

Carbons 21 (Shorter Essays)

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Editor's Note: This file, like Carbons 2, is largely a carbon copy of essays whose originals can be found in other files. By "originals" we mean the typed page of which this is the carbon. The tricky part is that sometimes, due to the vagaries of PB's travels and the mail, the carbon copy got to him first, and he edited that first, then later either copied the changes to the typed

page, or tried a different edit on that copy. We have no record of the order of any such edits, but we know – from PB himself – that this occurred. There are two and half original essays in this volume of which we cannot find the original typed pages at all. They are the “Reminiscences of PB” by S.S. Gopalkrishnan (a very special essay worth reading!); Nora Brigg’s short piece “VI: Comment on Fallacies” and the ‘half’ – two sections of the larger essay “The Mystery of Evil” titled *The Ego’s Evolutionary Crisis*, and “Our Practical Duty.” “The Mystery of Evil” essay is further problematic because the original section, and the sections titled “The Two Viewpoints” and “Who is Satan?” have their original pages in “Unrevised Essays;” but the sections “The Cosmic Order” and “The Defeat of Evil” are from “The Spiritual Crisis of Man Manuscript” – and finally the section titled “The Danger of Modern Materialism” is to be found in “Grey Long 8-13.” Thus the whole essay as such occurs only here. Just to complete the picture, the following are from “Unrevised Essays: “What We Can Do for Philosophy,” “Can We Communicate with the Dead,” “Poems,” “Is the Soul in the Heart?” “Notes on Hatha Yoga,” “Confusions and Contradictions in Mysticism,” and “The Destiny of Egypt.” (This latter is also of particular interest these days.) “A Philosophical Mysticism” comes from “Collected Writings 1,” and “Our Use of the Name Philosophy” occurs both in “Atmananda + 5” and “Carbons 2.”

To add to the weirdness of this file, pages 3-130 are duplicates of part of the material starting on page 131. Rather than have the reader jump back and forth to find all the first instances of the various essays, we have skipped over those 127 pages – but they can be found intact in the related PDF scan of the original notebook. Much of this material was written just after WWII, and as such expresses the grim perspective PB – and most everyone else – had at that time.

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

(1-1)¹ FREE NUMBERS

A
B
F
G
H
Q
V

¹ The paras in this file are all unnumbered unless otherwise specified.

X
Z
L

2²

Duplicates

3-130

{These pages are all xeroxed duplicate pages of essays that appear later in the document, on pages 131-254. As such, we have elected not to type them up twice.}

Shorter Essays

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SHORTER ESSAYS³

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(17) [DESTINY] ⁴ OF EGYPT	5
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SHORTER ESSAYS

What Can We Do For Philosophy⁷

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WHAT CAN WE DO FOR PHILOSOPHY⁸

² Void page

³ PB himself deleted "TITLE" from after "SHORTER ESSAYS" by hand.

⁴ PB himself deleted "(16) AMERICA'S COMING OF AGE ... 5 pages" from above this line by hand.

⁵ PB himself deleted "(20) ENGLAND'S CRISIS ... 6" and "(21) MACMILLAN'S BOOK INTRODUCTION

(unused only U.S.A.) ... 11" from below this line by hand.

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⁷ This is a carbon of the typed manuscript found in Unrevised Essays.

⁸ PB himself inserted "(C)" by hand.

(133-1) We are told from time to time about men changing their religion or passing from one physical outlook to another. We hear also of those who change a particular sectarian belief for a different one or of those who go over from one religious fold to another. It is easy to understand that this is sure to happen in time, because most people and especially most women tend to be swept away by the popularity of an organisation or institution, the glamour of a romantic personality and the forcefulness of their own emotion. Hence, they usually enter and stay within the religious or religious-mystical folds alone. Let us rejoice thereat for this evidences that religion or mysticism is indeed amply nourishing them.

But life's upward movement does not and cannot stop there. It will one day also have to show some of the intellectual loftiness, the impersonal grandeur and compassionate altruism of the philosophic goal. And although this higher path includes emotion it does not depend solely on it. Emotion is fickle and naturally sways over to whatever happens to please it at a particular time. When the belief gradually shows up its deficiencies and the fold betrays its defects, the followers become ripe for change. But if they misplaced their faith once, they may misplace it twice and even thrice. If they yesterday think something to be true which today they think to be false, where is the certitude that tomorrow they will not again reject this also and have a fresh idea of what is true? And if they can bring themselves to remember the strength with which they held those views which are now just as strongly rejected, how can they continue to trust their own judgment?

It is doubts and misgivings of this character which time and experience may bring to the mystically-minded but which they can never bring to the philosophically-minded. For it is part of the duty of a philosophic student to apply internal and external tests to his ideas. He must not only know that a thing is true but also know that the basis of his own knowledge is sound and irrefragable. Hence, the impression which philosophic truth makes on those who have comprehended it is so deep that it cannot be other than an enduring one whereas the impression which any religious organisation or mystical belief makes on the emotions of those who are attracted to it may fade and pass altogether when a different organisation or another belief rises and supplants it.

Philosophy is not a different conception of life facing and opposing other conceptions. It is too wide and too deep for that. None of the existing labels really suit it, none of the ready-made classifications really fit it. The intellectual or the mystic, the devotee or the doer who is exclusively absorbed in his own

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WHAT CAN WE DO FOR PHILOSOPHY (2)

(continued from the previous page) special path of life, permitting only the faculties which are engaged in it to function and repressing the others, is defective and inadequate as a truth-seeker and consequently can obtain only defective and inadequate results. Philosophy alone avoids such one-sidedness and achieves the largest and finest results. It cannot, by its very nature, reduce itself to party rivalry with any other teaching or worship. Its inmost heart is too loving, its practical attitude too generous and its intellectual understanding too large for that to happen. Whereas each organisation, group or sect, closes the door of heaven to every other one, philosophy leaves it open to all.

If we contrast the nature of true philosophy with the character of present-day mankind, we shall realise that the path of propagandising is not the right one for us. We may drag the horse to the trough but we cannot make it drink what it regards as unpalatable. It is natural and inevitable that those who have an imperfect intelligence, impure intuition, faulty character and selfish limitations should possess a world-view that is itself imperfect, faulty and limited. Therefore, the philosophic world-view being the outcome of a deliberate discipline of thought, feeling and action, refuses to oppose itself to any of the others, just as the philosopher himself refrains from interfering with the spiritual path of the unripe. The portal of religion is open to all men irrespective of their qualifications whereas the portal of philosophy is open only to those who possess a certain required degree of qualification. Anyone can become an accepted member of a religious body, whatever kind of character or intelligence, desires or aspirations he possesses but there exists no philosophical body to admit him into its ranks. Anyone afflicted with the wildest hysteria, the most unbalanced neuroticism, can join a conventional church or even a mystical society, but such a person could not obtain acceptance by a philosophic teacher before he sufficiently restores his balance. Before philosophy can serve him fruitfully, he must bring his whole psyche into a healthier balance or at least stop his emotions from running wild, his egotism from being dominant. He should not ask for spiritual illumination when his real need is psychological treatment.

The aspirant to philosophy has to fit himself first with the needful qualifications. It is he who has to refine and elevate his character, cultivate his intuitions and conduct himself in a worthy manner. It is he who has to learn to study and think for himself. Thus, nobody is deliberately shut out from entry into philosophy. Let him gain the requisite qualifications and he will soon find himself inside, but because few people are willing to pay this price, most people are to be found limited to the merely religious point of view and ignorant of the philosophical one. Hence nobody can convert anybody else to philosophy any more than he

(continued from the previous page) can convert a child into an adult overnight. Everybody must grow into it of his own accord, the growth of his own character into readiness for it, by his own experience of life and practice of intuitive reflection.

It is a great fallacy, prevalent in religious and religio-mystical circles that men may change their characters overnight by some miracle-working spiritual means. What really happens in such cases is that a temporary vein of evil tendencies runs out and exhausts itself abruptly at the same time that a more durable vein of good ones shows itself. The Oxford Group belief that people can be changed overnight in moral character, motives, goals and habits by a singing house party is naive. The fact is, they will embrace Buchmanism or any other ism which appeals to their psychological make-up and temperament and their intellectual level, and which offers a medium for bringing the change about. But if they are not ready, then the so-called change will be on or near the surface, not a real deep one. It will be merely emotionalist and subject to a counter-change as soon as a new wave of opposing emotion sets in. This is why so high a percentage as half the people who join Oxford Groups leave it soon after. The philosophic way is not less altruistic than the Oxford Group way. It also seeks to change men. But it sets up such an aim as an ultimate, not an immediate one. For it guides itself by knowledge and wisdom, it walks by sight rather {than}¹¹ by wishful thinking. Hence, it is satisfied to do whatever it can to help men seek their higher selves, to gain a better understanding of life and aspire towards nobler characters than their present ones.

If all this is grasped, it will then be easy to grasp why ordinary religionists and mystical cultists eagerly set out to make converts whereas philosophy quietly sets out only to make its knowledge available to those who have become ripened to appreciate it – which are two entirely different activities. It recognises the inexorable fact that men can be saved only individually, one by one, man by man. It has never expected many votaries. How could this be otherwise when it itself expects so much of a man before it will accept him, for it expects humility, the consciousness of his own ignorance, repentance, the consciousness of his own sinfulness, deep aspiration, the consciousness of his duty to attain the highest standards, hard intellectual work, constant meditation and rigid moral conduct. Because philosophy offers what is more precious still, it demands more price from us. Even though the war awakened many sleeping minds, it would still be foolish to expect a whirlwind growth of genuine interest in the quest of

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¹¹ We have inserted “than” for clarity.

ultimate truth. A quantitative development is always possible, given some sensational and catchy turn of events but as philosophic students we know that only a qualitative development is worthwhile, because it alone is deep enough to affect men's lives.

We must practise a wise reserve in such matters as the advocacy of truth, the conversion of foolish ignorant men into wise ones,

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(continued from the previous page) and the spreading of these glorious truths in an inglorious world. We may be tempted by the deplorable failure of religion in so many countries today to control the ethical conduct of mankind, to offer our philosophy as a universal panacea which will succeed in restoring everyone to ethical good-health; we may like to play with utopian dreams of bringing heaven to earth overnight; we may even hope that the human race, more literate and better educated than ever before in its history, will rise eagerly to the offer of philosophy and accept it as the only faith fit for the twentieth century.

But to entertain such optimism is merely to deceive ourselves and to act upon them is to invite failure. Philosophy cannot become a universally accepted system so quickly. It demands keen and subtle intellectual acumen quite above the average even before its outlines can be understood, and mankind has an immense distance to travel before such full growth of intelligence is discernible. It requires a determined pursuit of truth for its own sake, which is little evidenced anywhere today. It makes no such blatant appeal as to those religious and mystical systems which seek to bribe people with offers of emotional satisfaction for material gain. It is therefore, and must remain a teaching for the few, not for the masses. Dreams of suddenly changing the social and economic structure of the world to a moral basis are faced with the unpalatable fact that human character cannot change en masse so suddenly and that until it is so changed all systems must inevitably be defective and unsatisfactory.

What is possible and practicable, is gradual improvement. Competence must precede conversion and education must walk in front of propagation – in this field no other way is open. Therefore, it desires to leave every man free to choose his own concept of truth; to interfere with him by any attempt at proselytisation would be to interfere with his real progress. If later through the test of riper experience he discovers that his concept is unsuited to him or is a false one, the accompanying disappointment will enable him to finish once and for all with it and set him free to search elsewhere. Our duty is to make our knowledge available to him so that he need not grope or

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hunger one unnecessary day as soon as the critical moment arrives when he is mature enough to perceive that here indeed is his bread of life.

These facts being comprehended, the futility of seeking a widespread reception of these ideas will also be comprehended. There is no need for dejection because we have perforce to walk alone or almost alone, however. Does this mean that we are to do nothing at all? No, it does not. We still have a duty. It consists in building the troughs, in filling them with water and in acquainting the horses with the fact of the troughs' existence. That is to say we must train teachers in each of the five continents of the world. We must use the printed word and make this knowledge available in the form of periodical publications which will gradually educate their readers. We must have a centre of instruction by correspondence in each of these continents, too. We may even have to use the radio for simple and elementary talks on our teaching but here we shall have to be most careful to keep out the propagandist note and to keep in the educative one. Men are still like sheep and walk obediently after the leader. It is our grand privilege as pioneers to hold tomorrow's ideas today. These teachings have appeared in the world in their present form and at the present time because they correspond to the genuine need

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(continued from the previous page) of a portion of humanity. They have appeared because certain seekers of the West must now enter on a new phase in their evolution. Philosophy's objective will be to give such guidance on vital subjects as can be got nowhere else. It is not that the religious or mystical are asked to become philosophical but that the potentially or actually philosophical should not limit themselves to religion or mysticism. Hence, although philosophy is utterly uninterested in converting anybody, it is conscientiously interested in stimulating those whose moral outlook, mystical intuition and mental capacity could be put on a wider stretch without much difficulty. Only it does so quietly and unobtrusively.

Both novice and sage may present the same truths to a man with the intention of helping him. But whereas the first will be emotionally eager to convert the other's mind to acceptance, the second will be calmly indifferent to the result. And whereas the novice will betray all his eager missionary fervour, the sage will not. He serves the gospel with a manner that is so quiet and restrained, so hidden and subdued, that only those who are ripe for its influence will be able to detect it. His effort will be primarily to expound the truth rather than to disseminate it. For his attitude is that of Chinese

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Confucius, who confessed: "I do not expound my teaching to any who are not eager to learn it." He knows that propagation, however, should be done with wisdom. For some it should not be obvious, almost undetectable even; for others it may be very open and frank. He considers well beforehand his own position and capacity, as well as those of the people he wishes to influence, and then does only what the circumstances call for and permit. Loud and ostentatious propaganda is not for him. Silent and unobtrusive education is. He follows the wisest course in spreading such abstruse ideas and works intensively, not extensively, deeply amongst the few who are loyally "truth's own" and not superficially amongst the many who are lukewarmly here today, gone tomorrow. His students live their own autonomous life. They arise spontaneously, and come to him or his writings out of their own desperate need of inner guidance. Thus their energies are channelled into purely spiritual lines instead of being wasted in merely physical ones. He will indirectly impart this knowledge through writings to some and directly coach some others to carry on the work after he has gone. If he can create a loose, scattered and unorganised group of individual students separated and spread out far and wide, in whom the finest ethical values, the loftiest intellectual standard and the soundest mystical experiences will live on after he has vanished from the scene, even if each of its members strives and works in isolation, he will have done not less in the end for humanity than if he created a formal organisation. And to the eyes of those who can look on life from the inside, he may have done more.

If it be true that the world cannot be converted to acceptance of such lofty religious, mystical and philosophic principles, such superior values, and if it be likewise true that the world must be redeemed one day, what is to be the duty in the matter of those students who are the present-day bearers of these principles and values? Are they to stand helplessly by and let the impetus of evolution do everything? Or are they to propagate their ideas frantically and everywhere? The truth is that to indulge in over-pessimism is as fallacious as to indulge in over-optimism. They are to

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(continued from the previous page) accept neither of these alternatives. They will rise to the level of their obligation by making a gesture toward their fellowmen, which will not only combine what is best in both but also reject what is foolish in both. And this is to make available to mankind these ideas which have helped them, to let it be widely but quietly known that they do exist, to live faithfully up to them in actual practice so as

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¹⁵ PB himself inserted "(6)" by hand.

to exemplify them as best they can, remembering that people will discover in their personal conduct the best account of their beliefs and the best echo of their knowledge.

This done, it should be left entirely up to others whether they wish to accept or not. Students are not to waste their lives in forcing unpalatable food into unwilling mouths of millions who are content merely to exist in mental apathy and emotional indifference, bereft of an inner life. Nevertheless, the opportunity to get this food must be presented, and in that their compassionate duty consists. It is true that truth needs no boosting. It can live on its own worth. Nevertheless, the fact of its existence needs to be made known. It needs its John-the-Baptists for it sits remote and apart, silent and voiceless. It is not enough that the world sufferings have awakened the minds of many people and that the war, which has badly shaken men's feelings, has also quickly sharpened their wits. This awakening must also be directed into proper channels. Admittedly, the higher teaching is, in its philosophic fullness, above the heads of the masses in their present state of evolution, although in the remote future it will certainly percolate through into their understanding. But it is not above the heads of the intelligent or intuitive few among them, whilst its religious portion is well within the intellectual grasp of all and its mystical portion within the grasp of most.

There is a new hope. In the past, philosophy could not directly reach the popular mind. Popular unpreparedness blocked the way. But, today, there has been such a development that some of it can directly filter down to the people. The unrelenting pressure of this crisis and the harrowing distress of this war have abruptly aroused a small number of people from their spiritual sleep. Mysticism, which they had in common with most moderns ignored as an empty abstraction, began to acquire vivid meaning and to assume personal reference. They started to take an interest in it, to seek information and to read books about it, to ask questions of or to discuss it with their friends. Mystical truths and practices have certainly carried some serenity to where it was most needed – to lands and homes which have endured the noise and tumult, the horrors and fears of scientifically-waged war. There is now something which did not exist in pre-war days, an entirely new public for these teachings drawn from classes which have been brought by wartime experience into the ranks of seekers.

Under normal conditions, philosophic truth should be administered to a sick world in small doses, if on the one

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¹⁷ PB himself inserted "(7)" by hand.

(continued from the previous page) hand the patient is to be persuaded to swallow it and if on the other it is to be administered successfully at all. But, today, we are living under very abnormal conditions. If it was sinful to disclose the philosophic teaching in former times to the simple, illiterate masses and thus break their faith in the only spiritual standby they could comprehend, it is equally sinful not to disclose it¹⁸ today, when inherent-sufferings and democratic educational developments have rendered them ripe for its consolation and instruction. Consequently, the moment has come when it is the sacred duty of progressed students to disclose what will help their fellow-men in the present crisis and to quietly, unostentatiously, make these teachings available to all seekers, for the past eras of secrecy have served their purpose and come to an end. They need not expect to enlighten all mankind, and would be mad to do so. But they may reasonably expect to enlighten a small nucleus around which the future will form steadily expanding accumulations under evolutionary pressure.

Those students¹⁹ who are alive in these dramatic epoch-making times, should know better than {to}²⁰ regard the fact as accidental. Karma has put them on this planet, which means that the superior wisdom of their own Overself has put them here, precisely at the present moment because it is charged with tremendous significance. That these nobler religious, mystical and philosophic ideas will inevitably and eventually assert themselves sufficiently to influence the further course of mankind's mental history, is certain. Anything they can do within their different capacities and varying opportunities to accelerate such a process, it is their sacred duty to do.

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Can We Communicate With the Dead

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CAN WE COMMUNICATE WITH THE DEAD²²

(147-1) We seldom use the name 'spiritualism' in our writings because this should properly designate the doctrine which is opposed to materialism. Belief in the communication with the souls of the departed is more correctly named 'spiritualism' as the French perceive, and that is the one we prefer to use. This belief {has}²³ for long been a traditional one in China, Japan and Central Africa, whilst since the middle of the

¹⁸ PB himself deleted a comma by hand.

¹⁹ PB himself deleted a comma by hand.

²⁰ We have inserted "to" for clarity.

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²² PB himself inserted "D" by hand.

²³ We have inserted "has" for clarity.

last century {it²⁴} has spread noticeably in England and France, the United States and Brazil. It has done a good service in comforting the bereaved and in supporting the truth of survival after death.

The first problem, is to obtain authentic evidence of psychic phenomena. It is the problem of senseless and stupid 'spirit' messages of puerile descriptive statements, self-deceptions and arrant lies. The full record of modern spiritism reads in part like a tale of mental aberrations drawn from a neurologists' case book and in part like a genuine revelation of important facts. The opportunity of attaining social importance within a small circle by the easy method of giving out wonderful psychic communications, is temptation which comes to insignificant persons who discover their mediumistic character and which they rarely struggle against. Thereafter they mouth endless scraps of dubious information about other worlds or will deliver messages from disincarnate spirits and ghostly teachers at which we may well marvel. We say 'marvel' but not in the sense of admiration. The marvel is that there are other legions of devout believers who accept the ridiculous {as} if it were the sublime and who receive the imaginary as if it were the actual. Anyone who is in desperate need of comfort or communication will not be over-critical but on the contrary will be over-credulous when a medium met abruptly at such psychological moment, glibly promises to satisfy the need. Natural innocence and good intentions do not alone secure the enquirer against unconscious or gross deceptions. If allied with uncritical credulity they may let him fall into pits of folly. The disillusionments of experience will inevitably do more to instruct him than any logic however potent.

Both blind acceptance and sweeping rejection still leave the solution to this mystery undisclosed. How far, if at all, are these psychic phenomena objectively real and how they are only imaginary so? How much, if at all, of their face value is scientifically acceptable? Is the medium's real experience or one movement out of the shadows of his subconscious mind?

That all the messages which come through every medium's lips or planchette²⁵ come from a spirit in the 'next world' or that most of the phenomena which happen in her presence happen because such a spirit is originating them, is a claim which is certainly unjustifiable. That most of these messages and phenomena can very well be explained, where mere trickery is not at work as it so often is at work, by the fact that man is a spirit in this world, and himself possessed of powers already.²⁶

The Wisdom of the Overself

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²⁴ We inserted "it" as per PB's edit of the manuscript of which this is the carbon. That can be found on page 123 of Unrevised Essays. —TJS

²⁵ "planchetter" in the original; the 'r' was deleted by PB in the Unrevised Essays version, so we have repeated that here. —TJS '20

²⁶ The paras on this page continue in para 149-1.

(148-1)²⁷ We perceive only partially and incompletely when we perceive anything through the senses. When we set up the presentations of the eyes,²⁸ ears, hands, tongue and nose, that is²⁹ when we set up human experience as really being what it purports to be, we are merely surface seers. The things of our experience really bear to the things as they are in themselves a relation resembling that of the hat coat shirt trousers and shoes which a man wears to the man himself. The senses help us to know certain things only by shutting out many more things from our range of experience. Hence to know the world as it really is, we would have to expand our field of awareness to a higher [dimension].³⁰

It³¹ is not so easy to tell what a 'thing' is as the man who has never stopped to reflect upon the point may believe. For, guided by the unquestioned impressions which he gets through the eyes and fingers, he takes it for granted that it is obviously at rest [and]³² remains constantly the same,³³ when in fact there is such a continual circulation of its secret elements, such a shifting play of its electrons, for example, that the thing in itself slips through intellectual fingers as ungraspable. This seems strange and sounds absurd, yet, scientifically viewed, things in their ultimate character [are indeed]³⁴ fields of electronic and protonic energies moving at prodigious speeds. Nowhere in this vast universe is there, strictly speaking, such a state as absolute rest. Whenever we believe that something has been found in such a state, we merely entertain an illusion. For its rest is only relative. It is, as Einstein has pointed out, only an appearance of rest. Actually even the particles of a stone lying seemingly inert by the roadside are swarming in incessant motion.

Can We Communicate With the Dead cont.

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CAN WE COMMUNICATE WITH THE DEAD (2)

²⁷ Incomplete para. This page appears to be a draft from "Wisdom of the Overself." – TJS

²⁸ PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

²⁹ PB himself deleted a comma by hand.

³⁰ PB himself left a note in the left margin of this sentence saying "Don't italicize and remove the {under}lines" by hand.

