



## The Wisdom of a Turtle



In the age of anxiety, speaking at high speed is considered a sign of cleverness, while slow thinking constitutes a proof of mental retardation.

And this is one of the delusions of the century. Superficial and meaningless minds feel proud to be quick and believe others to be less than clever.

In fact, intelligence ignores hurry, and is ignored by it. Starting a real dialogue with another person requires a multiple focus on various levels of consciousness at the same time, while listening to one's own soul. The calm presence of silence is necessary for that to take place. The deep mind is slow in changing subject: the soulless mind is not. The real self is a friend of silence and can learn from a turtle or from a tree; the outward mask is not, and cannot.

## A Nameless, Timeless Soul

You may want to be quiet and silent and modest in order to live universal wisdom. And this is only the first step on the probationary path. The very fact that you search for wisdom is enough to challenge, reveal and confront un-wisdom, or ignorance.

You will try to avoid the fight, but the fight will come after you, and this is why the Masters of the Wisdom often use in their Letters the metaphor of the Warrior to refer to true theosophists.

The act of living in wisdom and existing in the strict territory of universal ethics invites all kinds of tests, which will check and verify the pilgrim's resolve. In the process of facing obstacles and decoding uncomfortable lessons, the main refuge of lucidity is an impersonal point of view.

The pilgrim gradually realizes he is no one. He is not a personality or mask. “He” is but a nameless, timeless soul, present here and now and in other places and occasions as well.

## **The Source of Serendipity When a Firm Ground Materializes Under The Feet of the Wise Pilgrim**



On the higher levels of conscious interconnectedness, serendipity occurs.

The whole universe pulsates in subtle unity every second: its higher dimensions are bliss.

As one realizes that the lower aspects of connection and their corresponding pain do not deserve a “priority status”, both the precariousness and the transcendence of life are accepted.

Then one becomes available to the higher and enlightened dimension of life connections.

Serendipity is not really about finding objects. It is not about attachment and hope or ambition. It is not about desire: it results from an unconditional sympathy with the best in all forms of life, within and around us.

The firm ground coagulates or materializes under the feet of the wise pilgrim, as he goes ahead in the right direction.

*[More on serendipity will be seen in the editions of July 2013 (pp. 1-2) and July 2015 (pp. 6-7) of “The Aquarian”.]*

## Abandoning Voluntary Blindness: **The Philosophical Value of Democracy**



The painting “The School of Athens”, by Raphael (partial view)

It is useful to examine the real meaning of words like “Democracy” and “Politics”, and liberate them from unnecessary misinterpretations.

Both concepts belong to philosophy and theosophy. They require a comprehensive view of life that goes beyond isolated facts.

Democracy means that everyone must be heard, in the sense that the interests and needs of all have to be taken into consideration. In its highest aspects, Democracy fosters and expresses the law of universal brotherhood.

Politics is the science of managing the common interests of every member of the *Polis* or community, in the best and most enduring way, within actual possibilities.

The greatest philosophers of every age dealt with Politics in its highest sense and not aiming at short-term political power.

Among them were Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, Cicero, Francis Hutcheson, Rousseau, Kant, and, in her own way, Helena P. Blavatsky. The founder of the modern theosophical movement was strongly “political” in her criticism of conventional Science, dogmatic Religion and authoritarian institutions.

HPB was *politically active*, and in a most decisive way, when she created the modern theosophical movement as a long-term, intercultural *nucleus of brotherhood* regardless of nation, sex, social class, caste or ideology.

## **Fanaticism Adopts Slogans Instead of Reason**

Modern Theosophy is against authoritarian ideologies - and does not act against authorities. It sees the difference between authority and authoritarianism. It relies on the law of karma. It plants the seeds of Truthfulness and Goodness and lets them germinate. It unmask oppression on a philosophical plane.

Philosophy teaches that abuse of power and disrespect for the citizen are not exclusive of military dictatorships or formally fascist regimes. Far from it: the worst forms of authoritarian domination start on the mental plane and spread through propaganda, in largely subconscious ways.

