



fiercely denounced by Helena Blavatsky, feeds on great amounts of money. Hatred is business. The Islamic terrorism that has been growing and spreading around the world since the 1990s needs vast and daily fortunes to operate, and it seems to have had no problem so far in obtaining them.

Since the beginning of mankind the friends of peace and truth have cyclically built or inspired once and again economic structures based on the principles of mutual help, ethics and respect for life. These have given people opportunities for what Buddhism calls “right livelihood”, and which is also known as “karma yoga”. There is always a worldview and a philosophy behind every branch of human activity, and theosophy enlightens the whole process of life, including all its “material” aspects. An economy whose basis is greed produces injustice and pain as much as it produces goods. The philosophies of the unity of life guide every economy which helps mankind along the path to wisdom.

The modern theosophical movement has to interact with a materialistic society, and one may learn a few lessons by observing the patterns of such interaction. For advanced students of theosophy, renunciation regarding all material possessions is the iron rule. And yet the promotion of mutual help initiatives in economy is one way of expressing the ideal of universal brotherhood. During the first years of the theosophical movement - in India in the 1880s - the very Raja Yogis who inspired the creation of the movement directly participated in an attempt to found a daily newspaper.

The journalistic initiative involved a financial effort which did not succeed. The publishing company, which should be named “Phoenix”, was never founded. The Indian nation lost that spiritual opportunity, but the economic plans and effort made by the Mahatmas are recorded in their Letters.[1] It is possible to draw philosophical and socio-economic lessons from that unique experience.

Seen from a historic point of view, the “Phoenix” venture is certainly no isolated fact. There was at least one attempt of significant proportions and some success to create a community of theosophical workers in the United States, involving socio-economic relations based on the principles of communion and cooperation: Lomaland. Although involved in illusions, the experience contains lessons. Dreams and small experiences in economic cooperation have been numerous among theosophists since 1875.

Every Utopian thinker, ancient and modern, addresses economic issues. The Indian emperor Ashoka is a classic example of socio-economic reformer. There were in antiquity entire nations and civilizations whose economic structures, though imperfect, were based on the principles of equity, justice, wisdom, mutual help and spiritual ethics. These will come to exist again in due time.

The principles guiding ethical civilizations have been raised and taught again and again for ages in Eastern and Western nations alike. Since the 20th century, significant names of thinkers and activists along this line include Mohandas Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, Chico Mendes, E. F. Schumacher, A. T. Ariyaratne, and many others. The kibbutzim and moshavim in Israel, and the thousands of co-operatives around the world are anticipations of a brighter future.

Regardless of the future now waiting for the present economic and financial structures of our materialist civilization, the universal tenets inspiring the economy of mutual help are available right now to be put into action if it becomes historically necessary.

#### NOTE:

[1] “The Mahatma Letters”, 1926 edition, published by T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., in London, UK, 493 pages. See for instance pp. 202, 377-384, 390, 393-396, 387-389, 353 and 428. The book is available in PDF at our associated websites. Numbers of pages are the same in the TUP edition of 1992. On the Phoenix venture, read also “The Masters and Men”, by Virginia Hanson, HPH, 1980, chapter 15, pp. 207-221. There are references to the venture also on pages 225-226 and others.

## The Meals of the Pilgrim



“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.”

The timeless axiom, ascribed to Hippocrates, is a central tenet in theosophy for several reasons.

It indicates in the first place the right relation between the individual and the act of eating. One’s food must be a source of health, and it is a serious distortion to look at it as simply a source of pleasure, as many do nowadays. And this belongs to Raja Yoga: self-knowledge is the opposite of search for immediate pleasure.

The Hippocratic axiom also points to the importance of health - physical and emotional - in the search for wisdom.

A third reason why the tenet has theosophical importance is in the fact that esoteric philosophy works with Nature and through her methods. With the right kind of food Nature gives us healing substances which come to our organism even before any sickness is visible.

That allows us to live healthier lives on the physical level and also to have purer thoughts and emotions. The psychic influence of food is of decisive importance in human life and has been demonstrated since antiquity.

