



Madame Blavatsky On

The Views Of The Theosophists

[The Spiritualist, London, February 8, 1878, pp. 68-69; *Collected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 290-300]

Sir,

Permit an humble Theosophist to appear for the first time in your columns, to say a few words in defence of our beliefs. I see in your issue of December 21st ultimo, one of your correspondents, Mr. J. Croucher, makes the following very bold assertions:

Had the Theosophists thoroughly comprehended the nature of the soul and spirit, and its relation to the body, they would have known that if the soul once left the body, it could not return. The spirit can leave, but if the soul once leaves, it leaves for ever.

This is so ambiguous that, unless he uses the term "soul" to designate only the vital principle, I can only suppose that he falls into the common error of calling the astral body, spirit, and the immortal essence, "soul. We, Theosophists, as Colonel Olcott has told you, *do vice versa*.

Besides the unwarranted imputation to us of ignorance, Mr. Croucher has an idea (peculiar to himself) that the problem which has heretofore taxed the powers of the metaphysicians in all ages has been solved in our own. It is hardly to be supposed that Theosophists or any others "thoroughly" comprehend the nature of the soul and spirit, and their relation to the body. Such an achievement is for Omniscience; and we Theosophists, treading the path worn by the footsteps of the old sages in the moving sands of exoteric philosophy, can only hope to approximate the absolute truth. It is really more than doubtful whether Mr. Croucher can do better, even though an "inspirational medium," and experienced "through constant sittings with one of the best trance mediums" in your country. I may well leave to time and Spiritual

philosophy to entirely vindicate us in the far hereafter. When any Oedipus of this or the next century shall have solved this eternal enigma of the Sphinx-man, every modern dogma, not excepting some pets of the Spiritualists, will be swept away, as the Theban monster, according to the legend, leaped from his promontory into the sea, and was seen no more.

As early as February 18th, 1876, your learned correspondent, "M. A. (Oxon.)," took occasion, in an article en-titled "Soul and Spirit," to point out the frequent confusion of the terms by other writers. As things are no better now, I will take the opportunity to show how sorely Mr. Croucher, and many other Spiritualists of whom he may be taken as the spokesman, misapprehended Colonel Olcott's meaning, and the views of the New York Theosophists. Colonel Olcott neither affirmed nor dreamed of implying that the immortal spirit leaves the body to produce the medial displays. And yet Mr. Croucher evidently thinks he did, for the word "spirit" to him means the inner astral man or double. Here is what Colonel Olcott did say, double commas and all:

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That mediumistic physical phenomena are not produced by pure, spirits, but by “souls” embodied or disembodied, and usually with the help of elementals.

Any intelligent reader must perceive that, in placing the word “souls” in quotation marks, the writer indicated that he was using it in a sense not his own. As a Theosophist, he would more properly and philosophically have said for himself “astral spirits,” or “astral men,” or doubles. Hence, the criticism is wholly without even a foundation of plausibility. I wonder that a man could be found who, on so frail a basis, would have attempted so sweeping a denunciation. As it is, our President only propounded the *trine of man*, like the ancient and Oriental philosophers and their worthy imitator Paul, who held that the physical corporeity, the flesh and blood, was permeated and so kept alive by the *psychê*, the soul or astral body. This doctrine, that man is triune — spirit, or *Nous*, soul and body — was taught by the Apostle of the Gentiles more broadly and clearly than it has been by any of his Christian successors (see *1 Thess.*, v, 23). But having evidently forgotten or neglected to “thoroughly” study the transcendental opinions of the ancient philosophers and the Christian Apostles upon the subject, Mr. Croucher views the soul (*psychê*) as spirit (*Nous*) and *vice versa*.

The Buddhists, who separate the three entities in man (though viewing them as one when on the path to Nirvana), yet divide the soul into several parts, and have names for each of these and their functions. Thus confusion is unknown among them. The old Greeks did likewise, holding that *psychê* was *bios*, or physical life, and it was *thumos*, or passional nature, the animals being accorded but a lower faculty of the soul-instinct. The soul or *psychê* is itself a combination, *consensus* or unity of the *bios*, or physical vitality, the *epithumia* or concupiscible nature, and the *phren, mens*, or mind. Perhaps the *animus* ought to be included. It is constituted of ethereal substance, which pervades the whole

universe, and is derived wholly from the soul of the *world—Anima Mundi* or the Buddhist Svabhavat —which is *not* spirit; though intangible and impalpable, it is yet, by comparison with spirit or pure abstraction — objective matter. By its complex nature, the soul may descend and ally itself so closely to the corporeal nature as to exclude a higher life from exerting any moral influence upon it. On the other hand, it can so closely attach to the *nous* or spirit, as to share its potency, in which case its vehicle, physical man, will appear as a God even during his terrestrial life. Unless such union of soul and spirit does occur, either during this life or after physical death, the individual man is not immortal as an entity. The *psychê* is sooner or later disintegrated. Though the *man* may have gained “the whole, world,” he has lost his “soul.” Paul, when teaching the *anastasis*, or continuation of individual spiritual life after death, set forth that there was a physical body which was raised in incorruptible substance. The spiritual body is most assuredly *not* one of the bodies, or visible or tangible *larvae*, which form in circle-rooms, and are so improperly termed “materialized spirits.” When once the *metanoia*, the full developing of spiritual life, has lifted the spiritual body out of the psychical (the disembodied, corruptible astral man, what Colonel Olcott calls “soul”), it becomes, in strict ratio with its progress, more and more an abstraction for the corporeal senses. It can influence, inspire, and even communicate with men subjectively; it can make itself felt, and even, in those rare instances, when the clairvoyant is perfectly pure and perfectly lucid, seen by the inner eye (which is the eye of the purified *psychê* — soul). But how can it ever manifest objectively?

It will be seen, then, that to apply the term “spirit” to the materialized *eidola* of your “form-manifestations,” is grossly improper, and something ought to be done to change the practice, since scholars have begun to discuss the subject. At best, when

not what the Greeks termed *phantasma*, they are but *phasma*, or apparitions.

In scholars, speculators, and especially in our modern *savants*, the psychical principle is more or less pervaded by the corporeal, and “the things of the spirit are foolishness and impossible to be known” (*I Cor.*, ii, 14). Plato was then right, in his way, in despising land-measuring, geometry, and arithmetic, for all these overlooked all high ideas. Plutarch taught that at death Proserpine separated the body and the soul entirely, after which the latter became a free and independent *demon* (*daimon*). Afterward, the good underwent a second dissolution: Demeter divided the *psychê* from the *nous* or *pneuma*. The former was dissolved after a time into ethereal particles — hence the inevitable dissolution and subsequent annihilation of the man who at death is purely psychical; the latter, the *nous*, ascended to its higher Divine power and became gradually a pure, Divine spirit. Kapila, in common with all Eastern philosophers, despised the purely psychical nature. It is this agglomeration of the grosser particles of the soul, the mesmeric exhalation of human nature imbued with all its terrestrial desires and propensities, its vices, imperfections, and weakness, forming the astral body — which can become objective under certain circumstances — which the Buddhists call *skandhas* (the groups), and Col Olcott has for convenience termed the “soul.” The Buddhists and Brahmanists teach that the man’s individuality is not secured until he has passed through and become disembarassed of the last of these groups, the final vestige of earthly taint. Hence their doctrine of the metempsychosis, so ridiculed and so utterly misunderstood by our greatest Orientalists. Even the physicists teach us that the particles composing physical man are, by evolution, reworked by nature into every variety of inferior physical form. Why, then, are the Buddhists unphilosophical or even unscientific, in affirming that the semi-material *skandhas* of the astral man (his very *ego*, up to the point of final purification) are

appropriated to the evolution of minor astral forms, (which, of course, enter into the purely physical bodies of animals) as fast as he throws them off in his progress toward *Nirvana*? Therefore, we may correctly say, that so long as the disembodied man is throwing off a single particle of these *skandhas*, a portion of him is being reincarnated in the bodies of plants and animals. And if he, the disembodied astral man, be so material that “Demeter” cannot find even one spark of the *pneuma* to carry up to the “divine power,” then the individual, so to speak, is dissolved, piece by piece, into the crucible of evolution, or, as the Hindus allegorically illustrate it, he passes thousands of years in the bodies of impure animals. Here we see how completely the ancient Greek and Hindu philosophers, the modern Oriental schools, and the Theosophists, are ranged on one side, in perfect accord; and the bright array of “inspirational mediums” and “spirit guides” stand in perfect discord on the other. Though no two of the latter, unfortunately, agree as to what is and what is not truth, yet they do agree with unanimity to antagonize whatever of the teachings of the philosophers we may repeat!

Let it not be inferred, though, from all this, that I, or any other real Theosophist, undervalue true Spiritual phenomena or philosophy, or that we do not believe in the communication between pure mortals and pure spirits, any less than we do in communication between bad men and bad spirits, or even of good men with bad spirits under bad conditions. Occultism is the essence of Spiritualism, while modern or popular Spiritualism I cannot better characterize than as adulterated, unconscious magic. We go so far as to say that all the great and noble characters, all the grand geniuses — the poets, painters, sculptors, musicians — all who have worked at any time for the realization of their highest ideal, irrespective of selfish ends — have been Spiritually inspired; not mediums, as many Spiritualists call them — passive tools in the hands of controlling

guides — but incarnate, illuminated souls, working consciously in collaboration with the pure disembodied human and newly-embodied high Planetary Spirits, for the elevation and spiritualization of mankind. We believe that everything in material life is most intimately associated with Spiritual agencies. As regards psychical phenomena and mediumship, we believe that it is only when the passive medium has given place, or rather grown into, the **conscious mediator**,¹ that he can discern between spirits good and bad. And we do believe, and know also, that while the incarnate man (though the highest adept) cannot vie in potency with the pure disembodied spirits, who, freed of all their *skandhas*, have become subjective to the physical senses, yet he can perfectly equal and can far surpass in the way of. phenomena, Mental or physical, the average “spirit” of modern mediumship. Believing this, you will perceive that we are better Spiritualists, in the true acceptation of the word, than so-called Spiritualists, who, instead of showing the reverence we do to true spirits — gods — debase the name of spirit, by applying it to the impure, or; at best, imperfect beings who produce the majority of the phenomena.

