

discernment. Every quality needs discernment, including generosity, selflessness, patience, loyalty, and deep attention.

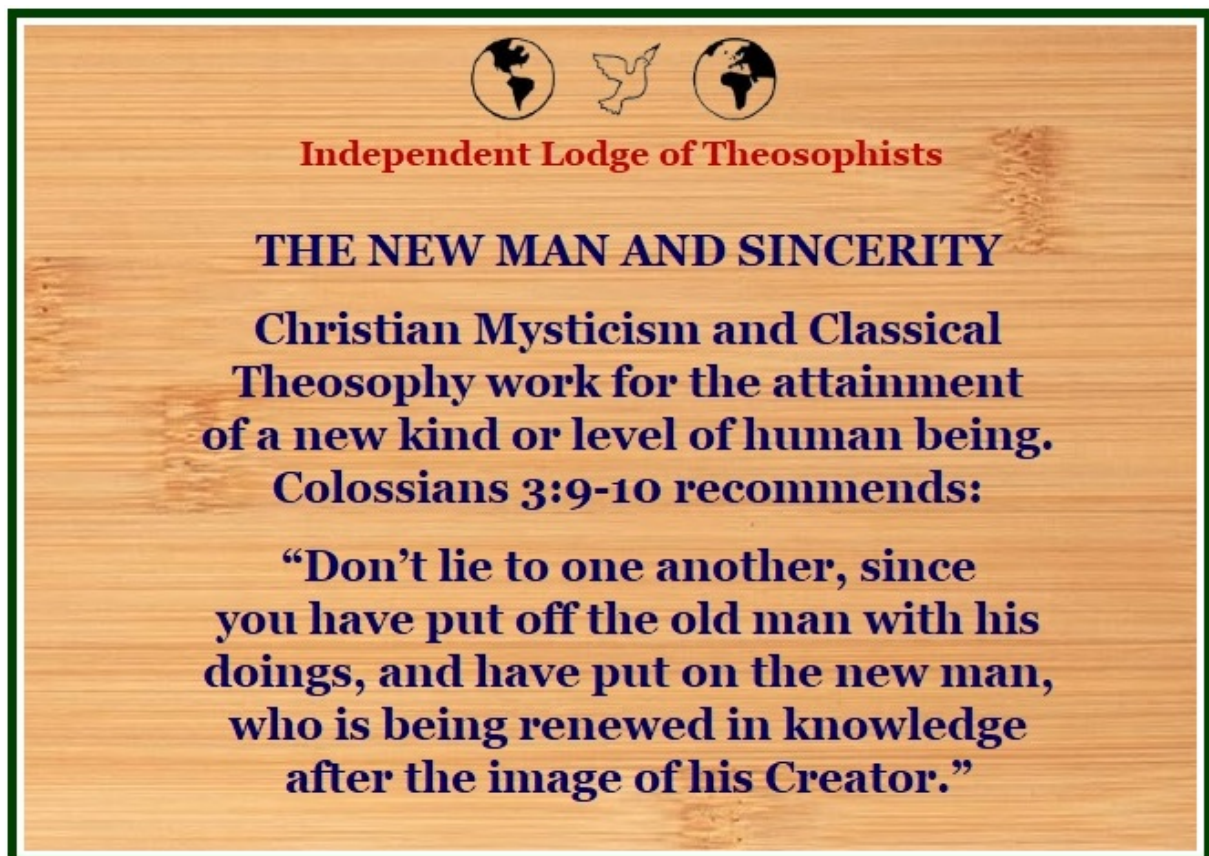
Discernment is the result of experience. You must learn from examining your own past, and the mistakes made by others, and their victories. Accumulated experience is the source of discernment.

The kind of dangers and opportunities that come to you depend on the state of your aura. Your state of mind must open doors to good opportunities, and close doors to the possibility of making mistakes and adopting illusions. The protection given you by your higher feelings opens the door to spiritual opportunities, to truth, to the development of higher qualities, to eternal wisdom and the influence of the universal Law. As you expand your ability to be surrounded by elevated feelings, you strengthen your personal safety on every level of life.

(CCA)

(Transcription of the 5m video "[Your Best Friends Are Near You and Keep You Safe](#)", revised by the author.)

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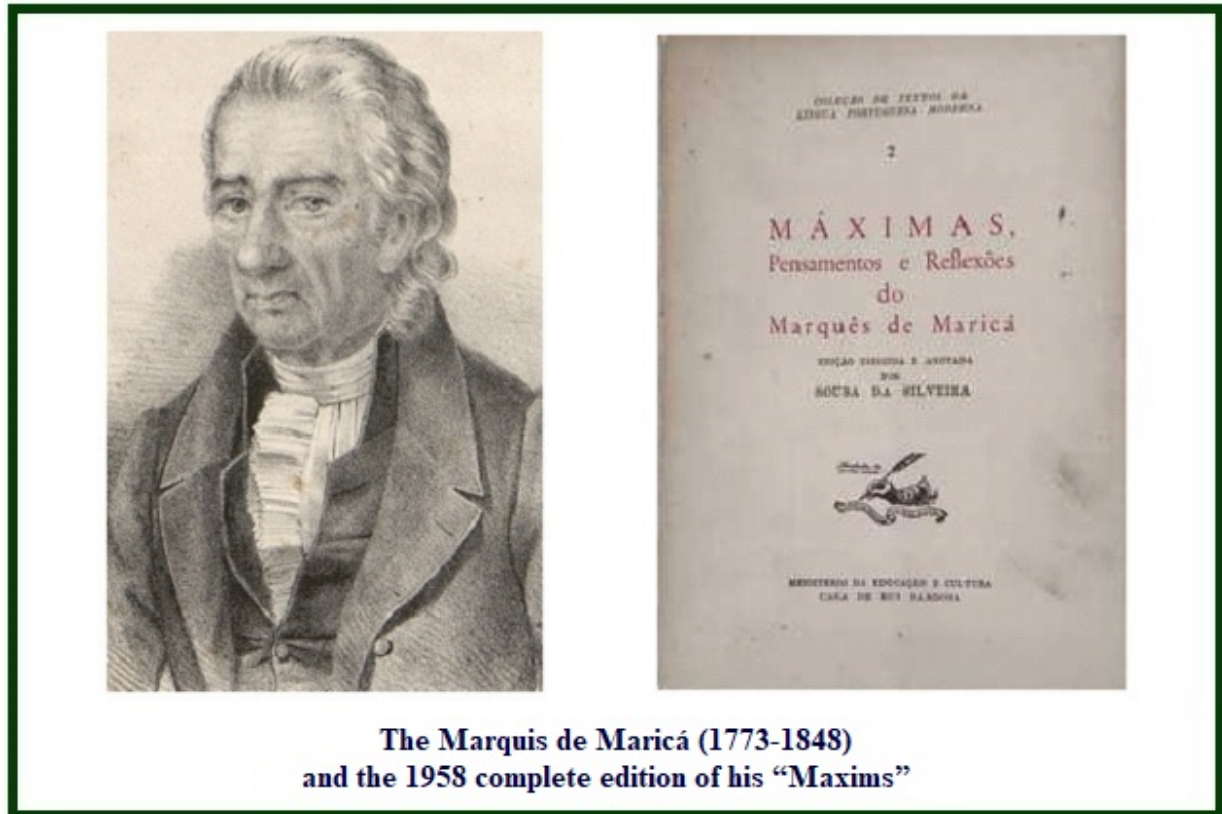