Humans have strong reasons to abstain from cruelty against animals, and theosophy is in favour of the choice for vegetarian food. In her “Collected Writings”, Helena Blavatsky says that [advanced] disciples of Eastern Wisdom follow a diet based on fruit. [1]

In “The Mahatma Letters”, a Master of the Wisdom recommends the free use of fruit to a lay disciple.[2] The theosophical essay entitled “The *Elixir of Life*” says one’s food should be “innocent and simple” and adds: “Fruit and milk will usually be the best”.[3]

Extensive researches done by Alfons Balbach and other authors have gathered safe evidence of the healing powers present in dozens of fruits.

#### NOTES:

[1] “Collected Writings”, H. P. Blavatsky, TPH, Volume XIV, p. 164, footnote.

[2] The book “The Mahatma Letters” is available in PDF in our associated websites. See p. 455. The page is the same in the TUP edition.

[3] “The *Elixir of Life*”, by G.M., in “Fire Years of Theosophy”, Theosophy Co., Los Angeles, 575 pp., see p. 24.

## Helena Blavatsky, On Ethics In the Theosophical Movement

The book “The Key to Theosophy”, by Helena Blavatsky, unfolds as a dialogue. On chapter three, readers find this question:

“Have you any ethical system that you carry out in the Society?”

“Society” here means “theosophical movement”. And HPB answers:

“The ethics are there, ready and clear enough for whomsoever would follow them. They are the essence and cream of the world’s ethics, gathered from the teachings of all the world’s great reformers. Therefore, you will find represented therein Confucius and Zoroaster, Lao-tze and the Bhagavad-Gita, the precepts of Gautama Buddha and Jesus of Nazareth, of Hillel and his school, as of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and their schools.”

Then the “Enquirer” in the book asks again: “Do the members of your Society carry out these precepts? I have heard of great dissensions and quarrels among them.”

And Blavatsky says:

“Very naturally, since although the reform (in its present shape) may be called new, the men and women to be reformed are the same human, sinning natures as of old. As already said, the earnest *working* members are few; but many are the sincere and well-disposed persons, who try their best to live up to the Society’s and their own ideals.”

What is the task to be fulfilled by experienced theosophists? HPB proceeds:



“Our duty is to encourage and assist individual fellows in self-improvement, intellectual, moral, and spiritual; not to blame or condemn those who fail. We have, strictly speaking, no right to refuse admission to anyone - especially in the *Esoteric Section* of the Society, wherein ‘he who enters is as one newly born’. But if any member, his sacred pledges on his word of honour and immortal *Self* notwithstanding, chooses to continue, after that ‘new birth’, with the new man, the vices or defects of his old life, and to indulge in them still in the Society, then, of course, he is more than likely to be asked to resign and withdraw; or, in case of his refusal, to be expelled. We have the strictest rules for such emergencies.” [1]

So in a truly theosophical association ethics can be no make-believe commitment. Imperfections are part of life, and a sincere attempt to improve oneself is necessary.

NOTE:

[1] See the subtitle “ON THE SACREDNESS OF THE PLEDGE”, in Section Three of “The Key to Theosophy”, by Helena P. Blavatsky, Theosophy Co. and TUP editions.

## Contrast and Unity

### The Paradox of Man Regarding the Cosmos



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was an activist of spiritualism and once had a deep interest in theosophy.

Many of his stories have points in common with esoteric philosophy. In the opening paragraphs of his short story “The Man From Archangel”, for instance, he makes his main character write down:

“The solar system, amidst a countless number of other systems as large as itself, rolls ever silently through space in the direction of the constellation of Hercules. The great spheres of which it is composed spin and spin through the eternal void ceaselessly and noiselessly. Of these one of the smallest and most insignificant is that conglomeration of solid and of liquid particles which we have named the earth. It whirls onwards now as it has done before my birth, and will do after my death - a revolving mystery, coming none know whence, and going none know whither.”

And Conan Doyle's character proceeds:

“Upon the outer crust of this moving mass crawl many mites, of whom I, John McVittie, am one, helpless, impotent, being dragged aimlessly through space. Yet such is the state of things amongst us that the little energy and glimmering of reason which I possess is entirely taken up with the labours which are necessary in order to procure certain metallic disks, wherewith I may purchase the chemical elements necessary to build up my ever-wasting tissues, and keep a roof over me to shelter me from the inclemency of the weather. I thus have no thought to expend upon the vital questions which surround me on every side. Yet, miserable entity as I am, I can still at times feel some degree of happiness, and am even - save the mark! - puffed up occasionally with a sense of my own importance.”