The two objections urged by Mr. Croucher against the claim of the Theosophists, that a child is but a duality at birth, “and perhaps until the sixth or seventh year,” and that some depraved persons are annihilated at some time after death, are (1) that mediums have described to him his three children, “who passed away at the respective ages of two, four, and six years”; and (2) that he has known persons who were “very depraved” on earth come back. He says:

These statements have been afterwards confirmed by glorious beings who come after, and who have proved by their mastery of the laws which are governing the universe, that they are worthy of being believed.

I am really happy to learn that Mr. Croucher is competent to sit in judgment

upon these “glorious beings,” and give them the palm over Kapila, Manu, Plato, and even Paul. It is worth something, after all, to be an “inspirational medium.” We have no such “glorious beings” in the Theosophical Society to learn from; but it is evident that while Mr. Croucher sees and judges things through his emotional nature, the philosophers whom we study took nothing from any glorious being that did not perfectly, accord with the universal harmony, justice, and equilibrium of the manifest plan of the universe. The Hermetic axiom; “as below, so above;” is the only rule of evidence accepted by the Theosophists. Believing in a spiritual and invisible universe, we cannot conceive of it in any other way than as completely dovetailing and corresponding with the material, objective universe; for logic and observation alike teach us that the latter is the outcome and visible manifestation of the former, and that the laws governing both are immutable.

In his letter of December 7th, Colonel Olcott very appropriately illustrates his subject of potential immortality by citing the admitted physical law of the survival of the fittest. The rule applies to the greatest as to the smallest things — to the planet equally with the plant. It applies to man. And the imperfectly developed manchild can no more exist under the conditions prepared for the perfected types of its species, than can an imperfect plant or animal. In infantile life, the higher faculties are not developed, but, as everyone knows, are only in the germ, or rudimentary. The babe is an animal, however “angelic” he may, and naturally enough, ought to appear to his parents. Be it ever so beautifully molded, the infant body is but the jewel-casket preparing for the jewel. It is bestial, selfish, and, as a babe, nothing more. Little of even the soul, *Psychê*, can be perceived except as vitality is concerned; hunger, terror, pain, and pleasure appear to be the principal of its conceptions. A kitten is its superior in everything but possibilities. The grey neurine of the brain is equally unformed. After a time mental qualities begin to appear, but they relate chiefly to external

¹ Emphasis added. — ED., A. T.

matters. The cultivation of the mind of the child by teachers can only affect this part of the nature — what Paul calls natural or psychical, and James and Jude sensual or psychical. Hence the words of *Jude* [verse 19], “psychical, having not the spirit,” and of Paul:

The psychical man receiveth not the things of the spirit, for to him they are foolishness; the spiritual man discerneth [*1 Cor.*, ii, 14]

It is only the man of full age, with his faculties disciplined to discern good and evil, whom we can denominate spiritual, noëtic, intuitive. Children developed in such respects would be precocious, abnormal — abortives.

Why, then, should a child who has never lived other than an animal life; who never discerned right from wrong; who never cared whether he lived or died — since he could not understand either of life or death — become individually immortal? Man’s cycle is not complete until he has passed through the earthlife. No one stage of probation and experience can be skipped over. He must be a man before he can become a spirit. A dead child is a failure of nature — he must live again; and the same *psychê* re-enters the physical plane through another birth. Such cases, together with those of congenital idiots, are, as stated in *Isis Unveiled*,¹ the only instances of human² reincarnation. If every child-duality were to be immortal, why deny a like individual immortality to the duality of the animal? Those who believe in the trinity of man know the babe to be but a duality — body and soul; and the individuality which resides, only in the psychical is, as we have seen proved by the philosophers, perishable. The completed trinity only survives. Trinity, I say, for at death the astral form becomes the outward body, and inside a still finer one evolves, which takes the place of

the *psychê* on earth, and the whole is more or less overshadowed by the *nous*. Space prevented Colonel Olcott from developing the doctrine more fully, or he would have added that not even all of the elementaries (human) are annihilated. There is still a chance for some. By a supreme struggle these may retain their third and higher principle, and so, though slowly and painfully, yet ascend sphere after sphere, casting off at each transition the previous heavier garment, and clothing themselves in more radiant spiritual envelopes, until, rid of every finite particle, the trinity merges into the final Nirvana, and be-comes a unity — a God.

A volume would scarce suffice to enumerate all the varieties of elementaries and elementals; the former being so called by some Kabalists (Henry Khunrath, for instance) to indicate their entanglement in the terrestrial elements which hold them captive, and the latter designated by that name to avoid confusion, and equally applying to those which go to form the astral body of the infant,³ and to the stationary nature-spirits proper. Éliphas Lévi, however, indifferently calls them all “Elementary,” and “souls.” I repeat again, it is but the wholly psychical, disembodied astral man, which ultimately disappears as an individual entity. As to the component parts of his *psyche*, they are as indestructible as the atoms of any other body composed of matter.

That man must indeed be a true animal who has not, after death, a spark of the divine *ruach* or *nous* left in him to allow him a chance of self-salvation. Yet there are such lamentable exceptions; not alone among the depraved, but also among those who, during life, by stifling every idea of an after-existence, have killed in themselves the last desire to achieve immortality. It is the will of man, **his all-potent will, that weaves**

¹ [Vol. I, p. 351.]

² “Immediate human reincarnation,” would have made it clearer, as HPB explains in her article, “Theories About Reincarnation and Spirits.” — Ed., A. T.

³ Perhaps HPB is alluding to the distinction between the “psychic embryo” — “those elementals which go to form the astral body of the infant,” — and “the stationary nature spirits proper.” — Ed., A. T.

his destiny,¹ and if a man is determined in the notion that death means annihilation, he will find it so. It is among our commonest experiences that the determination of physical life or death depends upon the will. Some people snatch themselves by force of determination from the very jaws of death; while others succumb to insignificant maladies. What man does with his body he can do with his disembodied *psychê*.

Nothing in this militates against the images of Mr. Croucher's children being seen in the Astral Light by the medium, either as actually left by the children themselves, or as imagined by the father to look when grown. The impression in the latter case would be but a *phasma*, while in the former it is a *phantasma*, or the apparition of the indestructible impress of what once really was.

In days of old the "mediators" of humanity were men like Krishna, Gautama Buddha, Jesus, Paul, Apollonius of Tyana, Plotinus, Porphyry, and the like of them. They were adepts, philosophers — men who, by struggling their whole lives in purity, study, and self-sacrifice, through trials, privations, and self-discipline, attained divine illumination and seemingly superhuman powers. They could not only produce all the phenomena seen in our times, but regarded it as a sacred duty to cast out "evil spirits" or demons, from the unfortunate who were obsessed. In other words, to rid the medium of their days of the "elementaries."

But in our time of improved psychology every hysterical sensitive blooms into a seer, and behold! there are mediums by the thousand! Without any previous study, self-denial, or the least limitation of their physical nature, they assume, in the capacity of mouthpieces of unidentified and unidentifiable intelligences, to outrival Socrates in wisdom, Paul in eloquence, and Tertullian himself in fiery and authoritative dogmatism. The Theosophists are the last to

assume infallibility for 'themselves, or recognize it in others; as they judge others; so they are willing to be judged.

In the name, then, of logic and common sense, before bandying epithets, let us submit our differences to the arbitrament of reason. Let us compare all things, and, putting aside emotionalism and prejudice as unworthy of the logician and the experimentalist, hold fast only to that which passes the ordeal of ultimate analysis.

H. P. BLAVATSKY²

New York, January 14th, 1878.



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² In *The Mahatma Letters*, p. 289, we find Mahatma K.H. saying of this article: "It was H.P.B. who, acting under the orders of Atrya ... was the first to explain in the *Spiritualist* the difference there was between *psychê* and *nous*, *nefesh* and *ruach* — Soul and Spirit. She had to bring the whole arsenal of proofs with her, quotations from Paul and Plato, from Plutarch and *James*, etc. before the Spiritualists admitted that the theosophists were right ..."

¹ Emphasis added. — ED., A.T.



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Cycles of light and darkness succeed each other as day does night

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"Truth is that which explains" ~ Robert Crosbie, Founder ULT

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Theosophists are original and independent thinkers and seekers after Truth

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We are composed of Body, Mind & the mysterious 'Soul' – more than one soul?

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The tidal wave of deeper souls lift us unawares out of meaner cares

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Under karma can there ever be any unmerited suffering?

Nov 7 The Middle Way (talk)
Between extremes of spiritualism and materialism are ethics and wisdom

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Its Aim and Purpose (2 short talks)

Nov 21 Man Visible and Invisible
Why, philosophically, man must be both a mortal being and an immortal soul

Nov 28 Universal Transmigration of Souls
Do human Ego souls reincarnate in lower animal forms?

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The Dark Age is the last and shortest of the four yugas or racial cycles

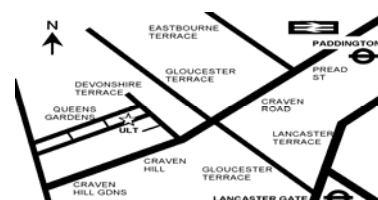
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Les reunions commencent et se terminent aux heures
précises indiquées

La Loge est maintenue en activité par des participations
bénévoles

Tel: 40-76-72

United Lodge of Theosophists

4865 Cordell Avenue, Suite 4

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Meetings: Sundays 11 a.m. to 12 noon

(Lectures followed by questions and answers, or group discussions.)

