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## ON JOINING A THEOSOPHICAL LODGE

DORITA GILMOUR

After a period of enquiry, discussion and reading, the time may arrive when an individual decides to join the Theosophical Society. There is then the choice of becoming a member-at-large or a member of a particular Lodge depending on outer circumstances and personal preference.

Rather interesting reasons are given in *The Key to Theosophy* by H.P. Blavatsky when the enquirer asks what are the "incentives" for joining. Apart from esoteric instructions given during H.P.B.'s later years to her students, the incentives were said to be mutual aid and sympathy in a union where "well-regulated efforts can produce wonders". Group effort is also clearly envisaged by Master K.H. in the *Mahatma Letters*. But on Page 24 of *The Key to Theosophy* (or. ed.) H.P.B. also states that "Theosophy has to inculcate ethics; it has to purify the soul, if it would relieve the physical body" of ailments, and she follows with the reasons for this statement. Finally on Page 25 we find these words "... a true Theosophist must put in practice the loftiest moral ideal, must strive to realize his unity with the whole of humanity and work ceaselessly for others".

People who join a Lodge are quite free to

participate as little or as much as they wish and no pressure should be put upon them. It has been said that even the presence of a well-intentioned individual at a Lodge meeting is beneficial. However, if they show an inclination to become more involved in Theosophical work there are lines along which work may begin and these should be put clearly before them.

Often individuals join the Theosophical Society without understanding that if they take their membership seriously it can be an important step in their spiritual evolution which will influence their destiny for all their future lives. In 1875 this opportunity to gain spiritual teaching was given openly and freely for the first time in recorded history and we frequently lose sight of the extraordinary privilege which is ours if we care — or perhaps dare — to use it fully.

Returning to the subject of the incoming members of a Lodge, should they decide to participate fully, what is expected of them in this second century of the Society's existence? Much? Little? Or nothing? No doubt they will have intellectually accepted the basic requirement for membership, the universal brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or

colour. But do we really understand and make it clear what brotherhood means in a group striving for spiritual growth? Merely keeping the harmony on a superficial level is not enough, because the practice of true brotherhood entails self-discipline along many lines. For example, in the *Mahatma Letters*, in the *Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett* and elsewhere we read how gossip and misunderstood motives were at the root of many catastrophic troubles in Blavatsky's lifetime and later; and to this day remain a great temptation both in personal life and Lodge work. The brotherly acceptance of people of different types, personalities and race is very difficult when they irritate, bore or disagree with us. And the larger the group, the more strain is felt by serious members. However, if the spiritual unity of the group is understood and stressed, the problems can be dealt with intelligently and without prejudice as they arise, by each individual. To deal with strain impersonally will lead to the building of a vital Lodge where personal egotism will be recognized as the major stumbling-block in establishing a "nucleus of universal brotherhood".

Moral courage seems to be an important quality for the members of a working Lodge to acquire, and this will slowly deepen through the experience of expressing oneself honestly, clearly and logically and above all being willing to accept whatever response arises from one's fellow-members.

It is important that all Theosophical students obtain a good grasp of the basic tenets of Theosophy so that they can be clear on fundamentals when asked to help explain some aspect of the teaching. For this understanding, study is strongly recommended by H.P.B. in *The Key to Theosophy* and indeed it can be gained in no other way.

Seldom stressed in Lodges is loyalty to the founders of our Society, but it is an integral part of membership. We owe Blavatsky, Olcott and Judge a tremendous debt and to downgrade any of them is an

act of ingratitude which will bear serious Karmic fruit. Vitally important is our grateful recognition of the part they played in the early years of the Theosophical Society and the realization by us that many lives of strenuous effort and dedication and sacrifice were necessary before they were accorded the opportunity to bring Theosophy to the western world publicly.

If loyalty is felt towards the founders the new member may then go a step further and take a clear look at his or her feelings about the Masters who took upon themselves the Karma of trying to forward humanity's spiritual evolution by making public some aspects of the Ancient Wisdom which they possess and which has been handed down by their predecessors to dedicated pupils from age to age. Belief in the Adepts is not required for membership in the Society they sponsored; but even if not immediately accepted, the conviction of their reality is often arrived at through deep consideration, during study or as a result of examination of the letters written by them to their pupils, or even as a rational conclusion that because there are those lower than us on the evolutionary scale, so there must be others infinitely higher than ourselves. As H.P.B. says, if one denies the existence of Masters, then one has to assume she wrote her voluminous books and articles with no outside help — an impossibility very evident even in a cursory perusal and strenuously denied by her to the end of her life.

When members are able to accept the disturbing fact that we are all misled frequently by personal egotism, they will then be willing to take responsibility for their attitudes and consequent actions in Lodge meetings. As a result the work will progress amazingly and strange Karmic patterns will often become clear, leading to the conviction that spiritual effort does not go unaided, even visibly. Spiritual vitality will be present in discussions of Theosophy as a consequence of this self-discipline by the members and possibly over a period of

time, the Lodge may become a centre of influence in the area if it remains true to the original purpose for which the group was formed. Those who have worked in Lodges for years know only too well how frequently we fail to live up to the ideal set forth in the *Mahatma Letters* but the effort to continue despite setbacks and failures is in itself a strong factor for eventual success in establishing a vital centre.

