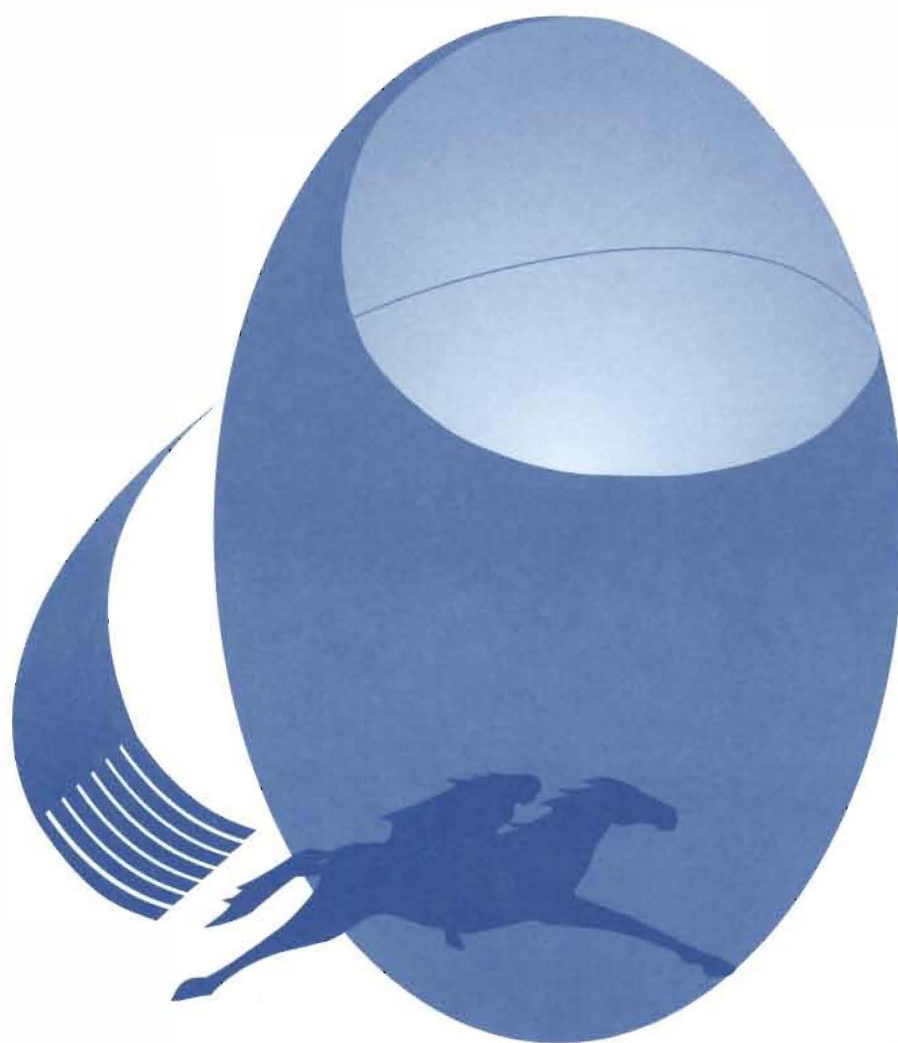


FOHAT

Volume VII, Number 1

Spring 2003



*The Arrival of
God on
the Indian
Subcontinent*

*The Symbology
of the
Easter Hare*

*A New Theory of
Comets and Their
Effects on
the Solar System*

*Following
in the Path
of the Bodhisattva*

A Vehicle for the Ancient Wisdom Tradition

This magazine is an invitation for followers of all traditions to enter into a dialogue whose goal is Truth and whose means is Universal Brotherhood.

THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY CONFERENCE - REMINDER

The Foundation for Theosophical Studies is hosting an international conference on theosophical history on the weekend of 14-15 June 2003 at 50 Gloucester Place, London W1U 8EA, England. Previous conferences have been held in London in 1986-9, 1995 and 1997, and others in San Diego, USA and Edmonton, Canada.

Fohat magazine has been notified that Nicolas Goodrick-Clarke will be presenting a paper tentatively titled "The Divine Fire: H.P. Blavatsky and the Theology of Electricity." It will be interesting to see what new insights into the magazine's namesake are uncovered.

The conference is non-residential, and only light refreshments will be served. Those presenting papers, and those attending as guests must make their own arrangements for travel, meals and accommodation. There will be a small fee for registration.

SUBBA ROW COLLECTED WRITINGS

H.J. Spierenburg has notified us of his new Subba Row publications. Available from:

Point Loma Publications, Inc.
PO Box 6507
San Diego, CA
USA 92166

T. Subba Row Collected Writings, Volume I, compiled by Henk J. Spierenburg, Point Loma Publications, Inc., San Diego 2001, Library of the Congress Card Number 2001-132432, ISBN 1-889598-30-5, pp. xxiv, 264, USD 18.50, EUR 24,96

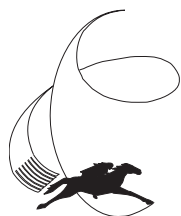
T. Subba Row Collected Writings, Volume II, compiled by Henk J. Spierenburg, Point Loma Publications, Inc., San Diego 2002, Library of the Congress Card Number 2001-132432, ISBN 1-889598-31-3, pp. x, 265-654, USD 18.50, EUR 24,96

The compiler has identified, with a few exceptions, all Subba Row's Sanskrit and other sources. The first volume contains an extensive biography (pp. xv-xxiv) and a never before published portrait (p. xiv) of Subba Row. The two volumes contain many pages of material not included in earlier compilations (pp. 44-47, 97-108, 174-184, 265-314, 353-355) and 1026 footnotes by the compiler. There is a bibliography in the second volume (pp. 597-609) with 229 titles and an Index of 44 pages with about 2600 words and notions.

Dr. Spierenburg has also notified us that on the website of David Pratt:
<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/dp5/subba.htm>
can be found the biography and the never before published portrait.

NOTE OF INTEREST: TEMPLE IN THE JUNGLE

A temple has been discovered in the Cambodian jungle near the Thai border recently. Believed to be from the 9th or 10th century, it is thought to be dedicated to Brahmin beliefs. For more information go to: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/03/05/1046826443356.html>



FOHAT

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To be featured in coming issues:

The date of the issue to be dedicated to William Q. Judge has been finalized — Look to Fall 2003 for some exciting new information on this much maligned Founder.

The Judge issue will be foreshadowed with Part One of an article in Summer 2003.

How Can I Be Part of the Cure?

In a recent *Secret Doctrine* class, we looked at a passage concerning the *protyle*. We read:

For if “the possible unit is only a possibility as an actuality of nature, as an individual of any kind,” and as every individual natural object is capable of division, and by division loses its unity, or ceases to be a unit, it is so only in the realm of exact sciences in a world as deceptive as it is illusive. In the realm of the Esoteric sciences the unit divided *ad infinitum*, instead of losing its unity, approaches with every division the planes of the only eternal Reality. (SD I, 617)

As we approach the infinitesimal, we approach “the only eternal Reality.” We looked at this from the point of view of homeopathy. In homeopathy tinctures are diluted to become more potent:

To produce different remedy potencies, the mother tincture is diluted in an alcohol/water mixture according to one of two scales, the decimal (x) and centesimal (c). Between every stage of dilution the diluted tincture is succussed (shaken vigorously). In the decimal scale, the dilution factor is 1:10; and in the centesimal, it is 1:100. To produce a 1c potency of the *Allium* remedy, for example, one drop of the mother tincture is added to 99 drops of an alcohol/water mixture and succussed. To produce a 2c potency, one drop of the 1c mixture is added to 99 drops of an alcohol/water mixture and succussed. . . .

Once a homeopathic remedy has been diluted beyond a 12c potency, it is unlikely that a molecule of the original substance still remains. (*Homeopathy: The Principles & Practice of Treatment*, 20-21)

What exactly is happening here?

Let us take Mercuric chloride as an example. This is a violent poison that if taken leads to, among other things, violent burning in the throat and stomach. As a cure it helps to treat ulcers. To make the cure a tincture of mercuric chloride is first created, a tincture that in itself would be poisonous. The analogy would then run as follows: just as this tincture would be poisonous to the individual body, so too would the life of selfish and gross materialism be poisonous to the body of humanity. This tincture contains too many gross elements that are corrosive within the human body. However, by embracing the spiritual we step out of the old body into the new, and bring with us only a drop of the old. If we work hard and succuss this drop into the new waters, we will grow. We will have made of ourselves a tincture of 1c potency and consequently be less poisonous and more curative. By helping the less potent and by being guided by those more potent we ascend this ladder of potency, struggling beyond the dross of each successive plane of Nature.

Each drop that we take with us is less gross and more essential. We are moving closer to the centre of ourselves, closer to our essence. At some point we move beyond the physical and into the spiritual as “it is unlikely that a molecule of the original substance still remains.” Yet just as this essential remedy is very powerful on the body, so is the essential soul a powerful remedy within the body of humanity. This is because the energies are operating at a fundamental level and subtle movement at that level can result in marked change at the physical level. Of course, it is also necessary to have the appropriate cure for each ailment and that is determined by the dharma of each soul, what some people call their ray.

Each one of us can be part of the problem or part of the solution. Not only are we a part of Humanity, but as a Humanity we are an aspect of Nature. It is our duty, then, to keep Nature healthy. What we must understand is that nobody is going to make us do this. There will be no sudden illumination without struggle. The gods will not come down to us, we will have to lift ourselves up to Them. There is no personal god carrying us along the path. There is no god who is going to save us from our ignorance. It is up to us to move ourselves into purer waters. It is by moving into purer waters that we acquire more wisdom and exercise more power. This is the only way. We take with us only the essence, the best of who we are.

If we sully the waters that we live in too much we will poison ourselves and Nature will do what it has to in order to clean the mess up. This, at times in the past, has meant that large portions of humanity and all of the so-called advances of civilized society have been wiped out. We have had to start from a primitive state and try to advance once again. Usually, only the spiritual survive, as it is they who understand that they must work with and rely upon Nature when all social institutions are stripped away. If you do not trust in Nature you will not survive. If you are not working to maintain and keep clean your little corner of Nature, then you are probably a part of the problem. If you are not striving to help your brother along the path then you are probably not making too much progress yourself. Each step along the path is just that, a step. It is not a huge distance. Humanity may feel itself in a crucible at the moment, but the distance out is not far. We know as a humanity what direction we must take in order to move on. There is no material cure for what ails us. We have to advance together as a whole in a spiritual step. The path to the top of the mountain may be different for each one of us — that is where tolerance and brotherhood must come in — but for each one of us it is upward. There is purer water towards the top.



Letters to the Editor:

Suicide

This is in response to *Fohat*, Vol. 6, #4, Winter 2002.

If the contents proposed in the suicide article in the Winter 2002 *Fohat* issue are actual, then capital punishment and suicide have a lot in common regarding after-death states. The article proposes that, compared with a natural death, people who die of violent acts are only partly dead. It is disturbing to think that, rather than 'executing' a solution to protect the world from criminals through capital punishment, we are possibly endangering it. Could that be? Does capital punishment fall short of attaining the desired object?

