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HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY

August 11, 1831 - May 8, 1891

THOUGHTS FOR WHITE LOTUS DAY

“There are no ancient symbols, without a deep and philosophical meaning attached to them; their importance and significance increasing with their antiquity. Such is the LOTUS. It is the flower sacred to nature and her Gods, and represents the abstract and the Concrete Universes, standing as the emblem of the productive powers of both spiritual and physical nature . . .

“The lotus flower . . . is the most graphic allegory ever made: the Universe evolving from the central Sun, the POINT, the ever-concealed germ . . .

“The underlying idea in this symbol is very beautiful, and it shows, furthermore, its identical parentage in all the religious systems. Whether in the lotus or water-lily shape it signifies one and the same philosophical idea — namely, the emanation of the objective from the subjective, divine Ideation passing from the abstract into the concrete or visible form.”

—S.D. I, 379-80 or. ed., II, 94-46-vol. ed., I, 406-7, 3rd. ed.

“One of the symbolical figures for the Dual creative power in Nature (matter and force on the material plane) is *Padma*, the water-lily of India. The Lotus is the product of heat (fire) and water (vapour or Ether); fire standing in every philosophical and religious system as a representation of the Spirit of Deity, the active, male, generative principle; and Ether, or the Soul of matter, the light of the fire, for the passive female principle from which everything in this Universe emanated . . .

“The Lotus, or *Padma*, is, moreover, a very ancient and favourite simile for the Kosmos itself, and also for man. The popular reasons given are, firstly . . . that the Lotus-seed contains within itself a perfect miniature of the future plant, which typifies the fact that the spiritual prototypes of all things exist in the im-material world before those things become materialized on Earth. Secondly, the fact

that the Lotus plant grows up through the water, having its root in the Ilus, or mud, and spreading the flower in the air above. The Lotus thus typifies the life of man and also that of the Kosmos; for the Secret Doctrine teaches that the elements of both are the same, and that both are developing in the same direction. The root of the Lotus sunk in the mud represents material life, the stalk passing up through the water typifies existence in the astral world, and the flower floating on the water and opening to the sky is emblematical of spiritual being.”

—S.D. I, 57-8 or. ed., I, 127-8, 6-vol. ed., I, 87-8, 3rd ed.

“Heaven’s dew-drop glittering in the morn’s first sun-beam within the bosom of the lotus, when dropped on earth becomes a piece of clay; behold the pearl is now a speck of mire.”

— *The Voice of the Silence* 11.

“Let thy Soul lend its ear to every cry of pain like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun.”

— *ibid.*, 12.

“There are three truths which are absolute, and which cannot be lost, but yet may remain silent for lack of speech.

“The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has 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.

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

“These truths, which are as great as is life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man. Feed the hungry with them.”

— *The Idyll of the White Lotus*

“Ah! Blessed Lord! Oh, High Deliverer!
Forgive this feeble script, which doth thee
wrong,
Measuring with little wit thy lofty Love.
Ah! Lover! Brother! Guide! Lamp of the
Law!

I take my refuge in thy name and thee!
I take my refuge in thy Law of Good!
I take my refuge in thy order! *Om!*
The Dew is on the lotus! — Rise, Great Sun!
And lift my leaf and mix me with the wave
Om mani padme hum, the Sunrise comes!
The Dewdrop slips into the shining Sea!
— *The Light of Asia*

STONEHENGE

AN ASTRONOMICAL TREATISE

HUGH MURDOCH

Dr. Murdoch, a physicist and astronomer, is a senior lecturer in physics at Sydney University, Australia. He has carried out research in radio astronomy for many years and has recently been working in optical astronomy as well. During sabbatical leave in 1971, he spent several months each working with the radio telescope at Arecibo in Puerto Rico and at the United States National Radio Astronomy Observatory at Greenbank, West Virginia.

For many years, Hugh Murdoch has been a member of the National Council of Australia. Each year he organizes sessions on Theosophical research at the Australian T.S. Convention. The following paper was given at the 1975 session, and first published in Theosophy in Australia, October, 1975.

The title of this talk may seem a little strange. It is taken from a remark of Mme Blavatsky; the reason for the title will become clear as we proceed. I think most of you know at least something about Stonehenge but there is much more to it than appears at first sight.

The pattern can best be seen in an aerial photograph. The most prominent feature is a circle 97 ft. in diameter which originally consisted of thirty accurately placed standing stones with lintel stones fitted across the top. These are held in position by what is known in woodwork as mortise and tenon jointing. Knobs on top of the standing stones fit into sockets hollowed out from the lintel stones.

Inside the stone circle are five large trilithons arranged in the form of a horseshoe. Each trilithon consists of two

standing stones and one stone across the top. The arrangement is similar to the trilithons at Adyar except that at Stonehenge the stones are much larger and the gap between the standing stones is very narrow — for good reason as we shall see later. Many of the stones are now missing but archaeologists are able to tell where they have been from impressions left by the stones in the chalk.

The central stones are only a small part of Stonehenge. There are fifty-six evenly spaced holes which form a circle 280 ft. in diameter. These are named the Aubrey holes after their modern discoverer. The number fifty-six is a strange one but we shall see presently that there is a very interesting explanation. Outside the Aubrey hole circle and surrounding the whole monument are two large continuous



Stonehenge: tall stone showing tenon joint.

circular banks with a circular ditch between them. These were evidently to enclose the monument. The inner bank is 320 ft. in diameter and is thought to have originally been 20 ft. high and 6 ft. wide.

There is also an irregular circle of stones known as bluestones inside the sarsen circle and a horseshoe of bluestones within the trilithon horseshoe. In summary from the outside we have the outer banks, the ditch, the inner bank, the Aubrey holes the precise sandstone circle capped with lintels, the irregular bluestone circle, the trilithons and the inner bluestone horseshoe.

There are a number of other important stones but for the present I will mention only the heel stone and the four station stones. The heel stone is about 100 ft. outside the outer circle. There is a broad avenue which passes through a 35 ft. wide gap in the outer circle, in the direction of the heel stone. The best known astronomical fact about Stonehenge is that if you stand at the centre and look along the avenue toward the heel stone, at dawn on midsummer day, you will see the sun rise over the heelstone. The avenue is lined on either side by a bank of chalk. An extension of the avenue has been traced to the river Avon, two miles away.

Who built Stonehenge, when and why? The answers to the first two questions have been given reasonably well by archaeologists. Carbon dating of excavated relics gives approximate answers to when and also some information about the civilization concerned. Until recently Stonehenge was thought to have been built over a period of some three hundred years commencing about 1800 B.C. Dating of

some recently discovered relics pushes back the commencement date by a further three hundred years.

Carbon Dating

Let us pause for a moment and discuss how carbon dating works. Cosmic rays interact with nitrogen atoms in the atmosphere and create a radio-active isotope, carbon 14, in very small amounts. All living things take in food including minute traces of carbon 14 along with more normal carbon 12. There is an equilibrium proportion of carbon 14 to carbon 12 in our bodies as in all living things. When, for example, a tree ceases to grow, it is taking in no more carbon 14 to maintain equilibrium, so the carbon 14 which is already there gradually decays with a half-life of 5000 years. So by detecting the amount of carbon 14 in proportion to carbon 12, it is possible to tell the age at which the tree ceased to take in carbon 14. The age of a fossil bone or a piece of charred wood or some artefact can be dated fairly well in this way.

