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CENTRIFUGAL AND CENTRIPETAL FORCES IN THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

BY IVERSON L. HARRIS

A short while ago I read again a passage in *The Key to Theosophy* which set me to thinking. I found that the universal principle enunciated by H. P. B. and applied by her to individual lives, was also applicable to the Theosophical Movement. So I have set down the following thoughts, believing that other Theosophical students might be interested and also that these reflections might evoke valuable reactions. The passage referred to is found in Chapter X, on page 189:

"The universe and everything in it, moral, mental, physical, psychic or spiritual, is built on a perfect law of equilibrium and harmony. As said before (*vide Isis Unveiled*), the centripetal force could not manifest itself without the centrifugal in the harmonious revolutions of the spheres, and all forms and their progress are the products of this dual force in nature. Now the Spirit (or *Buddhi*) is the centrifugal and the soul (*Manas*) the centripetal spiritual energy; and to produce one result they have to be in perfect union and harmony. Break or damage the centripetal motion of the earthly soul tending toward the centre which attracts it;

arrest its progress by clogging it with a heavier weight of matter than it can bear, or than is fit for the Devachanic state, and the harmony of the whole will be destroyed."

Applying the above ideas to the Theosophical Movement as a whole rather than to individuals, one sees evidence in several of the major branches thereof that the centripetal force had become so clogged 'with a heavier weight of matter than it could bear', that the harmony of the whole had been destroyed. But is not the present era definitely one when the centrifugal forces are working vigorously, intelligently and with considerable success to restore that harmony which has been destroyed? It may even be that the Powers behind the Movement deliberately engineered this renaissance of personal initiative and utter freedom of thought and of individual activity in order to counteract the over-centralization of authority, power and creeping dogmatism that had warped several of the organizations.

This fresh, wholesome, invigorating 'Wind of the Spirit' of centrifugalism is well summarized in *Eirenicon* No. 107, issued by the Peace Lodge of the Theo-

sophical Society (Adyar), 32 Chapel St., Hyde, Cheshire, England. The Editor — presumably Tom Redfern — quotes and supplements a statement made by the Editors of *Theosophical Notes* (Box 65, Berkeley, Calif.) for March, 1953, in which they draw attention to three concepts of unity in the Movement:

(a) that of organization.

(b) “unofficial unity among individuals or groups, or within groups, based only on ‘similarity of aim, purpose, and teaching’.

(c) “the unity of spirit of individuals or groups highly dissident among themselves but willing to tolerate one another and strive amicably for better understanding.” *Eirenicon* comments:

“Notes. . . in an introductory note says: ‘We do not see eye to eye with the Peace Lodge people in all respects, but by dint of considerable correspondence as well as their printed work, we have a deep respect for their honesty and sincerity.’ That assessment is reciprocal. There is a live relationship between *Notes* and *Eirenicon* in the unity of brand (c) above. *Notes* is aware of ‘at least eight groups’, with ‘unofficial and informal contact among themselves, to greater or lesser degree’, who have in common ‘a strong desire to get back to real Theosophy’ and/or ‘rebellion against abused authority in high places.’ We can think of 9, at least 5 of which will be common to both lists. *Notes* sees this as ‘a current unprecedented situation in the Movement’, for these groups are drawn from all of the ‘three chief survivors of the original Society’, and others outside of them. It is a characteristic of some of them, at least, ‘to have an argument among themselves and come out of it without a grudge—something practically missing from the spirit of the Movement since 1896, but a very essential part of the program of H.P.B. and her Teachers . . . It looks to us very much as though the original

aim, the coming together on a basis of mutual toleration of people with fundamentally the same idea but considerable difference of individual opinions is really alive again after 57 years. If so, the Masters will be behind it—and not very far behind.”

Eirenicon has for years advocated and promoted the practice of Theosophical brotherhood among all the different branches of the Movement, while not hesitating at any time to criticize abuses, particularly in its own society.

Continuing the thesis so well presented in the foregoing quotation, let us illustrate with a few out of many examples that could be chosen:

First, there is the persistent work of *The Canadian Theosophist*, which has done yeoman service for many, many years in speaking out fearlessly against the vagaries and fancies of neo-Theosophy, and in adhering staunchly to the Blavatsky tradition. In its issue of July 15th, 1952, the *C.T.* published an article entitled “Theosophy in Mexico: The aim and Guiding Principles of a Cosmopolitan Group of Students of Theosophy in the City of Mexico.” (Address Cerrada Eugenia No. 15, Mexico 12, D.F.). This group has been active since February 15, 1929, and its guiding principles are a ringing manifesto on behalf of Theosophical independence and spiritual centrifugalism. In its issue of May 15, 1953, the *C.T.* had the following comments about the sponsors of the admirable series of Bard Hall lectures on Theosophy and Contemporary Thought (For information, address either Mrs. Mary L. Fay, 211 W. Walnut St., San Diego, or Mr. W. E. Small, 3022 Ibsen St., San Diego 6) :

“The activities of this group of unaffiliated students may be an indication of a growing tendency within the Theosophical Movement for groups of persons to avoid the ‘party line’ of Theosophical Societies, and without creating

any elaborate organizational set-up, to work together as a group in carrying on the message."