Such ideas compel me to re-examine my understanding of capital punishment. Summarizing after-death states as presented in the article, humans consist of seven principles. Three make up our higher nature, and four our lower nature. In a normal (natural) death situation, these principles separate in accordance with the usual processes. In violent premature death, separation of the principles cannot occur; by the law of Nature, they are not ready to dissociate. Though that person is dazed for a short while, the principles remain intact. Subject to great suffering, consciousness is retained and this person lingers in earth's atmosphere until his/her allotted life span is reached. In other words, capital punishment, suicide and accidental deaths, out-of-time with prescribed natural deaths, are merely loss of the physical body. Homeless, belonging nowhere in the natural scheme of things, they become what most of us call ghosts. I expect that theosophy has different terminology and categories for this. These ghosts, still engrossed with vice and passion as if they were still walking the earth, rage in the astral realms.* Occupied with a thirst for life or for revenge, they are compelled to haunt people in an effort to quench that appetite through innocent living proxies. Playing on our weaknesses and negative qualities, they can influence or tempt us to do bad things, inject thoughts or poison us, so-to-speak, especially the weak-willed and sensitive people. Venomous ghosts can awaken innate and dormant tendencies of malice in some people, urging them to commit crimes by the dictate of an extraordinary force unknown to them. That would explain why at times criminals do not know why they engaged in a malicious act in the first place. That would also reveal the risks of mediumship and

channeling. The result of capital punishment is that the villains are a worse menace to humanity than when they were alive. That is the price we pay for our ignorance on this matter. If so then, as unforgivable and appalling the nature of the crimes committed by those on death row may be, they are less harmful to us if allowed to live.

What makes this barbarous custom even worse is that two victims of homicide (two earthbound ghosts) then hover about the planet — the slayer's victim and the slayer. It is a vicious circle. Is there a difference between these two in the after-death states? I imagine there is in suffering. If the killer's casualty did not possess strong passions during earth life, chances are he finds himself in a less hostile state of existence and would be quite harmless to us? Perhaps they just go to sleep and injure no one? Given the number of violent deaths that occur daily on a global scale, this is a very serious problem. Countless ghouls must dwell in the astral realms just yearning to prey on people.

Violent deaths have existed since the beginning of humanity, and the depraved bodiless souls have always afflicted man without his knowledge of it. Are there any predators roaming in the after-death states so destructive and full of hate that they do not disappear from our realms even after they finally reach the end of their natural life term?

Death penalty for crime is as brutal and savage an act as any other murder. The question remains, how do we punish criminals? What are we to do with people on death row?

Liù-Yuè

Professional Historians

Dear Sir:

I just finished your article in the Fall issue, "The Limitations of the Professional Historian". It is a second look at K. Paul Johnson's *The Masters Revealed*. Historians, like the feline family, come in all shapes, sizes and temperaments. For general purposes I would sort them into three categories:

1. Orthodox
2. Personal
3. Fraudulent

... continued on page 23

* Invisible region surrounding the globe.

God's Arrival in India - Part I

David Reigle

Ancient India is considered to be the spiritual motherland of our planet. According to *The Secret Doctrine*, it was the home of the once universal Wisdom Tradition. From ancient India, called Āryāvarta, the wisdom teachings went forth into all the religions and philosophies of the world. H. P. Blavatsky writes:

For Āryāvarta, the bright focus into which had been poured in the beginning of time the flames of Divine Wisdom, had become the center from which radiated the “tongues of fire” into every portion of the globe.¹

The one Wisdom Tradition thus took various forms for various peoples. In time these varying forms became religious dogma. But all had their origin in the sacred land of Āryāvarta.

But all such dogma grew out of the one root, the root of wisdom, which grows and thrives on the Indian soil. There is not an Archangel that could not be traced back to its prototype in the sacred land of Āryāvarta.²

It is to ancient India, home of the Wisdom Tradition, that we must turn to find the one truth behind the various religions of the world, and the key to the great mysteries of humanity.

... we affirm that, if Egypt furnished Greece with her civilization, and the latter bequeathed hers to Rome, Egypt herself had, in those unknown ages when Menes reigned, received her laws, her social institutions, her arts and her sciences, from pre-Vedic India; and that, therefore, it is in that old initiatrix of the priests — the adepts of all the other countries — we must seek for the key to the great mysteries of humanity.³

The most central truth behind the various religions of the world is generally thought to be that of the existence of God. Finding the key to the great mysteries of humanity, then, would depend on knowing that the various names for God found in the various religions of the world all refer to the same reality. But is God a reality? Although the Theosophical movement, in its efforts to promote the universal brotherhood of humanity, has had to act as if the answer to this question is yes, the teachers behind the Theosophical movement have answered it with an unequivocal no.

Belief in God is so central to modern ideas of spirituality, that it is hardly possible to conceive of a true spiritual tradition without God. A. O. Hume could not imagine that the Wisdom Tradition lacked God; so in his exposition of it written on the basis of

correspondence with the Theosophical Mahatmas, he drafted a chapter on God. The Mahatma K.H. responded with one of the clearest and most unmistakable statements we have of their doctrine, saying:

Neither our philosophy nor ourselves believe in a God. . . . Our philosophy . . . is preeminently the science of effects by their causes and of causes by their effects. . . . Our doctrine knows no compromises. It either affirms or denies, for it never teaches but that which it knows to be the truth. Therefore, we deny God both as philosophers and as Buddhists. We know there are planetary and other spiritual lives, and we know there is in our system no such thing as God, either personal or impersonal. . . . The word “God” was invented to designate the unknown cause of those effects which man has either admired or dreaded without understanding them, and since we claim and that we are able to prove what we claim — i.e., the knowledge of that cause and causes — we are in a position to maintain there is no God or Gods behind them.⁴

In another letter, K.H. said that if Hume publishes his account,

I will have H.P.B. or Djual Khool deny the whole thing; as I cannot permit our sacred philosophy to be so disfigured.⁵

Nonetheless, after H. P. Blavatsky's death, this position ceased to be upheld, so that at present the vast majority of members of the Theosophical Society are believers in God. Similarly, other teachings with roots in Theosophy that arose later, such as the Djual Khool/Alice Bailey books, utilized the God idea.⁶

The sincere and intelligent modern student of the ancient and Ageless Wisdom Tradition, then, often takes for granted that the idea of God in some form or other is necessarily found in all religions. Now that Buddhism has become more widely known, its noble teachings of compassion have impressed many such students. Like Hume in regard to Theosophy, they cannot imagine that a tradition so noble could be Godless. They then assume that the idea of God must be there under some other name or concept, since they know that this belief is universal. But is it? The Mahatma K.H. tells us that, “the idea of God is not an innate but an acquired notion.”⁷ If this is true, and the notion of God was in fact never part of the Wisdom Tradition, but was acquired as these truths went forth from their home in ancient India, history should show this.

There are three religions of ancient India, those now called Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism. Neither

Buddhism nor Jainism have ever taught the existence of God. They are non-theistic. Hinduism presently teaches the existence of God. It is now theistic. However, there is considerable evidence that none of the various schools of Hinduism originally taught the existence of God. In other words, all of ancient India, home of the Wisdom Tradition, was once non-theistic. To show this, we will here attempt to trace God's arrival in India.

Jainism and Buddhism — Religions without God

Jainism is the religion of the Jinas, the Conquerors, those who have conquered their passions and thus achieved liberation. They have done this without the help of God; for indeed, God is not to be found in their worldview. The worldview taught by the Jinas is described in the authoritative *Tattvārthādhigama-sūtra*.⁸ This text is a compendium of the teachings of the 24th and last Jina of our time-cycle, called Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, who in turn only re-established the teachings of the previous Jinas, going back in time without beginning.

In the Jaina worldview, karma takes the place of God. No one punishes us but ourselves, through our own former actions; and no one rewards us but ourselves, again through our own actions. The working of karma requires no intelligence to guide it nor power to implement it. It is simply the way things are, an inherent part of the eternal fabric of our universe. The universe has not been created, nor will it end. Matter is eternal and souls are eternal. Souls must through asceticism free themselves from the karmic bondage of matter. In this universe there is no place for God, nor any function for such a being to perform.

The religion of the Jinas is the religion of harmlessness, *ahiṃsā*. Its first principle is to not harm any living thing. This also means no retaliation. The karmic cycle of violence will not stop until it stops with us. For ages, Jainas made harmlessness the guiding principle of their lives. With no help from God, Jainism shares with Buddhism the distinction of having the best record on nonviolence of all religions known to history.

Buddhism is the religion of the Buddhas, the Awakened Ones, those who have awakened to truth or reality and thereby achieved liberation. They, too, have done this without the help of God; for God is not to be found in their worldview either. The basic worldview taught by the Buddhas is described in the authoritative *Abhidharma-kośa*.⁹ This text is a compendium of the teachings of the last Buddha, called Gautama or Śākyamuni. While modern writers recognize only this Buddha, the Buddhist texts speak

of many previous Buddhas, extending back into the night of time.

In the Buddhist worldview, as in the Jaina, karma takes the place of God. How karma works is understood differently in Buddhism than it is in Jainism, but the results are the same. We make our own destiny through our own actions. The universe and everything in it operates by its own laws, in the sense that science gives to the law of gravity. These require no lawgiver, and function without the need of God. As the present Dalai Lama of Tibet once said to a priest at an ecumenical meeting, "your business is God, my business is karma."

The religion of the Buddhas is the religion of compassion, *karuṇā*. In Tibet, Buddhist monks begin their meditations by generating compassion toward all living beings. This includes especially those who have wronged or harmed them. Thus after the brutal Chinese Communist takeover of Tibet, the Buddhist response was one of nonviolence. This was recognized worldwide when in 1989 the Dalai Lama won the Nobel Peace Prize for his thirty years of efforts to regain his homeland, during which violence was never considered an option. What country that calls upon God to bless it can boast such an example?

Both Jainism and Buddhism teach that each one of us can become perfected, through our own efforts, and be liberated from the compulsory round of re-birth. To do this requires the will power to follow the path taught by the Jinas or the Buddhas in face of all obstacles, as did Mahāvīra and Śākyamuni. This way of self-reliance is in direct contrast with the way of surrender to God taught in theistic religions.

Some modern writers have attempted to find in Buddhism an equivalent for God, or Godhead, and have found this in the Buddhist idea of *nirvāṇa*. Thus, Huston Smith in his deservedly popular book, *The World's Religions*, writes:

We may conclude with Conze that *nirvana* is not God defined as personal creator, but that it stands sufficiently close to the concept of God as Godhead to warrant the name in that sense.¹⁰

This refers to Edward Conze's 1951 book, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*, which in turn refers to Aldous Huxley's 1944 classic, *The Perennial Philosophy*, on the difference between God and Godhead. According to Huxley, the Perennial Philosophy has at all times and in all places taught a divine Ground of all existence, a spiritual Absolute, or Godhead. This has a personal aspect, who has form, activity, and attributes such as mercy; and this is God. In this philosophy, the two go together; you cannot have one without the other. In order to fit Buddhism into this scheme, Huxley had to make Godhead and God correspond to two of the three bodies of a Buddha.

Thus he made the second body of a Buddha, the Sambhoga-kāya, correspond “to Isvara or the personal God of Judaism, Christianity and Islam,”¹¹ an equation that few Buddhists would accept. God is simply not found in Buddhism.

