in haar geheel te vinden, moest men twee vragen beantwoorden: Wat ben ik? en: Wat is de wereld en het heelal? De eerste vraag werd door de mystiek beantwoord; de oplossing van het tweede probleem behoorde tot het domein der filosofie. Een bevredigend antwoord zou leiden tot's mensen volmaakte samenstemming met het leven in al zijn facetten.

Paul Brunton was vast besloten dit nieuwe probleem aan te vatten en het zo mogelijk op te lossen, niet alleen om zijn eigen zoekende geest te bevredigen, maar ook om de kleine minderheid der ernstige zoekers te dienen, die behalve innerlijke vrede de gehele waarheid verlangden te vinden.

Vele westerse denkers hadden hun hersenen gepijnigd met het probleem omtrent het wezen van het heelal, maar de tegenstrijdige antwoorden die zij hadden geproduceerd waren slechts zovele speculatieve theorieën. Zou het mogelijk zijn ergens een filosofie te vinden die niet theoretiseerde maar haar leerstellingen

grondvestte op onweerlegbare feiten? Het Westen bezat een dergelijke leer niet, maar enige oude oosterse geschriften spraken van een filosofie die niet gebaseerd was op metafysische speculaties maar op de feitelijke ontdekkingen van enkele Wijzen. Deze filosofie werd de Verborgene Filosofie genoemd, wijl zij het uitsluitend bezit was geweest van een zeer klein aantal bevoegde ingewijden, die haar door de eeuwen heen van generatie op generatie hadden overgedragen en die haar streng geheim hadden gehouden, omdat de onontwikkelde geest van de massa niet rijp was voor haar verheven leer. Deze filosofie maakte aanspraak op het praedicaat Filosofie der Waarheid en Brunton wenste haar daarom te bestuderen.

Daar het hedendaagse India geen levende Wijze scheen te bezitten, die hem met zijn filosofische studie kon helpen – zelfs de Maharisji had blijkbaar nooit iemand ingewijd in een hogere kennis dan de mystiek – moest hij zijn eigen weg zien te vinden met behulp van de filosofische schrijvers uit India's verleden. Tenslotte kwamen, door tussenkomst van een hogere macht dan zijn eigen moeizame pogingen, enige werken onder zijn aandacht die hem de sleutel in handen gaven. Deze werken, welke in vroeger tijden geheim werden gehouden, toonden duidelijk aan dat de beoefening der gewone yoga, ofschoon een uitstekende voorbereiding voor het waarheidsonderzoek, op zichzelf niet rechtstreeks naar het uiteindelijke Doel leidde, maar dat het directe

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(continued from the previous page) en hoogste pad naar de realisatie van Waarheid – nauwelijks bekend aan enige hedendaagse yogi – de “yoga van het filosofisch inzicht” werd genoemd met als hoogste stadium de “yoga van het onweerlegbare.

Deze twee filosofische yoga's zijn de hoogste takken van de yoga-familie. Beoefenaars van lagere vormen van yoga proberen in hun oefeningen, door het met geweld uitbannen der gedachten, zich bewust te worden van de vormloze werkelijkheid die als het ware de achtergrond der gedachten is. Daar de gedachten door deze methode niet opgelost worden maar slechts onderdrukt, komen zij weer in het bewustzijn op zodra de oefening is geëindigd en het tijdelijk inzicht gaat weer verloren. Het doel van de filosofische yogi is zijn gedachten vanzelf tot rust te laten komen in de *toestand van voortdurend inzicht*. Teneinde dit te bereiken begint hij, na de noodzakelijke training door de lagere yoga in gedachtenconcentratie en mentale rust, zijn denkvermogen met de uiterste intensiteit en concentratie te richten op het probleem van het wezen der wereld en zijn vermogen der rede geleidelijk tot zijn uiterste grenzen te drijven. Wanneer ten slotte het ogenblik komt dat de rede geen enkele stap verder meer kan doen, wordt plotseling door de “bliksemflits” van het inzicht, zoals dit mysterieuze proces door de Wijzen werd genoemd, de uiteindelijke Waarheid begrepen en op hetzelfde ogenblik komt het denken tot rust. Natuurlijk gaat het denkvermogen niet verloren nadat het inzicht is bereikt. De filosoof gaat voort met denken, maar zijn denken is een verlichte activiteit geworden.

De oude manuscripten noemden de leer der Wijzen, die dit inzicht bezaten, de Verborgene Leer, omdat zij slechts in het geheim aan vergevorderde leerlingen werd medegedeeld. De quintessence van deze leer was, dat het heelal in wezen niet stoffelijk

is maar mentaal, dat het als idee bestaat in een Super-bewustzijn, dat zowel immanent als transcendent is. De verruiming van de moderne geest en de vorderingen van de moderne wetenschap hebben het mogelijk gemaakt, deze leer thans openbaar te maken.

