

# THE VĀHAN.



A VEHICLE FOR

## THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

ISSUED by direction and under the authority of the European Section of the Theosophical Society in convention, for free distribution to English-reading members. Members of branches will receive copies through their officers. The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statements contained herein unless set forth in an official document.—G. R. S. MEAD, *General Secretary*.

All readers are cordially invited to send in questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W. For unsigned paragraphs the editor is personally responsible.

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NO. 9.

Edited by G. R. S. MEAD.

### NOTICE.

MY DEAR COLLEAGUES,

I desire to give you timely notice of a slight change, which has now been contemplated for some time, in the office of the General Secretary.

As many of you are aware, for years past there has been a battle for time in the cosmos of your General Secretary, fought out between his official duties and his literary labours. At first the latter were pinned in a corner, and only sufficient time could be snatched for a hasty and superficial article or paragraph in the midst of constant interruption. This was at a period when we were all younger, and thought it our duty to be ever feverishly on the double, with a constant supply of unnecessary alarms and excursions to persuade us that we were doing something. But for the last two or three years the Society has settled down to a more regular stride, and seems to have at last got into its head some idea of the point on which it is to direct its march. I have consequently been gradually giving more time to that special literary work in comparative Theosophy, for which I have some small ability, though no one is more deeply conscious than myself that it should be in more capable hands. But, alas, the special workers that I hoped would appear, have so far not come to the front, and the work brooks no delay, for it is above all things important that a healthy all-round view of general Theosophy in the past as well as in the present should be kept before the eyes of our students, rather than that our thought should run in a certain groove. Now this work, to be of any lasting utility, not only requires time, but indeed demands the whole time of a man, and not only of one individual, but of many. I have therefore, during the last two years, more or less, been com-

elled to reduce my General Secretary's work to a minimum, by distributing it among a number of willing helpers; but a point has now been reached when I can no longer consent to call myself General Secretary, seeing that others could do so much more work if they held the office. I am, therefore, asking the Executive Committee to relieve me of my official duties by May 1st, and to take as my substitute our friend and colleague the Hon. Otway Cuffe, until the convention in July, when you will formally elect my successor.

This step has been taken only after serious deliberation with others, and has the approval of our President-Founder. It is hardly necessary to tell you that there will really be no change except one of name as far as I am concerned; I shall do the same work of lecturing as before, see as much of you all as before; I shall change neither my way of life nor my dwelling-place; the only change will be that some one else will have an opportunity of doing more work. Everything is in order, the Section is healthy, the times are peaceful, as you are well aware. Finally in taking my official farewell of you all, my dear colleagues, I would thank you from the bottom of my heart for your ever kindly consideration and willing co-operation, and would still sign myself your friend and obedient servant,

G. R. S. MEAD.

### EXECUTIVE NOTICE.

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE,  
*January 24th, 1898.*

The wording of Section 5 of the Revised Rules of the Society, approved by the General Council, July 9th, 1896, having given rise to misunderstanding as to the authority of a Branch President in the matter of the issue of Diplomas of Membership, the undersigned, by virtue of the general authority given him in Section 12, hereby declares the Constitutional meaning of the Rule to be as

follows: after the word "membership," in line 3, read "bearing the signature of the President-Founder and the seal of the Society, and countersigned by either the General Secretary of the Section or the Recording Secretary T.S., according as the applicant resides within a sectionalised or non-sectionalised territory, shall be issued to the member."

The Council had no intention to signify that a Diploma could be issued by a Branch President independently of the constitutionally prescribed officers of the Headquarters or Section, nor that his signature should be appended to it at all.

General Secretaries of Sections will please cause this Notice to be communicated to their Branch Officers.

H. S. OLCOTT, P.T.S.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

#### THE "DEATH OF THE SOUL."

J. M.—I wish to refer to Question CCCC. of J. A. R. in the February VĀHAN, as follows:

*"It is said that the soul can dwell in the unseen worlds while its body goes on living on earth; and that there are many soulless men, both wicked materialists and those of advanced holiness, among us. What is the meaning and what is the proof of this?"*