In making the *nirvāṇa* comparison, Smith distinguished God as Godhead from the personal creator God. The idea of an impersonal Godhead, “the God-without-form of Hindu and Christian mystical phraseology,”¹² is, however, invariably linked with the idea of a personal God. Godhead must be able to think and act, even if through God. Were it possible to conceive of Godhead without God, that is, without any of the qualities that normally define God — those of being all-knowing, all-powerful, ruler of all, or even of merely being conscious — then why call it Godhead, or God as Godhead?

When A. O. Hume wished to describe the One Life taught in the Wisdom Tradition as God, the Mahatma K.H. replied:

If people are willing to accept and to regard as God our ONE LIFE immutable and unconscious in its eternity they may do so and thus keep to one more gigantic misnomer. But then they will have to say with Spinoza that there is not and that we cannot conceive any other substance than God; . . . — and thus become Pantheists. . . . If we ask the theist is your God vacuum, space or matter, they will reply no. And yet they hold that their God penetrates matter though he is not himself matter. When we speak of our One Life we also say that it penetrates, nay is the essence of every atom of matter; and that therefore it not only has correspondence with matter but has all its properties likewise, etc. — hence is material, is *matter itself*. . . . We deny the existence of a thinking conscious God, on the grounds that such a God must either be conditioned, limited and subject to change, therefore *not* infinite, or if he is represented to us as an eternal unchangeable and independent being, with not a particle of matter in him, then we answer that it is no being but an immutable blind principle, a law. . . . The existence of matter then is a fact; the existence of motion is another fact, their self existence and eternity or indestructibility is a third fact. And the idea of pure spirit as a Being or an Existence — give it whatever name you will — is a chimera, a gigantic absurdity.¹³

Nirvāṇa is described in the Buddhist texts as the extinction of thirst (i.e., desire), or the cessation of suffering. It is also called the ultimate truth. It is what the Buddhas attain when liberated. It is the one thing taught by all Buddhist schools as unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*). Helmuth von Glasenapp says about *nirvāṇa* in his major study, *Buddhism — A Non-Theistic Religion*:

It does not belong to the world, has no relationship with it, nor does it affect it. It might best be called

the ‘totally other’; this is, indeed, a much more suitable expression for *Nirvāṇa* than it is for the Christian God who, though being above the world, yet governs it and is thus in constant touch with it. If God were the ‘totally other’, he could never be the ‘good friend’ of the soul, and neither could the soul establish a relationship with him.¹⁴

As something “totally other,” *nirvāṇa* has no relationship with the world, and plays no role in the life of an individual. It does not think or act. This is not God in any normal sense of the word. Certain epithets used to describe *nirvāṇa*, such as “peace,” caused it to be equated with God as Godhead by those who sought to find the idea of God in all religions. This was based on the conception of Godhead and God, explained as the twofold *brahman* found in the Vedānta system of Hinduism: the absolute *brahman* without attributes (*nirguṇa*), and the conditioned *brahman* with attributes (*saguṇa*), now also called God-without-form and God-with-form in modern Hinduism. God-with-form includes the ideas of Īśvara, the ruler of all, and Brahmā, the creator. Buddhism has always refuted these ideas of God. The Buddha is depicted as refuting the idea of Brahmā the creator in the *Brahma-jāla Sutta*;¹⁵ Nāgārjuna is credited with a treatise refuting the idea of Īśvara;¹⁶ and so on throughout Buddhist history. The Buddhist attitude toward the idea of God is pointedly summed up in the *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*:

The Buddha and his followers borrowed the name [Brahmā = God] from their Brahmanical counterparts in order to refute, not only their theology but the basis of all theologies: the idea of God.¹⁷

Religion had been defined in terms of God. When scholars began to study Buddhism seriously, they first suggested that it cannot be a religion, because it does not have a God. It instead could only be a philosophy. But since Buddhism obviously is a religion, with temples, a priesthood, scriptures, etc., scholars had to re-define religion, allowing that there could be religion without God. This, of course, applies equally to Jainism. Now that religions without God are recognized, scholars prefer to refer to them as non-theistic, rather than atheistic, since the term atheistic has other connotations in our society.

The above serves to illustrate just how difficult it is for us in the West to even conceive of a Godless religion. Conversely, it was likewise difficult for the Mahatma K.H. to conceive of the theistic ideas prevalent in the West, as they were so illogical to him. Some passages from his letters to A. O. Hume illustrate the difficulties faced by teachers when trying to communicate the teachings of the Wisdom Tradition to a theistic audience.

Then for a man endowed with so subtle a logic, and such a fine comprehension of the value of ideas in general and that of words especially — for a man so accurate as you generally are to make tirades upon an “all wise, powerful and love-ful God” seems to say at least strange. I do not protest at all as you seem to think against your theism, or a belief in an abstract ideal of some kind, but I cannot help asking you, how do you or how can you know that your God is all wise, omnipotent and love-ful, when everything in nature, physical and moral, proves such a being, if he does exist, to be quite the reverse of all you say of him? Strange delusion and one which seems to overpower your very intellect.¹⁸

And now to your extraordinary hypothesis that Evil with its attendant train of sin and suffering is not the result of matter, but may be perchance the wise scheme of the moral Governor of the Universe. Conceivable as the idea may seem to you, trained in the pernicious fallacy of the Christian, — “the ways of the Lord are inscrutable” — it is utterly inconceivable for me. Must I repeat again that the best Adepts have searched the Universe during millenniums and found nowhere the slightest trace of such a Machiavellian schemer — but throughout, the same immutable, inexorable law. You must excuse me therefore if I positively decline to lose my time over such childish speculations. It is not “the ways of the Lord” but rather those of some extremely intelligent men in everything but some particular hobby, that are to me incomprehensible.¹⁹

You say it matters nothing whether these laws are the expression of the will of an intelligent conscious God, as you think, or constitute the inevitable attributes of an unintelligent, unconscious “God,” as I hold. I say, it matters everything, and since you earnestly believe that these fundamental questions (of spirit and matter — of God or no God) “are admittedly beyond both of us” — in other words that neither I nor yet our greatest adepts can know any more than you do, then what is there on earth that I could teach you?²⁰

Theism, of course, is not limited to the West. It is now the norm in India as well. Buddhism had been driven out of India a thousand years ago, and Jainism at present makes up less than one percent of its population. Today, virtually all of Hinduism is theistic. But it was not always this way.

Hinduism and God — Earlier and Later

The Vedas are the oldest religious compositions of India, and indeed are thought to be the oldest religious texts in the world having a continuous tradition of use up to the present. They will not provide us with the help we might expect from them in our attempt to trace God’s presence in ancient India, however, for the simple reason that we do not know for certain how they were understood in ancient

India. They require the help of a commentary to be properly understood, and the only commentaries now extant are comparatively modern. The age of the Vedas is not known, but they are estimated by modern scholarship to date from circa 1500-1000 B.C.E., while Indian tradition makes them considerably older than that. Yet for long, the only commentaries known were those of Sāyaṇa, dating from the 14th century C.E.²¹ This is well within what we may call the theistic period of Indian history, and at least two thousand years removed from the Vedas themselves. The strange fact that we have only late commentaries on India’s oldest texts provides weighty evidence for the Wisdom Tradition’s assertion that the genuine commentaries have all been withdrawn.²²

The Vedas are to all appearances polytheistic, since they are made up of hymns addressed to a number of different “gods,” or “deities.” But as everyone knows, appearances can be deceiving. When Western scholars approached the Vedas, they of course did so presupposing their own worldview, wherein what is ancient is necessarily primitive, and primitive religion is polytheistic, arising through the deification of various natural phenomena such as the sun and rain. Seeing in the Vedas the personified sacrificial fire (Agni), sky (Indra), sun (Sūrya), etc., they took the Vedas at face value, that is, as being polytheistic. India was at that time under British rule, and institutions of higher learning in India followed a European model. So Indian scholars also took up the view that the Vedas are polytheistic. Thus today, most books by both Western and Indian scholars present this view.

The traditional Indian worldview differs from the modern Western one, holding sometimes opposite presuppositions. In this worldview, whatever is ancient is not of necessity primitive, but on the contrary comes down to us from a spiritually more advanced Age of Truth, or Golden Age as it is called in other traditions around the world. The seers (*ṛṣi*) of the Vedic hymns were not rustics wondering at the awe-inspiring forces of nature they saw around them, but rather were highly advanced sages whose insight far surpasses our own. This is why the Vedas are so revered in Hinduism. The Vedic revelation (*śruti*) includes two parts. The hymns addressed to various deities are found in the first part, on works (*karma-kāṇḍa*). The last part, on knowledge (*jñāna-kāṇḍa*) comprises the Upaniṣads. It is to these texts that Hinduism has traditionally turned for the philosophy of the Vedas, rather than to the hymns themselves. This is because the hymns, consisting of mantras, are liturgical formulae that are considered to be of limited use in determining philosophical issues, such as the question of Vedic polytheism. As pointed out by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy:

It is precisely the fact that the Vedic incantations are liturgical that makes it unreasonable to expect from them a systematic exposition of the philosophy they take for granted; if we consider the *mantras* by themselves, it is as if we had to deduce the Scholastic philosophy only from the libretto of the Mass.²³

Thus we find that Hinduism in general adopted the view taught in the Upaniṣads of the one universal *brahman*, and found no contradiction between this and the fact that the Vedas spoke of the many gods. This characteristic Indian attitude is explained by Shrimat Anirvan in his chapter, “Vedic Exegesis,” from *The Cultural Heritage of India*:

. . . in the spiritual idiom of the Vedic seers, gods are *born* as One and Many and All. The same phenomenon of expanding consciousness (*brahma*) is described objectively in a symbolic language by the Vedas, and subjectively in an intellectual language by the Upaniṣads. They speak of a metaphysical realism in which One and Many do not clash either in form or in substance; and their theory of gods cannot be exclusively labelled as monotheism, polytheism, or pantheism, because it is an integrated vision in which all these isms harmonize. Since this was the vision at the root of all forms of Ārya mysticism, a Buddhist nihilism or a Vedāntic monism (which are not to be confounded with a-theism or mono-theism) found nothing to quarrel with in a theory of many gods. This is a phenomenon which very naturally mystifies the western mind, which will see in it nothing but a condescension to an ineradicable superstition. From the Vedic age to the present times, the vision of One Existence and many gods have lived harmoniously in the spiritual realizations of India’s greatest seers; . . .²⁴

Early on, pioneer Vedic scholar F. Max Müller had noticed that the alleged Vedic polytheism was no ordinary polytheism, since each god may in turn be addressed as if the highest one. This is unlike polytheism found elsewhere, as for example in Greece, where Zeus is always the highest. Thus he coined new terms for this, henotheism and kathenotheism. This observation fits in nicely with the idea from the Upaniṣads of the one and the many. Nonetheless, scholars did not apply this idea of the one and the many to the Vedas, because the Upaniṣads are regarded by them as being a later development. So Western scholars, and now Indian scholars following them, continue to regard the Vedas as being polytheistic, in spite of Hindu tradition on this. As far as can be traced, Hindu tradition has looked upon the Vedas in terms of the one and the many for a very long time.