Het resultaat van zijn studies en ervaringen op het Uiteindelijke Pad, legde Paul Brunton neer in een tweetal werken: *The Hidden Teaching beyond Yoga* (1941), Ned. vert. *Hooger dan yoga* (1947), en *The Wisdom of the Overself* (1943), Ned. vert. *Het Super-ego* (1948). Samen vormen zij een complete verhandeling over de yoga van het filosofisch inzicht en de yoga van het onweerlegbare. Dat deze werken door de eenvoudige woordenkeus en heldere betoogtrant zelfs voor leken op filosofisch gebied, mits hun intellect behoorlijk is ontwikkeld, volkomen begrijpelijk zijn, moet de schrijver als een grote verdienste warden aangerekend.

De Verborgen Filosofie werd niet als een volledig systeem in een enkel geschrift aangetroffen. Brunton ontdekte fragmenten van deze leer in honderden teksten, waarvan vele niet meer in het oorspronkelijke Sanskriet bestonden maar slechts in vertalingen in andere Aziatische talen.

In "Hooger dan Yoga" wordt het fundament gelegd van deze verheven filosofie, die door Brunton kenmerkend de "leer van het mentalisme" wordt genoemd. De leringen die hier gegeven worden,

(continued from the previous page) hebben ten doel, de voorstellingen die de student van zichzelf en de hem omringende wereld heeft, te verbeteren en zijn ingeworteld geloof in de stoffelijkheid van het heelal te vernietigen. De kennis der Verborgen Leer omtrent algemene onderwerpen als semantiek (woordbetekenis), relativiteit, ruimte en tijd, de mentale processen van denken en waarnemen, het wezen der stof enz. wordt geleidelijk bevestigd door de ontdekkingen der moderne wetenschap, die zich langzaam maar zeker beweegt in de richting der filosofie.

Een zeer belangrijk hoofdstuk is de Filosofische Discipline. Iedere student die het ernstig meent en goede vorderingen wenst te maken, moet zichzelf aan deze strenge discipline onderwerpen. Zijn gehele geest, denken en gevoel beide, moet psychologisch in goede conditie zijn, wil hij in staat zijn de Verborgen Filosofie met succes te bestuderen. Want de tekortkomingen van de ongetrainde onevenwichtige geest zijn vele en de voornaamste is wel deze, dat hij het leven gadeslaat door een egocentrische subjectieve bril. Zolang hij weigert daarvan afstand te doen, kan hij de waarheid niet gewaar worden. De enige weg om het Doel te bereiken is, zich los te maken van sympathieën en antipathieën, van wensen en verlangens, van trots en vooroordeel. De hele persoonlijkheid moet op het altaar der Waarheid geofferd worden, alvorens toegang tot haar tempel kan worden verkregen.

In het tweede deel, het Super-Ego, vervolgt de auteur zijn intellectuele uiteenzetting der waarheid met hetgeen de Verborgen Leer zegt omtrent de geboorte van het heelal, de vier toestanden van het bewustzijn: waaktoestand, droom, diepe slaap en transcendentiaal bewustzijn, ook wel cosmisch bewustzijn genoemd; de betekenis van de dood, de oorzaak van het kwaad en het lijden, het wezen van "God,"

het "ik" en de Realiteit.

Een intellectueel begrijpen van de waarheid is echter niet genoeg om het uiteindelijk of - gelijk het door de auteur genoemd wordt - "ultramystisch inzicht" te verwerven. Het filosofische pad is een drievoudig pad en omvat 's mensen gehele wezen: denken, voelen, handelen. Daarom worden er voor de verdere ontwikkeling van de mystische gevoelens zeven meditatie-oefeningen uit de Verborgen Leer gegeven, waardoor de student langzamerhand de "mentaalheid" van zijn eigen persoon en de wereld begint te ervaren.

