

# The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the  
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Founded by EDWARD C. HEGELER

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VOL. XXXII (No. 6)

JUNE, 1918

NO. 745

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## The Open Court Publishing Company

CHICAGO

Per copy, 10 cents (sixpence). Yearly, \$1.00 (in the U.P.U., 5s. 6d.).

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# THE GOSPEL OF BUDDHA

By

DR. PAUL CARUS

*Pocket Edition. Illustrated. Cloth, \$1.00; flexible leather, \$1.50*

This edition is a photographic reproduction of the *edition de luxe* which was printed in Leipsic in 1913 and ready for shipment in time to be caught by the embargo Great Britain put on all articles exported from Germany. Luckily two copies of the above edition escaped, and these were used to make the photographic reproduction of this latest edition. While the Buddhist Bible could not in any way be considered a contraband of war yet the publishers were forced to hold back many hundred orders for the book on account of orders in council of Great Britain.

When the book was first published His Majesty, the King of Siam, sent the following communication through his private secretary:

"Dear Sir: I am commanded by His Most Gracious Majesty, the King of Siam, to acknowledge, with many thanks, the receipt of your letter and the book, *The Gospel of Buddha*, which he esteems very much; and he expresses his sincerest thanks for the very hard and difficult task of compilation you have considerably undertaken in the interest of our religion. I avail myself of this favorable opportunity to wish the book every success."

His Royal Highness, Prince Chandradat Chudhadharn, official delegate of Siamese Buddhism to the Chicago Parliament of Religions, writes:

"As regards the contents of the book, and as far as I could see, it is one of the best Buddhist Scriptures ever published. Those who wish to know the life of Buddha and the spirit of his Dharina may be recommended to read this work which is so ably edited that it comprises almost all knowledge of Buddhism itself."

The book has been introduced as a reader in private Buddhist schools of Ceylon. Mrs. Marie H. Higgins, Principal of the Musaeus School and Orphanage for Buddhist Girls, Cinnamon Gardens, Ceylon, writes as follows:

"It is the best work I have read on Buddhism. This opinion is endorsed by all who read it here. I propose to make it a text-book of study for my girls."

**THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING COMPANY**

122 S. MICHIGAN AVENUE

CHICAGO

ILLINOIS





THE GODDESS NUT.

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## READINGS FROM THE UPANISHADS.

PAUL W. COTTON.

"Truth is the solemn vow of the good."

—*Sanatsugatiya.*

### I.

GOETHE, in the "Italian Journey," writes from Rome: "In the evening we came upon the Coliseum, when it was already twilight. When one looks at it, all else seems little. The edifice is so vast that one cannot hold the image of it in one's soul: in memory we think it smaller, and then return to it again to find it every time greater than before." It is with similar feelings that the modern mind wanders through the magnificent ruins of ancient speculation.

There is a grandeur about the Upanishads that is not surpassed and but rarely equalled by any other book in the world. They are a gigantic, primeval forest of thought. There are trees in this forest that tower into the heavens, trees whose roots clutch the center of the earth, and there is a vast growth of matted underbrush whose inextricable confusion clogs the footsteps of the soul.

We have lost the key to so much of it, we impatient ones who are only too ready to clap the label of absurdity on all that we cannot understand, on all that he who runs shall not read. But the Upanishads are not for those who are in a hurry. There are yet in this world poor, time-starved souls who insist on seeing Rome in a day, who vainly endeavor to pinch the pyramids between the leaves of their Baedeker. It were well for them to keep clear of the Upanishads. They were not born to follow the star and they will never find the babe in the manger.

Let the earnest seeker who has opened these pages plod on patiently across the dreary sands of vanished rite and ceremony.

Many wells of living water lie ahead of him. By and by there is a flash of green, the oasis appears and a voice speaks to him out of the sky:—

“The intelligent, whose body is spirit, whose form is light, whose thoughts are true, whose nature is like ether (omnipresent and indivisible), from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odors, and tastes proceed; he who embraces all this, who never speaks, and is never surprised.

“He is my self within the heart, smaller than a corn of rice, smaller than a corn of barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than a canary seed or the kernel of a canary seed. He also is my self within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds.