and to B. K.'s answer to the same. Judging from B. K.'s remarks, he does not regard the theosophical doctrine of the loss of the soul as being of great importance, and evidently thinks that it is based on a remark made somewhere by H. P. B. as to one's meeting "soulless men and women every day in our streets." As I understand it, this is one of the most important doctrines in the whole range of esoteric teaching; it is fraught with the most profound and terrible truths; it is an aspect of one of the dark sides of nature; and was *deliberately* taught by H. P. B. It is so taught in the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, from page 510 to page 529 inclusive, and to this I would refer B. K. I regard this doctrine as of the greatest importance, and have been teaching it in public and private lectures; and if I am wrong in my belief as to its terrible reality, I would like to be set right. In the article beginning at page 510, "On Exoteric 'Blinds'" and "The Death of the Soul," H. P. B. says: "But now I have permission to give it to all, revealing its tenets first to the Esotericists, and then, when they have assimilated them thoroughly, it will be their duty to teach others this special tenet of the 'second death,' and warn all the Theosophists of its dangers. The pledge of secrecy, therefore, will no longer extend over this one solitary article of the esoteric creed." The article mentioned, and also the article following it, headed "The Philosophical Rationale of the Tenet," make it perfectly plain to me that the divine immortal triad of a human being can be eternally severed from the lower personality,

making personal immortality conditional. She says: "Speaking on esoteric lines, every irrevocably materialistic person is a *dead man*, a living automaton, in spite of his being endowed with great brain power." Again: "Thus the chief and most important secret with regard to that 'second death' in the esoteric teaching was and is to this day the terrible possibility of the *death* of the soul, that is, its severance from the Ego during a person's life-time." What becomes of the lower personality in the case of the severance from it of its Ego, and what becomes of the Ego itself after the severance, is thoroughly explained in the third volume in the pages referred to; and I understand it is now the duty of Theosophists to thoroughly understand and teach this important doctrine of the possibility of the "loss of the soul" through the persistent ignoring of spiritual things, as well as by a criminal career of positive vice. I gather from the teaching of H. P. B. referred to, that soulless men and women are more common in this materialistic age than is generally supposed. The soul, she says, "begins by becoming virtually dead during the life of the body, and ends by dying completely—that is, by being *annihilated as a complete immortal soul*." Such a catastrophe may often happen long years before one's physical death: 'We elbow soulless men and women at every step in life.' And when death arrives . . . there is no more a soul (the reincarnating Spiritual Ego) to liberate . . . for it has fled years before." Again she says: "I gave the outlines of the occult doctrine in *The Theosophist* of October, 1881, and November, 1882, but could not go into details, and therefore got very much embarrassed when called upon to explain. Yet I had written there plainly enough about 'useless drones,' those who refuse to become co-workers with nature, and who perish by millions during the manvantaric life-cycle; those, as in the case in hand, who prefer to be suffering in Avichi under karmic law, rather than give up their lives in evil, and, finally, those who are co-workers with nature for destruction. These are thoroughly wicked and depraved men, but yet as highly intellectual and acutely *spiritual* for evil as those who are spiritual for good. The (lower) Egos of these may escape the law of final destruction or annihilation for ages to come."

"Thus we find two kinds of soulless beings on earth; those who have lost their Higher Ego in the present incarnation, and those who are born soulless, having been severed from their Spiritual Soul in the preceding birth. The former are candidates for Avichi; the latter are 'Mr. Hydes,' whether *in* or *out* of human bodies, whether incarnated, or hanging about as invisible or potent ghouls. In such men cunning develops to an enormous degree, and no one except those who are familiar with the doctrine would suspect them of being soulless, for neither Religion nor Science has the least suspicion that such facts actually exist in Nature."

Henry Drummond, in his *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, in the chapter on "Degenera-

tion," teaches that the soul may become atrophied by the non-exercise of its functions. The soul that Drummond means is the Antahkaraṇa of Theosophy, the silver thread which unites the higher and the lower Manas; when this thread becomes broken then the higher soul departs. Did not Jesus also teach this doctrine when he said: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

I believe this is a terrible possibility. If I misunderstand the doctrine, however, I would like to be put right.

B. K.—In reference to J. M.'s letter, I should like to enter a protest, both on my own behalf and that of others, against the tendency displayed to forget that in the THE VĀHAN one is answering a definite and specific question, and not penning a disquisition upon the subject in general. In my reply to Question CCCC., I was trying to deal with the specific point raised, and in no sense writing upon the problem of the loss of the soul in general.

In the next place, anyone reading what H. P. B. has written, with a knowledge of her style and phraseology and a familiarity with the presuppositions she always assumes as known to her readers, will, I think, see that the phrase I used, "units to millions," is amply justified both by the facts and by her own teachings. Thus to take the passage quoted beginning: "Speaking on esoteric," etc.; the first part of this sentence is *obviously* metaphorical, and not meant to be read literally; as to the latter portion, the "death of the soul" is undoubtedly a "possibility," as she herself says, but certainly is a rare and relatively very abnormal occurrence; and a careful analysis of the teaching given will be found to reduce the cases of its occurrence to the types mentioned in my original reply.