Read **[The Future of Adyar Society](#)**
[Examining The Political Crisis of 2007-2011](#)

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The Four Levels of Happiness

Commentary on a Maxim by the Marquis of Maricá



Modern theosophy, which started in 1875, speaks of various levels of consciousness. A direct understanding of such a basic aspect of esoteric philosophy is of fundamental importance because it is very difficult for us to understand the complexity of life unless we have a direct perception of the diversity of levels of consciousness.

You have physical consciousness, and you have emotional consciousness. You possess an intellectual, broad-minded perception of reality, and the spiritual approach to life. All of them are important. In fact, theosophy speaks of seven levels.

Anticipating by a few decades this fundamental aspect of theosophy, Brazilian philosopher Marquis of Maricá wrote about four different levels of consciousness, at which happiness can be acquired.

The first one is health. The *sensory happiness*, says the Marquis, is attained through good health. Here we have the ability to improve our health before diseases arrive. If you see life as a long-term effort to learn spiritual things, you need to preserve and improve your health. Physical well-being is one of the most basic and practical, yet fragile sources of happiness. It can always be improved.

The second level of happiness is the moral one. Here, says the Marquis of Maricá, you must develop virtue - and virtue is that set of good qualities which put you in sympathy with the divine world. This includes self-control, self-knowledge, self-responsibility, a knowledge of the Law of Karma, the Law that says you must sow, before harvesting.

The third level is the intellectual layer of life. You must understand nature by studying and understanding Nature, both outward and inward.

The fourth one is the religious level of happiness. The Marquis mentions the *fear of God* and the *love of God*. Fear of God of course is a rather symbolic way of referring to the rigor of the universal law.

Fear of the universal law means a sense of responsibility regarding the fact that your life on the physical plane is far from eternal. You have a limited amount of time in order to accomplish whatever learning you want to attain about eternal life before your physical body gets eliminated from the equation. There is a dramatic tension in this, because you have a limited time to obtain unlimited wisdom.

There is a sense of responsibility and danger because of the contrast between a limited life and an unlimited task, an unlimited learning. The feeling of danger can be symbolically called *fear of God*, or *fear of the eternal law*. There is a sense of danger in living. It's the danger of wasting your time with idiotic things.

The Marquis names here four main levels of happiness. If you look at it carefully, you might find ten or fifteen levels of happiness in your life. And to each level of contentment there is a corresponding level of *unhappiness*. The set of four forms of happiness established by the Marquis corresponds to four forms of suffering. There is, for instance, a physical unhappiness, a moral unhappiness, an intellectual unhappiness, and a religious kind of suffering, or defeat.

Happiness and unhappiness are combined in your life so as to bring you lessons, and from such a contrast one may feel a kind of fear regarding the dangers of wasting time.

Fear is useful as long as it makes us open our eyes. The other fear, which paralyzes one, is not useful and should be despised and abandoned. Courage is much better than fear, if fear wants to paralyze us. Fear is a kind of alarm clock sounding the news that life is short when compared with our natural calling for eternity. We want eternity, and eternity surrounds us. We must transcend the illusion of short term life in order to understand eternity in time.

(The above text is a transcription of the 7m video "[The Marquis of Maricá, on the Four Levels of Happiness](#)", and was revised by the author.)

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An Article by Radha Burnier:

H.P. Blavatsky's Signet Ring
The Annotated Story of a Ring Shows
the Need for Honesty Among Theosophists

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Sayings of the Egyptian Fathers - 02 (Concluded)

28. A certain brother went to an anchorite and, having been charitably received by him, said to him as he was leaving: “Forgive me, father, for having disturbed your usual mode of living.” And he replied: “My mode of living, brother, is to receive peaceably anyone who comes and to dismiss him charitably when he leaves.”

29. A brother asked an old man: “How is it that God promises good to the soul in the Holy Scriptures, yet the soul does not wish to remain in the good, but inclines to what is transitory and unclean?” The old man answered: “Because it has not yet tasted the sweetness of heavenly things; therefore, it turns more quickly to what is unclean.”

Commentary:

A practical decision to seek the lasting happiness of divine world depends on the lower self, which must deserve progress, before attaining it. It is by renouncing material attachments that one is born to the fullness of the spirit. (CCA)

30. A brother asked an old man: “How is it that the soul loves the passions?” He replied: “The soul loves the passions, but it is the Spirit of God which restrains it. Therefore, we should mourn and watch for what is unclean within us. As Mary bent over the tomb weeping, the Lord quickly appeared to her; so, too, the soul, if it loves tears.”

31. A brother asked an old man: “Tell me, father, some word of salvation.” He replied: “Go and ask God that He grant you always to have in your heart grief and humility, and always watch out for your sins.”

32. They reported of Abbot Poemen that, when he was about to leave his cell to join the congregation in church, he would sit for almost an hour examining his thoughts within himself; then he would enter.

33. A brother asked an old man: “What shall I do for my sins?” He replied: “He who desires to be free from his sins shall be freed from them by weeping, and he who wishes to build virtues in himself will build them by weeping. Even the Scriptures are composed of mourning, for our fathers said to their disciples: ‘Wail.’ There is no other way to life except this.”

Commentary:

Weeping is well regarded and welcome not only among the Desert Fathers, but throughout Christian mysticism. Read for example the text “[The Science of Tears](#)”, by Portuguese Oratorian thinker Manuel Bernardes, born in 1644.

Accepting the pain that cannot be avoided as part of reality is not an exclusively Christian teaching. The first of the four noble truths taught by Gautama Buddha states that life implies Dukkha, that is, discomfort, pain, affliction. (CCA)

34. A brother asked an old man: “What shall I do, father?” He replied: “When Abraham entered the promised land, he first bought a tomb for himself, and near the tomb he made sure of land for a possession.” The brother said to him: “What is a tomb?” He answered: “A place of mourning and weeping.”

