



The Challenge of Discipleship in the 21st Century

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It may be worthwhile to study the process of discipleship. There are also reasons to investigate the subtle magnetic relationships, or non-verbal communications, between the Adept Teachers of the Himalayas¹ and their lay disciples and Truth-aspirants all over the world.

The theosophical movement was conceived and created during the 1870s and 1880s by H.P. Blavatsky and several Masters, with the assistance of many disciples and aspirants in different continents.

Since the first moment, the inner structure of the movement was designed in such a way that it must have a central nucleus of sincere aspirants to a higher learning, in order for it to be able to live at the spiritual level. Otherwise, it can only experience the outer, mechanical life of a “shell”.

Indeed, history has proven once and again that in the absence of an *inner group* with people committed to the process of *discipleship*, the movement is scarcely more than a corpse. But what exactly do we mean, when we use the word *discipleship*?

If we see the idea of being a disciple as a status-symbol or a mark of personal achievement, then there is no need whatsoever for any sincere students to ever think about such a dangerous topic. In that case, we must just say, with so many others:

“It is enough to study the literature of authentic theosophy and to try to live up to its general principles.”

Yet Truth is frequently hidden beneath surface and appearances, and the seed of *discipleship* — with all its tests — is at the heart of the apparently simple fact of *trying to live theosophical principles*.

On the other hand, in its primary and original meaning, the word *discipleship* just indicates a learning-process — and there are no feelings of self-importance or self-achievement attached to it. In much the same way the word “disciple” means only “a learner”. As to the term “discipline”, it originally means but the *set of practical conditions* necessary for the *disciple* or *learner* to develop new abilities.

As disciples in general need teachers, another interesting question deals with our attitude towards the Adept-Teachers and

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¹ Or the Western Adepts, several of whom were also directly involved in the creation of the theosophical movement in the 19th Century.

Initiates. Is it correct for us to exert our curiosity and collect the scattered, scarce true information available about their existence, their work for mankind and their disciples?

A reasonable amount of evidence indicates that Adept-Teachers — variously called Raja-Yogis, Mahatmas, Masters, Adepts, Immortals or Rishis — are **not** supposed to be beyond our field of conscious investigation. It is clear that everyone can aspire to learn from them — directly or indirectly. According to Robert Crosbie, for instance, “HPB showed herself a true Teacher when she said, ‘*Do not follow me nor my path; follow the path I show, the Masters who are behind*’.”¹

However, the actual process of spiritual learning is rather complex. The probation path does **not** begin with a Master generously appearing to every aspirant in order to make a formal announcement. As a rule, probations and tests must be *unannounced*. Otherwise, they will not be effective. Besides, probation is a natural, unavoidable fact, and not something artificially created in order to test this or that disciple. Probation results from karmic law. Every bit of knowledge, in any department of life, always brings with it a corresponding amount of responsibility. And being responsible means facing tests. Probation, then, comes with the *first step* of one’s search for wisdom, and its intensity will be in direct proportion to the seriousness of that step — and of the following ones.

Along the way to Wisdom, the student of esoteric philosophy has to avoid not only the emotional mechanisms of self-delusion, fear and ambition in general. He will be challenged or tempted by many different forms of error, most of which will present themselves as perfectly spiritual attitudes or at least as *humanly* acceptable. The deeper the knowledge he has access to, the bigger

will be the occult and *undeclared* tests he will face.

He may *feel* entirely alone in certain occasions — even desperately so, if he happens to have enough courage to follow his own heart. But at the hardest of times, he — as every sincere aspirant to Truth eternal — will be more included than ever in the vast magnetic field which is always kept under the general observation of the Adepts and their direct disciples.

One of the Masters wrote to a *lay chela*², in 1882:

“Nature has linked all parts of her Empire together by subtle threads of magnetic sympathy, and, there is a mutual correlation even between a star and a man; thought runs swifter than the electric fluid, and your thought will find me if projected by a pure impulse (...). Like the light in the sombre valley seen by the mountaineer from his peaks, every bright thought in your mind, my Brother, will sparkle and attract the attention of your distant friend and correspondent. If thus we discover our natural Allies in the *Shadow* world — your world and ours outside the precincts — and it is our law to approach every such an one if even there be but the feeblest glimmer of the true ‘Tathagata’ light within him — then how far easier for you to attract us.”³

So, it is *Their Law* to approach every such an one — i.e., every possible natural Ally — if even there be but the feeblest glimmer of the true Buddhist light within him. But Masters and their direct disciples make this approach and observation *in silence*. They are in touch with the Self present within the Heart and Mind of the aspirant — not with his outer personality shell.

1 *The Friendly Philosopher*, Robert Crosbie, see p. 373.

2 Chelas: disciples.

3 *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, transcribed by A. T. Barker, facsimile edition, Theosophical University Press, Pasadena, CA, 1992, 493 pp., see Letter XLV, pp. 267-268.

How, then, does the Adept look at the Aspirant? Robert Crosbie wrote: "The Masters do not look at our defects, but at our motives and efforts."¹

In one of the Letters, after mentioning the existence of an "outer" as well as an "inner" man, an Adept-Teacher wrote:

"With the 'visible' one we have nothing to do. He is to us only a veil that hides from profane eyes that other *ego* with whose evolution we are concerned. In the external *rupa* do what you like, think what you like: only when the effects of that voluntary action are seen on the body of our correspondent — it is incumbent to us to notice it."²

It is at an inner dimension that the Masters observe the general collective field of aspirants and, with a few exceptions, their observation cannot be felt nor 'sensed' by the observed students. It usually takes a long time for the Truth-seeker to get to that special moment thus described in *The Voice of the Silence*:

"Silence thy thoughts and fix thy whole attention on thy Master whom yet thou dost not see, but whom thou feelest."

And more:

"Merge into one sense thy senses, if thou would'st be secure against thy foe. 'Tis by that sense alone which lies concealed within the hollow of thy brain, that the steep path which leadeth to thy Master may be disclosed before thy Soul's dim eyes."³

The study of the *Mahatma Letters* and some other indications suggest that in most

cases the Masters will observe and help the Aspirant for a very long time before he can sense the subtle presence of a teacher. Chronological time is not important, but this unperceived observation may go on for a few lifetimes, while the true foundation of discipleship — a stronger relationship between the student's successive mortal souls and his one Monad — is being built. After that, the Aspirant usually develops the ability to sense the non-verbal, subtle influence of the Master in his life — and he may even consciously interact with it in an abstract way, with no images or words. But this happens often a long time before he will be able to hear or to see his Teacher.

Referring to the Masters and to the silent help they grant to aspirants worldwide, William Q. Judge wrote:

"They have also stated that they do not make themselves objectively known to believers in them except in those cases where those believers are ready in all parts of their nature, are definitely pledged to them, with the full understanding of the meaning of the pledge. But they have also stated that they help all earnest seekers after truth, and that it is not necessary for those seekers to know from where the help comes so long as it is received. (...) Personally I know that the Masters do help powerfully, though unseen, all those who earnestly work and sincerely trust in their higher nature, while they follow the voice of conscience without doubt or cavil."⁴

What is it that determines the actual distance between each aspirant and the Adepts? It must be said that it is but a *vibratory* distance. It is a *lack of affinity* in vibration rates, since *geographical* distances do not exist for the consciousness of the Masters and their direct disciples. Such a *distance* is created by our own ignorance — not

1 *The Friendly Philosopher*, Robert Crosbie, The Theosophy Company, L.A. and N.Y.C., 1945, 415 pp., see p. 39.

2 *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, Letter XLIII, pp. 259-260.

3 *The Voice of the Silence*, H.P. Blavatsky, TPH, 1992, Fragment I, p. 16.

4 '*Forum*' *Answers by William Q. Judge*, reprinted from *The Theosophical Forum* (1889-1896), The Theosophy Co., Los Angeles, 1982, 141 pp., see pp. 75-76.

by the Masters. One of the Mahatmas wrote to a lay disciple:

“I can come nearer to you, but you must draw me by a purified heart and a gradually developing will. Like the needle the adept follows his attractions.”¹

Each aspirant must find in himself a way to shorten the inner distance between he and the Dharma or Teaching. In the silent heart of the Teaching, as in meditation, he can find, in part, the vibration rate of the Teachers. But this is not enough. How else, then, can he get nearer to the Source?

One Mahatma wrote something especially significant to the aspirants living in this first decade of the 21st century:

“Look around you, my friend: see the ‘three poisons’ raging within the heart of man — anger, greed, delusion, and the five obscurities — envy, passion, vacillation, sloth, and unbelief — ever preventing them seeing Truth. They will never get rid of the pollution of their vain, wicked hearts, nor perceive the spiritual portion of themselves. Will you not try — for the sake of shortening the distance between us — to disentangle yourself from the net of life and death in which they are all caught (...)?”²

It is up to each student to say whether he accepts this invitation — and takes the steps necessary to liberate himself from short-term goals and commitments. There is no hurry, though: the work of the Masters is a long-term process.

Although general conditions have changed since HPB times, there still is a common, *permanent* magnetic link between the Teaching, its Students and the Masters, as we can see in the *Mahatma Letters*.