Each man must form his own conclusions for himself, but it seems to me—to touch only on one point—that J. M. has applied to all *three* of the classes spoken of by H. P. B. what seems obviously and plainly to be said of one only. Thus the "drones who perish by millions" are plainly the two-fifths of humanity who fail to pass beyond the middle point of the Fifth Round, and have to wait in a state of suspended animation, to resume their evolution when the new manvantara dawns. Again in another place H. P. B. speaks of a life of suffering on earth as "Avichi" or "Myalba"—clearly by analogy only—and makes it plain that only in a few very rare cases is the "immortality in Satan," or *true* Avichi reached, which is what follows on the "loss of the soul." This seems to me perfectly plain on the face of her teaching, and she herself speaks of the "great abyss" between the "venal" wickedness of our present age and society and the intensity of intellectual and spiritual evil required to cause the "loss of the soul." So that I still maintain my position, *viz.*, that both according to the facts and to H. P. B.'s teaching the "loss of the soul" is excessively rare, occurring in cases barely to be counted as "units among millions";

and in that somewhat more cheerful view of the case I am glad to say that the wisest and best-informed of our students agree with me.

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TO BE OR NOT TO BE—ACCOMMODATED!

DEAR A. A. W.—Your attempt to smooth the agitated feelings expressed by G.'s question (CCCCVII.), should call forth the sympathy of all Theosophists; but at the same time it cannot but suggest thoughts to the one who would make his philosophy a reality in this present tangible existence.

To tell a man his sickness is the result of past misconduct will *not* help him to bear it, nor take the pain away; neither will it afford him consolation to hold out a hope for the entire eradication of his disease in some future body, that being the result of something he knows nothing about.

No! The teacher in this lower existence must be the helper in some form or other of the pain and suffering we see around us, and up to now dogmas have not done this!

The only cry that awoke the sympathy of Jesus was, "Lord, that I may see; Master, that I may be healed of my infirmity."

And where is the religion that will say, "*I will*, be thou made clean"?

When the majority of us have advanced to that stage of being where the material plane ceases to affect our highly civilised organisms, then we may hope for a withdrawal of the physical atoms of pain and suffering. But before that particular stage is reached, we should try to remove that which is now a stumbling block to so many, preventing them from using those faculties which are as necessary for their poor bodily advancement, as they will be later on for the emancipated soul. A perfect mind can exist only in a perfect body. Let us then begin with this body that we now hold, and be co-workers with nature in the life that now *is*, and so we shall attain the perfection of that which is to come; being quite assured that where there is knowledge there is power, and that he who withholds the power draws a veil over the face of knowledge, leading the little ones in paths unsuited to their fragile steps.

M. D.

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A. A. W.—I most fully sympathise with our amiable correspondent. I do not think there is a man or woman in the world more greedy for "comfort" than myself; albeit I doubt whether if we were put to our definitions, any of us could get much beyond Ancient Pistol's: "Accommodated; that is, when a man is, as they say, accommodated; or when a man is—being—whereby—he may be thought to be accommodated! which is an excellent thing!"

But what can I answer? I have no tincture to make pain pleasant; and, if I had, I would keep the fatal secret close. If there is indeed anything I have learned by experience it is just that this

desire for comfort is nothing but the beast's outcry against the whip and spur of the Higher Ego. It is a hard saying—I admit it; but truth is truth. Perfect *bodily* comfort means death to all physical progress, and in all higher worlds of which I can gain a glimpse the analogy holds. If old women of *both* sexes have made of Christianity a religion of "comfort" such was not its Founder's idea of it. Of all His sayings recorded in the Gospels perhaps none bear more distinctly the impress of a Master's teaching than these two: "I came to send *fire* upon the earth," and once more: "I came not to bring peace, but a *sword*." For my own part, all my quarrel with modern Christianity lies in this very thing—that its ministers have quenched Christ's fire and buried Christ's sword, and devoted themselves simply to making things comfortable. Our vocation as Theosophists is to stand for Christ *against* Christianity, as it now exists—to make a true Reformation in it; not a change of dead doctrine but the rekindling of the Fire. And the first thing the Fire will burn up is that insidious longing for comfort—to sleep ourselves away into the Abyss!