35. Abbot Moses said: “If a man’s actions do not accord with his prayers, he labors in vain. When a man prays for himself, that his sins may be forgiven, he should be careful not to sin again. When one puts away the desire to sin and walks in the fear of God, God will soon receive him joyfully.”

Commentary:

The need for coherence and integrity in the soul is a universal principle taught by different religions and philosophies. The Zoroastrianism of ancient Persia recommends that its followers make the following vows: “I agree with good thoughts, and I do not agree with bad thoughts. I agree with good actions, and I do not agree with bad actions. I agree with obedience (to ethical and moral precepts), and I do not agree with disobedience (to precepts). I agree with righteous people, and I do not agree with unworthy or unethical people.” (Translated from the article “[A Força de um Compromisso Sagrado](#)”). (CCA)

36. A brother asked an old man: “What shall a man do in every temptation that comes upon him and in every thought sent by the enemy?” He replied: “He must weep in the sight of the goodness of God, that He may aid and succor him. For it is written: ‘The Lord is with me to help me, and I shall avenge myself upon my foes’.”

Commentary:

The Lord is, of course, the higher self, the spiritual soul. The enemies of the seeker of truth are his demons, that is, his bad feelings and bad thoughts, negative subtle energies. His friends include the angels of good feelings and good thoughts, the angel of the intention to do right, and the angels of good habits. (CCA)

37. A brother asked an old man: “Behold, a man beats his servant for a fault which he has committed; what does the servant then say to his master?” He replied: “If he is not a bad servant, he says to his master: ‘I have sinned; have pity on me’, and nothing else. But when he recognizes his sins and confesses that he has sinned, his master will forgive him.”

38. A brother asked an old man: “If there is a persecution for the cause of the faith, where must one flee?” He replied: “Where you hear the faithful are orthodox, there flee.”

39. A brother asked Abbot Poemen: “What shall I do, because my thoughts disturb me as I sit in my cell?” He replied: “Despise no one, judge no one, speak evil of no one; and God will give you rest and will cause your sitting down to be undisturbed. For the properties of the soul are to watch one’s speech, to guard one’s actions, and exercise judgment. If one prostrates himself in the sight of God, and does not exalt himself to be measured with the great, and does not determine his own will, but sits in his cell and keeps his place, he will not be thrown into confusion, for these are the tools of the soul. Of all of these, guard especially against determining your own will; then you will have peace.”

Commentary:

“Not determining his own will” means not following the impulsive and instinctive desires of the lower self, but following the higher will, which is compatible with divine consciousness. (CCA)

40. A brother asked an old man: “What shall I do, for my thoughts molest me?” The old man replied: “Go and say to them: ‘Tell me, what fault or complaint have I to find with you?’ Then you will have peace. Reflect upon your desires and cast them behind you; then you will have no anxiety and your thoughts will flee from you.”

Commentary:

Speaking to his wrong thoughts establishes the proper distance between the truth-seeker and bad thoughts.

Undesirable ideas present themselves as if they were our own, and as if they originated from us. If we speak to them, we make it clear that they do not represent us, but are subject to our approval or disapproval. Speaking to undesirable thoughts by asking “what do you have to do with me?” means that we do not enter into the automatic and blind game to which they could induce us.

Theosophy states that thoughts and feelings are united with “elementals”, subtle beings of nature that animate them and are semi-intelligent, but can be “tamed” and trained. Hence the importance of speaking to the emotions or ideas that come to us, and thinking about them logically and from the point of view of our self-discipline, and not identifying ourselves instinctively with this or that inclination that arises from the lower worlds.

“Renouncing one’s own will,” as we have seen already, means abandoning the instinctive desires of the lower self. (CCA)

41. A brother asked an old man: “Why is it that sometimes when I recite the Psalms I am in more of a hurry to reach the end?” He replied: “How else can a man reveal that he loves God, except when he is attacked by a demon? It is then that we put violent restraint upon ourselves, because we are firmly held in the fear and love of God.”

Commentary:

“Demon”, of course, is the lower, instinctive part of the subconscious lower self, which boycotts the spiritual journey of the pilgrim. It represents the bad karma the apprentice has to face. (CCA)

42. He also said: “Flies do not approach a lamp which is lit, but they do light upon one that is only warm. So demons flee a monk who is lit by the fire of the Divine Spirit, but they attack him if he is lukewarm.”

43. He also said: “If your adversaries attack you, the first time, flee; the second time, flee; the third time, be as a sword against them, go out over them and cut them down.”

Commentary:

Let Karma ripen. Wait for your opponent to lower his vigilance. Prepare yourself like a calm warrior of truth. Keep the initiative to yourself. Make an independent decision on what is the right moment for confrontation, and win the battle. (CCA)

44. A certain brother came to Abbot Poemen during Lent and, while he was consulting him about his thoughts, said to the old man: “I hesitated about coming here at this time; I kept saying that perhaps you would be shut in during this season.” The old man answered: “It is not the wooden door, but the door of the tongue that we have learned to close.”

45. The brothers once came from Scete to the monk John, who was sitting in silence and working. When he had greeted them, he turned away without saying more and began to work. And the brothers said: “John, who gave you a monk’s habit? Why didn’t he teach you to be hospitable to the brothers and to say ‘Pray’ or ‘Sit’?” John said to them: “A man who is a sinner has no time for these things.” Abbot Theodore said: “You speak the truth, for God does not require this commandment of a man who is in supplication and penance.”

46. A brother addressed Abbot Poemen: “Father, teach me what I shall do.” He replied: “It is written: ‘I will declare my iniquity; and I will think for my sin’.”

47. A brother asked an old man: “Father, what shall I do?” He replied: “Go and become fond of doing violence to yourself. Unsheathe your sword and go forth to war.” The brother said to him: “My thoughts do not permit me.” The old man answered: “It is written: ‘Call upon me in time of your distress; and I will rescue you, and you shall glorify me.’ Call, therefore, upon God and he will free you.”

Commentary:

The idea that the pilgrim must fight against his own ignorance (and to a certain extent against the ignorance of others) is present in the Mahatma Letters. There, the theosophist is called a “warrior of truth”. On the other hand, in theosophy it is considered that “an earnest student is never left helpless”. However, help will come according to what he deserves and not according to what he expects. (CCA)

48. Abbot Theodore and Abbot Or were once putting mud on the roof of a cell, and one said to the other: “If God visits us right now, what are we going to do?” Then, wailing at one another, they left their work uncompleted and each retired to his cell.