Recently a method of dating using the bristlecone pine has been developed. This is a species of pine which grows in America and lives for about 5000 years. It is possible to date the age of trees by counting the growth rings year by year. With the use of this method it has been found that the Carbon 14 scale is somewhat in error, especially when we go back a few thousand years. Ages given by bristlecone pine dating are somewhat older than those given by carbon 14. What is wrong with the carbon 14 technique? It assumes that the amount of cosmic rays reaching the earth has been the same over many thousands of years and the most likely explanation of the discrepancy is that there are small variations in the intensity of cosmic rays and therefore in the amount of carbon 14 produced in the atmosphere. It is now possible to correct or to recalibrate the carbon 14 dating scale against the bristlecone pine scale. Using the bristlecone pine corrections the com-

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mencement date for Stonehenge becomes about 2,750 B.C. This is about the time of the construction of the great pyramid. It is interesting that the bristlecone pine scale gives dates in line with the Egyptian records and thus removes what had been a puzzling discrepancy with the carbon 14 scale.

Construction of Stonehenge

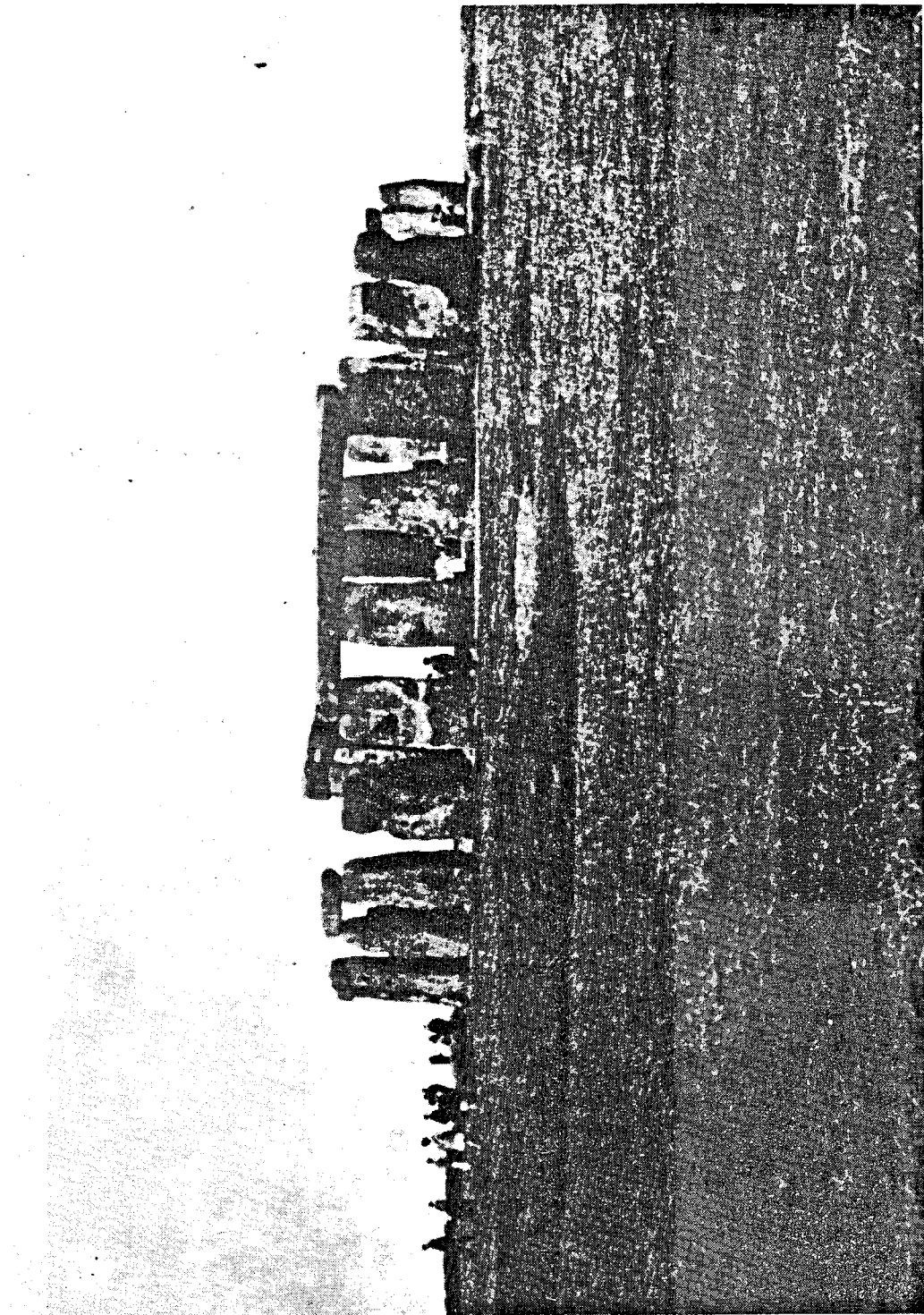
Stonehenge has been built in various stages. The first people were known to archaeologists as the Windmill Hill people because of a site nearby known as Windmill Hill in which they built ditches to corral cattle. The Aubrey holes were dug out of the chalk about 2½ to 4 ft. wide and about 2 to 4 ft. deep but they were refilled immediately. Some of them contain cremations. This first stage of construction also included the outer banks and ditch, the heel stone and probably the four station stones. The second stage some 100 or 150 years later was an erection of two stone circles which were subsequently taken down. This stage was built by a culture known as the beaker people from fragments of pottery beakers which have been found everywhere near their constructions. They also built the broad avenue at the entrance opposite the heel stone. The next important phase is what is known as Stonehenge III which was built by a bronze age culture known as the Wessex people. The main circle of stones are sandstone and are known as Sarsen stones. Sarsen seems to be derived from the word Saracen which means foreign. In other words, the stones were brought from elsewhere. The Wessex people built the sarsen circle and the five trilithons. There was also another series of holes which did not contain stones. These have been labelled the Y and Z holes and they were outside the Sarsen Circle. There was one circle of twenty-nine and another of thirty holes which were dug out and then filled in with fine soil. These people also built the irregular bluestone circle and the bluestone horseshoe.

How was all this done and where did the

stones come from? For picks the early builders used the antler of red deer and as shovels they used the shoulder bones of oxen. These have been excavated at the site. Tests have been carried out by modern workmen using similar instruments as to how long it would take to do the excavation. Similar tests with modern picks and shovels show that there is not a very great improvement. How were the huge stones weighing up to fifty tons moved? Again, tests by modern men have shown that they could have moved the stones horizontally by rolling them over wooden rollers and erected them by means of rope and by sheer manpower. Where did the stones come from? The sandstone was obtained from the Marlborough Downs not very far away. The so-called blue stones are in fact several different types of igneous rock. There is only one place where they all occur together and it is assumed that this is where they came from, namely a couple of hundred miles away in the Prescelly Mountains of Wales. The distance is about twenty-five miles by land and about two hundred and fifteen miles by water coming up the Bristol Channel and then up the Avon river for the final two miles haul along the avenue. They would have been brought up the river on barges and hauled overland on rollers. Quite a huge amount of effort in both organization and sheer manpower was involved. Hawkins from whose book most of this account is taken suggests that the effort is comparable to that put into the American space programme when considered as a proportion of their total activity and the magnitude of the task for the people concerned.

Environs of Stonehenge

Stonehenge is not alone. There are a great many other ancient sites nearby and in order to put it in perspective it is necessary to mention them briefly. First there is Avebury about twenty miles north of Stonehenge. This is the largest stone circle in England, probably the largest anywhere. It is 1,250 ft. in diameter with stones atop a high bank. A modern road



Stonehenge: general view.

goes through the centre of the circle, which engulfs the village of Avebury and unfortunately it has been used as a quarry by the villagers so that not a great deal is left.