One of the letters from the Mahatmas consists of a memorandum, and item number III of the document says:

“We can direct and guide their efforts and the movement, in general. Tho’ separated from your world of action we are not yet entirely severed from it so long as the Theosophical Society exists.”³

The above expression *Theosophical Society* can be reasonably equated to *Theosophical Movement*, nowadays.

The same idea of a long-term work appears at another Letter:

“... we cannot consent to over flood the world at the risk of drowning them, with a doctrine that has to be cautiously given out, and bit by bit like a too powerful tonic which can kill as well as cure (...). The Society will never perish as an institution, although branches and individuals in it may.”⁴ (Here, again, the term “Society” should be understood as “Movement”.)

With regard to the fact that the Mahatmas keep under their observation the general magnetic field — or the buddhic lights — of sincere aspirants to Truth and discipleship, it is interesting to take notice of these words by Robert Crosbie:

“... those Great Ones who I know exist see every pure-hearted earnest disciple, and are ready to give a turn to the key of knowledge when the time in the disciple’s progress is ripe. No one who strives to tread the path is left unhelped; the Great Ones see his “light”, and he is given what is needed for his better development. That light is not mere poetical imagery; but is actual, and its character denotes one’s spiritual condition; there are no veils on that plane of seeing. The help must be of that nature which leaves

¹ *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, Letter XLV, page 266.

² *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, Letter XLV, page 265.

³ *Ibid.*, Letter LXXVIII, page 378.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Letter XXXIV, p.245.

perfect freedom of thought and action; otherwise, the lessons would not be learned.”¹

According to HPB, “paradox would seem to be the natural language of occultism”², and the help given by the Masters is an example of that. No one is left unhelped: but in order to actually deserve help, everyone must — hence the paradox — take full responsibility for his own walk along the path. An independent action is then of fundamental importance to deserve and to receive assistance.

Once this basic principle is accepted, another question emerges: how far can the aspirant go in his inner progress? What are the limits of his growth? There is no easy answer to this. Occult learning is a multi-dimensional process. It depends on many interacting, dynamic elements. However, some of these factors can be named and examined.

1) One of them is the ever changing ‘tide’ of collective karma.

Conditions of collective karma are always helping or hindering in several ways the learning-process. We should remember, though, that in difficult moments greater efforts use to be more rewarding. The aspirant should be able to see an opportunity in each new obstacle. There is a law of symmetry, by which external obstacles create inner opportunities, and external improvements provoke dangers. *The Voice of the Silence* says about the *Hall of Probationary Learning*: “In it thy Soul will find the blossoms of life, but under every flower a serpent coiled.”³

As to difficult moments, an Adept-Teacher wrote, in a letter to Francesca Arundale: “Ah! If your eyes were opened, you might see such a vista of potential blessings to *yourselves* and mankind lying in the germ of the present hour’s effort, as would fire with joy and zeal your souls! Strive, towards the Light, all of you brave warriors for the Truth ...”⁴

2) Another factor is the karmic background of the student, and also his present karmic situation, with its obstacles and opportunities.

The more long-term karmic resources the soul has previously accumulated, the better and stronger means it will have to face present challenges, and more strength to develop a decisive action in the right direction. This background includes the amount of development already achieved in the paramitas of perfection. They are: Dana, or charity and immortal love; Shila, harmony in words and deeds; Kshanti, an unshakeable patience; Virag or indifference to pleasure and pain; Virya, a dauntless energy in the way to Truth; Dhyana or ceaseless inner contemplation; and finally Prajna, the integrating key that makes a man become a Bodhisattva.⁵

3) A third element leading to a better learning is the intensity of the efforts made by the aspirant.

In December 1880, H.P. Blavatsky published in her magazine *The Theosophist* these words from Thomas Taylor, the platonic thinker:

A little learning is a dangerous thing,
Drink deep, or taste not the PLATONIC
spring;

¹ The Friendly Philosopher, Robert Crosbie, see p. 07, lower half.

² H. P. Blavatsky in the first paragraph of the text “The Great Paradox.” See *Collected Writings of H. P. B.*, volume viii, TPH, 1990, p. 125.

³ *The Voice of the Silence*, H. P. Blavatsky, TPH, 1992, Fragment I, p. 6.

⁴ *Letters From the Masters of the Wisdom*, transcribed by C. Jinarajadasa, first series, TPH-Adyar, India, sixth printing, 1973, Letter 20, p. 52.

⁵ *The Voice of the Silence*, H. P. Blavatsky, TPH, Wheaton-Madras-London, 1992, 122 pp., see pp. 47-48.

There shallow draughts intoxicate the
brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.¹

Accordingly, in the New Testament's *Revelation* we find: "... because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am going to spit you out of my mouth" (Chapter 3: 14-16). This idea also relates to Matthew, 6:24: "No one can be a slave to two masters; he will hate one and love the other; he will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and the money."

4) Then we have the sustainability of the efforts made by the student.

Long-term sustainability and endurance to tests seems to be even more important than a great intensity in the search for truth. The best results are long-term, and they need long-term efforts to ripen. It is better to have a slow process of sustainable acceleration in our efforts than a sudden enthusiasm born out of self-delusion. Passing enthusiasms are not only misleading: they are strong signs of *superficiality in our commitments*.

5) A key factor is the purity of the student's motives.

Robert Crosbie wrote:

"Very often the ostensible motive is not the real one, and in this we frequently deceive ourselves. Ambition also comes in; the desire for the approbation of our fellows may cloud our vision in our effort to maintain it. There are many temptations, some of which may come disguised as angels of light."²

Our thoughts and intentions are established and *live* in several different levels of consciousness. There are intentions which are openly declared. Other intentions are conscious but not declared. There are also subconscious and unconscious motives, emerging from old habits and from the instincts of the "animal soul", kama-manas. And there are higher, nobler, "supraconscious" intentions which come from the higher self. We must become gradually conscious of all these kinds and levels of motives in our lives. As we learn to listen in our heart to the voice of the silence, all smaller intentions are brought together before our mind's eye and gradually understood, then purified and controlled. Self-observation, made from the viewpoint of our *higher potentialities*, submits our personal desires to the active will of the true self.

6) It is important to examine on which levels of consciousness the greater part of the effort is being made.

Studying HPB's works only on the mental plane tends to create pride, a feeling of self-importance and other symptoms of a learning limited to words. But if students go beyond that, listening to the silence and taking courage to challenge everyday routines from the viewpoints suggested by the wisdom they learn, then intuition will assist them and the process of learning will become ever wider and deeper.

7) Finally, the degree of expansion in his perception of space and time. This is the ability of the aspirant to identify himself with time eternal and infinite space. At first it can come as an intellectual/philosophical process, through the calm study of *The Secret Doctrine* and other works. But gradually the student will develop an inner, contemplative relationship with the greater cycles of time/space, so that he will recognize himself as he is: just a passing 'individualized' and "personalized" microcosmic fragment of that unlimited space-time. Thus

¹ *The Theosophist*, Bombay, volume II, 1880-1881, edited by H. P. Blavatsky (facsimile reproduction and re-edition by Eastern School Press, 1983 (Wizards Bookshelf), see page 52.

² *The Friendly Philosopher*, Robert Crosbie, see p. 07, upper half.

he will attain a widening perspective of the Adepts' and Initiates' work for mankind. He will learn more about their influence on human evolution along many centuries and through different religions, philosophies and sciences.

As to human history, an Adept-Teacher wrote to Allan O. Hume in 1880:

"Of your several questions we will first discuss, if you please, the one relating to the presumed failure of the 'Fraternity' to 'leave any mark upon the history of the world'. (...) How do you know they have made no such mark? (...) The prime condition of their success was, that they should never be supervised or obstructed. What they have done they know; all those outside their circle could perceive was the results, the causes of which were masked from view. (...)"

And the Master goes on:

"There never was a time within or before the so-called historical period when our predecessors were not moulding events and 'making history', the facts of which were subsequently and invariably distorted by 'historians' to suit contemporary prejudices. Are you quite sure that the visible heroic figures in the successive dramas were not often but their puppets? We never pretended to be able to draw nations in the mass to this or that crisis in spite of the general drift of the world's cosmic relations. The cycles must run their rounds. Periods of mental and moral light and darkness succeed each other, as day does night. The major and minor yugas must be accomplished according to the established order of things. And we, borne along on the mighty tide, can only modify and direct some of its minor effects. If we had the powers of the imaginary Personal God, and the universal and immutable laws were but toys to play with, then indeed might we have created conditions that would have turned this earth into an Arcadia for lofty souls. But having to deal with an immutable Law, being ourselves its creatures,

we have had to do what we could and rest thankful. There have been times when 'a considerable portion of enlightened minds' were taught in our schools. Such times there were in India, Persia, Egypt, Greece and Rome. (...)""¹

As the student gradually learns to understand the sacred long-term work done by the Mahatmas for the good of mankind, he can't help giving up his personal worries and short-term goals. They all lose their meaning and importance as he sees the longer, unlimited time-line of human evolution.

Then he will be able to offer his efforts to his own reincarnating Monad, in the inner temple of his higher consciousness. Or to his Master. And within the small circle of his possibilities, he will accept the fact that he is co-responsible for the future of the theosophical movement – a collective instrument for human evolution – and he will try to *act accordingly*.