49. When Abbot Silvanus was sitting in his cell, he went into a trance and fell upon his face; after many hours he arose weeping. His disciple stood by him and said: “What is the matter, father?” But he remained silent and kept weeping. As the disciple continued to insist and, finally, used force to get an answer, the old man said: “I was carried to the judgment, my son, and saw many in monk’s garb going to punishment and many of the laity entering the kingdom of God.”

Commentary:

The Desert Fathers were free from ecclesiastical bureaucracy, and they maintained a critical spirit towards it. They dedicated their lives to direct contemplation, and avoided becoming involved in institutional power disputes. See Apothegm 7, above. (CCA)

50. Abbot Moses once went to a well to draw water, and he saw the brother Zachary praying, with the Spirit of God abiding over him in peace.

51. It was said of Abbot John that he never permitted an idle thought to enter his heart nor spoke of the things of this world. So the brothers tested him, saying: “We thank God, father; it has rained a great deal and the palm trees have been irrigated and are sprouting and the brothers may find leaves for their work.” The old man said to them: “Just so, brothers, is the Spirit of God. When it descends into the hearts of the saints, they are opened and bear fruit in the fear of God.”

52. A brother asked an old man: “What is the meaning of the Lord’s words: ‘I was in prison and you came to me’?” He answered: “Although the Lord referred this to those who were His neighbors, yet, since sitting in a cell is to be in prison, if one sits in a cell and always keeps his thoughts upon God, to him it may rightly be said: ‘I was in prison and you came to me’.”

Commentary:

The monk’s cell is fundamentally his own aura. In it he lives alone with his conscience. The cell corresponds to his Karma, his personal world, which can be both a refuge and a blessing, or perhaps a prison, depending on his state of consciousness. See the article [The Invisible Monastery](#). (CCA)

53. A brother asked Abbot Bessarion: “What shall I do, for my thoughts trouble me?” Abbot Bessarion replied: “Keep quiet, do not esteem yourself with the great, but be silent in your heart.”

Commentary:

Abandon any feelings of self-importance. Remember that which is eternal and never dies. Calm down, trust life, elevate yourself, and accept peace. (CCA)

54. A brother asked Abbot Antony: “What does it mean for a man to esteem himself of no value?” He replied: “To think oneself like the animals, which cannot reason, for they have no judgment; as it is written: ‘I was like a brute beast in your presence. Yet with you I shall always be’.”

Commentary:

Understanding and accepting our personal insignificance is a source of blessings, and gives us the courage to act correctly here and now, without selfish thoughts. (CCA)

55. Abbot Pambo asked Abbot Antony: “What shall I do while I sit in my cell?” He replied: “Be not confident of the reward of your justice, and do not think of transitory things, and be continent of tongue and appetite.”

56. A brother asked an old man: “Do you think it is good to have a good reputation in the sight of men?” He answered: “Such reputations confer no virtue. Do not desire to have a good reputation with your brother; rather, avoid it.”

57. A brother asked an old man: “What is humility?” He answered: “If one returns good to one who does him evil, that is perfect humility.” The brother said: “What if one cannot be successful in doing this?” He replied: “He should run away and remain quiet.”

58. A brother asked an old man: “What is progress for a monk?” He answered: “Humility, for to the extent that a man lowers himself in humility, so much does he advance in heaven.”

59. A brother asked an old man: “How can the soul achieve humility?” He answered: “By always examining its own sins.”

60. Abbot Poemen said with a sigh: “All virtues have entered my cell except one virtue, and upon it man depends.” The brothers asked him: “What is this virtue, father?” The old man answered: “That a man shall always reproach himself.”

61. A brother addressed an old man: “Come into my cell if I deserve to wash your feet.” But he did not go. Again, the second and the third time he spoke to him, but he did not go. Finally, the brother went into the cell of the old man and, showing repentance in his presence, asked him to come into his cell. And the old man arose and went with him, and he said to the old man: “Why did you not come, though I asked you often before?” The old man answered: “You spoke with words alone; you did not satisfy my heart that I should come; but when I saw the true humility of a monk within you, then I rejoiced and came to you.”

62. An old man said: “How can a man teach his neighbor what he has not learned and has not himself observed? Be ever humble, therefore, to learn.”

Commentary:

See Apothegm 35. (CCA)

63. An old man said: “The virtue of a monk is to criticize himself on every occasion.”

64. An old man said: “A man cannot see his thoughts from without, but only when they are within; then, if he is a fighter, he drives them out.”

Commentary:

Inner coherence. See Apothegms 43 and 47. Examine the text [Jesus Christ, the Warrior of Truth](#). (CCA)

65. An old man said: “It is the task of a monk to observe his thoughts from a distance.”

66. An old man said: “A situation which is not foreseen does not permit us to proceed to better things.”

Commentary:

It is advisable to look ahead. We must be prepared for different possibilities. Preemptive action is the best strategy: better safe than sorry. (CCA)

67. An old man said: “Do not measure yourself, but cling to one whose mode of life is upright.”

Commentary:

Don't pretend to yourself that you know everything. Seek out someone who knows more than you and is trustworthy. Follow an ideal. Obey a high spiritual teaching. (CCA)

68. An old man said: “Every connection from which a man does not sever himself will again involve him.”

69. An old man said: “The victory over any trouble that comes upon a man is silence.”

70. An old man said: “Every carnal delight is an abomination before God.”

Commentary:

“God” is the Law, the divine world, the spiritual soul.

The incompatibility between heavenly life and earthly life occurs to the extent that there is a shift in the soul's focus from the spiritual world to the physical world, so that the soul becomes dependent on unnecessary physical satisfaction. The soul's focus when directed towards spiritual fullness is very different from the soul's focus if directed towards physical satisfaction.

Placing this teaching in the context of the Theosophical Movement and considering the reality of the lay devotee who has a family life, it is worth considering the following words of a Master of Wisdom:

"... Where a truly spiritual love seeks to consolidate itself doubly by a pure, permanent union of the two, in its earthly sense, it commits no sin, no crime in the eyes of the great Ain-Soph (the supreme universal Spirit), for it is but the divine repetition of the Male and Female Principles - the microcosmal reflection of the first condition of Creation. On such a union angels may well smile!" (["Letters From the Masters of the Wisdom - Second Series"](#), Letter 19, pp. 41-42. In Portuguese, see ["O Casal Como Centro da Civilização"](#).)

The sacredness of the human couple occurs in the internal and essential aspect of marriage. (CCA)

71. An old man said: "If a thought of some carnal necessity comes to you and touches you once, twice, even three times, pay no attention."