Very close to Avebury is Silbury Hill. This is a huge mound 600 ft. in diameter and 130 ft. high. It has recently been dated at 2750 B.C. making it the same age as the first stage of Stonehenge. It should be noted that dates quoted are approximate and there is always an uncertainty of fifty to one hundred years on either side. It has been suggested that it is a monument to the founder of Stonehenge. Excavations have shown that it is not just a heap of dirt but has been built using advanced methods of construction. It has even been compared with the great pyramids in that respect. At West Kennett nearby is a long barrow. This is a large underground burial chamber 350 ft. long and 100 ft. wide at one end tapering to 50 ft. at the other end. There is evidence that it was used for several centuries. Within it are large stone-lined chambered sepulchres. There is also a place called the Sanctuary which consists of six rings of holes for wooden posts, the outer one 160 ft. in diameter. The Beaker people later converted it to two rings of stones. A 20 ft. wide stonelined avenue one and a half miles long ran from the Sanctuary all the way to Avebury.

Returning now to the vicinity of Stonehenge, we find more interesting sites as well as a great many round burial barrows. Two miles from Stonehenge there is a site known as Woodhenge since this appeared to consist of wooden posts. There were six large concentric rings of post holes at Woodhenge, the outermost of which was enclosed by a circular bank and ditch. At Durrington Walls near Woodhenge is the possible remains of an even larger circle than Avebury 1,500 ft. in diameter but there is so little left that this is uncertain. Finally there are the remains of a broad road known as the Icknield Way which Hawkins likens to the modern equivalent of a four lane highway, stret-

ching from Avebury right across England to the Norfolk coast.

In all there is evidence of a vast amount of activity by quite an advanced civilization in this area almost 5,000 years ago. We are gradually learning more and more of the abilities and the mental capabilities of our distant ancestors. We are learning that they are not the primitive savages that we once thought them to be. The frontiers of intelligent man are being pushed back further and further. Hawkins really threw a cat among the pigeons of British archaeology when a little over a decade ago he demonstrated convincingly that Stonehenge was used as an advanced astronomical observatory. The archaeologists already had evidence for magnificent feats of construction, but the new evidence indicated very great mental ability as well, which the archaeologists at first found difficult to accept.

Astronomy

The first suggestion that Stonehenge might be astronomical was made by Stukely in 1840 who noted that the avenue points towards the heel stone in the north-east where mid-summer sunrise occurs. Various people have over the years made suggestions that it might have an astronomical purpose including Mme. Blavatsky. But the first really solid evidence came from the astronomer Hawkins and I would like to explain to you a little of how he went about it because I think this is important. We can theorize about all sorts of things. Different people can put forward their own theories to explain a given set of facts and they can have a wonderful argument about who is right and nobody can say for sure. The scientific method is quite different. It aims to make deductions with a certain degree of definiteness. Hawkins used a computer to do a whole series of calculations each of which is quite simple but would have taken a very long time to calculate by hand instead of the few seconds by the computer. I will try to explain what he did. At our latitude you will notice that the sun never

occurs directly overhead since we are south of $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. It goes from about $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ North to $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ South and back in a year. This angle is what astronomers call the declination; it is the angle a celestial object makes with the zenith when viewed from the equator at the time of day when it reaches its highest point. (For the sun this is mid-day.) Alternatively it is the latitude at which the object can be seen directly overhead. Given the latitude of the observer and the declination of the object it is a simple matter to compute the compass points on the horizon at which it will rise and set.

Hawkins took the most significant stones at Stonehenge including the heel stone, the four station stones and a number of other stones which I have not mentioned. From these he considered all possible pairs of stones and calculated where a line joining them would reach the horizon in each direction. Working backwards from the horizon points and knowing the latitude, it is then simple to calculate the declination of a celestial object rising or setting at the horizon points indicated by each pair of stones. In other words given the positions of stones the computer rapidly calculated the declinations for a large number of possible alignments based on any pair of stones. The method worked well because the Stonehenge people repeated their sight lines many times over. The most common declinations were $+24$, -24 , $+29$, -29 , $+19$, -19 . It was clear that $+24$ and -24 represent the extreme points of the sun in its annual north-south motion. The inclination of the earth's orbit changes slowly over a long period and at the time of Stonehenge it was 24° not $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ as at present. The remaining four declinations relate to the moon. The moon's orbit about the earth is inclined to the earth's orbit about the sun at an angle of 5° , and here the declinations of the sun and moon can differ by up to 5° . The extreme northerly declination of the moon for any given year ranges from $+29^{\circ}$ to $+19^{\circ}$ and back to

$+29^{\circ}$ over a period of 18.6 years. Similarly the southerly limit for any year ranges from -29° to -19° . It is very clear that the remaining four declinations represent the extreme points of the moon. So we have the extreme points of both the sun and the moon but unlike the sun alignments which work every year, each moon alignment works only once in 18.6 years. For each case we have a rising point and a setting point. The six declinations listed above give twelve possible horizon points. For example, looking from the centre over the heel stone gives midsummer sunrise and another alignment gives mid-summer sunset. Of the twelve possible sun-moon alignments ten occur, some of them several times over. The only ones missing are midsummer moonset at -19° and -29° . There could even be a buried stone which accounts for these, as the necessary region for such a stone to occur has not been excavated.

All of the above alignments come from only nine positions, namely the centre, the heel stone, the four station stones and three other special stones. The shape of the station stone rectangle is cleverly chosen so that one diagonal gives an alignment as well as those given by the sides. It is also very interesting that the station stone rectangle would not in fact be a rectangle at any other latitude. A mere fifty miles either north or south, its sides would no longer be perpendicular. Is this significant? Was the latitude deliberately chosen? Hawkins is inclined to think so.

The same alignments occur for the trilithons. Three of them are for sun positions and two for moon positions. From each of the sun trilithons, looking through the narrow gap between the two uprights gives only one possible sight line through a gap between two stones of the main sarsen circle. The gap between the trilithon uprights is so narrow that no other view through the sarsen circle is possible. For each of the moon trilithons you can see two gaps in the sarsen circle and these represent the two extreme moon positions.

Hawkins later discovered more alignments, whose significance he at first overlooked, with declination 0° , $+5^\circ$ and -5° . These represent the position of the sun and the two extreme positions of the moon (over its 18.6 year cycle) at equinox. The zero alignment is an east-west line. It is obvious that a great deal of planning has gone into the construction, that the arrangement of the stones is purposeful and that they are very clearly aligned on the sun and the moon. Hawkins compares the whole edifice of Stonehenge with the other wonders of the ancient world and comments that surely in none of them was stone itself 'so skilfully used to record the fruits of intellectual endeavour in an emotion-inspiring temple as in the great monument on the Salisbury Plain.'

Eclipse Predicted

The next question is why did they want all this information and what did they do with it. Here we leave the realm of scientific deduction and enter the realm of reasoned conjecture. Hawkins suggests that the observations were used for eclipse predictions. The only previous suggestion along these lines appears to be a rather enigmatic statement by a man named Henry Wansey, a Wiltshire clothier who said in 1796 'Until we know the methods by which the ancient Druids calculated eclipses with so much accuracy, as Caesar mentions, we cannot explain the theoretical use of Stonehenge'. I do not know whether in fact Caesar said this. There are, however, some interesting remarks by Diodorus, an historian of the first century A.D. He talks about an island in the north inhabited by the Hyperboreans, so called because their home is beyond that point where Boreas the north wind blows. He says 'Apollo is honoured among them above all other gods' and 'there is also on the island both a magnificent sacred precinct of Apollo and a notable temple which is adorned with many votive offerings and is spherical in shape . . . They say also that the moon as viewed from this island appears to be but a little distance

from the earth . . . The account is also given that a god visits the island every nineteen years, the period in which the return of the stars to the same place in the heavens is accomplished', 'the kings of this city and the supervisors of the sacred precinct are called Boreades since they are the descendants of Boreas, and the succession of these positions is always kept in their family'.

