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THIRD PAPER

The Veil of Maya

There is some question raised by various philosophers as to the extent to which we can claim to live or assert consciousness. There is much more evidence to substantiate death. From our present population of two billion and more, we can estimate that close to two trillion corpses are now enriching our soil. And we need only to go back four or five thousand years to accumulate this total.

The statistics for death are monumental. The statistical percentage of those who have died and found a life after death might well be said to be nonexistent in view of evidence available. These odds are very discouraging -- so much so that the average person seeing them or sensing them throws up his hands and refuses to become concerned about the problem.

There are other statistics, however. These billions of people have built thousands of civilizations, produced scientific marvels that have later been lost and they have written books that have turned to dust. Yet the earliest history shows one great movement which has continued until the present time -- the most primitive people theorized about a Primal Cause or God and formed some sort of theology to satisfy their questions. And their temples and their theology all have, in due time, proven insufficient and most of them have vanished from the earth.

We have no more reason to discount theological phlogiston theory. The living or current efforts to determine about life after death offer some very interesting statistics. There are hundreds of movements, religions, cults, societies for physical research, brotherhoods, philosophic clubs and ale-house fraternities that claim authority on the knowledge of life after death. If we examine them all -- presuming that we possessed the needed life span -- we might perhaps find that none of them about knew about the ultimate state of things or we might find that each of them contained a grain of fact, surrounded, pearl-like by a blob of flesh and then a layer of slime. Or we might conclude that the majority of their concepts are valid in a relative sense. Still, these deductions leave us only with theories and ensuing confusion and frustration.

Man will spend hundreds of man-hours paying for pills and he often spends his life savings to treat a terminal disease in the frantic hope of adding a few years to his life. Yet, despite modern medicine and medical research, man continues to die. He invents new cures only to find new diseases or old viruses that have developed greater resistance by surviving man's antibiotics. We live in a Christian nation and era that affirms that man's body is only a coat for a more subtle fabric, yet it never occurs to anyone to study the subtler fabric or essence that is left when the coat wears out. In fact, the Westerner (Christian) is likely to ridicule those who dedicate themselves to esoteric diggings.

It is possible that life after death is more important (so hinted by theologians) than this grubby life. However, in many religions we find those same theologians advocating the grubby life, except for a few, chosen for their hierarchy. If the death-plane is more important and this life is only a preparation for it as most theologians

claim, then something sensible should be done about it. We should all do the great work -- not just a fractional hierarchy.

Humanity throughout the Middle and Dark Ages remained in serfdom to pontifical dogma. Lately, the peasant is somewhat better educated and the matrix of ignorance that begets faith is demanding more sensible dogmas and a more scientific or logical approach to theism. The worship of fear and the masochistic attempt to create godhead from the mingling of fear and love is melting under the new light shed by common-sense.

The history of religions, their rise and fall, will afford us a disturbing suspicion. Many great religious movements have eroded away, leaving nothing for our scrutiny but an external pile such as the pyramids, Angkor Wat, the temple at Karnak and the Potala. Which brings us to wonder why many great religious dynasties have possessed and lost the drive. It may bring us to wonder if there is not a great natural scheme to prevent man from expanding his knowledge. We have the "Tower of Babel" story and the belief that gods do not wish for men to become too clever.

Man, as an individual and as a race, is unable to continue to fruition -- the search for Truth. Man as a race develops great religions but they reach peaks in growth and then begin to wither almost like a living entity. Man, the individual, possesses certain years of this life in which he may dynamically pursue wisdom or religion but then he is overcome by lethargy, circumstances or despair long before his natural death.

If we examine the problem we may surmise that not all of man's inability to pierce the veil is because of the jealous nature of the "gods" who might not wish for man to aspire beyond the pawn stage. We will find that man is, unfortunately, a race of liars, which status complicated his illusion-status bestowed upon him by nature. The man chained in the Platonic cave, instead of breaking his chains, worships them with rationalization.

That man lies to himself and that these lies are in greater proportion than his efforts toward Truth can be demonstrated if it is not already self-evident. And it is part of the purpose of this paper to indicate many of the major lies that pose as vehicles for Truth and demonstrate how they are manufactured out of smaller dishonesties. The Grand Creed degenerates into a social institution because members of its hierarchy use escapes and rationalizations to cover their lack of knowledge and when we realize the tricks that they employ, we find them of so petty a nature that we no longer feel obliged to punish our children for being truant from Sunday School.

It is doubtful if anyone will disagree with the postulate that the most important thing in man's experience is survival. Survival may be concerned with the race, the family unit, the body, or the nameless essence that might survive corporeal death. Another item of experiential importance, equal to or greater than survival, is self-definition. In the quest for soul-survival we come to the business of defining that which we are and hope to be.

As a result of self definitive study, there are several camps of opinion ... we have the monists, dualists and the pluralists. (Ouspensky indicates that we are multiple.) We know that it is important for that which is surviving to know the nature of its survival. Or we might ask -- is it really surviving if it does not have the proper self-awareness? And is it not necessary to understand perfectly the essence or soul-matter before we embark upon any formulation for continuance? The old sage who indicated, "First know thyself," may have been far ahead of today's theologians who are the product of a supposed spiritual evolution of hundreds of years. Here and there a solitary sage points out a formula but the masses laugh merrily at him as they crowd into chaos. He does not of a necessity give a useless utterance. Someone heard and remembered him and disciples and biographers recorded a word or two for him. For us.

We might say that the sincere religionist places essence-survival as being of tantamount importance and self-definition for him is lesser in importance. As a result, he becomes bogged down in artificial or imaginary rubrics, faith-implementations, and priest-formulas. Or in false translations, or questionable interpretations of the sacred

writings.

It is nothing short of amazing to note the brashness with which various theologians skip across many passages in the Bible (although they profess to be fundamentalists), especially if those passages appear to challenge the structure of their own house of cards. How many are able to explain the lines in the beginning of the Bible? There was a tree in the garden called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And man was not allowed to eat of it under pain of death. Now in our botanical catalogues we find no classification that might indicate a plant possessing wisdom, so we must deduce that the tree was symbolical. If the edict meant that man was forbidden under pain of death to seek for wisdom, then the Master Jesus was giving out some bad advice when he said, "Seek and ye shall find."

There is too large a gap between Old Testament and Talmudic laws of conduct -- and Christ's attitude. The former commanded conduct by instilling a fear of a wrathful God. The latter proposed a way of living based on love to raise the level of being. The latter declared for a God of love, not one of anger and jealousy.

There are many puzzling things in the Bible. Careful translation and comparison should be undertaken by sincere Bible students. We wonder about frequent references to an angry God. We hear of a God that is partisan, who helps one little tribe on this little earth to kill off their adversaries. We are enjoined to love and fear this God, although we may well be the descendents of survivors of one of the expendable tribes who found themselves in the path of the Jew. We, who have never had the rare privilege of seeing the hand of God in a pillar of fire, nor heard His voice booming from the vault, nor witnessed a sea opening up to let the chosen ones through, nor witnessed a burning bush -- wonder how in the name of a name those living witnesses to all these marvels could ever doubt that God enough to worship a golden calf. It would seem that the narrator of that exodus either waxed hot with imagination or else God made a mistake and allowed the sea to swallow the better people. And in the New Testament (at Golgotha) we could really have used a pillar of fire but did not have one. And the voice no longer roars out of the heavens, but is plaintive and mild. Soul is not incinerated but implored. Sodom and Gomorrah, on the other hand, were incinerated because two messengers were insulted, not killed. At the crucifixion Jerusalem was given very little indication that it had incurred divine displeasures despite the fact that the Son of God was the victim.

The human mind is finite indeed. As a few mystics have been honest enough to admit, the human mind is unable to focus itself upon a problem for a very long period. It wearies. It loses its chain of thought and it loses in memory the sequence of important things it wished to remember and compare with continued exploration. It loses track of the definition it applied to basic word-implements. The brain sleeps at night and awakens oblivious of all the noble intentions of the previous night. The eye of the ascetic blinks when a symmetrical harlot walks by ... and a year's meditation is dissembled. The philosopher gets hungry and the exigencies of the other survival drive take him away from the attic and into the hot-mill.

The question arises as to that which can be done amidst all this failure, uncertainty, and man-made confusion. In a way, it is no more difficult a project to begin than any other. But to maintain continuity and purity of purpose is another thing. If man were to bend a percentage of his energy toward the solution of death's mystery, under conditions that would exclude from the beginning the possibility of digression, commercialization, degeneration into cultism, and have built into the blue-print from the beginning an arrangement for periodical shocks or hypodermics to revitalize or remind the organism of its objective, then a greater degree of success might be attained.