Commentary:

Reexamine item 43. (CCA)

72. An old man said: "If a man does not say in his heart: 'God and I are alone in this world', he has no peace."

Commentary:

In Raja Yoga and Christianity, concentration produces peace. (CCA)

73. An old man said: "Silence is a journey."

74. An old man said: "If a man diminishes the demands of men and of his appetite, he has peace."

75. An old man said: "A monk must have a heart brave for each single thing; then he will be saved."

Commentary:

Courage is necessary. (CCA)

76. An old man said: “If you see or hear something, do not report it to your brother, for this engenders a quarrel.”

77. An old man said: “One’s own will and idleness and getting accustomed to these two things are the downfall of a man.”

Commentary:

Regarding one’s personal will, consider item 67. (CCA)

78. An old man said: “Tranquillity and silence and secret meditation give rise to saintliness.”

79. An old man said: “Everything that is beyond the mean is the work of demons.”

Commentary:

Regarding demons, see Apothegm 41. (CCA)

80. An old man said: “What is the good of building someone else’s house and overthrowing one’s own?”

Commentary:

Speak of the sacred path from your direct experience only. An Eastern Master of Wisdom wrote: “...Rather than go about preaching with a heart and a life that belie your professions - conjure the lightning to strike you dead, for every word will become your future accuser.” The recommendation is in the article “[The Rule of Sincerity](#)”. (CCA)

81. An old man said: “Each man’s own will is like a wall of bronze or a rock placed before him separating a man from God. Therefore, if a man conquers his own will, he can most truthfully say: ‘And by the help of God I shall leap over a wall.’”

82. An old man said: “We leave the straight and well-lighted road and travel that which is thorny and dark; that is to say, we leave off weeping for ourselves and our sins and always regard the wrongs of our neighbors.”

83. An old man said: “One who criticizes another is not a monk; one who returns evil for evil is not a monk; one who is greedy or proud or talkative is not a monk; but the one who is really a monk is humble and silent and full of charity, possessing the fear of God always in his heart.”

Commentary:

Try to live the hidden essence of dedication to the divine world, and not its appearances. The tree is known by its fruits. Remember Apothegm 80 and its Commentary. (CCA)

84. An old man said: “Do not despise the brother who stands beside you, for you do not know whether the Spirit of God is in you or in him.”

Commentary:

In other words: “Your student and your assistant may have wiser souls than you.” (CCA)

85. An old man said: “Humility and the fear of God are superior to all the virtues.”

86. An old man said: “If a monk wishes to quarrel with one who has done him wrong, his situation is the same as if he quarrels with the devil.”

Commentary:

In life as a whole, the best way to defeat evil is not through conflict, which generally creates or reinforces bonds of unity between adversaries. The most efficient way is the building of good habits and the creation of good karma, so that error loses power and remains on the sidelines of events. Open confrontation is necessary in certain circumstances, but should be avoided as much as possible. When indispensable, it should be brief and selective. Although life involves combat, inner peace must always be preserved, and it should be stronger and more important than conflict. (CCA)

87. An old man said: “From the least action to the greatest that a man performs, whether in thoughts or in deeds, it is entirely up to him to make the choice.”

Commentary:

In a letter from a Master, one can read: “Karma representing an Entry Book, in which all the acts of man, good, bad, or indifferent, are carefully recorded to his debit and credit - by himself, so to say, or rather by these very actions of his.” ([“The Mahatma Letters”](#), Letter XVI, p. 111.)

Thoughts are actions on the mental plane, feelings are actions on the emotional plane. They all imply responsibility. (CCA)

88. An old man said: “Humility is not a banquet, but it is the seasoning salt of every banquet.”

89. An old man said: “To humiliate oneself and to hold oneself in contempt are like a wall for a monk.”

90. An old man said: “He who wishes to build a house must assemble many necessary things before he can complete the task. So a monk must make many careful preparations to be able to fulfill the works of God.”

91. An old man said: “There is no greater virtue than not to hold another in scorn.”

92. An old man said: “Blessed is he who endures toil and is thankful for it.”

93. An old man said: “For each one to force himself in every way, this is the road to God and the task of a monk.”

Commentary:

A Master wrote, quoting the words of Alfred Tennyson: “Self reverence, self knowledge, self control, These three alone lead life to sovereign power”. (“[Letters From the Masters of Wisdom - First Series](#)”, Letter IV to Laura Holloway, pp. 205-206.)

Self-observation and self-control are of decisive importance both in Raja Yoga and the Christian mystical tradition. (CCA)

94. An old man said: “He who always forces himself for God’s sake is like a man who is a confessor.”

95. An old man said: “A man who has death before his eyes at every hour conquers meanness of spirit.”

Commentary:

Remember Apothegm 22. (CCA)

96. An old man said: “Be free in speaking, not a slave.”

Commentary:

Free from lower feelings such as fear, anger, ambition and the like. (CCA)

97. An old man said: “It is impossible for a man who does not guard his mouth to succeed even in a single virtue, for the first virtue is to guard one’s mouth.”

98. An old man said: “I fear three things, that is, when my soul is going to depart from my body, and when I am going to come into the presence of God, and when the sentence is going to be pronounced against me.”

Commentary:

“My soul departing from my body” is a reference to death. How can one prepare for that? The purification of the soul during the physical life enormously benefits the afterlife process.

The expression “leaving the body” as a synonym for dying is frequent among the mystics of the desert and is technically correct from a theosophical point of view. The human soul does not die: only its material form loses life when the soul finally “leaves” it. The soul departs from the body but continues living on non-material levels of consciousness. Read [The Process Between Two Lives](#), by CCA, and [What Reincarnates?](#), by Robert Crosbie.

99. An old man said: “In whatever place you sit, do not have regard for those who have their own consolation, but for the needy one who has neither bread nor peace.”

100. An old man said: “If you have passion, but let it alone and pray God for some other matter, you will not be heard. But first ask in behalf of your fight against passion, then, when you have knocked and entered, place before God some other request.”



Partial view of a painting showing Saint Anthony of the Desert and Saint Paul of Thebes. By the painter Diego Velázquez (1638)

101. An old man said: “These three things are of utmost importance - fear of God and continual prayer and doing good to one’s neighbor.”

Commentary:

On the fear of God, remember Apothegm 22. (CCA)

102. An old man said: “Just as the breath that escapes from the nostrils, without which one cannot live, so a man must always have within him fear of God and humility.”

103. An old man said: “What is the use of commencing a task, if one does not learn to finish it? What is begun and not finished is nothing.”

