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#### IV

### THE TWO SOPHIA'S OR THE RELATIONSHIP OF THEOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHY <sup>1</sup>

*Philosophia ancilla theologiae*—Philosophy is the handmaid of theology: thus a thinker of the Middle Ages, Petrus Damiani (1007-1072) expressed what according to him was the right relation between philosophy and theology. <sup>2</sup> In these centuries, not all have given proof of a similar lack of appreciation for philosophy, but in those times it was generally accepted in Europe that philosophy had to take second place as well as be a servant to theology.

One can raise an identical problem as to the relationship between *philosophy* or "love for wisdom" in general, and *theosophy*, usually rendered as "divine wisdom".

Before going into this problem in principle, we wish to find out how this relation is in practice; how, for instance, leading theosophists think about philosophy; what philosophizing theosophists there may have been; the study of which subjects philosophy and theosophy apparently have in common and towards which philosophical trends theosophists are attracted. However, we shall have to do all this very quickly.

Firstly, it is striking that—whereas a leader like MR. C. W. LEADBEATER apparently took little interest in philosophy <sup>3</sup>—DR. ANNIE BESANT positively appreciated philosophy and its function. This appears, for instance, from her address on *Philosophy or God manifesting as Understanding*, the third of six lectures given at the opening of the Brahmavidyashrama in Adyar in 1922. <sup>4</sup> There, she gives a very right definition of philosophy as "the definite intellectual attempt to understand the universe in which-man finds himself as a part." <sup>5</sup> Also, her positive attitude re philosophy is constantly coming to the fore in her interest in Indian philosophy.

Whereas DR. G. S. ARUNDALE was as little interested in philosophy as Mr. Leadbeater, we have a series of pronouncements on the subject from MR. C. JINARĀJADĀSA. Only, they rather diverge. In the Foreword to the second impression of the collective work, entitled *Where Theosophy and Science meet*, he writes that in due course other works such as *Where Theosophy and Philosophy meet* will have to be published. <sup>6</sup> However, he has many faults to find with today's philosophy.

According to him, in the field of metaphysics one finds oneself occupied by "matters not worth discussing".<sup>7</sup> Today's philosophy is "purely an intellectual analysis of mental processes".<sup>8</sup> What he is especially nettled at, is that the study of philosophy seems to have so little influence on the formation of character; in ancient India and in Greece this was different: there, purification of the emotions was the first requirement for the study of philosophy.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, there is one philosopher for whom Mr. Jinarājadāsa has a great admiration; this being Plato, who—according to Mr. Jinarājadāsa—is all too little studied by theosophists. He was a social reformer and actually he was neither a philosopher nor did he have a system<sup>10</sup>—statements which we would rather not support.

Mr. Jinarājadāsa also wrote about Schopenhauer.<sup>11</sup> Those three thinkers: Plato, Schopenhauer and Bergson, usually are warmly welcomed by theosophical authors.

It lies near also to ask ourselves which significance is attributed to philosophy by H. P. BLAVATSKY in *The Secret Doctrine*. However, this question is not easily answered, since *The Secret Doctrine* has so little system. As far as we can see, no definition or appreciation of philosophy as such is given anywhere, even if many scattered remarks are to be found in its pages in connection with various philosophers and their ways of thought, in comparison with the esoteric doctrine. In these sundry remarks, again Plato and Hegel seem to be liked best.

Various individual theosophists have occupied themselves in a more systematic way with philosophy. Among these, I may recall, for instance, BHAGAVAN DAS (1869-1958) and DOUGLAS FAWCETT (1866-1960) and among the Dutch M. W. MOOK (1876-1926) and J. J. VAN DER LEEUW (1893-1934). Apart from his greater works, Bhagavan Das gave a lecture at the Philosophical Congress of Bologna in 1911 on the subject of *The Metaphysic and Psychology of Theosophy*, later published as an Adyar Pamphlet.<sup>12</sup>

Mr. Fawcett has been a member of the Theosophical Society between 1885 and 1891, therefore not for very long time. Yet it is apparent that his later philosophical work was influenced by theosophy.<sup>13</sup>

Of the, at least in Holland, lesser known authors we should not forget to mention Miss CHARLOTTE E. WOODS, who a.o. wrote about "The Self and its Problems" (1922), as well as Miss H. S. ALBARUS, who did not deny her German background in a series of well-considered philosophical articles in *The Theosophist*<sup>14</sup> and elsewhere. B. L. ATREYA, professor at the Hindu University of Benares, who (as far as we know) never was a member of the Theosophical Society, contributed an—in our opinion—rather vulnerable paper

to *Where Theosophy and Science meet about Philosophy and Theosophy*.<sup>15</sup> In a somewhat wider sense we must, of course, mention DR. G. R. S. MEAD (1863-1933), who was in the first place a classicist and a student of comparative religion and as such was constantly brought into contact with the problems especially of the philosophy of the Ancients.

As regards Holland—in this country a rather vivid intercourse between philosophy and theosophy has taken place. On the one hand, Professor BOLLAND (1854-1922) criticized theosophy,<sup>16</sup> whilst accusing my own teacher at the University of Groningen, Professor HEYMANS (1857-1930)—who himself thought of theosophy as "obvious superstition"<sup>17</sup>—of theosophical sympathies in connection with his psychic monism, of which Bolland said: it is "New Knowledge, Ancient Wisdom".<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, we can point to a series of Dutch philosophizing theosophists. It should not be forgotten that MR. J. D. REIMAN JR., in the years, when—mostly on his instigation—the International School of Philosophy was founded near Amersfoort, was a theosophist, as well as his wife, and the leader of the lodge of the Theosophical Society in Amersfoort.<sup>19</sup> Dr. J. J. van der Leeuw has, especially in his *The Conquest of Illusion* (1928), treated, or at least touched upon, a large number of philosophical problems. A clearly philosophical theosophist was Mr. M. W. Mook; see his *Hegelian-Theosophical Essays* (1913) and various other, small pamphlets of which he was the author.