De derde fase van het filosofische pad is altruïstisch handelen. Uit dit drietal: metafysisch denken, mystiek gevoel en zelf verloochenend werk, wordt de gouden draad gesponnen die de zoeker uit de doolhof der onwetendheid in het vrije veld der Waarheid zal leiden. In het laatste stadium van het onderzoek moet hij door de yoga van het onweerlegbare alle verschijningsvormen, zowel de schijnbaar materiele wereld als zijn eigen persoon met alle gedachten en gevoelens, leren zien als in wezen niet verschillend van hun beginsel: de zuivere geest. De serene Stilte of Leegte, gelijk dit beginsel door de Wijzen wordt genoemd, hetwelk de mysticus in zijn eigen hart vindt, is ook de alomvattende Weikelijkheid die aan het heelal ten grondslag ligt. Door het geduldig volgen van het drievoudige pad zal de student geleidelijke en evenwichtige vooruitgang boeken, totdat op het ogenblik der verlichting door de genade van het hoogste Zelf de

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(continued from the previous page) "bliksemflits" van het inzicht zijn mentale duisternis wegvaagt en hij niet langer enig gevoel van scheiding ervaart tussen zijn eigen wezen, het wezen van de wereld en Dat wat beide doorstraalt. Zonder meditatie is hij zich nu voortdurend bewust van de vormloze werkelijkheid. Zelfs gedurende de diepe slaaptoestand is hij niet beroofd van dit bewustzijn. De Waarheid die hij gevonden heeft, waarmee hij zich bewust verenigd heeft, kan nooit weerlegd worden. Hij heeft het doel van zijn onderzoek bereikt, het hoogste stadium van 's mensen geestelijke ontwikkeling: hij is vrij van gehechtheid aan zijn persoon, hij kent zijn eigen wezen en dat der wereld en hij leeft voortaan in volmaakte harmonie met het universele onpersoonlijke Al.

Dit werk, waarmee Brunton de meest verheven leer die ooit aan de mensheid is gebracht voor het Westen toegankelijk heeft gemaakt, is tot nu toe het laatste dat uit zijn pen is gevloeid.

Een paar vroegere, kleinere en minder belangrijke werken, die nog niet in het Nederlands zijn vertaald, zijn hier buiten beschouwing gelaten.

Dat er onder de bewonderaars van zijn mystieke werken niet weinigen waren die zijn overgang van de eenzijdige mystiek naar de alzijdige filosofie niet konden begrijpen en waarderen en hem deswege onstandvastigheid, ontrouw en het verzaken der yoga verweten, was onvermijdelijk. Iedere pionier die zich een weg baant door het dichte oerwoud van een onbekend gebied, is aan de scherpe doornen van kritiek en laster blootgesteld. Brunton maakte geen uitzondering op deze regel, maar het

vasthouden aan zijn steeds gevolgd devies "De Waarheid boven alles" was hem meer waard dan de lof van een paar wispelturige bewonderaars.

Deze eenvoudige grote man, die in alle nederigheid zichzelf een student noemt en met nadruk iedere aanspraak op de titel van "leraar" of "meester" afwijst, heeft zijn eigen leven tot een klare spiegel gemaakt waarin de Waarheid in al haar schoonheid gezien kan worden door diegenen die zo fortuinlijk zijn hem persoonlijk te kennen. Toen de schrijfster hem voor de eerste keer ontmoette, was het haar of zij op deze ontmoeting haar gehele leven gewacht had. De grote rust die van hem uitging, het ontbreken van enig gevoel van eigen belangrijkheid, zijn volmaakte natuurlijkheid en grote werkelijkheidszin maakten een diepe indruk op haar. Aan deze kleine tengerere man kon men al zijn moeilijkheden vertellen. Dat het innerlijk leven van de bezoeker met alle fouten en tekortkomingen voor hem een open boek was, was haar onmiddellijk duidelijk; maar dat deze kalme ogen tot op de bodem van haar ziel lazen, stemde haar niet onbehaaglijk, want deze man veroordeelde niets en niemand, omdat hij alles begreep.

Paul Brunton is geen vage dromer, maar een praktisch man met buitengewone werkkraft, hij staat met beide benen stevig op de grond, hij kent de wereld en ontvlucht haar niet. Als werktuig van het hoogste Zelf bezit hij de macht, in de persoonlijkheid van degenen waarmee hij in contact staat veranderingen ten goede te bewerken, maar dit gebeurt geheel onopzettelijk, gelijk in de warme zonnestralen zich de bloemknop opent. Het is verre van hem, iemand in een bepaalde richting te willen drijven. In zijn tegenwoordigheid voelt

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(continued from the previous page) men zich op zijn gemak, men kan geheel zichzelf zijn. Kortom, Paul Brunton is een mens in de heste betekenis van het woord. Zijn werken geven geen dorre theorieën, zij zijn eigen uitgekristalliseerde ervaring. Daarom zijn zijn woorden levende woorden, die de macht hebben sluimerende hogere gedachten en gevoelens te wekken in ieder hart dat voor hun boodschap open staat.

Het belang van een leven als dat van Paul Brunton kan in deze ver schrikkelijke tijd niet hoog genoeg geschat worden.