Den TEOSOFISKA

Ursprungliga Undervisningen

UNITED LODGE OF THEOSOPHISTS, Malmögen

Kungsgatan 16 A, 211 49 Malmö, tel. 0709 26 22 12

TEOSOFISKA FÖREDRAG

Hela höstterminen 2004

den 6 oktober Manligt och kvinnligt ur
ett andligt perspektiv

den 13 oktober I Mästarnas fotspår

den 20 oktober Den globala karman

den 27 oktober Sufismen och teosofin

den 3 november Regression, Hypnos &
Förnimmelser

den 10 november Ockulta vibrationer

den 17 november Teosofins pånyttfödelse
i Malmö

den 24 november Kan vi återfödas på
andra planeter?

den 1 december Den Hemliga Lärans
världsbild

den 8 december Intuition och
klärvoajans

den 15 december Shakti - Ljustes gudinna

Stiftelsen Teosofiska Kompaniet

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PROGRAM - 2004—2005

SUNDAY EVENINGS

7:00 - 7:45 P.M.

Universal Theosophy by Robert Crosbie

8:00 — 8:45 P.M.

Study, read, question, discuss, discover,
the Teaching and
Philosophy of Theosophy

IN:

THE SECRET DOCTRINE by H.P. Blavatsky

United Lodge of Theosophists

799 Adelaide Street
London, Ontario N5Y 2L8
CANADA

Wednesday Evening 7:30 to 8:45 PM

October Discussions
facilitated by the articles of
William Q Judge and H. P. Blavatsky

What is Truth
The Life Principle
The Number Seven
Three Great Ideas & Proofs of the Hidden
Self

November Discussions
facilitated by the articles of
William Q. Judge and Robert Crosbie

Sheaths of the Soul
Three Planes of Human Life
Teachings of the Avatars
The Kingly Mystery

December Discussions
facilitated by the articles of
Robert Crosbie and H.P. Blavatsky

The Recognition of Law
What Reincarnates
What Survives after Death
Christmas Then and Christmas Now

The Year is Dead, Long Live the Year!

Sunday Evening
7:00 to 8:00 PM

Isis Unveiled
H. P. Blavatsky

Email contact: Laura Gray at
classiccontours@sympatico.ca



**THE COFFEE
KLATCH**



Coffee-Maker: The controversy on the *Letters* of HPB proceeds apace! I predict that no one will be changed. It would be expecting impersonality in a field riddled with the “personal.”

Lady in Center Booth: Such strange enclosures in a volume purporting to be by Madame Blavatsky is at worst a planned mixing-together with an end-in-view, at best an abysmal lack of knowledge regarding the pedigree of the documents so casually included. There is no more dangerous enemy than those who pose as your friends.

Student: *Students* of HPB with a “capital S” — *i.e.*, those who actually read and study her major works — will need to draw a clear line regarding what can be attributed to her and what can’t and WHY IT CAN’T. It will not convince the label carriers, the archivists, and the scholars, but will furnish serious students with “the other side of the story.” The process of belittling HPB began with Col. Olcott:

[His] “faith” in H.P.B., in Masters, in Theosophy, rested upon exactly the same basis as his “faith” in Spiritualism during the preceding twenty years. That basis was *phenomena* — not philosophy, logic, ethics, altruism. “Old Diary Leaves” shows this on nearly every page. (*The Theosophical Movement*, p. 278-79)

He states his real motives for writing "Old Diary Leaves" in these words:

The controlling impulse to prepare these papers was a desire to combat a growing tendency within the Society to deify Mme. Blavatsky, and to give her commonest literary productions a quasi-inspirational character. Her transparent faults were being blindly ignored, and the pinchbeck screen of pretended authority drawn between her actions and legitimate criticism. Those who had least of her actual confidence, and hence knew least of her private character, were the greatest offenders in this direction. It was but too evident that unless I spoke out what I alone knew, the true history of our movement could never be written, nor the actual merit of my wonderful colleague become known. ... (*Ibid.*, p. 273)

By the spring of 1893 ... "Old Diary Leaves" was steadily undermining the reverence and respect of the members for H.P.B. as a Teacher, by representing her as a mere thaumaturgist. The theories and speculations to account for her phenomena, the vagaries of character and habits attributed to her, could only lead to the inference that, however gifted in some ways, she was but an irresponsible medium, not a Messenger direct from the great Lodge of Masters. The constant stream of belittlement by the President-Founder of the Society who was generally considered as her most intimate friend and associate was not less injurious to her Occult status than that of the Psychical Research Society in its celebrated *Report*¹ ... (*Ibid.*, p. 331)

Was H.P.B. to become a mere memory, the MASTERS an empty and far-off inaccessible abstraction, THEOSOPHY secondary to the Theosophical Society, and that Theosophy to be twisted, perverted, corrupted, by the interpretations of students, the "fresh revelations" of the horde of psychics and "occultists" who were already proclaiming their "successorship" to H.P.B. and delivering "messages from the Masters of H.P.B." in con-

tradition to what she had taught and exemplified? (*Ibid.*, p. 381)

Quark at the Oblong Table: — Student, are you telling me that the current Editorial Committee for the *H.P.B. Letters* is simply continuing in the footsteps of its President-Founder?

Lurker at the Back Table: —

Publishing pure literature in lieu of the fraudulent will give Students a yardstick by which to judge. It is a duty acquired, or grown into, by students who actually assimilate the philosophy brought by HPB. Only these have the internal ferment and firsthand knowledge to understand the abyss between scholarship and occultism:

To the earnest Disciple his Teacher takes the place of father and mother, for whereas they give him his body and its faculties, its life and casual form, the Teacher shows him how to develop the inner faculties for the acquisition of the eternal wisdom.



London, Ontario, CANADA reports.....

Unveiling Isis Unveiled – H.P. Blavatsky

Before the Veil -

"Before the Veil" is an essential part of *Isis Unveiled*. Without it, the student may not be sufficiently prepared for what is to come. If we do not look at Blavatsky's work under the proper light, we have little to gain. We will remain ignorant and fail to see the picture she presents as a whole.

H.P. Blavatsky, in "Before The Veil", refers to Shakespeare to express what is to come. Joan - "Advance our waving colours on the walls" -*King Henry V*. Act IV (I.U., Vol. I, ix). In *Isis Unveiled* she reminds us that the Masters are in control, contrary to what the current state of the world would have us believe. She will take back the wisdom religion. For us to gain from her *Isis Unveiled*, we are expected to be ready to

¹ A *Report* which has since been overtly disowned by that same Psychical Research Society.

make the choice, the choice to drive instead of to sit in the passenger seat. The teacher can, at times, seem mean and cruel. However, the teacher is demonstrating true compassion at this point while the true student is willing and ready for the work ahead: "My life has been devoted to the study of man, his destiny, and his happiness" J.R. Buchanan, M.D., *Outlines of Lectures on Anthropology* (I.U., Vol. I, ix).

HPB's sarcasm insults the state and thinking of the modern man:

It is nineteen centuries since, as we are told, the night of Heathenism and Paganism was first dispelled by the divine light of Christianity; and two-and-a-half centuries since the bright lamp of Modern Science began to shine on the darkness of the ignorance of the ages... The ancient philosophers

were well enough for their respective generations, but they were illiterate as compared with modern men of science (*Ibid.*).

Christianity, with its "Star of Bethlehem" (*Ibid.*, ix), holds itself in perfection, seeming to make the true road plain to any man. Christianity, like most religion is used for the personal ambitions of man:

At Rome, the self-styled seat of Christianity, the putative successor to the chair of Peter is undermining social order with his invisible but omnipresent net-work of bigoted agents, and incites them to revolutionize Europe for his temporal as well as spiritual supremacy.

Blavatsky will tell us why we are failing in our search for the truth in our approaches to both religion and science. She also is laying the groundwork for her *Secret Doctrine*:

...what are the facts? On the one hand an unspiritual, dogmatic, too often debauched clergy; a host of sects, and three warring great religions; discord instead of union, dogmas without proofs, sensation-

loving preachers, and wealth and pleasure-seeking parishioners' hypocrisy and bigotry, begotten by the tyrannical exigencies of respectability, the rule of the day, sincerity and real piety exceptional. On the other hand, scientific hypotheses built on sand; no accord upon a single question; rancorous quarrels and jealousy; a general drift into materialism. A death-grapple of Science with Theology for infallibility — "a conflict of ages" (*Ibid.*, ix).

This "conflict of ages" between science and religion will only be allowed to occur, however, for so long. "Man, the most intelligent being in the universe, has never been without a **friend**" (**Judge**,) It may seem that we are all a "bewildered public...rapidly descending to the level of a mere animal existence" (*Ibid.*, x). However, there are those who know and who will never allow all to be lost:

...scattered throughout the world, a handful of thoughtful and solitary students, who pass their lives in obscurity, far from the rumors of the world, studying the great problems of the physical and spiritual universes. They have their secret records in which are preserved the fruits of the scholastic labors of the long line of recluses whose successors they are" (*Ibid.*, p. 557).

We cannot reject science or religion altogether in our search for the truth. We are to examine wholeheartedly their strengths and weaknesses, if we are to know:

Are we not bound rather to take as the true aphorism of this century, the

declaration of Horace Greeley: "I accept *unreservedly* the views of no man, living or dead"? Such, at all events, will be our motto, and we mean that principle to be our constant guide throughout this work (*Ibid.*, x).