A thought-provoking editorial in the same issue of the *C.T.* states:

"The viability of the Theosophical Movement, its power to continue to live and grow despite conditions which seemed certain to destroy it, is evidence of the basic truth of the body of doctrines which it promulgates. Our human foolishness and downright stupidity, our egotism and self-righteousness have hampered and diverted the free flow of its power—but despite popular distortions of the original message, despite the effects of the power complexes of many 'leaders', despite the activities of little 'holier-than-thou' groups within the Movement, and despite also the pathetic inertia of thousands of members, the Theosophical Movement does go forward. Each year new fires are kindled from the ancient Flame; each year eager, valiant and enthusiastic souls join one or another of the Theosophical Societies, and so become members of the Movement which is above all organizations. The effects of their action is long lasting, though many cannot endure for long the cold rigidity of the theosophical organizational machines, nor the disparity between ideals and practices."

As though to illustrate some of the fine points brought out in the foregoing editorial, a summary in English has just been received from Holland of a report about the yearly Convention of The Theosophical Society (H.P.B.) held at The Hague on June 14, 1953. On behalf of the Netherlandish National Committee, Mr. J. Versluije made some timely statements, singularly applicable to the topic under discussion in this letter: He spoke of 'the well-trying methods and lines of work' decided upon at the annual meeting of 1951, and the resolution adopted in 1952, which had been

adhered to, namely: "To consider the members in the Netherlands as one National Corresponding Lodge, the local lodges being 'independent groups' following their own methods of work, while of course all pursuing the well-known objects of the Society." (For further information about this Society, address Mr. J. H. Venema, Van Blankenburgstraat 66 A, The Hague.)

In England there is the Corresponding Fellows Lodge of the T. S., whose monthly *Bulletin* is alive with intellectual vitality, independent thought and the spirit of brotherhood. Mrs. Harry Benjamin (24 Upper Brighton Road, Worthing, Sussex), the Lodge's Secretary and one of the Editors of its *Bulletin*, writes that she is in full agreement with the comments first above quoted from *The Canadian Theosophist* of May 15th, and says that "It seems to be the very keynote of our work for the future, and that without creating *any* international organizational set-up, we are in fact closer and co-operating more effectively with each other, throughout the world, . . . I feel this very strongly."

One should not overlook the pioneering work of broad, undenominational, centrifugalism inaugurated and still carried on by H.P.B.'s grand-nephew, Boris de Zirkoff, in *Theosophia* (615 So. Oxford St., Los Angeles 5, Calif.), and in his many classes and lectures, which have consistently upheld the Blavatsky tradition.

To the best of my knowledge, the first mighty impulse was given to this trend in 1930 by Dr. G. de Purucker, Leader of the Point Loma T. S., when he launched the Theosophical Fraternization Movement, stripped himself of many of the autocratic prerogatives contained in the Constitution of 1898, and insisted on the autonomy of National Sections and lodges of the T. S. he headed, and on the importance of exercising individual initiative and

choice.

History confirms the truth of Lord Acton's dictum: "Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely." And speaking in New York in 1912, Woodrow Wilson gave voice to this practical wisdom:

"The history of liberty is a history of the limitations of governmental power, not the increase of it. When we resist . . . concentration of power, we are resisting the powers of death, because concentration of power is what always precedes the destruction of human liberties."

It will be noted that in the foregoing comments and quotations, nothing whatsoever has been discussed from an 'occult' or 'esoteric' angle. All questions have been dealt with from a rational, common-sense and philosophical standpoint. As for esoteric matters, would not all Theosophical students be well advised to accept old Lao-Tze's dictum?: "Those who know do not speak; those who speak do not know."

When one witnesses, as many of us have witnessed, 'the abuse of power in high places', and in the name of the Masters, forsooth, then it is surely time once more to remind all Theosophical students of H. P. B.'s warning in *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 301:

"I say again, every earnest Theosophist regrets today, from the bottom of his heart, that these sacred names and things have ever been mentioned before

the public, and fervently wishes that they had been kept secret within a small circle of trusted and devoted friends."

As every student of Theosophical History knows, it was H. P. B. herself who first publicly proclaimed to the West the existence of living Masters or Mahatmas, whose Messenger she was and whose message she delivered in her inspired writings. Besides H. P. B., who that claims Mahatmic guidance and inspiration may be believed? The crucial and final answer was anticipated by Jesus 2000 years ago in the Sermon on the Mount:

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

"Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. . .

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."—*Matthew* vii, 15-17, 21-23.

"Because of their lust for authority men are in constant turmoil. Those in authority are ever fighting to maintain it. Those out of authority are ever struggling to snatch it from the hands of those who hold it, while Man, the God in swaddling-bands, is trampled under foot and hoof and left on the field of battle unnoticed, unattended and unloved."

"Seek no authority over the lives of men . . . but seek a way into the hearts of men through Love and Understanding; . . . and once installed therein you can the better work to loose men of their chains. For Love will guide your hand, while Understanding holds the lantern."

The Book of Mirdad, Mikhail Naimy.

REINCARNATION, A LOGICAL NECESSITY

In reply to a question which was asked at a Theosophical meeting, the speaker, who did not accept the doctrine of reincarnation, said, "Reincarnation is not a logical necessity, but I do not know of any logical reason against it."