“He from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odors and tastes proceed, who embraces all this, who never speaks and who is never surprised, he, my self within the heart, is that Brahman(n). When I shall have departed from hence, I shall obtain him (that Self). He who has this faith has no doubt; thus said Sandilya, yea, thus he said.”

What has happened? The soul feels a deep sense of peace and security steal over it slowly but inevitably, like the light of day entering a darkened room. It knows itself with a divine instinct to be “beneath the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” All wars and rumors of war are very far away.

These words are the key to the Upanishads. Man has forgotten much that they taught, he cannot forget his vision of eternity. That is why the Upanishads still appeal, that is why they have withstood the tides of time for 3000 years. The Hindu sages that uttered them had a spiritual penetration that burned like a mountain of fire. Here is that “white radiance of eternity” of which Shelley sang. This vision is aloof from the world of phenomena only because it is verily the Immortal, the Thing-in-Itself, and sometimes its weight of pregnant utterance becomes too heavy for the medium of language and withdraws into the dim distance like scornful thunder lost in limitless skies.

“The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars, nor these lightnings, and much less this fire. When he shines, everything shines after him; by his light all this is lightened.”

It is of the Self they are speaking, that Self of which man is the temporary representative, yet eternal fulfilment. And because



they held the truth these unfathomable winds of thought have risen out of the inaccessible realms of the Himalayas and passed over the world.

## II.

You will find eternity in the Bible but it is an eternity conceived and complicated by considerations foreign to the thought of the Upanishads. The nearest approach to them is Job, and how utterly alien to Hindu philosophy are the conceptions of Job! Job strives with God, he has words with the Eternal and after futile arguments comes to know his own nothingness. There is throughout the Old Testament a distorted sense of personal relationship to the Deity which attains its full perversion in the Psalms.

In the Upanishads man is never, like Job, reduced to nihilism and despair. He cannot be dazed and deluded by appearances since his knowledge of the Self saves him. It is his lack of knowledge of God that drives Job to distraction. A Hindu Job would have consoled himself with some such thought as this:

“I know that great person of sunlike luster beyond the darkness. A man who knows him truly passes over death; there is no other path to go.” It is knowledge, not faith, that saves.

Despite their intimate revelations of God the Upanishads view the Creator, as it were, from a distance. He is generally spoken of in the third person and is rendered chiefly by wondrous negatives. There is an indefinable haze of wonder over these pages which simplicity serves only to enhance. You are led within the shrine, the veil is drawn aside, but the seraph nevertheless remains a seraph.

Every religion or philosophy is an attempt, more or less successful, to fathom the godhead. The Upanishads contain the most beautiful presentation of God ever achieved by humanity. Science has not passed beyond these thoughts, science has but confirmed them. The Great Mystery is still as beautiful and mysterious as ever and this book is eloquent with the burden of the Great Mystery.

It is because man has ventured to speak of that of which he has no sensorial cognizance that the world is so great and so wonderful. The scientific truth followed the intellectual intuition. So knowledge came into being and knowledge is salvation. Such is the doctrine of the Upanishads. It is from this great root that Buddhism sprang. The best of Buddhism is to be found in the Upanishads. From this root also has risen our science and philosophy and the “X”

that hovers ever beyond them is revealed in these old treatises, in so far as man may speak of the Unknowable.

The doctrine of the real and the ideal has never been more clearly stated or more satisfactorily adjusted. The sublime conception which is so insisted on here: that beneath this fabric of appearance we call the world stand the pillars of eternity,—this is the *Leitmotif* of all great thinkers from Plato to Carlyle and seems to have been from early times one of the ruling ideas of mankind.

The far-sighted seers of the Upanishads dared to assert at a time when science was unknown the eternal unity of God and nature, the certain proof of which is the greatest achievement of modern thought. The Upanishads are the first and most profound poetic exposition of the monistic doctrine.

Their spirit is the spirit of praise and their truth is wrapped in a veil of poetic beauty that is like the changing light on sunlit seas. On the shores of the infinite they have built their altars and there they chant forever the endless peace of the Unconscious. The prayers of the Upanishads are beyond good and evil.

