The Aquarian Theosophist

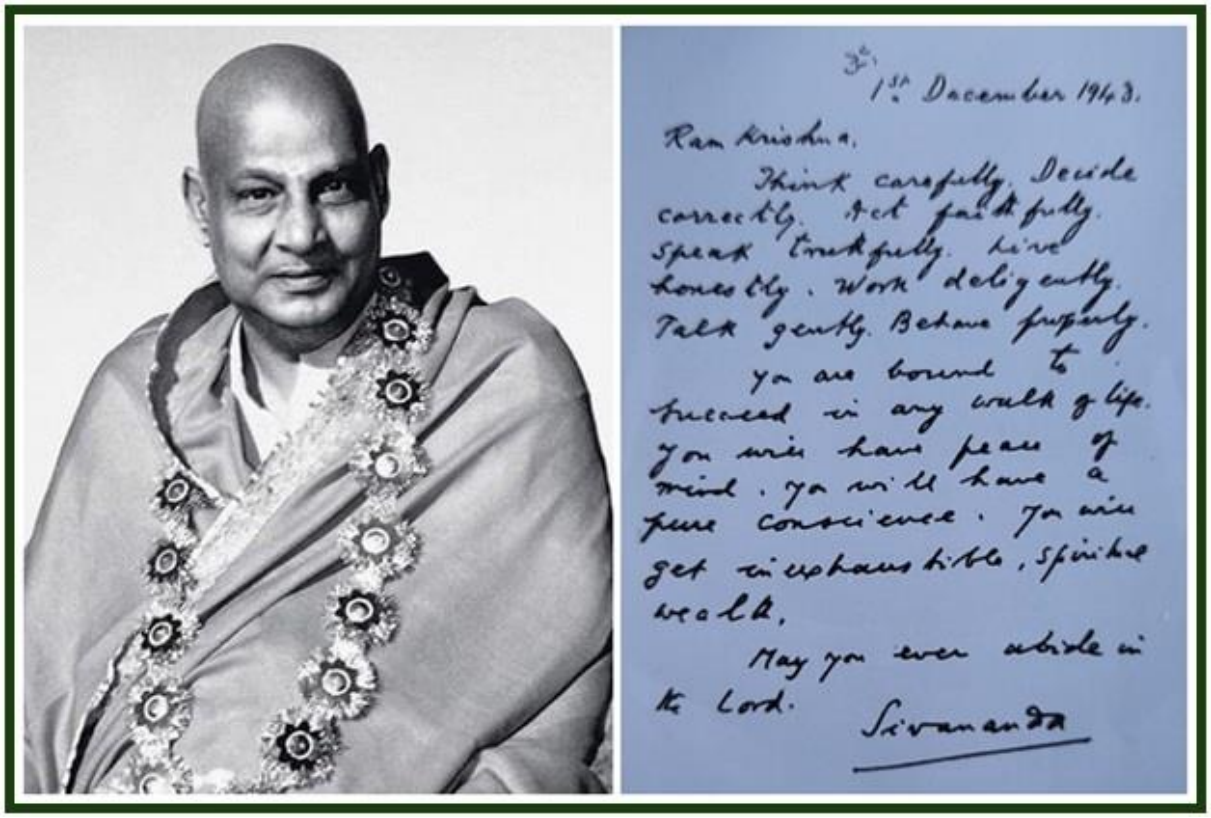
Volume XXVII, Number 01, November 2026

Blog: www.TheAquarianTheosophist.com **E-mail:** indelodge@gmail.com
The monthly journal of the **Independent Lodge of Theosophists** and its associated websites

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A Manuscript from Swami Sivananda:

Think Carefully. Speak Truthfully.



1st December 1943

Ram Krishna,

Think carefully. Decide correctly. Act faithfully. Speak truthfully. Live honestly. Work diligently. Talk gently. Behave properly.

You are bound to succeed in any walk of life. You will have peace of mind. You will have a pure conscience. You will get inexhaustible, spiritual wealth.

May you ever abide in the Lord.

Sivananda.

From the book "**Sivananda Upanishad**", Spanish edition, Compilado por Swami Vishnu-Devananda, con Cartas Manuscritas del Sabio, International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres, Centro de Yoga Sivananda, Madrid, 1995, 571 pp., see p. 149.

Independent Lodge of Theosophists

The only thing that should surprise us is that we are still capable of being surprised.

(La Rochefoucauld)

« **Maximes** », **La Rochefoucauld**, Classiques Garnier, Paris, 1992, 682 pp., see p. 91. (Aphorism 384 in the 1678 edition.) *On ne devrait s'étonner que de pouvoir encore s'étonner.*

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See the text "**Sayings of the Egyptian Fathers**", which was published in two parts at the editions of **June 2026** and **July 2026** of **The Aquarian Theosophist**.

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Hazrat Inayat Khan:

The Wisdom of Personal Detachment



There is an old Sufi story that could be a Zen narrative. It might also belong, as a matter of fact, to the Christian tradition of the Fathers of the Desert, or describe an event in the lives of two disciples of those immortal Masters of the Eastern Wisdom who guided Helena Blavatsky in the 19th century.

According to the tale, one day, as Machandra - the Sufi hermit - was making a long journey through the wilderness with his teacher Gaurikha, he decided to break the silence and confess he had a problem. He was afraid of losing something.

Gaurikha then said:

- “Throw away the fear”.

And Machandra answered:

- “But how can fear be thrown away?”

- “Easy. Just throw away that which causes you fear.”

Machandra showed the two bricks of gold he had:

- “Should I throw them away?”

- “Yes”, said Gaurikha, “what are they?”

Machandra threw them away. However, as they went on, he became pale.

- “Why are you sad?” – Gaurikha asked.

Machandra said:

- “Now we have nothing.”

- “We have everything. Look before you, what do you see?” And Machandra saw mountains of gold.

Gaurikha said:

- “Take as much as you can, if that is what your soul needs”.

But Machandra’s soul had awakened. And he said:

- “I will not take anything, for I now know the riches of possessing nothing.” **[1]**

The journey of the two hermits symbolizes the long process of self-improvement. Their conversation is the dialogue between one’s higher self and lower self, or heaven and Earth in us. The gold represents one’s sense of security: does it come from our purse, or from our confidence in the Law? The mountains are the Eternal Wisdom, which would be absurd to consider one’s personal property: and yet, they save us from every danger.

(Carlos Cardoso Aveline)

NOTE:

[1] See this story in the March 2012 edition of “The Aquarian Theosophist”, pp. 8-9. It was adapted from the book “Tales”, by Hazrat Inayat Khan, Omega Publications, New Lebanon, New York, US, 248 pp., 1980, p. 19.

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The above text transcribes and updates part of the research material presented in a public talk in Brasília, Brazil, on 10 August 1996.