Commentary:

On the material plane as well as the spiritual one, we must do our best to complete our tasks and fulfill our duty to the end. (CCA)

104. An old man said: “If a man does not please you in your heart, do not share with him the knowledge of your heart.”

Commentary:

Trust is the foundation of sincerity; and being trustworthy opens the door to trust. (CCA)

105. An old man said: “Be determined that you will never do wrong to any man, but that you will have your heart pure for every man.”

106. A brother asked an old man: “If I see some sin among the brothers, do you bid me make it known?” He answered: “If they are elders or of your own age, warn them humbly without criticism, so that even in this you may be found humble.”

107. A brother asked an old man: “Other brothers live with me and they want me to instruct them; how do you suggest that I act?” He replied: “First, do what you preach, that you may offer them not only advice, but a model.”

Commentary:

Both the Pythagorean tradition and Christian mysticism say one must teach by example. Saint Andrew Avellino wrote to a friend:

“Ask God to take away my understanding and dry my hand before I advise anyone, verbally or in writing, to do something I do not practice, or have no desire to practice.” (From the book “S. Andrés Avelino, Clérigo Regular”, A. Veny Ballester, Editorial Vicente Ferrer, Barcelona, 1962, 639 pp., see p. 33.)

Take into consideration the Apothegms 35 and 80. (CCA)

108. They used to say of Abbot Macarius the elder that, just as God covers the whole earth and bears the sins of men, so he was like a God on earth among the brothers, concealing their sins as if not seeing or hearing what he did see or hear.

109. Abbot Moses asked Abbot Silvanus: “Can a man make a new start from day to day?” He replied: “If he is a workman, he can take up and start from day to day. It is necessary for each to learn some little thing from all of the virtues. Each day, as you rise in the morning, begin in every virtuous deed and in every command of God, in great patience, in long-suffering, with fear and love of God, with humility of soul and body, in great endurance, in tribulation and recollection of the cell, in prayer and supplication, with purity of heart and eyes, with control over tongue and speech, in renunciation of material things and the desires of the flesh, in the struggle of the cross, that is, in trial and poverty of spirit, in spiritual continence and strife of battle, in penitence and grief, in simplicity of soul and silence, in fasting and nightly vigils, in manual labor according to the teachings of the Apostle Paul: ‘Working with our own hands’; ‘in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in labors and trials, in necessities and hardships and persecutions’; ‘in holes and caves and caverns of the earth.’ ‘Be a doer of the word, and not a hearer only’; working your talent into two, wearing a wedding garment, founded upon a strong rock and not upon sand.

“Alms and faith must not leave you. Reflect every day that death is near and, as though you were already enclosed in the tomb, have no care for this world. Let abstinence from food, humility, and grief not depart from you, and the fear of the Lord abide in you at every hour. For it is written: ‘For fear of you, O Lord, we conceived and writhed in pain, giving birth to the spirit of salvation.’ Persevere in these things, then, and in any other virtue that there be, and do not measure yourself with the great, but believe yourself inferior to every creature, that is, viler than every man, however great a sinner he may be. Have discernment, criticize yourself, but do not judge your neighbor nor look down upon the sins of other people, nor bewail your own sins, nor be anxious for the deeds of any man. Be of gentle spirit, not inclined to anger. Think no evil in your heart against anyone, have no enmity in your heart nor hatred against one who fights with you without cause; do not become angry at his enmity, nor despise him in his need and trial, nor return evil for evil, but be peaceful with all: for this is the peace of God. Do not entrust yourself to one who does wrong, nor rejoice with him who does evil to his neighbor. Do not criticize another, for God knows everything and sees every man. Do not believe one who slanders, nor rejoice with him in his evil speech. Do not hate anyone because of his sin, for it is written: ‘Do not judge, and you will not be judged.’ Do not despise a sinner, but pray for him, that God may give him conversion to penitence and have pity upon him: for God is powerful. And if you hear of anyone that he is acting unjustly, reply in these words: ‘Am I a judge of these things? I am but a man and a sinner, dead beneath my sins and mourning for my own woes: for a dead man has no reason to be concerned for anyone.’ Accordingly, he who thinks and performs these things is a worker of every kind of justice in the grace and power of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

110. Abbot Moses said to Abbot Poemen the seven following Sentences, which, if someone puts them into practice, whether in a convent, in solitude, or even in secular life, they can be saved. **1.** First of all, as it is written, man must love God with all his soul and with all his intelligence. **2.** Man must love his neighbor as himself. **3.** Man must abstain from all evil. **4.** Man must not judge his brother in any case. **5.** Man must not do harm to another. **6.**

Before leaving the body, man must purify himself from every stain of flesh and spirit. 7. Man must always have a contrite and humble heart. This can be fulfilled by one who always considers his own sins and not those of his neighbor, with the help of the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives with God the Father and with the Holy Spirit, and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

Commentary:

In the item six of this Apothegm 110, the words “Before leaving the body” mean “Before dying”. Remember Apothegm 98 and its Commentary. (CCA)

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The first part of **Sayings of the Egyptian Fathers** can be read on pages 7-15 of the [June 2026](#) edition of “[The Aquarian Theosophist](#)”. The text is now complete in *The Aquarian*.



A statue of Martin of Braga in the Portuguese City of Braga.

See the Portuguese language counterpart of the above text: [Sentenças dos Padres do Egito](#).