³¹ PB himself left a note in the left margin saying "cut here" – there is also a line drawn above the top of this paragraph.

³² PB himself changed "rest, something that" to "rest and" by hand.

³³ PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

³⁴ PB himself changed "have indeed become" to "are indeed" by hand.

³⁵ This page is a duplicate of page 1 in Lectures and Prague Talks.

(149-1)³⁶ It is inevitable that the philosophically untrained medium should mistake a mere thought-form for a veritable disembodied spirit. This is most often the case when the supposed spirit shows no sign of the presence of the embodied observer but it can also be the cause even when a house is haunted by a ghost which is visible at times. Here are two interesting stories. When Manchester ship Canal was first opened, Professor Ernest Wood's father attended a grand exhibition held there to celebrate it. One of the exhibits was a duplicate of a prison-ship cell, on a ship used to transport convicts to Botany Bay. There was a lifelike full size wax figure of a matted-hair, unhappy looking convict sitting in the cell, the windows were barred, straw on the floor and gloom. Several months later, when his father had forgotten the incident, he visited a professional medium. She accurately described the prison-ship scene and the convict but said it was the figure of a disincarnate spirit and that she had a message from him to give. In the other case, a novelist went to a medium who reeled off several incidents purporting to be from his own life career. She had in fact quite accurately described several incidents from a story he was writing and which was still {in}³⁷ incomplete manuscript form. It is obvious that both these cases were cases of mind-reading, of thought forms clairvoyantly seen. In the one case, the form was a memory, in the other an imagination. Professor Wood himself told us about the first case and someone we met in a train told me about the other.

What is philosophy's comment here? Just as the dream-mind dramatises itself into various personalities, so the medium's subconscious mind dramatises itself in many cases into 'spirit guides' and 'spirit controls.' The same dream-mind which, in the sleeping person, dramatises itself into various personalities, in the mediumistic person dramatises itself into various 'spirit-controls.' It is a part of the medium's own mind, so these 'controls' have no separate existence. Such knowledge as they furnish and such messages as they transmit are tappings from the sitter's mind. Many a medium has quite vividly seen and correctly described the face and figure, the mannerisms and character of some deceased person whose spirit is at the time supposed to be near the sitter. But in most cases it is not a spirit at all but a picture already held either consciously or unconsciously in the sitter's mind. There has been a separate discarnate spirit actually present at all as a reality but only the mental image of a spirit. The medium however, being philosophically untrained, has not been able to recognise one from the other. Notwithstanding this, [she may be quite honest, quite psychic, and her communicated message may still have a certain]³⁸ value in it.

This said, there is still a residue of experiences which may really be attributed to the 'other world.' For philosophy agrees that the real man, the conscious thinking and feeling entity, does survive when his term of existence in the flesh comes to an end. It

³⁶ This para is a continuation of para 147-1.


³⁷ PB inserted "in" at this point in the MS "Lectures and Prague Talks" of which this is the carbon. – TJS '20

³⁸ Indecipherable in the original due to two lines typed over each other – however a duplicate of this text was found in Lectures and Prague Talks, para 1-1.

endorses the works of the nineteenth-century Yugoslav writer, Ljudevit Vulicevic “Look down into the loathsome grave and you will see the remains of one who is no more. Where is the mind, reason and intelligence? They are not in the grave?” The test which will indicate the presence or absence of a spirit, which will reveal whether the voice is animated by a supernatural or subconscious force, is a physical one. If he feels something like a cold breath pass agitatedly through his body, causing him almost to shiver, then a disembodied entity³⁹

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

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³⁹ This para is continued in para 154-1.

⁴⁰ PB himself changed “Planet” to “Planets, The ... 27, 130” by hand.

⁴¹ Referring to “Jules Henri Poincaré.”

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

The Wisdom of the Overself

152
THE WISDOM OF THE OVERSELF
(39)

(152-1) us⁴³ the true state of Nature. Only the untutored and unscientific now hold the naive belief that the world is solid stable and stationary otherwise than in appearance. For they set up the familiar experiences of everyday as their standard of explanation. Theirs is the 'finger-philosophy' which makes what is felt by the fingers into a criterion of ultimate [reality].⁴⁴ This common conception of the world is of course, essential for practical life because it has a [limited]⁴⁵ truth of its own, but when we rise to the philosophic standpoint we discover that it does not resist scrutiny. Perfectly right

⁴² "Rani Teertha" in the original but there is no such person, whereas Rama Tirtha was and is indeed renowned. – TJS '20

⁴³ Incomplete para. This page appears to be a draft from Wisdom of the Overself.

⁴⁴ PB himself deleted "and truth" from after "reality" by hand.

⁴⁵ PB himself inserted "limited" by hand.

though it be in its own place, such a view becomes wrong here. For it does not exhaust all the possibilities of the universe. Thus reason reverses Judgment⁴⁶ of the senses and philosophy silences the voice of opinion. “Culture inverts the vulgar views of Nature... Children, it is true, believe in the external world. The belief that it appears only is an afterthought,” was Emerson’s wise comment in his Essay on Nature.

What science has discovered with the help of cunning instruments ancient sages discovered more than two thousand years ago with the help of concentrated [thought]⁴⁷ alone. “No man can twice enter the same river,” asserted Greek Heraclitus.⁴⁸ “Whoever perceives in truth and wisdom how things pass away in this world, in his eyes there is not ‘It is’ in this world,” declared Indian Buddha, who also pointed out that nothing remains the same for two consecutive moments.

But still farther back in time than these two men was this doctrine taught by [ancient sages]⁴⁹ from Asia in the East to America in the West. They taught, exactly like modern scientists, that the entire universe [is]⁵⁰ in incessant motion,⁵¹ [i.e. alive,]⁵² and that this motion [takes a rotatory,]⁵³ wheel-like circular form. And they went still further by pointing out that as the point where a circle [originally]⁵⁴ begins or ends⁵⁵

Can We Communicate With the Dead cont.

153

CAN WE COMMUNICATE WITH THE DEAD

(4)

(153-1) Although it is generally inadvisable to develop mediumship, owing to its dangers, something depends on the kind of mediumship practised. And those whom circumstance or convention kept apart while on earth can come together without restraint and find the fruition of their own love in the heavenly after death sphere. Until then during a state of deep reverie a vision of the departed one may come to one left behind on the earth plane. If mediumship is merely a clairvoyant seeing of visions, there is little danger and this experience often comes to the practiser of ordinary yoga too. If, however, it means surrendering completely to the control of an unknown spirit, a departed soul, then this cannot be recommended. Nevertheless {although⁵⁶} we

⁴⁶ PB himself changed “judgment” to “Judgment” by hand.

⁴⁷ PB himself changed “mind” to “thought” by hand.

⁴⁸ “Heraclitus” in the original.

⁴⁹ PB himself changed “the guardians of the hidden teaching” to “ancient sages” by hand.

⁵⁰ PB himself changed “was” to “is” by hand.

⁵¹ PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

⁵² PB himself inserted “i.e. alive,” by hand.

⁵³ PB himself changed “took a Rotatory, i.e.” to “takes a rotatory,” by hand.

⁵⁴ PB himself changed “really” to “originally” by hand.

⁵⁵ Incomplete para

⁵⁶ PB inserted “although” here in the MS “Lectures and Prague Talks,” so we are doing the same here. – TJS ‘20

personally regard spiritism as a tricky subject we are not opposed to it. We would not stop anyone who wished to from entering its dark and dubious portals. If he finds it more attractive than mysticism; if he must have its dubieties rather than the rock-like certainties bestowed by philosophy, that is his affair. The communications which purpose to be come from spirits of whom he has no certainty whatsoever, require much more proof of their authenticity than that which comes from his own reason, from his own inherent power of recognising truth. The philosophical evidence on behalf of immortality is impeccable and is infinitely preferable to the tainted data of necromantic spiritism.

The only kind of self-surrender which it is perfectly safe to practise is that where one feels the pure presence of God, it is then most beneficial and even necessary to give oneself up completely to this beautiful, blessed and sacred presence. The one discovers that it is just as mysterious to be alive as it is to be a spirit of the so-called dead. The mystic's aim is not merely, as it is with so many mediums to substitute a different space-time level of perception for his present one, but to lift himself right out of the bondage to such perceptions altogether into the region of infinite duration and infinite Space.

154

CAN WE COMMUNICATE WITH THE DEAD

(3)

(154-1)⁵⁷ is most probably there. But at this point it {is} needful to enquire about the identity of the communicating spirit. Is he the one whom it purports to be? To discover and verify the real identity of the communicating spirits, has been the second great problem for all investigators who are sufficiently and actively intelligent and it is harder to solve than the first one.

The attempt to bring the so-called dead into communication with those on earth may be harmful to both sides, but in fact it rarely succeeds. When it does succeed, lying spirits often seize the opportunity to manifest in disguise. For it is they with whom our side most easily comes into contact. There is great deception in such intercourse but people are deluded by the proffered 'evidences' – which certainly exist – into imagining that they have established communication with their departed relatives when they have only established communication with evil spirits, to whom the providing of such impressive 'evidence' is easy. The enquirer should beware of them. It is easier for invisible demons to personate successfully the character of some departed friend than it is for accomplished theatrical actors to personate characters in Shakespeare's plays. Their false voices may tell him flatteringly how good he is, how great his future will be. The true voice of the higher self tells him {how}⁵⁸ sinful he is, how needed is his purification. It is an incontrovertible historical fact that, with one or two exceptions, all

⁵⁷ This para is a continuation of para 148-1.

⁵⁸ We have inserted "how" for clarity.

the well-known spiritualist mediums in England, in the months and years before September, 1939 guided or being used by their possessing spirits or 'controls' predicted emphatically that there would be no war. Whereas H.G. Wells and several other writers, guided by nothing more than reason, predicted that there would be war. That was a specimen of deliberate and dangerous misleading on a wide scale. The question whether or not spirits can read the future has nothing to do with the viciousness of this deed.

The majority of mediumistic communications are unreliable and dubious, whilst although much of the remainder emanates from genuinely super-physical sources, it is still deceptive. In these circumstances the average person has very little possibility of communicating with authentic 'spirits.' Nature has quite rightly thrown a veil across their world which renders penetration almost impossible, except in a few gifted cases. Philosophy's counsel is that the subject should only be practically dealt with by highly-trained investigators, all amateurs are not only liable to be deceived but also to incur grave risks to their morality and sanity. But everyone may theoretically deal with it,⁵⁹ reading its voluminous literature.

Mentalist doctrine points out the private character of each man's post-mortem state. This is the lesser reason why the Buddha himself declined to give a definite answer to the question what happens to man after death. Nevertheless his monkish followers managed to construct a series of heaven and hell-worlds which compare favourably with the colourful varieties furnished by other creeds. We may best understand the after-death state by likening it to dream, which it largely is and just as it is extremely difficult to penetrate the dreamer's consciousness without awakening him, so in the case of spirits. After this intermediate period of dreaming, there is a lapse into deep unconscious sleep, a state which is quite impenetrable by living entities. Communication can only be established in the first period not during the second one.

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⁵⁹ We have inserted a comma for clarity.

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Poems

156
POEMS⁶¹

(156-1) "ALONG THE MYSTIC ROAD,"

MY eyes have sought, since I could see, the things that set the
spirit free,

The wondrous magic of the key
To chainless life.

With sweeping glance they hunt and find, all ecstasy of heart
and mind,

All mystic roads that leave behind
The scene of strife.

And oh, the sense of broken bliss, when I must flee from
Dian's kiss

To wander in the black abyss
Where bubbles thrive.

When secret haunts where god-men stray, whitened lands where

⁶⁰ "Heracleitus" in the original.

⁶¹ PB himself inserted "P" by hand.

fairies play,
Fling me, a stranger, far away
To wear my gyve.

Yet must I thank the Tireless One, whose hidden heart in
the blazing sun
Will rain his love till I have won
The final fight;
For the daily gleam of the far-off goal, for constant flights
of the loosened soul,
And welcome words from Truth's great scroll,
My best birthright!

Ah! let me never lose the line that leads into the spangled
shrine,
And is to me a battle-sign
That flashes hope.
For ages yet will race me by, before my toil shall fructify
And prove no man can e'er belie
His horoscope.

My bleeding feet shall fail and fall, my wincing lip must quaff
the gall,
The days in hell again appal,
But never a cry.
For the wakened soul is done with fear, and sees behind each
sorrow-spear
A coming brightness shining clear
Through blackened sky.

And if I meet along the road a brother burdened with his load,
A stumbling soul that feels the goad,
A heavy heart;
Then let me give with eager hand, all strength he needs upright
to stand,
All love and light that I command,
Till pain depart.

For every man must sink in slime, before he e'er begins to climb,
Before he pass the bounds of Time
Where all is one.
So send me, Lord, on every side, that to the blind I come, a guide,
And bring each soul, a willing bride,

Unto the sun!

157⁶²
POEMS

158
POEMS⁶³

(158-1) PRELUDE⁶⁴

Strange chords that tremble down through time,
White wraiths that haunt my pantomime,
Grey lights that shine from far-gone lives;

I fling you back your gilded gyves,
And walk the world in lonely plight,
A fairy-friended anchorite,
A lone-dropt leaf.

PAUL BRUNTON.

(158-2) A MYSTIC IN MONTMARTRE.

Far up there curls the futile café smoke,
And with it drifts the babble of the wise,
Great litterateurs fling out their facile thoughts,
Whilst I, poor fool, sit still with half-closed eyes.

The pungent air oft trembles at their tones,
For be it known they are the ones who know,⁶⁵
All lore of books is theirs, and more besides,
Why wonder then, a dolt like me lies low?

I stir my coffee to their scornful words,
For silence tells them truly of my state,

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POEMS⁶⁶

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⁶³ Handwritten notes at top of page read "dups."

⁶⁴ PB himself underlined "Prelude" by hand.

⁶⁵ PB himself changed period to comma by hand.

⁶⁶ Handwritten notes at bottom of page read: "1919."

(continued from the previous page) Far are my feet from this earth's beaten way,
Lost is my mind to Sense and Place and Date!

160⁶⁷
POEMS

A Philosophical Mysticism

161
A PHILOSOPHICAL MYSTICISM
Contribution to Talgeri's Symposium, "What I Believe"

(161-1) The faiths by which men live vary naturally, as much in the areas covered as in the principles embraced. I did not realise this till I sat down to write about this topic. I did not realise that my own faith had grown so broad and high and deep through a multitude of changing experiences and host of incessant reflections, that I could not fairly represent it within the short space available here for this purpose. But a few points from it which have strongly impressed me, may be set down.

Long ago I was led, both by reason and by intuition, to the unshakeable conviction that all the vast movement of this wonderful cosmos could not occur without the hidden presence of an indestructible unchangeable Mind and must certainly be due to it. It is self-sufficient, ever-abiding, everywhere present, uniquely alone, the root of all manifested things, the reality behind all appearances, the Soul of all souls. It is the Nameless God.

But what does this mean for man? There is tremendous significance in it for him. For the Supreme has left its witness in no less a place than his own heart. It is itself forever beyond him but, fortunately, what witness is not. And it is nothing less than his own soul, his higher self, the source of his noblest aspirations and finest thoughts. True that most of us are still unaware of our divine nature and divine destiny. This is because intellect simply cannot grasp it, being only an instrument for space-time experience. Futile to ask it to grasp what is beyond time and space. There exists however a Way whereby conscious communion with the soul may be established through trans-intellectual experience, through mystical experience.

If we seek the soul, we shall need to practise an integral fourfold technique, thus utilising the four elements of the human psyche. Religion will satisfy the emotional need, mysticism the intuitional need. What about the needs of intellect and will? Hence, we have to add the development of scientific and metaphysical qualities for the one and the moral disciplining of action for the other. Nor is it enough to seek this fourfold development alone: we must also balance its component parts. How much error and how much sin have crept into men's lives through the leak hole of personal unbalance! The process of spiritual growth is to be found in manifold experiences and

⁶⁷ Blank page

even in contradictory attitudes. This alone would show the necessity and importance of achieving correct balance in character, capacity, thought, feeling and action.

If I believe in mysticism and in its value to mankind and especially today – I do not believe in much that passes for it nor in the wholesale acceptance of its traditional forms, with their extravagant claims and excessive asceticism. The mysticism of the past was mostly religious. The mysticism of the future will be mostly scientific. That is to say, it will be as intellectual and rational as the other was emotional and instinctive. Yet it will still preserve the religious emotion and not discard it. But it will be an emotion purified of superstition's taint, disciplined by reasons check.

I am not among these blind admirers who assert that all modern

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A PHILOSOPHICAL MYSTICISM

Contribution to Talgeri's Symposium, "What I Believe"

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A PHILOSOPHICAL MYSTICISM

Contribution to Talgeri's Symposium, "What I Believe"

(continued from the previous page) culture is superior nor among those ignorant critics who assert that all ancient culture is inferior. If therefore, I propose both the modernisation and broadening of mystical thought and practice, their realistic adjustment to our own times, this ought not to be misunderstood. For instance, if the medieval mystic found in the evil disorder and materialism of his times grounds for flight into escapism, the modern mystic should find in those very same causes grounds for striving in humanity's service.

The time has come for him to escape from escapism, to renounce either the cynical abandonment of the world or the cowardly flight from it. The time has come for mystical studies and exercises to be associated more with the ordinary man's home and less with the recluse's monastery. Exercises in meditation especially ought not to seem the strange unfamiliar things they now are. I have actually met people, particularly European and American people, who have been somewhat scared, to put it mildly, by the mere idea of meditation practice. But even fatigue with the stress of everyday living calls us to make up meditation as a means of deep relief.

Our harried life needs its healing calm. It will increasingly become recognised as a fundamental necessity of the daily program, as an antidote to both the grimness and rush of contemporary existence. But it offers much more than that. It is a necessary means of carrying prayer to a higher octave, an ordained channel of communication with the higher self, the soul. Meditation must be brought back to its rightful place in the common human program, not left outside for a few 'eccentrics.'

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Man's higher life begins and ends with religion. Although it mounts to mysticism and proceeds still farther to philosophy, finally it returns on itself and renews afresh the humble worship of God. But now its worship is total, intelligent, pure and direct. Total, because every moment is henceforth a holy one. Intelligent, because there is clear understanding that the divine life is not alien and apart but dwells at the very root of the worshipper's own life. Pure, because no personal benefits except of a spiritual kind, are asked for in return. And direct, because the ceremonial symbols and intellectual draperies, the dim intimations and human intermediaries of public religion are displaced by a sacred private insight. If there is any single message which I would like to leave for my fellow-wayfarers on earth before passing on from their sight it is this, that there truly is a universal Mind in which our own little minds are mysteriously rooted, that it is the inspirer of all that is benign and noble, serene and beautiful in our thoughts and feelings, and that the full reverent awareness of its presence with the glad loving obedience to its will fulfils the ultimate purpose of human life and brings the extreme measure of human happiness.

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A PHILOSOPHICAL MYSTICISM

Contribution to Talgeri's Symposium, "What I Believe"

S.S. Gopalkrishnan: Reminiscences of PB

165

REMINISCENCES OF PB⁷⁰

S.S. Gopalkrishnan

(165-1) By a Former Indian Secretary.

(S.S. Gopalkrishnan, B.A.)

A strange fate once threw me into a peculiar position – a position from which I took note of the chief happenings in the inner lives of a few American and European brothers and sisters who were striving hard to learn and understand the highest truths of {Indian⁷¹} Yoga and Eastern philosophy under the excellent, noble and clear guidance of a queer master, who now and then disowned his mastership and buried himself in the hollow of the Pyramids or hid himself in the remotest villages of the Far East, or again ascended and lost himself, in the freezing colds of the peaks of the highest mountain range. I refer to the one who was equally on close friendly relations with the matted-haired yogi, or the Egyptian bushy-bearded Muslim, or the shaven headed Supreme-Lamas in China and the Buddhist countries.

⁶⁹ Blank page

⁷⁰ PB himself inserted "R" by hand.

⁷¹ We have changed "Indian and Yoga" to "Indian Yoga" because at the time of writing Western "Yoga" (aka Hatha or Body Yoga) was already more well-known than Yoga as moral discipline and meditation practice – hence the need to specify. – TJS '20

I am not a biographer, and so the reader will have to excuse me if he finds this to be scrappy, disjointed and broken. For my part I will be quite satisfied if this makes interesting reading and describes a few salient happenings and incidents which help to reveal, though in a poor way, this amazing person. I met him by a strange coincidence. Coincidence indeed, apparently, but really the strong hand of good karma that made me cross his path. When low in spirits, having been the victim of a big bank crash in South India, in which I had invested money and where I was employed as a subordinate officer, and having wife and children to support, spiritually jaded and exhausted in the maze of conflicting faiths, beliefs and opinions, I read "Search in Secret India," it exerted a peculiar influence over me. Day after day the influence it had on me grew more and more until at last I could no longer resist the temptation of meeting its author. But, as that book ended with his return to his native west, I erroneously thought he was still there and regarded such a meeting as impossible.

After the above preface you will not be surprised if you find yourself suddenly transported to a small country town in South-West India. The reddish roads are marked by their dusty quietness. Except for a bullock cart or two, and odd villagers slowly passing occasionally, or the hurrying past of a stray cross-country motor bus, there is nothing to be seen or heard. The gentle breeze rustling through the leaves of coconut palms which line the road on one side at different points, adds to the completely rural atmosphere. There is some sign of activity only in the main bazaar street. Coolies trotting with their baskets poised over their heads, a few villagers looking with open mouths at the display of dirty oil-fried cakes, the masses of yellow mangos and brown berries both ripe and unripe heaped in groups on the floor of the fruit-stall, and clamorous haggling of the booth-keepers, the noise of the harsh music

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REMINISCENCES OF PB
S.S. Gopalkrishnan

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REMINISCENCES OF PB
S.S. Gopalkrishnan

2

(continued from the previous page) of the gramophone-record through the prehistoric horned instrument, the rattling of the tin pots of the tinker, the sonorous hiss of the hand blow-pipe of the smith, are the common sights and sounds that present themselves to you.

A certain spring day, when I happened to visit this little town for the first time, was, is and will be the most memorable throughout my life. Looking back now, I find how plainly all events and circumstances and environments joined together to bring

⁷² Blank page

this visit about and also how everything that has developed since then roots in it as the most blessed day of my life. By a mysterious event, the very same day that the globe-trotter himself came back to India, an unusual force pulled me forcibly and I travelled about 300 miles away from home unconsciously to the same destination. Just as I was getting into a bullock cart to proceed to the railway station, which was a couple of miles away, I heard the cart-driver conversing with another man. The word "Brunton" was mentioned in the conversation. I immediately questioned the driver about it and was astonished to hear that he had the honour that very morning of carrying the famous writer to a house he had engaged on his return to India. I postponed my journey to the station and was driven to his house instead.

I introduced myself to Dr P. Brunton, and simply said that I was pleased with his book, a native of the historic temple-city of Nandura⁷³ in south India, and that I had had the good fortune of a college education in the Missionary college there. I also stated that my grandfather had been one of the great Sanskrit pandits of his day, though I knew but little of that language. No boots, no socks, no coat, no tie or bow, and no hat were found on Brunton's person, much less a stiff collar and a waist-coat. I mention this because I had always thought white men insisted on wearing these things. He offered me tea and let me talk for awhile. The result was that I was installed – after twenty minutes – as his "literary and personal Secretary."