Since truth can be indicated. Since it has always existed, it takes on different forms. Truth in its different forms has always been rejected by many:

...could Jesus come back and behave in the streets of New York, as he did in

those of Jerusalem, he would find himself confined in the prison of the Tombs. What sort of welcome, then, could Spiritualism ever expect! True enough, the weird stranger seems neither attractive nor promising at first sight. Shapeless and uncouth, like an infant attended by seven nurses, it is coming out of its teens lame and mutilated. The names of its enemies is legion; its friends and protectors a handful. But what of that? When was ever truth accepted *a priori*? (*Ibid.*, x).

Being overly excited and gripped by a new truth does not necessarily make a truth false. Truth, however, often arrives in a subtle and gradual way. Just because we decide to investigate a new truth does not mean that we believe it. And we are often afraid of being swayed in the wrong direction, but we all have minds and the capacity to use them. When we make mistakes, the blame can be placed on only our own choice or ignorance. We will not be falsely swayed unless it is of our individual will:

The fanaticism of Spiritualists is itself a proof of the genuineness and possibility of their phenomena. They give us facts that we may investigate, not assertions that we must believe without proof. Millions of reasonable men and women do not so easily succumb to collective hallucination.

Real science and true religion are silent, and gravely wait further developments. (*Ibid.*, xi).

HPB explains that to gain truth we must turn to the ancient sages, since modern scientists are unable to provide reasonable explanations. She hopes for a finding of “a neutral ground where we can reach and profit by both [modern and ancient religion]” (*Ibid.*, xi). The Platonic philosophy is thought to have reached this stage of neutral ground. “Although twenty-two and a quarter centuries have elapsed since the death of Plato, the great minds of the world are still occupied with his writings” (*Ibid.*, xi). Described by Blavatsky as “the world’s interpretor”, Plato’s ideas were not his own. Even Plato was influenced by previous

works, such as Vedic philosophy, just as Hindu sages in a different time were influenced. It seems there is at work something greater than what we are able to see, working beyond the confines of both space and time. “So surviving the shock of time, what can this wisdom be but divine and eternal?” (*Ibid.*, xi).

Plato maintained that the unexamined life is not worth living. Real knowledge and spiritual aspiration were his aims. And real knowledge is seeing beyond the seen to the eternal, the intelligence behind all matter, and the source of all that exists:

...the *always existing*, in opposition to the transitory; and of that which exists *permanently*, in opposition to that which waxes, wanes, and is developed and destroyed alternately. “Beyond all finite existences and secondary causes, all laws, ideas, and principles, there is an INTELLIGENCE or MIND, the first principle of all principles, the Supreme Idea on which all other ideas are grounded (*Ibid.*, xii).

Insulting modern man once more:

“Though this eternal essence of things may not be perceptible by our physical senses, it may be apprehended by the mind of those who are not willfully obtuse” (*Ibid.*, xii). We must also remember that if we do realize this truth, points we have gained will be lost just as quickly if we do not make the truth a reality through our being.



MINIMUM-MAXIMUM SUNSPOT CYCLE

Solar physicist David Hathaway has been checking the sun every day since 1998, and every day for six years there have been sunspots. Sunspots are planet-sized “islands” on the surface of the sun. They are dark, cool, powerfully magnetized, and fleeting: a typical sunspot lasts only a few days or weeks before it breaks up. As soon

as one disappears, however, another emerges to take its place.

Even during the lowest ebb of solar activity, you can usually find one or two spots on the sun. But when Hathaway looked on Jan. 28, 2004, there were none. The sun was utterly blank.

It happened again last week, twice, on Oct. 11th and 12th. There were no sunspots.

“This is a sign,” says Hathaway, “that the solar minimum is coming, and it’s coming sooner than we expected.”

Solar minimum and solar maximum--”Solar Min” and “Solar Max” for short--are two extremes of the sun’s 11-year activity cycle. At maximum, the sun is peppered with spots, solar flares erupt, and the sun hurls billion-ton clouds of electrified gas toward Earth. It’s a good time for sky watchers who enjoy auroras, but not so good for astronauts who have to be wary of radiation storms. Power outages, zapped satellites, malfunctioning GPS receivers--these are just a few of the things that can happen during Solar Max.

Solar minimum is different. Sunspots are fewer — sometimes days or weeks go by without a spot. Solar flares subside. It’s a safer time to travel through space, and a less interesting time to watch polar skies.

“Contrary to popular belief,” says Hathaway, “the solar cycle is not precisely 11 years long.” Its length, measured from minimum to minimum, varies: “The shortest cycles are 9 years, and the longest ones are about 14 years.” What makes a cycle long or short? Researchers aren’t sure. “We won’t even know if the current cycle is long or short — until it’s over,” he says.



Quotable Quotes

Self-Confidence

IT is astonishing how the world makes way for a resolute soul, and how obstacles get out of the path of a determined man who believes in himself. There is no philosophy by which a man can do a thing when he thinks he can’t. What can defeat a strong man who believes in himself and cannot be ridiculed down, talked down, or written down? Poverty cannot dishearten him, misfortune deter him, or hardship turn him a hair’s breadth from his course. Whatever comes, he keeps his eye on the goal and pushes ahead.

Self-reliance which carries great, vigorous self-faith, has ever been the best substitute for friends, pedigree, influence, and money. It is the best capital in the world; it has mastered more obstacles, overcome more difficulties, and carried through more enterprise than any other human quality.

I believe if we had a larger conception of our possibilities, a larger faith in ourselves, we could accomplish infinitely more. And if we only better understood our divinity, we would have this larger faith....

The fact that you believe implicitly that you can do what may seem impossible or very difficult to others, shows that there is something within you that has gotten a glimpse of power sufficient to do the thing.

—ORISON SWETT MARDEN

Self-Containment

TAKE care not to casually discuss matters that are of great importance to you with people who are not important to you. Your affairs will become drained of preciousness. You undercut your own purposes when you do this. This is especially dangerous when you are in the early stage of an undertaking.

Other people feast like vultures on our ideas. They take it upon themselves to blithely interpret, judge, and twist what matters most to you, and your heart sinks. Let your ideas and plans incubate before you parade them in front of the naysayers and trivializers.

Most people only know how to respond to an idea by pouncing on its shortfalls rather than identifying its potential merits. Practice self-containment so that your enthusiasm won't be frittered away.

— EPICTETUS



As A Man Thinketh

by James Allen

IV Chapter Seven

Serenity

Calmness of mind is one of the beautiful jewels of wisdom. It is the result of long and patient effort in self-control. Its presence is an indication of ripened experience, and of a more than ordinary knowledge of the laws and operations of thought.

A man becomes calm in the measure that he understands himself as a thought-evolved being, for such knowledge necessitates the understanding of others as the result of thought. As he develops a right understanding, and sees more and more clearly the internal relations of things by the action of cause and effect, he ceases to fuss and fume and worry and grieve, and remains poised, steadfast, serene.

The calm man, having learned how to govern himself, knows how to adapt himself to others; and they, in turn, reverence his spiritual strength, and feel that they can learn of him and rely upon him. The more tranquil a man becomes, the greater is his success, his influence, his power for good. Even the ordinary trader will find his business prosperity increase as he develops a greater self-control and equanimity, for people will always prefer to deal with a man whose demeanor is strongly equable.

The strong calm man is always loved and revered. He is like a shade-giving tree

in a thirsty land, or a sheltering rock in a storm. Who does not love a tranquil heart, a sweet-tempered, balanced life? It does not matter whether it rains or shines, or what changes come to those possessing these blessings, for they are always sweet, serene, and calm. That exquisite poise of character which we call serenity is the last lesson culture; it is the flowering of life, the fruition of the soul. It is precious as wisdom, more to be desired than gold - yea, than even fine gold. How insignificant mere money-seeking looks in comparison with a serene life - a life that dwells in the ocean of Truth, beneath the waves, beyond the reach of tempests, in the Eternal Calm!

“How many people we know who sour their lives, who ruin all that is sweet and beautiful by explosive tempers, who destroy their poise of character, and make bad blood! It is a question whether the great majority of people do not ruin their lives and mar their happiness by lack of self-control. How few people we meet in life who are well-balanced, who have that exquisite poise which is characteristic of the finished character!”

Yes, humanity surges with uncontrolled passion, is tumultuous with ungoverned grief, is blown about by anxiety and doubt. Only the wise man, only he whose thoughts are controlled and purified, makes the winds and the storms of the soul obey him.

Tempest-tossed souls, wherever ye may be, under whatsoever conditions ye may live, know this - in the ocean of life the isles of Blessedness are smiling, and sunny shore of your ideal awaits your coming. Keep your hand firmly upon the helm of thought. In the bark of your soul reclines the commanding Master; He does but sleep; wake Him. Self-control is strength; Right Thought is mastery; Calmness is power.

Say unto your heart, “Peace, be still!”



Blinding Flashes

Years after exposure to space radiation, many astronauts' vision becomes clouded by cataracts. Understanding why may shed light on cataracts suffered by elderly people.

October 22, 2004: Gazing out of their space capsules, Apollo astronauts witnessed sights that humans had never before seen. They saw the breathtaking view of the Earth's bright blue disc against the inky black of space. They saw the far side of the Moon. They also saw strange flashes of light *inside their eyeballs!*

Since then, astronauts aboard Skylab, the Shuttle, Mir, and the International Space Station have all reported seeing these flashes. No need to call Agents Mulder and Scully of *The X Files*, though: what the astronauts are experiencing is space radiation zipping through their eyes like subatomic bullets. When a "bullet" strikes the retina, it triggers a false signal that the brain interprets as a flash of light.

Needless to say, this is not good for your eyes. Years after returning to Earth, many of these astronauts developed cataracts — a clouding of the lens, which focuses light onto the retina.

At least 39 former astronauts have suffered some form of cataracts after flying in space, according to a 2001 study by Francis Cucinotta of NASA's Johnson Space Center (see journal references below). Of those 39 astronauts, 36 had flown on high-radiation missions such as the Apollo Moon landings. Some cataracts appeared as soon as 4 or 5 years after the mission, but others took 10 or more years to manifest.