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Read more:

*** **Israel as a Utopia**. *** **Humanity Defeats Nazism**. ***

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The Eternal Pilgrim

However Dark the Age of Ignorance In One Part of the World, Some Other Part May Be Witnessing a Period of the Highest Culture

R. Machell



Under one disguise or another the eternal pilgrim has been the subject of innumerable legends, myths, fables, and historical romances. All the wanderings of ancient legendary heroes are fashioned upon the same foundation; and such stories are found in the great epics of all ages. In history we have the migrations of races, and in tradition these races and nations have been personified as individuals who lived through immense periods of time. The earth in its journey through space presents a cosmic version of the *wanderlust* or of the forced pilgrimage that is decreed by some superior power, according to the fancy of the poet or the fashion of the time.

The fairy-stories of our own childhood owed much of their charm to this never-failing theme, the wandering hero or heroine in search of some apparently unattainable object, veiled perhaps by a goal of more achievable proportions, adapted to the comprehension of the public or the taste of the age in which the story was told.

In our own times the Wandering Jew has been perhaps the most popular version of the eternal pilgrimage; and the theme has been used in one form or another by almost every well-known writer of romance, and by more than one serious historian.

The popularity of a legend depends upon its power to appeal to some passion of the human heart that is common to all sorts and conditions of humanity: and there is no quality more generally admired than heroism, no theme more popular than that of a noble hero wandering in search of some elusive goal, or the accomplishment of some impossible task, to be crowned at the last with power and fame, or love or wealth, or the mere consciousness of mighty deeds well done, or spiritual wisdom gained.

Why is this theme so popular? Why is hero-worship universal? You may say simply because all human beings desire things more or less unattainable: that is to say, things that are far beyond the reach of such powers as they may be able or willing to exert. Things easily attainable make no appeal to the imagination, which in the ordinary man or woman is only stirred by some secret longing of the heart, such as the desire to be, or to appear, heroic. But why such longing should exist in people of the ordinary kind is not apparent, without a deeper insight into the mysteries of the human heart than is possible to the ordinary man. That there are unsuspected depths and unexplored heights within the heart of the most ordinary person is made evident when some unusual circumstance calls out heroic qualities in the character of one who till then seemed utterly devoid of heroism.

It is evident that many, if not all, people of unheroic character are pleased to imagine themselves capable of heroic deeds, and would be delighted to pose as heroes if there were the smallest chance of their being able to impose upon anyone. And why? Does not the desire for admiration rise in the first place from a sort of subconscious belief that the real inner man is truly noble, courageous, heroic, as well as strong and beautiful? May it not be that indeed there is in every one of us hidden beneath a mean and commonplace personality, a potential hero who would behave heroically if that same personality would but give him the chance to display his beauty and his courage?

This inner, unknown, and only potential hero may be a fact; and it may be that the whole evolutionary process is concerned with the unfolding of his spiritual possibilities. It may indeed be the fact that the whole of nature exists for the purpose of the evolution of the soul. And so the soul of man, of nature, or of the universe, may be the great unmanifested reality that stands behind all the temporary and passing illusions of ordinary life.

So too it may be the fact that the unknown and unevolved soul of man is the hero who would stamp his image on the ignoble personality that so shamelessly asserts himself as the real man, and it may be for this reason that every youth, and most full-grown people, nurse in their hearts a secret conviction that under more favorable circumstances they would be recognised as heroes, both by an admiring world and by themselves. And for that reason tales of chivalry, of heroism, and adventure are always popular.

But you may say the eternal pilgrim is not a hero of romance. That merely means that the hero of romance is a variation from the original theme of the soul wandering in search of experience.

The Wandering Jew has been presented by Christian writers as a soul doomed to unending woe, wandering from land to land, without home or hope, eternally. But in this case, as in all others, the outer form of the myth changes from age to age, and is colored to suit the taste of the public for whom the story is told. The essential feature of the tale is the undying soul of man wandering through all experience in search of final liberation. This wandering was represented as a punishment for sin, by those who were interested in propounding and

exploiting a definite scheme of salvation, by means of which a man could pass, with certainty and despatch, from life on earth to eternal bliss in heaven. In lands where the scheme of salvation was different, the pilgrimage of the soul was perhaps itself the path of salvation or of illumination; and it may have been a long tale of triumph crowned by final victory; or it may have been a path of joy that ended in undying bliss: a pilgrimage is not necessarily a period of pain.

In ages of ignorance, such as seem to come to all nations and races at recurring periods in the long story of evolution, the knowledge of Reincarnation generally dies out, or is obliterated by those who find the easiest way to rule the world is by fear; and who therefore teach the fear of death and make a horrible bogey out of the gentle presence that bears the order of release for the imprisoned or incarnate soul, the beautiful messenger of death.

But there is good reason to believe that, however black may be the dark age of national ignorance in one part of the world, some other part may be witnessing a period of the highest culture and most advanced learning: for the evolutionary waves sweep round the earth, rising and falling, but not all together. So that the knowledge of the Divine Wisdom, called by the Greeks ‘Theosophy’, is never lost to man, though it may be for a while lost to the majority of men in some particular countries, or even apparently in all; but not by all men in all lands simultaneously. Thus, while the western world had utterly forgotten the teaching of Reincarnation, and had almost lost faith in the existence of the human soul, such knowledge was still common property in many oriental lands; and other and much higher knowledge was still treasured by a few even in the west. Among the more illuminated minds the progress of the eternal pilgrim was the one great subject of thought and study. And if the people as a whole had utterly forgotten the old teachings, and were living as animals hoping to pass straight from a life of grossest animalism to one of purely spiritual bliss by virtue of a blood-offering made for them by their Savior; yet deep in their hearts remained the knowledge of the soul’s existence and the conviction that the soul was truly heroic; and furthermore, since the soul knows its own immortality, there was in every heart a silent witness to the truth that lay beneath the allegory of the eternal wanderer.

The function of a myth is to present a truth in a form that may, by its familiarity, appeal to the popular mind without raising the antagonism certain to be roused by dogmatic assertion of an unfamiliar teaching. So the myths of wandering heroes, or eternal exiles banished from a spiritual home, were means of keeping alive in men’s hearts an intuition or an instinct of immortality that had been forgotten by the popular mind.

The myth sometimes deals with the experience of a soul passing through a single incarnation, as in the bible-story of the prodigal son, who leaves his father’s house, the Father “that is in heaven”, and journeys to a far land, this earth, and there squanders his substance in riotous living. Then at last he remembers his father’s home, his own spiritual origin, and he says: “I will arise and go to my father.” Then he returns from his long wandering on earth, where he has groveled with swineherds and gained his experience of the unfitness of such a life to satisfy the soul’s needs; and his father in heaven receives him cordially. Thus is told very briefly and symbolically the story of a single incarnation.
But other myths have a far wider range, and represent the pilgrim of life as passing through many lives on earth and in mystic worlds above or below the earth. They speak of descent into an underworld, or of translation into the celestial regions of the blessed, and of a return to earth at periodic intervals. There is the beautiful Peri, cast out of Paradise, seeking to return, and sent back to earth to gather a gift that shall unlock the crystal bar of heaven. She looks

down on the children of earth pityingly as she tries to find there some pearl that is pure enough to shine in heaven and sighs as she searches, and says: “Some flowerets of Eden ye still inherit but the trail of the serpent is over them all.”