Logic is a process in reasoning, a very useful one and one which we cannot do without. But it is a process, a method, a machine, and in order to put the logic machine into operation, it is not necessary that the premises upon which the machine will work, be true. Of course, it is highly desirable that the premises should be as accurate and as comprehensive as we can make them; if they are inaccurate, faulty or partial, the result of the logical process will likewise be inaccurate, faulty or partial. For example, Solomon in his haste voiced the major premise, "All men are liars" but history does not record whether he proceeded logically from that point into the minor premise, "Solomon is a man", and from thence to the inevitable 'therefore' "Solomon is a liar." But if Solomon was a liar, he may have lied in his initial premise and uttered a falsehood in stating that all men are liars when he knew full well that some men are not. If his premise were false, then the major premise should have been "All men are not liars", then "Solomon was a man" and "Therefore, Solomon was not a liar." But all this is merely by the way of indicating that a logical syllogism may be logical and silly at the same time; the process of logic is not concerned with either silliness or truth, it grinds out the grist from whatever grain is fed into it.

In our speculations on life we feed ideas into our logic machine and then find ourselves tied mentally by the kind of product it produces. Reincarnation is one of such ideas; it is a postu-

late concerning the process of human life. It is one of several postulates, as a matter of fact, but reincarnation seems to be based upon premises which, to say the least, are not so faulty, partial and incomplete as some of the other postulates.

One of those others is the materialistic view of life; there is no soul, no continuing entity, and consequently no previous existence, no post-mortem existence. The individual is the chance product of the reproductive urge of a male and a female of the species of the animal kingdom known as human, whose coming together was also largely chance, influenced by a mutual sexual attraction.

This materialistic view is quite logical. If the materialistic premises are accepted, the conclusion is logical; the machine has worked impersonally and efficiently to produce the only possible result from the material which was put into it.

Another postulate is that there is a soul, not pre-existing but newly created by God, each time a child is born; that there is a God who in his infinite omniscience permits a soul to be born into poverty or wealth, into a healthy or an unhealthy body, as a genius or as an idiot. Premising a God who is the creator of souls, Who is an all-wise, all powerful Being who is working out His incomprehensible plan, then the conclusion is inevitable that the environment, the circumstances, every inherent strength or weakness, virtue or vice which the newly created soul brings with it into incarnation, is the work of God and must be so accepted. The fatalists and the predestinators are logical; some souls are, by God's will, predestined to glory, some to shame. As the Eastern saying has it, "If God be all-

wise, what does it matter if men are foolish?"

Some orthodox religionists object to this conclusion, claiming that God works with humanity and is limited by the sinfulness of human beings; He is kindly but is unable to send perfect souls into the bodies produced by sinful and imperfect men and women. This, however, is a different kind of God, One who is not omnipotent but who is limited in His actions by his creation. He does the best He can in each case—but if the newly created soul is an idiot, that is the fault of humanity as a whole, not the parents alone for they themselves were but the limited product of a long line of ancestors and carried the racial sin in their veins to be passed on to their child. By such devious reasoning men seek to justify their irrational belief in something they know is not so.

Reincarnation postulates a continuing entity, not created when the body is created, not dying when the body dies; an entity which is the carrier of the essence of experiences from past incarnations and of the seeds of former actions. It postulates also an unceasing tendency in the universe to restore equilibrium, to balance push and pull, to produce effects directly proportionate to the causes which evoked them; in human affairs, this balancing tendency is called the law of justice, or in a word, karma. Karma brings to each soul coming into incarnation, the fruits of long series of lives out of the past, the faults and failings, the glories and the strengths, the fulfillment and the unfulfilled wish, the hopes, the fears, the certainties which have become part of the inherent character of the individual.

Granted that within the human being there is such an entity, and granted that there is such a universal law of justice, then reincarnation is the only logical answer. Without justice and without a continuing entity, reincarnation is not

necessary; with justice as a fundamental concept in our premises, then reincarnation is a logical necessity.

THE DOCTRINE AS A RAFT

"Under the similitude of a raft do I lay my Teaching before you, designed for escape, O disciples, not designed for retention. Give ear and lay well to heart what I shall say."

"Suppose that a man coming upon a long journey finds in his way a great broad water, the hither side beset with fears and dangers, but the further side secure and free from fears, and no boat wherewith to cross the flood, nor any bridge leading from this to that other shore. And suppose this man to say to himself, 'Verily this is a great and a wide water, and the hither side is full of fears and dangers, but the further side secure and free from fears; and there is neither boat nor bridge to conduct from this to that further shore. How if I gather some reeds and twigs and leaves and bind them together into a raft; and then supported on that raft, and labouring with hands and feet, cross in safety to that other shore.'"

"Accordingly, disciples, suppose this man to gather together reeds, and twigs, and leaves and branches, and bind them all together into a raft, and launching forth upon it and labouring with hands and feet, attain in safety to the other shore. And now the flood crossed, the further shore attained, suppose this man should say: 'Very serviceable indeed has this raft been to me. Supported by this raft and working with hands and feet, I am safely crossed to this other shore; how now if I lift the raft up on my head or lay it upon my shoulder and so proceed whithersoever I wish!' What think ye, monks? So doing would this man be acting rightly as regards his raft?"

"'Nay, verily, Lord..'"

“And what then ought this man do if he would act rightly as regards the raft? Thus, disciples, ought the man to consider; ‘Truly this raft has been very serviceable to me! Supported by this raft and exerting hands and feet, I am crossed in safety to this further shore. How now if I lay this raft up on the bank or leave it to sink in the water and so proceed upon my journey!’ “So doing, disciples, the man would be acting rightly as regards his raft.”