The house was purely an Indian-style small bungalow with a big court yard in the middle. No carpets covered the naked rough-bricked floor, no wall papers adorned the ill-plastered walls, no tapestries hung over doors and windows. There was not even one glass-paned window. The rough wood doors, without paint or varnish, creaked on their hinges. Three small tables, two chairs, an easy chair of light wood and canvass and a small one-doored cupboard besides a cot, all of the camp-folding pattern, were the only furniture to be found. We were away from the noise and din of the bazaar in the surroundings most suitable for literary work of a high and concentrated nature.

For the first, few days I was unpacking trunks, getting things straight and carrying books into rooms. I had to fix up Indian maps on walls, arrange the office, knock nails into walls, move suit cases and dressing cases into their proper places, make many bazaar purchases and do dozens of other little jobs. Then we opened up a packet containing dozens of unanswered letters from all over the world. They were in different sizes, shapes, colours and even languages; they were typewritten, pen-written and pencilled. They bore dates stretching back over all the dates

⁷³ "Nadura" in the original.

⁷⁴ Blank page

(continued from the previous page) in the calendar for more than a Year. PB was apologetic for this last fact but said his life being what it was, he could not help it.

His cook and personal servant was in some way not unlike his simple-living master. He was a lean chap talking hardly any English. One yard of [wide]⁷⁵ plain white sheet round his waist and one shirt were all his clothing. This has to be compared to the stylishly dressed butler who usually serves Europeans in India. In spite of his poor appearance he was a cook of no mean kind, for as I came to know later, he had served his master faithfully for nearly six years, and had travelled in many parts of India with him. The secret of his success was that he made the best-tasting soup, the best curried vegetables and cooked the finest rice. One wondered how such delicious things could come out of that medieval kitchen at the back of the house. If he were not watchful for a single minute, the food – whether raw or cooked – would be stolen away by the innumerable monkeys. In fact, once I saw his master projecting himself from out of his office like a bullet from the gun in hot pursuit of a monkey which had just stolen and was carrying off a typewriter ribbon from his table!

One day PB told me abruptly that he had decided to move away from this little town, that his work there had come to an end and that everything had to be packed and all local matters disposed of within twelve hours; I could never have managed the removal so swiftly before I entered his service but the training in efficiency, concentration and initiative which I absorbed from him every day enabled me to do it then. We spent a week in the capital city of Madras and then a telegram came and we were off again to the interior of the county. We became guests of the ruling prince of an Indian State. Some officers of the state met us at the station and conducted us, in two fine motor cars on a fast smooth drive by drivers in gorgeous livery to a fine palatially fitted-up bungalow. PB was then a socially busy soul. State dinners, tea parties with Rajahs and private palace conferences were the order of the day. From the village to the town, from the house to the palace, from the bullock cart to the saloon car, from a small looking-glass held between the fingers to gorgeous wall mirrors, what a change! It can only be imagined. Out flew dinner coats, polished boots, felt hats, walking sticks, white collars, etc. and soon PB was completely transformed. Even his conservative secretary with leg-cloths and shirt was moved and got into a pair of trousers and wore a collar and tie. The whizz of the electric fan and the gentle ring of the telephone bell replaced the primitive arrangements of our former home. This sudden change was typical of many which we made in the following years. I was at first surprised but later accustomed to the ease with which PB adapted himself to all kinds of environments and people. He passed from palace to hut or vice versa with perfect smoothness and yet with complete inward indifference. He disliked the formal conventions but submitted

⁷⁵ The original editor changed “white” to “wide” by hand.

to them when necessary. He detested public functions in his honour and never attended them if he could avoid doing so. External appearances never weighed with him nor deceived his sense of spiritual values. He never forgot or lost himself whatever the surroundings. He lived in the world when fate or duty called him but was not of it.

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(continued from the previous page) My Secretaryship filled my days with an interest I had not known before. Secretaryship indeed! It was like twelve different lives in one. Handling an international correspondence with five continents in one hour, superintending the cook and servants and bazaar purchases the next; keeping away undesired visitors, plunging into meditation at intervals, walking with him each night after dinner for two miles through city, village or jungle gravely discussing spiritual questions or joking about the daily events, meeting Maharajas one day and poor coolies the next – such was my bewildering unusual life. I repaired our typewriters and fountain pens, invented office equipments from primitive materials, aye, even picked open locks without using keys, as when the keys disappeared to my master's big steamer trunk in which he placed all his money and important manuscripts, documents, notes and papers. To his pleasant surprise I successfully opened the locks without injuring them. Such curious mixture of abilities am I! I was taken raw and uncouth, just over thirty years old, and he trained me on modern lines, made me discard my old fashioned piece of long untailored cloth that did duty for clothes, gave me jackets and trousers and neckties, etc., and thus transformed my outer appearance. But the change was equally great in my inner life. The typing of his literary notes, the instructions he conveyed to his students in his letters, the books which he presented to me now and then, as also the personal guidance and advice he imparted to me – all these created a new outlook in my life. Certainly, I now know I have not lived in vain.

Our mornings were usually spent on some kind of writing work. PB seldom dictated his literary work but preferred to write the first draft himself, seated alone in his office or, at those times of the day when the sun was less hot, seated on the flat roof of the house where he could be away from everything and everybody. I would then copy this draft neatly on the typewriter and he would rewrite it again at his leisure, after which I would again copy the result. On his writing desk he always kept a high bronze lotus-throned figure of the Buddha, which had been presented to him by the

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chief Lama of Siam. It was a symbol for him of the teacher of Esoteric Wisdom, the sage who typified compassion for all creatures. This solemn-looking and deeply-calm Buddha watched with pious interest and perhaps some sympathy the living man who sought in a very humble way to imitate him. But in the case of his mail, speed in handling was so necessary that he called my assistance to take down in shorthand what he had to say to the readers, students and friends with whom he tried to keep in touch but always in vain, for he was always in great arrears. He usually retired to the comfort of his bedroom to attend to his mail. There, upon his snug bed, with its coloured counterpane, a large mass of this correspondence spread out on his lap and all over the bed, he squatted with open shirt and cotton trousers, and dictated paragraph after paragraph in reply, to his stenographers. I sat in a chair, business-like with a folded turban on my head and squeaking large brown shoes on my feet! My blue fountain pen scribbled rapidly over my notebook. I must not forget the small tray of tea and toast placed at PB's side – that brown nectar which he drank quite often but which was almost harmless because it was quite weak too.

Thus the preliminary chapters of a new book got themselves shaped or, as the metaphysician would put it, were “manifested with name and form” whilst

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(continued from the previous page) letters were shaped out for the more fortunate of his numerous international correspondents. A week's mail went out to every corner of the world. After mornings' business was over, there followed lunch and a short siesta, then reading newspapers, periodicals or books, whilst half-resting on the bed in the fierce afternoon heat, next interviews with visitors, then the formal tea and toast [and]⁷⁸ then PB set to further work, usually on research notes or literary material. Records of interviews and the results of his meditations were also scribbled down. He has filled more unpublished note-books with his discoveries, ideas, reflections and intuitions than published printed books. I collected these odd pieces, arranged them under proper headings, and typed them suitably into his leather-bound loose-leaf note-books ready for future reference. Thus was the religious, mystic, yogic, and philosophic lores of the ancient East brought to light and probed into to their very depths. Thus, too, was PB's

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⁷⁸ PB himself deleted “records of interviews and the result of his meditations were also scribbled down” from after “toast and” by hand.

keen ever-active intelligence made to yield its fruits, his swift intuitions flashed into words and his profound meditations directed to an amazing variety of matters directly or indirectly connected with humanity's spiritual life.

After dinner we generally went for a walk to get some exercise. PB always carried his walking stick whilst I always carried a pocket electric torch to save us from treading on any possible snakes or scorpions. Sometimes we went into the forest but more often into the lonely roads on the outskirts of the town. Both of us were short figures but whereas he was slim I was sturdy and prided myself on being able to act as his bodyguard should it ever become necessary.

Lastly, after the day's activities had ended, but before dinner, there came the real life and secret of the man. He went out on the open upper veranda, squatted on a carpet and was lost in deep meditation for nearly an hour. Meditation, calm and serene at dusk and under an oriental sky, is a thing which can better be experienced than described. His secretary often joined him, although only in keeping with the old adage that a turkey fowl saw a peacock dancing and thinking himself equally beautiful began to unfold its feathers. Or else we would retire, when the need of greater privacy became heavy, to PB's own room and bolt the door from inside. He would then place a green crystal Buddha-head which he brought from China at the far end of the room and switch on the tiny electric bulb which was hidden inside it. The head emanated a phosphorescent greenish light and the eyes appeared mysteriously alive. The whole room had an unearthly subdued light. In its serenity and silence we easily fell into calm, deep and concentrated meditation.

I wonder how many people realise how absolutely necessary this meditation is for PB when such great pressure constantly devolves on his mind in his attempt to encourage, uplift and enlighten so many individuals as well as the world at large? On occasions, with the magnetic and telepathic influence of PB strongly felt, I sometimes forgot all my personal limitations and flew to ethereal heights, leaving my physical moorings in the body and soaring into vast space, with a feeling of oneness with all the universe. My feeble experience was only an echo or reflection of PB's swift sinking into even deeper state. Such joint meditations destroyed all the worries

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(continued from the previous page) and miseries of life, and brought great peace to my mind and went a long way to develop me spiritually. And a hundred times more was this so when in the immediate presence and under the guidance of PB.

Shall I try to describe to the best of my ability and powers of expression and as far as I can remember, what happened on one of these nights? I shall not add or take away any idea or thought. I describe it exactly as it appeared and happened to me. It is still fully vivid to me because it is still unforgettable. When late engagements or pressure of work made the evening meditation impossible, it was postponed to midnight. That night at 12 o'clock I went and squatted in the open terrace on a carpet spread on the floor, with PB at my side. I began to meditate. When the preliminary portion of slowing down the breath and thoughts was over, I very slowly turned my head to the right, to catch a glimpse of the marble-statue-like figure there and inwardly drew some inspiration and strength to carry on in earnest the analysis of the Ego or "I-thought." When that was over I slowly turned back to my original position. I often used to feel sleepy on previous occasions owing to the lateness of the hour. But now I was full of life and energy. With one concentrated thought of all-absorbing force I mentally asked "Who am I?" Then I felt that I was not the body. I said to myself, "If so, try to forget the body." A kind of dizziness grew over me and my body appeared to become rigid. I slowly began to feel no sensation in it. I could not move my limbs. Am I sleeping? I thought, "no." I was fully awake. My head and mind alone seemed to be present. All the portion below the neck seemed to melt away. I tried to open my closed eyes. I was not aware of anything in front of me. The parapet walls and the climbing plant were not there. I saw nothing but space. My mind was soaring high. "What am I?" This question alone remained. I felt I was a mere speck floating in the space, invisible to the eye, having no weight or shape or size, a mere idea or thought, a mere nothingness, but still distinct conscious. No name, no body nor anything belonging to this world. I was in that state for a few minutes. Then I slowly became aware of breathing and again became conscious of my body. I came back to myself by degrees. I opened my eyes - yes I could see everything plainly, slowly, but with some pain I turned my head again and saw PB. He was still in a fixed position. A few seconds more, I moved and shook my body, and then got up. The time was half hour past midnight.

Soon after, we retired to sleep but not before telling PB that I had had a very good meditation. Once in bed I wanted to get back that state. I wanted to watch at close quarters what happens when one passes from waking to the sleeping state - to study well the transition as PB had written in his notebooks about the importance of this moment. I lay awake for some time, but soon after I must have slept. When I became conscious of myself a peculiar form or force or energy seemed to flow everywhere, and on all sides, filling up all space and making everything lose all solidity and shape. The whole of the massy building, the walls and floors seemed to melt like butter over fire. I was lost in that ocean of energy. My body, too, seemed to become pliant and flexible, ready to

(continued from the previous page) melt away into nothingness. I got frightened. When my heavy body, which had been so solid and real, when 130 pounds of flesh, blood and bones were vanishing into nothingness, the horror could only be imagined. I was faintly aware that PB was sleeping on a bed in the adjacent hall. I called him out by name. I heard no response. I tried to get up and did so with difficulty, as the floor under my feet was soft and I began to sink, as one would sink in thick snow. I called again, but to no purpose. My voice was leaving me. I went to the switch. I switched on the lights but the whole of the electric installation appeared to have lost its solidity. I fumbled on my table and found my torch. I worked it. It also did not burn. There was no light except a star-like kind. Terror became hundredfold. Had the judgment day come or had the dissolution of the world set in? With one great effort, all the effort I could possibly gather, I waded and moved to where PB was sleeping. All the five senses were present in me only in part. Very near his bed at the top of my voice I called out his name. He awoke and sat up and said something. I could not hear distinctly for hearing, sight and feeling were ebbing fast out of me, but I felt he seemed to say "I am here. Do not be afraid." Then I forgot consciousness, and slowly the whole thing vanished. I do not know how I got back to my bed.

When I awoke it was dawn and the time was 6 A.M. My first feeling was to see my body and to feel sure it had not melted away. I ran my hands over my face and chest. I was again myself. I got up. When questioned, PB replied that I had come, terrified, to him during the night, about forty minutes after we had retired.

I tried to find out the changes, additions or alterations to my thoughts because of this experience. First and foremost, to my mind, this occurrence was a real mystic experience, showing a glimpse into the Absolute and revealing the great truths that the whole world is only an idea. I had read such a thing in PB's notebooks. It was now brought home to me as a piece of strange experience – this empty mentalness of the world. This indeed was how PB explained it to me the next morning after it happened. I felt then very strongly that my close association with him was partly responsible for it.

His Indian enemies have described him in their public press attacks as "a Journalist in Yogic pose." The truth is that I found him to be really a Yogi in journalistic pose! He used to smile indulgently at their attacks but thought it beneath his dignity to answer them. I, however, was not always able to keep silent over such gross injustices and misunderstandings.

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He never claimed to be anything more than a student of philosophical mysticism. But many incidents showed how humble was this estimate of his own powers. I may mention a little one. One day it struck me that I should present PB with my grandfather's copy of the book "The Vishnupuranam" translated by H.H. Wilson, a rare edition, 100 years old and a large volume weighing several pounds. For two days I had not time to talk with PB about my wish, but when I did mention it he replied that the past two days he had a great desire to procure that very book. He produced his pocket diary and to my astonishment the entry was found in PB's own handwriting "Get Vishnupuranam translated by H.H. Wilson." He put it down to the fact that he had concentrated on the idea, which went out and found the nearest mind which could be attuned to his. I was overjoyed at his words, and immediately wrote an urgent letter home, got the book through the post, and presented him with it. He was equally glad to accept the same from me as a gift and promised to keep it all his life.

Here is another incident. On the sixth day after I began to work for him, he suddenly predicted that I would stay with him for some years and then go into the employment of a public company which he named, where I would hold a high position. What he foretold was fully realised by later events. If today I am the well-paid confidential secretary and right-hand man to the managing director of one of India's large pioneer industrial companies, with a brilliant future in prospect before me, it is fair to say that I have been able to accept and carry on this highly responsible post only because of the confidence, courage, discipline,

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(continued from the previous page) training and mental development which the work with PB continually gave me. And if I have kept my spiritual life fresh and undimmed amidst such a busy and active environment, it is also fair to say that it was PB who showed me how to attain and keep such a difficult balance. Despite the passing of years, my loyal feelings toward him remain unchanged. He is living at a great distance from me now, but not from my mind and heart.

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Is the Soul in the Heart?

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IS THE SOUL IN THE HEART?⁸⁴

(181-1) "Your statement in the "Quest of the Overself" pp 230: lines 16 to 18 is bewildering to me, and does not seem consistent with your philosophy. You make so very clear in the "Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga," the unreality of materiality, how can you locate the Overself in a specific spot in one physical anatomy? It seems to me, you yourself dispute that possibility in the "Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga" pp. 317: lines 12 to 20. Swami Vivekananda says on the subject 'It is meaningless nonsense to say that the soul lives in a body. How can the unlimited live in a limited space?'" {taken from a letter to PB}

This question is really a very ancient one. Centuries ago the Indian thinker Silanka⁸⁵ sarcastically complained, in his Sutra Kritanga Tika that: "Some posit a soul that has a form while others maintain that it is formless. Some point out that the heart is the seat of the immortal Self, while others oppose them by saying that the forehead is the right place. How can there be an agreement of views among these philosophers? For us ignorance is far better than these follies."

The master-key to the comprehension of this difficult point is taken hold of when we take hold of the notion of two standpoints and consequently discriminate between two levels of existence; the one apparently real and the other absolutely real; the one a transient appearance and the other an eternal substratum of this appearance.

Thus this apparent anomaly can be explained, thus and thus only can views so opposed be reconciled. The Overself of which the author wrote in earlier books represented the exoteric notion of it. Even so he then pointed out the paradox of its being both inside the human heart simultaneously with its unbounded existence outside the human body. Such statements are perfectly correct from the standpoint of ordinary yogic experience because they describe the actual feelings of the mystic. If it be asked why the full ultimate truth about the Overself being entirely outside all considerations of spatial location was not then frankly given, the reply is partly that an ancient principle of tuition used by Asiatic teachers was followed, on which adapted truth to the capacities of different minds, unfolding knowledge only partially and

⁸³ PB himself inserted "(1)" by hand.

⁸⁴ Someone asked PB this question—I believe it was in a "letters to the editor" to some Indian journal—or it may have been in a letter directly to PB. In either case at present I have not been able to relocate the original. In any case, the statement was appended to the bottom of the page, and is referring to Chapter 13 of "Quest of the Overself," titled "The Mystery of the Heart." This same essay occurs in "Unrevised Essays p.233 where the same paragraph is inserted as we have done here. — TJS '20

⁸⁵ Silanka is a 9th century Jain credited with writing a tika (commentary) on the Sutra Kritanga and for the Acharanga Sutra, also called Tattvāditya. He was part of the Ajnana or sceptic movement.

progressively, and partly that the author had then only insufficiently grasped such a truth himself and did not have the temerity to venture into print about it. If therefore those earlier literary efforts were but imperfect adumbrations of the Overself because they were expressions of the author's own imperfection – for which he offers no excuse – as he has persistently informed the world that his task of tuition was forced upon him, they were also concessions to widespread human limitation, offerings on the altar of human service, accommodations of the popular mind and convenient expedients to being within a common comprehension a grand principle which might otherwise have remained unregarded.

It is like the difference between gazing at an unopened nut for the first time in one's life and gazing at it when unhusked with the kernel lying revealed. At first we see the husk but believe we are seeing the nut; later we see the real nut and then only know that our discovery of the husk was but a stage – yet a necessary stage – towards our discovery of the kernel.

Spiritual feeling does centre itself in the mid-sternal region of the chest. As practical men we must experientially affirm that the Overself has its habitat in the heart but as metaphysical men we must flatly deny the existence of any special point wherein it could be cramped. Only the sage who has mastered philosophy, who has harmoniously perfected himself in egoless action yoga and metaphysics, can afford to dismiss all sectional viewpoints; others must attend to them or else unbalance their progress. When meditation succeeds in attaining its objective, the yogi does have a definite experience of bliss, a joy of liberation from matter and ego. Such an experience transcends any that he has ever had before and is so exalted that he believes he has entered into union with the Overself. Indeed, he has really achieved his goal but it is only as seen from an earlier standpoint, like a mountain seen from afar off. He has approached immeasurably nearer to the realisation of Overself than the ordinary religionist, with his remote anthropomorphic God, for he has found his Deity within himself. Nevertheless it is still not the ultimate realisation. He has yet to pass through the metaphysical discipline and the ultra-mystic contemplations before this union is finally consummated in the discovery of the Overself as it is in itself, not as seen from any standpoint. With this discovery he is delivered from the need of further meditation because the Overself is then found everywhere not merely in the heart alone. And this is not a transient experience but a permanent insight.

The mystic view of the matter [is not inconsistent and]⁸⁶ need not be negated, it can be kept where it belongs and yet included and harmonised with the higher philosophic view. For no practical yoga system can be devised which does not in its earlier stages demand some focus for concentrating the thoughts. And in placing that focus within the heart region,

⁸⁶ “is not inconsistent and” was typed at the bottom of the page and inserted with a caret.

⁸⁷ This page is the scan of the bottom of the previous page.

IS THE SOUL IN THE HEART?

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

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(continued from the previous page) the mystic follows the best means of withdrawing his attention from external surroundings. Hence Shvetashvatara⁹¹ Upanishad says: "placing the body in a straight posture, with the chest, throat and head held erect making the senses and the mind enter the heart, the knowing one should cross over all the fearful currents." Mundaka Upanishad⁹² also counsels: "Just in the heart, where all the blood-vessels meet, very much like the spokes of a wheel meeting in the navel or the centre, resides the interiorly-governing Divine Spirit, manifesting His glory in ways multifarious. Contemplate Him, this interiorly-governing spirit, for, thus alone can you reach, with safety, the blissful haven, far beyond the ignorance-begotten miseries of this troubled ocean of life." The Gita XVIII, 6, says the region around the heart is the divine centre. "He has set eternity in their hearts," [..says the Biblical book, "Ecclesiastes."]⁹³ "The Heart is the greatest, the most primal cavity Residence of the Self; the body of bones and flesh is Its temple. Those who study this Secret Path realise that the individual is that Self and nothing else. The five senses which are robbing an aspirant of his robust Self, are the candles to exhibit the Inner Light," wrote Tirumular,⁹⁴ a Tamil Mystic of the seventeenth century.

It is an indisputable fact that although visions of divine figures or the Light of the Overself are clairvoyantly seen in the head, the presence of what is most divine in man is mystically felt in the heart; for Nature herself has made a mysterious and holy vacuum therein. The Overself as such is formless but its manifestation, within the heart

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⁸⁹ This page is the scan of the bottom of the previous page.

⁹⁰ PB himself inserted "(2)" by hand.

⁹¹ "Swetasvatara" in the original.

⁹² "Mundakopanisad" in the original.

⁹³ "...says the Biblical book, "Ecclesiastes." Was typed at the bottom of the page and inserted with a caret.

⁹⁴ "Tirumoolar" in the original.

possesses form. In the unimaginably minute airless space within the heart where this manifestation abides throughout the whole length of an incarnation, there appears a picture formed of light, a picture which outlines the precise prototype of physical body of the man concerned. In our measure it is but a fraction of a fraction of a dot in size. Yet it is there. This is the “little man within the heart” of whom Tibetan occultism speaks, the ‘figure in the heart’ space of Indian mystical Upanishads. In The Quest of the Overself it was explained that the divine habitat within the heart was not a thing but a space, symbolically called a ‘cave’ by the ancients, and in reality a kind of vacuum.

The authoritative Pali commentators on Buddhist texts expounded that the mind or consciousness is in dependence on the heart-base, although the Buddha himself never stated the organ in which it existed. They must have had their reasons for doing so. One school of Vedanta teaches that Brahma’s abode in man is in his vital centre, in the smallest ventricle of the heart. On the other hand, some Yogi teachers place it variously in the top centre or base of the head. Shankara,⁹⁵ the sage and commentator, reconciles these seemingly contradictory teachings about the seat of the spiritual self. He shows that in deep sleep the different places are entered in gradual succession. This does not mean that each has the same purpose or importance. Shankara points out that they fulfil different ends. Thus the spirit occupies the heart at one point of time and the head at another.