A period of nineteen years is very close to the 18.6 year moon cycle, which is related to eclipses. An eclipse can only occur when the sun, the earth and the moon are in line. If the moon's orbit were not inclined to the earth's orbit, then at every full moon, the moon would be eclipsed by the earth's shadow. Similarly at every new moon the sun would be eclipsed by the moon. The two points where the moon's orbit intersects the ecliptic (which is the apparent path of the sun as seen from earth) are known as the nodes of the moon. For an eclipse of the sun by the moon, the positions of both sun and moon as seen from earth must coincide with a lunar node. For an eclipse of the moon by the earth's shadow, the position of the sun must coincide with one node and the position of the moon must coincide with the opposite node. These are the conditions for all three bodies to be in line. Since the nodal points move around the ecliptic in an 18.6 year cycle, the times of the year at which eclipses can occur vary from year to year according to this cycle.

Hawkins' bold and very plausible suggestion is that the fifty-six Aubrey holes represent three cycles of 18.6 years. Three times 18.6 is 55.8 which is closer to 56 than 18.6 is to 19. Any method of counting based on an approximate 19-year cycle would soon get out of step and require frequent correction but calculations based on a triple cycle of fifty-six years would only need re-adjustment about once every three hundred years. This suggestion can not be verified scientifically in the same way as

(Continued on page 38)

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

I regret to report the death in Victoria on March 26 of Mrs. Nellie Tripp. She had been a member since 1972, but her connections with the Society went back much further.

Mrs. Tripp had been ailing for several months before her passing, but her interest in the activities of Victoria Lodge never diminished, and she is greatly missed by her friends in the Lodge.

* * *

A business trip took me to Geneva, Switzerland, in late April and early May. Doris accompanied me, and we took advantage of the opportunity to enjoy a short vacation before and after my conference commitment.

While in Geneva we had the pleasure of meeting the General Secretary of the T.S. in Switzerland, Mr. Georges Tripet, and his charming wife. In comparing notes we found that conditions and activities in the Swiss and Canadian Sections are similar, bearing in mind the differences in geography.

We also visited and were impressed with the functional quarters of the Geneva Lodge. The Lodge has a large library, and has adequate facilities for public meetings.

* * *

The Conference I attended in Geneva was an international meeting of workers, employers and government officials from more than twenty countries. It was enlightening and heartening to witness how readily different nationalities cooperate to solve problems when political factors are absent or minimized. It was also encouraging that well-intentioned people of widely differing interests can work together harmoniously even though their habitual approaches to a particular issue are very dissimilar.

* * *

The Nov.-Dec. issue, which contained a selection of material originally published in *The Lamp* and early volumes of the C.T.,

evidently delighted a number of readers. The Editors have received several expressions of appreciation for this glimpse into the past — not all from the “old timers”, either.

As in everything, good quality wears well.

One of the republished pieces came in for especially favourable comment. It was the Roy Mitchell talk on “Transmutations”. We regret that, through an oversight, the source of this item was not identified. For the record, it comes from the October, 1920 issue of this magazine. (Vol. I, No. 8)

* * *

Thumbing through the old C.T.'s is a fascinating experience. The May and June issues of 1926 reveal T.S. history in the making as well as offering examples of the wide range of interests of Canadian Theosophists fifty years ago.

A few of many interesting items include an excellent leader, “Beginning at the Beginning”, by the Editor, Albert E.S. Smythe; articles by W.B. Pease, William Loftus Hare; a lovely poem, “The World of Souls”, by Corinne Farley. Names appear that belong to still active students, for example, Zahaz D. Rudhyar, whose article “Theosophy, The Triune Soul of the Cycles” is printed; and Mrs. Edith Fielding, who was mentioned as having “a fine article” in *The Canadian Bookman*.

In matters concerning the Society, much space was taken up with the Canadian reaction to Mrs. Besant's announcement of the “Coming Avatar” and to various Adyar policies. A letter sent to Vancouver Lodge by Mrs. Besant in reply to a “protest” was printed.

* * *

Some things never change. In June, 1926, a member of Hamilton Lodge noted the visit of an alleged Swami to Pittsburg, where it was reported he received 600 pupils at \$25.00 each for a first course, and \$50.00 for an advanced course. That was big money in those days, when secretaries, for example, were lucky to earn \$10.00 a week. The Editor remarked that “the warning

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Letters intended for publication should be restricted to not more than five hundred words.

The editors reserve the right to shorten any letter unless the writer states that it must be published in full or not at all.

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given by Madame Blavatsky is largely forgotten. 'One who takes money in exchange for the teaching is either an imposter or a Black Magician.' "

* * *

I have pleasure in welcoming the following new members into the fellowship of the Society.

Edmonton Lodge. Teresa N. Trupp.

Toronto Lodge. Wytze J. van Campenhout.

T.G.D.

VANCOUVER LODGE

Our Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday, April 1. As the Executive had been in office for the maximum two-year period, elections were held and the new officers are as follows:

President.	Mrs. Doreen Chatwin.
Vice-President.	Mrs. Marian Thompson.
Secretary-	
Treasurer.	Mrs. Anne Whalen.
Librarian.	Miss Adeline Ayoub.
Executive Members	Miss Judith Myrtle, Mr. Jack Mecredy.

Reports were read which reviewed the highlights of our Centennial Year, which was a busy one under the leadership of Mrs. Marian Thompson. Our main Centennial function was to arrange public lectures when Mr. Geoffrey Farthing was visiting Vancouver.

In terms of numbers, as far as the general public is concerned, we cannot say he "reached the masses". Vancouver seems to be a difficult city to "crack," but we tried. We all enjoyed Geoffrey's visit and he gave some interesting food for thought to the few (outside the Lodges) who attended. Press and TV, although notified and invited, were not interested — until about three months later, on August 16, when almost a full page article appeared in the *Vancouver Province* concerning his visit. Strange are the ways of the media.

Our own personal celebration was held in December when each Lodge member was asked to contribute a personally written resume of the part played by each of the founders, and the Masters, in the formation of the Theosophical Society. We had an interesting and rewarding evening learning more about the various Masters, H.P.B., Col. Olcott, W.Q. Judge, the original "Aims and Objects" and a history of the early days of the Society.

We held a special May 8 White Lotus Day meeting and shared some of our meetings and preparations with Orpheus Lodge, who shared completely in the visit of Mr. Farthing.

Our *Secret Doctrine* classes continued throughout the year, together with inspirational readings from *The Light of Asia*, *The Prophet* and the *Bhagavad-Gita*. There were also some very enjoyable social events.

We have discontinued our Post Office Box, and due to increases in rent we have been compelled to move from our two Lodge Rooms to one wider room on the fourth floor of the same building. Our new address is Room 413, 207 West Hastings Street, Vancouver. This has occurred since our Annual Meeting, and we are quite happy and nicely settled in our new quarters.

Doreen Chatwin
President

THREE GREAT IDEAS

Among many ideas brought forward through the theosophical movement there are three which should never be lost sight of. Not speech, but thought, really rules the world; so, if these three ideas are good let them be rescued again and again from oblivion.

The first idea is, that there is a great Cause — in the sense of an enterprise — called the Cause of Sublime Perfection and Human Brotherhood. This rests upon the essential unity of the whole human family, and is a possibility because sublimity in perfectness and actual realization of brotherhood on every plane of being are one and the same thing. All efforts by Rosicrucian, Mystic, Mason and Initiate are efforts toward the convocation in the hearts and minds of men of the Order of Sublime Perfection.