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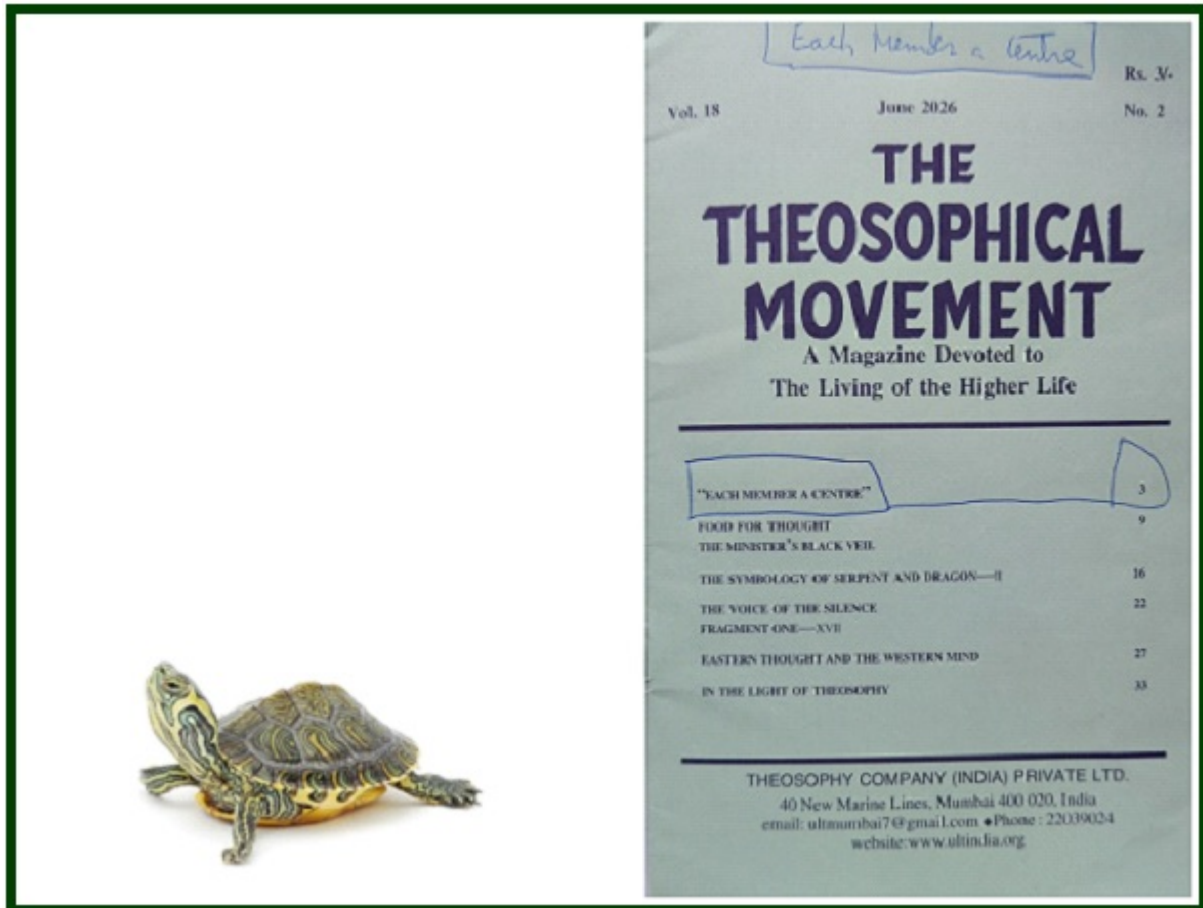


Visit the channel of [The Aquarian Theosophist](#) on [YouTube](#):
<https://www.youtube.com/@theaquariantheosophist845>

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HPB Says: Each Member a Centre

The important article *Each Member a Centre* opens the June 2026 edition of the Indian magazine “The Theosophical Movement”, of the ULT.



Indeed, from the mind and the work of every student of theosophy, a group of students or a lodge can materialize.

“The Theosophical Movement” magazine is available both in print and online: <https://www.ultindia.org/s/tm/TMJune2026.pdf>.

In addition to the article in TTM, one may remember that in a message addressed to the theosophists, H.P. Blavatsky wrote this about the movement:

“The multiplication of local centres should be a foremost consideration in your minds, and each man should strive to be a centre of work in himself. When his inner development has reached a certain point, he will naturally draw those with whom he is in contact under the same influence; a nucleus will be formed, round which other people will gather, forming a centre from which information and spiritual influence radiate, and towards which higher influences are directed.” (From “[Five Messages](#)”, p. 04.)

Thoughts Along the Road

Seven Short Videos to Better Understand Life



1. Chaos, Peace, and Order, in Our Lives and the Universe

* Some people see the universe and life as chaos. In chaos, each one is authorized, let us say, to be selfish, egocentric, and produce more chaos. For others, life in the universe is secretly or sometimes visibly governed by law, by order, by the law of justice, the law of karma, by God who is the law, and so on. Who's right? Who's wrong? Well, interestingly enough, we have a Brazilian philosopher writing in the 1840s from the city of Rio de Janeiro who anticipates Blavatsky's view of such a contrast between seeing life as chaos or seeing life as a harmonious totality ruled by law, truth and justice. According to the Marquis of Maricá, who anticipated theosophy in many aspects, writing in Portuguese from Brazil, the universe is a marvelous order that looks like disorder. And he says that *this is the complete solution to the great mystery of this world.*

Click to see the 3m video "[Chaos, Peace, and Order, in Our Lives and the Universe](#)".

2. My Greatest Responsibility is Defining the Way I Use My Time and Energy

* One of the greatest mysteries in human life is very practical. It consists of a series of questions: "What is the best way for me to use my time and to use my energies? What is the wisest way to live each 24-hour period? What is the best thought that I could have in the next few minutes? What is the best kind of relationship I must have and develop with myself, with

my own higher self, with others? What is the best point of view for me to adopt regarding life, the best attitude toward this or that other person? Do I remember my unlimited potentiality for good? Do I remember at all times my unlimited potentiality for wisdom? Do I avoid the traps that would make it more difficult for me to be wiser each new day than I was yesterday?"

Click to see the 2m video "[My Greatest Responsibility Defining the Way I Use My Time and Energy](#)".

3. From Unnecessary Complications to Voluntary Simplicity and Contentment

* The journey to wisdom, the path to theosophy, is the path from unnecessary complexities to voluntary simplicity. Voluntary simplicity is quite different from blind simplicity. It includes complexities. A wise form of voluntary simplicity includes possessing the key with which we can transform complication into pure awareness. By being able to go to the root of complexities in life, we get rid of complications and get back to the fundamental simplicity that is attained and has always been attained by all great sages in the history of mankind. You may have noticed the great intimacy between great sages, animals and trees. Well, animals, trees, and sages have one fundamental thing in common, which may be defined as simplicity. So, wisdom is not complicated. Wisdom is a kind of simplicity that includes victory over complications.

Click to see the 4m video "[The Path of Wisdom Leads You From the Unnecessary Complications to Voluntary Simplicity and Contentment](#)".

4. Kriyashakti Is the Power of Thought, the Rudder that Defines the Direction of Life

* The Sanskrit word *Kriyashakti* means *the power of thought*. In human life, everything depends on how you use the energy of thought. It is not merely a question of developing the power of thought, but of educating it, because you already have the power of thought. Although *Kriyashakti* is often mentioned as belonging to the higher and most developed levels of Raja Yoga or Christian mysticism, and that's true, the fact remains that *Kriyashakti*, if understood in its simple meaning of *power of thought*, belongs to every human being. All of us, common people, have the power of thought. And perhaps we are even aware of that. The issue is, *how do we use the power of thought?*

Click to see the 5m video "[Kriyashakti Is the Power of Thought, the Rudder that Defines the Direction of Life](#)".