It is a tenet of the hidden teaching that Mind has two phases: conscious and the unconscious, or active and the inactive. The second is the root and determinant of the first phase. And it is a further tenet of this teaching that the unconscious mind is correlated with the brain. Science can find corresponding changes in the brain for every change in sensation, i.e. in consciousness but science cannot find any such physical change in the brain for the principle of awareness itself, i.e. for the unconscious. If it were to direct its researches in this regard towards the heart its efforts might hope for better chance of success, because it is there that the corresponding bodily changes could ever take place. But as the principle of awareness is an unchanging one, no physical changes ever do correspond to it in actuality. It is ever-present during life. It is like a circle whose circumference is the entire body and whose centre is the heart. A shot through the heart is fatal not only in a physical sense but also in a mental one.

What is achieved during odd illumined moments, however, is not enough, for these moments are at first but intermittent. The habit of descending into the heart must

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⁹⁵ “Sankara” in the original. Referring to “Adi Shankara.”

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(continued from the previous page) be rendered habitual; man's central consciousness must be transferred from the brain to the heart. This does not mean to say that he is to become incapable of thought; it means only that thought will assume a secondary and subordinate importance in his life, and that the supreme place will be given to a focused attention and enjoyment of the peace within the Divine Atom resident in the Heart. He may then use the brain at will and think no less clearly, no less efficiently, than formerly, only he will no longer become the hapless victim of thought's tyranny.

When we still the active intellect, we feel the pressure in the head relaxes and a feeling of peace begins to suffuse the heart. This is also a physical feeling, so that there is really a descent from the busy intellectual region of the head to the quiet spiritual region of the heart. The Mystic rests his consciousness in the heart habitually, except when he has to enter intellectual activity for a time.

We descend from meditation in the brain to meditating in the breast. Such a statement may be incomprehensible to those whose thoughts and meditations have forever revolved within the sphere of cold ratiocination alone, but it will make some sense to the few who have begun to feel the first and most impalpable radiations of the divinity which the heart harbours. For man's real home is in the heart, not head. He has strayed afar.

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Notes on Hatha Yoga

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NOTES ON HATHA YOGA⁹⁸

(189-1)⁹⁹ The finest test of every theory is its result in practice. Yeats-Brown glorified the yoga of body-control in his books and daily practised its physical postures and breathing-controls for twenty years at least. He thought this brought him nearer to the intuition and wisdom of the inner Self. Did it really do so? For until the outbreak of war he was an ardent Fascist and had visited Berlin as a much-feted guest of the Nazis, writing in book and newspaper high-pitched adulations of Hitler, Franco¹⁰⁰ and Mussolini. Many an unbelieving materialist who had never even heard the word 'yoga' was wiser than Y-B in this vitally important matter.

(189-2) Other fruits of hatha yoga posture may be displaced knee cartilage, injured tendons, rupture,

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⁹⁸ PB himself deleted "Various" from before "Notes" by hand.

⁹⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 8; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

¹⁰⁰ Referring to "Francisco Franco Bahamonde."

(189-3) Let them not mistake the mere torpor of hatha yoga for exalted peace.

(189-4) The misguided men have brought the Science of Body Control into disrepute; they adopt its name without understanding its real aims and correct methods.

(189-5)"Shakya¹⁰¹ (The Buddha) called to mind all the different forms of yogic self-discipline which people at his time were in the habit of submitting to and which they thought raised the mind above all calamity – "Some seek salvation by suppressing their breath," he thought, – "They all follow the wrong road; they fancy that to be the true support which is untrue.." "The Lalitavistara¹⁰²."

(189-6) The forceful retention of breath used in yoga of body control was found by Buddha to be most painful as well as exciting to the nervous system and it was only when he sat under the fig tree where he attained Nirvana that he found and practised the superior method which harmonised well with his lofty aim. An exercise which is largely identical with the one practised by the Buddha has been given in The Secret Path and The Quest of the Overself. The essence of it consists in breathing as gently and slowly as possible as is consistent with comfort for a few minutes prior to the actual practice of meditation. Thus the taking in and giving out of the breath is brought under temporary control. During the operation attention should be wholly directed towards it, so that the student is fully conscious of the entire breath movement and of nothing else. This exercise is particularly recommended to remove thoughts of depression, bitterness and unhappiness. Its chief aim,¹⁰³ however,¹⁰⁴ is to help bring down the upspringing thought waves to a calm surface and thus merge the numerous separate thoughts in undifferentiated Thought. Students of the ultimate path can just as usefully practise it as a preliminary to their mental exercise and it will be just as valuable to them. Two points ought,¹⁰⁵ however,¹⁰⁶ to be added to the description given in those books, the first being the necessity of keeping the torso erect so as to help and not hinder the respiratory process, and the second being that the breathing is not to be done by raising and lowering the shoulders but raising and lowering the diaphragm so that the muscular region affected lies between the stomach and the chest.

(189-7) Hatha Yoga; These pressures, were self-applied through forcing the body to assume a particular immobile posture for fixed periods of time. The steadiness which was maintained during such postures had a steadying effect on the consciousness too

¹⁰¹ "Sakya" in the original.

¹⁰² "Lalita Vistara" in the original.

¹⁰³ PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

¹⁰⁴ PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

¹⁰⁵ PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

¹⁰⁶ PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

and so they were also adopted by healthy yogis as an indirect means of attaining the requisite concentration. And ultimately, because of the effect on the interaction of heart and brain, the requisite inhibition of thinking. Thus,¹⁰⁷ the yoga of body control has come to be traditionally handed down to the present day.

(186-2) In ancient times when those who pursued yoga practices usually retired to peaceful forests and rugged mountains, lived simple disciplined lives, ate less rather than more, took little or no flesh food and kept closer to Nature than their modern prototypes, the hindrance of ill-health was less frequent than nowadays. In their secluded settlements they were often out of reach both of professional medical help and professionally prescribed medicines so they usually learnt to depend on wild-growing herbs as far as these were available, and on applications of intense pressure applied to diseased parts of the body or to the breathing process. The healing herbs are Nature's gift to man and many of them have indeed been incorporated in the pharmacopoeia used by modern Western scientific medicine but more wait to be added. The pressures have possibilities of being equally efficacious but, like a double-edged sword, constitute at one and the same time an instrument of some power and some danger. We have seen both striking cures and terrible disasters follow the practice of these physical yoga exercises when done without the careful personal supervision of a trained teacher and in several cases even when this supervision was available. Our final conclusion is that it is not enough to have a teacher who merely knows how to do them. It is

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

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¹⁰⁷ PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

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(continued from the previous page) equally necessary to have during the earlier attempts the watchful¹¹⁰ supervision or veto of a qualified medical man who understands the anatomical dangers and physiological changes involved..

(193-1)¹¹¹ A modern Indian holy man, {Shukacharya}¹¹², of the Province of Gujarat, who died as recently as 1929 and who had thousands of followers who regarded him as a divine incarnation, told his disciples in one of his discourses; “Your Guru has practised all of the hatha yoga asanas for quite a long time and it is his definite verdict that it’s all labour wasted, in so far as the ideal of self-realisation is concerned. In fact, the human mind is the home of all maladies; it is vulnerable at each end and it is necessary to purge it of all diseases and to stitch all leakages; if it is so, where is the earthly sense in wrestling with the muscles? The primary concern, therefore, is to treat the mind and not the body.”

(193-2) He may practise meditation until Doomsday,¹¹³ mutter the hundred and eight different mystic spells, sit in all the sixty-four postures of the yoga of body control, hold his breath for a whole hour or vary its rhythms in every conceivable manner, but the Overself will remain stubbornly remote unless he frankly faces and successfully fights out his struggle against his own ego in his own heart. No physical contortion, exercise or manipulation can ever take its place. Such yoga exercises can discipline his body, give him control over it, but they cannot provide a passport into the higher region. This and this alone is the only yoga that really counts in the end on this strange quest, because demanding all it gives all. Indeed it is of the utmost importance that

(193-3) Again, the yoga of body control is merely an aid to those practices and can never become a substitute for them. It is an aid only for beginners who may use it for a time and then cast it completely aside without compunction.

(193-4) There are many yogis who have sat for years contemplating their own nose or their own navel. How many understood that this was but a preliminary exercise to unfold the power of one-pointed attention? How many believed that it would lead to a union with the ‘Supreme Spirit’? As if the Supreme dwelt exclusively and finally in the nose or in the navel!

(193-5) The technique which suited those ancient conditions will not quite suit our modern one. Those who disregard this fact open a door to mental derangement.

¹¹⁰ The word has been cut off by a hole punch. Only the bottom halves of the letters are visible in the original.

¹¹¹ The paras on this page are numbered 9 through 14, and are consecutive with the previous page.

¹¹² Shukacharya is an honorific meaning “son” of the great Vyasa (author of the Mahabharata). We have no specific information regarding a Holy Man of Gujarat who died in 1929. —TJS ‘20

¹¹³ PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

(193-6) The Buddha tried them all during his six years apprenticeship to yoga but discarded them all. He went indeed to extremes to which few are likely to venture in our own times. He held his breath longer than any of our amateur modern body-controllers are likely to hold it, "to pursue" as he said, "the ecstatic trance which comes from stopped breathing." What was his final judgment at the end of all these experiments? "With all these severe disciplines I failed to transcend ordinary human limits and to rise to the heights of superior understanding and insight." Thus, he said, he was driven to ask himself, "Could there be another path to enlightenment?" (Add to above quote a similar one from Shankara re hatha yoga pranayam given in my leather bound Vol "ADVAITA" section "Aparaokshanbuti" page 64/65.) Hence,¹¹⁴ too,¹¹⁵ when thousands of years ago a young Aryan youth went, in quest of truth, to the mysterious sage Sanatkumara¹¹⁶ and said: "I have become a master of mantra. Yet I have secured no peace for my soul. Pray tell me why?" The reply was as subtle as it seemed simple: "Oh Narada, your whole study is limited by name and form."

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NOTES ON HATHA YOGA

The Mystery of Evil

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THE MYSTERY OF EVIL

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¹¹⁴ PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

¹¹⁵ PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

¹¹⁶ "Sanatkimara" in the original.

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(197-1) It is not the writer's custom to criticise the critics or to answer their rejection of his work. Human opinions are so varied, intellectual standpoints so wide apart and emotional temperaments so different that on these grounds alone an author may expect to receive at some time or other notices ranging all the way from undeserved praise to undeserved vilification.

PB often has this experience. Moreover, he has no special desire to defend his work. No sooner is a book published, then he becomes increasingly aware of its faults and errors, its deficiencies and shortcomings. He is indeed so emotionally conscious of them that he deliberately refrains from thinking about his past literary work because of the regret that invariably accompanies the thought. Only when other people raise the subject and he has to deal with it to answer or help them, does he submit to the ordeal. This attitude is partly due to the shift of standpoint and the advance in knowledge which fate somehow brings him soon after each publication. Anyway, the fact remains that he is dissatisfied with his books and depressed by their imperfections. So, like Emerson, he trembles whenever someone writes appreciatively about them and sighs with relief whenever someone doesn't! All of which is merely a preamble to the statement that PB is his own worst critic!

England's leading literary journal, The Times Literary Supplement, usually takes notice of the writer's books and favourable notice, too. But The Wisdom of the Overself probably fell into the hands of a new reviewer, if one may judge from the internal evidence of approach and the external evidence of style. Most of his space was taken up with critique of a few unimportant statements in the prefatory chapter. The rest of his space with a quotation from the middle of the book, dealing with the problem of evil, together with an expression of the reviewer's opinion that this quotation, which he (not the author) asserts is the author's summing up of the problem, lacks 'finality' and treats the problem 'indifferently.' The great bulk of the book's teaching, and its leading ideas, were left undiscussed.

PB is grateful to The Times' reviewer for drawing his attention to what, he humbly agrees, is an unsatisfactory treatment of an important theme, although he deplores the uselessness of the other remarks to readers who want to know what the book contains. The treatment is unsatisfactory not because he would now withdraw any part of it, but only because as it stands it is unequal and incomplete. It does not cover more than a part of its field. It needs to be coupled with those paragraphs in the chapter entitled "The War and the World" dealing with the existence of unseen evil forces and with those paragraphs in the preliminary volume, The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga dealing with the need of a double philosophic and practical standpoint. This combination would more correctly represent the higher teaching about this problem but even then it would not fully represent it. In the following pages, therefore, the writer of both books has tried to bring forward what was there neglected and to put more stress on what was there too briefly stated.

We generally assume that good alone has the right to be active on earth. Therefore the presence of evil perplexes our minds. It seems that such presence is too

abundant and too continuous to fit smoothly into a divinely-ordered scheme. The crime and violence of recent times, the horror and shock of recent history, have pushed this question of evil into the thinking of many persons who had formerly ignored it. A generation which has heard Nazi propaganda, witnessed Nazi atrocities and watched Nazi moves towards world domination would be very soft-brained if it did not conclude that some kind of evil influence was at work in human affairs and that some evil forces were manifesting their disturbing activities in its midst. The existence – no less than the power – of evil has forced itself so plainly and so savagely and so insistently on our notice in recent times, that those who, at the bidding of extravagantly optimistic theories previously shut their eyes to it, have had perforce to open them and recognise it. This belated and bewildered act is a painful one.

The materialistic view of evil regarded it as a by-product of physical environments and temporary circumstances, to be set right by the mere setting right of those physical things. But the type of evil which has been so prevalent in our own times, has glorified brutality for its own sake, justified oppression for the oppressor's sake, pedestalled greed, ridiculed religion and derided conscience, as much for the pleasure it got from these activities as for the rewards. The men who practise it love it as intensely as saints love God. It can no longer be reasonably maintained, as the materialists have hitherto maintained, that external circumstances are alone sufficient to account for the unpleasant character of such noxious creatures. On the contrary, it is evident that the wrong of human conduct arises because evil is a real element in human beings, independent of human environment and circumstance. It is deplorable but it is also unfortunately true that it asserts itself more easily and more frequently than the good. The

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(continued from the previous page) historical perversity of human nature, its constant inclination to do wrong, too often discourages the philanthropist.

Philosophy does not regard the problem with indifference, as The Times reviewer believes, but rather with seriousness. Nothing that has been written in the Wisdom of the Overself is intended to deny the horrible actuality of evil, the constant activity of evil, its terrible havoc, in human history, and its frightful reality in human lives. Indeed the author goes even farther and asserts that there are not only the visible and ordinary instruments of evil which are so apparent all around us, but also unseen ones; evil spirits, in fact. The fall into black magic or evil occultism or mystical malpractice is the attempt to control or injure others by psychic or mental means.

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The Two Viewpoints

(199-1) What Is the true place of evil in a universe whose informing soul is itself a benevolent one? We cannot get at the truth about it if we consider it in artificial isolation but only if we consider it as part of the divine order of the universe. Whatever happens today in the world, or shall happen tomorrow, it will not happen outside of the divine knowledge and therefore, it will not escape the power of the divine laws.

Although the presence of evil could be justified to blind faith as being the will of God, the modern religionist is developing his thinking power. He is ready to accept the will of God but at least he wants a more rational answer, why this thing exists at all. Two viewpoints present themselves to him: the popular and the profound. This problem defies rational solution if treated from the first viewpoint alone but it begins to yield if treated from both in combination. There is indeed no popular explanation of evil which could escape being riddled with criticism by a sharp enough intellect. He must not rest satisfied with what experience and common sense tell him; he must also hear what metaphysical reflection and mystical revelation have to tell. For practical purposes he can get along with the first but for philosophic purposes it is needful to add the second. In a large balanced mentality the two views are not mutually exclusive but can be readily mated, but in a narrow mentality they cannot even meet.

The materialist, the egoist and the shallow-minded when brought face to face with these two ways of viewing the world, find them opposite and incompatible, markedly conflicting and hopelessly irreconcilable. They are like a carriage whose pair of wheels simultaneously turn in opposite directions. But the philosophic student, with his fuller and better-balanced cultivation of his psyche is able to let them exist side by side without splitting himself into two disconnected personalities. It is quite possible for him to synthesise them without developing a divided mind. Thus, his rational comprehension of the world unites perfectly in his well-rounded personality with his sensual experience of it; his mystical apprehension of life balances itself agreeably with his emotional reactions to it. Nothing is subtracted and nothing denied.

The understanding of this matter is darkened to our mind through failing to give ourselves the trouble of defining our use of this word evil. We should refuse to deny or to admit the existence of evil before we have discussed the question, "What do you mean by the term evil?" When that has been fully done, we shall find that the evil from which we are to be saved is largely, but not wholly, within ourselves. What do we mean when we say that an event, a thing or a person is 'evil?' In "The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga" it was explained how words are strongly interwoven with the very stuff of human understanding. When we investigate the language in which our concepts take shape, we are investigating the very concepts themselves. We may then discover, in startled surprise, how important are the psychological influences exerted by words and phrases which have become standardised clichés devoid of definite meaning. We may note how the whole character of obscure problems becomes illumined. Evil's origin will be easier to elicit after eliciting its nature.

We may watch in the tropics the 'evil' frog hunt 'good' glow-worms and the 'evil' snake hunt 'good' frogs in their turn. Whatever creates a state of conflict inside or outside a living creature and thus disturbs or destroys its happiness is 'evil' to that creature. It may originate from some animal obeying its appetites, some human behaving wickedly or from some violence of Nature. It may result from an event, an action, or from the relation between them. Although this is quite true, it is true only in a limited and relative sense. The fact is that each creature 'thinks' the evil of a situation.

When we ask why wild beasts should exist in the Universe we are thinking of their effects upon other creatures, including ourselves. We never stop to think why these beasts should not

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(continued from the previous page) exist for their sake and for their own selves. What they came to be as a result of the action and interaction, the development and degeneration of the bright side of things, just had to be. The one was not intended exclusively to serve any species, any more than the other was intended exclusively to harm that species.

In the case of men, whatever is displeasing to their human point of view, uncomfortable to their human selfishness, contrary to their human desires, and painful to their human bodies, is usually regarded as evil. The evil in the world is only relatively and partially such, never absolutely and eternally. It is evil at a particular time or in a particular place or in relation to a particular creature. This principle of the relativity of ideas leads to strange results. One of the first is that something may be evil from the standpoint of a particular individual placed in particular circumstances at a particular time but may not be evil from a universal standpoint. Charlemagne cut a way through benighted Europe for Catholic culture with his sword. But when that same culture became too narrow and too intolerant, the Turkish hordes who broke into Constantinople dispersed the classic texts so long hoarded in the Byzantine libraries, drove their keepers to Italy and thus released upon Europe new forces which greatly stimulated the Renaissance movement already in being. In both these cases 'evil' warfare produced 'good' cultural results. In our own lifetime we have seen atheistic evil launch its work of destroying decadent religion. But in the hands of a higher

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Providence we are also seeing in the end that it was indirectly used to purify and thus truly promote religion.

The divine idea works itself out through human frailties as well as through human virtues. In this sense evil is at times our teacher. It would be valuable to count the number of cases where trouble led to our own good and sorrow was peace in disguise. After experiencing the darker side of life we are in a better position to pass up to the brighter side, to which it directs us. Before the war, some of us long looked for a Messiah, but we wanted him on our own selfish terms. We wanted him to be soft and gentle, nay even sentimentally flattering towards us. We never dreamed that a precursor like Hitler might come instead, one utterly hard and mercilessly harsh, to punish us for personal materialism and national selfishness. We looked for redemption but never dreamed that we might have to be redeemed by the terrible power of suffering born out of evil. One compensation of wartime sufferings caused by other men is that they awaken the minds of a number of people and put them on the path of finding out what suffering means and what life itself means. But so long as they persist in ignoring the relativity of ideas and set up their personal opinions or individual preferences as truth, so long will they continue to mislead themselves and others; so long will they unnecessarily protract their sorrows. The evil which appears in the first sight of events, may disappear with the second sight. This is because there is an ultimate rightness in the ordering of universal life.

As the human entity evolves in knowledge and consciousness, it changes its view as to what is and what is not evil just as it changes its views as to what is or is not desirable. As it sets the different pieces of the mosaic world-pattern more and more into place so that the whole becomes more and more significant, as it first controls and then divests itself of the lower personal emotions, as it develops a calm impersonal interior life, its own attitude towards suffering changes. The change is slowly and reluctantly made but in the end it is unable to resist making it. For to the extent that it deserts the ego's littleness and responds to the higher self's leading in other matters, so must it respond here. Its highest change results from the discovery of its divine self, when this relativity of evil becomes perfectly plain, whilst its own ephemerality against the background of eternity becomes perfectly visible.

If evil is an illusion and if good is the opposite of evil, surely good itself must then be an illusion also, it will be asked. The answer is that there are two 'goods.' There is a relative one which is evil's true opposite, and illusory. There is an absolute one which is a quality of the One Infinite Life-Power; this is real good. Evil has no real existence. In our ordinary human life, we find this statement contradicted. With our ordinary human mentality we find it incredible. An almost Tibetan solitude of living is needed to make it true as an almost divine calmness of outlook is needed to make it acceptable. What we have to learn, even though it is so hard to accept, is that the divine thought of the universe is not only perfect and good in its first as in its last stages, but also in its present stage. If we find the world in a mess of tragedy and suffering, of chaos and sin, the mess is really in our own sight, our own way of looking at things. When it is hard to comprehend this statement that evil's reality is after all only an

apparent one, it will be helpful to gain such comprehension by comparing humanity's experience of it with a sleeper's experience of a nightmare. The hideous or hateful figures that he sees therein are unquestionably present to him, the torments and

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(continued from the previous page) terrors which it causes are very real to him. Yet after he wakes up, all these are seen for what they are worth, are recognised as now being what they even then were – merely ideas. On the immediate practical view it is quite true that evil is a real, widespread and powerful factor in human existence. But on the ultimate philosophic view it is now what it seems to be. It certainly exists. But such existence is relative to the practical standpoint only, to the human body with its finite thinking. It is not an illusion but at the same time there is a higher factor behind it as there is a higher factor behind the human body.

Who is Satan?

(203-1)"Evil is ephemeral. In the end it defeats itself. It has only a negative life. It represents the not-seeing of what is, the not doing in harmony, the not-understanding of truth. Evil is, in short a lack of proper comprehension, a too-distant wandering from true being, an inadequate grasp of life. When insight is gained and these deficiencies are corrected, it ceases its activities and vanishes. The mystic who penetrates into the profound core of being finds no evil there." This quotation from "The Wisdom of the Overself" which the Times reviewer claims to be, and criticises as the author's 'summing up' of evil was never intended to be a 'summing up' for it deals with its subject only from this ultimate standpoint and fragmentarily even then. But an adequate comprehension of the teaching calls for knowledge of the fact that its attitude toward evil is not exhausted by this quotation but is really two-fold in character. The belief (which the reviewer seems to hold) in a satanic opposition, is also but in a different way included in the author's own attitude. He does not deny but on the contrary fully admits the existence of individual forces adverse to spiritual evolution. He does not question the presence of malignant entities and satanic powers.

There are evil forces outside man as well as inside him. These super-physical agents operate in the invisible world and, under certain abnormal conditions,

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intermingle with living human personalities to influence their thoughts and actions or to oppose their spiritual progress. The spiritual aspirant inevitably encounters opposition from these adverse elements. The evil forces move against him in a cunning way. However well-meaning his intentions are in the beginning and however noble his ideals, he may yet be unwittingly and subtly influenced by their malignant power. If he succumbs to them, some of those he trusts betray him, his judgments turn out to be wrong, his actions mistaken and circumstances work against him. They lead from deed to deed, first by internal temptation but later by external compulsion, each involving him more and more in their toils and menacing him with worse and worse consequences. To escape each consequence as it arises, he has to commit fresh acts which drag him farther downwards. In the end he is caught by tragedy and overwhelmed by disaster. If we could trace apparent effects to their hidden causes, we would trace many a trouble to such adverse psychical forces of the invisible world.