“In like manner also do I lay my Teaching before you under the similitude of a raft, meant for escape, disciples, not meant for retention. Understanding the similitude of the raft, O disciples, ye must leave righteousness behind, how much more unrighteousness!” — *The Majjhima-Nikaya*, The First 50 discourses from the Collection of the Medium-Length Discourses of Gotama the Buddha.

THE DEDUCTIVE METHOD

Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge, originally published in 1890-91, are compiled from shorthand notes taken at meetings of the Lodge from January 10 to June 20, 1889. Questions were put by members; the answers in all cases are those of Esoteric Philosophy as given by H.P.B. herself.

A. . . . In occultism it is always best to proceed from universals to particulars.

Q. Apparently, then, the whole basis of occultism lies in this, that there is latent within every man a power which can give him true knowledge, a power of perception of truth, which enables him to deal first hand with universals if he will be strictly logical and face the facts. Thus we can proceed from universals to particulars by this innate spiritual force which is in every man.

A. Quite so: this power is inherent in all, but paralyzed by our methods of education, and especially by the Aristotelian and Baconian methods. Hypothesis now reigns triumphant.

Q. It is curious to read Schopenhauer and Hartmann and mark how, step by step, by strict logic and pure reason, they have arrived at the same bases of thought that had been centuries ago adopted in India, especially by the Vedantin system. It may, however, be objected that they have arrived at this by the inductive method. But in Schopenhauer's case at any rate it was not so. He acknowledges himself that the idea came to him like a flash; having thus got his fundamental idea he set to work to arrange his facts, so that the reader imagines that what was in reality an intuitive idea, is a logical deduction drawn from the facts.

A. This is not only true of the Schopenhauerian philosophy, but also of all the great discoveries of modern times. How, for instance, did Newton discover the law of gravity? Was it not by the simple fall of an apple, and not by an elaborate series of experiments. The time will come when the Platonic method will not be so entirely ignored and men will look with favour on methods of education which will enable them to develop this most spiritual faculty.

—*Transactions*, pp. 47, 48.

No ever so inclusive collection of empirical facts can ever lead to the setting up of such complicated equations. A theory can be tested by experience, but there is no way from experience to the setting up of a theory.—*Albert Einstein*, in *Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist*, p. 89.

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OFFICE NOTES

Dr. Sidney Smith, President of the University of Toronto, in his address of welcome to the undergraduates, uttered some words of wisdom which even members of the Theosophical Society might take to heart. Dr. Smith considered that standardization was 'the most insidious pressure of modern society' and told the students that they should develop 'a critical spirit that can stand up against all the dreary platitudes and pallid inanities that assail us.' He referred to the many influences 'which tend to submerge the individual in the tide of conventional mediocrity' and stated that 'the most valuable member of society is the man or woman who has the capacity

for dissent, who sets up a resistance to mass movements and mass ideas.'

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Seldom do we publish complimentary letters, but our Executive considered that the following portion of a recent letter from a subscriber should appear in the magazine. "I have followed with sustained interest the policies of your magazine for many years, and read with profit and enjoyment its excellent articles. It goes without saying — yet rarely do we express it in writing—that we hail the C.T. as an outstanding example of honest effort to uphold the original platform of the T.S. and the teachings of Theosophy as presented by H.P.B. Ever more and more power to you." Our correspondent is not a member of the Adyar Theosophical Society—as a matter of fact we do not know if he is connected with any Society at the present time—but he is one of the many students to whom the Theosophical Movement and its influence upon the world is of primal importance. We deeply appreciate his thoughtfulness in writing.

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A Theosophical student of many years' standing, Mr. G. P. Williamson of London, Ont., died on Sept. 3rd. Mr. Williamson conducted a well-known bookstore in London and many theosophical books passed through his hands. He was an excellent judge of the inner values of a book and his own extensive library contained many unusual items. He will be sadly missed by many friends to whom his kindly, quiet, helpful manner endeared him. Our sincere sympathy is extended to Mrs. Williamson and to his son and other members of the family. A short Theosophical funeral service was held at the Crematorium Toronto, on Saturday, September 5.

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Professor Ernest Wood and Mrs. Wood were the guests of Toronto Lodge

from Sunday, Sept. 27 to Sunday, Oct. 3. Professor Wood lectured on both Sunday evenings and also on four week-nights. On Saturday, Oct. 2 he spoke in Hamilton and attended a reception given by the Hamilton Lodge. The meetings were all well attended and their many friends in both cities were delighted to meet them again. Mr. and Mrs. Wood left on Monday for Syracuse where he was to speak that evening. Professor Wood will be fully occupied until the end of November with series of lectures in New York and Boston.



We were delighted to receive the September issue of *The Voice of Montreal Theosophical Society*. The Fall activities of the Lodge will get under way on September 15th and an excellent programme of lectures for the public will start on October 2nd. The President, Mrs. Helmi Sora reported enthusiastically on her visit to the Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society in America, and Mrs. William S. Harley reported on the Summer School which was held after the Convention.

THE THREE TRUTHS

Each man is his own absolute law-giver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.

The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour have no limit.

The principle which gives life dwells in us, and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen, or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception.

These truths, which are as great as is life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man. Feed the hungry with them.—Idvll of the White Lotus.

CORRESPONDENCE

The following letter relates to the book *Occult Chemistry*, a revised edition of which was published by The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, in 1951. We had fondly hoped—but in vain, as it turns out—that this material would have remained quietly buried in its original 1919 edition until it was forgotten. However, it has been reincarnated in quarto size profusely, illustrated, containing 390 pages, price about \$11.00. The new edition was revised by Mr. Jinarajadasa; parts of the original have been omitted and notes have been added on later 'investigations' made by Mr. Leadbeater.