Already in the Vedas proper, in hymn 1.164 of the *Ṛg-veda*, and repeated in hymn 9.10 of the *Atharva-veda*, we find a verse explicitly stating this idea. Here

is this verse, numbered 46 or 28 respectively, translated by Vasudeva S. Agrawala:

They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, and he is the heavenly Winged Bird. The sages speak of the One by many names: they call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan.²⁵

Modern scholars do not deny the obvious meaning of this verse, but dismiss the hymns it is found in as being “late”; that is, as approaching the time of the Upaniṣads, where such an idea is stated repeatedly. Their presupposition of development from more primitive to less primitive is, however, the very criterion on which these hymns are judged to be late. None of the three religious traditions of ancient India accept this presupposition, and neither does the Wisdom Tradition. Hindu writers down through the ages have quoted this verse as the expression of what the Vedas have always taught.

Although no ancient Vedic commentaries are extant, we do have a very old and authoritative text that gives exegetical comments on selected Vedic passages. This is Yāska’s *Nirukta*, estimated by scholars to date from circa 700-500 B.C.E. The *Nirukta* is the “limb” or auxiliary of the Vedas (*Vedāṅga*) that deals with etymology and related topics. In its section on deities, it quotes the above-cited verse to explain Agni, the first of the Vedic deities, who is said to be all the deities.²⁶ It had brought up the idea of the one and the many earlier in this section. There Yāska explained that the one is the one *ātman*, the “self,” which the Upaniṣads had taught as being identical with the one universal *brahman*. We here cite this passage as introduced and translated by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, slightly adapting his translation in accordance with that of Lakshman Sarup:

Modern scholarship for the most part postulates only a gradual development in Indian metaphysics of a notion of a single principle, of which principle the several gods (*devāḥ*, *viśve devāḥ*, etc.) are, as it were, the powers, operative aspects, or personified attributes. But as Yāska expresses it, “It is because of the great divisibility (*mahā-bhāgyāt*) of the deity (*devatā*) that the One Spirit (*eka ātmā*) is praised in various ways. Other gods (*devāḥ*) come to be (*bhavanti*) submembers (*prataṅgāni*) of the One Spirit. . . . Their becoming is a birth from one another, they are of one another’s nature; they originate in function (*karma*); the Spirit is their origin. . . . Spirit (*ātman*) is the whole of what a god is” (*Nirukta* VII.4).²⁷

Lakshman Sarup, who dedicated many years of his life to the editing and translating of Yāska’s *Nirukta*, notes here:

This is Yāska’s rejoinder to the objection that non-deities are praised like deities. The so-called non-deities, says Yāska, are but different manifestations of the same single soul [*ātman*]. In other

words, Yāska here propounds the doctrine of pantheism.²⁸

Yāska's *Nirukta* is the oldest text we have giving exegetical comments on the Vedas, dating from at least 500 B.C.E. Yāska refers to many teachers before him, so he was quite familiar with the ancient schools of Vedic exegesis. He understands the Vedas as teaching the one and the many; and he understands the one as referring to the one universal *ātman*, or *brahman*. This is the earliest available interpretation.

The standard Vedic commentaries now known are those of Sāyaṇa, written in the 14th century C.E., nearly two millennia later than Yāska. In the preface to Sāyaṇa's commentary on the *Rg-veda*, the same above-cited Vedic verse that was quoted by Yāska is again quoted to explain the many Vedic gods. Here is Sāyaṇa's passage, translated by Peter Peterson:

Although Indra and the other gods are invoked in many texts there is no contradiction, inasmuch as these are only the Supreme God in the form of Indra and other such gods. And so it is said in another text, "They call Agni, Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa and he is the strong-winged divine Garutman: He is one, but wise men call Him by many names, and call Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan." . . . In this way it is the Supreme God and no other who is invoked of all men.²⁹

Thus Sāyaṇa, like Yāska nineteen centuries earlier, understands the Vedas as teaching the one and the many. Now, however, the one is no longer understood to refer to the one universal *ātman* or *brahman*, but instead to the Supreme God (Parama Śvara). The Supreme God is considered by Sāyaṇa to be an anthropomorphic (*pauruṣeya*), corporeal being (*śārīra-dhāri-jīva*),³⁰ in other words, a personal God. So somewhere between 500 B.C.E. and 1400 C.E. the idea of the one as an impersonal principle was displaced by the idea of the one as a personal God.

The move to monotheism in Vedic exegesis continued up to modern times, reaching its culmination in the work of Swami Dayananda Saraswati, founder of the Arya Samaj. Although Sāyaṇa believed in a Supreme God behind the many Vedic gods, his primary concern was with Vedic ritual, not with God. Further, his brother Mādhava was a leading exponent of the Advaita Vedānta system, which by then allowed the coexistence of the impersonal *brahman* and the personal God, Śvara. For Dayananda, there was only the personal God, Śvara, the one Lord and Ruler of

all. The many Vedic gods were in name only; they were not forms of God, but were all simply names of the one God. Thus translations of the Vedas produced by the Arya Samaj replace the names Agni, Indra, etc., with the word God. Nor was there room in Dayananda's view for any impersonal principle such as the *brahman* taught in the Upaniṣads. Thus he demoted the Upaniṣads from their status as revelation (*śruti*), a status they had always held in Hindu tradition.³¹

Dayananda was a Hindu reformer and great champion of the Vedas. This is what led to a brief alliance between his Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Society. It was his monotheism that led to their parting of the ways. Blavatsky and Olcott, founders of the Theosophical Society, had understood from their teachers that an impersonal principle was taught in the Vedas. So they thought that when Dayananda was promoting the Vedas, he was promoting this idea. Dayananda thought that when Blavatsky and Olcott were extolling the Vedas, they were extolling his monotheistic view of them. Neither party could speak the other's language. When they parted ways, a letter was printed pertaining to this from "One of the Hindu Founders of the Parent Theosophical Society," Tiruvallam Hills, considered to be a Mahatma. It is important because it states clearly the position of the Wisdom Tradition in regard to Vedic theism.

It was in September, 1880, — more than 20 months ago — that the Pandit Dayanand Saraswati was told plainly the truth (as he had been told before, and even written to, from America, when the Society had at last learned what kind of God was the *Išvar* preached by him) — to wit: that the Founders neither then believed, nor ever had believed, in a *personal* God. The Swami . . . endows his "Išvar" with all the finite attributes of the Jewish Jehovah.

The Founders maintain that they *do* believe in the very Divine PRINCIPLE taught in the Vedas; in that *Principle* which is described at the outset in the *Rigveda Sanhita* (Man. X., R. 129) as *nāśad āsīt na [no] sad āsīt* — which is "neither entity nor non-entity," but an ABSTRACT ENTITY, which is *no* entity, liable to be described by either words or attributes. And, as they entirely fail to recognize this eternal, All-Pervading Principle in the "Išvar" of the Arya Samajists — they turn away from it.³²

(For a copy of the notes please write to: Eastern Tradition Research Institute, 3185 Boyd Rd, Cotopaxi, CO 81223.)

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The Bodhisattva Ideal

Zendo

It is well to remember that there are at least two general categories of Bodhisattvas:

Germ-Bodhisattvas
Achieved-Bodhisattvas

We belong to the first class.

There are three ways to self-forgetfulness:

1. The road of evil
2. The road of good
3. The road of the Bodhisattva.

If you are selfish with sufficient intensity that will earn a sojourn in “Annihilation land” — metaphorically the mineral kingdom where complex form is melted and units go back to basic geometry.

If you purify yourself with sufficient intensity, that will earn the self-forgetfulness of “Nirvana — where form” is escaped by the leap-frog principle. It’s like him who swims a river and **never** touches bottom where we, the swamp creatures, reside — we who need every ounce of hope and help we can get from the great currents that move inside the UNITY.

If you are sufficiently intent on service as a keynote, that will lead to another type of self-forgetfulness, called in *The Voice of the Silence* by H.P. Blavatsky, “The Bodhisattvic Body.” The Path of Duty expands and expands, until some fine day you wake up and can’t remember what it was you planned to have as a career! Duty, or the Bodhisattva Ideal, is omnivorous — first it seems satisfied with an hour-a-day, then two, then three, until all 24 are swallowed up in the burning building that used to be your personality! Alleviation of the plane upon which you energize has, in some mysterious way, become your career, although it was not in the game-plan when you began.

The Voice of the Silence points out, that the path of goodness or purity and the path of service or duty are technically “two paths in one” for a very long time — both are the result of MERIT. Thus the *Voice* is giving us fair warning: “Choose ye this day whom you will serve,” for when the BIG FORK in the road occurs several lifetimes away you will discover that the “big choice” — made of innumerable smaller ones — has already been made!

If one is used to service and has been living in that mode for several lifetimes, then the Bodhisattva ideal would be obvious; but if purity has been the mode

for several lifetimes, then Nirvana would be the obvious choice. In the Vedanta this translates into the problem of seeking rapport with Atma at the expense of all other principles. Madame Blavatsky explains that this is a fatal error, for it is seeking to escape DUTY. Nature does not permit us to “skip a rung of the ladder.” While one is draining the swamp of the personality, it is an unending cry of woe unspeakable for we have been “swamp creatures” far too long for it to be otherwise. Hence the *Voice* is perfectly realistic and up-front with us when it calls the journey a “*Dreary Path of Sorrow*.” (p.57)

I see before my race an age or so,
And I am sent to show a path among the thorns,
To take them in my flesh.
Well, I shall lay my bones
In some sharp crevice of the broken way;
Men shall in better times stand where I fell,
And singing, journey on in perfect bands
Where I had trod alone. . . .

— THEODORE PARKER

THE PATH OF WOE

It is fairly obvious that *The Voice of the Silence* considers us as germ-Bodhisattvas rather than achieved-Bodhisattvas, and hence recommends that we **find** and **tread** the Path of “Woe unspeakable.” This is kindness, for the process of dispersing the personal life to become a “beneficent force in nature” is grown out of deeds with an end in view. The beginning, however, is like being a volunteer for a “forlorn hope.” We must remember that two chapters of the *Bhagavad-Gita* are taken up with the suffering of Arjuna caused by his journey into the jungle of *Maya* and *Avidya*.

However, don’t be anxious, it burns up the matrices of memory and makes things worse. We are divine and **our forces are sufficient!** for a U-turn in the way we are living engenders a twin response from our higher Principles: **Hope** and **Responsibility**.

“**Hope**” is that enormous increase in one’s self-esteem that occurs when we let go of mother, daddy, doctor, friends, enemies, etc., and begin to rely upon the inner light.

“**Responsibility**” indicates an acceptance of one’s past and what it implies: The army of elementals, the four generations of relatives of one’s own making must be repolarized into **harmony** with the CHOICE — the U-turn — we have made. If the Higher Ego did

not derive from a *higher* plane the odds would be insurmountable, **but**, coming from a higher plane, the statistics of the lower become *irrelevant*. From the higher point of view we are taught two things “to live to benefit mankind,” and the “knowledge that arises” as a result.

However, since we are germ-bodhisattvas, *The Voice of the Silence*, makes its exposition along those lines.

Some comments from the *Voice* are:

- ♦ Who shall first hear the doctrine of two Paths in one, the truth unveiled about the Secret Heart? The Law which, shunning learning, teaches Wisdom, reveals a **tale of woe**.