For that matter, a curious thing has occurred with the relationship between Theosophy and Hegelianism. Some people appeared to have had an understanding of both, even though some of them started by being theosophists and ended by being Hegelians, then rejecting theosophy as a preliminary stage.<sup>20</sup> The now rare "pan-philosophical magazine" *Licht en Waarheid*, originally contained much theosophy; finally, it was converted into the purely Hegelian magazine: *Denken en Leven*. One of the most important Dutch Hegelians after Bolland, JACOB HESSING (1874-1944) since 1932 a special professor in Hegelian philosophy at Leyden University, has been a theosophist for some time—apparently under the influence of W. Meng. Even in later years he sometimes mentioned the saying "Satyānnāsti para dharma", which—so he said—should be ascribed to the Emperor Akbar and which according to him might be used as a device for any system of philosophy.<sup>21</sup>

Being a theosophist, one can apparently go in various philosophical directions!

In India, it is apparent that theosophy is strongly influenced by that Indian philosophical trend or *darshana*, the Vedānta. Dr.

Besant called the Vedānta "the greatest of all systems."<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, putting the One Self into the centre has also been criticized: thus, one cannot get rid of the (lower) self and one is kept imprisoned within the subjective. Western idealism, even all great philosophical systems, are so very sterile and subjective, so they said.<sup>23</sup> We disagree with this viewpoint. It may be true that theosophists have, in their meditations, to a too large extent identified their own ego with the Self. This, in our opinion, does not detract from the significance of that one Self. Dr. Besant was quite right to agree with the Vedānta doctrine.<sup>24</sup> However this may be—apparently it is possible to render theosophy in different ways in philosophical ideas. Also, it is very useful that we are free to do so and that not merely one philosophy—like Thomistic philosophy for Roman-Catholics—is considered to be the leading system.

On the other hand it can be said that there exists, nevertheless, some affinity or relationship between theosophy and certain philosophical trends. In the first place it can be established where this affinity is *not* given: for instance, with regard to materialism and positivism. The theosophist is unable to accept the idea of visible matter being the end, the truest reality. Neither does he agree with positivism, which only reckons with the—physically or psychically—tangible, thus never reaching the *spirit*. Nor can the theosophist be content with an extreme, or left existentialism, which teaches life to be absurd. No, on the contrary, he is in constant search of a *background*, which is not given, from which that which is immediately given, life and the world, only receive their meaning and can be derived.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, a theosophist naturally turns in the direction of a *spiritual* philosophy, which places spirit in the centre, whether he looks for it more especially in Hegelianism or in the (to our opinion not yet sufficiently known) spiritual existentialism as found with LOUIS LAVELLE (1883-1951) or in the Vedānta or in a Western counterpart of the Vedānta, called "absolute idealism" by the German philosopher Nicolai Hartmann.<sup>26</sup>

At any rate we can observe that theosophy and philosophy partly meet with the same problems. To mention some of them: the relationship between mind and body, or between the psychical and the physical, between spirit and matter; the bearing of intellect and intuition; the meaning of the rational and the irrational; eternity and time; freedom; the polarity of individual and society, etc.

If this be so, if philosophy and theosophy partly deal with the *same* subjects, then, only the more, the question arises of their exact and essential relationship. Now we wish to go into this. We must find an answer to the question: Which of the two is the highest?

Which of them has the last word? Is the one the servant of the other?

Here, however, we must make a restriction. If we want to compare theosophy and philosophy, then only theosophy is at stake, as far as it is part of the process of thinking. It is most probable that theosophy has yet other aspects or functions. Thus, the question boils down to this: If we put philosophy, which certainly is a matter of thought, and theosophy, insofar as it is thinking, beside one another, which will then be the strongest of the two; which one will turn the scale?

It has always seemed to me that in order to find an answer to questions such as this one, it is necessary to start from the difference between theory and practice and to point out that there exists also a *practice of thinking*. Pure theory is a rather late invention. Primitive peoples occupied themselves with all kinds of things: building of bridges, healing of the sick, etc., long before drawing up beautiful and complicated theories on how such things ought to be done. That is not something to begin with. So it is with thinking itself. Man is already convinced of the truth of various teachings about himself and his constitution, about the cosmos and its various parts, without being able to give exact proofs for these opinions.

Afterwards, these opinions often appeared to be quite wrong, but even so, I think that the anticipation of pure and established theory has an important as well as a lasting function. Otherwise, no result could ever be obtained; we have to start with various suppositions, the truth and the utility of which may eventually appear later on.

This does not only bear upon the best ways of building; it also bears upon general theories concerning the world and life and the task of mankind in them. Man is continuously confronted with decisions: to which purpose will he educate his children; how should the state and the community be run and ruled; on what grounds punishment is given?

Man cannot wait until every field has been exactly covered by science or philosophy. Therefore, he begins by accepting as correct on grounds of intuition a whole complex of opinions or teachings with regard to such general matters, and to act accordingly. This is both necessary and useful. For these complexes of provisionally accepted doctrines the term "ideologies" in the better sense (*Weltanschauungen*) should be used. This term, which as such might also be used as a synonym of philosophy, is often used in this narrower sense; of complexes of general teachings about mankind, life, the world and the reason for the existence of the world, as yet unproved, but nevertheless accepted with a strong conviction.

There is no one—except perhaps some dry and inactive Dr. Cipher (to quote a well-known Dutch novel) who is able, as a matter of fact, to do without such an ideology. Man is forever bothered by decisions; he has to cut the Gordian knot, if only about the problem for which political party to vote!

In my opinion, the religions also come under the head of "ideology" as regards their complexes of doctrines, for instance Roman-Catholicism, Protestant Fundamentalism, Islam, etc., etc. Their followers will not agree with our definition of as yet un-proved, but useful teachings. According to them, they teach *the truth*, even before it has been confirmed. It is revealed truth. "Dogma", originally only meaning opinion, principle, took the special meaning of an a priori established doctrine, being dogma in a narrower sense. According to me, this implies an overestimation of the task of ideologies, so that immediately the problem arises of how, for heaven's sake, all these, often contradictory complexes of dogmata can all be true at the same time.