We can always find negative statistics to feed our despair. It is a fact though that prior to Columbus, no one in history dared to venture too close to the edge of the earth. Had Columbus been daunted by the estimates of "bona fide": authorities, he would have made no discovery. And if we wish to discover that which is not already under the noses of the masses, we must expect to extend our necks.

Here are what might be considered some pertinent statistics or facts: Man still dies and is still afraid of death, despite any contrary pretence; yet man will spend large percentages of his energy, salary or time to the taxes that go for making machines to bring death about. Of course, he will argue that this is race-survival. Life is too short to go about trying to convince nations that war is useless and distracting to the nobler work of man, so it becomes a peculiarity to spiritual seeking that only a small minority will, in this era, take the time and energy to divorce themselves from the world's travail in order to do something more important.

The individual man is apt to place too much importance on his gregarious instincts. He is afraid of being unconventional and has fear of criticism from people. He shrinks from prospects of being called a crackpot or fanatic by society. And if he shrinks enough, he will never be able to change or help that society as did men who were monumental crackpots two thousand years ago. Men generally gravitate to a job, trade or profession and content themselves with fighting for more money. With that money they smugly buy insurance. They pay the preacher once a week to soothe or shrive them and when the monotony of their lives sends a ray of truth screaming through their flabby brains, they take their wallet to the psychiatrist in the hope that he will purge them of despair with the proper sophistry. Their only real claim to immortality is their undying faith that no matter what dissipations they suffer, the family physician will come up with a pill to rebuild the fun-machine.

Let us take a poll of that which the man in the street believe should be done about securing immortality. Most of them are depending on their minister to take them to heaven. After all, that is his department. Some will casually note that millions have died before him and he expects to go to the same place to which they went. Another will smile condescendingly and point you to faith, indicating the magic of simple belief. Another will want to douse you with baptismal water. And still another might press you to your knees and have you screaming sins you never dreamed you had.

Man just refuses to take death seriously. We who are sending rockets into the outer spaces are not yet out of the jungle spiritually. We are still consulting witch-doctors, engaging in frenzied religious revivals, and probing the pages of superstition for our auguries.

We do have need of science if we are to understand the physical aspects of man and if we are to monitor them -- for this monitoring may well be necessary before we can do too much on the mental levels. Transcendentalism has need of a system of checks and balances. The intuition must be tempered with logic. And the paradox is eternal.

Both religion and science have their proverbial heads in the sand. Most of the errors in the area of religion result from a refusal to look at any research with other than an inspirational attitude. On the other hand, science would profit by taking on more of an inspirational attitude and realize discoveries with the employment of variables.

In examining the achievements of religion, we can encounter many interesting bits of information not necessarily adductive to truth. We have monasteries famous for inventing alcoholic beverages, but rarely, if ever, has a monk emerged from a monastery with spiritual enlightenment for the world beyond the balderdash that has been warmed over and served for centuries.

We find that the many newer religions born by fission or schism are the result of politics rather than a change of attitude toward Truth. If there is but one God, of whom can that God be jealous? And if there is but one Truth, how can jealousy or any misunderstanding separate men dedicated to the path of Truth?

We find that mankind periodically takes up the sword and hacks the monk or witch-doctor to pieces and replaces whole religions. The mass of mankind, usually stupefied by nature and its exigencies, at times is roused from its inertia by a prolonged abuse of elementary reason. The public appears stupid because it is lethargic. Many prelates interpret this lethargy as ignorance and overplay their mental despotism, never expecting to be

challenged. But man does not revolt by premeditated plan always ... the reaction is generally one of nature, identified often as Karma, or it is the automatic purging by an organism of material that can no longer be assimilated. Automatically, un-adaptable formulas will be vomited up from the stomach of mankind.

History is witness to centuries of fat clergy who boldly preached holiness and ascetism. History is full of Friar Tucks and obese brew-masters in hooded habits -- and modern rectories are no exception. The layman laughs to find more devils in Loudun than in his favorite bordello and scratches his ear when he read Benvenuto Cellini's account of the priest who sought gold with the help of black magic. And it is no wonder -- when Communism points out the religious affront to common sense -- that the peasant indicates that he will rather accept stark materialism to be free of the merchants of star-dust.

The theological shell-game is about to be challenged on a larger scale than ever before. Seeds of dissatisfaction are popping through the stiff crust of the brain of the masses. As many are drifting away from church because of the secularization of religion, as are drifting away because of aspects of impossible traditionalism. Some leave on witnessing bad conduct of their pastors while others leave with rational reservations.

Many are opposed to the excessive institutionalism of churches and point out that organized religion no longer looks for God or the Truth. Many such dissidents form the membership of a new "-isms" or cults. And these dissidents find everything in the cult, usually, that they opposed in the religion.

Like a physician treating chancres, we are restrained from asking, "Why" upon witnessing the distress of honest seekers. We can only ask, "How can the distress be avoided," while we continue to treat symptoms instead of eliminating causes. We can point out the symptom and hope that future colleagues will find increasingly better ways to search.

Public sensitivity is one of the great stumbling blocks before the Truth. The truth must be administered subtly. And if we try to offend no one, nothing will be said. Too many writers, motivated by the purchasing power of the public, attempt to inject their philosophy indirectly into the reader's mind by the use of wit, laborious logic, or by emotion-stirring fiction. This type of writing tends to carry both writer and reader away from the importance of Truth, since it appears only in the form of a hint. It also possesses a vagueness that protects the writer from any need to defend himself. If the medium is wit, he can pass his controversial motive off as humor. If the medium used is metaphor, symbolism or parable, he can attest that the reader took the wrong meaning. And if the reader becomes quarrelsome about his interpretation of the moral behind a fictional piece, the writer can deride him for allowing himself to become agitated over a mere story.

If I can create a hypodermic, it has not been intended for any sensitive posterior, but is rather aimed at heart and head. I feel that time is short and that honest men will appreciate honesty in the long run. I am not so foolhardy as to undertake to awaken people who are using faith as a narcotic, not to disturb the weavers who are using faith as a matrix from which to weave a better world. I wish to reach those who prefer to encourage wakefulness and who would first define themselves and perhaps even the world before trying to make anything better.

Wakefulness involves keeping an open mind and avoiding pre-judgment. If we encounter books that profess to illuminate us, we should not judge them because someone else has attacked them. Nor should we be so blind as to avoid testing the creed upon which we presently rest -- we should examine it with the same critical attitude which might be applied to any other creed.

Whatever slippages or erosions Christianity manifest, there is no justification in belittling the image of Christ. The same attitudes should apply to any of the great spiritual leaders, such as Buddha and Mohammed, who reached a stature of eminence in their lifetime. Christ's teachings can in no way be held responsible for the diverse organizations that resulted from various interpretations of His words. Nor can He be held responsible for all of the rogues that operate under His banner.

The progress of a transcendentalist is slow in a world inimical to free-thinking. Books are scarce and over-zealous librarians think that they are frustrating the devil when they surreptitiously take certain books off the catalogue lists. Personal contacts are even more difficult to come about because each man must protect his family, even if that protection only involves public scorn or business losses. I hope to see better contacts among honest diggers and hope that some readers will bend an effort to help bring about better referential association among seekers. There must be paths in the jungle. There must be cases where men of any faith or fancy can go to meditate or to compare notes with a fellow-seeker.

To live with ourselves we must take some stand, some line of action. Nature and society prohibits the complete vacuum. We have the choice of driving dynamically or being driven relentlessly. We may cease to be a cork and become a ship.

ON THEOLOGY

Let us survey this massive subject that has furnished mankind with perennial hope and eternal strife, mentally and physically, individually and nationally. It would be of scientific value to chart the early origins of religion and the evolution of those origins in order to observe the sequence of changes, as well as the religiously revolutionary figures who expedited those changes.

There are works that deal with the evolution of religion that can be studied by the reader. They include the heavy works of Blavatsky and Max Mueller and *The Golden Bough* by Frazer. Frazer has done quite a bit of research on the growth of a complex God from primitive gods of the fields, of the hunt, or of war.

Thus, we have the possibility that the early corn-god may be the father of current religious thinking, or the possibility that there was a divine emanation waiting for primitive man to divest himself of the corn-god, which emanation appeared on earth in widely separated places at about the same time. The time embraced the period from 563 B.C. to 670 A.D. Zoroaster was born in the sixth century B.C. Buddha lived from 563 to 483 B.C. Then Christ came in the year 1. And we have Mohammed in the year 570 A.D.

And so, bypassing historical research, I would like to go directly to the major categories of religion in order to make a comparative study of different definitions and concepts. We have many interpretations of God.

We have the Monistic viewpoint, which means that God permeates everything, including the human soul and body.

Next, the Dualistic God, or God as a separate being.

The regional god, such as Jehovah, who was considered to be only the God of the Jews, and by some to a planetary spirit.