Als een instrument in de handen van hogere Machten heeft hij eerst de Indische yoga, daarna India's hogere filosofie aan het Westen gebracht in een duidelijke, aannemelijke en aantrekkelijke vorm. Hij heeft met woord en daad getoond dat Waarheid geen "fata morgana" is maar een levende realiteit, en dat het bereiken van deze Waarheid praktisch uitvoerbaar is voor ieder die bereid is, ter wille van zowel zijn eigen verlossing als die der mensheid, zijn leven te wijden aan dit verheven onderzoek.

De wereld heeft een praktische filosofie, waardoor zij haar zelfgesmede boeien kan verheken, bitter nodig. De Verhorgen Leer die Paul Brunton voor een steeds wijder wordende kring van ernstige zoekers heeft opengesteld, wijst de weg naar deze gelukzalige vrijheid. Zolang wij onszelf niet kennen en door egoïsme geketend zijn aan onwetendheid omtrent de sublieme Tegenwoordigheid die in ons hart en in het heelal woont, moet het hoek der Waarheid voor ons noodwendig gesloten en verzegeld

blijven.

Laat ons daarom, zoals Paul Brunton in de Geheime Weg zegt, "ons onderwerpen aan de grootsheid van het onvergankelijke hoogste Zelf: zelfs wanneer wij het niet kunnen hegrijpen of Zijn Himalayaanse hoogte niet kunnen bevatten, laat ons desondanks geest en hart en lichaam geven aan Zijn verheven. opdrachten. Zo gaan wij het eeuwige leven in en vergaderen de onsterfelijke vruchten van waarheid, wijsheid, vrede en macht."

Overdruk uit "Theosofia," April, Mei/Juni en Juli/Aug. 1951.

{Editor's Note: The following is Google Translate's version of the Dutch article (pages 299 through 310). We cannot find the original in either Dutch or English.}

Catherine de Goede de Koning: Dr Paul Brunton: A Truth Seeker and His Work

The question: What is truth? is the question of all ages. Many have attempted to find the answer to this question, but few have succeeded. Buddha and Jesus were among those few, but the singularity of their attainment led mankind to regard them as supernatural beings. Yet both spoke to their disciples of the truth as something that was also available to them. Buddha taught the Noble Eightfold Path and Jesus gave the promise: Thou shalt understand the truth and the truth shall set thee free. What is it that prevents man from finding objective, impersonal truth, but his own egocentricity, which, like a black shadow, always gets in his way when he tries to catch a glimpse of the radiant sunlight of truth? Chained to a tenacious egotism, man of all times has groped without hope in the dark night, and it is no wonder, therefore, that Western thought, born of this egotistic mentality, has throughout the ages doubted and denied the existence of an absolute truth, that in the unlikely event that it should exist, man with all his sad limitations should be able to know it.

The oriental mentality, less attached to the earthly and to the personality of man, had already in earlier times produced a philosophy that did not sit in the seat of the skeptics. This Indian philosophy not only taught the existence of an absolute truth, but also said that it was known to man, and that some sages had indeed known it.

Until the nineteenth century there was a wide gulf between Eastern and Western worlds of thought, but in that century the fullness of time had come when Destiny began to build the bridge that would bring the two together. Western philosophy, weary of its materialism, turned its gaze, starving with thirst, to the more spiritual East, in the hope of receiving the water of life from there. Did not even the arch-pessimist Schopenhauer say of the Upanishads - early Indian philosophical teachings - that they had been the comfort of his life, and that they would be the consolation of his death? Materialism, which had sounded the death knell over so many cherished theories, is itself on its deathbed at the end of the nineteenth century. Numerous sects and cults - many more or less influenced by Eastern teachings - have sprung up in the West, the exchange of Eastern and Western ideas being aided in part by the activity of the theosophical movement, while the rapid increase in mechanical transport and the invention of new means of communication Asian wisdom finds easier access to Western ears.

In the year 1898, as this era of spiritual revival and mutual influence of East and West begins to dawn on the world, Paul Brunton is born.

The magic word "India," uttered by the geography teacher's dry voice, awakens

slumbering feelings and thoughts in the boy's heart, who now begins to harbor a burning desire to see this wonderland with his own eyes. A fantastic plan to embark on the adventurous journey in the company of a schoolmate is discovered and thwarted, much to the disappointment of the youthful aspiring globetrotters. Years pass during which his deep-seated interest in India, yes, in all of Asia, continues to grow, but when he has reached manhood, the desire to travel the Orient must give way for the time being to other interests and duties that bind him.