Also, the contents of the various doctrines coming under dogma, vary often: as scientific research makes progress, many ideas are abolished which formerly were accepted as established truths. Undoubtedly, however, religions in the sense of ideologies do have the function of giving guidance and security in life. Not all ideologies are dogmatic. Liberal Protestantism, for instance, does certainly accept more than is exactly proved, but it does not *require* acceptance. There are also negative ideologies. The Freethinkers, for instance, put freedom of thought before everything else and they will have none of religious teachings or dogmata. The question is, of course, whether they themselves are completely free of all dogma: their freedom of thought often amounts to "at no cost belief in God", that is to say, to a dogmatically accepted atheism.

There exist many ideologies, especially if we also take into account the smaller groups, such as those of the Spiritualists, Mormons, Christian Scientists, and so on. It is obvious that Modern Theosophy, founded as a Society in 1875, is one of them. When envisaging as an outsider, that is to say as a student of comparative religion, those groups—one can observe all kinds of them, whether they be called sects or trends or ideologies—they all bring their own outlook on the world, thus satisfying the human need of a survey and hold on life. In the meantime, each of them (and sometimes violently <sup>27</sup>) claims that his system is the truth. Insofar as the teachings of the various ideologies contradict one another, they cannot possibly, however, be true at the same time. <sup>28</sup> It is likely, that each time a different aspect is brought to the fore. These aspects might eventually supplement one another—the one system might then be more

suitable for one type of person, the other for another type of person, without the contents of the systems necessarily contradicting one another—, but that is something which is not easily accepted: one's own system contains the complete truth.

There seems to lie a great task for an ideology which brings these various aspects to the fore, seeing them as parts of a greater whole, whilst pointing out the common background of the various religions.

Each one of us has to make his own choice of ideology, unless he automatically accepts that kind with which he has been brought up. He, who chooses the ideology of Modern Theosophy, will then, as happens elsewhere, be guided by partly explicit, partly intuitive considerations.<sup>29</sup> With the latter, the intuitive considerations, we can again observe the practice of thinking: which starts from that which is not yet fully proved.

Let us now have a look at the counterpart: *philosophy*. One of the questions repeatedly asked here, is that of the relationship between philosophy and science. We all agree, I think, that science really has the purpose to promote freedom and certainty of thinking, accepting only strictly proved results. It is true, science does often start from certain premisses or axioms, but this then forms a new problem: science at any cost wishes to prove (or at least to know exactly) where they come from and how far they hold good. These are really philosophical questions. Now then, is philosophy part of science or something else? That is partly a matter of definition. Sometimes one speaks of *Die Weltanschauungen der grossen Denker* (the ideologies of the great thinkers), for instance the philosophy of Schopenhauer, then meaning ideology in the above-mentioned narrow sense of a coherent complex of assumed, but not quite proved teachings. However, we prefer to give a more severe definition of philosophy. For philosophers equally strict requirements of exact demonstrability and objectivity should be expected as for science. In that case, however, philosophy also comes under the head of science; she is the summary and the crown of science, but she remains part of it. All those un-proved systems, then, are cases of ideology in the narrower sense, of provisionally accepted teachings, which eventually may be proved later on.

Thus having defined theosophy and philosophy, the former as an "ideology" and the latter as a part and the crown of science, what conclusion can then be drawn as to their interrelation? Which of them has the final word? To this question, according to us, the answer ought to be without reserve: philosophy. According to theosophy, this *has* to be so. This is the result of the fact that theosophy is a liberal spiritual trend. The Theosophical Society wishes to be a society of *searchers* for truth; when becoming a

member, acceptance of a credo is not required; at the most, its members should agree with the first aim concerning the formation of a nucleus of Brotherhood.

I remember my first meeting with Mr. W. B. Fricke in 1918 who at that time was a prominent member of the Theosophical Society, Netherlands Section. Then, he said to me: "We believe in reincarnation, but always remember, if we find something better, we shall accept that."

In practice, one may sometimes meet rather orthodox theosophists who swear by certain teachings or pronouncements. What, for instance, is to be found in the *Mahatma-Letters*, is regarded by them as strictly and completely true. According to me, however, even these letters are a result of the viewpoint of a certain circle in a certain period.<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile, there is no better proof for the undogmatic character of the Theosophical Society than the motto which is put round the seal on all its publications: *Satyān nāsti paro dharmah*, which is usually rendered as: "There is no religion higher than truth". Truth, as found by unhampered thinking, which especially occurs in science and her part and crown, philosophy, is *eo ipso* higher, of more importance than any religious consideration. By that motto, the liberal, non-orthodox character of theosophy is officially indicated. A stronger contrast to *philosophia ancilla theologiae* cannot be thought of; theology, in this case theosophy, is definitely not the handmaid of philosophy; it is rather the reverse. In principle, one cannot, accordingly, acknowledge a "double truth"; free thinking, philosophy and science carry off the palm in a conflict.

Theosophy, however, also contains various detailed teachings. If, for instance, reincarnation, therefore, is not a dogma, if there are so many more teachings, such as the existence of higher planes and subtle bodies and the Path of Initiation, all this has not been strictly proved and yet we often talk about it. This should be regarded thus: that it all comes under the heading of "ideology" in the typical sense of that which one intuitively feels inclined to accept, whilst awaiting a further scientific or philosophical proof (for instance to be found, perhaps, in parapsychology for the theory of reincarnation<sup>31</sup>).

In the meantime, one might consider the following too. On the one hand, it is dubious, as said, whether theosophy is only a matter of thinking; on the other hand, as also mentioned before, one is confronted by the choice of an ideology. This choice will be the more easy and justified, if the contents of the ideology concerned are clearly outlined, logical and deep. According to us, these contents should be full of meaning, have philosophical significance

and they should also be liable to being *understood*.<sup>32</sup> The unconditional acceptance of a certain, traditional religion on the grounds of the message of a certain leader, important as he may have been, to our opinion can never satisfy these demands.

Now, we have looked for a formula of what theosophy in an embracing sense really is, having already expounded such a one elsewhere.<sup>33</sup> Very shortly, one might say that modern theosophy is a *synthetic* movement, a movement aiming at synthesis, integration, unity, be it unity in diversity. This aiming at unity or integration can then be specified according to the direction in which it is expressed, in the first place either inwardly or outwardly.