The war was an outstanding example. It had a psychical content even before its physical and visible start. Whatever it was politically and militarily, it was also a dramatic struggle between forces of good and powers of darkness. We may be sure that whoever tries to arouse hatred of the good and inflames anger against the True, has lent himself to the dark forces of Nature. The Nazi hierarchs were possessed by foul demons, animated by malignant powers from the occult regions. They attempted to cover their own guilt by the old trick of malicious fabrication. There were entities other than human at work behind Hitler. He tried to make men turn into the most dangerous of all beasts by trying to turn them into cunning animals devoid of moral discernment and debarred from higher reflection. There were entities other than human at work behind Hitler. There were wicked agencies, human but disincarnate, inspiring the Nazi movement. All were devilish: all were powers of the lowest hells. Hence the lies, oppression, cruelty, materialism, greed and degradation which they spread everywhere. It was not so much by their arrogant aggressiveness and violent brutality that the Nazis sought to crucify mankind. Rather it was by their denial of justice, their opposition to spirituality and their contempt for truth that they sought to nail the human race to the cross of unexampled sufferings. At the innermost heart of Nazism lay a foulness indescribably black and immeasurably worse than any plague which ever beset humanity. For it sprang out of infernal diabolic regions, out of a gigantic mass attack of unseen sinister forces hoping to destroy the soul and enslave the body of man. This dangerous incursion of evil spirits into our world's affairs on such a vast scale had never happened before. It can be said that humanity barely escaped the most terrible setback in its history. Had the Nazis won, every spiritual ideal would have been strangled, every spiritual value stifled. The inner justice of things foiled them, and mankind emerged, sore and wounded but safe and

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(continued from the previous page) alive, from its great peril only to find itself facing a further attempt of the same dark forces to dominate the world again, but using a different channel.

But all this does not place these opposing powers on a level of equality with the force of good in the universal struggle; they play their necessary roles and we need not regard them as unforeseen lapses or evil accidents in the divine thought. The evil forces are always aggressive because they must always try to destroy that which in the end will destroy them. The good alone will endure. It is in the very nature of evil beings, as of evil thoughts, to attack other and, in the end, to destroy each other. Meanwhile, their powers are strictly limited and their opposition, when overcome, actually helps to develop the good in us. We need not hesitate to believe that the good will always triumph ultimately and always outlive the bad, that no kind of evil has an independent existence but all kinds are only relative aspects of existence. But this struggle and this triumph can exist only in each individual entity. They do not and cannot exist in the cosmos as a whole, because this is itself a manifestation of god. God's will alone prevails here.

Evil men and evil spirits do exist but whether there is an independent principle of evil is another matter. Whoever believes in the eternal existence of god and admits the eternal reality of evil, will have to trace the latter to its source. If that source is a personality or a principal, coeval and co-enduring with the universe, then it works its fiendish will in spite of God; then there are really two supreme beings. [The]¹²³ logical demands of unity do not permit such an impossible conclusion. It deprives God of his much-vaunted omnipotence and represents a dualism which puts its thoughtful believers in a profound dilemma. If, on the other hand, he traces the source of evil to a lesser principle or personality, he again puts them in a dilemma. For such conclusion leaves unexplained the question why God tolerates the existence of this dreadful entity instead of extinguishing every trace of evil from His Universe. If this were true, then God must share Satan's guilt! If, finally, he traces evil to man himself then God, in letting him fall to his doom, is either ignorant of his creatures' misdeeds or else He is indifferent to them.

Just as philosophy says that the man-like conception of god is suitable only for immature intelligences, so it says that the man-like conception of evil personified under

¹²³ The original typist typed "(that?)" before "The" in the original, presumably asking PB if he wanted it inserted. However, it was deleted by PB himself in the MS of which this is the carbon—Unrevised Essays, page 283.

the figure of Satan is also only for immature intelligences. There are individual evil influences, individual evil spirits even, and they constitute at times an opposition to the aspirant. But the greatest opposition comes not from a creature called Satan. It comes from the aspirant's own heart, his own weaknesses, his own evil thoughts. The recognition of those unseen forces must not be allowed to occlude the recognition of his own primary responsibility.

It is not pertinent to take up the question of the nature of God's existence here, except to note that philosophy combines both the transcendental and immanent views. But any dualistic thought which admits both good and evil as separate, real and eternal forces in the universe, will always involve itself in these contradictions. And every doctrine is a dualistic doctrine which teaches that the primal forces in the world are two and not one. The orthodox and popular view, which holds that the divine power is forever fighting desperately against a satanic power, and that the latter is entirely independent of and eternally opposed to it, is dualistic. Therefore, it is caught in these contradictions too, yet it represents the most tenable immediate point of view. Philosophy, however, goes further and deeper than mere appearances and hence represents the ultimate point of view.

The notion that there is a fundamental duality of good and evil running right around the tortuous pattern of the universe and through the tangled narrative of history is neither right nor wrong; it needs to be correctly interpreted. Philosophy offers such an interpretation. It does not hold that there is satanic power which is coequal with the divine power. It does hold that God has no independent and equal rival. Even if Satan existed, he could exist only by God's permission.

The parallel notion is taught by the theologians of certain religions (although never taught by the prophets who founded those religions) that the world has somehow fallen into a grievous muddle, that the work of God has been dangerously sabotaged by Satan and that this muddle can be put right and this danger overcome only by man's coming to the help of God. The infinite wisdom and infinite Power has indeed fallen low if it has fallen in such need. Is it not saner to believe that it still remains what it always has been, that the world and its history would take on a very different guise if we could see it without the limitations of our finite perceptions and finite understandings? It is human to want certain things to

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Who is Satan?¹²⁵

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¹²⁵ PB himself changed "7" to "6" by hand.

(continued from the previous page) happen and to desire certain purposes to be fulfilled. But God is not human. God has no wants, no desires and no purposes. When they appear to exist, they are for others. Let us not saddle our finite conceptions on the Infinite Being, our human qualities on the absolute power.

If there is but a single supreme principle of Being in the Cosmos, if all things and all creatures have emanated from it, then what, in the workings of this cosmos, we call evil as well as what we call suffering, must also have ultimately emanated from it. But the Supreme Principle being the only ever-existing one, it follows that evil and suffering in individuals are only transient appearances doomed to live fitfully and then vanish altogether.

The philosophic concept of evil is often too hastily rejected because it is too hastily studied. It will not be adequately understood unless its twofold character is also understood. It readily grants a real hidden and widespread activity of malignant forces in the world. It recognises their opposition to humanity's spiritual evolution. But it also holds that this still leaves the ultimate nature of evil unexplained. It says that all evil is in the end forced to serve the purposes of good. The one has only an ephemeral, the other an eternal life. If we can rise to the level of the Real, we are no longer able to perceive the transient evil by itself. We then perceive also the final good. From the World-Mind's standpoint there is the enduring reality of good behind the temporary appearance of evil. From the human standpoint there is only the evil. And because we have something of the World-Mind in us, an adequate view of the problem must include both standpoints. There is a relative good and a relative evil, they being necessary opposites. But there is no ultimate evil, only ultimate good.

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(207-1) Both evil and pain have been allotted roles in human development from its very start. They have not appeared by accident or by any unexpected 'fall.' They have not been introduced against the divine will by some satanic power. The fall into sin and the experience of pain are integral parts of the cosmic plan for human development. They are not cosmic accidents or cosmic mistakes. The divine Wisdom is as much at work here as anywhere else. What is at fault is human perception, human impatience and human limitation. It is his quality and degree of consciousness which makes one man perceive only evil where another man perceives both evil and good, as well as comprehends that human evil is both the consequence of human freewill and the cost of human evolution.

Even the evils of life have a rational place in the cosmic order as well as the good, the sufferings as well as the joys. The order is not the less divinely controlled because of their existence. They are not the result of an accident in the universal functioning or of a mistake in the divine planning. The Cosmos is grasped as a single whole in the infinite consciousness of the World-Mind. The latter, in its infinite knowledge, has foreseen all the probable courses and possible consequences of human conduct. But it

also knows that corrupt humanity today will be an ennobled humanity tomorrow. We would be justified in denouncing the divine plan as entirely wicked and absolutely merciless if the end of human existence were like this present passing phase of it or were an uncertain gamble. But the end is glorious, its accomplishment a certainty, the process a worthwhile one. For it is a genuine unfoldment from within of attributes, capacities and consciousness which reflect something of the divine. Philosophy rejects the exoteric Hindu view that it is nothing more than an illusion or that its struggles are God's jesting sport or that its birth is God's blunder.

That man's own freewill has created so much of the evils and misery in the world, is obvious. That with his own moral improvement, this deplorable situation will itself improve, is equally obvious. But the situation itself could not have arisen except by the permission and within the plan of the World-Mind. Where is there more than partial freedom for a man when, at the very beginning, he is forced to accept and given no chance to select a certain race, a certain county, a particular family, a particular economic status, a condition of health or ill-health and an abundance or lack of energy, intellect, will and intuitions? Thus, much of the course and something of the end of his life is dictated by Nature, fate or God. No human entity can determine its course with complete freedom. No human entity can deviate from the cosmic plan with complete independence. The freedom of all human entities is limited, as their power is dependent. Man has never possessed, does not now possess

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(continued from the previous page) and never can possess absolute freewill. Above his own will there is the inexorable cosmic will. All his individual development is but part of and controlled by the evolutionary plan for the cosmos itself. It has not been left to his whim or external chance what the outcome of that development shall be.

If the whole cosmos is an emanation of the Divine Mind, which, although mysteriously transcendental is also significantly immanent, there can be no force and no entity within it that is not fundamentally rooted in the beneficence, the wisdom and the serenity of divinity. It may have its origins obscured, it may appear, think and act evilly but it can do so only by the permission and consent of God. Therefore, it is not only man's ignorant and wrongful use of his free will that accounts for human evil and human suffering but also the cosmic plan itself. And this is something outside his

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¹²⁷ PB himself changed "8" to "7" by hand.

control and beyond the operation of his will. The wickedness and pain that shadow his existence were parts of the method of his inner development.

Yet it is wrong to say the Supreme creates evil. Man creates it, the Supreme merely permits it. If this were not so man could claim freedom from personal responsibility for his wrong-doing. If man's individual will is included in any subject to the more powerful will of Nature (God), it still has the independence to choose the power to create and the freedom to act within set limits. The great ills (miscalled evils) of bodily life like disease and poverty are often forced upon him by an implacable fate. But it would be a delusion to class them always with the great evils of mental life like hate and cruelty. For their control is frequently beyond his power, and their course may have to be endured, whereas sinful thoughts and their resultant deeds are not independent of his control and may be avoided. So far as human evil is concerned, it is useless to talk of the Supreme Power being omnipotent and therefore being able to abolish such evil at a stroke. He could not have been granted some measure of freedom of will without being granted at the same time some measure of freedom to act evilly, if he so chose to do. The whole scheme of human evolution would have been a useless one if he were to have been nothing but a slavish automaton, utterly deprived of all capacity for self-determination. To the extent that he has freedom, to that extent the Supreme has voluntarily given up its omnipotence in the individual but not in the cosmos, has necessary self-limited its own will in appearance but not in reality.

If man were not to be a mechanical robot, he had to be free in his will, within the limits imposed by both his nature and the universal design. He had to be given the power to choose. And if he were left free to choose good, he had necessarily to be left free to choose evil. That he would act wrongly, would clash with his fellow men, and would even match his foolishness against God's wisdom, was foreknown from the very beginning, was inevitable from the fact that he began his conscious life in ignorance and desire. Through experience he would eventually learn to act rightly and this dark phase in his career would disappear. Only by the experiment with evil could the value of good be adequately realised. The mistakes made by a carpenter are quickly shown up by his finished work either in its appearance or in its use. But the mistakes made by a spiritual seeker may be attended with much slower results and are much harder to recognise. This is because the truthful work of the carpenter is judged by the senses whereas the truthful understanding of the seeker is judged by the combination of rational thought and mystical intuition which philosophy calls intelligence. And in the evolution of man, his senses have arrived at a more developed state than his intelligence. Hence, experience alone does not bring immediate wisdom as its fruit. Only after it is well and honestly thought over, well reasoned upon in an impersonal manner, does the fruit appear. This takes time, this both implies and elicits growth.

Here is the answer to those who deplore the fact that men seem to learn nothing from history, whether it be their own or others', or worse, still, learn entirely false lessons from it. Time brings ripeness to some fruits, decay to others, more wisdom to some men but more foolishness to others. For, deceived by egoism and blinded by passion, there are those who get from experience the very opposite meaning to the one

it is intended to yield. But, Nature is supremely patient. She knows the hour will come when experience itself with its errors and consequent retribution, its sufferings and consequent despairs, will confront every man with the insistent demand that he understand it. If the divine order of the universe provides him with the time and experience he needs for growth, this does not mean he is left to rely on them alone, that would be too long, too tortuous and too uncertain a road. When he seeks to shorten the road and make it both safer and pleasanter, he is led to add to them the right use of his reasoning, the humble following of spiritual teachers and the proper attendance and intuition. The earthly journey supplies part of the requisite conditions for unfolding these

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(continued from the previous page) latent attributes and capacities. He passes by degrees from ignorance through experience to knowledge, from desire through suffering to peace. The immersions in evil and darkness provide the opposition whereby he may exercise his will to the good and his consciousness of the true. There is a power inherent in man and played upon him by Nature which makes for his mental growth and for the moral improvement of his species. Life is an ordered, if broken progression from the infinitesimal up to the infinite, not alone in the struggle to exist but also in the higher awareness.

That humanity should be allowed to fall into horrible depths of evil seems to show a lack of goodness in the divine scheme. Men are not to be blamed for questioning the divine goodness and doubting the divine wisdom. Yet we must ask ourselves whether that scheme could have completely fulfilled its lofty purpose for humanity without such experiences. It seeks to bring every human entity to full moral, intellectual and spiritual self-consciousness. The range of experiences within which the entity would have to be free to travel, would have to be sufficiently wide, and consequently sufficiently contrasting, to achieve this goal. To have limited this range to the non-evil, to have restricted the kinds of experience only to what we know as the good, would have rendered impossible the full achievement of human self-consciousness. That, after all, is a matter not only of morality but also of knowledge. There is in fact no other way than the existing one in which humanity could have found all the conditions necessary for the development of all its faculties.

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¹²⁹ PB himself changed "9" to "8" by hand.

No mode of conscious life could have been devised which provided unalloyed happiness and unmixed goodness at the same time that it provided the varied experiences and diverse states necessary to develop the knowledge, intelligence, character and spirituality of the human being. Although some facets of this development could have been got by a one-sided monotonous experience yielding only the enjoyment of life, important parts of the psyche would then necessarily have been left untouched by it. Only by providing a course of changing experiences which took a more varied course and also included the opposites of suffering and evil, could the full complete evolution of man have been achieved. The memory of the past darkness of ignorance heightens appreciation of the present light of knowledge. The vivid contrast between the two conditions makes them much more conscious of the meaning and value of the higher one. Without the experiences of both to complement one another, he could not distinguish good from evil, bliss from misery, reality from appearance and truth from falsity. How, without conditions productive of sacrifice and self-denial, for instance, could the spiritual widening of his consciousness be got? Good becomes significant to him only as it stands in contrast to evil, which is indeed the Not-good. The consciousness of sound as sound always needs to be accompanied by the consciousness of its opposite and differentiating number, silence; the same is just as true of good and evil. This is why there is an obstructionist principle, an adverse force, a dead-weight of inertia against which every effort of man to uplift himself, has to contend. Why is it there? Because resistance to it develops the good. The struggle to which he is called against the resisting elements, however long-drawn this struggle be, leads to his progress. It is one allotted task of the so-called evil forces to try his mettle by hindering his growth, to test his character by tempting his desires and to expose him for what he really is by opposing his efforts in self-development.

Thus the presence of evil in the world provokes us into overcoming it or yielding to it. If the first, that means it has led us to work for our own improvement; if the second, it has led us to acknowledge our own weakness. Sooner or later, the unpleasant consequences of such weakness will lead us to grapple with it. That is part of the mission of evil, to stimulate us into its own destruction and to force us into our own betterment. Immediately and directly, it may either strengthen us or weaken us. Ultimately it can only strengthen us.

It is difficult to defend the cruelties of Nature. The destruction which happens in Nature and which arouses no attention, far outweighs the destruction which happens in world war which arouses everyone's attention. But the birth of living forms on our own plane has to be followed by their death on that plane. These two poles in Nature, the positive and negative are an inevitable corollary of the cosmic manifestation. There is no pain, evil or sorrow in the eternal essence of things itself, in the absolute unity of life. Only when the time-processes of manifestation appear and only when innumerable beings are differentiated out, does their existence become even possible. For only then does the duality of opposites start. Nothing can be brought into actuality without necessarily bringing in the possibility of its contrary also. We can form the idea of light

only by forming the idea of darkness along with it. Good and evil are just as dependent on each other. If light makes darkness possible, love

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(continued from the previous page) makes hate, joy makes pain, good makes evil, and so on. And when the manifested beings are permitted to possess desire and to exercise will – as they must be if they are not to be robots – then potential strife, for selfish ends, is inevitably also permitted. There will always be evil at some point or other in the manifested cosmos because there will always be a shadow in the sunlight. No sun no shadow; no good, no evil. These things are presupposed and negatively present in their opposites. We cannot have a manifested cosmos without having also this perpetual relationship between them. But because change is imprinted upon manifestation, it is never the same evil that we see but only a new embodiment thereof. Its old forms are transmuted by time and evolution into good. Thus, in spite of themselves, apparent evil may be productive of a change for actual good and temporary suffering may eventually result in stable happiness.

This is God's world; it could not be anyone else's. It must ultimately be an expression of God's wisdom. Therefore if we find in it things and people, events and sights which offend us and seem diabolic rather than godlike, the shortcoming is in our faculty of vision, the unpleasantness is in our limitation of understanding, and can be nowhere else. We learn from philosophy that the life of the whole universe, no less than the life of every man, is ruled by order and not by accident, by law and not by chance, by intelligence and not by senselessness. There is an intelligent direction behind every phenomenon of life and Nature in this cosmos. There is no event, no creature, nothing in the whole universe which is without significance. This is so and must be so because the whole universe is the thought of infinite Mind Everywhere and always the universal intelligence is ever present, unceasingly working. Nature's laws are really its laws. And this still holds true where man's limited power of sight sees fault because of the presence of evil and death. The chaos and confusion, accident and chance, the pain and misery in human existence are only passing appearance, not durable reality. Even when we cannot know or see, as is mostly the case, we must believe that a higher power is activating the world process for what will ultimately prove to be the best interests of all creatures and things within it. To the persevering

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¹³¹ PB himself changed "10" to "9" by hand.

student of philosophy all the pieces of this mosaic pattern which individually seem so meaningless and unrelated, gradually fall into place and reveal the wonderful significance of the whole.

The divine plan is the outcome of divine wisdom and perfect understanding. Therefore it is the best possible plan. And therefore it could not have been other than it is without the divine Mind being other than it is. The universe too cannot be other than the best possible one. If we fail to perceive this, we fail because finite mentality cannot comprehend infinite existence. If, in this matter, we begin by doubting the wisdom of God, we end by accepting it. Such conscious acceptance of the divine order of things does not come easily to most men. Indeed, it comes only after their reason has first complained and their emotion has first rebelled against it. The ego must be laved with grace before it will submit and accept.

The ego, even in its spiritual aspiration, is forever looking for quick results; the higher self, for durable ones. Hence, the eternal patience with which the latter gazes down on the sufferings of the former. Many may deplore this awe-inspiring patience of the higher self as it waits for the reclamation of its offspring. Yet in no other way can it really promote and guarantee the genuineness of the ego's evolution. For every upward step the latter takes will then be a spontaneous one, elicited from within itself by its own experience and observation. Its growth will not be artificial and dubious but natural and sure. The ego has thus the right and freedom to make its own mistakes and involve itself in consequential suffering, because it must become thoroughly integrated with its parent self by a process as natural as the seed becomes a tree.

It is not inconsistent to grant that, in its immediate character, evil does exist and does have widespread range and formidable power, whereas in its ultimate character it is rather the absence of good. Experience testifies to that. But it exists as our human idea and in a relative sense. It has no more reality, yet no less, than any of our other ideas. Philosophy enunciates no new doctrine here. In the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas argues that sin is a privation of good. In earlier times, Plotinus argued¹³² that the very infinitude of God must therefore involve imperfections like moral and physical evils and that instead of infringing on the omnipotence of God, these imperfections really point to the infinitude of God. In the pre-Christian age, Plato transmitted a tradition which explained evil as the negation of God's positive and beneficent activity.

In the divine soul of every human being there is perfect peace and unalterable goodness even when in the person there is a diseased body and a wicked mind. In the higher self there is always sweetness and love, even when in its projection there is avarice and hate. The feeling of man may surrender itself wholly to evil passions but the innermost being of man never

¹³² Changed from "argues" to "argued" by PB himself in Unrevised Essays, page 287

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(continued from the previous page) does. It remains inviolate. His thoughts may be overcome but his real self is not. The rule of evil pertains only to the level of transient appearances, not enduring realities. If we could pierce deep enough into a man's soul – whether he be a gangster or a Nazi – we would find that he is fundamentally good. The basis of everyone's nature is goodness. Evil is just a thick layer of thoughts and tendencies superimposed upon it. The man he appears to be is one thing; the man he really is beneath it, is another. Coordination of the two, as expressed in the statement, "I and my Father are one" brings harmony and happiness. With it the ego enters the Kingdom of heaven.

It is this terrible fact of spiritual estrangement which is at the bottom of most human sin and misery. In the end we must attribute most of man's avoidable woes to this separation in consciousness from his divine self. After all, how can there be peace for anyone if his passions still enslave him, still disturb his relations with others or disrupt his relations with his diviner self?

The Ego's Evolutionary Crisis

(215-1) In "The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga" it was pointed out that tremendously accelerated change was one of the four dominant characteristics of this period. In its sequel, "The Wisdom of the Overself" there were revealed the great secrets behind this change. First, the War of unseen forces of good and evil. Second, the evolutionary compulsion being laid upon the extroverted and inflated personal ego to abandon its present position and take the path of return. The selfish and possessive instincts, the materialistic and extroverted attachments in human nature are not there by any degeneration on its part but rather by its own development. They are natural results of bringing out its latent capacities and faculties, of expanding its consciousness from more primitive stages through a quest for individualised life. They are a part of the rhythmic evolution which is such a feature of the divine plan.

In "the Wisdom of the Overself" it was also stated that the World-Mind does not work like an architect, for it is not separate from its materials or activities. Therefore, when the phrase 'divine' plan is used in these writings, it should be understood to mean not an architectural drawing but the inherent necessity whereby manifestation follows a certain way and not a different one. Everything in the cosmos is passing through various stages of unfoldment. And because it originates in the divine substance, all the

¹³⁴ PB himself changed "11" to "10" by hand.

possibilities of such unfoldment from lowest to highest are inherent in it. They do not have to be planned for. They are already there as part of its nature.