They do not shut their eyes to the bitterness of life and the struggle of existence. "Man is sacrifice," they say. "The first twenty-four years are the morning libation." But there is little in them about the suffering of mankind. The miracle of life has for them swallowed up all sorrow. It is enough that man can see and understand. Truth is the sovereign balm, and he who can find no comfort in truth will never appreciate the wonder and beauty of life. To these sages the world is ever a *new* world and their wisdom comes forth with the delight and naïveté of the child. This is the special happiness of early civilizations.

In that fine dialogue in the Khandogya Upanishad between Uddalaka and his son Svetaketu, the father is asked: How can this universe which has the form and name of earth, etc., be produced from the Sat (the Self) which is subtle, and has neither form nor name? He replies:

"Fetch me from thence a fruit of the Nyagrodha tree."

"Here is one, Sir."

"Break it."

"It is broken, Sir."

"What do you see there?"

"These seeds, almost infinitesimal."

"Break one of them."

"It is broken, Sir."

“What do you see there?”

“Not anything, Sir.”

The father said: “My son, that subtle essence which you do not see there, of that very essence, this great Nyagrodha tree exists.”

“Believe it, my son. That which is the subtle essence, in it all that exists has its self. It is the True. It is the Self, and thou, O Svetaketu, art it.”

What could be more simple, more deep, more true? In such flashes of miraculous insight is the eternal made manifest, the direct relation of man to the universe of which he is a part.

Here it is not a question of sin and atonement, of repentance and contrition. Emotionalism is severely absent; the intellect rules. All that is demanded is a heart hungry for knowledge and ears that do really hear the truth. “When the intellectual aliment has been purified, the whole nature becomes purified.” Jesus meant the same thing when he said: “The light of the body is in the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” But it is a far cry from those words in John: “In my father’s house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you,” to that sentence in the Svetasvatara Upanishad: “That which is beyond this world is without form and without suffering.” Here lies the typical line of demarcation between the Christian and Hindu philosophy.

Somehow the confident assertions of Paul with his glorification of a personal immortality pale before this superb doctrine of a cosmic identity. For this alone is commensurate with the hugeness of life: that a man should know he is part of the World-Soul and that this Soul lives and speaks in him; that his strength lies in the fact of his being one with nature and not above and apart from her. Beside such a conception the eternity of personality seems a trivial matter.

Do we need more than the present world war to convince us that the life of the individual is of comparative insignificance compared with the mysterious movements of race which animate mankind? The individual is but a spoke in the wheel that is ever rolling toward an unimaginable goal and it is only in man and the spirit of man that he lives eternally. If the individual would feel rock-bottom beneath his feet let him take to heart this admonition of the Kātha Upanishad:

“The wise who knows the Self as bodiless within the bodies, as unchanging among things, as great and omnipresent, does never

grieve." Or if he will have it from his Bible he can turn to the words of the Founder of Christendom who eight centuries later enunciated the same truth: "This is eternal life: that they might know thee, the only true God."

## III.

The Upanishads present no system of ethics, they have no ten Commandments to offer. They were written by men who were already masters of themselves. They do not plead or inveigh; they are a calm intellectual presentment of truth. In their treatment of holy things they lack the intrusive familiarity of Mohammed, the tender sentiment of Jesus. There is a certain reserve in their lofty eloquence, a diffidence in the face of a great subject which could only be felt by the finest of minds. And at times a breath comes from them cold and unreachable as the peaks of the Himalayas and eternal and pure as their snows.

Yes, God is indeed great, but he is great precisely because he is non-human and passionless, beyond love and beyond hate. He is "smaller than the kernel of a canary seed" but also "greater than all these worlds." In his creation they find him everywhere and in the spirit of the Orient they cry exotically:

"Thou art the dark-blue bee, thou art the green parrot with red eyes, thou art the thunder-cloud, the seasons, the seas. Thou art without beginning, because thou art infinite, thou from whom all worlds are born."

Men come forth from him as bubbles from the sea, as sparks from the fire, and return to him again, but men are lost only to find themselves in him.

"If the killer thinks that he kills, if the killed thinks that he is killed, they do not understand; for this one does not kill, nor is that one killed."