Scientists have long known of this link between radiation and cataracts, but they've never fully understood it. What exactly does radiation do to the lens of the eye to make it cloudy? Are astronauts' genes involved? Which ones?

Solving this puzzle might help people on Earth. Without ever traveling through space, more than half of people older than 65 get cataracts; cloudy lenses seem to be a natural result of aging. These old-age cataracts, some of them, resemble the cataracts astronauts get. If researchers can figure out what's happening inside astronauts' eyes, they might be able to develop medicines to stop the process.

That goal is many years away, though. First, "we have to understand the details--the genes and proteins and molecular pathways involved," says Eleanor Blakely, a scientist at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL). Supported by a NASA grant, she and her colleagues are experimenting with human eye tissue to learn these details.

"For good vision, the lens of the eye must be crystal clear," she says. The lens, shaped like an M&M, sits in the opening of the eye and focuses incoming light onto the retina. "At the center of the lens are transparent cells called 'fiber cells.' Damage to the lens can lead to clouding of the fiber cells, and this change in clarity is called a cataract."

In a healthy human eye, new fiber cells are constantly manufactured to replace old ones. The process begins with "epithelial cells," a type of stem cell that coats the front of the lens. When needed, epithelial cells flatten out and shed their nucleuses and other internal structures to become transparent fiber cells. It's an amazing metamorphosis. "During the final stages," she says, "all of the cell's organelles are disposed of by the cell in a carefully orchestrated process that leaves the cell alive, but basically a bag of crystalline proteins."

Blakely's group has shown that a radiation dose can upset the metamorphosis of epithelial cells, interfering with the formation of fresh fiber cells that make up the body of the lens.

They didn't deliberately irradiate people's eyes to figure this out, of course. Instead, they cultured human epithelial cells in petri dishes. As some of the cells were beginning to turn into fiber cells, her team exposed the cells to controlled doses of radiation. This work was done at LBNL and at the NASA Space Radiation Laboratory at the Brookhaven National Laboratory in Long Island, New York. Afterward, they used modern genetics tools to find out how the cells' genes and proteins responded.

They've found that a particular gene, Fibroblast Growth Factor 2 (FGF-2), jumps in activity eight-fold following a radiation dose. FGF-2 normally helps cells respond to stress. In this case, it seems to boost the activity of two other genes called "p21" and "p57." These genes control crucial events in the life cycle of a cell--*e.g.*, when a cell divides to form two daughter cells, or when an epithelial cell transforms into a fiber cell. Blakely suspects that an imbalance of p21 and p57 leads to the formation of abnormal fiber cells and, thus, cataracts.

It takes a while for abnormal fiber cells to accumulate and visibly fog the lens. Years go by after high radiation missions before astronauts notice their cataracts. The time delay complicates research. It's hard to pinpoint the cause when you have to wait years for the effect.

Early detection of cataracts is a goal of Rafat Ansari, a physicist at NASA's Glenn Research Center, working independently of Blakely. He has developed a laser probe that can detect signs of cataracts in humans years before they become visible. It's being clinically tested now at the National Eye Institute. Eventually, astronauts might carry such a probe with them on space missions, checking their eyes as they go.

Another team of researchers, led by Leo Chylack, Jr., MD, of the Center for Ophthalmic Research at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, is comparing cataracts in astronauts, test pilots and members of the ground crew at the Johnson

Space Center. They'll take stereoscopic pictures of the subjects' lenses to investigate differences in the type of cataracts these people get--another piece of the puzzle.

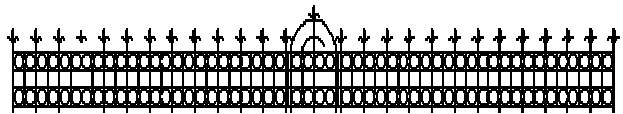
Meanwhile, Blakely is going back to the lab to learn more about the molecular underpinnings of it all. "We're still establishing the links between changes in FGF-2 and [the other genes]," she says. And there are other questions. For instance, cataracts usually develop slowly, but could sudden big doses of radiation accelerate the process? Astronauts taking off on a 6-month trip to Mars will want to know.

Credits & Contacts

Authors: Patrick L. Barry, Dr. Tony Phillips

Responsible NASA official: Ron Koczor

<http://www.firstscience.com/site/articles/ataracts.asp>



The Lessons of History¹

Every so often, or, in other words *CYCLICALLY*, some group or publication or internet entrepreneur repeats the errors of the past. In fact, such activities are not even considered errors by those perpetrating them. And how could they? Does the spoon value the soup?

Students of the writings penned by Madame Blavatsky and Mr. Judge, learn, as they proceed, that the magic of developing their inner principles is in their *sincere effort* with the philosophy. They gradually discover that the work they are doing is more than an intellectual endeavour. They are alchemists: — What they seem to be doing is not what is really being accomplished. Therefore the public, the historians, the scholars, the archivists — in short all those handling spiritually oriented material as an item of collectible interest —

¹ Most of this article is derived from *The Theosophical Movement 1875-1925*, pp. 127-130, 142-43, 144-47.

are like the fable of the spoon that endlessly ladled the ambrosia of the gods without so much as a *taste*. *Working* students of Theosophy become *chelas-in-germ*. Their *efforts* place them beyond the plane of *appearances*.

History, on the other hand, must deal with events. Even the most personal and short-sighted recognize that actions do not perform themselves. There is no action without a being to make it and to feel its effects. No one's minutest action stands alone and without relation.

History is the story of the persons and personages who performed the actions, as well as of the events themselves; but even more, if its chronicle is to be of any value to the student, he must be concerned in the meaning of the incidents which crowd the stage; in the parts played by the various actors in the drama; in the lessons to be learned in relation to the larger drama of life itself in which he and all other sentient beings are concerned.

Behind the arras of the visible lies the real and enduring world of *causation*, the world of immortal Souls engaged in the battle of Life — the pilgrimage of spiritual and mental evolution, in which all are involved. Thus the history of the Theosophical Movement becomes a *study of the operation of the Law of Karma*, in which, every living Soul is equally concerned.

The moment anyone takes this position he is on the plane of consciousness of the Superior Sections of the Theosophical Society; he is studying particular persons and their actions in the light of *Universal Principles* — in the light of the teachings of Theosophy, exoteric and esoteric.

From the beginning it was the Theosophical *Society* which attracted the attention of friends and foes alike. As it was the visible body, the heredity and preconceptions of the race made the thing visible, the reality. Its declared platform of

Objects was universally attractive, so long as those Objects remained in the region of ideals; an abstraction which one could profess without disturbance, external or internal.

But when it was ascertained that the Society was in fact but a vehicle for the dissemination and serious study of Theosophy; when it was seen that the careful study and comparison of the various religions and theories, philosophical and scientific, led straight to the unavoidable inference that the only value in any or all of them lay in what they had in common, not in their mutual exclusions; that the various *differences* were mutually contradictory and destructive; that in Theosophy alone was an inclusive Wisdom, self-convincing and self-explanatory of all and everything — then the Theosophical Society became and continued to be the target for every species of assault and attack that the adherents of sectarianism, whether in religion or science, could devise. And when it was perceived by the Fellows that the Objects of the Society were not merely formal and academic; that the serious study of Theosophy produced wholly unlooked-for results in themselves, compelling them to choose between their predilections and their professed principles, by far the greater part either left the Society altogether, or lapsed into the hypocrisy which pretends one course of action while following another. The active and *earnest* Theosophists have always been but a scant fragment of even that handful of humanity which from time to time has called itself Theosophical

The actual active and visible Head of the Theosophical Society was at all times Col. H.S. Olcott. To his zeal was due its foundation, to his ardent devotion its spread, to his abilities and sacrifices its successes. The Society itself more and more became to him the one Object of his existence; to it and for it he gave his all.

The case was quite otherwise both with H.P.B. and William Q. Judge. To

neither of them was the Society ever anything but a body, an instrument, an imperfect and faulty machine for conserving energy and putting it to use. Both of them were Co-Founders with Col. Olcott of the Society, both of them gave without stint to its support and defense, but only and always as a mere means to an end.

As President-Founder of the visible Society, Col. Olcott was prominent before the members and before the public. H.P.B. had as little to do as possible with the conduct of the Society; Mr. Judge was scarcely known at all in connection with it during its first decade. At all times until and unless the exigencies of the *Movement* compelled such appearances and interferences both H.P.B. and Mr. Judge supported and worked through Col. Olcott in the affairs of the Society, making themselves in every public way subordinate to him. His work was the exoteric phase of the Movement; theirs the esoteric.

H.P.B. was the *Teacher*; for purposes of the Movement she was the *direct Agent* of the Lodge of Masters of the Wisdom-Religion. These Masters were and remain, securely veiled from the prying and selfish approach of humanity, Their existence a matter of inference only to all but Their chelas and “those with whom They voluntarily communicate.” They are known in the world only through the evidences amassed by H.P.B. in her writings, through the few communications from Them to others who were, in every case, brought into relation with Them by and through H.P.B., and through those longings and aspirations of the human heart which still preserve the faith in Divine Beings, Elder Brothers to suffering and sinful man. So far as the whole West is concerned all that anyone knows or infers of the Masters or Their Wisdom-Religion, or Their chelas, comes, directly or indirectly, from the mission of H.P. Blavatsky. She therefore stood, and stands, in a position of supreme importance to the whole world; for *she stands in the place of the Masters* as Their Messenger

until 1975,¹ when she stated that Their next Messenger would come. All others, their statements and their actions, must be viewed in the light of her mission, her teachings, her statements, and her example; for she and none other represented the First Section.