The well-written, interesting short story is part of the volume “The Gully of Bluemansdyke and Other Stories” (1892).

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## **In Order to Re-establish Justice**

**T**he present civilization has much to gain from rescuing and recovering the wisdom of indigenous peoples in the various continents.

In Europe, in the Americas and Africa, the legends and folk tales teach us the best art of living. The same happens in Russia, Asia and Oceania.

Modern culture can abandon anti-Semitism and repent from its disrespect for life and forests, from its neglect of children, its contempt for peace, its worship of machines. It can cease to promote wars and genocides in the name of this or that divinity, or in search of money and authoritarian power. Asking forgiveness for our mistakes, we find justice.

## **An Accurate Evaluation of Potentialities**

**H**uman beings make decisions on the basis of a mental map of “possibilities” and “impossibilities”. Such a mapping is made with by the lower self, which often loves comfort - or perhaps the search for glory - more than it loves truth.

Our vision of our own possibilities gets easily outdated. Routine tends to ignore both higher possibilities and possibilities for the worse. Life is an on-going experiment: by seeing real dangers we get humble, and by being conscious of the many divine potentialities we dare go ahead in the process of learning the best.

An intense effort in the right direction, made with discernment, opens the best doors. Discernment of right and wrong is obtained gradually.

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# Report From SIPRI, 2017

## The Year in Which Nuclear Weapons Could Be Banned?



**From the *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)*, an independent institute dedicated to research into armaments, arms control and disarmament.**

At the end of 2016, the General Assembly of the United Nations voted by a large majority (Resolution 71/258 of 23 December 2016) to convene in 2017 a UN conference to negotiate a 'legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination'.

The result of the vote was 113 in favour, 35 against and 13 abstentions. Four of the five nuclear weapon states - France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States - voted against, along with the majority of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) states plus Australia, Israel, Japan and South Korea, all of which rely on US nuclear guarantees. Interestingly, North Korea voted in favour. Those abstaining included China (the only nuclear weapon state that did not vote against), India, the Netherlands, Pakistan and Switzerland.

An organizational meeting was held at the UN in New York on 16 February 2017, attended by more than 100 states, to plan for this conference. Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gómez of Costa Rica was selected as the president of the conference, which will be convened on 27–31 March and 15 June–7 July in accordance with Resolution 71/258. The meeting also agreed on the conference agenda and rules of procedure. The rules will be those of the UN General Assembly, which require a two-thirds majority for matters of substance and a simple majority for procedural matters, hence no state(s) will be able to block decisions on outlawing nuclear weapons.

This push to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons by a large majority of non-nuclear weapon states has opened up stark differences not only with states possessing nuclear weapons, but also within the ranks of the non-nuclear weapon states. States in nuclear-armed alliances such as NATO and the USA's Pacific allies, plus Russia, vehemently oppose any negotiations on a multilateral treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, while declaring support for achieving a world without nuclear weapons through an undefined 'step-by-step' or 'phased' approach with no defined timeline.

Three previous international conferences (Oslo 2013, Nayarit 2014 and Vienna 2015) drew global attention to the deep concern over the pervasive threat to humanity posed by the existence of nuclear weapons and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any detonation of a nuclear explosive. Given these risks, the majority of non-nuclear weapon states stressed the need for urgent action by all states towards achieving a world without nuclear weapons and noted that progress to date towards nuclear disarmament had been very slow. These states also highlighted that the 1968 Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) had obligated nuclear weapon states to disarm, but nearly 50 years after the NPT entered into force, this obligation has not been met and there are no signs of it being met.

The majority of non-nuclear weapon states also noted that there was a legal gap regarding the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, as there was no nuclear disarmament treaty along the lines of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention that respectively prohibited biological and chemical weapons and mandated their total elimination. Accordingly, these states proposed four distinct approaches for the pursuit of a world without nuclear weapons: (a) a comprehensive nuclear weapon convention; (b) a nuclear weapon ban treaty; (c) a framework agreement; and (d) a progressive approach based upon 'building blocks' of legal and non-legal measures as well as confidence-building measures.