*Inwardly*, the aim is directed at God or the One Self, resulting in: 1) reflection on, and finally contemplation of God or the Divine, i.e., seen from the outside, highest philosophy, respectively deepest (free) theology; 2) personal surrender and devotion towards God or mysticism; and 3) a gradual real union with God, or yoga.

When, however, man turns *outwards* in his desire for unity, other cultural values come into existence. When he tries to understand and explain the world or plurality, science and the rest of philosophy, the philosophy of plurality, are born. When man tries to create certain unities within the world, art and ceremonial magic originate. When he aims at unity in the practice of daily life, a fraternal loving or harmonic community on a smaller or larger scale comes into existence.

Unity *between* the various cultural values is a goal too; for instance harmony between art and religion, between science and brotherhood, between science and religion, where, again, we should find unity in diversity, that is to say, the autonomy of these cultural values should basically be retained.

This wider definition of what theosophy is, includes also a description of an *ideal theosophy*, of theosophy as an ideal. This amounts to a realizing the proper signification of this ideology and, the more this signification is evident and worthy to aim at, the more people will associate with it. From this ideal theosophy, theosophy brought into practice should be distinguished, which is a movement since 1875, one among many other movements and ideologies. That is, however, a very common thing; that which is formulated as an object, always goes deeper and is more beautiful than when it is put into practice. If, for instance, we read the programmes of political parties, they all are equally or almost equally fine. Apart from the objects, it will also depend from the realization of the same, whether one is willing to remain a member of a certain movement. If the gap between the aims and their realization becomes too wide, many turn aside. We think, however, that no discussion is neces-

sary about the importance of pure, deep and understandable formulas of the aims to be reached.

We can make some more remarks about this definition of "ideal theosophy". Its contents are very broad. Fundamentally, ordinary philosophy and science do also come under its heading: they aim at unity as regards knowledge! Also mystical, social and oecumenic aspirations come under the heading of ideal theosophy. Then, should we say that this definition might be *too* wide? This is not so, according to us, for nowhere else but in the Theosophical Society this ideal of a universal synthesis, integration or unity in diversity and brotherhood is so explicitly expressed. It is an ideal worth aiming at.<sup>34</sup> We shall, however, frankly have to acknowledge that many aspects of it are already pursued and also realized elsewhere. It will not do to regard the whole complex of deeper philosophy or the progress of science as part of the activities of the Theosophical Society, founded in 1875! One might go on giving such examples.

However, there should be a special relationship between this ideal theosophy and the modern theosophical movement—otherwise, there would not have been so many enthusiastic theosophists in the course of time. In our opinion, this special relationship is, that nowhere else that many-sided synthesis (for instance with regarding to the so important idea of brotherhood) is so explicitly formulated,<sup>35</sup> and that also in certain other respects the connection between the purpose of unity and its realization comes expressly to the fore here.

To all probability, it will particularly be possible to enter the Path of Initiation via the Theosophical Society. On the other hand, we shall always have to bear in mind that the Theosophical Society is one of a series of idealistic, religious and humane movements, each of which aims at an ideal lying beyond its reach. As regards this Path of Discipleship and Initiation, we cannot believe that this might *only* be entered via the Theosophical Society. If that which is indicated here, be as important and central as is assumed, it should be possible to find it elsewhere, too; for that matter, it existed already long before 1875.

Therefore, I do not deem it correct to mention "self-exploration, the experiencing of everything as a Mystery" as typical for theosophy or the Theosophical Society and to regard everything else as immaterial, so that, for example, the Theosophical Research Centres would not even be allowed to call themselves "theosophical".<sup>36</sup> Yes, of course, experiencing the Mystery—either in the direction of thinking, in the form of what we call the "fundamental paradox", or in the direction of the experience of mystic unity—is the most important, the deepest, or—so to speak—the "only needful" thing.

Let us hope that this mystery is especially experienced by theosophists; yet, it is likely that others, too, experience it, for instance in Zen Buddhism.

Actually, this is also the viewpoint of J. Krishnamurti: the most necessary thing is awareness. Everything else does not matter, is of secondary importance. For J. Krishnamurti, everything else is so very accidental, that he does not wish to occupy himself with it at all: neither with philosophies, nor with religious organizations, nor with religious ceremonies, and so on.<sup>37</sup> However, not everybody can take such a high, exclusive viewpoint all the time. Even if Mary be basically right as regards the one needful thing (Luke 10:42), the sisters Martha are also wanted.

We thought that the members of the Theosophical Society might exactly be those who—although acknowledging that the most important factor is self-exploration, the experience of the Mystery— will nevertheless feel called upon (as so many sisters Martha) to occupy themselves, besides that, with other things: spreading of teachings, for instance those regarding what leads up to the Path, of which that mystic experience constitutes the summit,<sup>38</sup> pursuing brotherhood in daily life, comparing the results of ordinary and occult research (like the Theosophical Research Centres do) and much more, consciously taking the viewpoint that, nevertheless, an organization for a spiritual purpose has its meaning and use, in spite of the dangers involved.

To our opinion, one will never be able to say that the Theosophical Society would be the *nec plus ultra* of ideologies, or, so to say, the absolute ideology. Then, one would not be liberal any more, but orthodox. However, if one wants to be and remain a member, one has to be convinced that the Society has a special task to complete. This special task is a consequence of that very broad and profound aim, such as we have tried to formulate as "ideal theosophy", theosophy as an ideal.

In the meantime, one can see various tasks for the members of the Theosophical Society and according to his range of interest and his type of person, each member will want to devote himself to some particular task.

With regard to our subject: "theosophy and philosophy", we can now ask ourselves: might there perhaps also be such a special task for a certain group of theosophists within the boundaries of philosophy? Philosophy is, as we have seen, the summary and the crown of human thought, of the search for truth. On the other hand, theosophy—although it is more, since it also aims at unity or integration in other, for instance practical respects—at any rate also has a theoretical side, concerned with ideas: it teaches, it

wants to promote insight. Thinking is, in any case, involved.

