

## Epidemics from a Theosophical Standpoint

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"Thought in the mind hath made us, what we are  
By thought was wrought and built, and a man's mind  
Hath evil thoughts. Pain follows him as comes  
The wheel; the ox behind.

“All that we are is what we have thought and willed, —  
Our thoughts make us and frame. If one endure  
In purity of thought, joy follows him  
As his own shadow – sure.”

THESE lines from the *Dhammapâda*, put into verse by Sir Edwin Arnold, are an epitome of Theosophy as to punishment and reward applied either to the individual or to the race. If the Theosophist should say that cholera and other epidemics are due to the evil thoughts of man, it will be denied in many quarters.

But we can in turn deny that the cause of any epidemic is known to the objector; and since no one stands on proven ground, the Theosophical explanation merits attention. It is this, that the evil thoughts of men of today and all past ages are stored up in the ether or "astral light", and when conditions favour they become the cause of epidemics.

We may look for some corroboration in modern science, in its hypothetical ether. The materialistic scientist, — unlike the occultist, — has never perceived this luminiferous ether, but finds it a necessity, however, in order to understand how light, heat, etc., reach earth from other heavenly bodies, and in other phenomena. Loosely, this ether may be considered identical with the "astral light" of Theosophy, but the occultists know that it has properties that materialistic scientists have not yet discovered it possesses. This is quite likely, since the latter have never appreciated it by any experiment. Since, as Theosophy teaches every thought is photographed in the ether and exerts a reacting effect, the ethereal plane must be, however invisible, a vast hypnotizing "machine".

Turning to Modern Scientists for corroboration we find Prof. Dalbear in the June Arena saying :

"Grant that mental action is accompanied by molecular vibrations of any sort, and it follows that there must be corresponding ether waves; and similarly constituted molecules in other bodies must as necessarily move in consonance with the first as if the source was heat motion

from a similar molecule: and such phenomena as thought transference would be looked for and explained as simply as the phenomena of the exchange of heat."

Camille Flammarion says: —

"Our psychic force gives rise to an [Page 17] etheric movement which is transmitted to a distance like all other etheric vibrations and becomes perceptible to other brains in harmony with ours. The transformation of a psychical action into etheric motion and vice-versa may be analogous to that which is observed in the telephone where the receiver which is identical with the recorder, reconstructs the sonorous vibrations". (Annales Psychiques)

Dr. Draper:—

"A shadow never falls upon a wall without leaving thereupon, permanent trace which might be made visible by resorting to the proper processes. . . Upon the walls of our most private apartments, where we think the eye of intrusion is altogether shut out, and our retirement can never be profaned, there exist the vestiges of all our acts, silhouettes of whatever we have done." (Quoted in *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, P. 104)

Hertz claims that thoughts may one day be made objective, in some such way as electrical waves can be condensed by a large concave mirror.

Professor Tyndall in submitting vapours of volatile liquids to the action of concentrated light in an experimental tube, showed that there exists a vast storehouse of pictures invisible to us under ordinary circumstances. In the tube the vapours formed into shapes of bottle's, cones, shells, scrolls, etc; once into a serpent's head, and once into a fish. These were the same on both sides. (See *Isis Unveiled*) Another experience of his was to pass a beam of light through a chunk of ice, the reflection on a screen showing forms of ferns, etc.

Photography shows that pictures are propelled in light; and Jack Frost must have his studio somewhere. His snow-flakes and frosty vegetation on window-panes are not the work of haphazard force. Hypnotism, furnishes us with a demonstration of the reality of thought-picture's. A mesmerist impresses a mental image upon a blank card. Physical eyesight will never detect it, but the mesmerized subject can, and will pick it out from among a pack of blank cards. The cards may be photographed — nevertheless the subject can see the image upon the photograph of the card bearing the thought-image.

Prof. Babbage declared that every thought is photographed in the ether; and he looks forward to the time when they may be made visible. A step more and our scientists must acknowledge that these thought-pictures are energies which exert an influence on the minds of men. Then Theosophy will have another important point conceded.

It will surely come after research into hypnotism is carried further. "Thoughts are things", say many varieties of would-be mystics. It is not a happy expression, since "thing" is the most indefinite word in the dictionary. That healthy persons have died merely because they supposed they were dying, is an

established fact. The effect of the mother's imagination upon the child is well-known.

"Christ's bleeding wounds " appearing upon devotees at Lourdes have been proven to many, whole sentences are said to have been produced [Page 18] on the skin. Thought - transference shows that not only the character of a propelled thought can be known to the receptive mind, but even the exact words.

Hypnotism furnishes us with demonstrations of thought dynamics. If a piece of paper is glued to the mesmerized subject's body, and he is told that it is a poultice, the blister will actually occur, while if a real poultice is applied and the subject told that it is a piece of paper, no change will occur on the skin. Thoughts can be propelled across the continent and will overpower the subject's consciousness. Hypnotism also proves that thought-images can impel to bravery, cowardice, crime, immorality, etc.