Next to her in importance in the Theosophical Movement was, and is, William Q. Judge. The placing of any persons, however talented or supposedly proficient in Occultism, on the same plane of knowledge and action in the world as these two; the acceptance of any teachings or “messages” as *Theosophy* in contravention of the recorded statements of these two, is to deny in fact the very Source of the Message of Theosophy, is to attribute to the Masters Themselves the fallibility of human nature. To take such a position is to imagine that They chose an untrustworthy direct Agent to deliver Their Message to humanity; that they permitted Their Message to be faultily and imperfectly recorded; that They left the world and the sincere student alike at the mercy of claimants of every kind, and without any sure guide or landmark of philosophy and example.

H.P.B. represented the First Section of the Theosophical Movement; W.Q. Judge represented the Second Section, and Col. H.S. Olcott the Third Section — or Theosophical Society proper. The evidences are abundant and overwhelming. Colonel Olcott was never, from the standpoint of the Superior Sections, other than a probationary chela. It is thus important to consider his dual position: on the one hand, the President-Founder of the Society, its guiding

¹ It is evident to some that their “Messenger” did come exactly as stated. However, once again we on the plane of appearances have no eyes to extrapolate from one cycle to another. The “appearance” from one cycle to the next is an abyss, for there is a change in polarity. The extravaganza of “planting the seed” is noisy and outlandish compared to the seed’s first sprouting in the darkness of the earth, or even it’s first push into the world of sunlight. If we study by analogy and correspondence rather than preconception, meaning becomes more evident and real — it speaks to our heart. — Ed., A.7.

genius and chief figure before the world; on the other hand, a struggling probationer, fighting and failing over and over again in his efforts at self-discipline and self-mastery. In the esoteric study of the Theosophical Movement, the actions of Col. Olcott the President, in all their contradictions and confusions, have to be studied in the light of Col. Olcott, the aspirant for accepted chelaship of the Second Section. Pathetic and disillusioning as is the task, it should be tempered in writer and reader alike by the reflection that the story of Col. Olcott is the story in advance of what confronts every aspirant to the same up-hill Path; the extent to which we learn the lesson of his failures is the measure of our debt to him. ...

[In studying HPB] it should be understood that widely as she has been discussed and extensive as have been the controversies which have raged about her mission and her personality the fact remains that only the scantiest and most fragmentary details exist relating to her, after the elimination of all the mass of hearsay and opinion, of claims and counter-claims made by friends and foes as to her Occult status, powers, and relations. She is to be known, if known at all, only through her writings and by those who faithfully "follow the Path she showed, the Masters who are behind."

Her writings are devoted entirely:

- (1) to placing on record her message of Theosophy and the citation of the evidences and arguments establishing its unbroken existence down the ages;
- (2) to articles in explanation and application of the Principles of that Message;
- (3) to instruction, advice, and suggestion to the students, individually and collectively, who to any extent become interested in Theosophy;

(4) to the direct and pointed statements made by her in her letters to and in relation to those persons who voluntarily associated themselves in her work and who as voluntarily pledged themselves to her guidance and tuition;

(5) to the defense of her mission, its instruments and her associates.

She was interested in and devoted to a CAUSE: nothing else mattered to her, nothing else was of moment to her, save and except as it might hasten or retard that Cause. Her writings, as her works, are wholly impersonal; consequently she never touched upon persons or events save as the exigencies of the Movement, of the Society, or of her pupils made such attention compulsory on her part. And the same state of fact applies in its integrity to William Q. Judge, his writings and his works.

On the other hand, "Old Diary Leaves," including the miscellaneous articles and letters written by Col. Olcott in connection with his Theosophical work, are wholly autobiographical and personal — in their point of view, in their treatment of men and events, in their judgment and conclusions. From the basis of the Superior Sections he was a struggling probationer, wrestling with the foes entrenched in his own inner nature. In his own eyes, and those of so many others, he was the President-Founder of the Theosophical Society, wrestling valiantly with its enemies, without and within. The period from 1881-8 is that of the second septennate of the probationary chelaship both of Henry S. Olcott and of the Theosophical Society as a body, and the struggles of the one are the mirror and the reflex of the struggles of the other. The "wandering from the discipline" of the one is depicted in the stresses which beset the other; their joint departures from their professed Pledges and Objects the compelling reason for the public formation of the Esoteric Section of the T.S. ...

In April, 1886, H.P.B. wrote a long and important letter to Dr. Franz Hartmann in reply to questions and problems raised by him. Dr. Hartmann, it will be remembered, was at Adyar before, during, and subsequent to the Coulomb charges, the Indian Convention's practical desertion of H.P.B., Mr. Hodgson's investigations for the S.P.R., the resignation and departure of H.P.B. He was familiar with much of the unwritten history of that eventful period. He learned enough, and his intuitions were sufficiently awake, to make him the faithful and loyal friend of both H.P.B., and W.Q.J., through all the troubled voyage of the Theosophical ship. H.P.B.'s letter to him was forced into publicity by the necessities of a decade later. It will be found in full in *The Path*, for March, 1896.

After acknowledging his letter she says:

“What you say in it seems to me like an echo of my own thoughts in many a way; only knowing the truth and the real state of things in the “Occult world” better than you do, I am perhaps able to see better also where the real mischief was and lies.”

What the truth and the real state of things was in connection with the facts and factors underlying the course of events we are considering is discussed at length:

“As to... that portion of your letter where you speak of the ‘army’ of the deluded - and the “imaginary” Mahatmas of Olcott — you are absolutely and sadly right. Have I not seen the thing for nearly eight years?

Have I not struggled and fought against Olcott's ardent and gushing imagination, and tried to stop him every day of my life? Was he not told by me... that if he did not see the Masters in their true light, and did not cease speaking and enflaming people's imaginations, that he would be held responsible for all the evil the Society might come to?...

“Ah, if by some psychological process you could be made to see the whole truth! ... I was sent to America on purpose and sent to the Eddys. There I found Olcott in love with spirits, as he became in love with the Masters later on. I was ordered to let him know that spiritual phenomena without the philosophy of Occultism were dangerous and misleading. I proved to him that all that mediums could do through spirits others could do at will without any spirits at all... Well; I told him the whole truth. I said to him that I had known Adepts,... That... Adepts were everywhere Adepts — silent, secret, retiring, and who would never divulge themselves entirely to anyone, unless one did as I did — passed seven and ten years' probation and given proofs of absolute devotion, and that he, or she, would keep silent even before a prospect and a threat of death. I fulfilled the requirements and am what I am; and this no Hodgson, no Coulombs, no Sellin,¹ can take away from me....

“When we arrived [in India] and Master coming to Bombay bodily, paid

¹ A German professor and Spiritualist to whom Dr. Hubbe-Schleiden turned for “messages,” after *his* breach with HPB, and who, like Mr. Sinnett's “psychics,” charged her with bogus communications. — Ed., A. T.

a visit to us... Olcott became crazy. He was like Balaam's she-ass when she saw the angel! Then came other fanatics who began calling them 'Mahatmas'; and, little by little, the Adepts were transformed into Gods on earth. They began to be appealed to, and made *puja* to, and were becoming with every day more legendary and miraculous.... Well between this idea of Mahatmas and Olcott's rhapsodies, what could I do? I saw with terror and anger the false track they were all pursuing. The "Masters," as all thought, must be omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent.... The Masters knew all; why did they not help the devotee? If a mistake or a flapdoodle was committed in the Society — 'How could the Masters allow you or Olcott to do so?' we were asked in amazement. The idea that the Masters were mortal men, limited even in their great powers, never crossed anyone's mind....

"Is it Olcott's fault? perhaps, to a degree. Is it mine? I absolutely deny it, and protest against the accusation. It is no one's fault. Human nature alone, and the failure of modern society and religions to furnish people with something higher and nobler than craving after money and honors — is at the bottom of it. Place this failure on one side, and the mischief and havoc produced in people's brains by modern spiritualism, and you have the enigma solved. Olcott to this day is sincere, true and devoted to the cause. He does and acts the best he knows how, and the mistakes and absurdities he has committed and commits to this day are due to something he lacks in the psychological portion of his brain, and

he is not responsible for it. Loaded and heavy is his Karma, poor man, but much must be forgiven to him, for he has always erred through lack of right judgment, not from any vicious propensity."

This letter, it will be noted, was written a year after H.P.B.'s departure from India, a little over a year before the foundation of *Lucifer*, and forms part of the chain of time and action leading to the formation of the Esoteric Section. Both H.P.B. and Mr. Judge from then on made the most strenuous efforts, publicly and privately, in preparations for the restoration of the Society, in Europe and America at least, to a semblance of its original lines, through the Esoteric Section.



Nonviolence: What they have Said

Principles of Nonviolence (for kids)...but really for adults

- Believing that everyone counts.
- Practicing kindness.
- Loving and forgiving ourselves and others.
- Taking care of the earth and everything on it.
- Having the courage to do the right thing.
- Helping people in our special way.
- Making the world a fun place to live.

Ways to Practice Nonviolence

EXAMPLE

Journalist Jane Pauley has said, "Kids learn more from example than any thing you say. I'm convinced they learn very early not to hear anything you say, but watch what you do."

LEAP

In order to act out of love many times I must leap. Look first, then leap. Instead of leaping, sometimes I hesitate and stand on

the precipice. My fear kicks in and I decide to think about it some more before I take action. I need to evaluate, mull, consider the options. But often the plain truth is that I already know what needs to be done, and I want to do it. I really do! What I lack is the courage to leap. My heart tells me to leap, my head says "Are you crazy? You could get hurt. Wait." I wait and the moment passes me by.

In *The Road Less Traveled*, M. Scott Peck writes, "When my patients lose sight of their significance and are disheartened by the effort of the work we are doing, I sometimes tell them that the human race is in the midst of making an evolutionary leap. 'Whether or not we succeed in that leap,' I say to them, 'is your personal responsibility.' And mine. The universe, this stepping-stone, has been laid down to prepare a way for us. But we ourselves must step across it, one by one."