### ACTIVITIES.

#### Headquarters' Reference Library.

The following books have been placed in this Library and are now acknowledged with thanks:

Clerk's Foreign Theological Library. New Series, Vol. XX., *Encyclopædia of Theology*, Dr. J. F. Rübiger, trs. by the Rev. John Macpherson, M.A., 2 vols., Edinburgh, 1884; C. F. T. L. Fourth Series, Vol. XXXVII., *A Comparative View of the Doctrines and Confessions of the various Communities of Christendom*, Dr. George Benedict Winer, Edinburgh, 1881; C. F. T. L. New Series, Vol. XLIII., *A History of the Jewish People in the time of Jesus Christ*, Emil Schürer, D.D., M.A., Div. I., Vol. II. Div. II., Vols. I., II., III.; *Phantasms of the Living*, E. Gurney, F. H. Myers, F. Podmore, 2 vols., London, 1886; *Vedic Religion*, Vol. I., *The Bhagavad Gītā, with the Commentary by Shrī Shankarāchārya*, trs. by A. Mahādeva Shāstri, B.A., Pt. I., Madras, 1897; *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms and of useful words of British India*, H. H. Wilson, M.A., F.R.S., London, 1855; *The Book of the Dead, The Chapters of Coming Forth by Day*. Egyptian text. Theban recension, ed. by E. A. Wallis Budge, London, 1898. Do. *Vocabulary*, Do. *Translation*; *The Swāmi Vivekāntanda's Addresses* (presented by "M."), December, 1896, to November, 1897; *La Langue Sacrée. La Cosmoglyphie. Le Mystère de la Création*, Emile Soldi, Paris, 1897; *Die Hebraeischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher. Ein Beitrag zur Literaturgeschichte des Mittelalters, meist nach handschriftlichen Quellen*, von Moritz Steinschneider, Vols. I. and II., Berlin, 1893.

ANNIE J. WILLSON, *Librarian*.

#### Theosophical Lending Library.

Open alike to members and non-members of the Theosophical Society.

Terms of subscription: one month, 1s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 6d.; six months, 6s.; twelve months, 10s. Postage extra. Catalogues on application to the Librarian, Theosophical Lending Library, 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, N.W.

LILIAN LLOYD, *Librarian*.

#### Donations to the General Fund.

The following donations have been received up to March 20th: T. Jackson (monthly), 2s. 6d.; Miss Tisdale, 15s.; "in remembrance of J. W. M.," £1 10s.; Miss Bowring (monthly), £1; A Friend, £1; A. Pearson, 5s.; Mrs. Mallalue, 10s.; J. W. H. Mackenzie, 6s.; Mrs. Besant, £5; Mrs. Hooper, £14 10s. Total £24 18s. 6d.

#### New Branches.

March 7th. Charter granted this day to Dr. Hübbe Schleiden, Günther K. Wagner, Frau Anna Wagner, Fräulein Gretchen Wagner, Fräulein Paula Stryczck, Bruno Ottmer, and Clemens Driessen, to form a Branch of the Theosophical Society to be known as the Hanover Branch.

March 18th. Charter granted this day to Willem H. M. Kohlen, André Vanderstraeten, Dr. Ernest Nyssens, J. E. Bäumer, Jon. C. Louman, Octave Berger, and H. J. W. Walenkamp, to form a Branch of the Theosophical Society to be known as the Brussels Branch.

#### New Centre.

A Centre to be known as the "Alpha" Centre has been formed at Leeds. Meetings are held weekly for the study of the philosophy of Pythagoras, under the direction of W. H. Bean, 9, Winstanley Terrace, Headingley, Leeds.

#### Lotus Circle.

The Lotus Circle meets at 19, Avenue Road, on Sunday afternoons, punctually at 2.30. All children are welcomed.

C. W. LEADBEATER.

#### Rome.

Mrs. Besant delivered a most successful lecture at Rome, on her way to India. The Hall of the Associazione della Stampa was crowded, and the lecturer was introduced by Signor Bonfadini, the president. Mrs. Besant spoke in French on "La Théosophie dans le Passé et dans l'Avenir." Very favourable reports appeared in the press; we learn that in every respect our orator's visit to Rome was a tremendous success.

**Blavatsky Lodge.**

The lectures for the past month have been particularly interesting, and both on the "closed" and "open" nights the Lodge has been full. Mrs. Besant has lectured twice. She took for her subject on March 3rd "The Rationale of Mental Healing," and by way of introduction, reminded the Lodge that in order to understand any subject it is absolutely necessary to consider it sympathetically, and that the duty of members of the Theosophical Society should be to try to find the basis of truth which is the foundation of all widely-held opinions and beliefs. Mrs. Besant then explained the science of mental healing, and quoted largely from the writings of its modern expounders.