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

- ♦ ere thou settest foot upon the **dreary Path of sorrow**, 'tis well thou should'st first learn the pitfalls on thy way.
- ♦ Hold firm! Thou nearest now the middle portal, the **gate of Woe**, with its ten thousand snares.
- ♦ The PATH is one, Disciple, yet in the end, twofold. Marked are its stages by four and seven Portals. At one end — bliss immediate, and at the other — bliss deferred. Both are of merit the reward: the choice is thine.
- ♦ Behold! The goal of bliss and the **long Path of Woe** are at the furthest end. Thou canst choose either, **O aspirant to Sorrow**, throughout the coming cycles! . .
- ♦ The “Open Way,” no sooner hast thou reached its goal, will lead thee to reject the Bodhisattvic body and make thee enter the thrice glorious state of Dharmakaya which is oblivion of the World and men for ever.

Should woe be met with a smile, should the moth rush most bravely to the flame? Yes!! Take heart “we humans are divine,” and can *choose* to ply our trade on the sunny side of the street. Dr. Gary Parker planned a 3-month stint and now it's 15 years and then some:

The White Water Bird

[Extracted with permission from “Life Boat” by John Dyson, *Reader's Digest*, June 2002]

A slim, rangy figure with short-cut hair and three gold bars on the shoulder-tabs of his white shirt pauses on the gangway of the *Anastasis*. He gazes

for a moment at the cluttered, chaotic, dilapidated port of Cotonou, in which the old liner, now a hospital ship, gleams like a white water bird in the hot West African sunshine. He takes a deep breath and braces himself for the tough job ahead.

Dr. Gary Parker goes ashore and drives to a nearby sports arena. Outside some 3000 sad, suffering people are standing, sitting, lying in the steamy equatorial heat. Waiting. For him. These are the lost souls of Africa — disfigured by disease, accident or birth deformities. The oral and maxillofacial surgeon may be their last hope.

ANGELLE KOFFI cooked meals to sell by the roadside. But her customers were few. People thought she was cursed, and they turned away from her. A tumor as large as a mango grew out of Angelle's cheek, stretching her nose sideways and twisting her mouth. It invaded her throat so that she had to struggle to breathe.

Shunned even by her relatives whose compound she shared, the 24-year-old orphan slept in an isolated hut. On the street, people ran at the sight of her so she often came out only at night, her head covered by a shawl. Sometimes she prayed for death to release her from the ridicule.

Only at church did she find some hope — and one day in September 2000 a visitor brought exciting news. “The white ship is coming!” It was a chance she could be healed.

ONCE IN THE STADIUM, Parker begins examining a long line of people pre-selected from the thousands outside as good prospects for surgery. He tries not to let their pleading eyes affect his judgment, but their plight weighs on his heart. The UCLA-trained surgeon still has to turn away one in three because they have advanced forms of TB, AIDS, anemia or other diseases. They are too weak to survive an operation. His refusal likely means a death sentence.

Near the end of the day, a slim woman with a bowed head approaches him with a shawl covering her face. Parker, who has seen every kind of disfigurement, tenderly folds back the cloth. The face turned up to him is hideous, distorted by a massive tumor. But it is operable, and he selects her for surgery.

MERCY SHIPS grew from a dream Don Stephens had as a 19-year-old Colorado farm boy. He was volunteering for *Youth With a Mission in the Bahamas* and saw illness claim lives that could have been saved with simple modern medicine.

In 1978, now a regional director for the organization in Switzerland, Stephens raised \$1 million to buy a

522-foot, nine-deck Italian liner retired from the Far East run. With a volunteer crew recruited from churches, he and his wife spent three years converting the ship in Greece, renamed her *Anastasis* (Greek for resurrection) and sailed to Los Angeles. From there, they made disaster-relief voyages around the Pacific. Soon Stephens had launched a fleet of hospital ships.

Gary Parker learned about the organization in 1984 and volunteered. He'd grown up in Los Angeles, the son of an aeronautical engineer, and had trained in dentistry and oral surgery. Motivated by a strong Christian faith, Parker was determined to help poor people. A devastating earthquake in Mexico in 1986 gave him the opportunity, and he flew down to assist Mercy Ships with the relief effort.

Parker expected to meet a team of fellow surgeons. Instead, he found himself working alone with a waiting room full of despairing people with facial deformities, most of them children. He planned on spending three months — 15 years later he's still on board. The ship was the answer to Parker's dream to help the poor. It could carry vital medical equipment to ports in countries without adequate facilities. He'd never run short of demand for his skills. But there were personal sacrifices.

Practicing in Los Angeles, Parker could have earned a handsome income. Instead, he survives by raising funds from church groups and friends, paying \$630 a month to live on board the *Anastasis* with his wife, Susan, and two small children. "Our friends say we're crazy, but happiness is not just a lucrative salary," he says. "Here I'm changing lives, and there's nobody else to do it. At home, I'd only be changing appearances."

Most charities would do well to spend 40 percent or less of total expenses on administration and fundraising. In 2000 Mercy Ships spent only 22 percent on these items. Heroic operations that would run thousands in the United States are done for a fraction of the cost. Though the fleet receives no government funding, it operates on a shoestring because nobody is paid. Moreover, all crew members — captain, cooks, nurses, teachers, even founder Stephens himself — must pay for food and lodging to work on the ship.

DURING the *Anastasis*'s seven-month stay in Cotonou, Parker and his team did up to eight cataract surgeries a day, performing 471 eye operations and 929 other surgical procedures. Three thousand more people had dental work; 5000 were treated at village clinics reached by a convoy of white Land Rovers ferrying health workers. A construction crew built a community center with grain stores and a maternity

clinic. On weekends, a group of women and children spent their free time painting a jail and visiting orphans.

As the ship's chief medical officer, Parker operates up to 12 hours a day, keeping three OR's going with a succession of volunteer surgeons, anesthesiologists and other medical specialists, who come for a few weeks at a time. Every operation changes somebody's life: An infant with food bubbling out of a gaping cleft in its palate. A silent herdsman who'd survived for 30 years by rubbing liquid porridge between his teeth because he couldn't open his mouth. A new nose for an old woman with only a hole where her nose should have been, the result of an infection.

As CEO, Parker is also involved in the quest for fuel, the endless struggle against burst pipes, being diplomatic with officials onshore, and looking after the ship's 363 crew members from 39 countries, all volunteers like himself.

His family is quartered in two cabins on the upper deck. At mealtimes, Susan gets their food from the communal dining room, then serves it at their own table. The children go to school on the aft-deck, where the play space is enclosed in nets. "For us, a perfect holiday is a suburban house with a big garden," says Susan.

As nobody is paid, a "can do spirit pervades the ship. Everybody does their bit and a bit more. Nurses take turns cleaning up the engine room and accountants dish out food." When the "all hands on deck" call goes out to help load cargo, Parker is among the volunteers. The crew is a walking blood bank: When blood is required, people volunteer on the spot.

FEARFULLY PEERING around the shawl hiding her bulging face, Angelle picked her way past the ship's kids playing basketball on the dock. The day had come for her surgery. "Welcome to the white ship," a nurse said, taking her hand. Her doctor was to be the tall man who had selected her from the crowd. She trusted him for the grueling ten-hour operation. When Angelle awoke she was fearful. Her face felt stiff and heavy. Had the operation failed? A nurse came and put a mirror in her hand. Nervously she lifted the glass: There were bandages, stitches and enormous swelling. But there was no tumor. All day she inspected her face, wincing as she flexed her new smile. When Parker came to visit, she took his hand in both of hers. "I can give you nothing but my thanks," she said through an interpreter, and her lopsided grin lit up the ship.

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THE NOSTRODAMUS COMET?

Robert Bruce MacDonald

One true thing about prophecies is that they are seldom set in stone and consequently dark futures can be avoided. Comets seem to play a significant role in many prophecies and recently there have been many comets entering our Solar System. There also seems to be some debate among the establishment scientists, such as those at NASA, and what we might call amateur scientists as to the size and nature of these bodies. Current comet theory does not look upon these dirty snowballs as much of a threat, but a recent theory set forth by James M. McCanney sees comets in a much more theosophical light and in this light even being involved in a near miss with a comet can be catastrophic. Certainly, there are enough prophecies floating around out there concerning the coming twenty years to give us pause.

As many are aware, the Mayan calendar points to an end date on or around December 21, 2012. What this means, western commentators have been very poor in deciphering. In the highlands of Guatemala, author Steven McFadden writes that there are still Mayan tribes following and interpreting the old calendars — the keepers of time. After studying with traditional elders for many years, Carlos Barrios has become a “ceremonial priest and spiritual guide, Eagle Clan” (www.chiron-communications.com/communique%207-10.html). Commenting on westerner’s interpretations that the world will end in December 2012, Barrios says, “The Mayan elders are angry with this. The world will not end. It will be transformed. The indigenous have the calendars, and know how to accurately interpret it, not others” (Ibid). How does Barrios interpret the December 2012 date?

Barrios tells us that the Mayans had predicted the return of their ancestors on a certain “One Reed” date that corresponded in the western calendar as Easter Sunday, April 21, 1519. Sure enough Hernando Cortez and his fleet arrived at what is now Vera Cruz, Mexico on that exact date. This date was followed by an era of *Nine Bolomtikus* (nine, fifty-two year hells for the native American peoples) bringing us up to August 16, 1987. This date was astrologically significant and has been referred to as “Harmonic Convergence.” Between this date and 2012 we are in a transition time. Barrios explains that “As we pass through transition there is a colossal, global convergence of environmental destruction, social chaos, war, and ongoing Earth changes. All this . . . was foreseen via the simple, spiral mathematics of the

Mayan calendars” (Ibid). What is so special about December 21, 2012?

Barrios explains that:

At sunrise on December 21, 2012 — for the first time in 26,000 years — the sun rises to conjunct the intersection of the Milky Way and the plane of the ecliptic, describing in the sky a great cross of stars and planets. This cosmic cross is considered to be an embodiment of the Sacred Tree, The Tree of Life — a tree remembered in all the world’s spiritual traditions. (Ibid)

John Major Jenkins expands on this idea of the conjunction in an article of his called “The How and Why of the Mayan End Date in 2012 A.D.” Jenkins writes:

To start with, however, I use the exact center of the Milky Way band that one finds on star charts, known as the “Galactic Equator” (not to be confused with Galactic Center). Where the Galactic Equator crosses the ecliptic in Sagittarius just happens to be where the dark rift in the Milky Way begins. This is a dark bifurcation in the Milky Way caused by interstellar dust clouds. To observers on earth, it appears as a dark road which begins near the ecliptic and stretches along the Milky Way up towards Polaris. The Maya today are quite aware of this feature; the Quiché Maya call it *xibalba be* (the “road to Xibalba”) and the Chorti Maya call it the “camino de Santiago”. In Dennis Tedlock’s translation of the *Popol Vuh*, we find that the ancient Maya called it the “Black Road”. The Hero Twins Hunahpu and Xbalanque must journey down this road to battle the Lords of Xibalba. (Tedlock 334, 358). Furthermore, what Schele has identified as the Sacred Tree was known to the ancient Quiché simply as “Cross-roads.”