When a systematic attack to human reason emerges, the process of brain-washing often calls itself “consensus”, and disguises its substance under the appearance of noble ideals.

The brain-washers present imaginary facts with such an emphasis and repetition that the most obvious falsities start to be seen as obvious, undeniable facts. For them, it is not necessary (nor allowed) to question “consensus” and “revelation”, or to think. The goal is to show to everyone that all must adhere to the Chorus of the Misinformed.

Religious or not, top-down pseudo-ideologies suggest to individuals and multitudes that the mere fact of someone disagreeing with their propaganda would be enough evidence that the citizen has no valid knowledge. He must be therefore a complete idiot or, worse, he must have an evil intention, deserving to be the blank of sustained collective hatred. [1]

Personal names of such “enemies” or the names of their countries start being used as symbols of that which the naïve members of the population are supposed to hate as a demonstration that they have “common sense” and are “clever”.

To think with independence is forbidden in subtle ways, but all are free to reproduce in various forms the slogans and old banal statements spread by those who are supposed to be “most clever”. He who does not adhere to the fashionable trivialities is a dangerous individual in whom no one can rely.

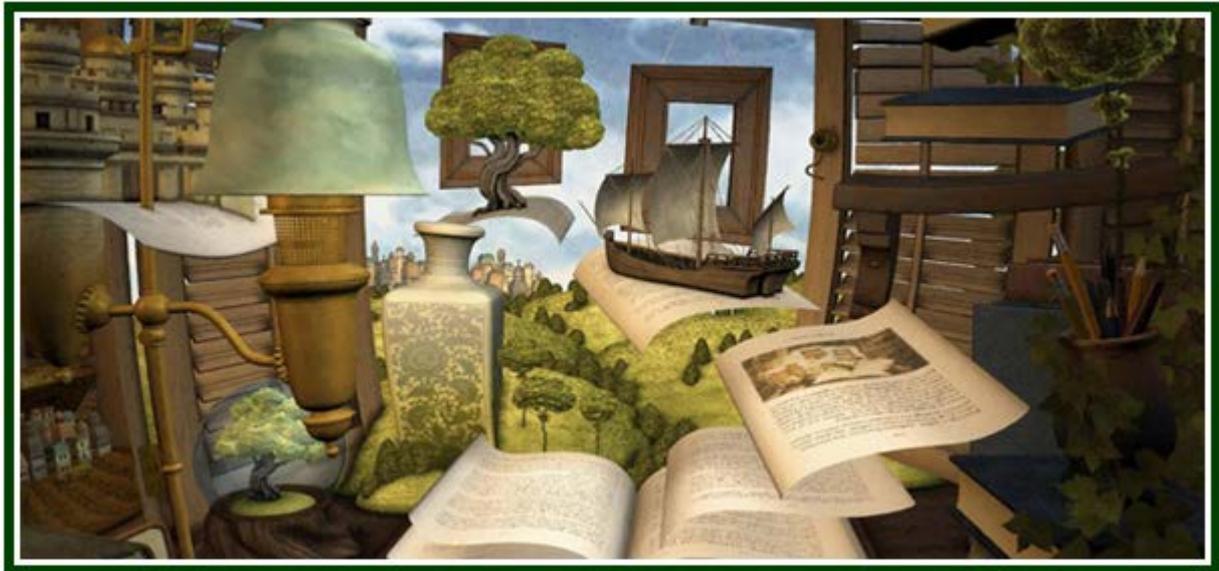
Thus an imaginary psychological situation is created according to which, if the supreme wish and “consensus” of the brain-washed leaders is challenged, or if they are treated with severe justice regarding their wrong-doings, there will be chaos. And this is tantamount to blackmail.

The process is feverish and short-lived. Sooner or later, the authoritarian disease destroys itself. However, its end can and ought to be accelerated by conscious individuals. The healing for the hysterical impulses related to authoritarianism dwells in ethics, in respect for the laws and the Law, and the inability to attain happiness through the fulfilment of one’s duty.