On March 10th, Mrs. Besant lectured in place of Mr. Keightley, who has only deferred his subject till later. On this occasion, Mrs. Besant compared our position in the present day with the position of those at an earlier period of the world's history, and more especially during the Middle Ages, when, as she reminded us, souls struggling for the light had no human help and guidance, but had to face always opposition and very often death, and who therefore had to fight on absolutely alone; and in a most impressive lecture Mrs. Besant urged us, as members of the Theosophical Society, not to let slip our great and almost unparalleled opportunities.

On February 24th, Mr. Chatterji lectured on "The Great Origination as taught by the Buddha," while on March 17th Mr. Mead threw further most interesting light upon "The Mysteries among the Greeks."

S. M. S.

**West London Branch.**

The meetings of the above Branch have been hitherto held at 142, Queen's Road, but members and visitors are asked particularly to note that the Branch has now secured a permanent room for a Library and Reading-room, at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road (opposite Queen's Road Station), where the Friday evening meetings will be held. Members having friends in Bayswater or Kensington are invited to make these meetings and the existence of the Lending Library known to any who may be interested. Books may be obtained, or exchanged, on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday evenings, from 7.30 to 8.30, and on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons from 4 to 5. *The Theosophical Review*, and other periodicals, will be in the reading room.

The Library owes its existence to the kindness of Mrs. Besant, who has given a generous donation for the purchase of books, to add to a nucleus which Mr. Mead has kindly handed to us, in the shape of some books left for his disposal by a late member.

Miss Pope is giving some elementary Natural History lessons, illustrated by the microscope, on Saturday afternoons at 3, to children only. Members of the Lotus Circle are cordially invited.

Arrangements for social evenings and further lectures are in progress, and we trust that our new Lodge room will be constantly brightened by the presence of members and friends interested.

**Lecture List.**

**BIRMINGHAM LODGE.** Meetings at No. 5 Room, Cobden Hotel, on alternate Sundays, at 7 p.m. Class for study on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m.

**BOURNEMOUTH LODGE.** Meetings at 1, Boscombe Chambers, Christchurch Road, Boscombe, on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m.

**BRADFORD, ATHENE LODGE.** Lodge meetings at 25, Hanover Square, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

**BRIGHTON LODGE.** The usual open meeting for study and interchange of thought takes place on alternate Sunday afternoons at members' houses. Information can be obtained from the Librarian, Mr. Lloyd, 15, Old Steine, or the Secretary, Dr. King, 30, Buckingham Place.

**BRISTOL LODGE.** Meetings at 39, Park Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.; on Sundays, at 11 a.m. for study, and from 4 to 9 p.m. for enquirers.

**EDINBURGH LODGE.** Meetings at Room 13, Dowell's Rooms, 20, George Street, at 8.15 p.m.: April 19th, *Methods of Occult Study*, Miss K. Moffat. Enquiries may be addressed to Mr. A. P. Cattanach, 67, Brunswick Street.

**EXETER CENTRE.** Meetings at 35, High Street, on the first Friday in each month, and by appointment.

**GLASGOW CENTRE.** Meetings at Holton's Hotel, Glassford Street, on Sundays, at 11.30 a.m.

**HARROGATE LODGE.** Public meetings at No. 3 Club Room, People's Hotel, on Sundays, at 7 p.m.: April 3rd, *The Bible*, Hodgson-Smith; April 10th, *The Forgiveness of Sins*; April 17th, *The Path of Discipleship*, Miss Hook; April 24th, *Prayer*, Mrs. Bell. Lodge meetings on Fridays, at 7.30 p.m., at 67, Station Parade, for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

**HERNE BAY CENTRE.** Meetings at 25, William Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., H. A. Vasse, of above address.

**HULL CENTRE.** Meetings at No. 9 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

**LEEDS LODGE.** Meetings at 21, Briggate, on the first and third Mondays in the month, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*.

**LEEDS, ALPHA CENTRE.** Meetings held weekly at members' houses for the study of the philosophy of Pythagoras. Enquiries may be addressed to W. H. Bean, 9, Winstanley Terrace, Headingley, Leeds.

**LIVERPOOL, CITY OF LIVERPOOL LODGE.** For information as to meetings, etc., apply to the Corresponding Secretary, 14, Freehold Street, Liverpool.

**LONDON, ADELPHI LODGE.** Meetings at 8, Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. (3rd floor), on Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: April 4th, *The Growth of Individuality*, Mrs. Sharpe; April 11th, *Bank Holiday*; April

18th, *The Resurrection and the Life*, S. F. Weguelin-Smith; April 25th, *Meditation*, P. Tovey.

LONDON, BLAVATSKY LODGE. Meetings at 19, Avenue Rd., Regent's Park, N.W., on Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.: April 7th, *The Middle Path of Buddhism*, J. C. Chatterji; April 14th, *Magic, Its Use and Abuse*, C. W. Leadbeater; April 21st, *A Hymn of Initiation*, G. R. S. Mead; April 28th, *The Rosicrucians and the Knights-Templars*, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley.