This celestial feature was not marginal in ancient Mayan thought and is still recognized even today. In terms of how this feature was mythologized, it seems that when a planet, the sun, or the moon entered the dark cleft of the Milky Way in Sagittarius (which happens to be the exact center of the Milky Way, the Galactic Equator), entrance to the underworld road was possible, which could then take the journeyer up to the Heart of Sky. Shamanic vision rites were probably involved in this scenario. In the Yucatan, underground caves were ritual places used by shaman to journey to the underworld. Schele explains that “Mayan mythology identifies the Road to Xibalba as going through a cave” (Forest of Kings, 209). Here we have a metaphorical reference to the “dark rift” in the Milky Way by way of its terrestrial counterpart, a syncretism between earth and sky which is

characteristic of Mayan thinking. Above all, what is becoming apparent from the corpus of Mayan Creation Myths is that creation seems to have taken place at a celestial crossroads — the crossing point of ecliptic and Milky Way. (www.levity.com/eschaton/Why2012.html)

From a Theosophical point of view we perceive physical existence as “life in the underworld” as it is the lowest of the planes on which we exist. However, using the Tree of Life metaphor, we could reverse that image. Blavatsky writes in *The Secret Doctrine*:

. . . The tree *was reversed*, and its roots were generated in Heaven and grew out of the Rootless Root of all-being. Its trunk grew and developed, crossing the planes of Pleroma, it shot out cross-ways its luxuriant branches, first on the plane of hardly differentiated matter, and then downward till they touched the terrestrial plane. Thus, the Asvattha, tree of Life and Being, whose destruction alone leads to immortality, is said in the Bhagavatgita to grow with its roots above and its branches below (ch. xv.). The roots represent the Supreme Being, or First Cause, the Logos; but one has to go beyond those roots to *unite oneself with Krishna*, who, says Arjuna (XI.), is “greater than Brahman, and First Cause . . . the indestructible, that which is, that which is not, and what is beyond them.” Its boughs are Hiranyagarbha (Brahmā or Brahman in his highest manifestations, say Sridhara and Madhusūdana), the highest Dhyān Chohans or Devas. . . . (SD I, 406)

The Tree of Life is rooted in the most sublime principle of our Universe, the First Logos. On December 21, 2012, we will be into the winter solstice with all of its occult significance. Rebirth would appear to be the theme of the day. It would seem that an expansion in the consciousness of Man could be imminent. What does Barrios say on this matter?

Barrios maintains that we are in a time of action. He outlines things for us in the following manner:

- We are living in the most important era of the Mayan calendars and prophecies. All the prophecies of the world, all the traditions, are converging now. There is no time for games. The spiritual ideal of this era is action.
- Many powerful souls have reincarnated in this era, with a lot of power. This is true on both sides, the light and the dark. High magic is at work on both sides.
- Things will change, but it is up to the people how difficult or easy it is for the changes to come about.
- The economy now is a fiction. The first five-year stretch of transition — from August 1987 to August 1992 — was the beginning of the destruction of the material world. We have progressed ten years deeper into the transition phase by now, and

many of the so-called sources of financial stability are in fact hollow.

- The banks are weak. This is a delicate moment for them. They could crash globally if we don’t pay attention. One critical period is October and November 2002. If the banks crash in these months then we will be forced to rely on the land and our skills. The monetary systems will be in chaos, and we must then rely on our direct relationship with the Earth for our food and shelter.
- The North and South Poles are both breaking up. The level of the water in the oceans is going to rise. But at the same time land in the ocean, especially near Cuba, is also going to rise. (Ibid)

Barrios claims that we are moving from a Fourth World energy — materialism — into the energy of a new Fifth World. However, there are strong forces at work trying to block this movement.

McFadden tells how Barrios describes for us how to overcome the power of the materialistic forces and their entrenched philosophy:

“We live in a world of polarity: day and night, man and woman, positive and negative. Light and darkness need each other. They are a balance. Just now the dark side is very strong, and very clear about what they want. They have their vision and their priorities clearly held, and also their hierarchy. They are working in many ways so that we will be unable to connect with the spiral Fifth World in 2012.”

“On the light side everyone thinks they are the most important, that their own understandings, or their group’s understandings, are the key. There’s a diversity of cultures and opinions, so there is competition, diffusion, and no single focus.”

As Mr. Barrios sees it, the dark side works to block fusion through denial and materialism. It also works to destroy those who are working with the light to get the Earth to a higher level. They like the energy of the old, declining Fourth World, the materialism. They do not want it to change. They do not want fusion. They want to stay at this level, and are afraid of the next level.

The dark power of the declining Fourth World cannot be destroyed or overpowered. It’s too strong and clear for that, and that is the wrong strategy. The dark can only be transformed when confronted with simplicity and open-heartedness. This is what leads to fusion, a key concept for the World of the Fifth Sun.

Mr. Barrios said the emerging era of the Fifth Sun will call attention to a much-overlooked element. Whereas the four traditional elements of earth, air, fire and water have dominated various epochs in the past, there will be a fifth element to reckon with in the time of the Fifth Sun: ether.

. . . “Within the context of ether there can be a fusion of the polarities,” Mr. Barrios said. “No more darkness or light in the people, but an uplifted fusion. But right now the realm of darkness is not interested in this. They are organized to block it. They seek to unbalance the Earth and its environment so we will be unready for the alignment in 2012. We need to work together for peace, and balance with the other side. We need to take care of the Earth that feeds and shelters us. We need to put our entire mind and heart into pursuing unity and fusion now, to confront the other side and preserve life.” (Ibid)

Is it unsurprising that what Barrios is describing here can only be accomplished in a spirit of Universal Brotherhood? The founders of Theosophy made it very clear that it was important that Theosophy survive into the current century. Could this be why? If the Theosophical Society had failed to survive into this century, that would have been indicative of the state of mind of humanity at this time. The fact that it did survive is also indicative. A few good people scattered across the globe developing their own understanding of Theosophy within the context of Universal Brotherhood can and did make a difference. Barrios tells us that change is coming, but how difficult the transition will be depends on people’s willingness to act together. Barrios tells us the following:

- We need to act, to make changes, and to elect people to represent us who understand and who will take political action to respect the earth. Meditation and spiritual practice are good, but also action.
- It’s very important to be clear about who you are, and also about your relation to the Earth.
- Develop yourself according to your own tradition and the call of your heart. But remember to respect differences, and strive for unity.
- Eat wisely. A lot of food is corrupt in either subtle or gross ways. Pay attention to what you are taking into your body.
- Learn to preserve food, and to conserve energy.
- Learn some good breathing techniques, so you have mastery of your breath.
- Be clear. Follow a tradition with great roots. It is not important what tradition, your heart will tell you, but it must have great roots.
- We live in a world of energy. An important task at this time is to learn to sense or see the energy of everyone and everything: people, plants, animals. This becomes increasingly important as we draw close to the World of the Fifth Sun, for it is associ-

ated with the element ether — the realm where energy lives and weaves.

- Go to the sacred places of the earth to pray for peace, and respect for the Earth which gives us our food, clothing, and shelter. We need to reactivate the energy of these sacred places. That is our work.
- According to Mr. Barrios’ reading of the Mayan calendar, if war happens in November 2002 or after, then it’s bad, but not catastrophic. But if it happens between April and November 2003, it will be catastrophic. Really bad. It could eventually result in the death of two-thirds of humanity. “So stay active,” he said. “If we are active, we can transform the planet. The elders watch to see what happens.”
- Many Mayan elders and knowledge keepers may be eliminated in the next few years. For the first half of the current Katun (20-year period) the dark side has a lot of power. But that will pass 3 to 4 years from now. The tide can turn. Amazing things are going to happen.
- One simple but effective prayer technique is to light a white or baby-blue colored candle. Think a moment in peace. Speak your intention to the flame and send the light of it on to the leaders who have the power to make war or peace. (Ibid)

Barrios points out that we are at a precarious point in the cycle. Materialism and its advocates are still holding power for the next three years or so. Barrios also points out that a war that begins between April and November could be catastrophic — this is particularly worrisome given the animosity between America and Iraq. How does the comet fit into all of this?

First, let us look at what Nostradamus has to say on the whole affair. In an article by Vincent Bridges, “Omen Update — Nostradamus’ Comet”, we read:

II: 46

Après grad troche humain plus grad s’appreste,
Le grand motor des siecles renouvelle: Pluye,
sang, laict, famine, fer & peste, Au ciel veu feu,
courant longue estincele.

After a great misery, an even greater approaches,
The great motor of the cycles is renewed: Raining
blood, milk, famine, iron and pestilence, In the sky
will be seen a fire, dragging a trail of sparks.

II: 62

Mabus puis tost alors mourra, viendra, De gens &
bestes une horrible defaite: Puis tout a coup la
vengeance on verra, Cent, main, soif, faim, quand
courra la comete.

Mabus will soon die, then will come, A horrible
“undoing” of people and animals, At once one will

see vengeance, One hundred (days) of power, thirst, famine, when the comet will pass.

VIII: 77

L'antichrist trios bien tost annichiliez, Vingt & sept and sang durera sa guerre Les heretiques morts, captifs, exilez, Sang corps humain eau rogie gresler terre.

The Third Antichrist soon annihilated, Twenty-seven years his bloody war will last: The heretics dead, captives exiled, Blood soaked bodies, and a reddened, icy hail covering the earth.

This passage reminds us of a couple of prophecies from North American Indians. The Hopi Indians have a Red Sky Prophecy and a similar prophecy has come to us by way of an Apache elder.* In both cases, if a Red Sky were to manifest, most of humanity would die as a result. War, disease, and famine would take its toll in the ensuing ten years. Comets seemed to be the most likely cause of the Red Sky and scientist, James M. McCanney has developed a comet model that helps to explain this:

The work showed among other things that comets were not dirty snow balls sublimating (vaporizing) in the solar environment, but were a complex plasma discharge interaction involving an asteroidal comet nucleus with the "solar capacitor", the capacitor being the result of a differential flow in the solar wind of high energy particles leaving the sun. The balance of charge in the solar system and a myriad of other previously unknown effects were predicted by the theory, including the existence of an electron sheet arriving from the sun at a cometary nucleus and resulting x-rays. Only recently have these been verified by observation. The new comet theory also explained that the tail matter was not moving away from the comet nucleus, but was being drawn in by electrical forces millions of times more powerful than gravity or solar wind forces alone. Essentially a comet was now seen as a huge "cosmic vacuum cleaner". Comets were being captured into the solar system by the existing planets and the comet "tail drag" helped to circularize their orbits. Many commonly stated beliefs regarding the nature of the solar system were being dispelled with more subtle explanations. (www.jmccanneyscience.com/)

As in theosophical theory, comets were captured by the gravitational forces of the Solar System and in time accumulated mass, circularized their orbits and became planets. Concerning a comet, Blavatsky writes:

It circles round and round between denser and already fixed bodies, moving by jerks, and pulling towards some given point or centre that attracts it, trying to avoid, like a ship drawn into a channel dotted with reefs and sunken rocks, other bodies that draw and repel it in turn; many perish, their mass disintegrating through stronger masses, and, when born within a system, chiefly within the insatiable stomachs of various Suns. (*See Comm.*

to Stanza IV). Those which move slower and are propelled into an elliptic course are doomed to annihilation sooner or later. Others moving in parabolic curves generally escape destruction, owing to their velocity.