The second idea is, that man is a being who may be raised up to perfection, to the stature of the Godhead, because he himself is God incarnate. This noble doctrine was in the mind of Jesus, no doubt, when he said that we must be perfect even as is the father in heaven. This is the idea of human

perfectability. It will destroy the awful theory of inherent original sin which has held and ground down the western Christian nations for centuries.

The third idea is the illustration, the proof, the high result of the others. It is, that the Masters — those who have reached up to what perfection this period of evolution and this solar system will allow — are living, veritable facts, and not abstractions cold and distant. They are, as our old H.P.B. so often said, *living men*. And she said too, that a shadow of woe would come to those who should say they were not living facts, who should assert that “the Masters descend not to this plane of ours.” The Masters as living facts and high ideals will fill the soul with hope, will themselves help all who wish to raise the human race.

Let us not forget these three great ideas.

— William Q. Judge
The Irish Theosophist, Feb. 1895

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STONEHENGE AN ASTRONOMICAL TREATISE

(Continued from page 34)

the alignments but as Hawkins points out no other way has been found to explain the number fifty-six. He also draws attention to a remark by Plutarch in his *Isis and Osiris* quoting Eudoxus as stating that Typhon is associated with the figure of fifty-six angles. As Typhon was the god of eclipses this is good circumstantial evidence for Hawkins' theory. This was pointed out to him long after he first put forward his theory.

Hawkins has suggested various ways in which marker stones moved around the Aubrey hole circle could be used to predict eclipses. But why build such a large circle of holes just to serve as a means of counting? Hoyle who has independently worked on the Stonehenge alignments and verified them to his own satisfaction, has put forward an improved theory. He suggests that the Aubrey hole circle represents the ecliptic and he describes a method for moving four stones around the circle to represent respectively the positions of the sun, the moon and the two nodes of the moon. When the sun and the moon coincide with the nodes of the moon in the way I described above, eclipses will occur. Hoyle's method is self-correcting and will work indefinitely. It is in fact well known that the ancients regarded the nodes of the moon virtually as celestial bodies so the use of stones to represent the nodes would not be surprising.

Predicting eclipses is something which would obviously be very important to a sun-worshipping people. To see that the sun is apparently being swallowed up must have been rather disturbing and the astronomer-priest would be able to wield great power by being able to predict eclipses. Hawkins believes they were particularly concerned with eclipses at the midwinter and mid-summer solstices. An eclipse at midwinter

would be particularly important because at midwinter the sun-god is going further and further away and maybe he will disappear altogether. But each year he turns and comes back again. If, however, he is swallowed up by an eclipse just as he has reached his furthest point this would have been very frightening. So a midwinter eclipse is probably of particular importance.

Place of Combat

Hawkins has also investigated the temple of Amon-Ra at Karnac in Egypt. This temple is 350 yards long and is aligned very accurately on midwinter sunrise. This had not previously been recognized because the line of sight was blocked by another building, the festival hall. From the temple it would be impossible to see midwinter sunrise. On the end wall of the building blocking the view is an inscription which says one climbs the Aha to see the mystery of Horus shining. His Egyptian guide explained that Aha means 'place of combat'. Climbing up a narrow stairway he came to a small room, open to the sky, with a small altar in front of a long rectangular aperture. There was a picture on the wall of a pharaoh, kneeling, facing the aperture to greet the rising sun on midwinter day. The combat was evidently between the forces of light and darkness, ensuring the return of the sun god after midwinter when light triumphed. No doubt a solar eclipse at midwinter was as important here as it was at Stonehenge.

I have spoken chiefly of Hawkins' work at Stonehenge. I only have time to briefly mention the equally important work of Alexander Thom, a Scottish professor of engineering who has carefully surveyed hundreds of stone circles in the British Isles. These are generally not as large or as complex as Stonehenge though some of them are very important. Thom has found the same solar and lunar alignments as at Stonehenge occurring over and over again. He has also made and carefully documented many even more remarkable suggestions. These include alignments

between an important stone associated with a circle and features on the distant horizon such as a gap between two hills. This gives much greater precision in the alignments than at Stonehenge. He also suggests, on statistical grounds, that there was a unit of measurement which he calls the megalithic yard equal to 2.72 feet. Then again many of the circles are not true but are either ellipses or so-called flattened circles, with the shape modified at one end. These come in two types for which Thom gives the geometrical construction. For both of these the circumference is very close to three times the diameter, which appears to be an attempt to avoid the irrational ratio pi which is 3.14. Perhaps we can explore the many fascinating aspects of Thom's work on another occasion.

Madame Blavatsky on Stonehenge

I must now refer to some statements of Mme. Blavatsky on Stonehenge and solve the riddle of my title. But first I will give some points of disagreement. She says the stone circles were built by Egyptian initiate priests who travelled to Britain when Europe was still joined by land to the British Isles. This would have been during the last ice age and would have made them very much older than the carbon dates suggest. She also says they were built by giants but we have seen that there is no need to believe that that was necessary.

However, she does say that circular stone monuments such as Stonehenge were both rock observatories and astronomical treatises. She applauds the views of one Maurice (presumably Rev. J. Maurice also quoted by Hawkins) that they were durable symbols of astronomical cycles. She says they were used to hand on knowledge to initiates. The description 'astronomical treatises' is certainly correct in view of the way modern astronomers such as Hawkins, Hoyle and Thom have been able to read their message, after nearly 5000 years.

It seems very likely that Stonehenge, like the temple at Karnak was connected with the worship of the sun-god Ra or Apollo. Diodorus, as we have seen, refers to this.

Eclipses in mythology are represented by the dragon-god Typhon. Blavatsky says 'The tradition of the Dragon and the Sun is echoed in every part of the world . . . There was a time when the four parts of the world were covered with the temples sacred to the Sun and the Dragon' (*The Secret Doctrine II*, 378 or ed., II, 395 3rd ed., III, 377-8, 6-vol. ed.). She also refers to the 'Dragon, which ever threatens, yet never swallows the sun during its eclipses' (*The Secret Doctrine I*, 407 or ed., I, 437 3rd ed., II, 123 6-vol. ed.) Recall the 'place of combat' at Karnak mentioned above. Blavatsky says 'The Egyptian Karnak is twin brother to the Carnac of Bretagne, the latter Carnac meaning the Serpent's Mount' (*The Secret Doctrine II*, 380 or ed., II, 397 3rd ed., III, 379, 6-vol. ed.) Carnac in Brittany is indeed now recognized as another great megalithic astronomical site.

She also says 'In the gods of Stonehenge we recognize the divinities of Delphi and Babylon, and in those latter the Devas of the Vedic nations. Bel and the Dragon, Apollo and Python, Krishna and Kaliya, Osiris and Typhon are all one under many names' (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 379 or ed., II, 396 3rd ed., III, 378, 6-vol. ed.) and 'Typhon . . . the Dragon slain by Horus . . . was also called Set. He is simply the *dark side* of Osiris, his brother . . . Terrestrially, all these allegories were connected with the trials of adeptship and initiation. Astronomically they referred to the Solar and Lunar eclipses' (*The Secret Doctrine II*, 380 or ed., II, 297 3rd ed., III, 379 6-vol. ed.)

In none of these quotations does Blavatsky say specifically that Stonehenge was used for eclipse prediction but a careful reading suggests that she certainly took for granted that there was a connection. A further quotation is interesting. I have added by way of explanation the words in brackets. 'Rahu, mythologically, is a giant, a Demi-god, the lower part of whose body ended in a Dragon's or Serpent's tail . . . The Sun and Moon . . .

denounced him to Vishnu, who placed him in the stellar spheres, the upper portion of his body representing the Dragon's head and the lower the Dragon's tail; the two being the ascending and descending nodes (of the moon). Since then, Rahu wreaks his vengeance on the Sun and the Moon by occasionally swallowing them (during eclipses). But this fable had another mystic meaning, since Rahu, the Dragon's head, played a prominent part in the mysteries of . . . initiation, when the Candidate and the Dragon had a supreme fight' (*The Secret Doctrine* II, 381 or. ed., II, 398 3rd ed., III, 380, 6-vol. ed.) Remember again the 'place of combat' at Karnak. It would appear that the creators of this legend were aware of the connection between the moon's nodes and eclipses of both the sun and moon.