Some NATO states responded that there was no such legal gap and that the NPT provided an essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. They stressed that the international security environment, current geopolitical situation and role of nuclear weapons in existing security doctrines should be taken into account in the pursuit of any effective measures for nuclear disarmament, and as such, a nuclear weapon ban treaty was not in their national security interests. These states also maintained that a nuclear weapon ban treaty would create confusion regarding the implementation of the NPT and complicate fulfilment of the NPT's nuclear disarmament obligations.

In fact, a nuclear weapon ban treaty would not affect the NPT. Those states that are parties to the NPT would still be bound by it and obligated to its full implementation. A nuclear ban treaty could go beyond the NPT and prohibit possession of nuclear weapons and deployment of nuclear weapons (including in foreign states, as for example in Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey which host US nuclear weapons under NATO auspices). Just as the 1963 Partial Test-Ban Treaty banning nuclear test explosions in the atmosphere, outer space and under water does not conflict with the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty banning all nuclear test explosions, a nuclear weapon ban treaty would not be in conflict with the NPT.

All the signs are that the negotiations in March and June-July will be fraught with deeply held differences among the participating non-nuclear weapon states. There are fears that those NATO and allied non-nuclear weapon states which might participate will run interference and



complicate the discussions on behalf of the nuclear weapon states. Another fault line could be between those non-nuclear weapon states that want a quick, short norm establishing a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons and those that might prefer a more detailed treaty with provisions on verification.

Civil society participation at the UN conference in March and June-July could be a prominent feature for the first time in multilateral negotiations on a nuclear weapon treaty. However, some states have already raised concerns at the organizational meeting in February regarding the participation of civil society and may attempt to curtail its influence or involvement.

Whether 2017 will be the year that finally sees nuclear weapons being banned or whether the effort to achieve this objective is stymied remains to be seen.

(Tariq Rauf)

[Tariq Rauf is the Director of the SIPRI Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-proliferation Programme. Visit the SIPRI online at [www.sipri.org](http://www.sipri.org).]

## Listening to the Silence From a Blog in “The Times of Israel”



...It is extremely beneficial to focus our consciousness in the silence of the heart several times a day. The task is easy and can be done without stopping work. With a small amount of willpower, we get out of mental routine to invoke that which is sacred.

It is enough to reduce the rhythm of efforts for half a minute, proceeding with the same activity in slow motion, while the meditational “void” is evoked and experienced once more in one’s heart. Following the pause, peace expands and efficiency increases.

[Reproduced from the article “**Right Action and Proper Rest**”, which is published in our theosophical blog at [The Times of Israel](http://TheTimesofIsrael.com).]

## An Increase in One's Purity of Soul: **Rejecting Emotional Garbage**



**Humans can always learn purity of emotion from their younger brothers who live according to Nature**

**B**y firmly rejecting distorted waves of thought and emotion, the student of esoteric philosophy keeps his conscience clear before his own higher self and every other being. [1]

He thus preserves a most precious asset: his ability to learn the best.

One of the first duties of a pilgrim is to maintain the world of *personal emotions* under the constant light of his spiritual soul. In order to expand his purity of mind, he can look up to wiser souls and spiritual teachers. He may also learn lessons from his younger brothers, the fellow-animals who live according to Nature.

As long as the pilgrim receives the approval of his own soul, it does not matter if he seems to have *little intelligence*. He has already obtained the main condition for progress, and other conditions will emerge in due time.

Both severity and goodwill are necessary, yet sometimes one of these factors must come to the front while the other remains invisible, preserving the foundations of right action.