. . . What does Science know of Comets, their genesis, growth, and ultimate behaviour? Nothing — absolutely nothing! And what is there so impossible that a lay centre — a lump of cosmic protoplasm, homogeneous and latent, when suddenly animated or fired up — should rush from its bed in Space and whirl throughout the abysmal depths in order to strengthen its homogeneous organism by an accumulation and addition of differentiated elements? And why should not such a comet settle in life, live, and become an inhabited globe! (*SD I, 204*)

McCanney states that these comets add on "differentiated elements" because they are highly charged electrical bodies (due to their interaction with the Sun and a highly charged Solar System) whose negative nucleus attracts to it ionized dust and material that pervades the solar system. This results in the comet tail that we see vacuuming material into the body of the comet. McCanney estimates comets such as Hale-Bopp and the current comet NEAT are on the order of size of a small planet such as Mercury or our Moon, and gives reasons for this. He also believes that they are a part of an entourage of a much larger planetary object referred to as Planet X. This comet-planet is supposedly due within the foreseeable future. At the very least, a body of this size will have a major effect on the weather as it passes through the system. If the orbit brings the planet near Earth, then the consequences could be much worse. As of yet this theoretical body has not been sighted so we are looking at there being some time yet. This would probably be the comet of prophecy.

In this new theory comets are electrically charged bodies accumulating mass and consequently changing orbit as they grow. McCanney believes Hale-Bopp doubled its size on its most recent trip through our Solar System and its orbit was erratic changing its periodicity to almost half. This naturally makes comets unpredictable. Another factor that McCanney does not seem to touch upon is how the electrical fields of planets affect these comets. If, as theosophists, we believe that the cumulative consciousness of mankind can affect the weather of the planet, then it must be that we are affecting ionization. Like the planet and the Sun, we are generators. Energy flowing out from the Sun would be more or less attracted to the planet depending on the consciousness of humanity. With over six billion generators on the planet living in anxiety over an impending war, one can only imagine what types of energies are being

. . . continued on page 22

* See "Cycles Great and Small", *Fohat*, vol. V, 4.

The Easter Hare

Katharine Hillard

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For more seasons than one cares to count, the Easter egg has been the familiar symbol of the great spring festival; but of late years, owing probably to the immense increase of our foreign population, another emblem has begun to dispute its supremacy in the confectioners' shops, and for some time the hares at Easter have been almost as numerous as the eggs. The hares are quite as often rabbits, delicate distinctions in zoölogy not being the province of confectioners; but in this case they cannot go far out of the way in confounding the two, because in symbology the animals are identical, and, moreover, to the American eye the rabbit is the more familiar form.

But why either? What has the "innocent rodent," as George Eliot would say, "with its small nibbling pleasures," to do with the great festival of the Resurrection?

To solve this enigma and trace out the meaning of the symbol, we must go like a crab backwards, through the history of Easter itself, even at the risk of repeating by the way many things that everybody knows already.

The egg-symbol, which naturally suggests the bursting into life of a buried germ, is easily understood, though it is a question whether many of the boys who amuse themselves by breaking each other's Easter eggs know that they do so to celebrate the opening of the year. The giving of eggs at the Easter season can be traced back to the remotest antiquity, and belongs to all the Eastern nations, who used the symbol both to signify the universe and to represent the revival of life at the vernal equinox.

Easter, though apparently a solar festival in its connection with the equinox, in reality, and even as ordered by the Christian Church, belongs of right to the moon. As early as the second century the Western churches began to object to the contemporaneous celebration of Easter with the Jewish Passover, and in 325 A.D. the Council of Nice decided that it should be held in future upon the first Sunday after the first full moon upon or after the vernal equinox; and if said full moon fell upon Sunday, then Easter should be the Sunday after. (This full moon, by the way, is the imaginary moon of the calendar, and neither the real moon nor the mean moon of astronomers.) In spite of the precautions of the Council of Nice, however, from the fact that the Jewish Passover

depends upon the first full moon of spring, Easter and the Passover have occurred together twice in this century, and will do so three times in the next.

Easter is derived from the name of the Saxon goddess Eostre, whose festival was held in April, and who was undoubtedly identical with Astarte, the Phœnician goddess of the moon. Now the moon was the earliest measurer of time, and we are told by Max Müller (in his first Lecture on the Science of Language) that her Sanskrit name, *mūs*, is clearly derived from the root *mū*, to measure. The moon was masculine in Sanskrit, as she was in Anglo-Saxon, and indeed in all the Teutonic languages, and as she is in German still. This confusion of sex, as it seems to us who are accustomed to think of her as a "goddess excellently bright," probably arose from the fact that the deities of the earliest mythologies were androgynous, and that sex was a question of relation, and depended upon their personification in an active or a passive form. Even in the Greek mythology we find frequent instances of this double aspect; Dionysus, or Bacchus, for instance, being worshiped both as male and as female. The moon, as the measurer or lord of time, was considered as an active element, and personified as masculine.

Why the moon should have been chosen as the measurer of our days rather than the sun is very clearly explained in *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. i. p. 389. In outline this explanation is as follows: When the earliest races of mankind wished to mark off periods of time, some cycle that belonged equally to the starry spheres and to humanity would naturally be that upon which their choice would fall. Such a cycle was found in the physiological phenomena connected with the life of the mother and her child. The lunar month of twenty-eight days (or four weeks of seven days each) gave thirteen periods in three hundred and sixty-four days; equivalent to the solar-week year of fifty-two weeks. The old Egyptians and Hebrews both calculated the calendar by the three hundred and sixty-four or three hundred and sixty-five days of the lunar year. Thus came the method of measures by lunar time, and through lunar, of solar time.

The moon, as we have already seen, varied in sex according to circumstances. As the new moon, with her brilliant horns and her increasing strength, or as the full moon, in the plenitude of her power, she

represented the active element, and was personified as masculine; she was the Lord of Light, the sign of new life, the messenger of immortality. But the waning moon was passive, or feminine, and typified darkness, death, and, in the Egyptian mythology, Typhon, or the Evil Principle, who had the supremacy during his fourteen days' rule, when he tore Osiris (the sun) into fourteen pieces. But with the new moon Osiris came back to life, and at its full the Egyptians sacrificed a black pig (representing the now conquered Typhon) to Osiris. In the planisphere of Denderah, the god Khunsee is seen offering the pig by the leg in the disc of the full moon, and in some parts of England a leg of pig is still eaten on Easter Monday, — a curious survival of this sacrifice.

In ancient symbolism, again, the light half of the moon was masculine; the dark, feminine. There was also another dualism connected with the moon, as the prototype of the Virgin Mother, which may explain a very singular old English Easter custom which has always been a mystery to antiquarians. The Virgin Mother was represented by the British Druids as *two*: the sisters Kreirwy and Llywy (the British Proserpine and Ceres), the Virgin *and* the Mother. Proclus speaks of "the vivific goddesses" as the elder and the younger. The same idea runs through Polynesian mythology, and corresponds with Isis and Nephthys in Egyptian, and "the two wives of Jacob that builded the house of Israel" in Biblical, lore. Pausanias describes a temple of two stories (the only one he knew) dedicated to Aphrodite; the lower story consecrated to the armed goddess, the upper to Aphrodite Morpho, veiled and with bound feet, — the fetters signifying gestation. One of the legends of the Mahabharata describes the two wives of Kaçyapas, Kaden and Vinatâ, the mother of breath, who bears the egg whence issues the serpent.

Now there is an endowment in the parish of Biddenden, Kent, of old but unknown date, which provides for the distribution of six hundred cakes among the poor upon the afternoon of Easter Sunday. These cakes bear a very curious "three-quarters" representation of two female figures joined at the shoulders and hips. The style is decidedly what in art parlance would be called "archaic," and the origin of the design has never been satisfactorily explained. Max Müller long since wrote of that interesting process of human thought by which elaborate myths grow from the seed-germ of a wish to account for some accepted fact, as in the case of the famous barnacle geese, who were described and painted as issuing from the barnacles of ships, through a popular misunderstanding of the name, which really came from the markings like spectacles (or *barnacles*) round the eyes of the geese. So, in the case of the Biddenden cakes, a legend was invented that the endowment was made by two unfortunate women

who lived joined together in this impossible fashion, *à la* Siamese twins. The hot cross-buns of Good Friday are readily traced back to the pagan worship of the sun; and I am inclined to believe that these two conjoined female figures represent the Virgin and Mother of the British Druids, the double Aphrodite of Pausanias, or the dual aspect of the moon. For in the oldest myths the goddesses, like the gods, are but one; and Artemis and Aphrodite, Here and Pallas, but representations of the varying phases of the *ewige Weiblichkeit*.

Having thus traced some of the connections of the moon with Easter, we have still to run down the mythical hare; and him we find directly as a type of the moon itself, across whose disc endless numbers of Hindu and Japanese artists have painted him, while their Chinese brethren represent the moon as a rabbit pounding rice in a mortar. The hare was identical with the moon in symbology, for reasons that shall presently be explained; but having been drawn "in the moon," two different versions of one story arose to explain his presence there, as in the case of the barnacle geese.

One was that Buddha once took the shape of a hare that he might feed a hungry fellow-creature, and was translated in that form to the moon, where he evermore abides. But this is a very inferior version of the beautiful story of the starving tigress and her cubs, whom Buddha fed with his mortal body; and the second myth, as told by De Gubernatis in his Zoölogical Mythology, seems more likely to be the genuine one. This legend says that when Indra, disguised as a famishing pilgrim, was praying for food, the hare, having nothing else to give him, threw itself into the fire, that it might be roasted for his benefit, and the grateful Indra translated the animal to the moon.

In Sanskrit, the *çaças*, literally *the leaping one*, means not only the hare and the rabbit, but the spots on the moon supposed to depict the hare of the above myth. There are several other Hindu myths connecting the hare and the moon, notably one in the first story of the Pançatantram, where the hares dwell upon the shores of the lake of the moon, and their king, Vigayadattas (the funereal god), has for his palace the lunar disc. The hare is often represented in popular sayings as the enemy of the lion (or the sun), as in the Latin proverb, *Mortuo leoni lepores insultant* (or *saltant*), the equivalent of another saying, "The moon leaps up when the sun dies." Mary Stuart, in the days of her captivity, adopted for her device a netted lion with hares leaping over him, with the motto, *Et lepores devicto insultant leone*. (See also King John, Act II. Sc. 1.)

There were several reasons why the hare was chosen to symbolize the moon. One was that it is a nocturnal

animal, and comes out at night to feed; another, that the female carries her young for a month, thus representing the lunar cycle; another, that the hare was thought by the ancients to be able to change its sex, like the moon. Sir Thomas Browne says that this was affirmed by Archelaus, Plutarch, Philostratus, and many others. Pliny, who is not mentioned by Sir Thomas, gives it the weight of his authority in his *Natural History*. The historian of *Vulgar Errors* devotes a chapter to the subject, but is extremely cautious in his dealing with it, considering it quite possible that such a change might take place, but in exceptional instances only, and certainly not annually, as the ancients asserted.

Beaumont and Fletcher allude to the notion several times, especially in the *Faithful Shepherdess*, Act III. Sc. 1, in the incantation of the Sullen Shepherd: —

“Hares that yearly sexes change,
Proteus altering oft and strange,
Hecatè with shapès three,
Let this maiden changéd be.”

Here we have the hare in close connection with Hecate, or the moon. And the same idea may be found in *Hudibras*, II. 2, v. 705.