It appears likely that Stonehenge was not

only an astronomical observatory, but also a temple of Apollo, a place of learning, a hall of initiation; and last but not least it has served as a means of conveying to us 5000 years after its commencement something of both the physical and intellectual prowess of a civilization which has left us no written records.

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IS ALL SUFFERING NECESSARY?

MOLLIE GRIFFITH

When we consider the events taking place in the world today, as well as those of the past, it is obvious that suffering plays a very big part in life. We find it hard to conceive of a world such as ours without it, or a person who had never suffered.

There are many different types of suffering, mental, emotional and physical; and possibly there is a more subtle type at a higher stage of evolution. It might be interesting to consider whether at least some of this suffering can be avoided. Is this not the very purpose of those who have travelled this human path before us and came back to teach? Was the "Golden Rule" not an instance of this?

The law of life we are told, is Harmony, and when we destroy that harmony needlessly by thought, word or deed, we suffer whether the act was committed in this life or a former one. This law, called in Theosophy, the Law of Cause and Effect, or

the Law of Karma, is expressed in the Bible as "what a man sows, so shall he also reap".

This is the kind of suffering we cannot altogether avoid, for much to our regret we are seldom able to undo what we have already done. However, even in such cases, we can do something, such as developing our will-power, so that when the time comes to reap what we have sown, we can face it with some degree of courage and understanding, and hopefully learn the lesson it has to teach us.

In life, we often see two people drawn together by circumstances, sometimes in the same family, who have nothing in common, or even people who have a deep-seated dislike for someone without any justification in the present life. This must be coming from the past and could result from many different causes. Here too, we believe nothing happens by chance and it

might be better to accept the situation now and meet it in the best way we can rather than kick against the pricks.

The suffering we can avoid concerns the present and the future. Although we have what we call "guide-lines" given us by all the great teachers, it is the working out of these which we find so difficult. And it is here that Theosophy is such a help, for it teaches about the inner nature of Man and where to look for light and guidance. It tells us of our various principles such as emotion, mind, intuition and their rightful place and purpose in our lives.

When a student begins to understand something of all this, he realizes one important fact — that the power of his personality, as the dominating influence in his life, has to take second place. It has been built up during the past incarnations, perhaps in civilizations where competition has played a big part. A certain amount of this may have been necessary but as we evolve, co-operation becomes far more important.

All personalities are different. They have good and bad qualities, likes and dislikes, prejudices and loyalties, and so on. However, there is one thing common to most of us, although in different degrees, and that is a certain amount of egotism. To do something about this is absolutely necessary if we want to be of any assistance to those who, in their compassion, help mankind and evolution generally in its upward course.

Anyone who has even started this struggle knows that in his personality he has a powerful adversary, for once it sees the writing on the wall, it seems to gather its forces together to retain its position. It is subtle, persistent and its forces of persuasion are something to be wondered at. It can even infiltrate our higher thoughts. However, personality is something to be used by the higher part of us. We have not been developing it all through many lives for nothing. It has its own special powers which can be of great service to the higher

self, when its serious weaknesses are eliminated and its forces are transmuted.

To return to the question of the type of suffering we could do something about, we might take a rather childish incident but one which illustrates the point. Suppose we have heard some news of great interest to a friend, and we look forward to telling them about it. Later a thought enters the mind to the effect that it might be kinder not to mention what we have heard at all. We will suffer a little whatever we do. If we repeat what we have heard, we shall have a vague feeling of dissatisfaction, and if we don't repeat the story, the personality will feel cheated. In the first case, our willpower will be strengthened and a future struggle made just a little easier; in the second, the result will be reversed. Another example we might suggest is to suppose one had to vote for or against a law which would be good for humanity in general but bad for oneself. What would we do? The winning of a painful struggle in the present will save us pain in the future, just as a physical operation now may prevent further pain in the future at the physical level. It is one thing to pay off past debts, but another to incur new ones of the kind which will hamper us in the future.

If we decide to enter the arena and fight this battle, accepting the suffering which it will necessarily bring to our personality, how are we going to go about it? There is a word in Theosophy and it is full of meaning. It is "swabhava" and the meaning is very profound. However, even for elementary students which as most of us are, it offers a light to our understanding. It means "self-becoming" or "self-growing" into what one is individually in the higher or spiritual self, and just as a seed produces its own type of flower, so a monad expresses its own characteristics by self-devised evolution.

Looking at all the various types of people around us we are struck by their differences, most apparent in their varied interests. Therefore if we have the urge to

realize our own higher potentialities, the medium through which each works will be different also.

All this does not imply that we should be continually worrying about our own growth, except in so far as it affects the work we want to do, for this would be another form of egotism. We are all part of the One Life, and what we need to discover is what our natural contribution should be. There are so many activities in the world which appeal to different people. There is music, love of children, or animals, and there is Nature and philosophy, service or religion. There is astrology, healing, or the arts, and many more interests which strike a responsive note in our hearts and minds. We may or may not yet know the nature of our own swabhava, but it must surely be something which arouses our deepest interest and feelings to the point where our personal interests begin to take second place. It would naturally be an activity which would contribute something worthwhile to the whole. Spreading the teachings of the Wisdom religion given to the world in the present day under the name of Theosophy, might be one important activity.

There is another type of suffering not mentioned yet, and that is the kind endured so courageously by H. P. Blavatsky. At one point in her life she was given the choice of either leaving this world, or staying and carrying on with her work, in which case it would involve more suffering. She chose to stay and as a result of that choice the world received her legacy: *The Secret Doctrine*; *The Key to Theosophy*; and *The Voice of the Silence*. This kind of suffering is a sacrifice undertaken willingly for the sake of others. It is the kind made by those whom we call "The Masters of Compassion" when they renounce Nirvana in order to stay in touch with humanity for its help and guidance.

The "Silent Watcher" is one of the greatest of these. Of Him it is said, "He will not quit his post till the last day of this life

cycle". The reason for this is "because the lonely sore-footed pilgrims on their way back to their 'home' are never sure to the last moment of not losing their way in the limitless desert of illusion and matter called earth-life".

In concentrating on suffering we must not forget its opposite state, joy or harmony. There is great beauty in Nature, much to be loved and admired in our fellow-men and unending inspiration in the lives of the truly great and in understanding the spiritual laws of life. Suffering is not an end in itself. It keeps us from slipping too far off the straight and narrow path and teaches us sympathy and understanding. Without it we would not appreciate its opposite, a state of wellbeing or health at different levels.

It has been said that the gods gave mankind the gift of laughter to help him through the ups and downs of life, so we should be thankful for this also. We know that a sense of humour will get us through some difficult situations and prevent us from taking ourselves too seriously.

This quotation sums all this up in a few words: "The end of all this struggle is the growth into greater self-knowledge, which means that the hunger for love and companionship will at last be satisfied in the realization of the spiritual identity which joins every man with his fellows, which makes us parts of one another, all brothers and children of one great parent, Life. This was the dream for which that lion-hearted soul, H.P. Blavatsky laboured". Is this not something that we in one way or another, should be working for too?

"... it is only through observing the law of harmony that individual life hereafter can be obtained; and the farther the inner and outer man deviate from this fount of harmony, whose source lies in our divine spirit, the more difficult it is to regain the ground."