Phallic God, a sort of humanized masculine evolution, symbolized from the Hebraic letter jod.

God, the undefinable, represented by the letters JHVH.

The God within. The inner self.

God as being the automatic law of the universe, but lacking in personality.

Any of the thousands of gods worshipped by sects or tribes.

Concerning the concepts of multiple Gods, they are difficult to categorize because some of the One-God doctrines confuse the layman with complex sub-theories such as the doctrine of the Trinity. There is an argument also that there is a hierarchy of Gods and some translators of the Bible point out that such is meant by the word Elohim which is an intentional plural word. The Buddhists also mention a God-hierarchy which they call the Dhyan Chohans of Bodisatvas which are sometimes given an exact number. This brings us to the Asian concept of Gods which have evolved from humans, as in the case of Gautama Buddha.

For future reference I wish to list certain concepts on life after death:

Reincarnation, either upward toward godhood or toward dissolution. Reoccurrence. A theory more complex but no more provable than the others. This has to do with the reoccurrence of a human being, either by design or accident, identical to a previous human being of another era. The argument is that such beings, if alike in all ways, are the same being. Another version of this theory is that the individual man is actually a life-strand in timeless continuum, with the only motion being the progression of that man's consciousness along the life-strand. Reoccurrence for him would be a repeat performance of such life-strand travel. In simple words, it means reliving this same life over and over. Some Spiritualists claim that this pastime is available to all after death, but that after a while the game grows boring and is abandoned. Reincarnation. White's concept. This theory supposedly evolved as a result of considerable work in automatic writing with a spiritual-guide doing the dictation. In this theory, the human is born unique, having never lived before as the same being. "That which is born of spirit is spirit, and that which is born of flesh is flesh," is used to identify the concept. One or more spiritual parents manufacture a spirit and then look about for a woman about to become pregnant or about to deliver. The child-spirit thus finds itself a child-body. Spiritualism. Spiritual evolution after death through possibly a half-dozen planes. Christianity's paradise or hell. This belief differs from the foregoing concepts in that it allows neither for another life in this plane nor any further refinement or growth after death. One life, one eternity. Immortality through faith. It is held by some that there is a dimensional matrix that is subject to the faith of men. Levi, in one of his books of magic, gives the formula for creation. Immortality through mechanical means, concentrating upon a chakra, observation of certain sounds, prayers, etc. Translation. This theory claims that some people may develop a body of immortality by means of a slow change. Union with the Absolute. Satori. Oblivion.

Can we pick up where Max Mueller leaves off and discuss the ineffable? Still, the hunger in man demands an answer and man is annoyed by the inconsistencies of the mighty. It is possibly true that all is rationalization -- even this -- but if we are to blush at hope then we must pursue some sort of mathematics and even risk the answer of zero. All of this, in respect for the straw, or any other tiny foothold of a word or sentence that might be an anchor. If all else fails, it shall be effort. And effort shall beget effort. On the other side, silence and inactivity will only beget silence and stagnation.

Let us look for the reasoning in some of the age-old beliefs and begin with Monism. If God is everywhere, then He is in complete charge and the quest for Truth is foolish, as well as the pursuit of any action. We would be only an infinitesimal expression of this Being. Add omnipresence to omnipotence and every aspiration becomes vanity for what seem to be separate mortals. Yet, the religions that preach such monism still preach free-will also in order to hold their flocks accountable. Then we hear the old expression that God is powerful enough to stop us, but that He allows us to do evil. This can only read that He allows Himself to do evil. And what could a singular God-entity do that would be qualified as being less than deific conduct when by His absoluteness (by definition) He cannot be adjudged one way or the other.

It is hard to determine if our Christian God is one of Monism or Dualism. The Catholic dogmas and catechism express beyond a doubt that He is everything. Yet those same catechisms make much of human guilt. Would they blame man for the creation of the human being? Predestination would indicate a monistic concept and an all-powerful God, but the advocates of predestination also preach morality.

It has been said that man makes God in his own image and likeness. Could it be that man, being a bifocal, bicameral, polarized creature feels it necessary to see everything in a relative manner? Regardless if everything is God, this writing would appear to be as foolish as any other action, but the efforts to know such Truth (if it be the Truth) or to find our true state of Being should not be arrested. We should not qualify the results of an adventure until the project is completed.

The Summa Theologica pretends to prove the existence of a Monistic God by using a Dualistic mechanism. It observes that the universe is in motion and ergo must have a mover. The mover must be God. This separates God from the universe and makes Him a sort of chief engineer over the visible, dimensional universe. Being a Mover of physical objects removes from God the need to participate in functions of non-visible planes or dimensions, so that such theology is more of a cosmology. Thomas Aquinas lived before Einstein and Ouspensky and, consequently, did not have to argue with them about the nature of motion, which must, of necessity, be relative to time in a timeless continuum.

The greatest bit of frustration in Catholic teaching is to be told on one hand that the Summa Theologica is the "highest theology" and be told by the same theologian that the finite mind cannot ever perceive the infinite.

In regard to Dualism, we find that Dualism at least gives us the privilege of being a searcher with an objective. We must all go along on this tack, at least until we find out that we do not exist as an individual. Yet, as we go and create concepts, counter-concepts are automatically born and of every virtue that we find, counter-virtue is created. And, thus, is born the devil.

Sometimes the devil is not the only competitor of God. There is a belief involving celestial politics in which sundry Gods hide behind the curtain of dimension and try to entice the souls of men away from other Gods. An erudite Theosophist recently stated that he held this to be the esoteric truth behind all religions. In works of magic we find invocations to some of these ancient Gods and practitioners as recent as Eliphas Levi believed that those Gods are still real and still retain the life which centuries of faith bestowed upon them. It is interesting to note here, also the efforts of churches in modern times to promote a drive for souls and the exhortations of churches to parishioners to increase and multiply. Why do the Gods need men? Unless this is Dualism, strained to the utmost, why should these celestial beings have terrestrial roots dependent somehow upon nourishment from fleshlings.

There is still another disturbing note that is echoed by scholar and clod alike ... Why do the Gods remain hidden? If there is a personal God, more powerful than man, why does He seemingly impose a set of rules or conditions upon man and Himself? This rule holds that the fleshlings must guess the correct name, which he must cry out at night, protesting his desire to be food for celestial roots, or to be a constituent.

The use of logic implies a mechanistic attack upon a problem that has its answer in the abstract magnitude. Knowing his difficulty, many seekers use the methods of the mystics which involve intuitional meditation or some form of concentration.

It would be impossible for man to choose a path from logic alone. Reason will sway the mind toward a movement but intuition plays the larger role in the choosing of spiritual paths. The theory of reincarnation is an example in that it seems to be more reasonable than the one-life, one-death theory. But reincarnation has not been proven either, even though there are many testimonials of the remembering of previous lives. So that if reincarnation is accepted, the acceptance comes largely from intuition. It is argued that it is a more just system than the concept of eternal punishment or reward for helpless reactions to the circumstances of life. It has an understandable, structural conception of the relation of action to consequences when it associates the theory of reincarnation with the idea of automatic Karma. However, we cannot accept a theory only because it has conceptual structure that is pretty or that it appeal to human standards of justice.

On the testimonial side, there have been people who have demonstrated, honestly or otherwise, that they could recall previous incarnations. Some cases have been carefully witnessed, especially cases where a young person described the place of his previous life or people now living who lived contemporarily with his previous life. There are rituals in Tibet by which the monks determine the identity of a child in a previous life. The Tibetans choose their Dalai Lama by this process.

Hypnosis cannot be considered as a valid means for determining previous incarnations, although it has been used here in the West to attempt that task. Hypnotic subjects have been found to be able to assume many characteristics upon command by the operator and have given evidence about any personality named at random as being their previous incarnation. I have verified this through hypnotic experimentation and several other hypnotists whom I know have witnessed the same results. The subject simply adopts the personality suggested and, at times, amazingly enough, will come up with facts about that personality that neither the subject nor operator knew about.

The Rosicrucians have a method for seeing your past incarnations, but gazing for long periods of time into mirrors is not very evidential in method and the results must be qualified by the knowledge that the human eye under prolonged strain is not very reliable.

We come now to mechanical means for reaching salvation or for attaining wisdom. One such is baptism -- a sacrament which involves water -- and a degree of surrender to divine will. Some who believe baptism to be necessary also believe that without it the soul goes to hell or to a lake of fire. The Catholic church teaches that the unbaptized go to Limbo. Baptism, of course, has fundamentalistic origins but there has not been a valid explanation for the use of earthly water to change a supposed spiritual condition. I can understand the change of being that may be brought about by the surrender of egotistical aspects of the personality but I cannot rationalize the use of water as a celestial catalyst.