It is unfortunate that our correspondent's examination of the sources from which the basic ideas of *Occult Chemistry* were drawn, has led him to resign from the Society. Doubtless the disclosures were but the last straws which finally moved the scale. Mr. Barratt is a deep student of *The Secret Doctrine*, a staunch, outspoken supporter of H. P. B., and an uncompromising opponent of the lower psychism which has permeated the Theosophical Society, Adyar. The Society cannot afford to lose members of Mr. Barratt's standing and his resignation will be regretted by all those members who are endeavouring to restore the prestige of Theosophy by stimulating interest in the study of the real basic Theosophical literature. Mr. Barratt still is and will continue to be a member of the one Theosophical Movement, whose members all are bound together as brother disciples in their common adherence to the original message of Theosophy.

They are aware that there is a fundamental and irreconcilable difference of approach between the revelations given out by Mr. Leadbeater, and the teachings of the Masters and their agent, H. P. Blavatsky. In St. Paul's words, the

first is of the earth, earthy; the second is the Lord from heaven. In the opinion of many students, Mr. Leadbeater was a psychic who never advanced beyond the limits of lower psychism, the plane of astral forms, subtle and illusive. It is true that his books express many exalted ideals, many noble teachings—it would be impossible to write on Theosophy without carrying forward some parts at least of the Message—but his engrossing interest was in psychism. His mind was not metaphysical; where H.P.B. and the Masters spoke of abstract Principles, Mr. Leadbeater saw only marvellous Beings, gods, devas, elementals and the like; where they presented the ancient doctrine of the divine self within the shrine of the heart, and stated that the great work of man was to realize that divinity by self-imposed disciplines of purification and aspiration, Mr. Leadbeater on the contrary counselled the use of ceremonies, the burning of incense, the invocation of astral beings, the performance of magical rites to control exterior forces. The many differences between the two attitudes have been the subject of articles and booklets and we do not wish to enlarge upon examples here.

The freedom of expression and belief which the Society guarantees to all its members gave Mr. Leadbeater the right to hold his peculiar opinions and to state them. Unfortunately these opinions have come to be regarded as authoritative by the majority of the members of the Adyar Theosophical Society. They are rejected by the members of the other Theosophical Societies and by the steadily growing number of Theosophists who are not affiliated with any Society. The number of these is being increased by students like Mr. Barratt, who feel that they should not remain in an organization which calls itself theosophical and yet has moved so far away from the original source of Theosophy.

We are therefore glad to publish Mr. Barratt's letter in the hope that it will encourage other members to take thought; to go back and re-read with more critical eyes the books which they have accepted heretofore; if upon a detached re-examination they find them no longer satisfying, then to turn to the great source books of Theosophy, *The Mahatma Letters*, *The Secret Doctrine* and other writings of H.P.B. to discover for themselves what Theosophy really is.

The Editor,
The Canadian Theosophist.

Dear Mr. Editor,

Having recently been invited to examine Edwin D. Babbitt's book, *The Principles of Light and Color*, N.Y. 1878, I found that the Leadbeater claims to originality in the matter of atoms have no foundation in sincerity, and the diagrams displayed in *Occult Chemistry*, *First Principles of Theosophy* and other works are direct plagiarisms from the work of Mr. Babbitt.

I have withdrawn from such a fake set-up of the real Ancient Wisdom in disgust, and prefer to keep away from any such 'societies' to conduct my studies of the original works of the Masters and H. P. Blavatsky alone, and free from such a befuddled mess. Perhaps you would like to quote some of my reasons to your readers.

FIRST EXPERIMENTS:

Quoting from Mr. Sinnett's introduction to *Occult Chemistry* (p. 1, 1919 edition) we read: "He was quite willing to try, and I suggested a molecule of gold as one which he (C.W.L.) might try to observe."

He made the appropriate effort, and emerged from it saying the molecule in question was far too elaborate a structure to be described. (It will be important to recall this assertion later.)

"I suggested an atom of hydrogen as possibly more manageable — this time

he found the atom of hydrogen to be far simpler than the other, so that the minor 'atoms' constituting the hydrogen were countable—they were 18 in number."

On page 11 of the same work it states ". . . the chemical atom is formed, and we find it to contain in all eighteen ultimate physical atoms."

These are the ones mentioned on page 2 as 'minor' atoms, so let it be stored firmly in mind lest the fingerprints of evidence become obscured.

When the all important question of "ultimate atoms" is used to illustrate matters further ahead, the reader will helpfully recall this.

We encounter next the statements casting the first shadow of suspicion upon the whole matter, for on page 2 of *Occult Chemistry* it is stated,—"we little realized at the moment the enormous significance of this discovery (?) made in the year 1895 long before . . ." etc.

Is this a truthful and sincere statement? Either it is a pretentious lie or an utterly irresponsible statement and utterly disregarding the fact that Edwin D. Babbitt published in New York a book containing the detailed picture here reproduced of the same atom form.

Occult Chemistry (1919 edition) even contains the remark on page 10 that the book, *The Principles of Light and Color*, N.Y. 1878, contains a drawing which "may be taken as correct" and is a "fairly accurate drawing".