When Madame Blavatsky began to call the attention of the world to Theosophy, the doctrine of Reincarnation was so completely forgotten by the general public that the teacher had to ‘go slow’ in reintroducing to the European public a doctrine that was still openly accepted in a large part of the Orient. Even now, after nearly half a century of Theosophical propaganda, there are people who regard this self-evident truth as a questionable theory; but it would be hard to find a well-educated man or woman in the western world today who is not more or less familiar with the term, however little they may understand the teaching. Numbers of people have recognised the truth of the proposition at the first hearing, and many have expressed surprise at not having found it out for themselves. The reason for such ready recognition of a truth is probably that the soul of man is not so sound asleep within its ‘chrysalis of flesh’ as one might well imagine, judging men and women by their ordinary conduct.

The eternal pilgrim is the most universal fact in human life: for every human soul is such a pilgrim, traveling in search of self-knowledge and gathering experience, necessary or unnecessary, helpful or harmful, as the case may be; eternally urged onward by the evolutionary impulse, which is sometimes called the principle of desire, the desire for existence.

Without the Theosophic teachings as to the complex nature of man and the dual character of mind, a soul may answer to the call of truth, although the unilluminated mind may not be able to explain to itself the reason for its acquiescence in a doctrine that may seem strange and unreasonable at first hearing. But when Theosophy is studied in the right spirit, the complex character of man becomes self-evident; though the understanding of the true nature of the various principles may come slowly.

The great fact that man is a soul inhabiting a body, once that it is recognised, becomes the key to every problem that can possibly bewilder or assail the mind. The fact that the soul of man is an eternal pilgrim wandering in search of jewels of wisdom, once that it has become alive in him, will prove its truth to him continually in the unfolding of his character. In fact the recognition of this simple fact is the first step towards self-consciousness, in the higher sense.

Of course it may be argued that all experience is good, and that all is equally desirable; but this is a deceptive play on words. To be precise, in speaking of experience, one might well say that repetition of an experience is waste of time and energy, and indeed is not truly experience, in the real sense, but merely useless repetition of sensation. Certainly something may be learned in that way, if only the lesson that such repetition is unnecessary and injurious. But is there not a better way?

When a soul begins to struggle for its liberation from the thraldom of the body and the senses, then repetition of experience is waste of time. When the prodigal remembers his father’s home he will turn in disgust from his diet of “husks that the swine do eat”. He will not argue that such food is valuable experience: he has learned that lesson, in one aspect at any rate.

The legend of the Wandering Jew is interesting from many points of view. Some think it had its origin in the destiny of a people doomed to wander for a long period, preserving their

traditions through the dark ages of their wanderings, to emerge at last purified and enlightened for the helping of humanity. Others have seen in it a tale of vengeance, long drawn out, for crimes committed long ago. Many writers have used it as a theme of mere romance, not looking beyond the legendary personality condemned to live on in loneliness, till expiation of his crime shall set him free to die. Yet few have failed to realize the element of allegory in the drama even if they were unable to divine the meaning.

The key to the story must surely be Reincarnation. And it may well be that some historical initiate remembering his past lives may have been represented as speaking of the forbidden topic, and so, self-doomed to the long expiation of his fault, in boasting of his knowledge, to live on beyond the normal age of man and thus to serve as a reminder to mankind that there are higher powers, not far away behind the clouds, but close in touch with ordinary humanity, able to call them to account for profanation of the mysteries.

It is indeed most probable that some of the historical or legendary characters reported to have lived for thousands of years, were men who displayed a knowledge of events connected with their own previous incarnations, and who thus seemed to be remembering those events in the ordinary way, which would require the use of the same body and brain for the whole period covered by the supposed or pretended memory. As to the possible limits to which man's bodily life may be extended I do not pretend to guess - and I am quite prepared to find that we all die long before we would do if we lived better lives. Indeed it seems to me most probable that the chief cause of death is the accumulation of memories, physical as well as mental; results of evil or mistaken causes, set up in ignorance or in defiance of the laws of health, and weighing us down with sickness of mind and body.

If a man lives in perfect harmony with all the laws of life he must surely have nothing to regret, no wasted energies to restore, no damaged instrument to repair, no evil consequences of mistakes to suffer. Why should he die? There would still be the habit of the race to overcome: the habit of early dying, stamped in every atom of his material body and mind: for a man cannot at will make himself separate from the race in which he chooses to incarnate, or in which his Karma compels him to abide. Brotherhood is a fact in nature and it cannot be overlooked, nor can its claims be repudiated. So we should naturally expect that if a man had the power to prolong his own life indefinitely, he would only use the power for the service of a worthy cause, and never for his own gratification: for brotherhood is a fact in nature, and selfishness is a denial of that great natural law, which is what some call sin. It has been well said that sin is the seed of death, meaning by sin the violation of natural law.

The eternal pilgrim is the reincarnating ego of the personal man: the man who never dies, and who, in his deeper consciousness, may carry the memory (or its equivalent) of many lives. But we all know that there are many things admitted as true by our own inner selves, that are ignored or even actually denied by the personal self in its most selfish moods. So we all live in open violation of many laws of nature that we know nothing about, as well as in frequent defiance of some laws that are better known to us than we care to admit; and consequently we grow old, and look for our release from the burden of a worn-out instrument as a step towards a fresh start with a new body better suited to our needs. For we are all optimists in such matters, and expect each time to get a better body and fresh opportunities. Why?

What right have we to expect a better body than the one we have so shamefully misused? For we all do misuse, or have at some time misused, these bodies. And they were probably much better than we might expect, all things considered. "Better it is to bear the ills we have, than

fly to others that we know not of"; and better still it is to acquire habits of self-control, that will enable us to make better use of the next body that we get. Nor can it be a matter of chance what kind of body shall be our next vehicle; for we are sowing seeds of causes all the time, and they will in due course result in just such a manner as the complexity of causes must necessitate. We may get more or less than we expect; but we may reckon on the justice of natural law to give us our due regardless of our expectations. And if we are working for the good of all mankind rather than for our own personal advantage, we shall regard events as opportunities, and not at all as either rewards or punishments. If we can live to benefit mankind we shall not care overmuch what are the conditions of our service, nor shall we take much thought of where our lot is cast, since we have taken service in the cause of Universal Brotherhood.

It has been well said that to work for self is to work for disappointment. This refers to the personal self, the lower self, spoken of in mystical works as the illusion, the shadow, the image. The eternal pilgrim is the real individual, the Ego, the real self. Some writers call it the soul; and I think that term is a good one for general purposes, though it may be too loose for philosophic use, unless qualified and defined; for the word has been used in many strange ways by various religious sects.