TEACHERS AND DISCIPLES

*T*his series of articles by Madame Blavatsky has such a very clear and inspiring content, we can only repeat what we have asserted all along: The best defence of Madame Blavatsky's credentials as an *Agentr* for the Trans-Himalayan Brotherhood rest in the transmission itself. He who does the *work* will have the proof.

Her students repolarize their life and become "friends of Mankind"! Henry

¹ Combined Chronology, for use with The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett & The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett, by Margareth Conger. Published by Theosophical University Press, Pasadena, California, 1973, 47 pp., see pp. 34-35.

Geiger stated the equation for such “repolarizing” in his “Foreword to the series;”¹

The articles by H. P. Blavatsky presented here represent an extraordinary achievement, consisting, for the Western world, of an introduction to almost wholly unfamiliar conceptions — ideas, moreover, which ran counter to the tendencies and direction of thought in the nineteenth century. The objections which were raised to these ideas and the confusions to which they led are also dealt with by H.P.B. in these articles. Her aim was to call attention to teachings of Theosophy, and at the same time to restore to the modern world some realizing awareness of the rigors and hazards which must, in the nature of things, attend all efforts toward the inner “becoming” which leads at last to adept knowledge, powers, and wisdom.

The closely allied meanings of the words “disciple” and “discipline” — both from the same root — soon become evident, since the life of the disciple encompasses the ardent pursuit of both study and self-control. The moral requirements of discipleship are continuously emphasized by Madame Blavatsky, for the reason that she was addressing person who had grown up in a civilization in which there was increasing separation between the idea of truth and that of duty and responsibility. In the undertaking of discipleship, science and religion become aspects of a single body of knowledge and the focus of this unification is the individual aspirant to truth.

The first article in this selection, “Lodges of Magic” was printed by H.P.B. in *Lucifer* for October, 1888. It deals with the everpresent tendency, in a commercial civilization, to exploit mysterious or secret things in the fraudulent attempt to profit by dealing in what can neither be bought nor sold. Then the author turns to the expectation of some people, common then as now, that it is possible to teach secrets of occultism in a brief course of specialized instruc-

tion. H.P.B.’s reply is in terms of the prerequisites for gaining hidden knowledge, to which she adds an account of the difficulties experienced by the beginner or neophyte in telling true from false teaching.

“Mahatmas and Chelas,” first published in the *Theosophist* for July 1884, gives actual instruction, although in great generality, in the laws which govern the relationships between those high Teachers who are called Mahatmas, and the disciples known in the East as Chelas.

The very idea of individual psychomoral development had been all but lost to the West, before the launching of the Theosophical Movement in 1875, so that, after the wonderful phenomena of the Spiritualists became known (they began to attract public attention in 1848), the mediums of the séance halls were often regarded as persons who had reached to a desirable inner condition. It became the task of H. P. Blavatsky to point out that the susceptibility of the medium to external psychic influences is an abnormal and pathological distortion of normal sensitivity. Under control, and with the guidance of moral philosophy, such psychic capacities might lead to another sort of growth. This all-important distinction is established and elaborated upon by H.P.B. in her article, “Are Chelas Mediums’?”, which was originally published in the *Theosophist* for June, 1884.

“Chelas,” printed in the *Theosophist* for October, 1884, provides a brief discussion of the various applications of this term, giving insight into the conditions and tests of chelaship.

“The Theosophical Mahatmas” was Madame Blavatsky’s rejoinder to a “manifesto” issued by two Americans, complaining of neglect by Eastern Teachers or Adepts, and the article was doubtless for this reason printed in William Q. Judge’s magazine, the *Path*. Published in the United States, in the issue of December, 1886. More than any other discussion perhaps, this article shows the difficulty encountered by Westerners in attempting the path of occultism before gaining a thorough

¹ This series is available as a pamphlet: “Teachers and Disciples.”

philosophical understanding of what is involved. In "Chleasd" H.P.B. had said that sentimentality is not the equipment for a Chelas," and in this article she declares that emotionalism "is not philosophy." "The Theosophical Mahatmas" is a strong statement concerning the path of discipleship. Its rules, H.P.B. shows, are indeed the laws of nature — of man's higher nature — to which no exceptions are made.

In "Chelas and Lay Chelas," which appeared in the Supplement to *Theosophist* for July, 1883, Madame Blavatsky defined chelaship and provided an account of the qualifications which for ages had been regarded as essential in those who aspire to the path to adeptship. She here spoke of certain rare individuals in the West whose personal qualities gained them the attention of the Adept-Teachers. She gave the reason for the slight relaxation of the stringent requirements, in the case of those who, from their acquaintance with Theosophy, had been moved to apply as candidates for chelaship, telling, also, of the manifold obstacles these aspirants created for themselves, as a result of expectation of special favor or privilege. She described the precipitations in human nature which result from too casual an approach to a course which requires unremitting effort and personal self-sacrifice. Yet there remained hope for those who would follow the counsels of the Teachers, and who would continue to try.

The article, "Madame Blavatsky on 'The Himalayan Brothers'," was sent by H.P.B. to the London *Spiritualist* (and published in that journal in the issue of Aug. 12, 1881) in reply to a writer who, claiming to be an "adept," had revealed his ignorance of the Eastern fraternity from which she had gained her instruction, and whose work she carried on in the world.

Again, in "Can the Mahatmas Be Selfish?", H.P.B. describes the conditions under which the adepts have relations with men in the world, showing that only through inward development of the latent qualities which correspond to the motives and interests of these high beings can ordinary persons hope to reach up to the plane of life and consciousness They represent. This ar-

ticle first appeared in the *Theosophist* for August, 1884



LODGES OF MAGIC

When fiction rises pleasing to the eye,

Men will believe, because they
love the lie; But Truth herself, if
clouded with a frown,
Must have some solemn proofs to pass her down.

CHURCHILL.

ONE of the most esteemed of our friends in occult research, propounds the question of the formation of "working Lodges" of the Theosophical Society, for the development of adeptship. If the practical impossibility of forcing this process has been shown once, in the course of the theosophical movement, it has scores of times. It is hard to check one's natural impatience to tear aside the veil of the Temple. To gain the divine knowledge, like the prize in a classical tripos, by a system of coaching and cramming, is the ideal of the average beginner in occult study. The refusal of the originators of the Theosophical Society to encourage such false hopes, has led to the formation of bogus Brotherhoods of *Luxor* (and Armley Jail?) as speculations on human credulity. How enticing the bait for gudgeons in the following specimen prospectus, which a few years ago caught some of our most earnest friends and Theosophists.

"Students of the Occult Science. searchers after truth, and Theosophists who may have been disappointed in their expectations of Sublime Wisdom being freely dispensed by HINDU MAHATMAS, are cordially invited to send in their names to _____ when, if found suitable, they can be admitted, after a short probationary term, as Members of an Occult Brotherhood, who do not boast of their knowledge or attainments, but teach freely" (at £1 to £5 *per* letter?), "and without reserve" (the nastiest portions of P. B. Randolph's "Eulis"). "all they find worthy to receive" (read: teachings on a commercial basis; the cash going to

the teachers, and the ex-tracts from Randolph and other "love-philter" sellers to the pupils!)¹

If rumour be true, some of the English rural districts, especially Yorkshire, are overrun with fraudulent astrologers and fortune-tellers, who pretend to be Theosophists, the better to swindle a higher class of credulous patrons than their legitimate prey, the servant-maid and callow youth. If the "lodges of magic," suggested in the following letter to the Editors of this Magazine, were founded, without having taken the greatest precautions to admit only the best candidates to membership, we should see these vile exploitations of sacred names and things increase an hundredfold. And in this connection, and before giving place to our friends letter, the senior Editor of LUCIFER begs to inform her friends that she has never had the remotest connection with the so-called "H (ermetic) B (rotherhood) of L (uxor)," and that all representations to the contrary are false and dishonest. There is a secret body — whose diploma, or Certificate of Membership, is held by Colonel Olcott alone among modern men of white blood — to which that name was given by the author of "Isis Unveiled" for convenience of designation,² but which

¹ Documents on view at LUCIFER Office, viz., Secret MSS. written in the handwriting of _____ (name suppressed for past considerations), "Provincial Grand Master of the Northern Section." One of these documents bears the heading, "A brief Key to the Eulian Mysteries," i.e., *Tantric* black magic on a phallic basis. No; the members of *this* Occult Brotherhood "do not boast of their knowledge." Very sensible on their part: least said soonest mended.