— *Isis Unveiled*, I, 317

SECRET DOCTRINE QUESTION AND ANSWER SECTION

CONDUCTED BY GEOFFREY A. BARBORKA

Readers of The Canadian Theosophist are invited to participate in this feature by sending their questions c/o The Editors to be forwarded to Mr. Barborka.

Question. What, if any, is the difference between Akasa and Cosmic Buddhi? If I mistake not it seems to me that they are both vehicles of Cosmic Life — Spirit.

Answer. There is a difference in the significance of the terms, although both represent what may be regarded as “ever-existing” — that is to say, both Akasa and Cosmic Buddhi (usually termed Maha-Buddhi) are present whether there is a universe in manifestation or NOT in manifestation.

Akasa is derived from the verbal root *kas* — to shine, hence literally “the shining substance” and is defined as the subtil, supersensuous spiritual essence which pervades all space — the Primordial Substance. The word also signifies the fifth kosmic element-principle, especially when linked to its Tattva, thus: Akasa-tattva, and sometimes rendered Aether (not to be associated with *ether*). As stated by H.P. Blavatsky:

... “Akasa being the first *Idea* of the yet uncreated Universe; from which must emanate the future Kosmos, in its descending grades of materiality.” (*Blavatsky Collected Writings*, X, 146)

“The realm of Akasa is the undifferentiated noumenal and abstract Space which will be occupied by *Chidakasam*, the field of primordial consciousness. It has several degrees, however, in Occult philosophy; in fact, ‘seven fields.’ ” (*ibid*, X, 360)

In regard to Maha-Buddhi: this is a Northern Buddhistic term, literally Great Wisdom or Great Universal Mind. It is

equivalent to Mahat as defined in Hindu philosophy: Divine Intelligence. In *The Secret Doctrine* Mahat is regarded as the aggregate of the divine and spiritual intelligences of our cosmos.

Question. Is not Akasa often associated with the Astral Light?

Answer. It is true that the term “Astral Light” is used with a good deal of latitude, nevertheless it is defined as “The invisible region that surrounds our globe, as it does every other, and corresponding as the second Principle of Kosmos.” (*Theosophical Glossary*, 38)

Here is another explanation:

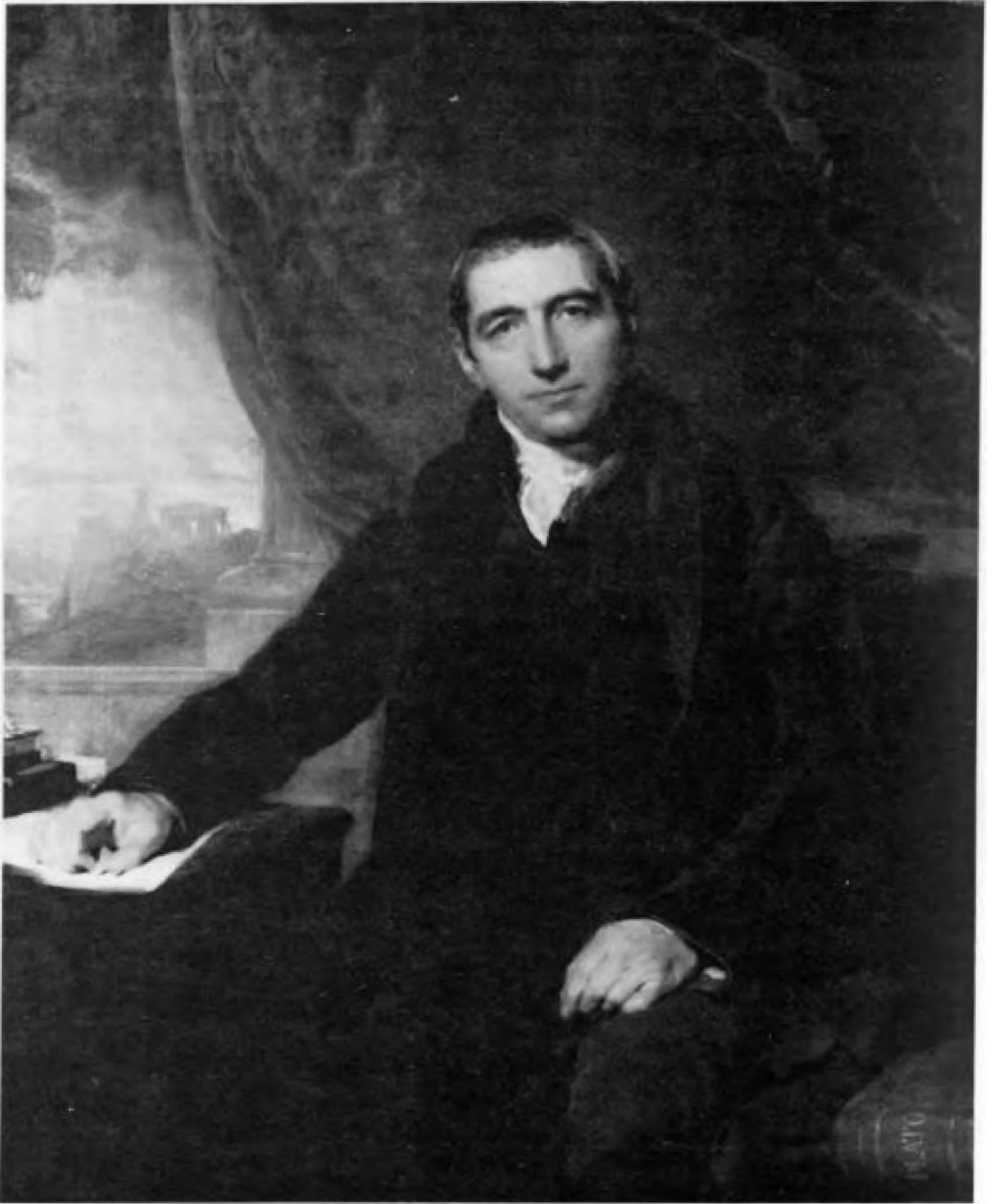
“The Astral Light is that which mirrors the three higher planes of consciousness, and is above the lower, or terrestrial plane; therefore it does not extend beyond the fourth plane, where, one may say, the Akasa begins.” (*Blavatsky Collected Writings*, X, 360)

However there is an important difference between the Astral Light and Akasa, which was pointed out by H.P. Blavatsky in this passage:

“There is one great difference between the Astral Light and the Akasa which must be remembered. The latter is eternal, the former periodic. The Astral Light changes not only with the Maha manvantaras but also with every sub-period and planetary cycle or Round.” (*ibid*, X, 361)

The reason for this “change” of the Astral Light is because the Earth undergoes evolutionary changes during every

(Continued on page 47)



The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Portrait of Thomas Taylor
by Sir Thomas Lawrence

THOMAS TAYLOR

1758 — 1835

A portrait of Thomas Taylor hangs in Canada's National Gallery in Ottawa. It is a compelling work in which the artist, Sir Thomas Lawrence, has managed somehow to suggest the mystery of the personality he put on canvas. In my visits to the Gallery there is always a temptation to linger by this painting to try to fathom its depths.

When one's attention is finally distracted from the face, the first noticeable object is a volume of Plato by Taylor's left hand. It was a happy choice of the artist, for it symbolizes the scholarly genius of the subject.

And what a scholar! Of all translators into English of Greek and Latin philosophical works, Taylor is the most prolific. As a Platonist he had no peers among his contemporaries. Indeed, it is necessary to go back to the era of the Platonic Academy to discover his equals.