5. Self-Restraint Expands One's Willpower and Contentment

* Self-restraint. This is an important topic in Raja Yoga, in the science of life, and in Christianity and most religions and philosophies around the globe. Self-restraint is more than mere moderation. It is a deliberate practice by which we eliminate unnecessary movements or perceptions, and put some limits on the use of our five senses. It means to consciously practice introspection, so as to accumulate magnetic power, and willpower, and inner

freedom, the ability to stay away from short-term tides, in order to gain *inner momentum*, let us say, an *inner strength* which then can be used to attain deliberate and sacred goals. Self-restraint with regard to the outward aspects of life is related to the heavenly treasure of which Christian mystics talk.

Click to see the 2m video “[Self-Restraint Expands One’s Willpower and Contentment](#)”.

6. Abstaining From Desire Gives You Inner Freedom

* One of the basic needs of the modern citizen is to reduce his wishes. The more we wish in life, the more frustration we have. The more goals we have, the less happiness and contentment we have. If you wish something in a very strong way, you’re telling yourself that you are not a complete being, that you need this and that, in order to be complete. However, life tells you that you have all you need in order to improve yourself moderately, calmly, which is the most efficient way to improve oneself. Our problem, regarding happiness, is not the need to obtain such and such conditions of life, even subtle conditions. Our obstacle on the path to wisdom and contentment is the need to moderate our wishes, to reduce the process of desire.

Click to see the 4m video “[Abstaining From Desire and Acquisition Gives You Inner Freedom](#)”.

7. You Were Created in the Image of the Divine World

* In chapter one of the Book of Genesis, it is said that God created mankind in His own image. Indeed, everything that is created, everything that is built and emerges into reality does so according to a certain ideal. Individually, each human being is also created in the image of his own spiritual soul, which is the ideal to which he must respond and follow.

But before following it, we must see the ideal aspect of our own existence, and then make a vow to follow through, make a vow to live up to this ideal, because each one of us was also created in the image of some ideal of perfection. In theosophy, it is a very sacred thing to try to live up to the ideal of human perfection. Each day, I should have before myself the image of the path to self-improvement. Do I have before me the ideal of human perfection? Do I work and live as much as I can in the image of the divine realm? All human beings can walk in the right direction.

Click to see the 6m video “[You Were Created in the Image of the Divine World](#)”.

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[See the revealing article](#)

Why I Do Not Return to India

by Helena P. Blavatsky

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The Prehistory of an Independent Lodge

The Blavatskian View of the Theosophical Movement, From the 1890s to the Decade of 2020

Carlos Cardoso Aveline



1. A Lineage That Is Almost Immaterial

Helena Blavatsky died in 1891, some 16 years after founding the theosophical movement in 1875. Soon the movement got into a *karmic fever* of struggle for power and ended up divided in two larger “families” or groups of theosophical associations.

On one hand, we see the Annie Besant lineage, with some 90 percent of the total number of theosophists worldwide.

[Click to Continue Reading](#)
[The Prehistory of an Independent Lodge](#)

“..Constructive work
often speaks louder
than brilliant words.”

Carlos C. Aveline

From the text
“Thoughts Along the
Road - 79”, published at
CarlosCardosoAveline.com



Join **E-THEOSOPHY** group on **Google Groups**, and study a little bit of theosophy every day: <https://groups.google.com/g/e-theosophy> .

The Invisible World and the Universal Mind

Selected Fragments From ‘Isis Unveiled’

Helena P. Blavatsky



H.P. Blavatsky working in her office in 1887

1. The Organs of Spirituality

Sincere skepticism as to the immortality of man's soul is a malady; a malformation of the physical brain, and has existed in every age. As there are infants born with a caul upon their heads, so there are men who are incapable to their last hour of ridding themselves of that kind of caul evidently enveloping their organs of spirituality.

(From "[Isis Unveiled, Volume I](#)", p. 115)

2. The Invisible World

It is not for the first time in the history of the world, that the invisible world has to contend against the materialistic skepticism of soul-blind Sadducees. Plato deploras such an unbelief, and refers to this pernicious tendency more than once in his works.

From Kapila, the Hindu philosopher, who many centuries before Christ demurred to the claim of the mystic Yogins, that in ecstasy a man has the power of seeing Deity face to face and conversing with the “highest” beings, down to the Voltaireans of the eighteenth century, who laughed at everything that was held sacred by other people, each age had its unbelieving Thomases. Did they ever succeed in checking the progress of truth? No more than the ignorant bigots who sat in judgment over Galileo checked the progress of the earth’s rotation.

(From “[Isis Unveiled, Volume I](#)”, p. 121)

3. The Universal Mind

Pythagoras taught his disciples that God is the universal *mind* diffused through all things, and that this mind by the sole virtue of its universal sameness could be communicated from one object to another and be made to create all things by the sole will-power of man.

(From “[Isis Unveiled, Volume I](#)”, p. 131)

4. The Descent of Spirit into Matter

As the reptile upon casting his coat becomes freed from a casing of gross matter, which cramped a body grown too large for it, and resumes its existence with renewed activity, so *man, by casting off the gross material body, enters upon the next stage of his existence with enlarged powers and quickened vitality*. Inversely, the Chaldean Kabalists tell us that primeval man, who, contrary to the Darwinian theory was purer, wiser, and far more spiritual, as shown by the myths of the Scandinavian Bur, the Hindu Dejotas, and the Mosaic “sons of God”, - in short, of a far higher nature than the man of the present Adamic race, became *despiritualized* or tainted with matter, and then, for the first time, was given the *fleshly body*, which is typified in *Genesis* in that profoundly significant verse: “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God *make coats of skin*, and clothed them.” [1] Unless the commentators would make of the First Cause a *celestial tailor*, what else can the apparently absurd words mean, but that the spiritual man had reached, through the progress of involution, to that point where matter, predominating over and conquering spirit, had transformed him into the physical man, or the second Adam, of the second chapter of *Genesis*?

(From “[Isis Unveiled, Volume I](#)”, p. 149)

NOTE BY HPB:

[1] *Genesis* iii. 21.

5. The Universal Life

The exhalations of the ash, Yggdrasil, condense, and falling down upon our earth call into existence and change of form every portion of the inanimate matter. This tree is the symbol of the *universal Life*, organic as well as inorganic; its emanations represent the spirit which vivifies every form of creation; and of its three roots, one extends to heaven, the second to the dwelling of the magicians - giants, inhabitants of the *lofty mountains* - and at the third, under which is the spring Hvergelmir, gnaws the monster Nidhogg, who constantly leads mankind into evil. The Thibetans have also their mundane tree, and the legend is of an untold antiquity. With them it is called *Zampun*. The first of its three roots also extends to heaven, to the top of the highest mountains; the second passes down to the lower region; the third remains midway,