² In *Isis Unveiled*, vol. ii, p. 308. It may be added that the "Brotherhood of Luxor" mentioned by Kenneth Mackenzie (*vide his Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia*) as having its seat in America, had, after all, nothing to do with the Brotherhood mentioned by, and known to us, as was ascertained after the publication of *Isis* from a letter written by, this late Masonic author to a friend in New York. The Brotherhood Mackenzie knew of was simply a Masonic Society on a rather more secret basis, and, as stated in the letter, he had *heard of, but knew nothing of our* Brotherhood, which having had a branch at Luxor (Egypt), was thus purposely referred to by us under this name alone. This led some schemers to infer that there was a regular

is known among Initiates by quite another one, just as the personage known to the public under the pseudonym of "Koot Hoomi," is called by a totally different name among his acquaintance. What the real name of that society is, it would puzzle the "Eulian" phallicists of the "H. B. of L." to tell. The real names of Master Adepts and Occult Schools are never, *under any circumstances*, revealed to the profane; and the names of the personages who have been talked about in connection with modern Theosophy, are in the possession only of the two chief founders of the Theosophical Society. And now, having said so much by way of preface, let us pass on to our correspondent's letter. He writes:

A friend of mine, a natural mystic, had intended to form, with others, a Branch T.S. in his town. Surprised at his delay, I wrote to ask the reason. His reply was that he had heard that the T.S. only met and talked, and did nothing practical. I always did think the T.S. ought to have Lodges in which something practical should be done. Cagliostro understood well this craving of humans for something before their eyes, when he instituted the Egyptian Rite, and put it in practice in various Free mason lodges. There are many readers of LUCIFER in _____ shire. Perhaps in it there might be a suggestion for students to form such lodges for themselves, and to try, by their united wills to develop certain powers in one of the number, and then through the whole of them in succession. I feel sure numbers would enter such lodges, and create a great interest for Theosophy.

"A"

In the above note of our venerable and learned friend is the echo of the voices of ninety-nine hundredths of the members of the Theosophical Society: one hundredth only have the correct idea of the function and scope of our Branches. The glaring mistake genereally made is in the conception

lodge of Adepts of that name, and to assure some credulous friends and Theosophists that the "H.B. of L." was either identical or a branch of the same, supposed to be near Lahore! — which was the most flagrant untruth.

of adeptship and the path thereunto. Of all thinkable undertakings that of trying for adeptship is the most difficult. Instead of being obtainable within a few years or one lifetime, it exacts the unremittent struggles of a series of lives, save in cases so rare as to be hardly worth regarding as exceptions to the general rule. The records certainly show that a number of the most revered Indian adepts became so despite their births in the lowest, and seemingly most unlikely, castes. Yet it is well understood that they had been progressing in the upward direction throughout many previous incarnations, and, when they took birth for the last time, there was left but the merest trifle of spiritual evolution to be accomplished, before they became great living adepts. Of course, no one can say that one or all of the possible members of our friend "A." 's ideal Cagliostroian lodge might not also be ready for adeptship, but the chance is not good enough to speculate upon: Western civilization seems to develop fighters rather than philosophers, military butchers rather than Buddhas. The plan "A." proposes would be far more likely to end in mediumship than adeptship. Two to one there would not be a member of the lodge who was chaste from boyhood and altogether untainted by the use of intoxicants. This is to say nothing of the candidates' freedom from the polluting effects of the evil influences of the average social environment. Among the indispensable pre-requisites for psychic development, noted in the mystical Manuals of all Eastern religious systems, are a pure place, pure diet, pure companionship, and a pure mind. Could "A." guarantee these? It is certainly desirable that there should be some school of instruction for members of our Society; and had the purely exoteric work and duties of the Founders been less absorbing, probably one such would have been established long ago. Yet not for practical instruction, on the plane of Cagliostro, which, by-the-bye, brought direful suffering upon his head, and has left no marked traces behind to encourage a

repetition in our days. "When the pupil is ready, the teacher will be found waiting," says an Eastern maxim. The Masters do not have to hunt up recruits in special__shire lodges, nor drill them through mystical non-commissioned officers; time and space are no barriers between them and the aspirant; where thought can pass they can come. Why did an old and learned Kabalist like "A." forget this fact? And let him also remember that the potential adept may exist in the Whitechaps and Five Points of Europe and America, as well as in the cleaner and more cultured quarters; that some poor ragged wretch, begging a crust, may be "whiter-souled" and more attractive to the adept than the average bishop in his robe, or a cultured citizen in his costly dress. For the extension of the theosophical movement, a useful channel for the irrigation of the dry fields of contemporary thought with the water of life, Branches are needed everywhere; not mere groups of passive sympathizers, such as the slumbering army of church-goers, whose eyes are shut while the "devil" sweeps the field; no, not such. Active wide-awake, earnest, unselfish Branches are needed whose members shall not be constantly unmasking their selfishness by asking "What will it profit us to join the Theosophical Society, and how much will it harm us?" but be putting to themselves the question "Can we not do substantial good to mankind by working in this good cause with all our hearts, our minds, and our strength?" If "A." would only bring his____shire friends who pretend to occult leanings, to view the question from this side, he would be doing them a real kindness. The Society can get on without them, but they cannot afford to let it do so.

Is it profitable moreover, to discuss the question of a Lodge receiving even theoretical instruction, until we can be sure that all the members will accept the teachings as coming from the alleged source? Occult truth cannot be absorbed by a mind that is filled with preconception, prejudice, or suspicion. It is something to be

perceived by the intuition rather than by the reason; being by nature spiritual, not material. Some are so constituted as to be incapable of acquiring knowledge by the exercise of the spiritual faculty; e.g., the great majority of physicists. Such are slow, if not wholly incapable of grasping the ultimate truths behind the phenomena of existence. There are many such in the Society; and the body of the discontented are recruited from their ranks. Such persons readily persuade themselves that later teachings persuade themselves that later teachings, received from exactly the same source as earlier ones, are either false or have been tampered with by chelas, or even third parties. Suspicion and inharmony are the natural result, the psychic atmosphere, so to say, is thrown into confusion, and the reaction, even upon the stauncher students, is very harmful. Sometimes vanity blinds what was at first strong intuition, the mind is effectually closed against the admission of new truth, and the aspiring student is thrown back to the point where he began. Having jumped at some particular conclusion of his own without full study of the subject, and before the teaching had been fully expounded, his tendency, when proved wrong, is to listen only to the voice of his self-adulation, and cling to his views, whether right or wrong. The Lord Buddha particularly warned his hearers against forming beliefs upon tradition or authority, and before having thoroughly inquired into the subject.

An Instance. We have been asked by a correspondent why he should not be free to suspect some of the so-called 'precipitated' letters as being forgeries, giving as his reason for it that while some of them bear the stamp of (to him) undeniable genuineness, others seem from their contents and style to be imitations. This is equivalent to saying that he has such an unerring spiritual insight as to be able to detect the false from the true, though he has never met a Master, nor been given any key by which to test his alleged communications. The inevitable consequence of applying his

untrained judgment in such cases would be to make him as likely as not to declare false what was genuine, and genuine what was false.

Thus what *criterion* has any one to decide between one "precipitated" letter, or another such letter? Who except their authors, or those whom they employ as their amanuenses (the *chelas* and disciples), can tell? For it is hardly one out of a hundred "occult" letters that is ever written by the hand of the Master, in whose name and on whose behalf they are sent, as the Masters have neither need nor leisure to write them; and that when a Master says, "I wrote that letter," it means only that every word in it was dictated by him and impressed under his direct supervision. Generally they make their chela, whether near or far away, write (or precipitate) them, by impressing upon his mind the ideas they wish expressed, and if necessary aiding him in the picture-printing process of precipitation. It depends entirely upon the *chela's* state of development how accurately the ideas may be transmitted and the writing-model imitated. The *non-adept* recipient is left in the dilemma of uncertainty, whether, if one letter is false, all may not be; for, as far as intrinsic evidence goes all come from the same source, and all are brought by the same mysterious means, and a far worse condition implied. For all that the recipient of "occult" letters can possibly know, and on the simple grounds of probability and common honesty, the unseen correspondent who would tolerate one *single fraudulent line in his name*, would wink at an unklimited repetition of the deception. And this leads directly to the following. All the so-called *occult* letters being supported by identical proofs, *they have all to stand or fall together*. If one is to be doubted, then all have, and the series of letters in the *Occult World, Esoteric Buddhism*, etc., etc., maybe, and there is no reason why they should not be in such a case — frauds, "cleve impostures, and "forgeries," such as the ingenuous though stupid agent of the S.P.R." has made them out to be in, in order

to raise in the public estimation the "scientific" acumen and standard of his "Principals."

Hence, not a step in advance would be made by a group of students given over to such an unimpressible state of mind, and without any guide *from the occult side* to open their eyes to the esoteric pitfalls. And where are such guides, so far, in our Society? They be blind leaders of the blind," both falling into the ditch of vanity and self-sufficiency. The whole difficulty springs from the common tendency to draw conclusions from insufficient premises, and play the oracle before ridding oneself of that most stupefying of all psychic anaesthetics — IGNORANCE.