The personal self is naturally selfish, even in its most unselfish actions: it is selfishly virtuous, and selfishly proud of its own virtue. Vanity and modesty may be equally evidences of self-admiration, both being the result of an absorbing interest in the personal self and its interest or emotions. So much is this the case that to speak of a selfless personality is almost to use a contradiction in terms: selflessness being only possible to the higher self, which is conscious of its identity with the Universal Self, to whom all personal selves are but as the fruits of one tree to the tree itself.

This is not to say that a person cannot act unselfishly; far from it: but the selfless motive can only come from the selfless Self, if I may use another paradox of terms. Selflessness is beyond the comprehension of personality, but the lower or personal self can be taught to behave unselfishly: and it is a common thing to see good virtuous people falling over themselves in admiration of their own virtue, and practising virtue for the selfish enjoyment of a sense of superiority to their neighbors, whose natural selfishness may be really more impersonal than the affectation of such a self-deceived model of all the virtues.

Selflessness is indeed a big word, and we may well leave it out of our general vocabulary and content ourselves with the more easily attainable ideal of unselfishness: for it has been well said that: "Step by step we climb to higher things"; and even the most selfish virtue may be a step upward towards the Path; while an unkind criticism of a self-deluded brother may be a big step downward on the wrong road. We must remember that "Brotherhood is a fact in nature", not a mere theory to be trifled with intellectually; and what we owe to humanity is forgetfulness of personality in recognition of our common origin and eternal union.

Some critics of Theosophy complain of the coldness and impersonality of the Theosophical ideals, not finding in its teachings much encouragement for that sentimental 'gush' so dear to the emotional ones who revel in the indulgence of their own feelings, and pride themselves upon their sensibility.

The student of Theosophy must learn to distinguish between the *real* self and the *false*; and this can only be accomplished by a constant invocation of the true self, and a continual effort to control the lower by the higher: for the lower is a usurper of authority.

But the eternal pilgrim, the real self, is nearer to the "Father that is in secret", the supreme Self of all, and knows the true self from the false; and so is not deceived by the delusions of the mind, nor blinded by self-righteousness. It seeks the pure light, in which no self-deception can exist. It sees all men as other selves, each with its separate purpose to fulfil, each with its lesson of experience to be learned. It sees its own small personality as one of the multitude to be cared for, as one of the great family of earth-born children individually weak, but accomplishing collectively a mighty purpose in the evolution of the great universe, of which no smallest atom is without its value to the whole, no single personality without its individual significance in relation to its fellows.

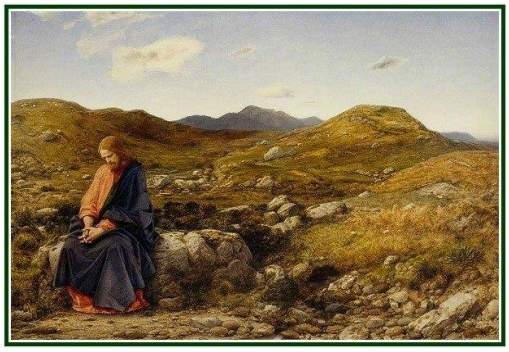
"To live to benefit mankind is the first step", we are told; and those who have adopted this as their attitude of mind in all life's problems, know that it is possible to live a selfless life, while working in the world, accomplishing the duty of the moment and the day, but almost unconcerned as to the personal results of duty done. The ideal is not impractical. But it will take all a man's power of will, and all his energy and enterprise, to hold that attitude of mind as his guide, and make it practical. It may require many life-times of experience before the ideal can be fully realized, for wisdom is not a gift of the gods, but a fruit of evolution; and a man must learn wisdom by experience, though intuition may reveal secrets of natural law as in a flash: yet the fruition of man's work on earth can be accomplished only by mastering the world of matter and illusion in which our lot is cast. This earth is now our workshop; we must apply ourselves to learn its lessons, and to co-operate with nature and with man in order to make life beautiful. So shall the eternal pilgrim go rejoicing on his pilgrimage to the ultimate goal of Universal Brotherhood.

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The article "**The Eternal Pilgrim**" is reproduced from the March 1921 edition of **The Theosophical Path**, pp. 232-240. Permission for its publication was kindly given in October 2026 by the Theosophical Society (Pasadena). The full name of the author is **Reginald Willoughby Machell**.

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Read more:



* **Jesus, a Sage Who Lived in the Desert**, by H. P. Blavatsky.

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The Philosophy of Respect for Life:

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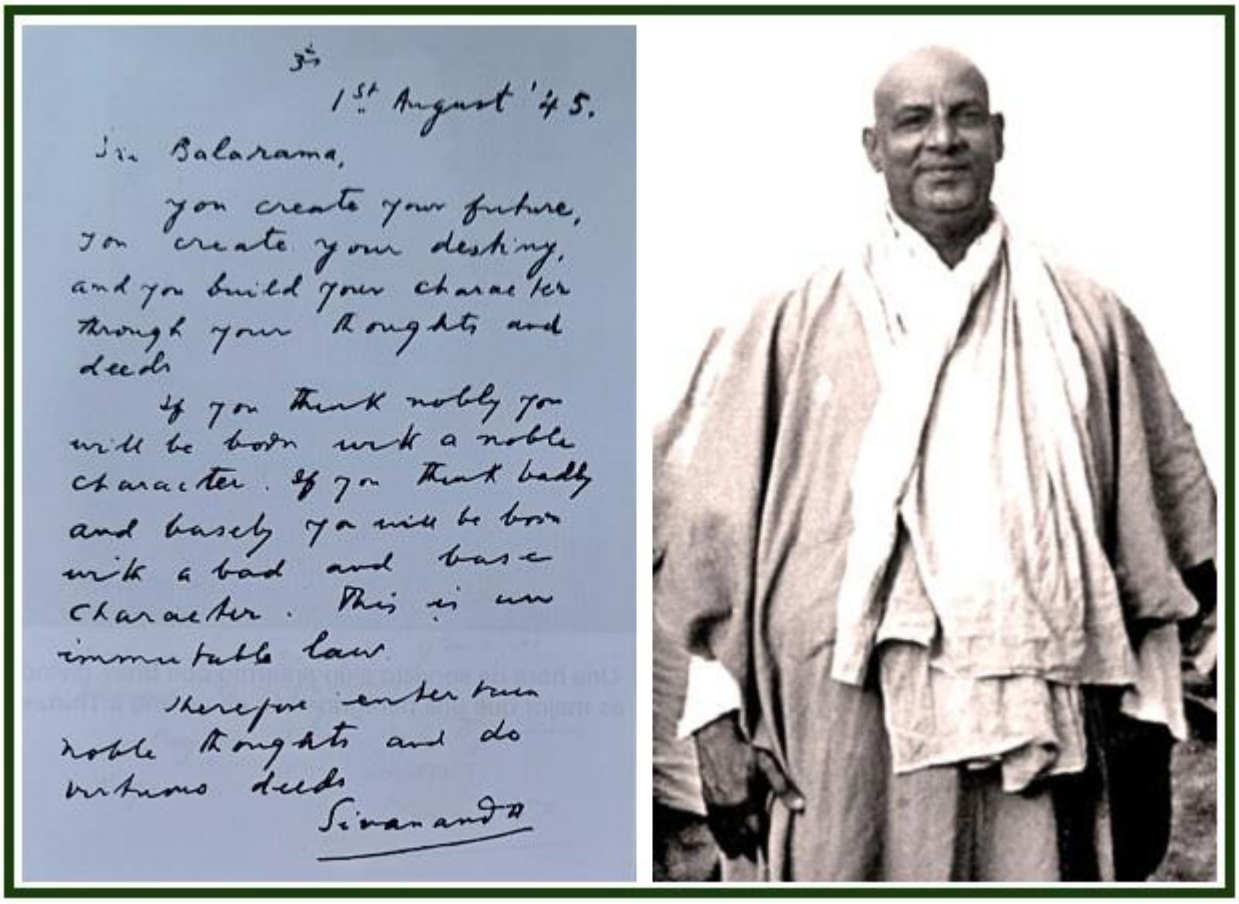
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Thoughts Along the Road