LONDON, CHISWICK LODGE. Meetings at Adyar Studio, Flanders Road, Bedford Park, W., on alternate Mondays, at 8.30 p.m.: April 4th, *Carlyle and the Philosophy of Clothes*, W. C. Ward; April 18th, *The Growth of Individuality*, Mrs. Sharpe.

LONDON, EAST LONDON LODGE. General meetings at 79, Burdett Road, E., on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., for the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. Private class on Tuesdays, at 8.30 p.m., at Millfield House, Grove Crescent Road, Stratford. Enquiries to be addressed to E. Cumberland, 32, Chaucer Road, Forest Gate.

LONDON, HAMPSTEAD LODGE. Meetings at 9, Lyncroft Gardens, Finchley Road, N.W., on Mondays at 7.30 p.m.: April 18th, *Many are called; few are chosen*, Mrs. Leo; April 25th, Class for Study (*Ancient Wisdom*).

LONDON, NORTH LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 10, Park Street, on Mondays and Wednesdays at 8.30 p.m.

LONDON, WEST LONDON LODGE. Meetings at 8, Inverness Place, Queen's Road, on Fridays, at 8 p.m., alternately for lectures and the study of *The Ancient Wisdom*. On April 1st, Mr. Leadbeater will lecture on *Peru, B.C. 1200*.

MANCHESTER LODGE. Meetings at 9, Albert Square, on Tuesdays, at 7.30 p.m. Information from Mrs. Larmuth, 24, Eccles Old Road, Pendleton; or at the Library, c/o Mr. Corbett, 9, Albert Square.

MARGATE LODGE. Meetings at 39, High Street, on Tuesdays at 8 p.m.

MIDDLESBROUGH LODGE. Meetings at 20, Albert Road (first floor) on Thursdays, at 8 p.m. Alternate Thursdays, study of *The Astral Plane*.

NORWICH LODGE. Meetings at 41, Exchange Street, every Monday evening at 8.15 p.m.

PARIS. Monthly lectures conducted by Com. D. A. Courmes, at the Salle des Mathurins, 36, rue des Mathurins, on Sundays, at 2 p.m. Meetings for enquirers at 3, rue du 29 Juillet (office of *Le Lotus Bleu*), on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, at 2.30 p.m.

PARIS, ANANTA LODGE. Open Meetings on Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., alternately at 38 and 58, rue de Verneuil. Meetings for members only, 2nd and 4th Sundays in the month, at 58, rue de Verneuil, at 9.30 a.m.

PLYMOUTH CENTRE. Meetings at "The Borough Arms" (Coffee Tavern), Bedford Street, on Fridays, at 8 p.m.

RAMSGATE CENTRE. Information to be obtained from Miss Hunter, 6, Clarendon Gardens, Ramsgate.

ROME LODGE. Meetings at 31, Via Lombardia, on Thursdays, at 6 p.m.

SHEFFIELD LODGE. Meetings at Oxford Temperance Hotel, St. James' Street, every Thursday, at 7.30 p.m.

THORNTON HEATH LODGE, CROYDON. Meetings at "Thorntonville," Bensham Manor Road, Thornton Heath, on Tuesdays, at 8 p.m. Secretary, F. Horne, 27, Keene's Road, Croydon.

ZÜRICH LODGE. Meetings at the Vegetarier-Heim, 57, Stockerstrasse, on Fridays, at 8.15 p.m.

### Library Closed.

The Library at 19, Avenue Road, will be closed, for purposes of cleaning, from April 15th to April 20th inclusive.

### ENQUIRER.

#### QUESTION CCCCXV.

A. M. G.—*Is sight developed in the etheric double apart from the dense body, and if so, is it by such sight that the various kinds of ether are perceived?*

C. W. L.—The etheric double is really part of the physical body, and as a general rule we are less likely to fall into error about either of them if we think of them together. They separate completely only at death, and even partial separation occurs only under anæsthetics, except in the case of a medium. There is etheric matter as well as solid and liquid matter present in the retina of the eye and in the brain, and it is probable that ordinary sight is connected quite as much with the vibrations of the former matter as with those of the latter. The capability of examining the molecules or atoms of ether would seem to be rather a different faculty, and apparently implies the use of a much higher power; but large masses of matter in the etheric state, or the bodies of the inhabitants of the etheric sub-planes, may often be seen under favourable conditions by what seems to be a mere intensification or exaltation of ordinary sight.