Let there be no misunderstanding, however, that Taylor was a mere translator. Some of his books and essays indicate a fine, enquiring mind, as well as the depths of his knowledge of the classics. In addition, he wrote learned prefaces and appended copious commentaries to the works he translated. All of these are valuable in their own right. Taylor's original writings clearly indicate a point of view which in later years would be described as theosophical. Certainly, they can be read with profit by today's students of Theosophy.

During his lifetime, Taylor's genius was scarcely recognized. To the contrary. Perhaps not unexpectedly, he attracted the wrath of theologians and stimulated the petulance of many a lesser classical scholar. He was fortunate, however, to have a patron, one William Meredith, whose modest support helped make it possible for Taylor to devote practically a lifetime to his chosen work. One of the signs

of Taylor's greatness is that virtually his entire enormous literary output was produced as a labour of love. He pursued his monumental task without thought of acclaim or of monetary reward.

Indicative of Taylor's character are these observations written by one who knew him well. He was "... a determined foe to falsehood; and always ready to make sacrifices, when the end to be obtained is worthy of a noble mind ... no man had ever a more passionate love of virtue, a loftier aspiration after truth, or a more vehement zeal for its diffusion ... his whole conduct is in perfect harmony with the principles of his sublime philosophy ... his every thought is in accordance with the whole tenor of his blameless life; and ... his intentions are wholly unsullied by views of personal interest."

As is so often the case, appreciation came posthumously. To their credit, the 19th century New England transcendentalists particularly revered Taylor and were avid collectors of his books. They were serious students of the Platonic philosophy, and valued Taylor's translations above all others. One of them, Ralph Waldo Emerson, wrote: "Thomas Taylor, the Platonist, is really a better man of imagination, a better poet, or perhaps I should say a better feeder to a poet, than any man between Milton and Wordsworth."

A later American generation maintained the tradition. A group including Thomas Johnson and Alexander Wilder helped keep Taylor to the forefront, not least through their efforts to establish the short-lived but pre-eminent *Platonist* magazine. Wilder, an early member of the T.S. and co-worker and friend of H.P. Blavatsky, himself published a new edition of Taylor's dissertation on *The Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*.

Since the end of the 19th century there has continued to be a small but steady following of Thomas Taylor, and several of his works have been reprinted in recent years. In 1969 were published two excellent essays, "Thomas Taylor in England" by Kathleen Raine, and "Thomas Taylor in America" by George Mills Harper. These authoritative articles should go a long way towards developing respect for Taylor at the academic level, where he has certainly been neglected since he first trod on theologians' toes as a youthful apologist for the classical view of religion and philosophy.

It is nearly 200 years since the publication of Thomas Taylor's first work. His writings are as valuable today as when they were written, and it is unlikely he will be superseded as a Platonist for a long time to come.

T.G.D.

BOOK REVIEW

The *Cratylus*, *Phaedo*, *Parmenides*, *Timaeus* and *Critias* of *Plato*. Translated from the Greek by Thomas Taylor. Original edition 1793. Published 1975 by Wizards Bookshelf, Box 66, Savage, Minnesota 55378, U.S.A. xxv + 428 pp. Price \$30.00.

The reappearance of Thomas Taylor's *Plato*, 182 years after its first edition, is an important occasion. This new edition is welcome not only for the sublime contents, but also as a symbol that the Divine Light of *Sophia* still shines.

Plato's position as philosopher and teacher is unique. It is impossible to estimate the significance of his contribution to western thought, but surely it would not be equalled by any ten thinkers from his day to this. He imparted a system without which western philosophy would have no solid foundation. Probably more important was his method of teaching, which unlike most others forces the student to think for himself. In both what he said

and in how he said it, Plato bequeathed the richest of treasures to the generations that followed him.

Plato's works have been rendered into the English language by several translators, but perhaps not as many as might be expected — it is a formidable task. Standing like a giant amongst them all is Thomas Taylor. He steeped himself in Plato and the Platonic tradition, and his version has a depth of insight that is lacking in all others.

True, this was not the verdict of his critics, mostly contemporaries. They denounced what to them was an un-scholarly translation and (no doubt worse in their eyes) an unorthodox interpretation. Perhaps the best rebuttal of their criticism is from the pen of Alexander Wilder, himself a serious student of the Platonic philosophy. In the introduction to his edition of *The Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*, Wilder wrote: ". . . it must be conceded that he was endowed with a superior qualification — that of an intuitive perception of the interior meaning of the subjects which he considered. Others may have known more Greek, but he knew more Plato."

Taylor's style also came in for much critical abuse. To me, this is of little concern. The style of almost any writer of Taylor's era (late 18th-early 19th century) has an archaic quality today. It just makes the reader think a little more. Although he was prone to composing long sentences, Taylor's prose is easily read for the most part. Read and enjoyed, for some passages are almost poetic in their quality.

The translation apart, Taylor's *Plato* has an additional virtue unmatched by any other. His prefaces to the books, as well as to the whole, are well worth close perusal. His "notes", too, often help clarify obscure passages, or stimulate further thought.

Once again, modern students of Theosophy are indebted to Wizards Bookshelf, in whose Secret Doctrine Reference Series this new edition is available.

In an introduction to this edition are a number of pertinent quotations from H.P. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*. Appended is a "Bibliography of the Works of Mr. Taylor", compiled by Wm. Axon in 1890, with additional material from the notes of James J. Welsh (1831). It is beautifully bound — in keeping with the quality of that which is enclosed within its covers.

Ted G. Davy

SECRET DOCTRINE QUESTION AND ANSWER SECTION

(Continued from page 43)

Round of its period of existence, and this change also occurs in its "second principle."

Question. Does not *The Secret Doctrine* refer to divine beings in connection with the Astral Light?

Answer. Yes, the reference is a significant one and is mentioned in Stanza IV, sloka 6:

"Then the Second Seven, who are the Lipika, produced by the Three (*Word, Voice, and Spirit*). "S.D. I, 103; I, 165 6-vol.ed.; I, 129 3rd ed.)

"The Lipika . . . are the Spirits of the Universe . . . and are connected with Karma — being its direct Recorders." (S.D. I, 128; I, 186-7; I, 153 3rd ed.)

The explanation is also given in regard to the connection of the Lipika with Karma.

"The *Lipika*, from the word *lipi*, 'writing,' means literally the 'Scribes.' Mystically, these Divine Beings are connected with Karma, the Law of Retribution, for they are the Recorders or Annalists who impress on the (to us) invisible tablets of the Astral Light, 'the great picture-gallery of eternity' — a faithful record of every act, and even thought, of man, of all that was, is, or ever will be, in the phenomenal Universe. As said in *Isis Unveiled*, this

divine and unseen canvas is the Book of Life . . . it is the Lipika who project into objectivity from the passive Universal Mind the ideal plan of the universe, upon which the 'Builders' reconstruct the Kosmos after every Pralaya . . ." (S.D. I, 103-4; I, 165 6-vol. ed.; I, 130 3rd ed.)

"Mahat, or Intellect, (is) the 'Universal Mind' (literally the 'Great'), which esoteric philosophy explains as the 'manifested Omniscience'" (S.D. II, 58; III, 69 6-vol. ed.; II, 61 3rd ed.)

"Connected as the Lipika are with the destiny of every man and the birth of every child, whose life is already traced in the Astral Light — not fatalistically, but only because the future, like the past, is ever alive in the present." (S.D. I, 105; I, 166 6-vol. ed.; I, 131 3rd ed.)

"The record of those relationships (from birth to birth) imperishably endures in the Akasa, and they can always be reviewed when, in any birth, the being evolves his latent spiritual powers to the 'fourth stage of Dhyana.'" (Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, V, 93)

THE THREE TRUTHS

There are three truths which are absolute, and which cannot be lost, yet remain silent for lack of speech.

The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendor has 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.

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

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

Idyll of the White Lotus

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