But a more important reason for the identification of the hare with the moon lay in the fact that its young are born with their eyes open, unlike rabbits, which are born blind. The name of the hare in Egyptian was *un*, which means *open*, *to open*, *the opener*. Now the moon was the open-eyed watcher of the skies at night, and the hare, born with open eyes, was fabled never to close them: hence the old Latin expression, *somnus leporinus*, and the identification of the open-eyed hare with the full moon. The old principle of cure by “sympathies” led to the prescription, in the early English folk-lore, of the brain and eyes of the hare as a cure for somnolency.

The Egyptian word *un* not only meant *hare* and *open*, but also *period*, and for this reason (as well as for the one already given as to its time of gestation) the hare became the type of periodicity, both human and lunar, and in its character of “opener” was associated with the opening of the new year at Easter, as well as with the beginning of a new life in the youth and maiden. Hence the hare became connected in the popular mind with the paschal eggs, broken to signify the opening of the year. So close has this association become with some peoples, that in Swabia for instance, the little children are sent out to look for *hares’ eggs* at Easter. In Saxony, they say that the Easter hare brings the Easter egg, and even in America we may see in the confectioners’ windows the hare wheeling his barrowful of eggs, or drawing one large one as a sort of triumphal chariot. In some parts of

Europe, the Easter eggs are made up into cakes in the shape of hares, and the little children are told that babies are found in the hare’s “form.” The moon, in her character of the goddess Lucina, presided over childbirth, and the hare is constantly identified with her in this connection in the folk-lore of many peoples, both ancient and modern. Pausanias describes the moon-goddess as instructing the exiles who would found a new nation to build their city in that myrtle-grove wherein they should see a hare take refuge. In Russia, if a hare meet the bridal car (as an omen thus *opposing* it), it bodes evil to the wedding, and to the bride and groom. If the hare be run over by the car, it is a bad presage, not only for the bridal couple, but for all mankind; being held as equivalent to an eclipse, always a sinister omen in popular superstition. In Swabia, the children are forbidden to indulge in the favorite childish amusement of making shadow-pictures of rabbits on the wall, because it is considered *a sin against the moon*.

Among English popular customs celebrating Easter, the only trace of the hare seems to be found in Warwickshire, where at Coleshill, if the young men of the parish can catch a hare and bring it to the parson before ten o’clock in the morning of Easter Monday (the *moon-day*), he is bound to give them a calf’s head, one hundred eggs, and a groat; the calf’s head being probably a survival of the worship of Baal, or the sun, as the golden calf.

The hare-myth has come over to America not only in the shape of the confectioners’ Easter hares, but also in the very curious superstition among the negroes as to the efficacy as a talisman of *the left hind-foot of a graveyard rabbit killed in the dark of the moon*. In an article by Mr. Gerald Massey¹ (to whom I gratefully acknowledge my obligations) on the subject of such a talisman, said to have been presented . . . to President Cleveland during his electioneering tour of 1888, Mr. Massey very plainly shows that the two myths have the same origin. The rabbit, identical with the hare in symbolism, is here equivalent to the Lord of Light and Conqueror of Darkness, in, or as, the new moon. In the hieroglyphics, the *khephsh*, leg or hind-quarter, is the ideographic also of Typhon, or personified evil; the *left* side intensifying the idea. Therefore the left hind-foot of the graveyard rabbit stood for the last quarter or end of the moon, a symbol of the conquered Typhon, or Principle of Evil, to be worn in triumph, like a fox’s brush, as a token of resurrection, or renewal, or general good fortune. The killing in the dark of the moon is simply a duplication of the victory over evil and death, a sort of symbological tautology, as it were. As a type of renewal, it was especially suitable as a gift to a President seeking reëlection, but in this case, as in

¹ Lucifer, vol. i. p. 6. London. See also his *Natural Genesis*.

the proverbial “dry time,” all signs appeared to fail. It is a singular coincidence, and shows the universality of ancient symbols, that in England the luckiest of all lucky horseshoes, says Mr. Massey, is the shoe from *the left hind-foot of a mare*.

So we have hunted our Easter hare (or rabbit, as you choose) through America and England and Germany, all the way back through ancient Egypt and India, till we have run him into his original “form,” the moon. That silent, silver-shining planet is the fountain-head of many a myth and the origin of many a mystery, and not half of “the fairytales of science” of which she is the heroine have yet been told.

Whether the proverbially “mad” March hare has anything to do with the moon and Easter I do not know. It has been suggested that this “madness” in March is probably only the access of liveliness that pervades the animal creation in the spring; but the fact that the hare was a proverbially melancholy beast indicates a different kind of madness, perhaps dependent on the “lunacy” of the moon. Prince Henry suggests the hare to Falstaff as a type of melancholy rather superior to the “gibcat” or the “lugged bear.” The eating of its flesh was said by

Galen to produce melancholy (perhaps as a sequence of indigestion!), and Nares thinks the long sitting of the hare in its form may have caused it to be considered a melancholy animal. If this condition be equivalent to madness, as the gentle optimist would have it, then we have the madness of the March hare sufficiently accounted for; otherwise we may hunt him through whole libraries of proverbs and popular sayings, and Archaic Dictionaries, and Glossaries, etc., only to find him mentioned as “well known” as far back as 1542. Only this and nothing more. Indeed, he is said to have made his first appearance in the pages of Skelton’s *Replaycation* to the Scoler, in 1520. A hare crossing a person’s path was supposed to disorder his wits, as the moon’s beams falling upon the face were supposed to do; and, upon the whole, the weight of evidence is in favor of the hare’s madness being a species of “lunacy” rather than the jollity of spring.

Perhaps the reader, weary of the subject, may feel inclined to agree with the profound genius who dismissed the question of the similarly proverbial madness of hatters in these simple words: —

“Why hatters as a race are mad
I do not know, nor does it matter!” 

... **Bodhisattva** *continued from page 14*

ONE DAY in March 2001, a woman walked gracefully down the gangway. In the pocket of her blue frock, a document explained why the picture on her ID card no longer matched her face. When she got home, nobody recoiled from her. The pastor embraced her, whirling her around. “Angelle, you are beautiful now!” he said.

BEFORE THE *Anastasis* ended its stay in Cotonou, advance parties were already arranging for the ship’s next stops in Sierra Leone and Gambia. So far, Mercy Ships has sent vessels to nearly 70 ports in 41

countries, giving medical and practical help to almost four million people since 1986. Currently, 14 nations, from Nigeria to the Philippines, are pleading for a Mercy Ship to call. Not long before departing, Gary Parker was deftly sewing up an infant’s cleft palate when a nurse told him about Angelle’s welcome at home. “That’s why we’re in business,” he said, smiling broadly. “Angelle has got her life back.” Now Angelle can smile too. 

[For more information on *Mercy Ships*, visit mercyships.org.]

... **Comet** *continued from page 18*

projected. In addition the century-long assault on Nature has probably left the planet in a vulnerable state. Unfortunately, whether one is fighting for peace or for war, the same type of energies are being generated. Right now, from a karmic perspective, it has already been determined whether we will be going to war. This will be dictated by the souls of the politicians and leaders now in power. As a humanity, all we can do is prepare for future elections, continue with the process of healing the earth, and finding peace and wisdom within ourselves.

If a Nostrodamus comet is on the way, then the only way to minimize its effects is to change the soul of

each man so that he becomes a generator of peace and harmony as opposed to fear, anger, and hatred. Natural farming, natural healing, being one with Nature, these are the keys to our future survival. By visiting our local spiritual places and figuring out how to start the healing process we can do more for humanity than in the halls of government. Government will change when the people begin to change. Let us hope that Theosophy has done its work over the last century and there are enough feelings of brotherhood in the world to see us through into the new era without having to endure another war and mass death. 

. . . **Letters** continued from page 5

How the individual historian would fall into one category or another — and how long they stay there — depends upon the state of the Race Mind at the time they make their exposition.

Under famous orthodox historians you might find Toynbee, Jowett, or Lecky.

Under famous personal historians you might spot H. G. Wells, Jacolliot, Thomas Taylor and Herodotus.

Under fraudulent historians you might find such persons as Eusibius, Senator Joe McCarthy, Richard Hodgson, and K. Paul Johnson.

The initial group are awesome due to their intellectual sweep and breadth, not their intuition.

The middle group are awesome due to their intuition, but occasionally make some fairly large blunders. Thomas Taylor has such a devoted following that all of his books are back in print, completely reset type, with library bindings. He grasped the spirit of Plato's work as an occultist. Jowett, on the other hand, technically rendered the Greek more correctly, but laughed at the philosophy he translated — Timaeus, Atlantis, reincarnation, etc., received a hyperbole of ridicule. Jacolliot made serious blunders, but grasped the "spirit" of the land he was portraying far better than more orthodox Orientalists. Herodotus, the father of history, is still far from being accepted. When the Race Mind has more fully understood occultism we might find him to be the most eminent among them!

The fraudulent group have several conspicuous traits in common which usually include:

1. Investigation is done to **PROVE**, not to **DISCOVER**.
2. A theory is brought to the terrain *a priori*.
3. When facts do not fit, they are either covered up — or if that is impossible — they are *carefully* ignored.

4. **Gaps** in the chain of evidence are filled in by means of **assumption**.

5. Lies are also brought to the table as a necessary lever to buttress the case. Eusibius did this quite brazenly, Huxley did it only mildly. Herodotus is called the "father of lies," yet may turn out to be the most truthful historian we have when we are more fit to adequately judge upon his reporting. Sometimes a person will become so entranced by their theory, that they begin to lie almost unconsciously.

6. Distortion by means of language. The adjectives chosen are usually the safest giveaway regarding a historian with a hidden agenda. When a person begins to demean what he seeks to disprove and exalt what he seeks to prove, then historical reporting rapidly begins to sound more like a courtroom than a laboratory.

In the case of K. Paul Johnson when we are asked our opinion of his book, *The Masters Revealed*, we mail the enquirer a copy of Daniel Caldwell's, *K. Paul Johnson's House of Cards*, along with David Pratt's, "The Theosophical Mahatmas, a Critique of Paul Johnson's New Myth" with the suggestion: "Here, read this and compare. You are the jury." As theosophists we are philanthropic investigators and must by our own efforts discover which party purveys diamonds and which cut-glass.

If any of your subscribers want a copy of these documents I will mail them one free, or they can also be found on the Net:

<http://www.blavatskyarchives.com/johnson.htm>

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/dp5/johnson.htm>

best regards,
Jerome
ultinla@juno.com

Modern science . . . labours under disabilities with respect to the investigation of the Occult quite as embarrassing as those of Religion; for while Religion cannot grasp the idea of natural law as applied to the supersensuous Universe, Science does not allow the existence of any supersensuous universe at all to which the reign of law could be extended: nor can it conceive the possibility of any other state of consciousness than our present terrestrial one.

- H.P. Blavatsky

Fohat is the Steed, Thought is the Rider

It is the "bridge" by which the "Ideas" existing in the "Divine Thought" are impressed on Cosmic substance as the "laws of Nature." Fohat is thus the dynamic energy of Cosmic Ideation; or, regarded from the other side, it is the intelligent medium, the guiding power of all manifestation. . . . Thus from Spirit, or Cosmic Ideation, comes our consciousness; from Cosmic Substance the several vehicles in which that consciousness is individualized and attains to self – or reflective – consciousness; while Fohat, in its various manifestations, is the mysterious link between Mind and Matter, the animating principle electrifying every atom into life. – Secret Doctrine I, 16



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