MAHATMAS AND CHELAS

A MAHATMA is a personage who, by special training and education, has evolved those higher faculties and has attained that spiritual knowledge, which ordinary humanity will acquire after passing through numberless series of reincarnations during the process of cosmic evolution, provided, of course, that they do not go, in the meanwhile, against the purposes of Nature and thus bring on their own annihilation. The process of the self-evolution of the MAHATMA extends over a number of incarnations," although, comparatively speaking, they are very few. Now, what is it that incarnates. The occult doctrine, so far as it is given out, shows that the first three principles die more or less with what is called the physical death. The fourth principle, together with the lower portions of the fifth, in which reside the animal propensities, has *kama Loka* for its abode, where it suffers the throes of disintegration in proportion to the intensity of those lower desires; while while it is the higher *Manas*, the pure man, which is associated with the sixth and seventh principles, that goes into *Devachan* to enjoy

there the effects of its good *Karma*, and then to be reincarnated as a higher individuality. Now, an entity, that is passing through the occult training in its successive births, gradually has less and less (in each incarnation) of that lower *Manas* until there arrives a time when its *whole Manas*, being of an entirely elevated character, is centered in the higher individuality, when such a person may be said to have become a MAHATMA. At the time of his physical death, all the lower four principles perish without any suffering, for these are, in fact, to him like a piece of wearing apparel which he puts on and off at will. The real MAHATMA is then not his physical body but that higher *Manas* which is inseparably linked to the *Atma* and its vehicle (the sixth principle)—a union effected by him in a comparatively very short period by passing through the process of self-evolution laid down by the Occult Philosophy. When, therefore, people express a desire to "see MAHATMA," they really do not seem to understand what it is they ask for. How can they, by their physical eyes, hope to see that which *transcends* that sight? Is it the body—a mere shell or mask—they crave or hunt after? And supposing they see the body of a MAHATMA, how can they know that behind that mask is concealed an exalted entity? By what standard are they to judge whether the *Maya* before them reflects the image of a true MAHATMA or not? And who will say that the physical is not a *Maya*? Higher things can be perceived only by a sense pertaining to those higher things. And whoever therefore wants to see the real MAHATMA, must use his *intellectual* sight. He must so elevate his *Manas* that its perception will be clear and all mists created by *Maya* must be dispelled. His vision will then be bright and he will see the MAHATMAS wherever he may be, for, being merged into the sixth and the seventh principles, which are ubiquitous and omnipresent. the MAHATMAS may be said to be everywhere. But, at the same time, just as we may be standing on a mountain top and have within our sight the whole plain, and yet not be cognisant of any particular tree or

spot, because from that elevated position all below is nearly identical, and as our attention may be drawn to something which may be dissimilar to its surroundings — so in the same manner, although the whole of humanity is within the mental vision of the MAHATMAS they cannot be expected to take special note of every human being, unless that being by his special acts draws their particular attention to himself. The highest interest of humanity, as a whole, is their special concern, for they have identified themselves with that Universal Soul which runs through Humanity, and he, who would draw their attention, must do so through that Soul which pervades everywhere. This perception of the *Manus* may be called "faith" which should not be confounded with *blind belief*. "Blind faith" is an expression sometimes used to indicate belief without perception or understanding; while the true perception of the *Manas* is that enlightened belief, which is the real meaning of the word "faith." This belief should at the same time be accompanied by *knowledge*, i.e., experience, for "true *knowledge* brings with it faith." Faith is the perception of the *Manas* (the fifth principle), while knowledge, in the true sense of the term, is the capacity of the Intellect, i.e., it is spiritual perception. In short, the higher individuality of man, composed of his higher *Manus*, the sixth and the seventh principles, should work as a unity, and then only can it obtain "divine wisdom," for divine things can be sensed only by divine faculties. Thus the desire, which should prompt one to apply for *chelaship*, is to so far understand the operations of the Law of Cosmic Evolution as will enable him to work in harmonious accord with Nature, instead of going against its purposes through ignorance.



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January

12 The Dreams
19 The Sevenfold in Universe and Man
26 Akasa and the Astral Light

February

2 Kaberia Mysteries
9 Astral Body
16 Plato's aspect on Atlantis
23 Kama and Manas

March

2 Life after Death
9 Devachan
16 The Gnostics
23 Theosophy and Vegetarianism
30 The Voice of the Silence

April

6 Hypnotism — Mesmerism
13 Channeling: true or false?
20 Plato's Myth of the Cave; deciphering and comparing with the Theosophical teaching,

May

11 In Memoriam of H. P. Blavatsky
18 The Elementaries,
25 The Elementals

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The Secret Doctrine by H.P. Blavatsky

MEDITATION — SELF-KNOWLEDGE,
The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali by William Judge
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15th What Survives After Death

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22nd The Nag Hammadi Texts (talk)

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29th Karma and the forgiveness of sins

Its beauty & original meaning was lost in the centuries after Christ

JUNE

5th The Ocean of Theosophy (talk)

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12th Mesmerism

The Art or power to act upon others & to be acted upon

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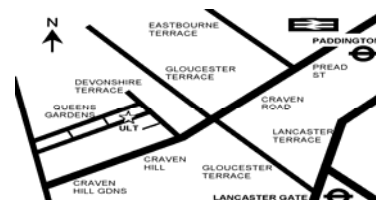
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May 18 "Karmic Agents"

May 25 "The Cause of Sorrow"

June 1 "A league of Humanity"

June 8 "Why do we sleep and dream?"

June 15 "The Creative Will"

Friday May 6 at 7:30 "White Lotus Day"

Sunday June 19 at 7:00 "U.L.T. Day"

Sunday Evening — 7:00 to 8:00 PM

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For the Summer we will be studying the *Key to Theosophy* on Wednesday evening — 7:30 to 8:45 PM

There will be no other meeting for the summer.

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THE COFFEE KLATCH



Coffee-Maker: I sometimes wonder if what the tea leaves don't know is really worth knowing.

Student: Coffee Maker you're mumbling again. Listen to what I found in the *Friendly*¹

The ideas we entertain of the Supreme, of Law, of Nature, and of our own Being govern the actions we perform. When we were children we had certain ideas, and we acted according to them, and so on, all through the years. Some of our ideas we have from time to time discarded, and others that we have collected have taken their place. We are now acting according to the ideas we now hold. Are they the best and highest possible to us?

If we change our ideas, we change our actions. If we see that Law rules, that this Law is inherent in our highest nature and not outside of us, we shall see that it is the Spirit in us — our very Self — that is the cause and sustainer of all our actions; and this Spirit by its very power as the Highest, through false ideas creates for itself false positions and false destinies. We have often adopted and we often change our ideas without any real consideration as to their truth, as to their relation to Life, as to their bearing upon existence. We must adopt and hold fast to three great ideas: that each human being has what are called the 'three attributes of the God-head' — the power of creation, the power of preservation as long as that creation seems satisfactory, and the power to destroy that creation and regenerate better ones. All we have to do is to realize our own real nature, see what our defects are, strengthen our virtues, and *move on*. (p.229)

Athenian stranger: In light of the foregoing, how do you account for this comment of madame Blavatsky' in her 'notes' on the *Pistis-Sophia Series* where it is commented that "*Manas triumphs over the passivity of pure spirit*." If all power comes from spirit how are we to account for this?

By spiritual transmutation "the gods or powers of nature" are conquered by the Divine Rebel," the *Asura, the Dragon of Wisdom,* "who fights against the Devas; i.e., the **activity of Manas triumphs over the passivity of pure spirit.**

Lurker at the Back Table: yes, but in this instance the word "spiritual could be interpreted as the "Law of Inertia."

Collected Lady at Center Table: Lurker are you sure about that? Sounds like academia over-coming your commonsense!

Lurker at the Back Table:

The symbolical teaching is more than mystical and religious, it is purely scientific, as will be seen later on. For, instead of remaining a mere blind, functioning medium, impelled and guided by fathomless LAW, the "rebellious" Angel claimed and enforced his right of independent judgment and will, his right of free-agency and responsibility, since man and angel are alike under Karmic Law. (SDI, 193-4)

Wherever *Thought has struggled to be free*, there you see the struggle of the great Asura to overcome the rigor mortis of the past. It is the activity of Manas to overcome the passivity of pure spirit. Why Else would HPB say that the animal's problem is not that he's material, but that he is *too* spiritual.?: —

Explaining Kabalistic views, the author of the "*New Aspects of Life*" says of the Fallen Angels that, "According to the symbolical teaching, Spirit, from being simply a functionary agent of God, became volitional in its developed and developing action; and, substituting its own-will for the Divine desire in its regard, so fell. Hence

¹ Student's nickname for the book, *The Friendly Philosopher* by Robert Crosbie. —Ed., A.T.

the Kingdom and reign of Spirits and spiritual action, which flow from and are the product of Spirit-volition, are outside, and contrasted with, and in contradiction to the Kingdom of Souls and Divine action." So far, so good; but what does the Author mean by saying, "When man was created, he was human in constitution, with human affections, human hopes and aspirations. From this state he fell — into the brute and savage"? This is diametrically opposite to our Eastern teaching, and even to the Kabbalistic notion so far as we understand it, and to the Bible itself. This looks like Corporealism and Substantialism colouring positive philosophy, though it is rather hard to feel quite sure of the Author's meaning (see p. 235). A FALL, however, "from the natural into the supernatural and the animal"—supernatural meaning the purely spiritual in this case—means what we suggest.

Athenian Stranger: perhaps Spirit needs a qualifier. What if there be Tamasic Spirit, Rajasic Spirit and Sattvic Spirit? If buddhi represents Cosmic Memory, does it also represent matter? Atma is beyond spirit, hence all power comes from Atma. When Mr. Crosbie says that our misuse of the 'powers of Spirit is the root cause of our problems, that too might be correct from another point of view. The possibility of perception comes from the Atma, our problems result from the false signals we send *via Manas* to Buddhi. We are imprisoned or liberated by our use of the Mind.