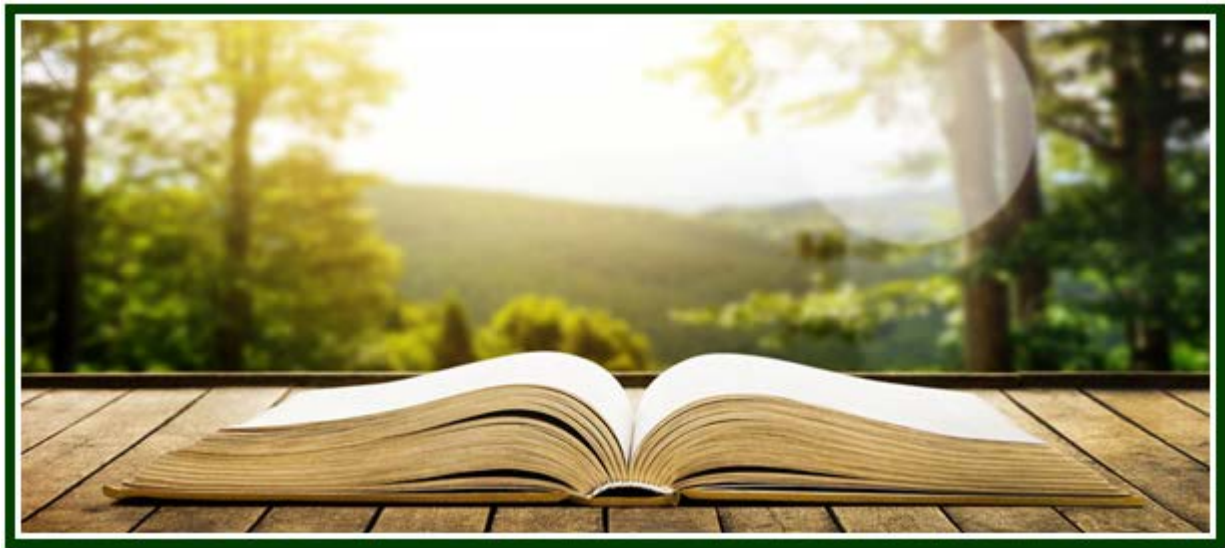
Goodwill should not be confused with weakness; but in many occasions misinformed people cannot tell the difference between the two factors. When generosity is seen as weakness, severity is needed. And severeness must not be confused with lack of goodwill: however, naive people are unable to see the differences between the two things.

Life is dynamic and includes a constantly, self-renewing contrast between fact and illusion. At all times, equilibrium and love of truth guide the pilgrim to wisdom as long as his inner purpose is noble.

NOTE:

[1] See the New Testament, Acts, 24: 16.

## The Study of the Laws



A correct way to describe a master of the wisdom consists in saying he is One with the Universal Law, for he acts in profound harmony with It. He causes harm to none and helps the liberation of all beings.

For every citizen of our planet, the way to wisdom consists in studying the laws of the universe and the One Law of Life, which is the Law of Equilibrium and Justice.

“The Secret Doctrine” and every true book of theosophy are guiding lights in the study of the laws of the universe, macrocosmic and microcosmic.

## The Teaching and the Wording

No philosophical or esoteric teaching is in the outward wording.

Attachment to words is the same as attachment to superficiality. The right use of words is an intelligent way to interact with the silent source of all knowledge. In the subtle dialogue between word and non-word, it is the Purpose present in the Silence that reveals the several layers of meaning around us.

Therefore the best wording can only point to the teaching and provide useful elements for the autonomous development of wisdom in our consciousness. The wording is the humble *vehicle* for the teaching. The example set by our actions and intentions teaches more than whatever we say.

Of course, the positive value of words may be significant, and it is often sacred, as long as they come from one who lives what he says. No one should pretend to teach something he does not know first-hand. True teachers never stop learning; they are fundamentally colleagues to their students, as we can see in the Mahatma Letters.



# Thoughts Along the Road

## Observing the Divine Presence in Daily Life



\* **S**piritual virtues cannot be acquired by imitation. They must develop from within in natural ways. They are stimulated by the Sun of a pure heart and nurtured by the wind and the rain of daily probation, as they grow on the hard soil of individual practice.

\* By studying the flow of Cycles one gets to understand the science of the use of time. The practice of right action is also the practice of right timing. In every Duration there are a few proper moments for real change. When to wait, when to act, in what a rhythm, and where - these are questions that demand profound calm, vigilance, discernment and attention.

\* At the lowest point of the tide, the waters of life start recovering strength. In the coldest time of winter, the Sun begins to get stronger again. In the most unpleasant moments, great lessons in wisdom are available. Since everything is cyclic, one must be serene in defeat and humble in victory.