All is eternal life. "There is one eternal thinker thinking non-eternal thoughts." The forms may fade and crumble but there is no cessation or diminution.

Such are the greatest religious and philosophic thoughts of the greatest race of history. The halo of the infinite is never far away from this atmosphere. It is a remarkable sign of man's intellectual preeminence that in so early a stage of his cultural development he should have seen so clearly and so far. These sages already realize the eternal dissatisfaction of men.

“Man is the sea rising beyond the whole world. Whatever he reaches he wishes to go beyond. If he reaches the sky he wishes to go beyond. If he should reach that heavenly world, he would wish to go beyond.”

These primitive images have in them the largeness and scope of Homer.

And shall man then ever attain? We speak of progress but the world rolls round and round like a wheel, and man is after all much the same, yesterday and to-day. Like a child building a house of cards, he rears through the ages with patient, meticulous care vast edifices of civilization and then with his mailed fist hurls them once more into chaos and destruction with a sort of fiendish delight.

As the river of time flows on it becomes apparent that in the ultimate analysis progress proves to be wholly spiritual and intellectual, and the inner conviction of the sages of India grows more and more to be a world force for the propagation of truth, all the securer because their thought rests firmly upon the axis of the macrocosm and not the microcosm.

The light of the Orient has dawned upon many minds. Schopenhauer found no study so beneficial and elevating as the Upanishads. The enlightened souls of the western world can regard only with the deepest reverence and admiration the supreme wisdom that could write: “There is no image of Him whose name is Great Glory.”

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad King Ganaka, being granted a boon by the Brahman Yagnavalkya, questioned him thus:

“‘Yagnavalkya,’ he said, ‘what is the light of man?’

“Yagnavalkya replied: ‘The sun, O King; for having the sun alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns.’

“Ganaka Vaideha said: ‘So indeed it is, O Yagnavalkya.’

“Ganaka Vaideha said: ‘When the sun has set, O Yagnavalkya, what is then the light of man?’

“Yagnavalkya replied: ‘The moon indeed is his light; for, having the moon alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns.’

“Ganaka Vaideha said: ‘So indeed it is, O Yagnavalkya.’

“Ganaka Vaideha said: ‘When the sun has set, O Yagnavalkya, and the moon has set, what is the light of man?’

“Yagnavalkya replied: ‘Fire indeed is his light; for, having

fire alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns.'

"Ganaka Vaideha said: 'When the sun has set, O Yagnavalkya, and the moon has set, and the fire is gone out, what then is the light of man?'

"Yagnavalkya replied: 'Sound indeed is his light; for, having sound alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns. Therefore, O King, when one cannot see even one's own hand, yet when a sound is raised, one goes toward it.'

"Ganaka Vaideha said: 'So indeed it is. O Yagnavalkya.'

"Ganaka Vaideha said: 'When the sun has set, O Yagnavalkya, and the moon has set, and the fire out, and the sound hushed, what is then the light of man?'

"Yagnavalkya said: 'The Self indeed is his light; for, having the Self alone as his light, man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns.'

"Ganaka Vaideha said: 'Who is that Self?'"

Let us answer him out of the Khandogya Upanishad:

"That Self is a bank, a boundary, so that these worlds may not be confounded. Day and night do not pass that bank, nor old age, death and grief; neither good nor evil deeds. All evil-doers turn back from it, for the world of Brahman is free from all evil.

"Therefore he who has crossed that bank, if blind, ceases to be blind; if wounded, ceases to be wounded; if afflicted, ceases to be afflicted. Therefore, when that bank has been crossed, night becomes day indeed, for the world of Brahman is lighted up once for all."

Note: (The quotations in this article are from the translation of the chief Upanishads by Prof. Max Müller, issued by the Oxford Press.)

## THE UPANISHADS.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE Upanishads form perhaps the most classical book of religious literature in the world, and no one who has not studied their problem can really claim to have understood the central proposition of religious thought. Mr. Paul W. Cotton presents to us the beauty of the Upanishads with an enthusiasm that naturally seizes a man who grasps their underlying idea for the first time. Chris-