That such is the case, is explicitly recognized by various leading theosophists. They say that there are different roads leading to the summit and to liberation of the self, and in this connection jñāna-yoga, bhakti-yoga and karma-yoga (i.e. yoga or unification through knowing, devotion and acts) are mentioned. Mrs. Besant, for instance, writes about this distinction in *The three Paths to Union with God* <sup>39</sup> and also in her booklet *Hints on the Study of the Bhagavad-Gītā* <sup>40</sup> she speaks about this jñāna-mārga, this *road of knowledge*. In the fourth chapter of this treatise, she quotes the Gītā about this yoga of wisdom and discernment, which a.o. comes clearly to the fore in its fourth and thirteenth chapter.

Now, philosophy is—or at least ought to be, for there are philosophers who have given up this ideal—the summit of human thinking, reflection on the profoundest problems, such as a.o. the relationship of man, the individual subject, to the foundation of the world, the One Self or the Absolute. Apparently, human thought here reaches its boundaries and can now only move forward in a faltering manner, only "know quand même, nevertheless". <sup>41</sup> But thus, the situation becomes even more interesting, in spite of the risks involved. Now it is obvious, that this jñāna-yoga, the mārga or the path of knowledge to reach the Supreme, is connected with these most profound problems of philosophy. In so far, theosophy should also have a special relation to these deep realms of philosophy.

If one does not have in mind modern theosophy, dating from 1875, but the older, historic theosophy, <sup>42</sup> then one can observe that this connection between theosophy and profound philosophical thought has often existed. One may think, for instance, of Plotinus' philosophizing about the One, Plotinus, who, on the other hand, also knew religious extasies. Jacob Boehme, too, used to ponder on the paradoxes in the relationship of God and the creation or multiplicity: concerning, as he called it, "the contrarium in God".

One can say that this jñāna-mārga has been followed by many thinkers: in India by Shankara in his doctrine of Advaita and by many others; in the Western hemisphere, for instance, by Spinoza, who wrote about the *amor dei intellectualis*, <sup>43</sup> the intellectual love for God by man, in which God also loves Himself.

More on the religious side, there have been the Gnostics, who— however motley in their various trends—all put understanding, reflection on the foreground, whereas Christianity as a whole can rather be called bhakti-yoga than jñāna-yoga.

Mysticism also assumes different forms, devoted mystics apparently practising bhakti-yoga again, whereas the so-called "cool mysticism" of—for instance—Meister Eckehart rather takes the

side of jñāna-yoga. Much jñāna-yoga is also evident in Buddhism with its supposed atheism, or rather its negation of a personal God; and J. Krishnamurti teaches—without *wanting* to be a teacher!— the same non-devoted, but cool, conscious realization of the highest, which apparently is comparable with "satori" of the Zen-Buddhists. Here, throughout "deprojection" is apparent, in contrast to the projection of God or gods, to whom one is lovingly devoted.<sup>44</sup>

So, on the whole there is enough to point out, coming under the nature of jñāna-yoga, this way of deepest knowledge. Now, we wish to ask the question how things are in the Theosophical Society. There the jñāna-yoga is explicitly acknowledged as shown above.<sup>45</sup> Yet it appears to us that there is no reason for enthusiasm. There are some philosophers who are in good favour, so to say, with the members of the Theosophical Society, such as Plato, Hegel to a certain extent, and also Shankara and his Vedanta, but one is not much, or not very intensively, occupied by jñāna-mārga. This may have special reasons. One can say that in the past, there was more studying in the Theosophical Society. The necessity of this seems to have taken more or less second place nowadays. Probably, there have been two causes for this: 1) the significance, given to intuition and 2) the viewpoint of J. Krishnamurti.

As regards intuition: among the philosophers popular with theosophists, also HENRI BERGSON (1859-1941) should be made mention of. Against the dry and rigid intellect he sets intuition as the function capable of experiencing pure duration, *l'elan vital* and creative activity. He is one of the so-called philosophers of life, who really renounce understanding in order to stop at experiencing, which, in our opinion, amounts to a sceptical attitude with regard to the possibilities of thought. Here, too, much use is made of intuition and too little use of the intellect, whereas, according to us, merely at one special point, namely understanding the "fundamental paradox", the intellect fails us and only the pure intuition of each one of us can bring relief.<sup>46</sup>

According to us, theosophists have made too much fuss of this conception of intuition by Bergson and some others. Probably, the cause of this has been that there are also theosophical teachings about the succession of races and about the development of various functions within these races. The fifth race, now in existence, would especially be characterised by the flourishing and preponderance of the intellect, of *manas*. This race is succeeded by the sixth race, now coming up, in which the faculty of *buddhi*, often rendered as "intuition", will be developed. Bergson's teachings would then, so to speak, anticipate this and be a sign on the wall.

Dr. Besant, however, somewhere makes an important remark.

She says that she does not like the term *buddhi* for intuition, since there exists an intellectual intuition totally different from the intuition of buddhi, which is self-realization. There is, according to her, a stronger relationship between emotion and buddhi than between manas and buddhi.<sup>47</sup> In other words: a distinction should be made between two things: between the intuition of buddhi, a direct evaluation of things, and the intuition of manas, where intellect by itself comes to intellectual intuition or intellectual contemplation (*intellektuelle Anschauung*). Then, there are two roads that can be followed: They who already at this moment want to become aware of buddhi,<sup>48</sup> take a different direction than those who—starting from the prevailing race—want to reach its summit, where intellect reaches its boundaries and realizes the fundamental paradox. The latter is the typical road of knowledge. Jnāna-mārga forms the immediate lengthening-piece of the fifth race. The point is not a mere rejection or renunciation of the intellect, but a step by step and conscious abolishing of the intellect by itself, as also Hegel wanted to do.<sup>49</sup> In other words: the highest can also be reached starting from thinking itself: it is aware of its abolition in an "understanding, nevertheless". This is quite different from merely leaving and outlawing intellectual thinking. In this way one can, therefore, judge favourably the significance of thinking and, accordingly, it is not right to relinquish study because of intuition.