How could any sane writer even hint at originality in such a case? Why has Mr. Jinarajadasa removed this reference to the work of Babbitt in his revised edition of *Occult Chemistry*?

Returning to our examination of the methods employed by Leadbeater and his very elaborate explanations of actual technique, we find that he unconsciously betrays himself from the start—he was never very intelligent; and certain-

ly never had a spark of originality as a thinker.

It is amazing to the writer that all the controversy over C.W.L. has never produced a known criticism of his 'atom-microscope'.

It is in this department of vanity that the cat shows a leg, and the childish nonsense of the whole thing is revealed.

THE MICROSCOPE MYTH:

It is not proposed here to decide whether the 'Chromo-Mentalism' of Babbitt, or the 'Occult Chemistry' of C. W. L. are facts or plagiarisms, but by the fullest analysis of Leadbeater's own words in his varied writings, we might

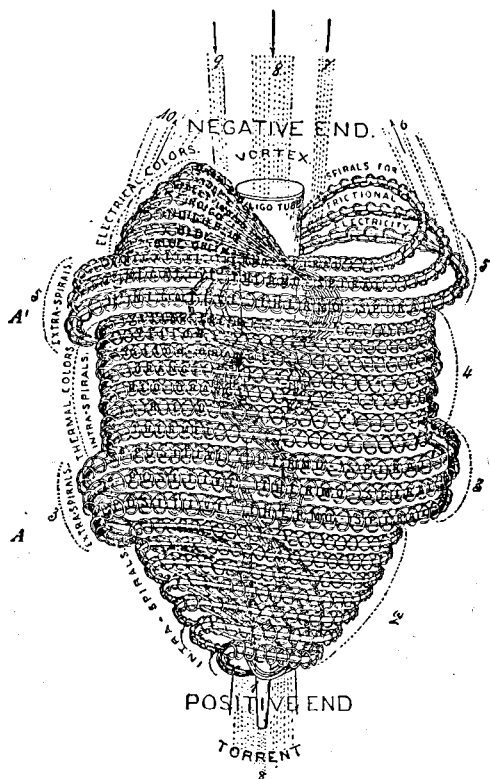


Fig. 135. The general Form of an Atom, including the spirals and 1st Spirilla, together with influx and efflux ethers, represented by dots, which pass through these spirilla. The 2d and 3d spirilla with their still finer ethers are not shown.

BABBITT'S ATOM, 1878

catch him jumping off his own shadow for the benefit of credulous old ladies, and neurotically frustrated sensation seekers.

It is quite possible that Babbitt is correct in his estimate of the approximate size of the atom, viz. 250,000,000 to 500,000,000 of these to extend over the length of one inch. This would mean roughly that an ordinary human hair would contain 100,000 in its width.

Try to imagine this minuteness by dividing a hair into two, four, eight, sixteen and so on until a thousandth of it is reached.

Divide this again by ten, and again by ten, and then one will have arrived at the size Leadbeater claims to see clairvoyantly,—you, by the way, can only imagine this size if genius reigns within.

All this may be possible in an adept, but in a later series of examples we can show Leadbeater contradicting the Adept teaching itself, and one feels strongly that he affects to exercise a faculty which really is possible at a level of real and esoteric proficiency, but which he is merely affecting to understand in order to impress the incredulous.

Therefore the whole point in evoking an imaginative grasp of such minuteness, one hundred thousandth part of the width of a single hair, is to make ready for other, and more awkward complications which will ultimately cancel Leadbeater's technique into absurdity.

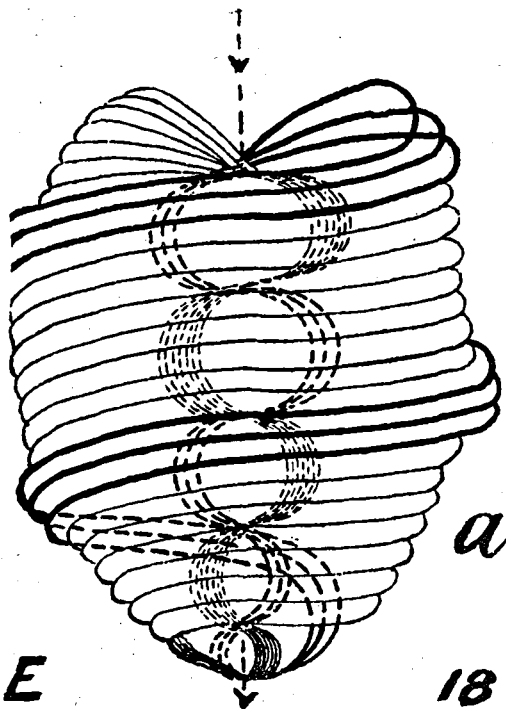
Quoting from his *Inner Life*, pp. 137-138, vol. 2, we read—"Another interesting power is that of magnification. There are two methods of magnification which may be used in connection with the clairvoyant faculty. One is simply an intensification of ordinary sight."

This in condensed form is the power to divert light (!) from the rods and cones, and direct it to the etheric matter of the eye.

He suggests that by concentrating it in a few particles, or even in one particle, he achieves a similarity of size

with an object he wishes to observe. How similarity of size can achieve magnification is evidently a part of his own imaginative esotericism,—he adds that in our ordinary vision "the vibrations set up are by no means thoroughly understood"! We can skip all this stuff in a hurry to reach the second method which he hails as superior.