However, this desire is not the only thing that occupied his mind during his boyhood. What is the meaning of man's existence? What is the "soul?" Behold the great problems with which he has racked his brains and which he has thought over and over in a deep desire to find the solution, while his less meditative comrades were absorbed in sports and games. Wonderful gifts have manifested themselves in this melancholy boy. Without a guide he explores the mysterious land of mysticism, without human help he develops the gift of thought concentration, without a teacher he acquires the power of inner contemplation and repeatedly experiences the ecstasy of the mystical trance.

These heavenly treasures are in the young man's possession when he enters life. But he considers himself an inept beginner. He craves higher progress on the spiritual path, and where better to receive instruction than at the feet of India's yogis and sages? For the time being, however, Fate has something else in mind for him. After his college years, he goes into journalism. He becomes a contributor to several magazines, later editor of "London Forum" and "The Occult Review." Immersed in a sea of busy and strenuous labour, he must keep his mental exercises to a minimum and is compelled to learn some of life's less lofty lessons.

But there comes a day when he no longer has to resist the voice of his heart: the passionately cherished childhood dream comes true, the journey to India becomes reality.

His first book: *A Search in Secret India* (1934), translated to Dutch as *Hidden Wisdom, Among the Yogis of India* (1938). However, this book provides more than just a fascinating sequence of vividly colored Indian scenes, it is the - often arduous - pilgrimage of a searching soul. Paul Brunton cannot be content with anything less than the best, the holiest that India has to offer, for he is in search of truth, not spiritual acrobatics and magic tricks. And the flower of truth does not bloom along busy roads, but in the tranquility of hidden valleys. He must pay the full price of body and soul before he finds that truth of India, which is embodied in the person of the Maharisji, the Sage of Arunachala, the Holy Red Mountain. This great man revives the beautiful spiritual experiences of his pre-journalistic years, he again tastes the unspeakable peace and ecstatic happiness of his earlier meditations. Thus in this book he brings, from his own experience, the glad tidings that man's inmost being harbors an everlasting world of goodness and beauty. It was precisely this consolation that the searching Western mind of the depressive 1930s needed most. The publication of this book also aroused much interest in India, because in 1934 the Maharisji was unknown outside the village close to his fat residence.

Brunton's first trip to the East is followed after some time by a second. But on the eve of his departure, sunk in deep reverie on the banks of the Thames, he receives an important assignment. Before his inner eye rises the face of one of his Indian

teachers. Gently but emphatically, this Sage shows him his duty to his fellow man. Brunton had followed the guide-star of truth, sure, but hitherto only for himself, and how many seekers there were pining for a cup of water from the celestial fountain? Would not his own soul wither if he averted his eyes from their pleading glances and shut his ears to their grievous cry? Whoever has dug out the gold of life must be ready to share that treasure with others, or it will fall to dust. Brunton acknowledges his shortcomings, and though he shrinks for a time from the wearing of the prophet's mantle, he bows to the divine will.

The mantle described allows him to reach the greatest number of people. So in a small work he describes his own experience in meditation and a method of self-examination taught to him by the Maharishi, as well as some yoga teachings of particular interest to the West. In this booklet, published in 1935 and titled: *The Secret Path*, an acquaintance has been gathered, which for the most part has been lost to the modern world and which in ancient times had only been orally and in writing. the secret was accepted and the disciples were told.

In lofty but simple language, the author shows Western man how to discover the Supreme Self - called the "Overself" by him. Through an intellectual analysis of the personality, the seeker will eventually come to the intuitive conviction that his true Self is not the body, feeling or intellect. To calm the mind, an easy but very effective breathing exercise is given, which, unlike some yoga exercises touted by others, can be done without the supervision of a personal teacher, because it is absolutely harmless. A special method of self-examination helps the aspirant to open up to intuition.

These exercises, together with the development of the higher feelings, gradually mature the seeker for the blissful experience of union with the highest Self, when the personal ego merges into the impersonal, eternal Being. The exact day of this new birth, however, depends not only on the efforts of the seeker, but chiefly on the grace of the Highest Self.

When Paul Brunton has thus discharged the task assigned to him by the Sage, he begins his second great journey, during which he also visits Egypt. The pennyfruit of his Egyptian travel adventures is: *A Search in Secret Egypt* (1936). This book brings extremely interesting descriptions of curious people and places, psychic experiences, beautiful thoughts and new knowledge about ancient occult Egypt. Like his work on India, this work is also a book with a message. This message is again based on personal experience - his sublime initiation during his nocturnal sojourn in the Great Pyramid - and it is the truth already known by the mystery priests of ancient Egypt, that man is more than his body and that the soul lives on after death.

Brunton's psychic adventure in the Great Pyramid has struck many readers as an implausible hallucination. However, he has personally assured the author of this article that he can fully vouch for its truth, and where this man has devoted his whole life to the cause of truth, any doubt of his words is wholly unwarranted.