For, even although thinking reaches its boundaries somewhere, none the less all kinds of preparatory stages belong to it. One can see the whole development of thinking as leading towards that purpose. For this, however, all sorts of trends in the history of philosophy have to be studied and commented upon. So, study is necessary as well as the whole apparatus of knowledge, including a good documentation.

As regards, secondly, J. Krishnamurti, we have pointed out in a study that his rejection of philosophy, too, includes a philosophical standpoint.<sup>50</sup> We consider his "cool-analytical" point of view to be a form of jnāna-yoga, of the road of knowledge. This is apparent from the importance given by him to "awareness". That he wishes to have so little to do with all those preliminary steps, for instance the refutation of other viewpoints, is typical for him and for his desire to concentrate on the only necessary thing: the immediate self-liberation. That need not, however, prevent others from occupying themselves with that preliminary work and its intellectual elaboration.

So there are various reasons why the road of knowledge has to a certain extent taken second place in the Theosophical Society. Still, this is to be regretted. Even if for many this road is too com-

plicated or too subtle, it should nevertheless be there. One should not underestimate the influence of thinking, this time not as "thought-power", but as to the contents of ideas. It has so often happened in history that ideas have been submitted to a small circle at first, to gain more and more ground and becoming common property at the latter end.

In order to create a better community, that is more based on cooperation, including even the whole of mankind, it is of the greatest importance that the ideals of unity are spread, even if people nowadays are already much more prepared to accept them than some fifty years ago. We should not only voice the ideal, or express a desirability; the synthesis or integration should also possess a theoretical background or foundation. This background can in the last resort be found in the conception of the One Self embracing all and everything, in other words: in a rejuvenated Vedanta doctrine. This *can* emerge from the theosophical circle, but then it will be necessary to pay more attention to the road of knowledge.

In the *Mahatma-Letters* two different tones can be heard: a pessimistic one and an optimistic one. The pessimistic one is that it is a "forlorn hope" for theosophical volunteers to devote themselves to this cause against the multitudinous agencies arrayed in opposition.<sup>51</sup> The other, optimistic tone is also heard from Master K.H. when he formulates the goal as follows: "The crest wave of intellectual advancement must be taken hold of and guided into spirituality".<sup>52</sup> This is exactly an appeal to theosophists to play a leading part in the thought currents of the era.

How can this be possible, however, if the road of knowledge and study comes so little to the fore in the movement?

At the end of our considerations we wish to put this matter in a clear light. In the years 1925-1927, many members of our movement held great expectations of three kinds of activities that—even without precisely belonging to the Theosophical Society—yet were indirectly connected with the Adyar Society. These were: the Liberal Catholic Church, the Co-Masonry and the movement to promote a Theosophical World-University. These expectations were followed by a serious reaction, when J. Krishnamurti's actions took another direction than was expected. After the first shock had been received and digested, however, the Liberal Catholic Church and the Co-Masonry continued their course, not without success, whereas of the third movement, aiming at a Theosophical University, practically nothing has ever been heard since. It is true that it still exists as a corporate body and that as an aim it has not yet been abandoned,<sup>53</sup> but as a whole the plan has been put off until further notice. One reservation should be made, however. The

activities in this direction are continued under the more modest name of Theosophical Research Centres. The English Theosophical Research Centre, for instance, produces excellent work, even if elsewhere the results may not be so impressive.

We will point out something else. In Holland, theosophists have the privilege to have in their midst an important international occult centre, i.e. St. Michael's at Huizen-Naarden. How fine and useful would it be, if we could, in this connection, make a start with an international theosophical university in the rather more unassuming form of a theosophical academy! DR. D. J. VAN HINLOOPEN LABBERTON, recently deceased, cherished designs in this direction in the twenties,<sup>54</sup> but alas in a rather rash and unfortunate manner, as was the case with his other educational projects too. It seems that since—it is a pity to have to make this statement—the interests regarding study usually come behind other things in "the Centre".<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, according to the contents, to the idea, there is space for a theosophical-philosophical school of students, which might take shape in a theosophical academy. The shining example for this is Plato's Academy itself, even if it met with periods of scepticism in later centuries.<sup>56</sup> In the centuries of Neo-Platonism the Platonic school then flourished in various centres: a.o. in Alexandria, in Rome and again in Athens. The influence of Neo-Platonism has been enormous: via Origen, Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite on Christianity; within Islam through Arabian thinkers like Alfarabi and Algazel and also on the Jewish Kabbala. When, during Renaissance and Humanism, the study of the classics was again taken up, Platonism flourished once more with men like Pletho, Marsilio Ficino (with his Platonic Academy in Florence) and Giordano Bruno.<sup>57</sup> Via Boehme and Swedenborg, who had a great influence on Romanticism, Neo-Platonism is also influential in our times,<sup>58</sup> especially in various occult circles. The gnostic and mystic aspects of Christianity are always connected with it.

This theosophical academy-to-be should, on the one hand, have to largely include the study of *comparative religion*. In this connection, we may remember the work of Dr. G. R. S. Mead (1863-1933), who alas left the Theosophical Society at a given moment. His further work in his society and magazine, both called *The Quest*, is continued to a certain extent, also chronologically, in the *Eranos-Conferences* of Ascona, Switzerland. There, on the Lago Maggiore, a woman of Dutch birth, MRS. OLGA FRÖBE-KAPTEYN (she died on April 25, 1962), did a great work by gathering every summer during many years a number of prominent scholars of comparative religion and depth-psychologists—a.o. Dr. C. G. Jung, recently deceas-

ed—and promoting the publication of their talks each year.<sup>59</sup> When this institution, which might very well be called an Academy, started, it seemed as if—as a result of the cooperation of Mrs. Katherine Tingley—this work would assume a more or less theosophical stamp. In later years, Mrs. Fröbe did not, apparently, want to have anything to do with theosophy any more. However, in the excellent work done here, we find a good example of what the theological section of a theosophical academy should be like.