It should be remembered that it is not the possibility of an atom acting as a magnifier which we dispute, but that



LEADBEATER'S ATOM, 1895

Leadbeater's conception and rendering of it is so anaemic. The second method reads—

"A method more commonly used, but requiring somewhat higher development, is to employ the special faculty of the centre between the eyebrows. From the central portion of this can be projected what we may call a tiny microscope, having for its lens only one atom. In this way we can produce an organ commensurate in size with the minute

object to be observed. The atom may be either physical, astral or mental, but whichever it is it needs a special preparation. All its spirillae must be opened up, and brought into full working order, so that it is just as it will be in the seventh round of our chain. This power belongs to the causal body, so if an atom of the lower level be used as an eye-piece a system of reflecting counterparts must be introduced."

We comment by observing that as Leadbeater's idea of the planetary chain does not agree with that of the Adept teachers, he is likely at short notice to create both microscopes and universes to suit his fancy.

Having given Leadbeater his full say, we must proceed to check the term "atom" and exactly which atom is being considered, because in the initial investigations there was mention of "minor atoms" and in the new *Occult Chemistry* Mr. Jinarajadasa changed the word to "Anu" which again is merely Sanskrit for atom. It is certainly not the chemical atom.

Checking on page 180 vol. 2 *Inner Life* we find "When for experimental purposes we break up a chemical atom into physical ultimate atoms" and again in *Occult Chemistry* itself, page 21 (1919 ed.) it says—"As the words 'ultimate physical atom' must frequently occur, it is necessary to state what we mean by the phrase. Any gaseous chemical atom may be dissociated into less complicated bodies; these again into still less complicated, etc.—the fourth dissociation gives the ultimate physical atom!!"

Thus we have arrived at final certainty that this ultimate physical atom is the one which in the earlier experiments with Sinnett was found "quite too complicated in their arrangement to be comprehended." (*O.C.* 2)

THE MICROSCOPE EXPLODED:

If the atoms were countable, but "too complicated in their arrangement to be comprehended" how did Leadbeater see these atoms if they themselves were the very atoms he was supposed to be looking through in his microscope? How did he know they had Spirillae?

The lens in the end of his etheric tube microscope was asserted to be such an atom itself! Yet he was here setting out to observe such an atom for the credulous Mr. Sinnett, without the means to see it!

How pitiful and painful all this is, and surely the biggest "gooseball" in the whole supposed technique of Leadbeater. Surely Mr. Sinnett would have asked himself how Leadbeater arranged in any case to separate his own breath from the atom of hydrogen he was supposed to be observing.

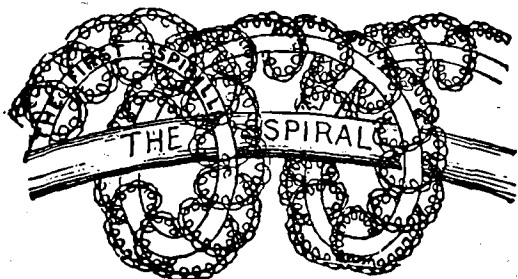


Fig 133. Piece of Atomic Spiral with 1st 2nd and 3rd Spirillae.
DETAIL OF BABBITT'S ATOM

The surrounding air alone contains several gases; how C.W.L. rid himself of these, and the oxygen within the air, with its attendant hydrogen, would awaken the curiosity of anyone not wholly absorbed in the etheric (?) microscope, which, if the writer's calculations are right would be something in the region of 1,000th of an inch in length.

How would such a previously estim-

ated minute series of atoms be rigged up in the tube with the meticulous exactitude required to conform to correct focus, and the principles of refraction?

Leadbeater will still continue to receive worship by members who may still assert "I don't care what your logic says or your evidence involves, Leadbeater was clairvoyant—he *saw* these things—and you are merely a pompous ignoramus lacking an 'Occult' background. How dare you?"

"When did C.W.L. ever subject himself to a test," we may retort, and quote the remark of Dr. Stokes of Washington, D.C.—"It is notorious that Leadbeater—despite all his talk about his powers has persistently declined to put them to the simplest test—one is compelled to laugh at this subconscious fiction factory" *O.E.L. Critic*. It is useless for his adoring chelas to pooh pooh the statements about the "ultimate atom" or to hide the whole mess under the term "Anu". The statements made in 1895 are repeated 15 years later on page 180 vol. 2 of the *Inner Life*.

As Mr. Jinarajadasa omits the references to Babbitt in his modern optimism about the merits of *Occult Chemistry* he probably arrived at other and private conclusions about Leadbeater not yet published.

The injunction of H. P. Blavatsky cannot be repeated too often where she says "Consequently unless the clairvoyant or seer can get beyond this plane of illusion, he can never see the truth, but will be drowned in an ocean of self deception and hallucination."

We can dismiss Leadbeater as a fake, and to quote H.P.B. again—"rest his shell".

Yours truly,

Grahame W. Barratt.

21 Haslemere Ave.,
East Barnet, England.

Mr. Barratt's letter opens up the whole question of the validity of Mr. Leadbeater's claim to extraordinary psychic powers. This question is taboo in certain circles, but when it is raised, the matter should be examined with detachment and with a sincere desire to arrive at a correct evaluation of Mr. Leadbeater's writings. The contents of his books should be dissociated from the alleged 'authority' of Mr. Leadbeater's utterances. Who gave Mr. Leadbeater this authority? Mr. Leadbeater himself; he was the one who throughout his writings claimed to speak from the vantage point of an advanced occultist. Mrs. Besant supported him in this, but it must be remembered that Mrs. Besant was not a psychic (as H.P.B. herself stated). The original *Lucifer* article of 1895 on *Occult Chemistry* indicated that Mrs. Besant had then made her first excursion into psychic realms.