Out of the unknown life of man's unremembered past, there come down to him this legacy of being able to know and do so much more than any animal can. But as his ego developed, his acquisitiveness and aggressiveness developed, too. This eventually brought about clashes with other egos. It began to sin and consequently to suffer. He could gain his fully individualised awareness in no other way. During the long course of his history, it has been through this very selfish extroversion that man has gradually manifested the potentialities with which Nature has endowed him and thus both expressed and developed himself. It was a natural and essential process, which brought him the requisite experience and the resulting knowledge of his personal individuality and powers. It was an indispensable phase of human development that the ego should grow in strength and expand in consciousness. It was an inevitable result of this phase that materialist attachment to externals should arise within it and that selfishness and wrongdoing should arise in the relations between egos, that evil should become as active as good and even, at certain periods, more active than good. Real evil appears only in the human kingdom, where the union of human intellect and animal desire produces creatures capable of wickedness such as no animal is capable of. An evil creature is simply an insufficiently evolved creature. Such a stiff thickening of egotism, such an extrovert attachment to the physical personality was unavoidable in the human entity's development. That could not be prevented. But it was only a phase. It was essential only for a period. And that period is now drawing to an abrupt close. Today the entity's needs are inevitably different. In order to become man the individual entity had to develop egotism. In order to surpass man, it will have to develop altruism. Thus the ruthless struggle and cruel history of human relations will surely be ameliorated. In the balanced practice of self-help and self-sacrifice, the next phase of its progress lies. It has moved far from the protozoa and has now reached a point in the evolutionary scale where a considerable change-over to another direction has become imperative. It must take the great step forward to a higher understanding of its own existence. Every day that it delays doing so, invites further suffering. The evil misdirection of its own forces has come too dangerously near to being a total one.

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¹³⁶ PB himself changed "12" to "11" by hand.

(continued from the previous page) The species Man is approaching a critical hairpin bend in inward life. With the twentieth century almost at its meridian, this self-worship and this excessive outward-turning begin to lose their evolutionary value. The materialistic animal ego is making its last desperate stand to keep its present rule. What we see all round us is but a visible manifestation of the invisible convulsions through which it is passing. Its own fierce resistance is reflected in the national ego's resistance. If both persist in resisting the new orientation, their convulsions will become dying ones and the civilisations they have built up will perish with them.

In this state of extreme extroversion and aggressive egoism, large numbers of people have become quite blind to the higher purpose of human life. They consider man merely a thinking animal, the moral struggle between right and wrong merely a matter of expediency and convenience, the aspiration for goodness merely a morbid pathological condition. Millions of other human beings have fallen even farther than this. They said "evil be thou my good." They took a man possessed by devils, Hitler, as a new Messiah, as a prophet of God. That Hitler did more in less time to shape the thought and life of millions for evil, than any other man has ever been able to do for good, is sad proof that morality will fall sooner than rise and that spirituality is harder to come by than materiality. The Germans followed this Anti-Christ with a devotion and faith a hundred times greater than they had shown to Christ. Yet such was the pretence and hypocrisy of those pre-war days that they were still called a Christian nation!

Anti-Christ always takes the field before, during or after the hour destined for the appearance of the true Christ. But in our time this is not only true of spiritual, that is religious, mystical, moral and metaphysical issues, it is also true of the social images reflected from them. Because the swift movement of modern technique is compelling a parallel movement of modern nations towards a supra-national world association, Nazism offered in advance its own selfish caricatured version of what such an association should be and tried forcibly to materialise it. Success would have prevented the establishment of a true world association. The Nazi version was quite simple. It consisted in the German python's swallowing up all the other animals and thus creating a union of them all! The Nazis had sufficient intelligence and wiliness to appropriate some spiritual values by offering their materialist counterfeits. The startling fact is that they created a hideous travesty of leading ideas which have become timely for incorporation in the modern man's outlook on life. It is thus that they hoped to take advantage of the time-spirit to deceive him.

It may be asked why, if evil is a relative and not an absolute thing, do we call the forces which inspired the Nazis evil forces? Here the first answer is that at the stage of ethical culture which the German masses had generally reached, that which should have been wrong to them was represented as right. The second is that malignant lying spirits did direct the Nazi movement from within... Why not work for self-aggrandisement alone if self be nothing more than the physical and egoistic person? Why not let war destroy a million men, women and children when they stand in the path to such personal triumph if, sooner or later, they are doomed to perish forever

anyway? Why not set up the acquisition of more and still more possessions by the most frightful means if successful acquisition of material things be the only sensible aim in a man's life? Why not bludgeon the brains out of every minister of religion, every student of literature, every preacher of ethics, every philosopher of spirit, every artist of exalted mood, whose influence gives his followers the weakening idea that there can be a reality beyond this lump of flesh and its earthly environment? These were reasonable questions to the Nazi mind because it was filled with hostility to the divine in itself and with hatred to the divine in others. Hence, its worst post-war legacy to the world is prejudice, malice, suspicion, intolerance, envy, wrath, unbalance, greed, cruelty, violence and hatred – evils that are corroding the hearts of millions with terrible intensity. This is the dangerous emotional situation which Nazism has left to humanity. Never in history was there so much hatred and malice in the world. Never in history was there so much need of goodwill and mutuality between human beings. The situation shocks and dismays every true well-wisher of mankind. What lesson, therefore, does humanity now need to learn most? The lesson of pity, compassion. The need of more love and less hate in the world is obvious. Yet the external events and emotional movements of our time show more hate and less love. Where is our vaunted progress? The ultimate issue of all this trend in the pre-1939 world was the desolation and violence of war. The ultimate issue of it in the peacetime world may be disastrous in its own way. The younger generation have grown up in an explosive, selfish and materialist atmosphere. If the public tragedy and private emptiness of our time cannot turn them and enough of their elders towards a spiritual way of life, nothing can do so quickly enough. In that case, utter destruction will before long end our failing

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(continued from the previous page) civilisation. It is a long way and a trying one, but it is a fact that until men reach an advanced stage of development, they will not learn except by taking to themselves the teaching of suffering and the lessons of trouble by noting the miseries which follow in the wake of mistaken action and evil-doing. The results of past evil or foolish actions sooner or later confront them.

The terrible spectacle of {first Nazidom's and now Communism's¹³⁹} organised hatred would alone be enough to make anyone cynically pessimistic of human nature.

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¹³⁸ PB himself changed "13" to "12" by hand.

But when he realises the monstrous extent of the evil in human character all over the world, and especially when he discovers its deep penetration in Western so-called spiritual circles and in reputed holy eastern ashrams, he must draw back appalled and affrighted for himself, despairing and hopeless for humanity. He must feel that the Roman Catholic dogma of original sin is not far from practical truth, however distant from ultimate truth. Such a position as humanity's present one is filled with the gravest dangers. It cannot continue much longer than a decade or two. If it is not soon brought to an end, the evolutionary forces will bring our pretentious human civilisation to an end.

Our own sins sent us a Destroyer. God has yet to send us a deliverer. Hitler appeared as a gigantic figure holding the centre of the world-stage and armed with a whip which slashed right and left, amongst his own countrymen equally as among all Europe. It would be a large error to believe that the world was punished for Hitler's sin alone. Not one man's but the accumulated results of millions of men's selfish thinking and negative feeling and unethical doing went into the catastrophe which has overwhelmed more than a whole continent. The long insufferable agony of wartime horrors and atrocities, bitterness and distress, deserves special thought here. In its size and cause, its strangeness and technique, the war was the outstanding event in the external history of the nations. Yet it was simply a part of the general world crisis, albeit the most vivid, violent and dramatic part.

Unfortunately for this generation, among the first effects of this inner evolutionary change was so unexpected and so unpleasant a one. All the evil in humanity's character was thrown up to the surface; all the ugliest passions found release. Horror and violence, lust and greed, fear and hate, envy and spite have been openly glorified. But this is the night before the dawn, the desperate struggles of the trapped beast in man.

The Danger of Modern Materialism

(219-1) The gods of quiet virtue and spiritual wisdom have had fewer votaries than at most other parallel periods of our history, while grinning demons of brazen pleasure and materialistic pursuits have replaced them. Folly holds the field. Hence, all this crisis plays the role of a John the Baptist to prepare the way for those who would enlighten and teach humanity. With all their scientific backwardness and primitive character, there was always a place in most of the civilisations of antiquity for the philosopher and prophet. There does not seem to be one for him today – on the contrary he is too often met with unjust suspicions and hopeless misunderstanding and so can do nothing else than crawl into his shell. This accusing fact that our society has no place for the philosophical mystic, sets no importance on him and perceives no value in him, is of itself enough to damn it for having strayed so far from its higher purpose.

¹³⁹ PB himself deleted "first Nazidom's and now Communism's" from page 287 of Unrevised Essays – the manuscript from which this is the carbon.

There is something seriously wrong with a civilisation which thinks that the effort to come into Overself-consciousness is an abnormal and even and insane one

It is not enough to understand the tragic as well as historic significance of these world-shaking events. We must also understand their underlying religious, metaphysical and philosophical significance. And this cannot be done adequately unless we let the light of doctrines like spiritual evolution and compensatory karma shine down upon them, For without them, it is too taxing to explain why society today is as it is. The psychological situation which has been created by the close of the war, can be adequately understood only by the light of these and other truths. Mankind's own thoughts and emotions, passions and deeds, must share the responsibility for this tragic fate. The world pinned its faith to political action alone; the world received its terrible reward. Its civilisation has indeed received the inevitable rewards of its short-sighted selfishness for it has seen so many of the things it strove to obtain, crumble away in its hands.

When we interpret these events by the light of philosophy, we observe that whilst men sought only a personal, a partisan or a group triumph over other men, instead of seeking for the triumph of good over evil and truth over falsehood, their affairs continued to move from one blunder to another and from one misery to another. Such people naturally but quite wrongly apportion censure to other men or to untoward events or things. The political and social

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(continued from the previous page) problems covered a still deeper one. Those who made quick judgment on limited data or those who believed that mind is a mere by-product of matter, could not perceive this truth. Amid all this clamour of tongues and systems, individuals and interests, the fundamental issues became obscured and their essentially mental and ethical character remained unseen. The spiritual failure and political crisis of this epoch went deep before the war; neither its mind nor heart was capable of retrieving the one or solving the other. Its boasted progress was found to be surface-deep.

If our thinking upon this subject is to be right, it must clear up the significance to be assigned to such a term as 'progress.' For too long it has been rendered foolish or contradictory by our misconceived and easy acceptance of traditional nonsense. The

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¹⁴¹ PB himself changed "18" to "17" by hand.

set-back given to human society by the war and its aftermath was useful in destroying foolish notions of continuous progress which so many smug people used to harbour. Flabby in heart and palsied in mind, it has been bitterly punished for a delusive, shallow optimism. As a materialistic civilisation moved on apparently indefinitely toward increasing triumph, men began to doubt all the spiritual truths they had learnt. But as all observers now witness, it moved towards disaster instead. For it is not enough to be moving; you must know where you are moving to! Do we not somewhere read, "They that walk blindly shall perish?" We can now sit up ruefully and confess that we were fools to travel so far and find so little. Before any society can be headed in the right direction, it must first find out where it wants to go – to paradise or to perdition; just as anyone ought to know whether to ask for London or Liverpool before he stands at the railway-station booking window. Yet this simple statement contains a truth too plain to appeal to our complicated generation. The events of the last two decades provide nothing more or less than a visible commentary on the messages it was the privilege of men like Jesus, Krishna and Buddha to deliver. The unprecedented times through which we have lived merely prove by terrible facts what such men preached by opened lips. They prove that the religious unfaith and materialistic denial of a whole generation, the hard scepticism which has degraded their values and dragged down their instincts, afford too insecure a basis for human living.

Materialism – by which we mean not merely the openly confessed and crudely obvious doctrine which goes under this name but also its unconscious and disguised forms – has been the bane of our time. The total impressions of all the forms it has taken – and they are to be found in the scientific, religious, political, educational, literary, artistic, hedonistic and legal spheres – is a ghastly one. The end of it all was both the terrifying figure of Hitler and the typhoon destructiveness of the World war. Hitler, the war and the crisis were the natural consequences of belief in the doctrine of materialism when pushed to its logical extreme. We are entitled to ask those who have banished spiritual value from their world-view, what they have gained. No answer can hide the ugly fact of a world in the grip of evil and distress. Our failure to integrate spiritual reality into our view of life has produced the most unfortunate inner and outer consequences. It has produced a decade when the unheard-of crimes of unprincipled tyrants and the misfortunes of helpless masses dismayed and distressed all thoughtful good-hearted people. This gloomy derogation of human dignity is the logical end of materialism and it is for such reasons that those who can comprehend the momentous issues of the human race's destiny which confront it today, must engage in the hard struggle against materialism as in a holy war. The war and the crisis constitute a tragic judgment on a society which was falling headlong into the abyss of such a wrong world-view. Its present anguish and bewildered state show, to their shame, how little wisdom and how much frailty there still is in human beings. It demonstrates too that materialism has no future, for it cannot provide a sound moral basis for living or a hopeful metaphysical basis for thinking about humanity.

Because our generation has been violently confronted with and shaken by those shaded aspects of life, like death and suffering, which most generations habitually

ignore, it has either to consider them or to flee from them. The first course brings it to a vital religious feeling or a rebellious atheistic one. The second course plunges it into sensualism. This is the century of challenge. Humanity has got to choose between continuing in the old materialistic way of life or starting a more spiritual one. And unless the suffering of the war and crisis awakens a sufficient number of people spiritually, the outlook will again be dark. The situation is still grave. We shall shortly learn exactly how far this awakening has gone. Events will not let humanity alone. They are forcing it against a blank wall. From here there is no escape. It must find a new and better way of life – or sink down and perish. It was written in “The Wisdom of the Overself” that humanity was walking on the edge of a precipice. The warning must be reiterated here that if it does not respond to the new call whilst there is yet time, its days of safety are numbered. The alternatives are clear. Humanity must either penitently enlarge its outlook to include the spiritual basis of life or continue to restrict itself to a sometimes open, sometimes camouflaged materialism. In the first case, it will save civilisation; in the second, it will succumb to the evils bred by such materialism

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(continued from the previous page) and perish, with its civilisation largely effaced.

For those who had eyes to see, it was clear even during the very zenith of Nazism that one of its main historic tasks would be to quicken this process in Germany itself where Nazi forms collapsed altogether after a briefer existence still. This is because those forms were essentially too retrograde in such an age. They provided their adherents with all the illusion but with little of the reality of progress. In this way they were poisoned offshoots from the true line of progress. Part of Hitler’s half-conscious mission was to liquidate the old order of things and to destroy world-views which had lost their timelines and serviceability. But although in this way far ahead of his times, in others Hitler was of course far behind it. He did not understand that the age of moral dinosaurs and mental pterodactyls was long past.

The prevalent state of materialism in the world and its consequent influence on human character may lead to something even more devastating than war. Nature might take a hand in the game. Within a couple of months, there were slain by the influenza epidemic just after the First World War many times more people than were slain during the four years of that war itself. The science and civilisation, the culture

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and cities of Atlantis were erased from the earth's surface, engulfed by a vast mass of water which has since, during thousands of years' ceaseless rolling, washed its site clean of the ancient foulness. Through such cataclysms does Nature free herself from the obnoxious presence of evil men, purify her body from nests of corruption and defend herself against the vices which her own spawn seeks to plant upon her. Thus she returns to mankind the penalties of their own iniquities. When Nature's violence, as in earthquakes and cyclones, is so great or when fate's blows are so hard as to make men feel their littleness and helplessness, the instinct to turn to some higher power in resignation or petition arises spontaneously. Many in our age have been so stupefied by a hard materialism as to deny the reality of this instinct, but they have only covered it over. They cannot destroy it.

But the challenge has been dramatically made final, urgent and pointed by a new force which has been let loose in the world – the atomic bomb! The energy released by atomic disintegration is now in our hands. What was once the fantastic dream of a few scientists has become the awful reality of contemporary history. The new type of bomb has unparalleled effects. It can blast and burn a vast area with a thoroughness previously unknown. It can obliterate whole cities in a single raid by its tremendous concentration of incendiary and explosive power. It has outmoded all known military weapons, and outdated many security problems. Its possibilities for mass-slaughter constitute the major revelation of our times. It is significant that the atomic bomb did not appear until the end of the war against Japan and did not even appear at all in the war against Germany. This points to the fact that if another war develops, this new kind of warfare has been reserved for it alone in fate's design and history's record. War must now either slay most of the human race altogether or slay itself through its own perfection. It is perhaps the most dramatic and the most visible form of evil in the whole history of mankind. That is why voluntary abnegation would constitute an enormous gesture of self-betterment on their own part.

In war human evil appears in its worst form and its effect in their most widespread form. With this discovery, the pathway leading to the greater part of civilisation's utter self-destruction is now wide open. Humanity must now take its choice. Nothing in history is comparable to this terrible ultimatum. The new discoveries force it to choose between the two alternatives: real acceptance of the moral law or else virtual self-destruction. This is the divine working. Today is indeed a fateful time. Today we all live with such terrible bombs invisibly suspended over our heads! Only a drastic change in moral attitudes can effectively meet their dangerous challenge. And what else is this except a choice between cultivating a greater self-discipline or clinging to an outmoded selfishness; a decision between an alliance with the sacred presence or a continuance of enmity to it? If we fail to make a right choice, then it will not be long before civilised life on this planet comes to an end.

The course of events after the Second World War cannot resemble the course of events after the First World War. Everything is against it. For this time an ultimatum confronts humanity, a final challenge to inaugurate a new and nobler epoch or else largely perish from the earth. The alternatives have been clearly presented before it to

choose between. There is no middle way. The escape from its post-war troubles will not be achieved by finding middle positions between extreme ones, but by seeking new positions in preference to old ones. It has to make the final and irrevocable decisions as to which direction it will take. It has to choose whether it will cling as hard as before to the ego or loosen the hold on it. On this choice depends its fate. Its spiritual adolescence must come to an end as its technological adolescence has already and so dramatically done.

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(continued from the previous page) The order which humanity constructs itself for is, after all, the expression of its own spiritual perception or spiritual blindness. The new order will not be a better order if understanding is not better. All will fall into false hopes who fail to perceive the direct casual relation between the inner life and the outer one, and who ignore the precise unfailing operation of the moral law. The widespread crises and calamities which have struck the world have aroused millions of people to lively expectations of an impending radical change and universal renovation in the spiritual and material forms of society. These terrible distresses have caused a number of sufferers to engage in the quest of self-redemption. How large this number is nobody can yet accurately determine but how small it must be in proportion to total population anybody can begin to perceive.

Because fate permitted the tremendous consequences of atomic power to be placed at the disposal of mankind at this precise juncture of history, we may be sure that there is a tremendous reason for it. That everything in this generation has been thrown into a state of crisis is therefore no accident. A higher will is guiding world affairs. This state could not have developed earlier, for then it would have been quite premature. It is karmically synchronised and inwardly connected with the grand turning-point in the human entity's evolution, with the shift away from unbalanced immersion in physical externals and excessive attachment to the personality. How much human evil would vanish when men enlarge their outlook and belittle their self-centredness! The outer effects of this inner evolutionary movement are being everywhere greatly felt but nowhere clearly understood. The statement in "The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga" that humanity is approaching the threshold of manhood, means that from the moment that the new evolutionary twist began, the human entity's

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ignorant child-like development also began to come to an end. Hitherto, it has blundered about half-blindly in its adolescence and youth. Henceforth it will receive knowledge and be able to move more consciously and have to assume more and more of the responsibilities of spiritual maturity. When the present crisis eventually draws to a close, there will interiorly be released a divine influx and there will exteriorly manifest various high-grade spiritual teachers. The twentieth century will indeed be "the century of enlightenment." Thus, at first involuntary and later voluntarily, man obeys the higher purpose for him of the divine plan. This purpose cannot but be fulfilled, for every thing in this universe works to that end. It does not depend for such fulfilment on his conscious cooperation nor will it be thwarted by his blind opposition. He may work with it or oppose it. The first course will lead in the end to rejoicing, the second to suffering. It is not easy for him, constituted as he is, to take the wiser course. Yet evolution will force him into it by degrees, easy or not, for the world is a rightly-ordered one.

For the movement of mankind is cyclic and in this moment when the wheel must take a fresh turn the two universal forces which forever struggle with each other, the force which elevates man and the force which degrades him, the evolutionary and the adverse elements in Nature, are meeting in a tremendous grapple whose tension was unheard-of before. Whoever fails to perceive that this is the fundamental problem, or whoever perceiving seeks to evade it, contributes to the responsibility for the sequence of events. If we do not understand the human and superhuman forces which are at work in the world, we shall not understand how rightly to deal with the world crisis itself. We must arrive at consciousness of what direction inevitable historic forces are taking beneath visible events; and we must learn to interpret aright the various currents and cross-currents which have been started by the post-war period.

Those of us who wish to anticipate this evolutionary advance should make the effort involved and sacrifice entailed in a cheerful and willing spirit. For the same truth which earlier punishes us when disdained and rejected, later blesses us when welcomed and received. The same evil which first tempts us, later tests us. Its revelation of what we are, when linked with its consequences, finally brings us to seek the good. It works by examining our right to life's supreme treasure, the divine consciousness, by tempting character and faith or testing motive and goodness, it enables us in this way to establish such a right. Thus in the end, it is an instrument of the cosmic purpose for us and not, as we often suppose, always the enemy of that purpose. Our human perception of the world around us is limited and narrow, our conception of it imperfect and prejudiced. We see it as we see the underside of a rug in the course of being made, when it is a shapeless mass with a fragmentary pattern, which is itself hardly discernible because reversed.

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(225-1) [If there]¹⁴⁴ be any object that such a conception of evil's divine sanction enervates the will to resist it, let the answer be that, if they look at it from the standpoint of the blind personal ego only, it may be so. But if they look at it from the standpoint of the

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(continued from the previous page) enlightened human soul which loves truth, they will not do so. Even truth can be dangerously misapplied. This is the case when the foregoing doctrines are made, by a false logic, to free anyone from moral responsibility. Although we have to explain the circumstance wherein men think wrongly and act wickedly, we have not sought to extenuate it. Anybody who drew the conclusion that they are not responsible and therefore not punishable would draw an unphilosophical, misleading and dangerous conclusion. Nothing that is written here is a defence of tame submission to evil-doing. Nothing here makes God the creator of evil nor puts the murderer on the same level as the saint. Anyone who still thinks so has merely read but not studied our words. Although the triumph of evil is only a seeming triumph, although we need recognise evil only as a limited power, our practical attitude towards it must be sternly resistant. If the sinner were compelled to commit sin by the divine plan or the divine will, if he were to think that he could perpetrate any crime because it is God-ordained then the foundations of morality would collapse and the belief that he is free to choose between righteousness and wrong-doing would be illusory. This would be inconsistent with the ethical teaching of all great prophets. Although at the level and from the standpoint of ultimate reality, the infinite wisdom and love reign supreme, if we descend to the level and standpoint of the phenomenal world, we have to admit the existence of malignant entities and hostile forces which thrive on hatred and wrong-doing, on falsity and evil. We are here in the world of appearance but to creatures whose perceptions are limited to that world these are terrible realities, whose interferences we must fight and whose solicitations we must resist.