Not only is the Christian religion beset with fundamentalism, but every religion that has inspired writings has the same trouble. And it is not enough that we suffer out abstractions to be handed to us in the form of parable and translated histories, but we are subjected to further confusion by still more tangential philosophies which claim for truth by the genital philosophies application of symbolism to the Bible, or the application of numerology to the original alphabet of the Bible. And this with the knowledge that the original documents are unobtainable.

Can the truth actually be this complicated? Can wisdom be rattled loose from the convolutions by the bombardment of the mind with myriad symbols? Yet this wisdom that is verbalizable is but the result of the juggling of symbols.

With the application of symbolism, intuition recedes from fundamentalism. Emotional games are not enough to keep the people in the churches even though the churches have become social centers, utilitarian crime-preventers, or conduct-inhibitors of questionable value. The mass-mind of man as a computer manifest its decisions more by its apathy than by its interest. Worship consists of a smooth confluence of egos.

That man can be inspired by reading the Bible cannot be denied nor could it be denied that he might be inspired by studying Raphael's Ephemeris. If juggling will do the trick, then why not the Tarot of the YI-Ching? I wish to avoid any great amount of criticism of the fundamentalist approach. Fundamentalistic interpretations bog down in the ambiguity and obscurity of both literal and interlinear import and we could spend endless hours arguing about intended meanings. And it is not valid to take the Bible to be of divine voice merely because the book says so any more than we should fall down and worship a totem-pole because the inscription on the pole reads, "I am God, worship me." There must be valid indications or substantiations indicative for the Bible's authority which come as witnesses from outside the Bible, -- and preferably from an all-able God.

There is an arguments that uncertain, ritualistic steps are necessary for beings of lesser development whose nature and karma will not allow them to accept the philosophic side of essence of religion. So that such people are doomed to spend this life by frittering away their time, by singing chorals, or quoting the scriptures. And this is both truth and cleverness. There are people who are unable to seek for truth with dynamic energy and average faculties, but I have reservations about using religion as an anodyne, or, -- exchanging lies for tithes

The time has come when another layer of superstition And fearful umbrage should be lifted. Believe what you will, but do not legislate. Belief is no proof for belief. Belief may even create, but then different beliefs will still produce monstrosities and confusion. God remains forever hidden from mankind and to believe our elders, He is only able to communicate through material objects or through some high-priest who thinks no more of his altar than to take his means from it and glorify his animal exigencies with it. Drinking of alcohol has been justified by using the Biblical references of Christ's drinking of wine. Quotations can be found to justify various carnal expressions. You can split yourself like a schizophrenic and let the breast boast that is no part of that which supports it, placing virtue in the heart and head and giving the devil the hindmost.

Any system of thinking that begets sub-sciences and rubrics and infinitum is not possible to completely understand or follow. This paper is directed to lives of less than a hundred years -- that hope for light within that span of time. Nor can we study every religion. Such a search would be the equivalent of the task of the demons at a Chinese funeral who must pick up every piece of showered confetti in order to find the soul of the deceased.

We are looking for the most consistent. And we must be justified in abandoning too much inconsistency. For instance in the Summa Theologica we find that evil is supposed to emanate from good. Yet the wee, bipolar, bicameral bipeds are supposed to be headed for purgatory, limbo or hell for not avoiding evil. This reasoning is the result of a split purpose by the author who would appear erudite while trying to inspire fear. We are led to believe, by seeing repeated, conflicting sub-theories in great religious writings that some of the authors were interested in constructing speculative philosophies for the edification of their egos. Cosmologies abound. Some harmonize a little better than others on a point or two or they combine a complex, exotic idea with that which we wish to believe. And the more complicated the diagrammed treatise, the more it flatters such minds whose pride would not let them settle for a simple theory.

Nearly two thousand years of Christianity have not given us one two-edged sword alone -- the blades are like the leaves of grass. Each man's religion is a stranger to his neighbor's. We cannot expect that it will be any different in the next five hundred years, but each who sees this chaos of Babel should want to simplify things a bit. Man should, likewise, have reverence for honest effort, whether it be in the field of fundamentalism, astrology, magic or any other. While threading our way among the many paths, let us do so with respect and yet have the courage to criticize. And let the criticism be as honest and as sacred to us as that which we criticize is sacred to those who hold the different point of view.

And if there is a feeling of resentment it can only be for those who treat truth lightly or who laugh at the hungry while feeding from their sweat.

Let us have a brief look at hell. Celestial schizophrenia and spiritual masochism. Hell must be the womb of the Almighty from which came evil or the devil. Evil must have a headquarters. If we go back to the ancients, we find that those pagans were more civilized. They did not believe that the soul was tortured after death, except for the Tibetans. The pagan feared the shaman's magic, not this cosmology. We do not hear of an unhappy hunting ground in Indian lore. Valhalla was not a dreaded place. Hades had no terrifying negative qualities. Gehenna was the city dump. Sheol was the grave, not a fiery pit.

The early Christian church must have borrowed from Tibetan "paganism." Dante's sadisto-masochistic writings may well have been an attempt at legal pornography in his time. Milton could not admit a Paradise without admitting the opposite. In the book, Lives of the Saints, I have read of saints who languished in the

contemplation of various body-tortures for the sake of their sins or for the "love of their Lord." Reward and punishment get all mixed up so that the zealot who professes to be a faithful servant of God still expects to be punished, to die on the rack. And God benevolently smiles in approval or chooses to silently ignore this passing of his pawn. The God of the Jews would at least have manifested anger at losing a pawn. In those days, one man holding up his arms could turn the tide of battle, but later a thousand Christians dying in the arena while chanting the allegiance of God, have no power over a handful of lions.

It is no wonder that a sobering period was to ensue. And a trend toward materialism or, as it was called at the time, an age of reason. The inquisition was the final monstrous act of masochism that sent Europe and Christendom reeling into the hypocritical age of reason.

Doctrine was replaced by experimentation. Science looked into everything from magic to alchemy. It was called metaphysics, but it was actually a sincere attempt to find a tangible religion. Witches, astral influences, fairies, magi, werewolves, elemental, incubi, succubi, homunculi, reincarnation and transmutation were all mixed up together. This was a commendable investigation, being an objective analysis of phenomena with an aim at finding the proper relation between these phenomena and man.

THE SEARCH FOR GOD

We approach this subject with the heavy awareness of our limitations, whether our approach to God be direct as a moth flying into the sun, or indirect and cautious as a tiny bookworm trying to digest every book in every library. And the task is burdensome enough without harnessing ourselves with the load of guilt or responsibility every step of the way and with every mistake in every step.

The old concepts of sin must go. They represented acts which were responses to compulsions whose origins are primeval. We are, for the most part, mobile robots with built-in reflexes. As the Bhagavad Gita explains. But we are robots that hope to take over our own computers. And somewhere along the line, someone legislated that if we are to take over the computers, we must first admit personal liability for any decisions of the computer. This would be assumed to be a sensible idea only if we could completely control that computer. And completely controlling the individual involves controlling its destiny which would mean controlling the environment with all of its known and unknown laws of operation.

We arrive now at the conjecture that we are not supposed to presume to know that which is planned by God for us. This may be true and it is just as possible that it is not true. There is always the possibility that all knowledge is available and proportional to our ability to remove limitations. If we are not supposed to know that which God is doing with us, when we are placed in a position of insignificance in which any attitude of ours toward God would not flatter that God one iota. And our existence would be as meaningless and mortal as an expendable, erodable cog in a machine of two billion cogs.

There is also the possibility that there is truly a personable God who is the creator and master of all, but who pays little or no attention to us because he has more important creatures with which to amuse Himself. We like to think that God created us as perfect creatures for reasons of perfect joy. We appraise Him with human standards of pleasure and flatter ourselves into the picture by claiming that we are giving a command-performance for His pleasure. We take too big a step when we conjure up a God that surmounts all time and space and then pretend to know him on a first name basis. The one-God theory, as meaning something synonymous with a First Cause, can be understood as a concept. But there is evidence that the one-God theory is not the result of personal knowledge or research, but rather a result of clever theology or theological diplomacy whereby all the conflicting religions were ingested and included rather than opposed as adversaries. Even the ancients realized that the system of thinking which explained the most would last the longest. The laymen of ancient times, while not as educated as today's laymen, still saw all kinds of advantages from incorporating the tax-hungry priest-craft all under one roof.

Theosophy has many good points. It neglects to define God as a personal being both inaccessible to and yet threatening to man. It emphasizes, rather, the Pyramid on spiritual endeavor and the need to contact spiritual teachers on higher strata of the Pyramid. The Pyramid is intentionally capitalized here because it represents one of the major concepts of this book. The only hope of man lies in the existence of a source of knowledge or direction that is human. And while some may say that all lies within ourselves, we find that even the cloistered monks find a need for cooperation with other humans to secure their meditation. There are, besides teachers of relative wisdom, teachers of direction which are most rare.