On the other hand, *philosophy* ought also to play an important part in such an academy. There is an important development going on, sometimes called *Revision of the Enlightenment*.<sup>60</sup> The Enlightenment of the 18th Century, however useful for the fight against all kinds of superstition, has, in various respects, rejected the good with the bad.

Here, Immanuel Kant also lent a hand by proclaiming the impossibility to know "things in themselves", for instance to know the world in which, also in his opinion, man survives after death. Dr. Rudolf Steiner was quite right when, in a booklet called "Philosophy and Theosophy"—dating from his theosophical period<sup>61</sup>—he observed that the agnosticism of Kant was very infertile: "form" (in the sense used by Aristotle) can indeed be transferred from object to subject, so that the subject is surely able to know things.<sup>62</sup> If, however, the barrier—supposedly existing between this and the other world—is *in principle* broken down (like various seers have already done in practice), then the whole view of the world is altered. Parapsychology, doing such useful research-work, is so very often looked upon with a suspicious eye, because people still bear the old idea in mind that there cannot be anything in the realm of consciousness other than that which has entered this realm through the *ordinary* senses. Therefore, this other world also has to be uncovered theoretically. This happens when one does not any more draw an essential dividing line between the spirit (or mind + soul) in contrast with the body, but between the One Spirit, the One Self and (soul + body, or the psychic + the phisic).<sup>63</sup> Then there is room to also objectify the psychic worlds.<sup>64</sup> Thus, there is a huge task for philosophy, often connected with the idea of the all-embracing, unity-creating, One Self, which idea can have a very strong influence indeed on the entire view of the world as well as on the interrelation of men.

It has been said here, that it is useful to make these things clear. For, what do we see in practice? A small interest in philosophy and a diminished interest in study, in the "road of knowledge", among the members of the Theosophical Society. One is rather lonesome this way; one sees oneself as the voice crying in the wilderness.

Thus, one sits between two chairs: theosophists wish to hear little about philosophy and academic philosophy is only too apt to dispatch the philosophical ideas one proposes, by saying: "That is nothing but theosophy!" It is, however, self-evident that one cannot make bricks without straw and that where nothing is, Caesar loses his right.

Yet it is right to point out the possibility of such a development, of teamwork in a theosophical-philosophical spirit, eventually resulting in a theosophical academy or even a university and—what is even more important—in a beneficial influence on the spirit of the era. Who knows but that a definite development in this direction through the arrival of egos with a real interest in study, with a feeling for these problems, may be expected about 1975. However, within the Theosophical Society that date has only too often had to serve as a palliative already!

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Netherlands Theosophical Research Centre at Amsterdam, October 14, 1961.

<sup>2</sup> See F. Sassen, *Geschiedenis der Patristische en Middeleeuwse Wijsbegeerte*, 1949, p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, there is a curious statement of his in the essay "Higher Consciousness" (in the booklet *The Monad*, 1920, p. 51): "What down here would be a system of philosophy, needing many volumes to explain it, is there a single definite object—a thought which can be thrown down as one throws a card upon the table".

<sup>4</sup> *Brahmavidya*, Adyar, 1923. See *The Theosophist*, April 1923, p. 31 *seq.* and *Theosophia*, June 1923, p. 77 *seq.*

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 34, p. 79.

<sup>6</sup> Vol. I (1949), p. VIII.

<sup>7</sup> *The Theosophist*, March 1951, p. 382.

<sup>8</sup> *The Theosophist*, April 1948, p. 20; cp. February 1953, p. 353.

<sup>9</sup> *The Theosophist*, March 1947, p. 414. In our opinion this is too strongly expressed. Nevertheless, it is a fact that in Indian philosophy the practical aspect of philosophy, its function as a doctrine of salvation, has always been in the foreground. However, apart from that, what has the truth of statements to do with emotions either sublime or not sublime?

<sup>10</sup> *The Theosophist*, February 1953, p. 353; cp. "C. Jinarājadāsa and the Platonic View," *The Theosophist*, August 1953, p. 346 *seq.*

<sup>11</sup> Namely in "The World as Idea, Emotion and Will", *The Theosophist*, August 1946, p. 303 *seq.*

<sup>12</sup> No. 122 and 123, cp. *The Theosophist* XXXVII, 2, p. 54 *seq.*

<sup>13</sup> See E. Douglas Fawcett en Raynor C. Johnson, *Theosophia*, May 1958, p. 73 *seq.* and *De Grondparadox*, 1961, p. 317 *seq.*

<sup>14</sup> For instance "The Doctrine of the great Self in Western Philosophy", *The Theosophist* XXXI, p. 1558 *seq.*

<sup>15</sup> First ed. III, p. 109 *seq.*; second ed. II, p. 113 *seq.* See our review in *Theosophia*, October 1939, p. 292 *seq.*

<sup>16</sup> For instance *De Boeken der Spreuken* II, 912-943.

<sup>17</sup> "De Tijdgeest in de Wijsbegeerte", *Haagsch Maandblad*, March 1924, p. 263.

<sup>18</sup> *Zuivere Rede*, p. 1227 *seq.*; cp. p. 940 *seq.*, p. 1276.

<sup>19</sup> J. D. Reiman Jr., *Openingsrede* (Amersfoort 1916); "Rede bij de opening van het Gebouw", *Theosophia*, October 1917, p. 271 *seq.*

<sup>20</sup> See our *Variaties op één en meer Themata*, 1947, p. 193.

<sup>21</sup> In "Het ware in de filosofie van Hegel", *De Idee*, Hegelnummer, 1931, p. 78.

<sup>22</sup> *The Theosophist*, April 1923, p. 35.

<sup>23</sup> Professor J. E. van der Stok, *Theosofia*, June 1954, p. 91; *St. Michael's News*, Dec. 1952, p. 28.

<sup>24</sup> See our paper below: Ch. XII and "Die Fruchtbarkeit der Grundgedanken des Vedānta für die abendländische philosophische Problematik" in *Kant-Studien*, Vol. 51, 4, p. 438 *seq.* and in *De Grondparadox*, p. 324 *seq.*

<sup>25</sup> Cp. *Theosofie en de Theosofische Vereniging* (Amsterdam, 1960), article "Filosofie", p. 33.