1895 was the critical year in Theosophical history; the fragmentation of the one united Society into mutually exclusive groups dates from then. Students of Theosophical history have noted that it was only after Mrs. Besant's charges in 1895 against Mr. Judge had resulted in the formation of a separate society in America, that Mrs. Besant became associated with Mr. Leadbeater in psychic affairs. Much of the inner history of that period is not written down. However, it is significant to note that in a later chapter of *The Principles of Light and Color*, a book which was undoubtedly in Mr. Leadbeater's possession, methods are outlined for influencing other persons. One sentence reads, "When convenient it is quite desirable to have a person who is already well charged with these fine forces and who can himself see clairvoyantly, make passes over the head downward and especially over the eyes and forehead and thus impart his own power to the subject." In all the circumstances of that

tragic period is it too much to infer that Mr. Leadbeater did use these methods to induce Mrs. Besant to believe that she too saw the images which Mr. Leadbeater claimed he saw? This may be a clue to the whole puzzling question of the relationship between Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater—but this is getting a bit away from the immediate subject.

From the portion of Babbitt's book relating to the atom, Mr. Leadbeater took the following items:

1. The oblate ovoid shape of the atom.
2. its basic structure,
3. the spiral lines of force,
4. the finer spirillæ in the major spirals,
5. the concept of etheric force entering the atom through the heart-shaped depression at the top and exiting from the opposite end,
6. the concept of grades of 'ether' which entering the atom, impart to it its rotary motion,
7. the concept of colours associated with the lines of force in the atom.

Babbitt wrote in 1878, long before science had any idea of the inner structure of the atom and long before 'nuclear physics' was thought of. Babbitt's atom form cannot be reconciled with any modern scientific discoveries on the nature of the atom, but however much one may disagree with Babbitt, one must admit that in the portion of his lengthy book which relates to atomic structure, he was careful to present his conclusions as hypotheses only, 'it would appear', 'it is reasonable to suppose', 'study indicates that this must be so', etc., etc. No such scientific modesty influenced Mr. Leadbeater — he *saw* the atom, and not only the atom, the 250 millionth part of an inch, but also *saw* all the infinitely smaller minutæ of its spirals and spirillæ!

It is unfortunate that the book has been revived and that it was published by The Theosophical Publishing House. For the sake of the reputation of the Society, the advertising of the book in reputable scientific journals, such as *Nature*, should be discontinued forthwith.

FATIGUE

The most usual explanation for the phenomenon of sleep is that the body becomes tired and more or less depleted of its vitality and then seeks repose. This, says Theosophy, is just the opposite of the truth, for instead of having suffered a loss of vitality, the body at the conclusion of the day, has more life in it than when it waked. During the waking state the life-waves rush into the body with greater intensity every hour, and, we being unable to resist them any longer than the period usually observed, they overpower us and we fall asleep. While sleeping, the life-waves adjust themselves to the molecules of the body; and when the equilibrium is complete we again wake to continue the contest with life. If this periodical adjustment did not occur, the life current would destroy us. Any derangement of the body that tends to inhibit this adjustment is a cause of sleeplessness, and perhaps death. Finally, death of the body is due to the inequality of the contest with the life forces; it at last overcomes us, and we are compelled to sink into the grave. Disease, the common property of the human race, only reduces the power of the body to adjust and resist. Children, say the Adepts, sleep more than adults, and need earlier repose, because the bodily machine, being young and tender, is easily overcome by life and made to sleep. — William Q. Judge, in *Echoes from the Orient*.

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

The Theosophical Society was formed at New York in 1875. It has three objects:

1. *To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.*
2. *To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science.*
3. *To investigate the unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.*

The Society affords a meeting place for students who have three aims in common, *first*, the ideal of Universal Brotherhood; *second*, the search for Truth, and *third*, a desire to associate and work with other men and women having similar aims and ideals. The acceptance of the First Object is required of all those who desire to become members; whether or not a member engages actively in the work contemplated in the Second and Third Objects is left to his or her discretion.

The nature and purposes of the Society preclude it from having creeds or dogmas, and freedom of thought and expression among its members is encouraged. An official statement on this point; “. . . there is no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none of which a member is not free to accept or reject.” The statement calls upon the members “to maintain, defend, and act upon this fundamental principle . . . and fearlessly to exercise his own right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.”

Theosophy or ‘Divine Wisdom’ is that body of ancient truths relating to the spiritual nature of man and the universe which has found expression down through the ages in religions, philosophies, sciences, the arts, mysticism, occultism and other systems of thought. Theosophy is not the exclusive possession of any one organization. In the modern Theosophical Movement, these ancient truths have been re-stated and an extensive literature on the subject has come into being. The teachings are not put forward for blind belief; they are to be accepted only if the truth that is in them finds an echo in the heart. Each student should by ‘self-induced and self-devised’ methods establish his own Theosophy, his own philosophy of life. The Movement encourages all students of Theosophy to become self-reliant, independent in thought, mature in mind and emotions and, above all other things, to work for the welfare of mankind to the end that humanity as a whole may become aware of its diviner powers and capabilities.