NOTE:

[1] On the illusion of eliminating adversaries, and on the false belief that it is enough to change social structures, human beings needing no inner change, readers can see the note “Naive Views Dating From 1789”, on p. 13 of “The Aquarian”, September 2016 edition. The fact that real improvement in society results from noble intentions and right thinking can be seen in the same edition of “The Aquarian”, p. 14, in a note entitled “The Invisible Power of Good Will”.

## Letter from a Master: How to Build a Theosophical Lodge



**One's home and theosophical lodge can be strong magnetic centers**

*[We reproduce below most of Letter 4 of the first series, in "Letters From the Masters of the Wisdom" (TPH, 1973 edition). We leave aside the sentences that are specific to the London city in the decade of 1880. We preserve everything in the Letter that has universal value. Essentially the document can be seen as if it were directly written to the Independent Lodge of Theosophist and to all associations of sincere students of the original esoteric philosophy. As a historical text, the letter is addressed to Ms. Francesca Arundale. Omitted fragments are indicated by ellipsis, in parenthesis. In some sentences, we put words in italics in square brackets in order to make understanding easier.]*

... **Y**ou are an officer of [*your Lodge*] and as such have a special duty and opportunity.

It is not enough that you should set the example of a pure virtuous life and a tolerant spirit; this is but negative goodness - and for *chelaship* will never do. You should even as a simple member, much more as an officer, learn that you may teach, acquire spiritual knowledge and strength that the work may lean upon you, and the sorrowing victims of ignorance learn from you the cause and remedy of their pain. If you choose, you may make your home [1] one of the most important centres of spiritualising influence in all the world.

The "power" is now concentrated there, and will remain - if you do not weaken or repulse it: remain to your blessing and advantage. You will do good by encouraging the visits of your fellow members [*of the theosophical movement*] and of enquirers and by holding meetings, of the more congenial for study and instruction. You should induce others, in other quarters, to do likewise. You should constantly advise with your associates in the Council how to make the general meetings of the Lodge interesting. New members should be taken in hand from

the first, by the older ones especially selected and assigned to the duty in each case, and instructed thoroughly in what you have already learnt, so that they may be capable of participating intelligently in the proceedings of regular meetings.

There is a strong disposition to slur over the ceremony of “initiation” in such a way as to make no serious impression upon the candidate. The method of the Parent Society [*in India*] may be unsuited to English prejudices, yet to fall into the opposite extreme of undignified haste is very much worse. Your ways of *initiation* are a standing insult to every regular chela and have provoked the displeasure of their “Masters”. It is a sacred thing with us; why should it be otherwise with you? If every fellow took for his motto the wise words of a young boy, but one who is a fervent Theosophist, and repeated with Bertram K. “I am a theosophist before I am an Englishman”, no foe could ever upset your Society. However, candidates should be taught, and old members always recollect, that this is a serious affair the Society is engaged in; and that they should begin the work as seriously by making their own lives Theosophical.

(...) You have accepted an important service - the financial agency - and done wisely. Such aid was very needed. If the members in Europe wish well to the Mother Society, they should help to circulate its publications, and to have them translated into other languages when worthy of it. *Intentions* - you may tell your fellow-members - and kind words count for little with us. Deeds are what we want and demand. L.C.H. has done - poor child - more in that direction during two months than the best of your members in these five years.

The members of the (...) Lodge have such an opportunity as seldom comes to men. A movement calculated to benefit an English-speaking world, is in their custody. If they do their whole duty, the progress of materialism, the increase of dangerous self-indulgence, and the tendency towards spiritual suicide, can be checked. The theory of vicarious atonement has brought about its inevitable reaction: only the knowledge of Karma can offset it. The pendulum has swung from the extreme of blind faith towards the extreme materialistic skepticism, and nothing can stop it save Theosophy. Is not this a thing worth working for, to save those nations from the doom their ignorance is preparing for them?

Think you the truth has been shown to you for your sole advantage? That we have broken the silence of centuries for the profit of a handful of dreamers only? The converging lines of your Karma have drawn each and all of you into this Society as to a common focus, that you may each help to work out the results of your interrupted beginnings in the last birth. None of you can be so blind as to suppose that this is your first dealing with Theosophy? You surely must realize that this would be the same as to say that effects came without causes. Know then that it depends now upon each of you whether you shall henceforth struggle alone after spiritual wisdom thro’ this and the next incarnate life, or in the company of your present associates and greatly helped by the mutual sympathy and aspiration. Blessings to all - deserving them.