Self-Responsibility and Inner Contentment



1. Life Seldom Disappoints the Ascetic

* Life rarely disappoints the ascetic: it may disappoint the self-indulgent. **[1]**

* The fool easily becomes indignant, or despondent, when facing unpleasant circumstances. This is not the attitude of one who is austere: euphoria and sorrow belong to childhood.

* In order for the pilgrim to make real progress along the path to wisdom, at least four things are needed: 1) a clear and lofty goal; 2) a decision to renounce all forms of attachment to ignorance or suffering; 3) perseverance in taking refuge in his inner immortal soul while facing outward life as it is; and 4) a long-term view of life, with a horizon of countless thousands of years.

2. Sivananda on Self-Responsibility

* It is useless to blame others for one's suffering. Swami Sivananda wrote to Sri Balarama in 1945:

* “You create your future, you create your destiny, and you build your character through your thoughts and deeds. If you think nobly you will be born with a noble character. If you think badly and basely you will be born with a bad and base character. This is an immutable law. Therefore entertain noble thoughts and do virtuous deeds.” **[2]**

* There is no blessing higher than simplicity of heart, self-responsibility and humbleness.

3. When Silence Enlightens the Soul

* At a certain point, the seeker of wisdom starts transcending words.

* Even after the pilgrim has long studied the universal Law and attained a certain degree of self-knowledge, he will still constantly seek *a better perception of reality*. But right understanding will cease to come mainly through words. Instead, it will emerge from silence.

* The absence of sounds now illuminates the words that already exist, and there is no need for new concepts or novelties of any kind.

* Then the seeker of truth will continue to acquire valuable things. He does so through austerity. He willingly abandons the habit of acquiring complicated second-hand descriptions of reality.

* He prefers to be silent and motionless. Or perhaps he moves in Wu-Wei, slowly, and as if he didn’t move. Thus new layers of perception of life come to him on their own. The pilgrim now has so much, that he has nothing.

* He can see and is able to take into consideration countless aspects of Life, as long as he attaches himself to none. The final sum in personal possession is zero. His potentiality to understand life would seem to be unlimited, on the condition that he renounces the intention of materializing such a realm of perception.

* Possession makes spiritual knowledge fade away. In the absence of possession, everything is available.

* The Sun rises in the morning and enlightens everything, yet He will not be controlled by those He enlightens. Likewise, the wider levels of understanding emerge and silently explain that which is Supreme, but cannot be bibliographically documented.

* The less noise, the more light. The essence of sacred music fluctuates above sound: when truth is present and seen, the need for words is no more. (CCA)

NOTES:

[1] To find ideas that relate to this sentence, examine the book “S. Andrés Avelino, Clérigo Regular”, by A. Veny Ballester, Editorial Vicente Ferrer, 1962, Barcelona, Spain, 639 pp., especially p. 520.

[2] From the book “Sivananda Upanishad”, Una obra universal con cartas manuscritas de Swami Sivananda, compilada por Swami Vishnu-Devananda, Centro de Yoga Sivananda, Madrid, third edition, 1994, 571 pp., see p. 253.

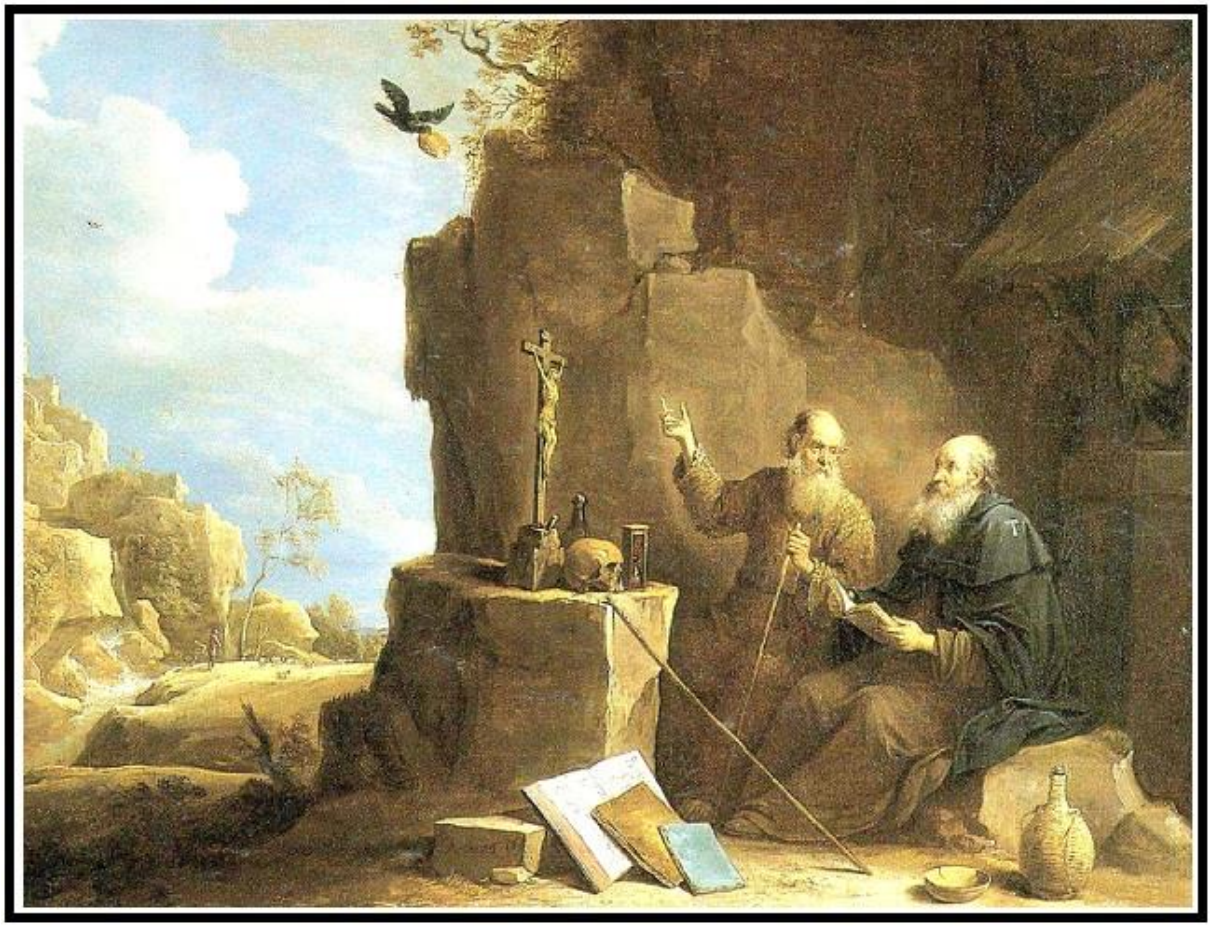
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The Daily Practice of the Fathers of the Desert - 03