CORRESPONDENCE

CORRESPONDENCE

[EARLIER this year we carried a notice on the *Release the Fear* monument to be unveiled. The sculpture, of melted-down lethal weapon has been finished and Linda Smirn sends us this notice from Phoenix]

The looming figure rising from Sweet Acacia Park in downtown Phoenix look like Big-foot swaddled in blue.

On Saturday (May 28th), the figure will shed its plastic-tarp-skin to reveal the sculpture that Phoenix artist, Robert J. Miley envisioned more than a decade ago.

Release the Fear, the 24-foot statue that mimics a human figure with outstretched arms, was created from 4 tons of melted down weapons. It is a monument to peace and understanding, Miley said.

After the official unveiling ceremony at the grassy space between Central and First Avenues on Roosevelt Street, tens of thousands of people will pass by the sculpture every day.

It's uniqueness will make people ponder said U.S. Marshal David Gonzales.

Gonzales coordinated the donation of weapons that had been used in violent crimes from police agencies across Arizona. He got involved because of the community spirit that's involved in seeing a project through to its fruition.

I'm a big advocate of the community coming together to work on crime issues," Gonzales said.

Gonzales will attend Saturday's event along with Gov., Janet Napolitano and Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon. There will be a joint blessing ceremony by religious leaders and performance by Sister Sledge. The ceremony will begin at 9 a.m.

It's a unique piece of art when you see the guns and knives that have been incorporated at the base) I think it will give people pause, especially young people ... that dealing with weapons or being involved has repercussions," Gonzales said.

This week, as Miley put the final touches on *Release the Fear*, despite the commanding presence, the fact that he was finished seemed unreal.

But he's ready to have his project revealed finally.

"The other day I had a chance to sit back and stare. I've been digging and hauling rock; my hands are blistered and calloused. We've polished the whole sculpture. It actually looks alive now."

Book Review

A DEATH INTERRUPTED

Review: *A Death Interrupted* by Eli P. Bernzweig, Llumina Press, (2005), \$16.95, ISBN159526163X

It is a delight to find alternative genres for Theosophical presentation. Eli P. Bernzweig, in a compelling way, uses the novel to accomplish such a task. To a mild extent, there is a kind of resonance of intent with H.P. Blavatsky writings (e.g., *Nightmare Tales*) written in another era.

Bernzweig's bottom line is to offer the Theosophical teachings of the after death states to the general public wrapped around a novel with plot, story line, and outstanding pacing (Gosh, "I wonder what will happen next?" feel). The quality of writing has a full range. All the way from a teenage "Nancy Drew Murder Mystery" style to brilliant, concise material – almost to the point of a legal brief (Bernzweig in his real life is an attorney). His description of the Theosophical philosophy reflects the latter except for a small portion which can be attributed to – by his own admission – literary license. What is and what is not pure Theosophy will be a challenge for the student to look up, think about, and discuss with others.

In this sense the book has the potential to fulfill two aims, one, to enable the serious student of Theosophy to examine their own understanding, and, two, introduce new students to the philosophy and afford a vehicle or discussion.

The story includes a touching love affair of the central character, David Elliott and his recently passed on Senta Trondson. Its setting is in the modern world with internet communication and even brief references to Al Qaeda. A Washington D.C. newspaper offers the work place with characters necessary to unfold the drama. There is the protagonist and one might say "protagonists" to Theosophical teachings. Of course, it has as well intrigue and smatterings of romance.

Damodar is used as the vehicle to put forward information on the after death states. This is the same Damodar who was associated with Blavatsky and Judge in India. His information appears on selected computer monitors. Interestingly, the real Damodar did, in fact, recommend different forms in which to present Theosophical ideas (see Theosophical Articles and Notes).

Some may object to what might be called "phenomena" displayed on the computer monitors and even the special "powers" of the master. However, if one reflects on the phenomena exhibited by H.P. Blavatsky in the last quarter of the 19th Century, there may not be that much difference.

An unexpected reaction – whether intended by the author or not – was trying to fit for size the ideas that Theosophy could be known throughout the world. So many of us are so used to the fact, in numbers, we are relatively small. We are not used to the idea Theosophy could be in the National media. One needs to let that sit a while in order to sense what it means.

To the reviewer, it was fun to read. It will undoubtedly start some controversy around Theosophy which can lead to greater discussion. It may lead others to develop an interest in Theosophy. It is our understanding Eli Bernzweig is now working on another novel with a similar objective. We commend him for his work.

BY JAMES COLBERT



Sally Colbert's questions relating to *A Death Interrupted* and Eli Bernzweig's rejoinders

1: Q — Can an entity in *kama loka* contact their deceased relatives? Also, how would one know these deceased entities are still in *kama loka*?

Answer: My understanding of the theosophical teachings accords with the quote from *The Key to Theosophy* by HPB that you cited, but in my researches I also came upon some material by Mr. Judge, when responding to questions published in *The Theosophical Forum*, in New York, that offered a modicum of evidence that such contact *might theoretically be possible*. I shall quote two of his replies to questioners that demonstrate the point:

[Question] “Do earthly friends recognize one another during their passage through Kama Loka? If so, who what is the recognizer?”

[Judge’s reply] Kama Loka being a state and not a place, there is no “passage” through it. No doubt in some cases, if two beings are in the Kama Loka state at the same time, and for similar reasons, and with the same magnetic currents, they may recognize each other. But as Kama Loka is the state in which the Soul is freeing itself from the astral body and the passions and desires, it cannot with ease be concerned with any other process than that one; and hence, in the sense of the question as put, there is no recognition, although the being has what it may suppose to be a recognition of friends and enemies. “*Theosophical Forum*, September, 1892, p. 12.

[Question] “Are the majority of people, those who are neither very wicked nor very spiritual, conscious in Kama Loka that they are dead; and are they able to see the kamic sights with which it is said to be filled? I have read Stanton’s *Dreams of the Dead*, and although I cannot accept all he says, the information gained from other sources has been too meagre to permit of my discriminating accurately between what is true and what is false.”

[Judge’s reply] Precisely as physicians know that every human body has its own physical idiosyncrasies, which are well known in their effects upon and relations with medicine, so in the state after death the

idiosyncrasy of the person has an effect upon the state there. There is no positive or definite rule which invariably applies to every being after death. Consequently there are many different kinds of states in “Kama Loka.” Some people are aware that they left the earth, others are unaware of it; some are able to see those they have left behind, others not; and certainly everybody in Kama Loka is able to see all that pertains to the particular division of that state in which he may be at the time. Mr. Stanton’s book is excellent in many respects, but cannot be exhaustive. What he describes is beyond doubt what happens to some persons in Kama Loka, but he by no means describes all the possible cases or facts of that state. But one thing may be asserted as positively so, or else the whole system is at fault, and that is that the being in Kama Loka sees whatever pertains to the state in which he is, as it is all a question of state. *Theosophical Forum*, September, 1893, p. 12. See also, *The Theosophical Movement* (Bombay) 17th, November, 1944, p. 5.

Based on the quoted material, I decided there was at least *some* ground for giving my fictional Senta the ability to make contact with those of her deceased relatives who were still in *kama loka*. It also gave me the opportunity, fictionally speaking, to motivate Senta to make amends for wrongs she had perpetrated or erroneous judgments made while she was alive.

Incidentally, the book *Dreams of the Dead*, by Edward Huntington Stanton, [Boston, Lee and Shepard, 1892] is a marvelous work of fiction that also describes events involving the adventures of a deceased entity and persons still living and it makes reference to theosophical principles that are mentioned throughout the novel.

2: Question — : Where would one find references to Dhyan Chohans’ special powers in watching over and protect-

ing victims of accidental or homicidal death?

Answer: — If you will look in Letter No. XXc of the *Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, received by Sinnett in August, 1882 [see page 131 of the Trevor Barker Compilation of 1923], wherein the Master is discussing the after-death states of suicides and victims of accidental deaths, and says,

“Although not ‘wholly dis severed from their sixth and seventh principles’ and quite ‘potent’ in the séance room, nevertheless to the day when they would have died a natural death, they are separated from the higher principles by a gulf. The sixth and seventh remain passive and negative, whereas, in cases of *accidental death* the higher and lower groups mutually attract each other. In other cases of good and innocent egos, moreover, the latter gravitates irresistibly toward the sixth and seventh, and thus—either slumbers surrounded by happy dreams, or, sleeps a dreamless profound sleep until the hour strikes. With a little reflection, and an eye to eternal justice and fitness of things, you will see why. The victim whether good or bad is *irresponsible* for his death, even if his death were due to some action in a previous life or an antecedent birth; was an act, in short, of the Law of Retribution, still, it was not the *direct* result of an act deliberately committed by the *personal* Ego of that life during which he happened to be killed. Had he been allowed to live longer he may have atoned for his antecedent sins still more effectually; and even now, the Ego having been made to pay off the debt of his maker (the previous Ego) is free from the blows of retributive justice. The Dhyan Chohans who have no hand in the guidance of the living human Ego, protect the helpless victim when it is violently thrust out of its element into a new one, before it is matured and made ready for it. We tell you what we know, for we are made to learn it through

personal experience. You know what I mean and I CAN SAY NO MORE! . . .”