PRACTICE

An old grandfather, whose grandson came to him with anger at a schoolmate who had done him an injustice, said "Let me tell you a story. I too, at times, have felt a great hate for those that have taken so much, with no sorrow for what they do. But hate wears you down, and does not hurt your enemy. It is like taking poison and wishing your enemy would die. I have struggled with these feelings many times." He continued, "It is as if there are two wolves inside me; one is good and does no harm. He lives in harmony with all around him and does not take offense when no offense was intended. He will only fight when it is right to do so, and in the right way." "But the other wolf, ah! He is full of anger. The littlest thing will set him into a fit of temper. He fights everyone, all the time, for no reason. He cannot think because his anger and hate are so great. It is helpless anger, for his anger will change nothing. Sometimes it is hard to live with these two wolves inside me, for both of them try to dominate my spirit."

The boy looked intently into his Grandfather's eyes and asked, "Which one wins, Grandfather?"

The Grandfather smiled and said, "The one I feed."

RISK

Novelist and poet Erica Jong says "And the trouble is if you don't risk anything, you risk even more."

Walking the path of nonviolence often feels like taking a risk. When we commit ourselves to opening our hearts we sometimes feel exposed and vulnerable. It takes walking a distance down this path before we gain the experience that teaches us that nothing is stronger than love. It takes practice to learn that standing in a place of love is the safest place of all.

CONSTRUCTIVISM

How frequently do we think about whether or not our actions are constructive? How many times have I tried to solve a problem without considering whether or not my solution was actually constructive or merely a band aid? Much of what we do can be reactionary, borne of our fear of what might happen. Sometimes we know that what we're doing is actually destructive and we go ahead and do it anyway in order to get a temporary feeling of resolution. This is what we see our leaders do all the time. Many people use violence in order to attempt to end violence. It never works, but they try it again anyway.

In *Trumpet Of Conscience*, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. says, "Means and ends must cohere because the end is preexistent in the means, and ultimately destructive means cannot bring about constructive ends."

SATYAGRAHA

In *The Principles Of Healing*, H.B. Jeffery writes, "... let us suppose that there is only one singer in a whole choir who has the proper note and key, and that all the rest are off key. If that one will keep to the true key and tempo, ignoring all the rest and singing

correctly, they will all swing in to the right way and soon be together with that one. This will happen, not because the true singer has given any attention to their lack of musical accuracy, but because he has kept his own accuracy, because he has maintained his knowledge and his expression of the principle of music.”

AIMLESSNESS

In *Peace Is Every Step*, Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh writes, “There is a word in Buddhism that means “wishlessness” or “aimlessness.” The idea is that you do not put something in front of you and run after it, because everything is already here, in yourself. While we practice walking meditation, we do not try to arrive anywhere. If we keep thinking of the future, of what we want to realize we will lose our steps.”

OBSERVE

In *Care Of The Soul*, Thomas Moore writes, “The basic intention in any caring, physical or psychological, is to alleviate suffering. But in relation to the symptom itself, observance means first of all listening and looking carefully at what is being revealed in the suffering. An intent to heal can get in the way of seeing. By doing less, more is accomplished. ... It is not easy to observe closely, to take the time and to make the subtle moves that allow the soul to reveal itself further.”

DESIRE

As George Bernard Shaw wrote in his play, *Man And Superman*, “This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world did not devote itself to making you happy.”

EXPERIENCE

In an article for the magazine *Christian Century*, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., talked about his experience in

Montgomery. He wrote “As the days unfolded I became more and more convinced of the power of nonviolence. Living through the actual experience of the protest, nonviolence became more than a method to which I gave my intellectual assent; it became a commitment to a way of life. Many issues I had not cleared up intellectually concerning nonviolence were now solved in the sphere of practical action.”

INTUITION

Intuition is the “knower who knows” within each one of us. No one is without intuition. It is a muscle that needs to be exercised in order to grow strong and responsive. It’s hard to imagine that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. or Mahatma Gandhi could have each changed an entire nation without using their intuition. How could they have each begun such a formidable journey without trusting that part of themselves that knew the right way to go?

In *Living In The Light*, Shakti Gawain writes, “The more you do it, the easier it will become. Eventually you will be able to contact your intuition, ask yourself questions, and know that in that ‘wise being’ within you, an incredible source of power and strength is available to answer your questions and guide you. As you grow more sensitive to this guidance from the intuitive feelings within, you will gain a sense of knowing what you need do in any situation. Your intuitive power is always available to guide you whenever you need it. It will open to you as soon as you are willing to trust yourself and your inner knowledge.”

Today commit to developing a deeper relationship with the “knower who knows.” Ask for guidance, follow it and give thanks.

PRIORITIZE

In a university commencement address several years ago, Brian Dyson, CEO of Coca Cola Enterprises, spoke of the relation of work to one’s other commitments: “Imagine life as a game in which you are juggling some five balls in

the air. You name them work, family, health, friends and spirit — and you're keeping all of these in the air. You will soon understand that work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. But the other four balls — family, health, friends and spirit — are made of glass. If you drop one of these, they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged or even shattered. They will never be the same. You must understand that and strive for balance in your life."

TRANSFORMATION

Gandhi said "A nonviolent revolution is not a program for seizure of power. It is a program of transformation of relationships ...

BOLDNESS

Goethe said "Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to drawback, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation) there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no one would have dreamed would come their way.

Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it."

PROGRESS

Vincent Van Gogh understood the nature of creative progress, he said, "To make progress is a kind of miner's work; it doesn't advance as quickly as one would like, and as others expect, but as one stands before such a task, the basic necessities are patience and faithfulness. In fact, I do not think much about the difficulties, because if one thought of them too much one would get stunned or disturbed."

KNOWING

René Daumal said "You cannot stay on the summit for ever; you have to come down again ... So why bother in the first place? Just this: What is above knows what is below, but what is below does not know what is above. One climbs, one sees. One descends, one sees no longer, but one has seen. There is an art to conducting oneself in the lower regions by the memory of what one saw higher up. When one can no longer see, one can at least know."

MASTERY

Labor organizer Cesar Chavez teaches, "If you use violence, you have to sell part of yourself for that violence. Then you are no longer a master of your own struggle."

OPENNESS

A Turkish proverb says, "He who builds himself a fence, fences out more than he fences in.

PATIENCE

According to Cesar Chavez, "Nonviolence is not inaction It is hardwork... It is the patience to win."

GENEROSITY

Mother Teresa said, "There is a hidden poverty more pervasive than lack of money. It is the poverty of the heart."

FREEDOM

Civil rights activist Diane Nash said, "Freedom, by definition, is people realizing that they are their own leaders."

FAITH

When Cesar Chavez was organizing farm workers, he challenged them to say, "Si, se puede" (yes, it is possible) when they didn't know how they would overcome obstacles.

COURAGE

Eleanor Roosevelt has urged, "You must do the things that you think you cannot do."

INTERRELATEDNESS

"I am cognizant, of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly." — Martin L. King from his jail cell, Atlanta, 1963



The New Paradigm

As a student I firmly think theosophy is healthier than it has ever been — mainly because it is achieving what the several Initiates who came together to begin its activity in 1875 intended to accomplish. That *one* among the "several" who founded the impulse became the *Manu* for the cycle so founded — not in the anthropomorphic sense of "he did it", but viewed as a "*Keynote of Consciousness*."

A nucleus of universal brotherhood can only begin its accumulations, when a body of literature potent with the magic of self-reform for those who assimilate it, is made available. Madame Blavatsky agreed to be the scapegoat or "seed" by which the new *Keynote of Consciousness* could be made present and available on a lower plane. The process corresponds to planting a seed. The seed has to be dead (*i.e.* dried out and having no life from the cycle in which it was harvested). Then it can be planted, *sprout* underground, and undergo a second death. All this for Cyclic Law. In the East the word for it is: *Padmapani (Protector of the Cycles)*.

Thus the most important part of Madame Blavatsky's work was unseen, for events germinate in the astral *before* they

sprout above ground into the noisy, boisterous world we inhabit. The work was prenatal, and we students of history are privileged to read the vast array of changes proceeding in the cosmic womb: first to America for collecting the past and planting on fresh ground, then to India for denial, crucifixion, and expulsion; then to Italy, Germany, and England for purposes of beginning "a new movement in the West."

Yes, the Movement is healthy as never before, and I have yet to meet a genuinely serious student of the Blavatsky-material who does not show the marks of *real occultism*.

Best wishes for your 100th issue!

jerome

[Reprinted from *Theosophy World*, Issue 100]



The Simplicity of Vision¹

The work of philosophy is simple and discreet. Let us not get carried away by the swollen puffiness of solemn affectation.

Marcus Aurelius
Meditations 9, 29

I² sincerely believe that our most urgent and difficult task today is, as Goethe said, to "learn to believe in simplicity." Might it not be the case that the greatest lesson which the philosophers of Antiquity — and above all Plotinus — have to teach us is that philosophy is not the complicated, pretentious, and artificial construction of a learned system of discourse, but the transformation of perception and of life... (xi)

From matter to Soul to Spirit to the One

Hadot insists that we should not take these levels of reality — from matter to Soul

¹ *Plotinus or The Simplicity of Vision*, by Pierre Hadot {French}, translated by Michael Chase, with Introduction by Arnold I, Davidson. Published by University of Chicago, 1993.