This question is probably closely connected with the evolution which is slowly but steadily taking place in the physical atom itself. Those who have read the article in *Lucifer* on "Occult Chemistry" will remember that four sets of spirillæ are there mentioned as existing in the atom, lying as it were one behind the other, each set forming the spiral running round the walls of the tube of the larger or grosser set below it. There are in reality seven sets of such spirillæ, thus lying one behind or within the other, and one of them comes into activity in each round of our evolution. Thus, since we are now in the fourth round, only four sets of these spirillæ may be observed in working order in the atom as we see it to-day; but by the end of the seventh round the entire system of seven orders of spirillæ will be fully vitalized, and therefore the physical atom will no doubt be a far more sensitive object, able to answer to many finer vibrations which at present evoke from it no response.

Now one of the lighter tasks of the aspirant to adeptship is the development of the very atoms of which his physical body is composed, so that they *may* be capable of response to these finer forces of nature, and as he does this he gradually becomes sensitive to all kinds of etheric vibrations which had not previously affected him, and is therefore conscious of much to which the undeveloped man is totally blind.

Naturally his efforts along these lines have to be continually kept up, since the atoms of his body are constantly changing, and every new atom which is absorbed into his frame needs to be subjected to this process of development. Thus he is assisting in his small way in the evolution of the physical universe, for the atoms which have passed through his body are distinctly the better for his use of them. Though after they leave him their finer spirillæ sink back into inactivity, they are yet much more ready to be again aroused into response to the play of the higher forces than would be the case with other atoms which had had no such experience. These more advanced atoms come in process of time to form part of other organisms, and the presence of a number of them in the brain even of a quite ordinary person would be very likely to give him occasional opportunities of a certain amount of what is commonly called etheric vision.

#### QUESTION CCCCXVI.

A. M. G.—*Does a highly developed ego, that of a Master for instance, put on the limitations of the physical brain when it descends to work on the physical plane?*

C. W. L.—Undoubtedly when working on the physical plane such an ego must be limited by his physical brain; but if we in any way compare such limitation with that which we experience in connection with our own brains we shall be grievously mistaken. It should be remembered that the Master stands at least at the Asekha level—the position which humanity is intended to attain at the end of the seventh round—and that therefore even his physical body is far more highly evolved and far more sensitive than ours.

In addition to the evolution of the physical atom, to which reference has already been made, there is also visible in the adept a very striking development of the means of communication between the cells of the brain and the higher principles. It is very difficult to describe this clearly without the help of a diagram, but it may be possible to give some idea of it by calling in the aid of the reader's imagination.

Let us suppose the grey matter of the brain to be laid out upon a flat surface, so that the layer is only one particle thick—that is to say, let us suppose ourselves looking down upon it from the "fourth dimension," since that is exactly the appearance that it would present if regarded from that point of view. Let us suppose also that the corresponding particles of the astral body and of the mind-body are similarly arranged in layers on

their respective planes, and that the lines of communication between them are represented by threads joining each physical particle to its astral counterpart, and each of those astral particles in turn to its counterpart in the mind-body.

Now, if we imagine an ordinary man's brain and its counterparts to be thus arranged, we should see that surprisingly few of the lines of communication were perfect—probably not more than a score or two out of many thousands. In the case of the vast majority of the particles, there would simply be no threads at all, and great areas of the brain matter could therefore never receive any direct communication from the higher bodies. In the case of other particles the thread might exist between the mind-body and the astral, but not be carried through to the physical, while yet others might have the thread complete between astral and physical, but no continuation of the line higher up.

Now since the various faculties of man express themselves down here only through their appropriate areas in the brain, it is obvious that the state of affairs which has been described entails some rather curious consequences. We are for the moment leaving entirely out of account the enormous differences which exist between the various egos, and also the differences in the impressibility of their respective mind-bodies; yet we see what infinite possibilities of variety we have even in the arrangement of the threads of communication between the lower vehicles alone.

Take for example the power of metaphysical thought. We shall find many an ego in whom such a faculty does not yet exist at all, but even when it is beginning to develop, it will be with the greatest difficulty that any connection can be established with the appropriate area of brain matter. Until the ego can evolve the proper threads of communication, he will be able to operate that part of his physical brain only by the clumsy and roundabout expedient of sending his message down some other and quite inappropriate thread, and letting it spread out laterally, as it were, by transference from one cell to another in the physical brain. We can see at once how different would be the position of the man who had developed even one of the threads specially belonging to that type of thought, and how infinitely better yet would be the condition in which all the threads which feed that section of the brain were in full working order. This last-mentioned state of course exemplifies the ideal condition of that part of the brain in a seventh-round body, so it is needless to say that not even the highest philosophical thinkers among us are within anything like measurable distance of such a consummation as yet.