\* It is a deep yet unseen sort of bliss, to detect the mechanisms of spiritual ignorance in ourselves and in those around us, and stay away from them; and challenge them; and preserve peace in our souls. Unfortunate are those who identify themselves with ignorance. Bliss starts with a willingness to pay the price for getting rid of attachment to falsehood. An unconditional love for truth is the first condition to begin the journey.

\* In order to listen to the voice of one's conscience, one must be in complete silence on the emotional and mental levels. Such absence of noise is attainable by reducing to nothing one's personal existence in its psychological dimensions. Therefore in order to listen to our conscience one must cease to function for some time at least as a separate self, thus suspending all sense of personality or personal existence. There is scarcely anything more

spiritually pleasant than listening to the silent voice of the void, which contains the totality of life.

\* One's central point of view makes some things easy to see and causes other things to become invisible. Looking at life from various perspectives, we can better observe the complexity and contradictions present in the objects seen. Some points of view are complementary to each other; some are mutually exclusive. One must examine and decide with care what are the main standing-points of our choice, for they determine our relation to life and to Karma.

\* That part of the lower self that reacts against wisdom tends to fabricate great dramas out of nothing. In fact, human beings do not generate problems they can't solve. Every difficulty created is solved in due time.

\* Each individual is often the hidden source of his own pain, and the active healer of himself. The universe is not ruled by personal feelings of one kind or another: it is regulated by the impersonal law of love; by the principle of balance and equilibrium among all, by the feeling of impartial compassion.

\* One must have eyes to see, before perceiving the cosmos behind apparent chaos. While a building is being remodeled, sheer confusion is apparent to the visitor. As the housekeeper cleans a house, everything seems to be out of place. Historical time evolves by centuries. A new civilization of ethics slowly emerges in the middle of old materialistic societies; and many a fact seems not to make sense. Before selfishness is defeated, the victories obtained by spiritual ignorance look like the biggest of all time.

\* The power of spiritual soul flows as a blessing to one's "terrestrial" being. Listening to the highest is hearing that which cannot be heard. It is seeing the invisible facts of life and *feeling* that which cannot be felt on a personal level. And there has to be a decrease of intensity in the outward world, for the inner and the higher to flow, unperceived, in that which is outward.

## The Herd Illusion

A trap which every good-willing person has to face is the illusion of herd-thinking and herd-consensus.

"Thinking like the others" is actually not-thinking; it is a fake version of the sense of communion. True unity includes diversity of thoughts and embraces contrast, at the same time that noble goals, noble methods and universal principles are shared by all.

Being part of a herd creates a false sense of security. The herd-effect paralyses people's ability to really live.

The way ahead is in being self-responsible. It requires challenging the wrong forms of Tamas or blind routine. One must help others as far as possible to get rid of the herd-effect, to attain a real feeling of brotherhood, to build a harmonious cooperation and an affinity that does not suppress the inner independence of anyone.



## April 2, 2017: **A Day to Celebrate Altruism**



**G**ood Deeds Day is an annual celebration dedicated to good deeds. All over the world, hundreds of thousands of people choose to volunteer and help others, putting into practice the simple idea that every single person can do something good, be it large or small, to improve the lives of others and positively change the world.

The project was initiated in 2007 by businesswoman and philanthropist Shari Arison going global in 2011. Good Deeds Day held its largest day yet on April 10, 2016, when 1,500,000 participants from 75 countries took part in 14,000 projects, totaling over four million hours of service.

Link to the event: <http://www.good-deeds-day.org/> .

## The New Texts in Our Websites

**T**his is the monthly report of our associated websites. The following items were published in English language between 22 February and 22 March:

(The more recent titles above)

1. **The Need to Rebuild Ourselves**- *Helena P. Blavatsky*
2. **The Light and Power of Jupiter** - *Carlos Cardoso Aveline*
3. **On Seeing the Mistakes of Others** - *Carlos Cardoso Aveline*
4. **The Place of Miracles** - *Anonymous* (a Talmudic tale)
5. **Did Madame Blavatsky Forge the Mahatma Letters?** - *C. Jinarajadasa* (book)
6. **The Mahatma Letters** - *A.Trevor Barker (ed.)* (book)
7. **The Island of Truth** - *George P. McCallum* (a short story)