The second work that owes its origin to this journey is: *"A Hermit in the Himalayas"* (1936). It contains diary entries of the author's lonely sojourn in the serene world of majestic white mountains and broad-branched cedar trees, where the pure atmosphere helped him practice his "yoga of silence" until he felt himself one with the Silence of Eternity. This book of deep thoughts and poetic descriptions of nature has as its "leitmotiv" the words of the Psalmist: Be still and know that I am God.

"The Secret Path" had been only a brief introduction to the method of discovering the highest Self; with his work "The Quest of the Overself" (1937), the author gives a comprehensive manual, in which, on the basis of his enriched experience and deepened realisation, the same subject is treated in a more philosophical, scientific and analytical way. Without using Eastern terms, which even in translation would not speak to the majority of Western readers, without vagueness or long-winded descriptions, without also taking occult side-paths, the author points in clear and exact words the shortest way to the goal of both western mysticism and eastern yoga: the union with God, or as he calls it, with the "Overself." Again, though in a more elaborate form, self-analysis and self-examination are given as powerful aids to inquiry. The latter method, taught by the Maharishi, is very effective, because here progress does not depend solely on the often laborious efforts of the seeker. In the long run, the mental attitude cultivated by this practice, which is a humble interrogative rather than an intellectual affirmative, activates a higher factor than the intellect, namely, the deepest part of man's being, which answers its questions with irrefutable mystical experience.

Besides the mental training, the development of the aesthetic and mystical feelings is described in detail as an indispensable part of this path. A staring exercise is added to the breathing exercise, already known from The Secret Way. Both are physical aids to calm the ever-moving thoughts and induce a state of intense mental abstraction, helping the seeker to reach the highest stage of the path: focused attention on the spiritual Heart, the microscopic divine atom, irradiated by the highest Self, is located in the right ventricle of the physical heart. Ultimately, through the sublime act of complete self-surrender to the highest Self, the seeker will awaken to the sublime reality of this Self. What he achieves in meditation will gradually permeate his entire daily life and will enable him to fulfill the task assigned to him in society in a better and more effective way. Even a slight contact with the highest Self can bring about remarkable changes in his life and character. One need not be afraid of becoming a vain dreamer by this method; the path pointed out in this book is intended to benefit the western working man in all circumstances of life. Adherents of any religion or none, even atheists, can practice it successfully, because the presence of the Supreme Self in every human heart is not a fiction but a provable fact and does not depend on the acceptance of any creed or dogma.

This book has met the spiritual needs of many seekers, who were now able to benefit from the best of Eastern yoga, adapted to Western active life and mentality. The harvest of spiritual experience, which Paul Brunton had hitherto amassed and so generously distributed in his books, was undoubtedly a rich possession. With the ability to enter a mystical trance, concentrate the thoughts at will and for a long time, and enjoy an unspeakable peace, most people would have been more than satisfied for the rest of their lives. Paul Brunton, however, was not satisfied. His mind was one that - to quote an American scholar - "is not satisfied in his search for truth until he has understood the world."

Indeed, he had found the truth about himself, he had often entered the divine Silence, but when he opened his eyes after his mystical absorption, there was always the world again with all its feverish haste and restlessness, for which the silence of meditation slowly but definitely had to clear the field. To experience this silence all the time, one had to flee the world, live like an ascetic in a hermitage or cave, and spend

most of the day meditating. Many Western mystics and Eastern yogis had chosen this path of solitude, but Brunton clearly saw that the solution to the world problem could not lie in flight. He wanted a truth that could be experienced in every state of life, not just in the silence of meditation.

The advanced yogi and mystic had their feelings fully developed, but their intellects usually only a little. This was an unbalanced condition. Thinking and feeling must keep each other in balance. Brunton knew from his own meditations that yoga gave the vague sense of having reached the truth, but she certainly did not give an irrefutable knowledge of the truth, for the insight she gained was transient. Only if the intellect had discovered what feeling perceived in meditation, if it had founded this discovery on the solid ground of proven facts, and if spontaneous action was born from the perfect union of reason and feeling, then only would it whole being of man form an indissoluble and harmonious unity. Then meditation would no longer be indispensable to maintaining insight into Truth or Reality, but this insight would continue without interruption, even during the most active moments of man.

Thus, to find the truth in its entirety, one had to answer two questions: What am I? and: What is the world and the universe? The first question was answered by mysticism; the solution of the second problem belonged to the domain of philosophy. A satisfactory answer would lead to man's perfect harmony with life in all its facets.

Paul Brunton was determined to take up this new problem and, if possible, solve it, not only to satisfy his own searching mind, but also to serve the small minority of earnest seekers who, besides inner peace, desired to find the whole truth. find.