(Emphasis mine)

See also, Extracts from *The Path*, Vol. IV, pp. 254-56, November, 1889

3. **Question — Can one contact one’s deceased relatives on the Birth-days of the Dhyanis?**

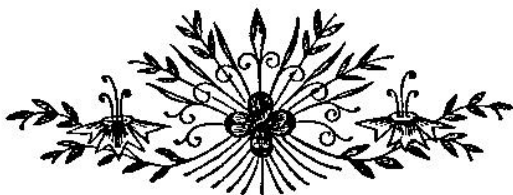
Answer: — You are entirely correct in concluding that entities in *devachan* cannot be contacted, but (for literary purposes only) I seized upon the three “birth” days of the Dhyanis, as ideal days to attempt to contact one’s departed loved ones, and precisely because, as noted in the *Secret Doctrine II*, 179, those are special “magic feat” days. I threw in HPB’s “birth” day just for good measure.

4 **Question: — “ . . . an unexpected offshoot of the series was the establishment of nationwide branches of the newly-formed OM Society by tens of thousands of bereaved relatives around the nation and around the world who were determined to make contact with their departed loved ones on the four days mentioned by Damodar in his final article. . . .”**

I Assume this is a case of literary license?

Answer: — Absolutely. There is no such entity as an OM Society. [Parenthetically, while writing the book, I chanced upon a delightful website called The Daily OM, www.dailyom.com, which makes my crea-

tion of a fictitious OM Society seem quite reasonable.]



Notes from the May 8th Meeting

U.L.T. London, U.K

quotations from H. P. Blavatsky on

MIND, KARMA AND THE UNIVERSAL CHRISTOS

1. MIND

Question: — the two, the higher and the lower, Manas are one, are they not?

Answer: — They are, and yet they are not — and that is the great mystery. The Higher Manas or EGO is essentially divine, and therefore pure; no stain can pollute it, as no punishment can reach it, *per se*, the more so since it is innocent of, and takes no part in, the deliberate transactions of its Lower Ego. Yet by the very fact that, though dual and during life the Higher is distinct from the Lower, "the Father and Son" *are one*, and because that in reuniting with the parent Ego, the Lower Soul fastens upon and impresses upon it all its bad as well as good actions — both have to suffer, the Higher Ego, though innocent and without blemish, has to bear the punishment of the misdeeds committed by the *lower* Self together with it in their future incarnation. ***The whole doctrine of atonement is built upon this old esoteric tenet;*** for the Higher Ego is the antitype of that which is on this earth the type, namely the personality. It is, for those who understand it, the old Vedic story of

Visvakarman over again, practically demonstrated. Visvakarman¹, the all-seeing Father-God, who is beyond the comprehension of mortals, ends, as son of Bhuvana, the holy Spirit, by ***sacrificing himself to himself***, to save the worlds. The mystic name of the "Higher Ego" is, in the Indian philosophy, *Kshetrajna*, or "embodied Spirit," that which knows or informs *kshetra*, "the body." Etymologize the name, and you will find in it the term *aja*, "first-born," and also the "lamb." All this is very suggestive, and volumes might be written upon the pregenetic and postgenetic development of type and antitype — of *Christ-Kshetrajna*, the "God-Man," the First-born, symbolized as the "lamb." The *Secret Doctrine* shows that the Manasa-Putras or incarnating EGOS have taken upon themselves, voluntarily and knowingly, the burden of all the future sins of their future personalities. Thence it is easy to see that it is neither Mr. A. nor Mr. B., nor any of the personalities that periodically clothe the Self-Sacrificing EGO, ***which are the real Sufferers, but verily the innocent Christos within us.*** Hence the mystic Hindus say that the Eternal Self, or the Ego (the one in three and three in one), is the "Charioteer" or driver; the personalities are the temporary and evanescent passengers; while the horses are the animal

¹ "*Agni*, in the condition of *Akta*, or anointed, is suggestive of Christ," remarks Prof. Jolly. "*Maya*, Mary, his mother; *Twastri* (Viswakarman), St. Joseph, the carpenter of the Bible." In the *Rig Veda*, Viswakarman is the highest and oldest of the Gods and their "Father." He is the "carpenter or builder," because God is called even by the monotheists, "the Architect of the Universe." SD ii 101 fn

passions of man. It is, then, true to say that when we remain deaf to the Voice of our Conscience, we crucify the Christos within us. [*The Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, pp. 67-69]



ENQUIRER. If the "Spirit," or the divine portion of the soul, is pre-existent as a distinct being from all eternity, as Origen, Synesius, and other semi-Christians and semi-Platonic philosophers taught, and if it is the same, and nothing more than the metaphysically-objective soul, how can it be otherwise than eternal? And what matters it in such a case, whether man leads a pure life or an animal, if, do what he may, he can never lose his individuality?

THEOSOPHIST. This doctrine, as you have stated it, is just as pernicious in its consequences as that of vicarious atonement. Had the latter dogma, in company with the false idea that we are all immortal, been demonstrated to the world in its true light, humanity would have been bettered by its propagation.

Let me repeat to you again. Pythagoras, Plato, Timaeus of Locris, and the old Alexandrian School, derived the *Soul* of man (or his higher "principles" and attributes) from the Universal World Soul, the latter being, according to their teachings, *Aether* (Pater-Zeus). Therefore, neither of these "principles" can be *unalloyed* essence of the Pythagorean *Monas*, or our *Atma-Buddhi*, because the *Anima Mundi* is but the effect, the subjective emanation or rather radiation of the former. Both the *human Spirit* (or the individuality), the re-incarnating Spiritual Ego, and Buddhi, the Spiritual soul, are pre-existent. But, while the former exists as a distinct entity, an individualization, the soul exists as pre-existing breath, an unscient portion of an intelligent whole. Both were originally formed from the Eternal Ocean of light; but as the Fire-Philosophers, the mediaeval

Theosophists, expressed it, there is a visible as well as invisible spirit in fire. They made a difference between the *anima bruta* and the *anima divina*. Empedocles firmly believed all men and animals to possess two souls; and in Aristotle we find that he calls one the reasoning soul, *nous*, and the other, the animal soul, *psuche*. According to these philosophers, the reasoning soul comes from *within* the universal soul, and the other from *without*.

(from *The Key to Theosophy*, Section 7)

2. KARMA?

ENQUIRER: — [on hearing how karma works]. But I see nothing of a moral character about this law. It looks to me like the simple physical law that action and reaction are equal and opposite.

THEOSOPHIST: — I am not surprised to hear you say that. Europeans have got so much into the ingrained habit of considering right and wrong, good and evil, as matters of an arbitrary code of law laid down either by men, or imposed upon them by a Personal God. We Theosophists, however, say that "Good" and "Harmony," and "Evil" and "Dis-harmony," are synonymous. Further we maintain that all pain and suffering are results of want of Harmony, and that the one terrible and only cause of the disturbance of Harmony is *selfishness* in some form or another. Hence Karma gives back to every man the *actual consequences* of his own actions, without any regard to their moral character; but since he receives his due for *all*, it is obvious that he will be made to atone for all sufferings which he has caused, just as he will reap in joy and gladness the fruits of all the happiness and harmony he had helped to produce. I can do no better than quote for your benefit certain passages from books and articles written by our Theosophists — those who have a correct idea of Karma.

ENQUIRER: — I wish you would, as your literature seems to be very sparing on this subject?

THEOSOPHIST: — Because it is *the* most difficult of all our tenets.

Some short time ago there appeared the following objection from a Christian pen: —

"... How is he to get emancipation, or pardon, or the blotting out of the evil or wickedness he has already done?"

To this Mr. J. H. Conelly replies very pertinently that no one can hope to "make the theosophical engine run on the theological track." As he has it: —

"... The condition contemplated . . . in which a man shall have been 'awakened and converted to a certain extent from evil or wickedness,' is that in which a man shall have realized that his deeds are evil and deserving of punishment. ... While it is strong upon him is the time when he is urged to accept the doctrine of vicarious atonement.

"He is told that he must also repent, but nothing is easier than that. It is an amiable weakness of human nature that we are quite prone to regret the evil we have done when our attention is called, and we have either suffered from it ourselves or enjoyed its fruits. Possibly, close analysis of the feeling would show us that that which we regret is rather the necessity that seemed to require the evil as a means of attainment of our selfish ends than the evil itself.

"Attractive as this prospect of casting our burden of sins 'at the foot of the cross' may be to the ordinary mind, it does not commend itself to the Theosophic student. He does not apprehend why the sinner by attaining knowledge of his evil can thereby merit any pardon for or the blotting out of his past wickedness; or why repentance and future right living entitle him to a suspension in his favour of the universal law of relation between cause and effect. ...

"But it is more. It rewards merit as unerringly and amply as it punishes de-

merit. It is the outcome of every act, of thought, word and deed, and by it men mould themselves, their lives and happenings. Eastern philosophy rejects the idea of a newly created soul for every baby born. It believes in a limited number of monads, evolving and growing more and more perfect through their assimilation of many successive personalities. Those personalities are the product of Karma and it is by Karma and re-incarnation that the human monad in time returns to its source — absolute deity."