Questions and Answers of the Greek Fathers, Selected and Translated from Greek into Latin by Paschasius of Dumium

(*Interrogationes et responsiones Graecorum patrum*)

Paschasius of Dumium
(Editor, Translator of the 6th century AD)



St. Anthony the Abbot and St. Paul the First Hermit:
a painting by David Teniers the Younger (1610-1690)

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Editorial Note:

Part One of the present series is included in the September 2026 edition of "**The Aquarian Theosophist**". **Part Two**, in the October edition.

The series reproduces a translation made by Paschasius of Dumium that is part of the book "**Iberian Fathers, Volume I**", presenting writings by Martin of Braga, Paschasius, and Leander of Seville. Published by The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., in 1969, the book is now available online. It has 261 pages: see pages 134-143 for the chapters below. The footnotes of the original text are not included here.

(CCA)

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Chapter 13

1. An old man said: "He who is too much praised by men suffers no small harm, but he who is not honored by men receives glory from above."

2. He also said: "It is not possible for grass and seed to come into existence at the same time; similarly, it is impossible for those of us who have praise and glory in secular things to win a reward in heaven."

3. He also said: "When thoughts of pride or vainglory assail you, examine yourself to see whether you have obeyed all the commands of God, whether you love your enemies, whether you rejoice in the success of an enemy, whether you feel sad at his humiliation, whether you remember that you are an unworthy servant, that you are a worse sinner than other men; even then do not suppose that you have accomplished something great, that you have done some good deed, for such elated thoughts dissolve all those good things."

4. An old man said to someone: "Do not set your heart against your brother, saying that you are more sober than he and more continent, but be subjected to the grace of God in the spirit of poverty and in love that is not pretended, lest in the spirit of exaltation you lose your reward."

5. The old man also said: "To the extent that a man lowers himself in humility, so far does he climb on high. Just as pride, if it climbs to heaven, is cast down to hell, so humility, if it descends to hell, will then be exalted to heaven."

6. As Abbot Macarius was returning to his cell at dawn carrying palm leaves, the devil met him with a very sharp sickle and tried to strike him, but was unable to do so. He shouted: "I have great trouble with you, Macarius, for when I want to strike you I am unable. Yet I surpass you in everything that you do. You fast occasionally; I never eat food. You watch frequently; I never allow myself to sleep. Yet in one thing you conquer me, I admit." When Abbot Macarius inquired what that thing was, he replied: "Your humility alone overcomes

me." As his enemy said these words, the blessed Macarius extended his hands in prayer, and the unclean spirit vanished into the air.

7. One of the fathers used to say: "All labor without humility is useless, for humility is the precursor of love. Just as John was the precursor of Jesus, bringing all men to Him, so humility brings all to love, that is, to God Himself, 'for God is love'."

8. One brother asked an old man: "What is humility?" The old man replied: "It is the tree of life, growing up high."

9. He also said: "The land in which God ordered a sacrifice to be made to Him is humility."

10. Again, one old man was asked: "How can the soul attain humility?" He replied: "If a man considers only his own sins." He used to say: "The perfection of man is humility."

11. Abbot Motois said: "Humility is never angry with itself and never allows others to be angry."

12. He also said: "Humility is when, if a brother has sinned against you, you forgive him before he repents."

Chapter 14

1. At the time when Abbot Joseph came with other brothers to Abbot Pimenius, one of the relatives of this Pimenius brought a child whose face had been twisted by a seizure of the devil, and its father sat outside the monastery and wept. When one of the old men heard his voice as he wept and came outside and asked the cause of his mourning, he replied: "I am a relative of your Pimenius, and I have come that he might see this child. You see, master, what tribulation Satan has caused this infant. Until now, we were afraid to bring him here, because Pimenius does not want to see us, and if he knows that I am here now, he will throw me out in confusion. But when I saw you, fathers, who have recently come to him, I presumed to come here. However you wish, then, go and pity me, father, and take this child and carry it in with you, that he may pray for it." The old man took the child and went into the cell, but he was wise enough not to offer it first to Abbot Pimenius, but to the lesser brothers, saying: "Bless the child, brothers, offer a prayer, and pass it on to the other old men." After all of them, he brought it to Pimenius, but he was unwilling to look upon it. When they asked him to pray as they all had done, he groaned, then arose and praying said: "God, heal thy creature, that the enemy may not rule over him." And he made the sign of the cross over the child and it was soon restored to its father, healed.

2. Once, when a layman entered the church possessed by an unclean spirit, they all offered prayer, but the unclean spirit was by no means cast out of him. So the brothers said to one another: "What can we do to this spirit? No one can drive him out except Abbot Besarion, but if we mention this, he will not even consent to come to church. Let us do thus: since he is accustomed to come to church before everyone else, let us cause the one who is suffering to sit here, and then let us say: 'Father, father, arouse the one who is sleeping'." Accordingly, they did so, and when Abbot Besarion came, they all stood in prayer and said to him: "Father, arouse the one who is sleeping." He said: "Arise and go outside." And soon the unclean spirit departed from him, and he was made whole from that hour.

Chapter 15

1. The blessed Antony used to say frequently: “If the baker did not cover the eyes of his animal at the mill, it would turn around and consume its own recompense. So we receive a veil through the dispensation of God, that we are unable to comprehend the good that we do, lest we consider ourselves blessed and thus become extolled and lose our reward. The reason for our being left with sordid thoughts is that we must concentrate on condemning ourselves and our thoughts; yet we must not allow the sordid things in us to obscure the small amount of good we have done. A man is never good, even if he wants to be good, unless God dwells in him, ‘for no one is good but God only.’ ” We must therefore always truthfully criticize ourselves. When one does not reprehend himself, he loses his reward.”