Many Western thinkers have racked their brains with the problem of the nature of the universe, but the conflicting answers they produced were only so many speculative theories. Would it be possible to find a philosophy somewhere that did not theorize but based its teachings on irrefutable facts? The West had no such doctrine, but some ancient Eastern writings spoke of a philosophy based not on metaphysical speculations but on the actual discoveries of some Sages. This philosophy was called the Hidden Philosophy, because it had been the exclusive possession of a very small number of authorized initiates, who had passed it on from generation to generation through the ages and who had kept it strictly secret, because the uneducated minds of the masses was not ripe for her lofty doctrine. This philosophy claimed the predicate Philosophy of Truth, and Brunton therefore wished to study it.

Since modern India seemed to have no living Sage to aid him in his philosophical study – even the Maharishi had apparently never initiated anyone into a knowledge higher than mysticism – he had to find his own way with the help of the philosophical writers. from India's past. Finally, through a power higher than his own laborious efforts, some works came to his attention which gave him the key. These works, which were kept secret in ancient times, clearly showed that the practice of ordinary yoga, although an excellent preparation for the search for truth, did not in itself lead directly to the ultimate Goal, but that the direct and highest path to the realisation of Truth – hardly known to any modern yogi – has been called the “yoga of philosophical insight” with the highest stage being the “yoga of the irrefutable.

These two philosophical yogas are the highest branches of the yoga family. Practitioners of lower forms of yoga try in their exercises, by forcibly banishing the thoughts, to become aware of the formless reality which is, as it were, the background

of the thoughts. As the thoughts are not dissolved by this method but merely suppressed, they reappear in consciousness as soon as the exercise is finished and the temporary insight is lost again. The aim of the philosophic yogi is to let his mind settle down by itself in the state of constant insight. In order to achieve this, after the necessary training by the lower yoga in thought concentration and mental rest, he begins to direct his mind with the utmost intensity and concentration to the problem of the essence of the world and gradually push his power of reason to its utmost limits. float. When at last the moment comes when reason cannot go any further, suddenly by the "thunderbolt" of insight, as this mysterious process was called by the Sages, the ultimate Truth is comprehended, and at the same moment thought comes to rest. Of course the mind is not lost after insight is attained. The philosopher goes on thinking, but his thinking has become an enlightened activity.

The ancient manuscripts called the teaching of the sages, who possessed this insight, the Hidden Doctrine, because it was imparted only secretly to advanced students. The quintessence of this teaching was that the universe is essentially not material but mental, that it exists as an idea in a Super-consciousness, which is both immanent and transcendent. The broadening of the modern mind and the advancement of modern science have made it possible to make this doctrine public today.

The result of his studies and experiences on the Ultimate Path, Paul Brunton laid down in two works: *The Hidden Teaching beyond Yoga* (1941), and *The Wisdom of the Overself* (1943). Together they form a complete treatise on the yoga of philosophical insight and the yoga of the irrefutable. That these works, by the simple choice of words and clear line of argument, are perfectly intelligible even to laymen in the field of philosophy, provided their intellect is properly developed, must be regarded as a great credit to the author.

The Hidden Philosophy was not found as a complete system in a single text. Brunton discovered fragments of this teaching in hundreds of texts, many of which no longer existed in the original Sanskrit but only in translations into other Asian languages.

"*The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga*" lays the foundation of this lofty philosophy, which Brunton typically calls the "doctrine of mentalism." surrounding world, and destroy his ingrained belief in the materiality of the universe. The knowledge of the Hidden Doctrine on such general subjects as semantics (word meaning), relativity, space and time, the mental processes of thinking and perception, the essence of matter, etc., is gradually confirmed by the discoveries of modern science, which is moving slowly but surely in the direction of philosophy.

A very important chapter is the Philosophical Discipline. Every student who is serious and wishes to make good progress must subject himself to this strict discipline. His whole mind, thinking and feeling both, must be in good psychological condition if he is to be able to study the Hidden Philosophy successfully. For the shortcomings of the untrained unbalanced mind are many, and the chief one is that it views life through self-centered subjective glasses. As long as he refuses to part with it, he cannot perceive the truth. The only way to reach the Goal is to free oneself from likes and dislikes, from wishes and desires, from pride and prejudice. The whole personality must be sacrificed on the altar of Truth before entry into its temple can be gained.

In the second part, *The Wisdom of the Overself*, the author continues his intellectual exposition of truth with what the Hidden Doctrine says about the birth of the universe, the four states of consciousness: waking state, dream, deep sleep and transcendental consciousness, also called cosmic consciousness; the meaning of death, the cause of evil and suffering, the essence of "God," the "I" and Reality.