Philosophy does not deny evil's existence but only its absoluteness. Philosophical ethics always opposes it but at the same time points out its relativity. We are never at any time under a necessity to do evil. And when philosophical knowledge

¹⁴⁴ PB himself deleted "Even truth can be dangerously misapplied. This is the" from before "If there" by hand.

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teaches us that it is a form of error, we inevitably seek to do good always, however lamentably we may fail occasionally. It is a fallacy to think that because all is perfect in the World-Mind, it is consequently perfect for human beings. To the divine wisdom, the evil in the universal movement is something which flows out of the very nature of separative existence, which eventually takes the shape of aggressive self-assertion. The man who can rise to this understanding is not thereby exempted from his human responsibilities, nor granted permission either to proclaim every happening as equally divinely-willed or to forsake his social duty of resisting the world's evil. Because it is said that the evil in man is due to his ignorance and consequent misplacement of forces which are not evil in themselves, such as intellect, energy and emotion, let this not be mistaken to mean that the presence of evil is consequently to be denied. On the contrary, because it is a feature which transforms life into an arena of unending conflict, it should specifically be acknowledged, faced, prepared for and struggled against. It is not a contradiction to struggle grimly and unceasingly against evil in practical life whilst at the same time philosophically recognising the part it plays in the world-plan.

A man may never come to understand why it should be so; he may have to leave the riddle as an unsolved one. But this need not interfere with his practical attitude. Evil develops his moral muscles each time it is resisted and overcome. Nothing in philosophy should encourage the evil doer in the continuance of his misguided course. On the contrary, he is warned that suffering awaits him and that there will be no peace for him until he repents. It is a duty laid upon righteous men to resist wrong-doing. They must be guarded and prudent in their dealings with men who breathe naturally the air of evil thinking. Non-resistance, if indiscriminate, would invite crime and encourage evil men to continue in their evil-doing because they would find it both unhindered and profitable. The recognition of divine will back of things does not and must not be allowed to lead anyone into an irresponsible attitude towards life and a lethargic tendency in conduct. When evil thoughts have overwhelmed a man's feeling and obsessed his mind to the extent of making him injurious to his fellows, it is a proper duty of society to defend itself by taking preventive measures against him. The pessimistic outlook which stifles initiative, acquiesces in immorality and bids tormented men to be contented with their lot, may serve to confirm their tormentors in their own wrong-doing. Thus it may promote crime and increase the world's evil.

The pacifist mystic's passive toleration of evil perpetrated under his own eyes may be a mystery to most of his disciples. But it is not a mystery to the philosopher. The attitude of fatalistic resignation to evil events because they are believed to be the expression of God's will, is sometimes a heroic one but sometimes a cowardly one, sometimes wise but sometimes foolish. A proper judgment would require a knowledge of the invisible factors as well as the visible ones involved in each particular case. But the attitude of passive resignation to evil forces and malignant persons is never wise and always foolish. The monk or mystic who believes in non-resistance because he believes all happens by God's will, is entitled to his

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(continued from the previous page) view. We are not concerned with him here. In The¹⁴⁷ Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga¹⁴⁸ there have been explained the defects and confusion in this view, which is not the philosophical one. The attribution to God's will does not in any way shift the responsibility which properly belongs to human endeavour. The fallacy here is to make man the doer of actions and yet saddle God with the responsibility for them. It arises from confusion of thought. Only after we have made a study of evil from the religious, metaphysical and mystical standpoints combined, can we get really clear ideas about it. There is often a confusion of thinking when mystics deal with the question of good and evil. They show this confusion by the easy way they accept the pacifist doctrine of non-violent yielding to aggression. Philosophy clears away this confusion by its penetrating analysis. In the result, it advises the aspirant to accept evil metaphysically but to resist it practically. He has to do this because of the divine origin of the cosmos and because of the imperfect state of humanity. From the practical standpoint there is no alternative but to see evil as evil or as ignorance and deal with it as such.

A further mistake of the propagandist for non-violent ethics is his failure to make a moral distinction between defence and offence. What would have happened to the world's finer feelings and higher ideals if, for instance, it had tamely submitted to Hitler? Would they not have been forced into eclipse for a long time? Would not pacifism have become his unconscious ally? Moreover, if in a struggle between two men one or the other must suffer will it not be better for the evilly-disposed one to do so, for has he not more to learn from suffering than the good man? The attitude which would ignore the evil in men and gloss over their wicked deeds by pretending to a large angelic charity, is unphilosophical. Although not less charitable, philosophy does not buy its virtues at the cost of losing its balance and shutting one eye. It prefers to stand on both legs and open both eyes. It acknowledges the good in men as part of the same picture as the bad in men. Because it understands, it never condemns. But the mystic who refuses to recognise wrong-doing in others, is a coward who morally shares responsibility for their reaction by his passive condonation of them. Even the semi-pacifist Roerich recognised this and wisely wrote: "My call is to magnanimity but not

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¹⁴⁷ PB himself deleted quotation marks by hand.

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to weakness. When you encounter a tiger, do not think of helping him; there is a limit to abomination.” It is the sacred duty of those who care for mankind’s welfare to resist evil, to protect and succour its victims, just as it is the sentimental duty of many Indian monks who have renounced the world not to resist it. Nor is the first in any way less holy than the second. Evil is no metaphysical illusion but a practical fact. We find it here in our midst every day and have to deal with it as best we can. We cannot reconcile ourselves to it, much less collaborate with it. We must take our part in the age-old unending conflict against it. All aspirants after philosophy must be warriors. We should always remember that the theoretical reconciliation to the presence of evil in our midst is not the same as the practical resignation to it. We see that it is an inevitable accompaniment of personality in the universe, but we should also see that it is only a temporary accompaniment. It may be there, but we do not have to co-operate with it nor submit to it. If we understand its limitation, it need shake neither our faith nor our nerve.

Thus there are plenty of reasons why philosophers, as well as laymen, should strive to overcome evil and try to elevate the character of mankind. We need not ignore the evil in our fellow men, for we have to deal with them in a practical world, neither should we ignore the soul working silently within them. The evil will go eventually; the good will remain permanently. If we have to enter into relation with them, we must perceive what is wrong in them but we should do so impersonally without ill-feeling. Therefore, the human weakness which returns one wrong for another, which seeks to retaliate or to revenge itself against the wrong-doer, is unacceptable. We must do what social responsibility calls upon us to do in such a case. But we should not sully ourselves with lower deeds.

Nor should we even indulge in the useless but common habit of condemning those who have committed offences against us. Jesus has explained one reason for this counsel: “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” And Epictetus has pointed out how the man who cultivates his power of looking beneath appearances, will not find fault with others. Their evil-conduct arises out of the imperfections and limitations in their psyche, out of its unbalanced or undeveloped condition. They cannot help doing what they do because they cannot help being what they are. And this in turn is the inheritance of all their past experience, all their past thought. Time will teach them. Life will instruct them. Suffering will drive the poison out of their system. Karma will take them in hand and discipline them. When they become acutely aware of the Mischief wrought in other lives and harm they have wrought in their own, they become truly penitent and more discerning. Meanwhile, we humans may learn to forgive what life itself may sometimes forgive. There would be little hope for humanity’s eventual escape from the thralldom of evil, if God’s grace did

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(continued from the previous page) not enter into its evolutionary life at some point. And this does happen, bringing redemption, liberation and illumination. There is love at the heart of things. There is forgiveness for repentant man. There is forgetfulness for his foresworn sins.

A celebrated Tibetan commentator, Asanga, wrote: "If another does harm to the spiritually developed man, he endures with patience the worst injuries with the idea that it is a benefit he has received. To think that the offender does one a service is to conduct oneself in accordance with the example of the Perfect Ones." The merciful remission of sins, the compassionate granting of pardon is a fact in the relations between human beings themselves. How much more should it be a fact in their Divine Father's relations with them! Forgiveness of sins is a fact, not merely a hope, but it is a fact only for the few. The others must bear the consequences of their wrong conduct. This is because it does not become operative until after the repentance of sins. The belief that he too, depraved sinner though he has been, may also expect forgiveness and attain to goodness, is a true one even for the worst of men, if only he becomes deeply repentant. However, the forgiveness of some sins does not mean with ordinary humanity the forgiveness of all sins. The past cannot be totally wiped out, even when its legacy can be modified. With the aspirant, forgiveness applies only to a specific sin or a specific group of sins. With the adept, it applies to the totality of all his sins. For the first is still carrying his karma entwined round his neck, because he is still carrying his ego. But the second is liberated from the burden of karma because he is liberated from its hidden core, the ego.

In dealing with those people who have fallen victims to the malevolent forces, whether full time or intermittently, we must remember not to condemn, resent or hate. We all carry a load of wrong-doing out of the far past yet we seek forgiveness of this heavy karma. If we are not ourselves prepared to forgive those who wrong us, we have no right to expect the remission of our own sins. This in fact is a spiritual law. Hence the need of practising Jesus' maxim about forgiving seventy times. All aspirants who seek forgiveness for themselves, should follow the rule of forgiveness in their dealings with others. Every time they have to endure hatred from men, they are given the chance to learn goodwill towards men. Where others find only poison, they are to find its antidote.

But these are not the only grounds for such an attitude. There is another and one not less solid. Each man's thought contributes its little mite to the world's store, makes it better or worse. We are responsible for our own thoughts and if we are on the spiritual path we must try to keep them constructive, positive and harmonious, not

destructive, negative and discordant. Darkness has no positive existence in itself. It is simply the lack of light. Just so, ignorance is simply the lack of knowledge and evil is simply the lack of good. And just as the only way to get rid of darkness is to bring a light into it, whether by switching on a lamp or opening a window, the only way to remove evil from the world's thinking and eliminate the ignorance that promotes it, is to bring more good thought and spread more spiritual knowledge in the world.

Thus, as humanity unfolds its diviner characteristics, it sheds its grosser ones. By its own labours in self-improvement, it prepares the way for the entry of God's redemptive grace. When it discovers its real self, whose first attributes are love and wisdom, it discards evil and error. In the moment that it casts aside the shroud of ignorance, it sees 'through' the evil values and turns to the good ones. To know himself fully, man will have to know himself as a ray of the divine sun, shedding light and goodness. To understand evil fully, he will have to love the pure truth rather than personal satisfaction. And then that same evil which was formerly a dark and tragic riddle to his lower perceptions, vanishes as such before his higher ones and is so no more.

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(233-1) Whatever catastrophe injures the bodily life of contemporary man, the advance of his spiritual life is foreordained and inevitable. If we have only to survey the bloody and greedy course of history to realise that the evil in man is as innate as the good in man, it is nevertheless true that whereas the one will grow ever upwards the other will shrink and wither to the ground. During the war, the philosophically minded could hold on hopefully, knowing that the rope of karma was running out and that the evil incarnate in Hitler would destroy itself in the end. The mind can support itself firmly during contemporary upheavals, and keep itself unharmed by them, only if it possesses, and makes its own by constant contemplation, a knowledge of the divine plan back of things and a faith that the moral law must always prevail for evolution is divinely ordered. Amid the widespread darkness and tumult, there was still the assurance for them that those forces which work only for evil, work in the end for their own destruction. Evil's success is always transient. In his metaphysical ignorance, Hitler did not comprehend the karmic and evolutionary forces which were also at work, did not know that he and his barbarous satellites would become the suffering heirs to their

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own deeds and that the calamities which they brought to other people become curses which karmically fell upon their own heads. He did not realise that every form of wrong-doing contains in itself the germ of its retributive reaction.

We who have lived in an epoch when the powers of evil have made their strongest bid for world-domination, have also lived to see its colossal failure. The hour of punishment can only be postponed; it can neither be evaded nor avoided. "Not in the heavens, not in the midst of the sea, not if thou hidest thyself away in the clefts of the mountains, wilt thou find a place on earth where thou canst escape the fruits of thy evil action." Thus spoke Buddha and did not Nazidom verify these words? We may see in the outcome of the conflict not only a striking demonstration of the ultimate triumph of Good over Evil, but also a contemporary confirmation of the statement made in "The Wisdom of the Overself" that there are definite limits set to the activity of evil. The atheist says that even if God exists, He is either powerless to prevent the arising of evil or merciless to permit its continuance. The philosopher says that God does exist, does possess power and display mercy, but that these things are channelled through a cosmos, that is an orderly regulated universe. He says, too, that the permission under which the dark forces operate has a string of limited length tied to it and that at the end of their cycle, they are either destroyed or destroy themselves. In the retribution which overtook the Nazis during the closing period of the war, we may see one vivid illustration of these statements. And in the appearance from time to time of spiritual teachers, religious prophets and divine healers, we may see another. The forces of evolution help mankind in this second way by bringing about the rebirth of advanced egos as, when and where they are needed. Such individuals are like generals in the war against evil, and work for its defeat.

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 target for powerful forces of hatred wrath and falsehood. Whoever publicly bears a deeply spiritual message to humanity, has to suffer from opposing forces. He has to endure the pardonable sneers of the sceptical, the unpardonable hatred of those obsessed by the same dark powers which obsessed so many Nazis, the regrettable criticisms of the suspicious, and the unjust vilification of the envious. The attempt to introduce his ideas meets with hostility and opposition not only from the quarters of religious bigotry but also from those of scientific materialism. The hostile elements all select him as the target for their hostility as soon as he takes up the unthankful task of lifting any of the delicate veils of Isis in an age when, in certain countries, the brute and the boor actually sit enthroned among them. He will have to suffer both from hard materialists and fanatical mystics, who are either incompetent to understand the integrity of his motivation or instrumental for that adverse element in Nature which is the secret source of hostility towards such pioneer pathfinders. Ambitious preachers and teachers prompted plainly by envy, and charlatanic cult-leaders, disturbed in the enslavement and exploitations, attack the thinker himself even though they accept or use many of his ideas.

When anyone is incapable of fair and proper criticism of a man's ideas but capable only of vitriolic abuse of the man himself, there is usually some soundness in those ideas. Doctrinal opposition, which may always be proper and honourable, is one thing but personal enmity, which is always improper and dishonourable, is another. It will be his special lot in life to attract critics who eagerly combine both. [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.]¹⁵¹

But whether vilification gives way one day to vindication or not, is a matter of

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(continued from the previous page) indifference for he will have lived in the present body long enough to learn to look elsewhere for his own happiness. That a sincere effort to put forward ideas which are helpful in life's truth-quest should arouse so much personal antagonism, is as amazing to those who do not comprehend the psychological factors involved as, with the ever-present vision before his eyes of the ever-approaching terminus of this little game called earthly life, it is amusing to him.

It is the spiteful business of those who have sought the soul but failed through their own weaknesses to find it, to speak evil, to spread slander and to invent falsehoods about the man who does succeed in this enterprise. It is the noble business of this man to remain unmoved by their attacks, to refrain in silence from answering them and to forgive their misdeeds in patience. These human spiritual failures strew the path's hinterland like wreckage. They persist blindly and obstinately in their acceptance of evil suggestion and are not to be confounded with those finer aspirants who fall, repent and raise themselves again. A single reply to all their worthless criticisms would be best taken from an Arab poet:

"These are our works which prove what we have done,
Look therefore at our works when we have gone."

He has created something which has helped mankind. His critics have not. They have simply tried to tear it down. Having done nothing of worth themselves, they seek

¹⁵¹ PB himself inserted "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." with an asterisk reading "see next sheet" after "both." by hand; the sentence was originally typed on the following page.

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to destroy the work he has done with their foul criticisms; while, having given free rein to the dark, destructive and negative qualities of their own characters, they assail him amid the safety of their private rooms. The help which, in sheer kindness of heart, he gives out is forgotten; the hatred which, in sheer envy, they carefully cultivate, is remembered. He is paradoxically punished for the good that he has done to persons of evil character and mean mind. "It was when I began to love God that I got disfavour of men," sadly wrote the dying Hans Denck, the sixteenth century German who was hunted from city to city because of his mystical preachings, which were eminently sane and truly Christian but which menaced the vested interests of institutionalised religion. "I have loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore I die in exile," lamented the noble-charactered teacher Hildebrand. Each word, each hostile act, will become for them in later years a flail to beat their own shoulders. Such is the law. The harm done against anyone always reacts upon the wrongdoers eventually, but the harm done against a man who lives with head bent before the higher powers, reacts tenfold against the wrong doers, for then they trouble not the man but the power which seeks to use him. These things happen with unfailing and clocklike regularity. But the backbiting, the thoughtless gossip, the envy and malice which prompts people to say untrue things about such a man cannot alter what he is. Whilst they are busy concocting fresh treacheries, he will turn indifferently away from them and their world to find the divine peace which awaits everyone who has begun to commune with the higher powers. He is content to leave them to enjoy the fruits of the karma which they make. He is utterly helpless and cannot even raise his little finger in self-defence. He knows that even his enemy is not different in essence from his own inner being. Hence he has and can have nothing but goodwill towards each enemy, but the Law itself is not so kindly and will demand a hundredfold higher payment for every falsehood and every malicious word uttered against him. He has conscious knowledge of the forces that are working for him, of what they have done in the past and what they will do at the ripened hour.

He may not desert the broad work of human enlightenment which devolves upon him. That work has to be done and neither the malice of satanic human instruments nor the misunderstanding of the superficial and ignorant should deter him from carrying it out. He takes 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 he sheds his shyness, continues his work and offers malevolent enmity the silent indifference of one who knows in what sublime cause he is striving. He makes it a rule not to answer calumny, partly because he knows its true source lies in the promptings of evil entities who will continue their unseen activities whatever he says and partly because God is his judge and he accepts no other. If enemies spit verbal venom openly at him, or secretly behind him, or in public prints, he does not let it excite him or create bitterness against them. He remains serene and extends his goodwill to them, then

(continued from the previous page) comprehends that they cannot act otherwise, being what they are, and finally drops them out of his mind altogether. It is their business to plunge the daggers of malice and the stilettos of vilification in his side. It is his business immediately to assuage the pain by holding to the serenity of the Overself and to stop the bleeding by using his philosophical insight.

Such being the experiences that come to him he may not try to shut his eyes to the evil forces and chaotic morality, to the tragedy and degeneration in the world around him. Indeed, he will see them even more clearly and more alertly for what they are than other men, because he will see down to their very roots in human nature. He will never pretend with the softer mystics that they are not there. Yet the consciousness of these bitter and brutal realities can never intimidate him, nor disillusion him. He knows that they will one day arouse man to seek for the only power by which they may be overcome, and meanwhile, until man is so awakened, he himself must hold aloft his own guttering candle of inward light. This is his responsibility and he will not retreat from it. This is what he can do for humanity and he will certainly do it.

Let us serve humanity by all means, let us seek to distribute the spiritual waters of life and the material bread of man. But, this said, let us not fall into the gross error of believing that the laws of the universe are all wrong, that the powers of evil are almighty and that unless we interfere with the course of events, the outcome will be most deplorable. This is not so. The universe will still carry on, whatever we do. Its administration is still in capable and beneficent hands. God is still the Supreme Authority and does not require or ask for anyone's help.

[The vague feeling that, despite all the suffering and sin, the outcome of this drama of the human race will, in the end be a blessed and happy one is correct. There we see today evil in a man, an event or a place, it is rather the absence of good, just as cold is the absence of heat. For the good rightfully belongs to the inner nature of things, and can never permanently vanish.]¹⁵⁴

The guarantee that Good is always destined to triumph, however deferred the hour of that triumph may seem to us, is to be found among the attributes of the Power which sustains all existence. One of these attributes, as sensed by all mystics who have

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¹⁵⁴ "The vague feeling that... can never permanently vanish." was typed below the line and inserted with an arrow.

approached the Divine, is love. To know, to feel or believe this, is to know, feel or believe immovably in the ultimate rightness and beneficence of things. The philosophical mystic affirms that even hatred is not a permanent reality but only the temporary absence of love, and just as darkness vanishes when light appears, so will these negative emotions vanish when evolution forces men to awaken and admit the love which is inherent in their deeper self, the Overself.

Earthly experience is not an instrument of human torment but a device for human education. Its lower values are transmuted by time into higher ones, its evil values into good. The immense multitude of human beings which has passed in procession over the face of this turning globe for unknown millions of years, has not passed in vain. The mysterious laws of this cosmos will not and cannot allow an ultimate triumph of forces or entities which violate their inward essential beneficence. If the appearance of individual evil is an ordained phase of human development, the liquidation of individual evil is equally ordained to succeed it. This is the paradox, that although evil is present everywhere, it will prevail nowhere. The evil must be overcome by good, the wrong by the right. Thus analysis of what it is shows it to be a set of values and qualities, not an eternal principle. That a cosmos divinely-born and divinely-sustained should illogically contain such evil qualities, is something not to be understood at first thought nor judged at first glance. Instead of seeking their origin in the universe without, we ought to seek their origin in our own consciousness, within. For they represent a corruption of human values, an alienation from the higher self and a misdirection of free-will.

The evil man writes in water, the evil being is a track in the sand. For the destiny of the one is to be transformed, and of the other to be forgotten. Somewhere in the exercise of human free-will, a cycle of sinful thought, feeling and action came into being. But as it had a beginning, so shall it have an ending. Since it starts afresh in each individual, it ends there, not in the species. The sinful kingdom of hell is within us. The sinless kingdom of heaven must therefore be found by each for himself and it must be found within himself.

That sinners may one day become saints, that the evil in life may one day be transmuted into the good, is not only a possibility we must admit but also a truth we must recognise.

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(continued from the previous page) If there is evil in the universe, nevertheless the universe itself is good. If ordinary men have to look to the far-off future for the transformation of the darkness of the one into the light of the other, the sage finds the light here and now. He will see the menace and danger of the times for what it is, but he knows that he will be as secure later as he is now, because he, the true self, cannot be touched, cannot be reached by any menace or any danger, but dwells beyond them. The universe which he sees is ever shining. His higher consciousness has put such a different aspect upon it that he is reconciled to it as it is today, and not merely as it will be one day. He knows well enough that if so many of the creatures within the universe have to pass through an evil phase, the Supreme Being behind the universe never does; and insofar as he has brought his own mind into harmony and unity with it he perceives how good will forever be more than evil. Thus in the end every man will have to solve the baffling problem of evil for himself. Nobody else can solve it for him, for he must penetrate to the very depths of his own consciousness, those mystical depths where the Overself resides, before he can possess himself of its true solution.

The true philosopher is conscious of one fact, taught him perennially by his Overself, that truth will triumph in the end, that good will outlast evil, that tolerance and kindness will overcome persecuting cruelty and that the spiritual tendencies will outlive and out wear the materialistic ones. If the realisation of these things are not for his time, if they are hidden in futurity, he learns to acquire Nature's patience. If the development of human entity seems to necessitate the bringing of evil to the surface of his life, the further development also necessitates the banishing of this evil from his life. Let this important qualification cheer us in every reflection about this dismal subject.

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Confusions and Contradictions in Mysticism

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(241-1) It is not only in its explanation of the social and practical defects of the immature yogi's outlook that philosophy can help the puzzled student but also in its explanation of the metaphysical defects. It has often been claimed that mystics the world over hold the same views even though they belong to different religions. A more critical study of their biographies would refute this claim. Such study would reveal that the emotional results of joy, uplift and certitude may be common to all but the intellectual results differ widely; that the unity that does exist is in the sphere of technique, not of

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¹⁵⁷ Handwritten notes at top of page read: "By PB"

revelation, in the meditation exercises which are practised and not in the illuminations which follow them. Why this should be so will become clear when the explanations we shall give are understood. On every important point it will be found that they do not all think alike and that their inner experiences are so dissimilar in some ways as they are similar in others. Complete uniformity in thought, ideation and attitude is something which has never been and can never be achieved in any mystical community. If, despite their lofty attainments, many renowned yogis saints prophets and mystics differ so widely from each other in their views judgments attitudes and teachings, it is surely important who believe in the worth of mystical practices to enquire into the matter rather than walk blindly. For this is equally true of Indian as of European mystics.