Some mystics depend upon sprits, or angels, presuming that such spirits are closer to God, or in possession of knowledge of other dimensions. We have the case of Joan of Arc. If we are to look at the history of her life we must admit that she was in contact, from childhood, with elves or fairies and later in life with an angle whom she identified as St. Michael. Now St. Michael was not a canonized saint and, in fact, was older than both Catholicism and Christianity. He is supposed to be the spirit that spoke to Moses in the burning bush.

The voices that instructed Joan were knowledgeable. They correctly informed her to identify the dauphin, Charles, and betrayed to her a prayer that Charles admitted was known only to God and himself. With these angels' help she was able to locate the lost sword of Charles Martel, which she used to lead the French. The victories which she predicted came to pass.

Yet, the story has puzzling facets. St. Michael, the archangel, was not her only prompter. St. Catherine and St. Margaret, two ex-humans, also prodded her to take over military leadership. The English were Christian as well as the French. What was going on in the politics of France, especially when the mills of God take care of the destinies of men? We are led to believe that God was in need of Joan of Arc. Yet, if this is true, why did God abandon Joan to defeat, to a trial conducted by men, and finally to a fiery death. Like the demon of Socrates, when the crisis of death drew near, St. Michael did not lift a spear.

We may say that Joan knew that all of this would happen. Yet the whole affair does nothing to promote faith in God among men. And more so, it is likely to make us think twice before listening to discarnate beings, regardless of their ultra-mundane abilities. If the philosophers and saints were left holding an empty sack, what do we have to hope for? As has often been noted, Christ apparently was abandoned in his final hours. All of which brings us back to the problem of understanding all the sources of revelation, whether they be voices, invisible entities who make themselves know by indirect means, or entities which are visible. The Bible itself warns of unfamiliar spirits, but no where do we find a formula for distinguishing between beneficial, honest entities and those which make use of us and than drop us.

In regard to Joan of Arc, I have come to the conclusion that her fate was somehow related to her virginity. It is said that she was rearrested for putting on a pair of pants. Previously, she had been arrested and had admitted certain charges brought against her by the ecclesiastical inquisition. The male attire was taken as proof of her relapse. In looking for common denominators, there is evidence that innocence plays a part in the commerce between humans and entities. The demons invoked by Cellini and the priest demanded that a virgin boy be brought to the next invocation. We find poltergeist visitations to be more phenomenal when there are children of adolescent or pre-adolescent years involved. All of which would mean that virginity was the power that Joan possessed and for reasons unknown to us, it attracted either spirits of stature or spirits that were able to impersonate biblical characters and saints. And possibly, as long as Joan was a virgin, (Prince Charles is supposed to have had her examined) she had the service of those spirits.

We come to one of the great secrets of occult work. As Eliphas Levi advises, the thaumaturgist observes celibacy ... at least for certain periods of time prior to most ritual or invocations.

The dangers of listening to voices are evident in many publicized cases wherein people have even murdered their children at the command of invisible entities which identified themselves as God. Such was the case of Abraham an Isaac, but an angel or voice arrived in time to prevent Abraham from killing Isaac. I can see the

probability of such a sacrifice enacted in modern times by another Abraham, a trusting, fanatical fundamentalist, if the latter believed that God actually commanded Abraham (since the Bible is accepted as the true message of God). It follows that if Abraham did not dare to disobey, then neither should anyone else similarly inspired.

Man has been able to discern that he is not yet fully able to discern. Whereas in previous times, the populace was quick to accept any phenomena on quaking knees -- we now take a calmer approach and look for a more natural explanation. While not being able to categorize and explain all phenomena, we have become alert to the ability of the mind to impose a fraud upon itself -- by virtue of its finite nature -- and we realize that the mind responds to severe problems with unconscious rationalization and weary surrender to the nearest explanation.

We have approached the problem of knowing God objectively and for many reasons it is impossible. In the first place, we cannot define God until we create a definition (a definitive philosophy) for God. As a result of the many God-definitions, it is evident that the word God is a very uncertain term. Equally portentous is the word gizmogle. A scientist might spend decades sifting the sands of the sea with a microscope with the pretence that he was looking for a gizmogle. And in this charade he might actually find a keystone enzyme containing the secrets of life. This is a fairy tale just concocted, but we should not be surprised if such a case actually occurred to find that the scientist was quickly ordained as a prophet by virtue of his new power and find that gizmogle, which previously meant nothing, would now be capitalized.

It is better to avoid the use of the word God, or definitions of that not yet ascertained, except in the magical processes of prayer. In our objective or relative search we can only retreat from ignorance and error. We may build imposing conceptual structures whose foundations are hypotheses, but we should never make the mistake for a moment of forgetting that the original hypotheses are still there, still qualifying the whole structure.

So that for any research value we find that the voices of unseen entities and the directives of apparitions are unreliable and are no final authority for the seeker. Nor are they of use in the search for God. It stands to reason that if God or any other being of bi-dimensional power desired to communicate with us through an angel, then that God would use its ultimate power to clarify that medium of communication by denying any spirit the means to communicate with man in a fraudulent manner. If we are to presume the existence of an omnipotent God, we must assume that He is not concerned with our confusion.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Man is more concerned with the problem or possibility of life after death than he is with arguments about God. Yet man, being inclined to believe that which he wishes to believe and to understand problems in proportion to this understanding, is liable to settle for a wide range of solutions to the eternal enigma.

If Christian theologians recognized the need to be more than human in their guesses about Divine purposes they settled for much less and made God to appear as a sub-human ogre in their conceptualization of a helpless life followed by a relentless hell.

And while reincarnation may be more digestible than Christian finality, it still fails to answer all questions and it also bears symptoms of rationalization. For the poor and oppressed there is a hope of a better day for themselves and indirect revenge upon the oppressors. For the superior, or dominant class of people, there is hope for still better and greater experiences and there is more security for them if the less-fortunate majority is placated by a promising philosophy.

Another strange belief is that of assumption. The outstanding cases are the stories of Elijah and Mary. Some refer to the raising to heaven of Elijah as being a translation, but today translation is used to designate a slower metamorphosis of body material. Elijah and Mary were supposedly lifted up suddenly. The Catholic Church in a recent gesture of sensationalism and dogmatic derring-do decided that the Mother of Christ was assumed physically into heaven and decided that all Catholics were required to believe it. This command came at a time

when the Church and all Christendom were struggling with the trend of humanity toward materialism, pragmatism and utilitarianism. It was a very bad time to pull a rabbit from the Tiara. If Mary was assumed bodily into heaven, then the substance of heaven should be conceived again.

Is heaven a dimension or a place? Would not Mary's body be a bit of an impediment in a place where all other creatures arrived bodiless and possibly subject to laws of another dimension. Evidently Jesus was able to come back and get his body, since the body disappeared from the grave, and later reappeared on the road to Emmaus. This does not prove that Jesus escaped physically from the grave, but could infer that the spirit of Jesus was able to simulate a body and to discard the mask at will.

To say that a personality has found a means to travel from one dimension to another and to be seen in both is not unreasonable, although it implies a special talent. The SRF movement claims that some of its masters were avatars who had the ability to come and go between the spiritual planes and they were also reputed to have extensive creative ability. This brings us to the world illusion, for many believe this world to be one of illusion and that some liberated spirits are able to provoke the illusion at will.

If a person entered another dimension with his body he would either experience body-changes that would replace the present body-exigencies -- and hence he would immediately become a different being than us -- or he would have to take some of this physical dimension with him (food and sanitary facilities) and this might imply the need to take it all with him.

The business of reassuming the body on judgment day cannot be comprehended even by simple-minded cannibal. Would the man who ate Captain Cook and Mr. Cook travel through eternity like Siamese twins, or with interlocking molecules?

Another problem arises with the knowledge that some people die with disease-wasted or crippled bodies. The aged and crippled are supposed to find only a healthy, young body on judgment day. If religion can make this concession to those who see the evident unreasonableness or pointless possibility of rising from the grave exactly as they entered it, then it is possible that the whole idea of resurrection has merely been a concession made to the many constituents of the church who could not visualize any other type of survival.

For those who think themselves to be advanced beyond such primitive dogmas of the early church, and who still cannot bear the idea of leaving the body, there is a group who call themselves Translationists. They believe that a very small percentage of humanity survives death by translating. This comes about by a progress in spiritual growth whereby the body, with each year, becomes less and less physical and perishable until it is really a different substance, immune to death as we know it, and unhampered by the functional exigencies that we other clods experience.

Translation theories bring to mind the many spiritual evolution concepts -- theories that involve either a change of being or a growth of awareness -- the growth of awareness interpreted as a necessity for knowing the future dimension.