An intellectual understanding of the truth, however, is not enough to attain it ultimately or – as the author calls it – “ultramystic insight.” The philosophical path is a threefold path and encompasses man's entire being: thinking, feeling, acting. Therefore, for the further development of the mystical feelings, seven meditation exercises from the Hidden Doctrine are given, through which the student gradually begins to experience the "mentality" of his own person and the world.

The third stage of the philosophical path is altruistic action. From this trio: metaphysical thought, mystical feeling and self-denying work, is spun the golden thread that will lead the seeker from the labyrinth of ignorance into the free field of Truth. In the last stage of the inquiry he must learn, through the yoga of the irrefutable, all appearances, both the apparent material world and his own person with all thoughts and feelings, as essentially not different from their principle: the pure spirit. The serene Stillness or Emptiness, as this principle is called by the Sages, which the mystic finds in his own heart, is also the all-encompassing Reality which underlies the universe. By patiently following the threefold path, the student will make gradual and balanced progress, until at the moment of enlightenment by the grace of the highest Self the "thunderbolt" of insight sweeps away his mental darkness and he no longer experiences any sense of separation. between his own being, the essence of the world and That which radiates through both. Without meditation he is now perpetually aware of the formless reality. Even during the deep state of sleep he is not deprived of this consciousness. The Truth he has found, with which he has united consciously can never be disproved He has reached the object of his inquiry, the highest stage of man's spiritual development: he is free from attachment to his person, he knows his own being and that of the world and he lives henceforth in perfect harmony with the universal impersonal All.

This work, through which Brunton has made accessible to the West the most sublime teaching ever brought to mankind, is the last to come out of his pen to date.

A few earlier, smaller and less important works, which have not yet been translated into Dutch, are not included here.

It was inevitable that there were not a few among the admirers of his mystical works who could not understand and appreciate his transition from one-sided mysticism to the all-sided philosophy, and because of this accused him of instability, infidelity and renunciation of yoga. Any pioneer who makes his way through the thick jungle of an unknown territory is exposed to the sharp thorns of criticism and slander. Brunton made no exception to this rule, but adhering to his ever-followed motto "Truth Above All" was worth more to him than the praise of a few fickle admirers.

This humble great man, who humbly calls himself a student and emphatically rejects any claim to the title of "teacher" or "master", has made his own life a clear mirror in which Truth can be seen in all its beauty. by those fortunate enough to know him personally. When the writer first met him, she felt as if she had waited all her life for this meeting. The great calm that emanated from him, the lack of any sense of his own

importance, his perfect naturalness and great sense of reality made a deep impression on her. All his troubles could be told to this little petite man. It was immediately clear to her that the inner life of the visitor, with all its faults and shortcomings, was an open book; but that these calm eyes read to the bottom of her soul did not make her uncomfortable, for this man judged nothing and no one, because he understood everything.

Paul Brunton is not a vague dreamer, but a practical man with extraordinary energy, he has his feet firmly on the ground, he knows the world and does not flee from it. As an instrument of the supreme Self he has the power to effect changes for the better in the personality of those with whom he is in contact, but this happens quite unintentionally, just as in the warm rays of the sun the flower bud opens. It is far from him to want to drive someone in a certain direction. One feels at ease in his presence, one can be completely oneself. In short, Paul Brunton is a human being in the truest sense of the word. His works do not give dry theories, they are his own crystallized experience. Therefore, his words are living words, which have the power to awaken slumbering higher thoughts and feelings in every heart open to their message.

The importance of a life like that of Paul Brunton cannot be overestimated in this terrible time.

As an instrument in the hands of higher Powers he brought first Indian yoga, then India's higher philosophy to the West in a clear, plausible and attractive form. He has shown by word and deed that Truth is not a "fata morgana" but a living reality, and that the attainment of this Truth is practically doable for anyone who is willing, for the sake of both his own salvation and that of mankind, his life. to this lofty research.

The world desperately needs a practical philosophy by which it can break its self-forged bonds. The Reverberated Doctrine that Paul Brunton has opened to an ever-widening circle of earnest seekers points the way to this blissful freedom. As long as we do not know ourselves, and are chained by egoism to ignorance of the sublime Presence that dwells in our hearts and in the universe, the corner of Truth must necessarily remain closed and sealed to us.

Let us therefore, as Paul Brunton says in *The Secret Path*, "submit ourselves to the magnificence of the imperishable highest Self: even if we cannot comprehend it or comprehend Its Himalayan height, let us nevertheless give mind and heart and body to Are exalted. exercises. Thus we enter into eternal life and gather the immortal fruits of truth, wisdom, peace and power."

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