K. H.

NOTE:

[1] Note by C. Jinarajadasa: “77 Elgin Crescent, Notting Hill, London, W., where H.P.B. was the guest of Mrs. and Miss Arundale.”

[See in our websites the article “**Turning a House Into a Temple**”.]

# Serious or Curious?

## A Commentary on the Golden Stairs

N. C. Ramanujachary



The last and the consummating step in the *Golden Stairs* to reach the Divine Temple, given to us through Helena Blavatsky is:

“A Constant Eye to the ideal of human progression and perfection which the Sacred Science depicts”.

The stress here is on the Constant eye, which is ever-present and ever-awakened. It is not a “curious eye”, which every average citizen has towards matters of Life and Living.

Constant also means “eternally vigilant” and living with the Being soaked in that state. Then it would not be possible for one to “err”. In the matter of daily practices and behavior, one must naturally come to a state that he or she becomes incapable of doing anything wrong. This would appear to be utopian, but is not impracticable if one is serious enough on the treading up the Path.

What needed is an undisturbed attention and unsullied devotion to the Ideal, once it is understood as the sure and certain means for obtaining the Ultimate.

The steps are not to be taken as “symbolic” but are the practical, Pragmatic actions for performance.

## The Condition of the World

“The moral condition of the world depends upon three things: Truth, Justice and Peace.” Rabbi Hillel

[Reproduced from “Lucifer” magazine, London, January 1891, p. 408. The name “Lucifer” is an ancient and pagan term for the planet Venus and has been distorted since the Middle Ages by ill-informed theologians.]

# **Judah Abravanel:** **Fragments From Neoplatonic Judaism**



The following excerpts are reproduced from the classical Jewish and Neoplatonic book “Dialogues of Love”, by Leone Ebreo (Judah Abravanel), whose first edition was published in Italian in the year 1535. We use the edition of the University of Toronto Press, 2016, 440 pages. The number of page of each fragment is indicated in parenthesis at its end.

## **1. Defining a Blessed Life**

... Happiness consists in knowing one thing only, and it cannot reside in knowledge of all things, each one individually; more accurately, in the knowledge of a single thing that comprises all the things in the Universe. And, once this thing is known, all others are known together in an act and a greater perfection than would be possible if they were each known separately. (p. 57)

## **2. The Mystery of Human Brotherhood**

By nature humans love each other, as well as do other animals of the same species; and especially if those humans come from the same country or land. But humans do not have as firm and certain love as animals have.

The most ferocious and savage animals do not use cruelty with those of the same species; a lion does not prey on another lion, nor does a snake inject poison into another snake. Humans, instead, receive more evils and murders from other humans than they do from all other animals and adverse things of the universe. Human enmity, deceit and weapons kill more humans than all other accidental and natural things.

The reason for the deterioration of the natural love between humans is greed and concern for superfluous things. Hostility is generated out of these things, not only between distant people from different countries, but also between those of the same land, of the same city, of the same household, between brothers and brothers, between fathers and sons, between husband and wife. To this must be added other human superstitions, which are the causes of cruel hostilities. (p. 79)

### **3. The Love of Stones and Trees**

Everything is moved by love of its own origin and generative element. You will also see the stones and metals generated by the earth, when they are away from it, seek it with haste, and never stop until they come to rest in the earth, as little children look for their mothers, and only with them are they at peace.