2. While the same holy Antony was praying in his cell, a voice came to him, saying: “Antony, you have not yet reached the measure of the tanner who lives in Alexandria.” Upon hearing this, the old man arose early in the morning and took his stick and hastened to the city. When he came to the designated man and went in, the latter was astounded at the sight of such a great man. The old man said to him: “Recount to me your works, for it is on account of you that I have left the desert and come here.” He answered and said: “I am not aware that I have ever accomplished any good thing. As soon as I arise from bed in the morning, before I sit down to my work, I say that this whole city from the least to the greatest is to enter the kingdom of God for its just acts, but that I alone for my sins shall enter eternal punishment. What I say in the morning, and again in the evening before I sleep, I feel in the truth of my heart.” Hearing this, the blessed Antony replied: “In truth, son, like a good workman sitting in your own house, you have won the kingdom of God and its rest, while I, as one without understanding, have spent all my time in solitude without having attained to your measure.”

3. A brother asked Abbot Pimenius: “Father, why did the Apostle say: ‘For the clean things are unclean?’ ” He replied: “If anyone can arrive at an understanding of these words, he will see that he is less than every creature.” The brother said: “How can I see myself as less than him who is a murderer?” The old man replied: “If a man is able to arrive at these words of the Apostle, and sees a man who has killed someone, he says to himself: ‘This is the only crime he has committed, but I commit murder every hour by killing myself’.” When the brother asked how that was possible, the old man answered: “Man’s only justice is to reprimand himself constantly; then he will be justified when he condemns his sins.”

4. A certain brother said to an old man: “My thoughts say to me: ‘I am good’.” The old man answered: “He who does not see his sins always thinks he is good; but he who sees his sins can never be persuaded by his thoughts that he is good, for he knows what he sees. Therefore, one needs to work hard to reflect upon himself, for negligence, sloth, and idleness cause the eyes of the mind to be blind.”

5. A certain brother said to Abbot Pimenius: “My thoughts do not allow me to have regard for my sins, but my fathers compel me to think of my sins.” Abbot Pimenius replied with a story about Abbot Isidore, saying: “While Abbot Isidore was weeping in his cell and his disciple was sitting in another cell, it happened that the disciple went to him during the very hour that he was weeping and asked: ‘Why are you weeping, father?’ He replied: ‘I am weeping for my sins, son.’ Again, he said: ‘You have no sins, father.’ The old man replied: ‘My son, if God were to manifest my sins to men, He would need not three nor four men, but many, many more’.”

Chapter 16

1. A brother asked Abbot Pimenius: “How can a man avoid speaking ill of his neighbor?” The old man replied: “My neighbor and I are two images. When I criticize my image, that of my brother is held in honor by me; but when I praise my own, then I behold the evil image of my brother. Accordingly, I do not say ill of another if I always criticize myself. For he who does not examine himself despises even the great man.”

2. One of the fathers used to say: “Whatever you dislike you should not do to another. If you dislike one who speaks ill of you, do not speak ill of another. If you dislike one who slanders you, do not slander another. If you dislike one who despises you or does you wrong or carries off what belongs to you or does anything similar, do not do any of these things to another. He who is able to abide by these words does enough to achieve salvation.”

3. One of the holy fathers, seeing another in sin, wept bitterly, saying: “Woe is me, for just as he sins today, so shall I tomorrow.” And he warned his disciple, saying: “Even though someone commits a grave sin in your presence, do not condemn him, but rather consider that you sin more than he does, even if he is a layman, unless, of course, he blasphemes God, which is a sign of heretics.”

4. A certain anchorite named Timotheus heard that one of the brothers had sinned. When his abbot asked what he should do with the brother, Timotheus advised that he have him expelled. When the brother had been expelled, temptation came over Timotheus, who prayed in the sight of the Lord and said: “I have sinned, have mercy upon me.” A voice came to him, saying: “Timotheus, this has happened to you because you had no regard for your brother in the time of his temptation.”

Chapter 17

1. A brother asked Abbot Pimenius: “What is faith?” The old man replied: “To live constantly in love and humility and to do good to one's neighbor.”

2. When Abbot Theodore was speaking of the work of the hands and of the soul, a brother said to him: “Explain to me, father, the work of the soul and the work of the hands.” The old man said: “Everything that we do by the command of God should be credited to the works of the soul; what we do for our own use or advantage, all these are known as the works of the hands.”

3. If anyone of the brothers sent for Abbot Apollo while he was working with his hands, he would swiftly and gladly go to him, saying: “I am going with Christ my King to work for my soul. For this is the work which is credited to the sou!.”

Chapter 18

1. A certain anchorite sat outside his monastery, performing many deeds of virtue, and other monks came to him from the monastery and compelled him to eat at an unaccustomed hour. After this, the brothers said to him: “Were you sad, father, because today you did something against your custom?” He replied: “My troubles come when I follow my own will.”

2. A certain brother came to Scete and asked to see Abbot Arsenius. When the other brothers urged him to rest a while, he replied: “I shall not eat bread until I am worthy to see him.” Then one of the brothers took him to Abbot Arsenius, knocked on the door of his cell, and

brought him in. They were received, prayer was offered, they sat down. The blessed Arsenius being silent, the one who brought the brother in said: “I am going.” And the one who had come with such great desire, seeing that Abbot Arsenius had not spoken to him, sat in silence and confusion and said: “And I am going with you, brother.” So they both left. Then he asked to be taken to Abbot Moses, who had been converted from a robber. He was received by him with due hospitality and dismissed. The brother who had taken him to both of them said: “Well, you have seen both of those for whom you inquired; which one do you like better?” He replied: “Why, I preferred the one who received both of us well and fed us.” Hearing these words, one of the fathers prayed to the Lord, saying: “Lord, explain this matter, I pray, for one refuses in Thy name to see men or speak to them, the other in Thy name is cordial to all.” Lo, in a trance, he seemed to see two ships on a river: and in one he saw the Holy Spirit in silence and tranquillity sailing with Abbot Arsenius; in the other ship he saw Abbot Moses and the angels of God, and they were placing honey in his mouth and a honeycomb in his teeth.

Chapter 19

1. A certain brother asked an old man: “If there are two brothers in one cell, and one of them fasts for six straight days, while the other tends the sick, whose labor is greater before God?” The old man replied: “If he who fasts six days shall hang himself by the nose, he will not be similar to the other in the sight of God.”

2. John the Younger, of Thebes, disciple of Abbot Ammon, served the old man in his infirmity for twelve years; yet, when the old man saw him working, never once did he say a kind or pleasant word to him. When Ammon was about to leave this world, the other old men sat about and he took the hand of his disciple and said to him three times: “You shall be saved, you shall be saved, you shall be saved.” And he handed him to the old men, saying: “He is not a man, but an angel, who served me in my illness so many years and, although he never heard a kind word from me, still performed his service with great patience.”