There must be some reason for the many divergent beliefs, which is like saying there must be many types of spectacles for the diverse types of vision. And with this observation goes the perennial struggle to try to make everyone accept a uniformly stylized pair of lenses, or to invent a super set of spectacles that would adjust any and all eyes to spiritual reality.

The initial part of any investigative observation must necessarily involve the study of ways and means of observing. Sometimes it is through the critical eyes of others.

Science would demand a personal witness of one who had returned from the grave if science would ever be persuaded to enter the search for a life after death. It would, in fact, demand many witnesses. For this reason many intellectuals, or pseudo intellectuals became involved in Spiritualism. Some courted ridicule in the pursuit

of that which might be called "first hand" information. They sought out mediums and organized societies for psychical research. And they were rewarded with adventures in a very dramatic study.

Descriptions of post-mortem adventures in the Tibetan Book of the Dead are not too incongruous with Curtiss' concepts regarding spiritual planes. We have learned, however, that we cannot learn from the vapid wraiths that come through the curtains of a medium's cabinet. Their intelligence is as evasive as their tenuous ectoplasm. They utter euphemisms, platitudes and encouragement but any explanation of the nature of their beings and of their surroundings is vague and indefinite. We hoped to find evidence that the form of man would find continuation, even if it were unproven. And to hear the voices of our departed friends tempts us to embrace Spiritualism. However, the fuzziest minds will feel slighted when they talk to relatives who, instead of awakening into greater realms at death, seem be less intelligent than when they were living and need to be prompted with every answer. An obscure and somewhat secret brotherhood of mystics gives a very interesting explanation for this lack of intelligence among ectoplasmic sprits. This brotherhood advises that there are beings who are able to imitate the forms of the deceased. These beings may not necessarily be human but are, rather, creatures of a different dimension. Whether or not they don the masks left by the Astral body is not important here because it involves more tangential and conceptual thinking not directly relative.

For those not experienced in Spiritualistic terminology the planes referred to are generally listed as seven with the astral plane being the plane immediately above, or next in experience, to this plane. Many students of Spiritualism are likewise acquainted with the concept of the astral body -- a shell left behind on the astral plane -- when the spirit goes on to higher planes. In some writings, we find the world soul synonymous with the astral body, while the essence that survives the lower planes is known as the spirit. And, of course, other writings refer to the beings (supposedly on the astral plane) who haunt houses as being spirits and refer to the immortal essence as the soul. Such confusion results in painstaking definition by all parties on all points.

The lay-spiritualist is not aware that cabinet-spirits are beings of another dimension. Western scientists did not suspect such as "beings." They suspected trickery.

Spiritualism does not explain away or disprove the counter concept that other dimensional entities manipulate the masks of the dead and until it does, one theory shall be as good as the other and the foundation of Spiritualism shall be in jeopardy.

The unscientific teachers of India and Tibet are responsible for the first explanations of the counter-concept or the idea that beings or entities could manipulate the ectoplasm. The always ultra-civilized Western world managed to kill all the witnesses to spirit-phenomena -- so much so that some benevolent entities appeared as deceased saints hoping to get by the ecclesiastical fire for the sake of the medium. William Crookes treated Katie King as a deceased person. Eliphas Levi was of the opinion that most spirits were somehow created out of the subtler essence of the medium's body, which the magus manipulated as he would theatrical wax. We cannot say that Levi was entirely wrong, for there is no way to be sure that some mediums do not have unique talents. The Rosicrucians, in some cases, believe that man is able to create such entities.

If there is any conclusion that can be drawn from these concepts, it is that the medium's cabinet is not an infallible threshold or two-way, glass door between the different dimensions. We can recognize that Spiritualism and thaumaturgy are valuable means of gathering more information about such entities and their environment.

Spiritualism has degrees of depth as does any religion. The lower levels have to do with fraud beneath a pretence of being a comforting utility. And the messages that came from the mouths of genuine materializations are no more sagacious than those that are relayed to us through clair-audient and clairvoyant mediums. When asked to describe heaven, God, Christ, or even the pastime of the deceased, all of the above sources reply in a sweet but inane message that might be described as spiritual double-talk.

The matter of materialization is worthy of scientific investigation, both in that it is a phenomenon unexplained and in that it presents a situation in which man seems to function as a creator. The pretence about apports is that they are creations. At one séance which I attended the "spirits" wove a scarf and presented it to a grief stricken, but heavy contributor -- a mother from Easter Ohio. There was emphasis here by the elated pseudo medium that is was created, woven especially for this mother.

Then if such weaving be possible, is it not possible that the phantoms themselves could likewise be manufactured? The more likely truth is that the scarf actually came from beneath a cheese cloth tunic and never had been anything but material cloth. The mention of "phantom weaving" is not mentioned here to expose a case of trickery but to indicate inconsistency in a movement that would fail to see the full possibilities of such weaving.

The significant thing to remember about spirit materializations is that regardless of their identity they do not seem to have as much personality or intellect as the living person did, which would not be encouraging if we were hoping for mental evolution upward. Not that we should look for that which flatters our hopes. I have been privileged to witness several materializations that were not cheesecloth. The figures were recognized by relatives but the control spirit's voice bore a remarkable likeness to the medium's voice, as did the voices of other emerging spirits. Most mediums admit that the spirits use their larynx, but never mention that the ectoplasm itself may well emerge from the medium's body.

W.J. Crawford spent a lifetime studying spiritualism and table tilting, and discovered that the table was moved by ectoplasmic rods or cantilevers that extended from the solar plexus of the medium to the approximate center and underside of the table. He established these conclusions with the use of a soft putty which was placed on the underside of the table. And he isolated the path of the invisible cantilevers by moving a square piece of cardboard beneath the table. When the cardboard interfered with the path of the cantilever, the table would fall. His book, *The Reality of Psychic Phenomena* is valuable to anyone interested in this type of research.

Spiritualism exists all over the world but under different names. The guides or spirits have different names as well, being demons, djinns pitris and elementals. Eliphas Levi charts celestial domain and categorizes the hosts of angels and demons. It should be remembered that Levi did not deny the existence of entities or demons, but inferred that the wraiths that appeared as souls of the deceased were very probably ectoplasm only. His real name was Alphonse Constant and it is presumed that he adopted the pseudonym to stay alive. He had been a priest but he left the church, married and became quite an authority on magic. After many years of this research, he is supposed to have rejoined the Catholic Church, with the comment that everyone should belong to some church in preparation for the next life. Evidently, if there is anything to gather from the life's work of this man (presuming that it is true that he did rejoin the Church), it is that this research gave him no greater promise than that offered by the Church.

Levi reminds us that his knowledge of entities came from studies with the Church hierarchy. And this indicates that Levi either left the Church to marry or else he was restricted in his search by being in the Church. And all of this also indicated that at one time the Church was searching for the Truth before it degenerated into secularization and the apathy that comes from being afflicted with overweight.

Levi, who had lost faith in the Church, based his entire structure of magic upon faith. He tells us that the apparition of Appollonius of Tyana may well have been created by his faith and, consequently, was not the soul of Appollonius which his student would have liked to have seen. This is worth remembering when we encounter the analysis of faith in later chapters. And so we ponder the limitations of faith and the coloration that those limitations place upon the results -- the creations of faith.

Let us go now to cases which are known as spontaneous reappearances, or resurrections of the dead, for it now seems possible that their testimony would appear more valid than the testimony of conjured spirits. It is impossible to review all of the cases of this type or to examine them for authenticity. If we are to presume that they have any value at all, we must admit that a percentage of them may well be sincere accounts. Occult magazines are well supplied with letters from readers attesting to this type of experience and occult magazines do not pay for these letters. Articles written by doctors bear witness that some patients on returning from states of unconsciousness peculiar to terminal patients relate strange stories and experiences which cannot be blamed on drugs or delirium.

We can study the many different reports and reach some common denominators on the evidence available. One factor noticed is the inconsistency with other accounts of after-death experiences. Another peculiarity that has been noticed in many medical cases reported is that the patient had no horror of death and often lamented at being revived. As regards variance in testimony, we have cases where a dying man saw his departed relatives but seemed unaware of celestial scenery or environment. Some have noticed beautiful landscapes but saw no relative. We have accounts where exotic environment is witnessed, such as strange vistas, colonnades, iridescent geometric figures and many others. A very few have witnessed only non-human entities. Quite a few have mentioned hearing exquisite music. The nose seems to have no place in heaven, -- I do not know of a single report of reported fragrance. Some have reported a dimensional world subject to the wishes of the viewer, -- and these are rare.