The earth generates them with love, and keeps and preserves them. Plants, herbs and trees have so much love for the earth - their mother and generator - that without corruption they never wish to be separated from their mother. Indeed, with their roots they embrace the earth lovingly, like children do with their mother's bosom. And this earth, like a tender mother full of charity and love, not only generates them, but continually nourishes them with its own moisture, drawn from its viscera to the surface to sustain them, as a mother when she draws milk from her womb to her breasts to nurse her children. (p. 87)

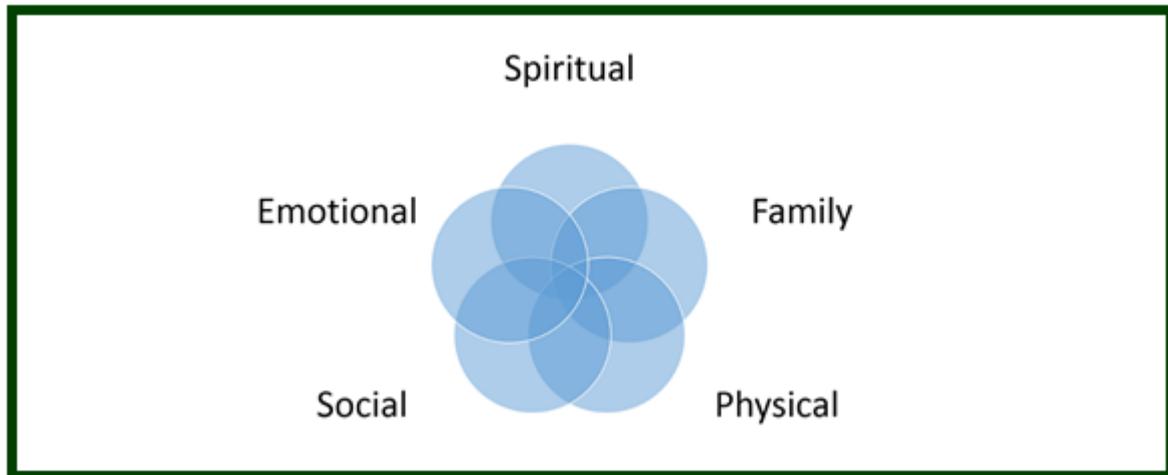
### **4. The Music of the Spheres**

The main reason for the love found in the celestial bodies is conformity in their natures, as in humans there is conformity in temperaments. Among the heavens, planets, and stars there is such a conformity of nature and essence, and in their motions and acts they correspond to each other with so much proportion, that they become united harmoniously in their movements and acts.

Indeed, they seem to be different members of one organic body, rather than different separate bodies. As it is with different voices, one sharp another grave, a single song that is pleasant to the hearing is generated, and if one note is missing, the whole song or harmony is destroyed. In the same way these bodies that differ in magnitude, motion, weight, and light, because of their proportion and conformity, produce a harmonious proportion, and it is so unified that if the smallest part is missing, the whole is ruined.

Therefore, this conformity in nature is the cause of love in the celestial bodies, not only as with different people, but like the organs of the same person. So, just as the heart loves the brain and the other organs and gives them life and natural heat and spirits, and the brain provides nerves of perception and motion to the other organs, and the liver provides blood and veins because of the love that they have for one another and which each of them has towards the whole as to its own part, and since this love is stronger than any love for another person, so the parts of heaven love each other with natural conformity and, cooperating in unity of purpose and function, they serve one another, fulfilling each other's needs in order to make a perfectly organized celestial body. (pp. 105-106)

## The Chain of Action and Reaction



The law of karma operates on every level of reality and so does the ripening of karma.

Some levels of action take a long time to return to their originator, and sometimes this takes place in a future incarnation. In other situations, fruits are immediate: examples are many of mistakes whose karmic consequences occur in the fraction of a second.

If someone is humbly performing an altruistic duty, the consciousness of his action and duty enlightens him as an immediate blessing which makes no noise. Bliss may even avoid his self-conscious awareness and flow undetected by the physical personality - unless the pilgrim develops a deeper attention regarding life. And this should come in time.

Progress along the path to wisdom allows students of philosophy to learn little by little an important lesson.

They become able to anticipate the karmic development of situations and to *know the effects of an action before it takes place*. By practising the science of right living, they avoid unnecessary pain and enjoy inner bliss.

## A Few Socratic Questions

If we have an interest in the path to divine wisdom, it will be useful to ask ourselves some questions. For instance:

\* What is it that inspires us? \* Does it inspire us to perform better actions, to become wiser and look at life from a higher point of view? \* Do we defend such a source of inspiration from the inevitable pressures coming from lower forms of consciousness? \* Do we feel grateful? \* Do we share with others a knowledge of such a source?