... and from the *Secret Doctrine*:

"Karma has never sought to destroy intellectual and individual liberty, like the god invented by the Monotheists. It has not involved its decrees in darkness purposely to perplex man, nor shall it punish him who dares to scrutinize its mysteries. On the contrary, he who unveils through study and meditation its intricate paths, and throws light on those dark ways, in the windings of which so many men perish owing to their ignorance of the labyrinth of life, is working for the good of his fellow-men." [II, 305]

And now I advise you to compare our Theosophic views upon Karma, the law of Retribution, and say whether they are not both more philosophical and just than this cruel and idiotic dogma which makes of "God" a senseless fiend; the tenet, namely, that the "elect only" will be saved, and the rest doomed to eternal perdition! [from *The Key to Theosophy*, Section 11]



3. THE UNIVERSAL CHRISTOS PRINCIPLE

... it is useless to speak of the esoteric identity of universal beliefs until one has thoroughly studied and *understood* the true esoteric sense of these two original terms: *Chrêstos* and *Christos*: two poles as opposed in their significance as night and day, suffering and humility, joy and glorification, etc. The true Christians died with the last of the Gnostics, and the Christians of our day are but the usurpers of a name

they no longer understand. As long as this is the case, Orientals cannot agree with Occidentals; no blending of religious ideas would be possible between them.

... I have not the slightest intention of hurting the feelings of those who believe in Jesus, the carnalized Christ, but I feel myself compelled to emphasize our own belief while explaining it, because the Abbé Roca wishes to identify it with that of the Roman Church; never can these two beliefs be united, unless the Catholicism of the Latin Church returns to its earliest tenets, those of the Gnostics. For the Church of Rome was Gnostic—just as much as the Marcionites were—until the beginning and even the middle of the second century; Marcion, the famous Gnostic, did not separate from it until the year 136, and Tatian left it still later. And why did they leave it? Because they had become heretics, the Church pretends; but the history of these cults contributed by esoteric manuscripts gives us an entirely different version. These famous Gnostics, they tell us, separated themselves from the Church because they could not agree to accept a Christ *made flesh*, and thus began the process of carnalizing the Christ-principle. It was then also that the metaphysical allegory experienced its first transformation—that allegory which was the fundamental doctrine of all the Gnostic fraternities.

esh or matter. Read exoterically, the words “*Iêsous Chreistos theou huïos sôtêr stauros*,” meaning literally “Jesus, Christos, Son of God, Saviour, Cross,” are most excellent handles to hang a Christian prophecy on, but they are *pagan*, not Christian.

RUINS OF THE TEMPLE OF THE
SIBYL, early 1st C. BC



Tivoli (anc. Tibur), Italy.

In the *Travels* of Dr. E. D. Clarke, the author describes a heathen monument found by him.

... This inscription ran thus “Chrêstos, the first, a Thessalonian from Larissa, Pelasgiot, 18 years old Hêro,” Chrêstos the *first* (*protou*), why? Read literally the inscription has little sense; interpreted esoterically, it is pregnant with meaning. ... But the word Chrêstos, standing alone and the other word, “protou,” following it, gives it quite another meaning, especially when the deceased is specified as a “hêro.” To the mind of an Occultist, the defunct was a neophyte, who had died in his 18th year of *neophytism*, and stood in the first or highest class of discipleship, having passed his preliminary trials as a “hêro”; but had died before the last mystery, which would have made of him a “Christos,” an *anointed*, one with the spirit of Christos or Truth in him.



ON THE HPB DEFENSE FUND

Carlos Cardoso Aveline

The *H.P. Blavatsky Defense Fund*, recently established by *The Aquarian Theosophist*, has a greater importance than one can see at first sight.

It will create an alternative to an unfortunate fact, the inclusion of some 20 false documents scattered all over the volume I of *HPB Letters*. As many know by now, the texts consist of disgusting libels against HPB, astutely ascribed to herself by Mr. Vsevolod Solovyov after HPB's death and recently presented as if they were authentic by Mr. John Algeo. The volume with the forgeries was published by the TPH-USA, under the personal leadership of Mr. Algeo, international vice-president of the Adyar Theosophical Society.

The *HPB Defense Fund* seeks to counteract this situation by publishing an authentic *volume I* of Madame Blavatsky's letters. It will furnish the student with the means to discriminate the authentic from the fraudulent, the clean from the corrupt.

It is true that at a worldly level the Fund will protect the interests of the consumer and reader in general, who deserves buying books well-edited and prefers reading true documents, and not forgeries. This is a significant level of action. But the Fund's significance goes far beyond the realm of editorial and publishing facts. It has profound effects at the ethical and occult levels as well. It sets an example of commitment to truth and of respect for those who serve the cause of mankind. The chance to actively supporting the editorial project of the *Blavatsky Defence Fund* is a unique opportunity for sincere students of Theosophy, who can thus learn in a practical way about the inner positive

effects of defending the work of a true Initiate from unjust attacks.

The task now is to defend HPB. But it could well be to defend other Truth seekers, if we were in different points in time. Pythagoras, Socrates, St. John of the Cross, Giordano Bruno, Baruch Spinoza, Alessandro Cagliostro and H. P. Blavatsky all suffered cruel persecution. And they are not exceptions in History: examples are countless. For millenia now, nearly every brave soul who did any important work in favour of mankind has been in one way or another misunderstood and attacked by his contemporaries.

In all such situations Karma has created, as we see right now, the need and the opportunity for students to openly defend these pioneers and teachers. Through solidarity, each learner can preserve and enhance his magnetic link with the source of the spiritual lessons he learns. This preservation and defence – a conscious privilege for some – is not just individual. It must be also collective. It is not just subjective. It must be objective. It has to be done in the same level of reality in which the attacks happen.

Perhaps the story of an event in the early years of the theosophical movement can illustrate the challenge of defending the Teacher. One day, during the late 1870s, Henry Olcott met in New York an acquaintance with whom he stopped for a few moments to chat. Olcott wrote in his *Old Diary Leaves*:

“The man was very prejudiced against HPB, and he spoke very harshly against her, keeping to his opinion despite all I could say. At last he used such objectionable language that, in sheer disgust, I hastily left him and went on my way.”

A few hours later, when Olcott was at home, a paper was materialized – or

precipitated – before him. It was a copy of some aphorisms from the buddhist *Dhammapada* and *Sutras*. It came with the signature from one of the Adept-Teachers and a two-words message which simply said – “*Translation correct*”.

Olcott wrote: “The verses were reproaches to my address for having allowed HPB to be reviled without defending her; unmistakably referring to my encounter downtown with a person I had met, although no names were mentioned.”¹

The importance of this event is that the message from the *Dhammapada* is not just in the past. The message is valid to the students of HPB in the 21st century and in the next centuries as well. As we see Mr. Algeo’s new edition of old forgeries against HPB, the three main paragraphs quoted by the Master and sent to Olcott give us real food for thought. Especially if we acknowledge that the soul of HPB is, in fact, our brother. The paragraphs say:

* “He who hears his brother reviled, and keeping a smooth face leaves the abuse unnoticed, tacitly agrees with the enemy, as if he admitted the same to be proper and just. He who does it is mouse-hearted, or selfishness is at the bottom of his heart. He is not fit to become a ‘companion’.”

* “Revenge is sinful and throws the ‘companion’ in the embrace of Zahak. He who permits his left hand to be polluted with dung without immediately wiping it with his right cares little for the cleanliness of his whole body. What constitutes the integral? – parts. Of what is composed a human body? — of limbs. If one limb cares not for the appearance of another limb, is not Zahak ready with trowel and brush

to blacken the whole? Such a ‘companion’ is not ready to become a Brother.”

* “It is easy to destroy the poisonous houâbâ in its first germination. It is difficult to arrest its progress when once allowed to mature. Its unhealthy emanations will fill the atmosphere with miasmas. It will spread and infect its healthy brethren and cause the limpid waters of the lake to stagnate and dry. Avoid the houâbâ and its husbandman, Beloved.”²

Unfortunately, this message did not prevent Henry Olcott from making other mistakes along the same line, later on. Yet he had the merit of defending HPB against Mr. V. Solovyovs’ libels, and wrote that Solovyov was “as heartless and contemptible, though fifty times more talented than the Coulombs”.³ As to Mr. Algeo, he was warned about Mr. Solovyov’s fraud before publishing the book, but preferred giving publicity to the libels.

What can students do, now? We are not mere spectators: our actions depend on us.

One of the stimulating factors we can take into consideration when we think of defending HPB and her work is that she is not really dead. There is no death for a soul like the one who was once born under the name of Helena Petrovna von Hahn. Another practical reason is that the work and life-example of such a soul is now, as it will be in the future, of great importance as an *occult* and *magnetic bridge* between mankind and the Elder Brothers.

¹ *Old Diary Leaves*, H. S. Olcott, First Series, TPH, Adyar, 1974, 490 pp., see pp. 414-415.

² *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Second Series, transcribed by C. Jinarajadasa, Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India, 1973. See Letter 23, pp. 47-49.

³ *Old Diary Leaves*, H. S. Olcott, Third Series, TPH, Adyar, 1972, 460 pp., see p. 185.

Hence, I send my sincere congratulations to those who created the *HPB Defense Fund*.

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