Chapter 20

1. A certain great old man said to his ill disciple: “Be not saddened, son, for your infirmity or the misfortunes of your” body. For it is of the utmost importance to religion to thank God in one's infirmity. If you are iron, you lose the rust through fire; but if you are gold, you are tried by fire and proceed from great things to greater. Be not anxious, therefore, brother, for if God wants you to be tortured in the body, who are you that you should resist His will or bear it ill? Therefore, bear up and ask God to give you what He wills.”

2. A certain old man was frequently weak and languishing of body, but one year it happened that no illness befell him, wherefore he wept and took it badly, saying: “Thou hast abandoned me, Lord; Thou hast been unwilling to visit me this year.”

Chapter 21

1. Abbot Piemon was asked by a brother how the soul can resist and not wish to fear God. The old man replied: “The soul does wish to fear God, but it is not yet time. For the fear of God is great perfection.”

2. A brother asked an old man: “How does the fear of God enter the soul?” And the old man said: “If anyone first possesses humility, so as to judge or condemn no one, or is a distributor of alms, so as to have nothing, then the fear of God enters his soul.”

3. An old man said: “May fear and humility and hunger remain with you.”

4. A certain brother asked an old man: “Father, why is my heart hard and why does it not fear God?” The old man said to him: “I think that if a man would keep reproach in his heart he would possess the fear of God.” The brother said: “What is reproach?” The old man answered: “That a man reproaches his soul in all matters, saying to it: ‘Remember that you must meet God.’ He also says: ‘What have I to do with man?’ I think that if one abides by these reproaches, the fear of God will come to him.”

(To be continued.)

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The Divine Intellect and the Immortal Counsellor of the Soul

Selected Fragments From ‘Isis Unveiled’

Helena P. Blavatsky



1. The Sowing of Truth

Everything in this world has its time, and truth, however based upon unimpeachable evidence, will not root or grow, unless, like a plant, it is thrown into soil in its proper season. “The age must be prepared”, says Professor Cooke.

(From “**Isis Unveiled, Volume I**”, pp. 219-220)

2. The Divine Intellect

We are at the bottom of a cycle and evidently in a transitory state. Plato divides the intellectual progress of the universe during every cycle into fertile and barren periods. In the sublunary regions, the spheres of the various elements remain eternally in perfect harmony with the divine nature, he says; "but their parts", owing to a too close proximity to earth, and their commingling with the *earthly* (which is matter, and therefore the realm of evil), "are sometimes according, and sometimes contrary to (divine) nature". When those circulations – which Eliphas Levi calls "currents of the astral light" – in the universal ether which contains in itself every element, take place in harmony with the divine spirit, our earth and everything pertaining to it enjoys a fertile period. The occult powers of plants, animals, and minerals magically sympathize with the "superior natures", and the divine soul of man is in perfect intelligence with these "inferior" ones. But during the barren periods, the latter lose their magic sympathy, and the spiritual sight of the majority of mankind is so blinded as to lose every notion of the superior powers of its own divine spirit. We are in a barren period: the eighteenth century, during which the malignant fever of skepticism broke out so irrepressibly, has entailed unbelief as an hereditary disease upon the nineteenth. The divine intellect is veiled in man; his animal brain alone *philosophizes.*

(From "**Isis Unveiled, Volume I**", p. 247)

3. The Immortal Counsellor of the Soul

The *dual* man, *i.e.,* one from whom the divine *immortal* spirit has departed, leaving but the animal form and astral body (Plato's higher *mortal* soul), is left merely to his *instincts,* for he was conquered by all the evils entailed on matter; hence, he becomes a docile tool in the hands of the *invisibles* – beings of sublimated matter, hovering in our atmosphere, and ever ready to inspire those who are deservedly deserted by their *immortal* counsellor, the Divine Spirit, called by Plato "genius".

(From "**Isis Unveiled, Volume I**", pp. 276-277)

4. The Universal Mind

The speculations of Plato, in the *Banquet,* on the creation of the primordial men, and the essay on Cosmogony in the *Timæus,* must be taken allegorically, if we accept them at all. It is this hidden Pythagorean meaning in *Timæus, Cratylus,* and *Parmenides,* and a few other trilogies and dialogues, that the Neo-platonists ventured to expound, as far as the theurgical vow of secrecy would allow them. The Pythagorean doctrine that *God is the universal mind diffused through all things,* and the dogma of the soul's immortality, are the leading features in these apparently incongruous teachings. His piety and the great veneration Plato felt for the MYSTERIES, are sufficient warrant that he would not allow his indiscretion to get the better of that deep sense of responsibility which is felt by every adept. "Constantly perfecting himself in perfect MYSTERIES, a man in them alone becomes truly perfect", says he in the *Phædrus.*

(From "**Isis Unveiled, Volume I**", p. 287)

5. The Temporary Character of Shape

[…] *Annihilation* means, with the Buddhistical philosophy, only a dispersion of matter, in whatever form or *semblance* of form it may be; for everything that bears a shape was created, and thus must sooner or later perish, *i.e*., change that shape; therefore, as something temporary, though seeming to be permanent, it is but an illusion, *Maya;* for, as eternity has neither beginning nor end, the more or less prolonged duration of some particular form passes, as it were, like an instantaneous flash of lightning. Before we have the time to realize that we have seen it, it is gone and passed away for ever; hence, even our astral bodies, pure ether, are but illusions of matter, so long as they retain their terrestrial outline. The latter changes, says the Buddhist, according to the merits or demerits of the person during his lifetime, and this is metempsychosis. When the spiritual *entity* breaks loose for ever from every particle of matter, then only it enters upon the eternal and unchangeable Nirvana.

(From "**Isis Unveiled, Volume I**", p. 290)

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The above selection was made by Mr. Alex Rambla Beltrán, our coeditor from Spain.

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Read the Article

_ Israel, the Old New Land _

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"Deserve, then desire". (H. P. Blavatsky)

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The Aquarian Theosophist **Volume XXVII, Number 01, November 2026.**



The Aquarian Theosophist is the monthly electronic journal of the **Independent Lodge of Theosophists** and its associated websites, which include **www.CarlosCardosoAveline.com**, **www.TheosophyOnline.com**, and **www.HelenaBlavatsky.org**. It was founded by Jerome Wheeler in November 2000. Editor: Carlos Cardoso Aveline. Assistant-editor: Joana Maria Pinho. In order to make a free subscription or get in touch with *The Aquarian*, write to **indelodge@gmail.com**. Blog: **www.TheAquarianTheosophist.com**. The entire collection of the journal is at our associated websites. "**The Aquarian Theosophist**" is a trademark registered in the National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI), Lisbon, Portugal, under the number 515491 (19 September 2013).

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