## The Ecology of the Soul, Or the Birth of Devotion



Theosophy is the perception both practical and contemplative of the unity of all beings and things.

It inevitably cancels the illusion of being a separate self. Theosophy is therefore inseparable from altruism.

While there are many different individualities, no separation exists. Diversity and unity live together.

As a result, there can be no personal acquisition of a knowledge regarding theosophy.

All that one's personal self can do is learn concepts and get acquainted with the wording, paving the way for the understanding of one's soul.

Real knowledge does not belong to one's outer vehicle. For the lower self, loving truth is to love something beyond itself.

Thus devotion is born.

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**“He that can compose himself”, said Benjamin Franklin, “is wiser than he that composes books”.**

(From “The Theosophical Movement” magazine, September 2016 edition, p. 26.)

# The Occult Life of Sentences

At each sentence or paragraph along the road of theosophical study, the pilgrim must ask himself what the actual meaning of those words is, to his own inner life and daily existence.

The best answers to such recurrent question will probably be wordless: yet the ever-renewed query remains decisive. The secret dialogue between philosophical thoughts and one's conscience and actions cannot be artificially provoked, just as the germination of a seed cannot be forced from the outside. One must create the proper conditions for it to occur of its own, and give it the time it needs.

## Thoughts Along the Road Observing the Sacredness of Daily Life



\* Ignorance uses to disguise itself under the garb of wisdom. For this reason the key to attain wisdom is beyond adopting wise words in our thinking or talking. One needs to constantly compare the truth of wise words with the illusion of actions and reactions based on ignorance, and which are still present in one's life. Courage, confidence and humbleness are necessary in the process.

\* The path changes people. As the spiritual pilgrim walks up the mountain, his horizon widens, the air becomes purer, and he has to live with an increasing amount of detachment regarding particular issues and specific objects. If he does not take the initiative to look for detachment, then detachment will look for him, and it will find him.

\* The magnetism of the Sun transmits life and vision to all. It permeates things. It inspires each being according to its specific degree of evolution. It demands nothing. The Earth and every celestial body in the solar system are parts of the aura of our Star as it proceeds in its anonymous pilgrimage across the Milky Way - and around the centre of the galaxy.

\* More intelligent than fighting our circumstances is to learn from them and build better ones.

To purify oneself is better than criticizing others. Instead of indulging in ambition, one should renounce unwise ideas. The way to happiness is not quite in having our desires fulfilled, but in leaving personal desires aside. A strong will must be built that is altruistic.

\* There is no joy like the joy of having fulfilled one's duty. No pleasure can ever be comparable to the pleasure of knowing that one deserves inner peace. Doing good in undetectable ways is among the supreme forms of happiness. When the Law and the higher self are the sole and secret witnesses of good actions, the pilgrim has his reward already.

\* Effort and rest are equally important in life. Both should be complete. There must be moderation in the two. A supreme effort can be made daily that does not deny the principle of moderation. A complete rest has nothing to do with laziness. Detachment, which results from a broad horizon, grants us the ability to combine intensity and moderation in work.

\* What is the criterion to evaluate the process of learning? The contents and meaning of knowledge are indicated by the amount of ethics in the way it is used. True knowledge is employed in morally responsible ways, to achieve decent goals. Real knowledge provokes well-being: false knowledge leads to suffering.

\* However imperfect, human beings are living ladders between the earth and the sky. In order to improve themselves, they must understand and regulate Life in each step of their own consciousness, and establish little by little a harmony between celestial and earthly forms of life in themselves. It's a long term task, and every minute counts.

\* Naive people take life for granted. They are still sleeping inside. Those who know better conquer life each new day with due effort. They are awakening already. The attitude of misinformed people regarding the future is based on the principle and the philosophy of "wait and see". People with common sense actively work for a better tomorrow. Everyone can examine to what group of individuals he belongs by now.