<sup>26</sup> See *De Grondparadox*, p. 325 *seq.*

<sup>27</sup> In this respect, the groups that are not sceptical-cautious, but which onesidedly claim that their special viewpoint is right, have priority in practice; they form a united group, ready to make sacrifices.

<sup>28</sup> Concerning the concept of the One Truth, cp. *Variaties . . .*, p. 10 *seq.* and *Alg. Ned. Tijdschrift v. Wijsbegeerte*, June 1963, p. 201 *seq.*

<sup>29</sup> In our opinion, also information coming from trustworthy clairvoyants should be taken into account—if one wants to anticipate somehow that which in the end will be proved to the satisfaction of everyone. It is true that the statements of clairvoyants are also liable to mistakes, as the clairvoyants themselves point out, but they are better than nothing at all.

<sup>30</sup> Compare the discussions in the latest volumes of the *Science Group Journal*, published by the English Theosophical Research Centre, about the discrepancies between certain statements in the Mahatma-Letters and results of contemporary science. See also *De Grondparadox*, p. 307 *seq.*

<sup>31</sup> Parapsychologists recently pay again attention to cases of remembrance of past lives. See I. Stevenson in *Journal American S.P.R.* 1960, p. 51 *seq.* and elsewhere.

<sup>32</sup> Cp. the saying of Dr. A. Besant: "Give me understanding and I shall keep Thy law!"

<sup>33</sup> "Een ruimere definitie van theosofie", *De Theosofische Beweging*, May 1932, p. 199 *seq.* and elsewhere. See *Variaties . . .*, p. 208 *seq.*

<sup>34</sup> It is closely connected with the notion of *evolution*.

<sup>35</sup> It is remarkable that in the *Purposes* of the United Nations, founded in 1945, Art. I, 3 runs: "encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion". The latter part looks like an echo of the First Object of the Theosophical Society. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights this is still more the case.

<sup>36</sup> Mr. A. J. H. van Leeuwen in *Theosofia*, February 1960, p. 43. According to Mr. van Leeuwen, truth has no room in universities! But what else but the search for truth is the aim there? Such a statement can only make sense, if Truth (with a capital T) is an indication of the same Mystery, like Krishna-

murti speaks of "Truth or Life or God" (cp. *Varieties...*, p. 22) and if there might be a reason to deny the significance of truth in the usual sense. Even then, philosophy might approach the Mystery within the universities, namely by assuming the "fundamental paradox" to be the highest principle.

<sup>37</sup> Cp. *De Grondparadox*, p. 105 and *infra* Ch. VIII.

<sup>38</sup> Krishnaji's comment would immediately be: "no path!" However, the others hold the opinion, though that may fundamentally be right (compare "become what you are"), that it is possible *to prepare* oneself for that experience.

<sup>39</sup> 1897. Dutch translation, Amsterdam 1912.

<sup>40</sup> 1906. Dutch translation, Amsterdam 1907.

<sup>41</sup> It is here, where the concept of the fundamental paradox comes in. Cp. *De Grondparadox*, p. 14 *seq.*; *infra* p. 74.

<sup>42</sup> For this distinction see the article "Theosofie" in *Handbook van het Moderne Denken*, Arnhem 1950, p. 753.

<sup>43</sup> *Ethica*, pars V, prop. XXXIII.

<sup>44</sup> See *De wijsgerige projectie*, Assen 1958, p. 12 *seq.*

<sup>45</sup> Cp. also G. Hodson, "The way of knowledge". *The Theosophist* XLIX, 3, p. 323 *seq.*

<sup>46</sup> Cp. "De waardering van het verstand", in *De Grondparadox*, p. 35 and elsewhere.

<sup>47</sup> In "Philosophy" etc., *The Theosophist*, April 1923, p. 42; 32.

<sup>48</sup> One may remember the preparations for the "Sixth Race" which should already be made during the present root-race according to *Man, Whence, How and Whither* of A. Besant and C. W. Leadbeater.

<sup>49</sup> Concerning the relationship of Intellect and Reason cp. *De Grondparadox*, p. 27 *seq.*, not forgetting the *via negativa* of theology.

<sup>50</sup> Cp. "J. Krishnamurti en de wijsbegeerte" in *De Grondparadox*, p. 93 *seq.*

<sup>51</sup> *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* (A. T. Barker), p. 35. A letter of 1880.

<sup>52</sup> "Letter to A. Besant" in *Letters from the Masters of Wisdom*, ed. C. Jinarājadāsa, first series, 4th.ed. 1948, p. 111. A letter of 1900.

<sup>53</sup> Cp. *The Theosophist*, April 1958, p. 8 (N. Sri Ram), January 1960, p. 219 (N. Sri Ram), p. 260 (B. Wouters), *St. Michael's News*, June 1958, p. 109 (Rukmini Arundale); *The Theosophist*, Aug. 1964, p. 345 (change of name).

<sup>54</sup> See our "De Beweging voor een Theosofische Wereld-Universiteit", *Handboekje van de Ned. Associatie voor de Th. W.U.*, Amsterdam 1927.

<sup>55</sup> As in Neo-Platonism after Plotinus the-theurgical-magical element came to the fore, in Huizen the interest in the ceremonial-magical moment is dominant.

<sup>56</sup> Carneades a.o.

<sup>57</sup> Somewhat later one meets in England the *Cambridge Platonists*, such as Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688).

<sup>58</sup> See the essay "Literair Platonisme" in *De stille getuige*, (1960) by Professor S. Dresden.

<sup>59</sup> In the *Eranos Jahrbücher* from 1933 until now.

<sup>60</sup> See "Parapsychologie als Revision des Aufklärung" by Professor G. F. Hartlaub, *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie* IV, 2, p. 81 *seq.*

<sup>61</sup> Theosofische Bibliotheek no. 47, Amsterdam 1909.

<sup>62</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 27-29. Cp. *De Grondparadox*, p. 331-332.

<sup>63</sup> See *Tweeërlei Subjectiviteit*, p. 292.

<sup>64</sup> See *Theosofie en de Theosofische Vereniging* (1960), p. 34.