Why does an anarchical confusion of thought prevail in mystical circles? Why have spiritually advanced men contradicted each others' teachings? Why does Abdul Baha say reincarnation is untrue whereas the Buddha says it is true? Why does Sri Aurobindo repudiate the maya theory of Shankara¹⁵⁸ where the Maharshi¹⁵⁹ rejects Aurobindo's own tenets of the divine descent and the Supermind. Why do the disciples of Ramakrishna say that he was the avatar for the modern age whereas the Baha'is claim precisely this status for Baha'u'llah¹⁶⁰?

The variant attitudes of contemporary mahatmas towards the last way may serve as a further and highly important example of this chaotic situation. When it broke out in 1939 one of Swami Ramdas's devotees expressed great distress at the prospect of tremendous slaughter which opened up. The Swami replied that from the spiritual standpoint it was only a storm in a teacup and in the end was only God's 'Lila'¹⁶¹ or sport; hence there was no need to feel distressed about it as God's will was being accomplished.

The Maharshi's¹⁶² attitude may be gauged from that which he adopted a few years earlier. When the Italo-Abyssinian war was brought to his notice he replied that a sage could look on unconcerned even if 5,000,000 people were being slain, that everything was the outcome of karma, and that there was nothing to be done by the spiritually-minded except be an inactive spectator.

Sri Aurobindo has clearly stated: "You should not think of this as a fight for certain nations against others. It is a struggle against a darkness and falsehood that are trying to overwhelm the earth and mankind. It is a struggle for conditions in which men have freedom and room to grow in the Spirit. Those who fight for this cause are fighting for the Divine and against the threatened reign of the Asura (unseen anti-evolutionary entities.)"

¹⁵⁸ "Sankara" in the original.

¹⁵⁹ "Maharishhee" in the original.

¹⁶⁰ "Baha'u'llah" in the original.

¹⁶¹ "Leela" in the original.

¹⁶² "Maharishhee's" in the original.

Thus all three South Indian Yogis hold different and contradictory views on the most colossal tragedy which has yet happened in the history of mankind. Yet all have claimed to be self-realised, all enjoy this reputation throughout their country and are so in our personal belief also. Does this not prove our point that the attainment of the mystical self-realisation is no guarantee of the attainment of final truth? Does it not confirm the assertion made in "Hidden Teaching Beyond

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(continued from the previous page) Yoga" – an assertion which annoyed many mystically-minded readers – that the seeker must travel beyond the frontiers of conventional mysticism into its more philosophical development if he wants such certitude? Does it not suggest the need of attempting to clear up some of this confusion by means of an independent search for truth freed from blind personal loyalties? Does it not imply that the philosophical student must demand as an intellectual right the freedom to be exempt from the necessity of sharing all the views of any mystical teacher to whom he has given his allegiance?

It is a natural outcome of his independent investigation of truth that a man should sooner or later find himself rebelling against conventional teachings and traditional authorities. The need to escape from authoritarianism becomes paramount when we see such distinguished authorities contradicting each other in this way. The results of an enquiry as to why such confusions and contradictions do arise might add to our understanding of yoga processes and their psychological workings. It was only a strange intuition, clinched finally by our initiation into the hidden teaching, which enabled us to find our way to the true solution of this problem, whose striking soundness anyone may test for himself. The scruples of a delicate reserve, the shrinking of an innate diffidence and the fact that our own understanding of it was still not clarified, kept us from prematurely making this disclosure. If the mere act of sitting still for prolonged periods of time without any other form of endeavours could confer true enlightenment upon human creatures, then surely it ought also to bring the same result in the cases of so many different kinds of animals which perform precisely the same act. These animals do derive a kind of peaceful feeling from it, like the yogi, but they do not derive a higher knowledge.

Why then does meditation alone not suffice to yield adequate truth, although it does yield inner peace? The answer is that as soon as a yogi mystic or saint – no matter how celebrated he be – comes out of this deepest point of his meditation, this emptiness of pure spirit, or as soon as he begins to think in it or as soon as he begins to speak and

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write, he begins to construct an intellectual formulation. What the yogi has noted about the mysterious workings of the Overself over his head as it were is quite correct but what he has concluded from this premise may be partially incorrect. And this partial error will arise because he does not perceive that his conclusion is only a metaphysical interpretation of his mystical experience, not necessarily the truth about it. He does not perceive that his personal predilections and environmental suggestions give a particular character to the whole course of his mystical experiences, because they govern his unconscious interpretation of that experience. His consciousness of the sublime experience passes and must pass through the refractive medium of his merely human nature.

The lovely realisation of a single divine and undivided existence is a matter of fact; but the limited formulation of a particular idea related to it is a matter of opinion. Outside of the realisation of the Void, where all is utterly still, idea-less and thought-free, the mystic can find only his own pre-existent imaginations and his own personal ideas. Every revelation of which he delivers himself beyond the revelation that pure Mind, Spirit, exists is the fruit of mere imagination, is dependent on the intellectual position from which he regards his theme, and is liable to be contradicted or cancelled by someone else's revelation. The only certain affirmation which every mystic may unhesitatingly make is that his divine Self exists. After this insight ceases and all that he utters is but his reasoned conclusion, private opinion or personal belief. If it is to be grasped at all, the revelation has to filter down through the intellect and emotions into wakeful consciousness and is necessarily much affected by the process. The ego, whilst receiving inward grace from the Overself, translates the effect into intellectual and emotional terms of its own conventional understanding. It is at this point that all the contradictions between the teachings of different yogis start to appear. For what they then formulate is largely the result of or strongly influenced

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(continued from the previous page) by their habitual thought-tendencies, intellectual capacities, emotional direction, environmental suggestions and general world-view. Or it reflects the racial geographical contemporary and even climatic limitations amid which they find themselves. Most often however the limitations of their general experience, the immaturity of their general experience, the immaturity of their thinking and the primitivity of their feeling, are inevitably reflected into the translation.

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¹⁶⁵ PB himself inserted "(3)" by hand.

Many centuries ago a sage compared this situation with that which happens when night falls. With the coming of darkness, the man addicted to sexual pleasure will go in search of a woman, the thief will go in search of a house he can stealthily enter, the mystic will go in search of a secluded spot to practice divine contemplation. Thus one and the same event brings with it three different suggestions to three different persons. In each case the man understands the significance of his experience according to his pre-existing inclinations. The mystic's emotional past enters into this formulation as much as his intellectual qualities. He transfers his ego's limitations to the Overself's illuminations, mixes his ignorance with its wisdom. Where few respond to the pure mystical experience of the Overself with a pure understanding of it, most interpose the ego's own ideas fears fantasies and eccentricities, as well as wishes, thus distorting or falsifying it. They may unconsciously bend lofty truth to conform with their little prepossession.

We can often trace the gradual formation of a revelation from the ideas upon which the revelator himself dwelt constantly during his earlier years, ideas which he had acquired from teachers environments or reading. It is out of such ardent concentration upon them that his own doctrines came to be developed. The environment within which he was brought up, shapes his thought and will continue to do so unless he revolts. For instance, Sri Aurobindo Ghose's fourteen years association with European life, men, culture and language shows itself not only in his public writing but even in his private thinking. The idea of evolution, for instance. Only a single Indian mystic, religionist or thinker out of all India's several thousand years line of teachers ever mentioned this idea in his works, as far as I am aware. That was Kapila. And even he gives it the form of Nature's inevitability arising out of what went before rather than "Nature's purposive progress." Abdul Baha, one of the Persian prophets of the Bahai Faith, stated that reincarnation is an impossibility. Philosophy however replied that (without discussing the truth of the doctrine itself, which is a different matter) the Bahai rejection of reincarnation and other Hindu-Buddhist tenets is not a result of its prophets' Overself revelation but of their personal outlook. Bahai teachings on these points are not spiritual insights but intellectual formulations. Its rejection of rebirth, for example, is natural in the light of this doctrine's unfamiliarity to Western peoples and Semitic religions. Such rejection merely reveals the prophet's personal limitations of experience and narrowness of culture. He knew next to nothing about Hindu-Buddhist doctrines and estimated their importance accordingly. This is further proved by Abdul Baha's statement (in the book "Some Answered Questions") that Buddha taught the oneness of God, a statement which is absurd because Buddha refused consistently either to agree or deny that there is any God at all. The Bahai teacher's ideas about this and other matters are forced on him by his whole past and personal trend rather than revealed to him by an independent and external source, and his statements are, in part, traceable to what he has been taught and whom he has been associated with.

How many other prophets or yogis have confused the creations of their own fancy with reality, the workings of their own ego with divinely inspired truth? How

many interpretations of mystical experience have been fashioned by temperamental inclinations and personal idiosyncrasies? When errors are put forward within the fold and under the language of mysticism, it is likely that indiscriminating people will swallow them along with the truths and this is exactly what often happens. For it is a common mistake to regard these temporary and accidental characteristics of a mystical experience for the permanent and fixed ones. If his own human wishes ideas memories and emotions colour the ordinary yogi's primal experience, the irony is that although he may understand well enough that he had to withdraw from them during meditation to attain this pure experience, he does not perceive that he ought also to withdraw from them to explain this experience. Such a withdrawal is effected by the philosophic discipline. The authentic presence power and light of the Overself is separated by this discipline from the ego's emotional intellectual or imaginative

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(continued from the previous page) formulations in which it is half-hidden. If it is difficult for the student, who through philosophical training has become conscious of his personal contributions, to disengage himself from their influence, it is nearly impossible for the mystical aspirant who does not even know that such a discipline exists, to do so.

All this is in consonance with mentalist doctrine that outside of the Void, of pure Mind, whose realisation is the only genuine unadulterated mystical experience, the seer prophet mystic or yogi finds only the repercussions of his own human thinking, imagination wishes and opinion, only the action and reaction of his own mind, only an idea. Whoever attains such a height loses awareness of all theological conceptions for the time. It is only the force of long habit that makes him pick them up again on his descent from it. His conception of the Real is thus in part the product of his own character, of his inherited attitudes and of his acquired beliefs. Every such an one who has not been initiated into the mentalist teaching may write statements or deliver himself of utterances which, although written or delivered in perfect truthfulness and utter sincerity, may yet have the unfortunate effect of misleading all those who accept his words blindly uncritically and credulously. The absence of rational criticism and scientific method from his intellectual make-up will naturally reflect itself in the kind of ideas which he creates, for himself or his followers, to explain his inner life.

Where all this is not understood we may witness the ludicrous result of intellectual shortcomings being elevated into divine wisdom, cultural narrowness being

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¹⁶⁷ "(4)" was typed at the top of the page.

proclaimed as mystical knowledge and experiential immaturity being put forward as transcendental insight. And where the knowledge of reputed masters is so subject to relativity, would it not be wiser for students to hold only floating views? Unfortunately, only the deepest devotion to truth can shake off the strong influence generated by the uncritical personal loyalties of guru worship.

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The Destiny of Egypt

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THE DESTINY OF EGYPT¹⁶⁹

(249-1) There is a fascination about Egypt which few Western people can resist. The amazing record of its lengthy history, the impressive mystery of its vanished religion, the colossal conceptions which underlie its architecture and especially the Great Pyramid and the Sphinx, all these mingle with the picturesque scene of the Nile Valley under an ever-shining sun to make an attractive significance for us.

The discovery of Tutankhamun's¹⁷⁰ tomb some years after World War I signalled an astonishing recrudescence of Egyptian taste and ideas into modern life. The close fitting skirts of women, the geometrically-patterned horizontal lines of decoration on dress and wall, the massive architecture of modern office blocks, the increasing interest in Spiritualism, and other parallels, indicate the unexpected entry of ancient Egyptian influence on our own epoch like some sudden reincarnation.

The history of this mysterious land has met and mingled with the history of Britain and Babylon, Israel and Greece, Persia and Rome, France and Turkey, and – still earlier – with distant India and vanished Atlantis and Lemuria. It has influenced men who have themselves influenced the course of history, men like Alexander, Julius Caesar, Marc Antony, Napoleon and Lord Kitchener; sages who have influenced the course of human thought, sages like Plato and Pythagoras and Moses.

Before the above-mentioned re-awakening of interest in Egypt, she seemed to have slipped [largely]¹⁷¹ out of the world's eye and to have lain aside, tired and lifeless after her immense [past.]¹⁷²

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¹⁶⁹ PB himself inserted "B" and "by Paul Brunton" by hand.

¹⁷⁰ "Tutankhamen's" in the original.

¹⁷¹ PB himself inserted "largely" by hand.

¹⁷² PB himself deleted the section following "immense past" by hand. It originally read:

"My first teacher in occultism, predicted this re-awakening long before and constantly drew my attention to things Egyptian. Finally he said one day:

"The new religion, when it comes, will be born in Egypt. Forces are concentrating in the inner worlds for an outburst of light in the land of the Nile which will spread itself all over the world,

[Egypt]¹⁷³ occupies, in the geographical land mass of our globe,¹⁷⁴ a mid-way position between East and West, between North and South. Its two chief cities, Cairo and Alexandria have become so cosmopolitan that plenty of English, French, Italian and German voices may be heard against the background of Arabic ones. The psychic atmosphere of the country is peculiar and felt by all sensitive persons who visit it. No doubt the intense dryness of the climate has something to do with it. No doubt the intense dryness of the climate has something to do with it, but powerful influences magically generated in centuries past by the priest-magicians has still more to do with it.

Just as the warm dry sand has kept in perfect preservation for thousands of years the buried temples and shrines which have only been uncovered during the past fifty years, so the warm dry climate has kept the psychic influences equally well preserved for an even longer period.

I must utter this warning: In Egypt one finds great evil as well as great good as part of this psychic and spiritual legacy. The terrible things which happened when the priesthood became degenerate but retained their occult powers, still reflect themselves in the atmospheric

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(continued from the previous page) influences of the country. But on the other hand, in such places as the Pyramid and the Sphinx, the temples of Karnak and the shrine of Abydos, and the infinite stretch of desert sand which encloses the land, I have come into conscious relation with the white powers and learnt what mighty strength for godliness still exists there.

When, after considerable difficulties with the authorities, I was permitted to spend an entire night inside the darkness of the Great Pyramid, inside the King's Chamber as the central shrine is called, I did not undertake this enterprise through any desire of my own. I did it because I had been bidden. Nor did I know what was going

and particularly the Western world. It will have little to do with the modern race of Egyptians but will spring from the immortal spiritual legacy left behind there by the ancient Adept-Kings."

Whether his prophecy will prove correct or not, one may say that no country in the world is so fitting a starting-place for the next religion as Egypt"

¹⁷³ PB himself changed "It" to "Egypt" by hand to complete the link from the above deleted material.

¹⁷⁴ We have inserted commas around this independent clause for clarity.

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to happen, as I sat there with quieted mind and concentrated attention. And when I was taken out of my physical body and led into a sloping passage which was mysteriously illumined, my expectancy was so greatly aroused that I foolishly disobeyed my guide's order not to look round. Immediately the experience came to an end, but not before I had seen enough to fill me with wonder. For I had seen a great circular chamber filled with ancient records engraved on metal and sculptured in stone. And my spirit-guide had informed me that those things belonged to Egypt's pre-historic past, to her sacred days when Adept-kings ruled the land.

Is all this so fantastic as it sounds? The seers of modern Egypt have predicted that those records will be found, that the Pyramid will be "disembowelled" to give forth her age-old treasures of esoteric wisdom and history, and that these will constitute proved revelations which will astonish the whole [world.]¹⁷⁶

There is a great mystery here. The early Egyptians were very fond of the habit of concealment. The Arabs who came later discovered this and have looted much treasure from buried hiding-places in different parts of the country. An engraved stone was found last century in the ruins of the Temple of Hathor at Dendera,¹⁷⁷ bearing the following inscription: "There was found the great ground-plan of the town of Dendera, an ancient drawing on a roll of leather, of the time of the followers of Horus. It was found in the interior of the brick wall of the south side of the temple." The stone goes on to say that as a result of this discovery King Thutmose¹⁷⁸ was able to restore correctly the temple structure.

Professor Selim Hassan who was in charge of the excavations near the Sphinx, showed me once some cunningly-hidden small rooms filled with statuary, which he discovered hidden behind a blank wall below the ground level. Why should not the Pyramid contain greater treasure?

Jesus did not disdain to betake himself to Egypt during his youth and learn the wisdom of its bearded High [Priests.]¹⁷⁹ It is certainly a significant fact that only within the last twenty years have excavations around the Pyramid been made on so vast a scale, and that the Sphinx has at last been freed from the mass of sand in which it lay half-buried for centuries. These things are omens, harbingers of the more important work [of]¹⁸⁰ discovery which destiny has marked on the calendar of time as coming nearer. But before that happens it may well be that the dark evil places in the land will have to be purified by some great natural catastrophe or by some powerful human agency.

¹⁷⁶ PB himself deleted "One of these mystics, who is named Elie, a Syrian by birth, told me that the discovery will be timed to synchronise with the advent of the next world religion which, he asserted, would begin in Egypt." From after "world" by hand.

¹⁷⁷ "Denderah" in the original.

¹⁷⁸ "Thothmes" in the original.

¹⁷⁹ PB himself deleted "Who knows whether a great spiritual message may not one day come out of Egypt?" from after "Priests" by hand.

¹⁸⁰ PB himself deleted "spiritual" from after "of" by hand.

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3

(continued from the previous page) Whatever striking new facts the world may learn then, the old eternal principles of religion will remain. "I am in thee and therefore thou canst in no way escape Me," says the divinity seated in the heart of man. Let me finish with a brief verse from an Arabic book which I found in Egypt, written by the Sufi-Muhammadan sage-poet, Ibn Al-Arabi:¹⁸²

"O Pearl Divine! White pearl that in a shell
Of dark mortality is made to dwell,
Alas, while common gems we prize and hoard
Thy inestimable worth is still ignored!"

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THE DESTINY OF EGYPT

Duplicates

255¹⁸⁴
ALONG THE MYSTIC ROAD

256¹⁸⁵
ALONG THE MYSTIC ROAD

257¹⁸⁶-270
CAN WE COMMUNICATE WITH THE DEAD

271¹⁸⁷
CAN WE COMMUNICATE WITH THE DEAD

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¹⁸² "Ibn Al Arabi" in the original.

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CAN WE COMMUNICATE WITH THE DEAD

273¹⁸⁹-276

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR PHILOSOPHY

277¹⁹⁰-280

ALONG THE MYSTIC ROAD

281¹⁹¹-288

PRELUDE

289¹⁹²

IS THE SOUL IN THE HEART?

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IS THE SOUL IN THE HEART?

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REMINISCENCES OF PB

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REMINISCENCES OF PB

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WHAT CAN WE DO FOR PHILOSOPHY

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WHAT CAN WE DO FOR PHILOSOPHY¹⁹⁸

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CONFUSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS IN MYSTICISM

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¹⁹⁸ PB himself inserted "11" by hand.

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CONFUSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS IN MYSTICISM

297²⁰¹
THE DESTINY OF EGYPT

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THE DESTINY OF EGYPT

Nora Briggs

299
NORA BRIGGS²⁰³

(299-1)²⁰⁴ The greatest difficulty which the average Western person has in the way of accepting mystical experience is his deeply etched belief that nothing can have meaning or validity unless a rational explanation is immediately available. A very little reflection will bring to view the fact that there is an element of a-rationality in all experience. Our knowledge of the world and of our awareness of it and the relation between the two, if two there be is slight and incomplete in the commonly accepted academic sense of knowing. To lay aside temporarily the questioning attitude of the surface mind and to observe with a still mind the flow of inner experience is then the height of rationality, in that it is the scientific approach, the testing of the mind by the mind with a little understood technique. The possibly resulting experience of knowing the nature of a thing centrally

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NORA BRIGGS

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²⁰³ PB himself inserted "N.B" in the left margin of the page - likely referring to Nora Briggs.

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(303-1) Whoever dreams that he can attain unalloyed pleasure deludes himself. Only when repeated disappointment has educated him, will he rise to the higher view and attain what is really possible, – unalloyed peace.

It is not possible to bring the circumstances of life into an impeccable adjustment so long as ignorant or evil persons exist to create disorder. But from the very pain and chaos which they create it is possible to learn the inexorable lessons of the interdependence of all mankind and the inevitability of ultimate unity. It is possible also by the way of the philosophic discipline to recognise and then to eradicate the causes within oneself which contribute to the suffering and disturbance in the world, and so to add one's mite towards tipping the balance towards serenity and peaceful living.

Out at the periphery of understanding of the philosophic teaching many foolish people become cranks and develop cults based on false doctrines. We will hold no truck with such people. They are incurable by reason and amenable only to the hardest blows of karma, victims of their own irrational dogmas, slaves to their own emotional complexes. Philosophy does not dispense with the necessity for clear thinking, it depends upon it, and carries it to the farthest and finest point possible to humanity now. That it admits of knowledge a-rationally possible, gives no credence to folly and irrationality.

(305-1) I am so sorry to hear of the pressure of troubles upon you. Perhaps it is the most grievous of all ills watching the suffering of loved ones. But birth is inseparable from death, and the brightness of youth from the decay of age. How platitudinous that reads – just because we put up such resistance against accepting it, I suppose. No thought about it makes it any the more acceptable, and so we push it from us. What ever answer there is then clearly lies beyond thinking, even beyond expression in words. It must lie in the heart's experience of its own deep layer of consciousness. It must be within the knowledge born of experience that all life is ideational –

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(305-2) My own experience is that all life's happenings offer a great variety of ways in which one can react: what is often unnoticed is how subject we all are to the pressure of the average human consciousness around us, the average mental and emotional atmosphere of the age. You know how Samuel Butler tried to break this – he suggested many ways of doing this in his book EREWHON. I do not know that he was necessarily always right, but he made some good shots. If for one moment you could look upon the illness of your mother with all its train of problems for you with complete detachment, the world would regard you as a most unfeeling daughter and probably say so loudly, but is the world right? You might be a much more efficiently helpful daughter.

(305-3) I feel sure PB would say that to hold the memory of moments of peace is a wise and good exercise. If at the same time you can remember that it was not alien to you, not just PB's peace it was the impact of his great achievement which made you for the moment aware of the depths in yourself. At least that is what I think happened to me. To seek to live in the peace during times of stress need not be escape, it can be the surrender of the ego, the saying "Thy will, not mine be done" –

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NORA BRIGGS

Our Use of the Name "Philosophy"

307

NORA BRIGGS

Our Use of the Name "Philosophy"

(continued from the previous page) Therefore I feel that to use the word as we are doing is not quite accurate. Should it not have some qualifying adjective – true philosophy, or the Philosophy of Mysticism, or even Meta-physical philosophy (clumsy though it sounds) or "Our Philosophy."

At least should it not be introduced with some qualifying adjective or phrase. The Shorter Oxford definition of the word for example. This is really the sense in which the word is being used throughout; but it still is not quite right semantically to ignore the other connotations which have grown up around the word, and to claim it exclusively for one usage only without explanation.

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Our Use of the Name "Philosophy"

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