\* Music, noise and silence make life, just as right action, mistake and repose do. Pleasure, pain and wisdom are part of existence, just as renewal, preservation and a balance between the two.

\* A secret dialogue bridges the different sides of existence. Some children seem too old already: they will get younger as time passes. And many are those who at seventy start to live the joy of life.

\* The student of universal wisdom must learn how to receive in proper ways in his psychological world the ceaseless events that Life brings to him. New facts and realities harmonize themselves as soon as one puts them in their right context. Thus the student develops an ability to deal with *trends of events*, rather than mere isolated facts. Once he identifies the patterns, the cycles and trends, he can foresee what the possibilities are. As a result, right understanding succeeds "surprise", and right action replaces impulsive behaviour.

\* Through our sense of *inner equilibrium* we can understand the rules guiding Life. The Law of Karma expresses itself in a dynamic, spiraled movement, constantly re-establishing equilibrium and balance. It does so through the law of cycles and the law of symmetry. A mathematical symmetry can be seen in every cycle which allows us to infer and calculate in advance the change and renewal of general trends that are yet to come in History and Karma.

\* It all depends on the point of view from which we look at life: in order to find the spiritual Path, one must see each thing and every event from a noble viewpoint. Besides, isolated insights have limited results. Before being able to sustain a noble perspective, a stable structure of habits, actions and practice must be built. This is no poetical speculation. The grandeur and beauty of the path can only inspire the inevitably hard and apparently “inglorious” effort.

\* The soul has its own ecology. A stable silence within allows one to contemplate the emotional and mental landscape of his individuality, with its higher places and lower places, its climate and atmosphere. Passing “winds” and “rains” can change the short term aspect of one’s nature and its temperature. These factors alternate with sunlight, moonlight, and the influence of clouds of various kinds. In order to sow in effective ways, one needs patient labor done under changing weather conditions. The agriculture of the soul is an Occult science: it requires hard, intelligent work.

## **In 1889, Helena Blavatsky Writes on The Eiffel Tower, the “Eighth Wonder”**



**Eiffel Tower in Paris**

**J**ust back from under the far-reaching shadow of the eighth wonder of the World - the gigantic iron carrot that goes by the name of the Eiffel Tower.

Child of its country, wondrous in its size, useless in its object, as shaky and vacillating as the Republican soil upon which it is built, it has not one single moral feature of its seven ancestors, not one trait of atavism to boast of.

The architectural Leviathan of 1889 is not even - in the question of usefulness - on a par with the New York statue of Liberty, that-would-be rival of the ancient Pharos. It is simply one of the latest fungi of modern commercial enterprise, grown on the soil of cunning speculation, in

order to attract numberless flies - in the shape of tourists from the four points of the world - which it very conscientiously does.

Even its splendid engineering does not add to its usefulness, but forces even an “unpopular philosopher” to exclaim, “*Vanitas vanitatum; omnia vanitas*”. Shall modern civilization still lift its nose and sneer at its ancient and elder sister?

The wonders of the world, the seven marvels of the Pagans, will never be replaced in our days. M. de Lesseps’ admirers may look contemptuously back on the causeway built by Dexiphanes, three centuries before our conceited era, but the astral atoms of himself, as those of his son, Sostratus the Cnidian, may rest undisturbed and need feel no jealousy.

The architecture of the marble tower of Pharos erected “to the gods, the Saviours, for the benefit of sailors” has hitherto remained unrivalled, in the public good derived from it, at all events. And this we may say, despite a creation of the Long Island statue of Liberty.

(Helena P. Blavatsky, in the opening lines of her article “The Eighth Wonder”: see “Theosophical Articles”, HPB, Theosophy Co., Los Angeles, volume III, p. 63.)

## Preventing the Insanity of Atomic War



We’ve already trapped ourselves in a small degree of irreversible nuclear damage. To avoid further harm to ourselves and our children, the people of the world must somehow avoid further nuclear insanity.

(Ken Keyes, Jr.)

[Reproduced from the “The Hundredth Monkey”, by Ken Keyes, Jr., Vision Books, Oregon, USA, 1989, 176 pp., see p. 46.]