But that is the condition to which the Asekha has brought his physical brain, not as regards one part only, but the whole. So that although it is undoubtedly true that he is limited by his physical brain, since he has vast stores of knowledge which are altogether beyond even *its* power of expression, we shall be making a mistake of the most colossal

character if we suppose that that limitation is in any way comparable with those under which we constantly find ourselves labouring. We should remember that this fourth round is not the one specially intended for the development of Manas, and that we can at present have no conception of the glorious heights to which it will attain in its own fifth round, any more than we can realize how poor a thing the intellect of which we are so proud to-day will appear to us when we look back upon it from the standpoint which we shall then have attained.

QUESTION CCCCXVII.

*G. B.—In the case of very prominent public men, great conquerors and so on, are such individuals traced back to other characters occupying corresponding positions of power and influence in the past, or is it possible for an ego, hitherto working in an unobtrusive fashion, suddenly to spring up into fame and power?*

E. G.—Great faculty in any department of life is always a matter of growth, and presupposes attention directed thereto through a series of lives. A "prominent" public man would hardly begin by being prominent, but would gradually work his way into the position. "Aspirations and desires," we are told, "become capacities; repeated thoughts, tendencies; and wills to perform, actions," but in the earthly lives between those of devachanic assimilation, the physical body would need training and scope for action along the lines on which the ego was advancing. In order, for instance, to possess the powers of organisation, foresight and endurance required by a great general, there would have to be opportunities on the physical plane for the exercise and gradual externalisation of such powers. But the training, I suppose, might take place in a relatively unobtrusive fashion.

So also with great philosophers, great artists, etc. But here again, as the evolution of faculty proceeded, a certain amount of self-expression, it seems to me, would always make itself felt in the various lives, and make itself felt in ever-widening circles in proportion to the growing power within.

A. A. W.—When we fully realise the principle that powers in one life are the results of efforts in previous ones, we shall at once see that it is nearly certain that any one who displays extraordinary talent, or, as we call it, genius, must be the temporary manifestation of a soul who has worked at his subject for many lives before, though possibly this may be the first time he has brought it to such a pitch as to "spring up into fame and power." A great mathematician, who sees at a glance what an ordinary man would take volumes of calculation to prove—a Mozart who can play before he can speak—a poet who "lisps in numbers, for the numbers came," are all results of labour spent, very

possibly for many thousand years, upon their various arts. The same must be the case with a man like Napoleon, who had a true *genius* for the art of war. But there are many prominent public men, and even great conquerors, of whom we need not think so highly; who owe their position more to outward circumstance than to inward power. It would, for example, not be hard to recognise Napoleon as a reincarnation of Julius Cæsar, if we were so informed; but that Cæsar should have become the Duke of Wellington (who was *only* a great general, and *not* a great man), would not be so easy to believe. The subject (like all which depend upon the workings of karma), is of almost inconceivable complexity. We all know that there are "spirits" who are in the habit of assuring all their friends that they have been very remarkable personages in past times. Buddha, Socrates, Plato, St. John the Evangelist, Cæsar—or at least George Washington or Ben. Franklin—but we don't take these *very* seriously. I fancy one rule might be laid down which would put aside a good many such identifications—once a great man, always a great man. I must explain, however. To take an old example, Bacon *may* have been forced by his evil karma to return as a mere money lender; but if such were the case, we should expect him to be a very remarkable money lender—a kind of Ralph Nickleby at the least; whatever his circumstances, the innate power and energy of the ego *must*, one would say, somehow shine out. He might be a *wicked* man, a miserable man, but never, surely, an insignificant one. And this consideration pretty well settles also the question implied in G. B.'s query—it is not very probable that any of *our* egos are likely "suddenly to spring up into fame and power."

QUESTION CCCCXVIII.

*F. T.—It is said that the Mysteries of antiquity were scenes of great debauchery; is this the fact?*

G. R. S. M.—F. T. should read the papers entitled "Notes on the Eleusinian Mysteries," which will begin in the April number of *The Theosophical Review*, and run through two or three issues. The greatest minds of classical antiquity speak in the highest terms of these Mysteries, and F. T. will find abundance of quotations and references in the papers referred to.

The subscription to THE VĀHAN for those who are not members of the European Section of the Theosophical Society is 2s. 6d. per annum, post-free. Single copies, 3d. each, may be obtained from the Theosophical Publishing Society, 26, Charing Cross, S.W. No back numbers can be supplied.

*All communications must be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at latest.*