Consider the thoughts of men since the dawn of history: how must the ether surrounding earth be charged with thought-energies of malice, avarice, anger, lust, and hatred. This vast hypnotizing veil affects man both directly and indirectly: directly in influencing him to do evil, indirectly in sowing the seeds of epidemics. It is the Kabalist's Satan, because it "deceived the whole world", no person (except he be a "twice-born" who has conquered the world, the flesh, and this etheric devil) being free from its demoralising influence. As said by Mme. H. P. Blavatsky in her Glossary:

"Eliphas Lévi calls the astral light the great serpent, the dragon, from which radiates on humanity every evil influence. This is so, but why not add that the astral light gives out nothing but what it has received; that it is the great terrestrial crucible in which the vile emanations of the earth (Moral and Physical) upon which the astral light is fed, are all converted into this subtlest essence, and radiated back intensified, thus becoming epidemics — Moral, Psychic and Physical."

Such is the description by one who could see the process on a plane invisible to the "rank-and-file".

It is now necessary to trace the connection to the bacilli or microbes of the bacteriologists.

Theosophy teaches the existence of a universal life principle from which the smallest to the greatest life proceeds. Many life-germs in their passage to objectivity through the astral light, are imbued with man's evil thought-pictures. They have stamped upon them man's mark of Cain, and they become terrors for all who fear death.

That men's thoughts have given the bacilli which propagate disease their evil character, is borne out to some extent by a few eminent physicians, who contend that vegetable germs are harmless until in the organisms of man or beast they become animalized, after which, under favourable conditions, they become the cause of epidemics. The vegetable germs in yeast, for example, are perfectly harmless, and an ounce even of good cheese contains millions of microscopic lives of hundreds of varieties. If [Page 19] any of these germs can take root in living flesh they can pass into the animal stage and are noxious.

But there are mental and psychical epidemics as well. The middle ages furnishes us many examples of such. The fad in monasteries of biting one another would spread to similar institutions hundreds of miles distant. Whole towns would take to flagellation. The St. Vitus' dance is "catching". It is beginning to be suspected that crime is epidemic: — that murders, for example, occur in groups. At any rate, we have murderers' confessions as to being urged by some extraneous influence to do the act. The *convulsionnaires* of the Cervenues, in the latter part of 1700, show us what a psychical epidemic can do. (*Isis Unveiled*, p. 370 *et seq.*) Dr. Charles Elam, in his *Physician's Problems*, has the following summary:

" ' We know that there are periods when certain diseases, propensities, fortunes and misfortunes of humanity are more rife than at others'. There are times of epidemic in moral and physical affairs. In one epoch, the spirit of religious controversy will arouse the most ferocious passions of which nature is susceptible, provoking persecution, bloodshed and wars; at another, an epidemic of resistance to constituted authority will spread over half the world (as in the year 1848) rapid and simultaneous as the most virulent bodily disorder."

Again, the *collective character* of mental phenomena is illustrated by an anomalous physiological condition invading and dominating over thousands upon thousands, depriving them of everything but automatic action, and giving rise to the popular opinion of demoniacal possession, an opinion in some sense justified by the satanic passions, emotions and acts which accompany the condition. ... "The seeds of vice and crime appear to be sown under the surface of society, and to spring up and bring forth fruit with appalling rapidity — and paralyzing succession . . . We know that certain pathological conditions have a tendency to become epidemic, *influenced by causes not yet investigated* . . . We see how strong is the tendency of opinion once promulgated to run into an epidemic form — no opinion no delusion, is too absurd to assume this collective character. We observe, too, how remarkably the same ideas reproduce themselves and reappear in successive ages; no crime is too horrible to become popular, homicide, infanticide, suicide, poisoning, or any other diabolical human conception . . . . In epidemics, the *cause* of the rapid spread at that particular period *remains a mystery.*" (*Isis Unveiled*)

And so it will always remain until the astral light of Theosophy is taken into consideration.

But why do all these epidemics go westward ? Emigrants ? But do not people travel eastward also ?

"Westward ho!" say cholera. But so does "Annie Rooney". "Westward the star of empire wends its way". And so do "McGinty", *la grippe*, and the fashions, [Page 20]

Materialistic scientists are unable to tell us why, but Theosophy, explains that the sun is a vast magnet, a storehouse of electrical and vital forces, and that as it (practically) spreads westward, it exerts a pulling force on earth's astral sphere. This attraction causes humanity to migrate westward; and according to Theosophy, a new type of man is evolved at every circuit. At the dawn of history, the Aryan type was limited to India and Egypt; today pioneers of that life-wave have reached the Pacific Coast, and when the great-body will have arrived, the United-States will sustain a population exceeding the present Europe.

Within a few years, we are taught, a cycle of 5,000 years will end, when a great deal of this stored-up psychic force in the ether will be precipitated, causing wars, epidemics and calamities of various kinds.

So many demonstrations of psychical powers in man will revolutionize present materialistic opinions, while upheaved resting ages of unknown civilizations will humiliate Darwinists.

Why is it so probable that peace will continue ? Nations continue arming, for the spirit of war is in the hearts of men as of old. Labour's cry grows louder demanding settlement of questions that strike at the very root of our civilizations. There is need only of some of that psychic fire, the effects, of which are so well described by Dr. Elam, to ignite the pile; and as a pistol shot in the Alps may start an avalanche, so may an accumulation of filth serve as a means for manifestation — as an epidemic of disease — of astral filth.

The lessons Theosophy teaches are important ones, Man *is* his brother's keeper, and the only permanent protection against plagues and calamities lies in the purification of the thought-plane. It is a simple problem of cause and effect. If every man purifies his own thought-sphere, the astral light will eventually be cleansed. As time rolls on will be ushered in the Golden Age, dreamed of by sages. Earth will have become a paradise and man will have evolved into a demigod as compared to his present unfinished state.