All of which brings us back to the concept that man may well have, in a limited fashion, the power to project or create. Man may color that which he sees with that which he has already seen, desired or contemplated. Or he may project a picture of his expectancies upon the matrix of mind or next plane substance with an intensity similar to projections on a theatre-screen so that it causes an illusion that there is a living movie screen life, when actually the only life is behind the audience in the projector. This is similarly maintained but rendered in other words in the Tibetan Book of the Dead.

Some Spiritualists believe in a Desire World, or plane -- a realm wherein the spirit can create any illusion simply by desiring. This could also be hell. And, of course, the whole concept may be the result of the testimony of resuscitated persons who manifestly were rewarded with objects of desire while in the dream or death state.

A significant factor that should not be overlooked is the attitudinal evidence presented by people who are dying. Medical reports show that a majority of people who know that they are dying relax and show no anxiety. This may or may not be evidence that euthanasia is part of the physiological and psychological progression of terminating creatures. It is also possible that the computer found a sudden comprehensive answer thrust upon itself and was delighted in the accident.

We move on to another type of personal witness and that is the unexpected or spontaneous appearance of spirits. This type involves neither invocation nor medium. Typical cases would be the haunts of old houses, roads or scenes of tragedy. Such cases include solitary spirits, armies of soldier spirits seen by a living army, and convocations of monks. If their substance is ectoplasm and ectoplasm is somehow dependent upon human energy, then the visible shells of this type of spirit must have drawn from the residual energy left behind by people visiting the spot or as in the case of the phantom-army, drawn from those present. This type of phenomena cannot be explained as a deliberated creation by those present.

There are also accounts of people who have been accosted and warned by spirits that resembled themselves, the observers. We have often heard of people who claimed to have seen their "double." The so-called experts have laid this type of phenomena at the door of the astral double or astral body.

The significant thing about all of these witnesses is that they show little sympathy for the momentousness of man's ignorance and the momentousness of any information that might be extended by someone we could understand and who would -- once having lived in his ignorance -- know that the living yearned for this knowledge. Yet, what do we get? The spontaneous appearance or reappearance while ranking as among the

most informative if not authentic still are largely visitations of warning. This means that the deceased are interested yet in the affairs of this dimension and either cannot or will not place the wisdom of the next dimension above the need to warn us of an accident pending or of approaching death.

Science, of course, would prefer the conjured type of spirit since this would be a controlled experiment; but the conjured type of spirit rarely shows the intelligence or awareness that might be associated with a being that is supposed to be sitting astraddle two dimensions. What conclusion can we draw except that man is frustrated by what appears to be a directed blocking by supervisory powers ... or simply by the stupidity of the millions of seekers?

We come now to the group of theorists who accept the destructibility of the body and believe that the soul rises either to eternal paradise or descends to hell. They borrow from one another and while borrowing, protest that the party from whom they borrowed is spurious. So that while we move from one group to another we can observe several things. We find the common denominator of all seekers to be ignorance. And from the overlapping confusion among cults and religions we find that most conventional movements have similarities and we find a common denominator in them in that they are all offered with ingestible syrup. The seeker's problem lies in knowing how and when to step with courage of the "-isms" which our computer or intuition indicates as being inadequate for other than a social emollient.

In studying and cataloguing "-isms" that cling to the one-life, one death idea we find that there is considerable variance among them. Some do not believe in hell and vary in their ideas of heaven. Each heaven is colored with wishful thinking a sometimes we find a colored with wishful thinking and sometimes we find a spiteful heaven wherein only the adherents of the particular exponents are allowed.

The interpenetration of different beliefs has a significance. We may not be as unique as we are led to believe. Christianity has built up an elaborate theology and mythology that can find no origin in the teachings of Christ. Christianity and the religion of ancient Egypt are similar. The Egyptians, several thousand years prior to the time of Christ, believed in heaven and an underworld. They believed in the human soul and in an ethical or moral code that would facilitate the meeting with God face to face. Osiris, like Christ, was a man who gave his life to improve the lot of this fellow man and to secure immortality for them. There was a Judas in his camp that betrayed him and there is mention of seventy-two follower. It is suggested that the Copts, or early Egyptian-Christians, played a big part in adding a few trimmings to the teachings of Christ. Some numerologists and occultists believe that the entire story of Christ is a fabrication or translation of Egyptian names into Hebrew names which would be more palatable to the Eastern Mediterraneans. For them (the occultists) the word Mary means Egypt from which emanated Truth.

In Egypt, they believed in a fellow called Aapep, a double for our devil. In the Book of the Dead (Egyptian), a common vignette shows the deceased person speaking to the serpent Aapep. The Christians also connect the snake with their devil. The different houses of Osiris remind us of the limbo and purgatory of the Catholic Church. There is considerable similarity between Catholicism and the religion of Osiris and less proportionate borrowings by the Catholic Church from Asian religions. So that it might appear that geography and communication had some effect upon the geography and communication had some effect upon that geography and communication had some effect upon the ramifications of Christian theology.

The mummies of Egypt and the bodies in the catacombs are no alarming deviation from the idea of universal salvation. In Egypt, the poorer people were cremated or buried, but they had a belief in rising again and it is not clear from the translation of the Book of the Dead whether they intended to return to the same or another body. Nor is it clear today why the Christians are so abhorrent of creation or why the Catholics go through the exhausting ritual of blessing and anointing corpses, or of blessing graves to insure a celestial expedition. Lamentation goes up for the soul of the deceased who is not buried on sacred ground. And yet the laity meekly accept the explanation that God bends down with special dispensation for the faithful who were incinerated at

the stake or digested by the lions in a pagan arena. And are not these martyrs accepted as saints today and are not the saints in heaven? Incidentally, in both Egyptian and Christian religions there is a belief in a final day of judgment. This implies that heaven is somehow subject to time for these theologians. Death is not an eternal Now, nor is heaven an eternal Now, but is measured by the years it will take for souls to live sun-measured lives up to a certain point in that solar system and then to be gathered -- the ancients and the moderns souls -- for a massive trial.

We come now to Reincarnation. It permeates the Asian religions, mostly. It can, however, be found like a whisper or hint in parts of the Bible. Christ's admonition to Nicodemus concerning the origin of flesh and spirit is one example. John the Baptist is claimed by some to be the reincarnation of one of the older Bible personalities. The insistence that Christ will come again in physical form is noted.

We deal with a new type of divine justice and this makes the theory of reincarnation unique. The earthly sojourns replace the purgatories and limbos and man is not damned for this ignorance, but is required to work the lessons over again. Spiritual evolution is tied to the earth and life becomes more of a classroom than a torture chamber. The weakness in the theory of reincarnation lies in the inability of the layman to understand the objective of perhaps millions of years of transmigration. In other words, where are we aimed and what is reason for the whole system?

The presumption is that if we knew, we might employ some of this so-called free will to accelerate the growth. Another weakness in the theory of reincarnation is the failure of the believer to remember past lives. Of course, the authorities maintain that this ignorance is a prerequisite for our spiritual growth and maintain that if we knew that which was in store for us we might try to throw our machine into reverse.

We come now to a school of thought which has very little connection with the foregoing "-isms" and which has for its objective the Union with the Absolute. There are many terms, eternally vague to the layman, such as Cosmic Consciousness, Nirvana, Samahdi, Satori, Awakening and Enlightenment. The implications of these strange words, while being a vague description of an indescribable state of being, also points to a change of being for the aspirant. Precluding possibly the need of the finite mind to adjust to the infinite before pretending to understand it.

Among the so-called masters who claim to know about these states of mind there is much contradiction. The words "so-called" are not to be interpreted as being derogatory but denote the uncertainty of the title of master. There is no way to distinguish a master from a neophyte and if the reader knew the difference, he would not need to read this. Buddha once was asked by a candidate-neophyte to prove his claim to being a master by proving to the candidate that the latter would actually reach Nirvana by following Buddha's path. Gautama the Buddha replied that the candidate was unreasonable in demanding an answer to an impossible question. It would be like demanding proof from someone describing a long journey or distant scenery. The only proof would be to go and see for one's self.

So the main weakness in this category is the intangibility of the concepts concerned and the impossibility of checking the people who clam to be masters or authorities. In this category we are not dealing so much with religion as we are with direct experience. We are dealing with systems that have no readily accessible temples if temples exist at all. These systems depend very little on written directives and are so diversified in form as to confuse anyone not simply drawn as to a magnet to a particular school. And there is much refutation of authority within some systems.

For instance, P.D. Ouspensky devoted much of his adult life to the investigation of methods for the "expansion of consciousness." He was a disciple of Gurdjieff, a very mysterious and autocratic spiritual master. Yet Ouspensky, while never denouncing Gurdjieff, nor attempting to discredit him, nevertheless disassociated with

him and founded his own school. And his books lead me to believe that Ouspensky had the better system.