² Michael Chase

to Spirit to the One — as metaphysical abstractions, but rather as exhibiting stages of ascent, of spiritual or inner transformation.¹

[Plotinus] situates himself and his experience within a hierarchy of realities which extends from the supreme level — God — to the opposite extreme: the level of matter. According to this doctrine, the human soul occupies an intermediate position between realities inferior to it — matter and the life of the body — and realities superior to it: purely intellectual life, characteristic of divine intelligence, and higher still, the pure existence of the Principle of all things. Within this framework, the experience Plotinus describes for us consists in a movement by which the soul lifts itself up to the level of divine intelligence, which creates all things and contains within itself, in the form of a spiritual world, all the eternal Ideas or immutable models of which the things of this world are nothing but images. Our text even seems to give us to understand that the soul, passing beyond all this, can fix itself in the Principle of all things. . . .

Each degree of reality, he argues, can only be explained with reference to its superior level: the unity of the body is explained by the unity of the soul which animates it; the life of the soul requires illumination by the life of higher Spirit; and finally, we cannot understand the life of the Spirit itself without the fecund simplicity of the absolute, divine Principle, which is, in a sense, its deepest intimacy.

The point that interests us here, however, is that all this traditional terminology is used to express an inner experience. All these levels of reality

become levels of inner life, levels of the self. Here we come upon Plotinus' central intuition: the human self is not irrevocably separated from its eternal model, as the latter exists within divine Thought. The true self — the self in God — is within ourselves. During certain privileged experiences, which raise the level of our inner tension, we can identify ourselves with it. We then become this eternal self; we are moved by its unutterable beauty, and when we identify ourselves with this self, we identify ourselves with divine Thought itself, within which it is contained.

Such privileged experiences make us realize that we never cease, and have never ceased, to be in contact with our true selves. (26–27, PH)

Since, according to Hadot, all these levels of reality become levels of inner life, levels of the self, Plotinus' metaphysics cannot be separated from his spiritual experience. His spiritual biography represents the itinerary of philosophy itself.

Mystical union, however, does not permanently abolish the distinctions among discontinuous levels of the self. Mystical experience is transitory (Porphyry having reported that Plotinus reached the summit of this experience only four times during the six years Porphyry was present in his school), and Plotinus' soul does not re-main up above, but returns to the exigencies of everyday life. How then can we reconcile the fleeting states of divine union with our normal lives, the fact that "we must look after our bodies and other people, think rationally, make provisions for the future" (65)? Hadot shows that, for Plotinus, the practice of the virtues assures a connection between the ecstatic and the everyday (chapter 5). Plotinian virtue expresses itself in a particular style of life and in a relationship with others that consists of mildness or gentleness. The secret of Plotinian gentleness is to be found in a transformation of one's whole being, a practice of virtue and contemplation that makes one present to

¹ Rather than a formal book review we will use a series of extracts from the book. MC will be Michael Chase and PH will be from Chase's translation of Pierre Hadot. The book is small. We recommend it to Theosophists as a way of improving our knowledge of the era Plotinus represents. Hadot (and Chase too!) have penetrated beyond the dry bones of *scholarship* into the spirit of the Neoplatonists. — Ed., A.T.

Spirit while not excluding presence to other people, the world, and even the body (chapter 6). As Hadot writes elsewhere, "Presence to the self can thus be identical with presence to others on the condition that one has reached a degree of inwardness sufficient for discovering that the self, the true self, is not situated in corporeal individuality but in the spiritual world, where all beings are within each other,¹ where each is the whole and yet remains himself."² In his final chapter, Hadot sketches the solitude that preceded Plotinus' death, and his meditations on the problems of evil and death that appear in his last works. He concludes by taking up the issue of our distance and proximity to Plotinus, insisting that while we cannot slavishly repeat the spiritual itinerary described in the *Enneads*, we risk a genuine loss if we ignore the dimensions of human experience to which Plotinus is witness.³

[TO BE CONTINUED]

¹ Seeing Krishna *everywhere*, one becomes a Self-Analyzing reflection — *svasam-vedana* — Ed., A. T.

² Pierre Hadot, "Plotinus and Porphyry" in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality. Egyptian, Greek, Roman*. Edited by A. H. Armstrong (New York: Crossroad, 1986, p. 233).

³ My description of the structure of *Plotinus or The Simplicity of Vision* is indebted to discussions and correspondence with Pierre Hadot.

SCIENCE JOURNAL

By SHARON BEGLEY

Scans of Monks' Brains Show Meditation Alters Structure, Functioning

ALL OF THE Dalai Lama's guests peered intently at the brain scan projected onto screens at either end of the room, but what different guests they were. On one side sat five neuroscientists, united in their belief that physical processes in the brain can explain all the wonders of the mind, without appeal to anything spiritual or nonphysical.

Facing them sat dozens of Tibetan Buddhist monks in burgundy-and-saffron robes, convinced that one round-faced young man in their midst is the reincarnation of one of the Dalai Lama's late teachers, that another is the reincarnation of a 12th-century monk, and that the entity we call "mind" is not, as neuroscience says, just a manifestation of the brain.

It was not, in other words, your typical science meeting.

But although the Buddhists and scientists who met for five days last month in the Dalai Lama's home in Dharamsala, India, had different views on the little matters of reincarnation and the relationship of mind to brain, they set them aside in the interest of a shared goal. They had come together in the shadows of the Himalayas to discuss one of the hottest topics in brain science: neuroplasticity.

The term refers to the brain's recently discovered ability to change its structure and function, in particular by expanding or strengthening circuits that are used and by shrinking or weakening those that are rarely engaged. In its short history, the science of

neuroplasticity has mostly documented brain changes that reflect physical experience and input from the outside world. In pianists who play many arpeggios, for instance, brain regions that control the index finger and middle finger become fused, apparently because when one finger hits a key in one of these fast tempo movements, the other does so almost simultaneously, fooling the brain into thinking the two fingers are one. As a result of the fused brain regions, the pianist can no longer move those fingers independently of one another.

LATELY, **HOWEVER**, scientists have begun to wonder whether the brain can change in response to purely internal, mental signals. That's where the Buddhists come in. Their centuries-old tradition of meditation offers a real-life experiment in the power of those will-o'-the-wisps, thoughts, to alter the physical matter of the brain.

"Of all the concepts in modern neuroscience, it is neuroplasticity that has the greatest potential for meaningful interaction with Buddhism," says neuroscientist Richard Davidson of the University of Wisconsin, Madison. The Dalai Lama agreed, and he encouraged monks to donate (temporarily) their brains to science.

The result was the scans that Prof. Davidson projected in Dharamsala. They compared brain activity in volunteers who were novice meditators to that of Buddhist monks who had spent more than 10,000 hours in meditation. The task was to practice "compassion" meditation, generating a feeling of loving kindness toward all beings.

"We tried to generate a mental state in which compassion permeates the whole mind with no other thoughts," says Matthieu Ricard, a Buddhist monk at Shechen Monastery in Katmandu, Nepal, who holds a Ph.D. in genetics.

IN A STRIKING difference between novices and monks, the latter showed a dramatic increase in high-frequency brain activity called gamma waves during compassion meditation. Thought to be the signature of neuronal activity that knits together far-flung brain circuits, gamma waves underlie higher mental activity such as consciousness. The novice meditators "showed a slight increase in gamma activity, but most monks showed extremely large increases of a sort that has never been reported before in the neuroscience literature," says Prof. Davidson, suggesting that mental training can bring the brain to a greater level of consciousness.

Using the brain scan called functional magnetic resonance imaging, the scientists pin-pointed regions that were active during compassion meditation. In almost every case, the enhanced activity was greater in the monks' brains than the novices. Activity in the left pre-frontal cortex (the seat of positive emotions such as happiness) swamped activity in the right pre-frontal (site of negative emotions and anxiety), something never before seen from purely mental training."

That opens up the tantalizing possibility that the brain, like the rest of the body, can be altered intentionally. Just as aerobics sculpt the muscles, so mental training sculpts the gray matter in ways scientists are only beginning to fathom.

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CORRESPONDENCE

[We interrupted Laura at a meeting of the Canadian Lodge in London, Ontario. The Canadians — their politeness knows no boundaries — so this was our answer:]

Thank you for the phone call. It was wonderful to hear from you!

Sorry I made it so difficult for you to connect with me!

We had an interesting discussion going on the following quotes.

"Now, since truth is a multifaced jewel, the facets of which it is impossible to perceive all at once; and since, again, no two men, however anxious to discern truth, can see even one of those facets alike, what can be done to help them to perceive it? As physical man, limited and trammelled from every side by illusions, cannot reach truth by the light of his terrestrial perceptions, we say — develop in you the *inner* knowledge."¹

Even his² friends are beginning to find fault with him. They cannot see *why it should not be a purely Theosophical magazine*, in other words, why it refuses to be dogmatic and bigoted. Instead of devoting every inch of space to theosophical and occult teachings, it opens its pages "to the publication of the most grotesquely heterogeneous elements and conflicting doctrines." This is the chief accusation, to which we answer — why not? Theosophy is divine knowledge, and knowledge is truth; every *true* fact, every sincere word are thus part and parcel of Theosophy. One who is skilled in divine alchemy, or even approximately blessed with the gift of the perception of truth, will find and extract it from an erroneous as much as from a correct statement. However small the particle of gold lost in a ton of rubbish, it is the noble

¹ From article "What is Truth?"

² Referring to the magazine *Lucifer* — a 98 page magazine published twice-a-month for several years by Madame Blavatsky.

metal still, and worthy of being dug out even at the price of some extra trouble.

It is interesting to read that [HPB's] students were dogmatic, even with HPB Herself!

We then moved on to the "Sheaths of the Soul".

If we knew Karma as well as we think we do, and if we truly realized that thoughts are more real than actions, we would see that we must take the unwavering position of SOUL and stop such thoughts of separateness.

Have a good night and a good meeting!³

Laura
London, Ontario, Canada

³ Both lodges — L.A. and London — have meetings on Wednesday, the night we called. — Ed., A. 7.