Gautama founded the movement now called Buddhism yet the yogic masters who admit Buddhistic origins or affiliations and some Zen masters claim that what is now apparent on the face of the earth as Buddhism bears less resemblance to the original message of Buddha than Christianity in reflecting the true message of Christ. According to one Zen master (who from respect must remain anonymous and may, consequently, not be personally attacked as false nor hailed as true), Buddha really started Zen and Buddhism was a personality cult depending for substance on parables and wise sayings. The number of people who were really endowed with teachings of Gautama (initiated) were few and tremendously out of proportion to the vast number of Zen Buddhist monks who might lay claim to cognizance of the system. This same man claimed that there was a lineage of any true master that could be traced back to Gautama. This tracing is, of course, not possible. If there were no records kept, then we must take people's word for these things. A man may claim that he was initiated by another now dead. But unless the dead man left a bona-fide proof of this for posterity, we are out of luck.

This category (of union with the absolute) lays claim to a transcendency over the previous religions discussed. This makes it unique. The weaknesses that mark the doctrines of various religions are not to be found in it. The wheel of reincarnation, if aimed at Nirvana, may have more meaning; but an endless wheel of reincarnation could make lemmings out of humans. Cyanide would be better to live with than the knowledge that man can never escape from the misery of eternally being reborn into the pain of adjustment to nature only to be extinguished each time by nature.

But heaven and hell as dreamed and depicted by Dante, Milton and Swedenborg would have to be consigned to the realm of illusion. They would exist in somewhat the same intensity as the light projected upon a theatre-screen that seems to be animated by the projector. Thus, we become not the potted but the potter. We become possibly the projector but the projections (our physical bodies included) may no longer be considered as any more real than projections. So away goes the grave, shoal, hell and heaven and with the peddlers of fear-pills.

And what do we have? Still there is confusion. We have, first, no clear knowledge of the state of being implied when any of the words such as Cosmic Consciousness, Nirvana, Samahdi, or Satori is heard. There are different schools and approaches. The direct approach method is called Zen. Nothing about Zen makes sense unless you have become a Zen Adept.

Then there is the evolutionary approach to the "Union" that may take many years of reincarnations. This is found in some yogic groups. Here we have an over-lapping of dogmatic beliefs with ideas of "change or being," Personal immanence is shadowed by concept-building. Some reincarnationists believe that it leads to a state of Nirvana after a long period of evolution through incarnations. Some believe also in a longer period of evolution on a spiritual plane, after the body is finally discarded. Thus, the Theosophist Blavatsky speaks of Buddha as being on a level slightly above the level of the masters Koot Hoomi, Morya or Christ. And the implication from this form of yoga is that these levels are somehow related to duration, or times as reckoned in the solar system, because of the periods of service needed to earn the step of a master and the service time needed to earn still later the step of Bodhisattva. This type of Buddhism is a very laborious climb if union with the Absolute is going to be achieved inside of a million years.

There is much confusion, evidently, between the Absolute state and that which might be called the Universal Mind -- a plane which still may be a projection. Yogic schools that protest their ability to reach the Absolute still compile volumes about phenomena produced and miraculous ability over the world of matter. Yet, is not he who is able to mold the wax or reform the matrix of matter still only a mechanic -- dealing with material by his own admission? And, consequently, dealing with illusion by his own admission?

Blavatsky has two ponderous volumes filled with the wonders of phenomena down through the ages and with miracles ascribed to occult groups -- all offered as incentive for the reader to become a theosophist. But from her accounts, heaven is not an absolute state, but an endless ascension of spirits to nobler and nobler heights. We

are dazzled with time keeping in yugas that make the entire life of mankind on earth a very small point in the overall time during which the great spirits were building the cosmos.

The progress and time that it might take for an amoeba to become a Bodhisattva may be possibly computed. And that is not all. Somewhere are many masters and Buddhas gone before of even greater spiritual heights, but nowhere is there an end in sight. So that we begin to wonder about the purpose of spirituality.

Also in the SRF movement highlighted in America by Yogananda we have an evolution toward becoming a master or avatar. Yet, we must ask about the extent to which this adroitness as a master might contribute to our state of being. Babuji or Babaji (which, incidentally, only means "dear one") was always popping up in crowds in India so that one of the disciples of this movement might tell of the alarming event. Babaji also performed sensational feats but only for the elect. There is a story told about a party of sorts which was given for one of the chief adepts in which an entire palace, villa or village was materialized for the occasion and if memory is correct in this matter, an immense amount of gold was materialized. Would not such a new religion bring the poor peasants of India on the run?

In America, no group has contributed more to the researching mind about the religions of India and Tibet than the Theosophists. Where, in some of the Indian cults that have invaded America there is uncertainty, there is a dynamism and a strong appeal to human reason on the part of the Theosophists. Besides whatever conclusions we may reach about them, they have provided humanity with an invaluable service -- they have stimulated curiosity about the origin of things and about the nature of man and they have laboriously compiled information to exercise the scientific mind.

And if there is one who might be considered a voice or authority about Theosophy, it must be Blavatsky. Theosophy would incorporate all religions, echoing Max Mueller with the claim that all spring from the same hunger and all are aimed at Truth, despite the fact that some along the way become either sectarian, venal, or are limited by the understanding of the devotees. Theosophy does not deny Christ, it enlists him and places him in a harmonious relation to Theosophy. Theosophy's attempts at a marriage of the utterly profane with the utterly abstract philosophies is interesting to note.

That Blavatsky decrees the understanding of the Absolute to be the basic reality can be found in the poem of the Secret Doctrine, on the 15th and 16th pages. She likens it to the Parabrahm of the Vedantists, inferring that they have a similar concept. Displaying an unusual familiarity with the relation of man to the Absolute, she goes on to describe it as the causeless cause from which first emanates the Logos and from the Logos comes the next emanation, Life, and finally, Intelligence.

There is considerable confusion to be found by cross-checking the writings of Blavatsky. Here we are concerned with the confusion that exists in heaven, or at least Blavatsky's heaven. She also speaks of a war in heaven. The first cause or the Logos, should not have too many meanings. Anything that is first, absolutely should have no more than one meaning. At different places in the Secret Doctrine, Christ is supposed to be the Logos. Jesus (if there is a significant difference) was supposed to manifest the Logos in himself as being the son of the Logos. On page 232 of Book 2 of the Secret Doctrine, he is described as an Initiate, a Savior and a parallel of Krishna. In Book 1, page 264, Jesus or Joshua is referred to as representing the fall of spirits into matter so that the war in heaven is only allegorical. In Book 2, page 231, footnote, we find that Jesus and the Father are meant to mean soul and spirit. The Logos is not a spirit, as we noted earlier, but the first cause, antedating spirit or Purusha.

In works other than the Secret Doctrine, Jesus is looked upon differently. Blavatsky places him on the Master level with Koot Hoomi. In Isis unveiled, much space is used to discredit Jesus. In Book 2, page 201, Jesus is described as a wise adept of the Rabbi Elhanan who traveled into Egypt, studied the Kabala and was later hanged upon the cross. This, according to the Talmud. On page 566, Book 2, of the same Isis, Christ is not the son of God but only a high priest. (Here goes the Logos out the window.) On page 574, on the same book,

Professor Mueller is supposed to prove that Paul was the real founder of Christianity and not Jesus. "For Paul, Christ is not a person, but an embodied idea." Page 239 undertakes to find that Jesus, or Christ, was a man and only a man.

So much for the compilation of confusion. If, by running between the raindrops, or by treasure hunting in confetti, we are supposed to find the Truth, then Blavatsky may have some system. The vital issue is time. How much time do we have to fumble with the variegations of symbolism? Is there not a simpler way? If man is to become united with the Absolute in a million years, there is no value in the present contemplation of sacred writings or histories of erroneous and incomplete movements.

In summarizing the various approaches to Union with the Absolute, we first encounter the slow evolutionary theory. Secondly, we have groups of people, or cults, that endeavor simply to expand consciousness, whose ultimate aim is cosmic consciousness. Gurdjieff and Ouspensky may well come into this category. Thirdly, we have the direct method which is Zen. The Zen method is supposed to be quicker and supposedly brings the individual into maximum enlightenment. We might also mention another group who expect to join the Absolute in a state of awareness by becoming obliterated and returning to the electrical field of the cosmos.

We cannot discuss any of these groups without participation if we expect to do them justice. And with the teachers who would lead us into expanded being there is no argumentation or reasoning. In Zen, reasoning would only be used by the Master to run your intellect up a rat hole.

We are left, therefore, either an emotional magnetism toward such teachings or else we are selective by virtue of intuition if we need to look for a reason for embracing schools of either expanded consciousness Zen. And even after the student has embarked upon the two paths mentioned, at every stage along the way he still finds himself unable to translate intellectually that which is happening to him.

[End]

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