It is possible that the knowledge gained by the new student in the Lodge will gradually be carried outward into daily life. When Theosophy is frequently in the background of the mind we often find ourselves measuring our thoughts and actions against that ideal as we make decisions affecting our lives, our relationship with others and the total environment. Though like all members of our Society the neophyte in Theosophy will fail many times, no longer will that individual be content to drift along on the surface of life but will begin to understand the Karmic pattern of the present incarnation. When we are in earnest, failures will be examined impersonally with the aim of being able to deal with them more successfully when the problems reappear — as they no doubt will. How encouraging it is to realize that chance after chance to act wisely comes to us throughout life — frequently involving the same unsolved problem in a different guise until we have learned the lesson thoroughly. Realizing we have untold lives before us and knowing that discouragement and guilt feelings are a hindrance, the new student, after the first flush of enthusiasm will then be content to be a small part of a pioneer effort towards helping the spiritual evolution of humanity. Although it is vitally important to recognize clearly the deep-seated craving for personal recognition and glory, this aspect of the lower part of our make-up will eventually be seen in its true light if we can only gain inner knowledge of the timeless centre of our being, where “truth abides in fullness”.

Would the knowledge of these aspects of membership frighten prospective members away? There will always be those who fear a commitment or who become disappointed for various reasons. However, for those who have been questioning life and its meaning, to suddenly discover a group of people who have found some rational explanations and are willing to share freely what little knowledge they have and put Theosophical literature at the disposal of the enquirer, and who try to answer questions in an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding — this is indeed a thrilling experience for the newcomers and sometimes even leads to the feeling that they have “come home” and are now picking up the threads of an association reaching far back into the past.

In conclusion let us not encourage the illusion, either in ourselves or new members, that to live Theosophically is easy. If we find it so, we are not yet really committed. It entails difficult albeit invigorating effort at all levels, but the inner challenge is one which gives a glory and purpose to life like no other, and the certain knowledge that because life is One, whatever spiritual growth we make now as individuals and as a group is for all time, for all humanity, and cannot be lost.

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How do you expect the Fellows of your Society to help in the work?

First by studying and comprehending the theosophical doctrines, so that they may teach others, especially the young people. Secondly, by taking every opportunity of talking to others and explaining to them what Theosophy is, and what it is not . . . Thirdly, by assisting in circulating our literature . . . Fourthly, by defending the Society from the unjust aspersions cast upon it . . . Fifth, and most important of all, by the example of their own lives.

*The Key to Theosophy*

# WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE

April 13, 1851 - March 21, 1896

*William Quan Judge was one of the founders of The Theosophical Society. His life and works have inspired many students of Theosophy in the generations since his death. Two samples of his writing follow: first, a letter to an enquirer; and then the article, "Of Occult Powers and Their Acquirement", signed by one of the several pseudonyms used by Mr. Judge. — Eds.*

Mr. A.C. Lamphere  
Jacksonville, Fla.

December 15, 1890

Dear Sir:

I have yours of the 12th in which you say "Would you kindly refer me to some advanced work on Esoteric teachings?" It must be very obvious to you at once that if there were for sale or publication an advanced work on "esoteric" teachings it would at once cease to be esoteric, since the meaning of that term is hidden or secret, notwithstanding its very loose use in America at the present time. I have been studying this subject a great many years and have yet to find any advanced publication such as you desire, for the above reason that it is an impossibility. My advice to you would be to carefully study Theosophical literature, as all through it are scattered various references and hints

as to esoteric matters.

I cannot agree with you that your body or any one's body is good for a thousand years, as the human body has its limitation and cannot cohere much beyond the allotted time. I am sorry that I am not able to meet your wishes in this matter, but I am very well satisfied that experience and further study will demonstrate to you that you are asking for impossibilities. Then further it occurs to me that the true duty of man and especially a Theosophical man is not to discover any means to prolonging the miserable existence of a human body, but rather to engage in developing his inner nature, the only real one, and in helping his fellow man, in which work I would wish you all success.

Faternally yours,  
WILLIAM Q. JUDGE  
*Practical Occultism*

## OF OCCULT POWERS AND THEIR ACQUIREMENT

There are thousands of people in the United States, as well in the ranks of the Society as outside, who believe that there are certain extra-ordinary occult powers to be encompassed by man. Such powers as thought-reading, seeing events yet to come, unveiling the motives of others, apportionation of objects, and the like, are those most sought after, and nearly all desired with a selfish end in view. The

future is inquired into so as to enable one to speculate in stocks and another to circumvent competitors. These longings are pandered to here and there by men and societies who hold out delusive hopes to their dupes that, by the payment of money, the powers of nature may be invoked.

Even some of our own members have not been guiltless of seeking after such wonderful fruit of knowledge with those

who would barter the Almighty, if they could, for gold.

Another class of earnest theosophists, however, have taken a different ground. They have thought that certain Adepts who really possess power over nature, who can both see and hear through all space, who can transport solid objects through space and cause written messages to appear at a distance with beautiful sounds of astral bells, ought to intervene, and by the exercise of the same power make these earnest disciples hear sounds ordinarily called occult, and thus easily transmit information and help without the aid of telegraph or mailboat. But that these Beings will not do this has been stated over and over again; for the kingdom of heaven is not given away, it must be "taken by violence." It lies there before us to be entered upon and occupied, but that can be only after a battle which, when won, entitles the victor to remain in undisturbed possession.

As many have seemed to forget these rules, I thought it well to offer them the following words from one of those very Adepts they seek to meet:

"(The educing of the faculty) of hearing occult sounds would be not at all the easy matter you imagine. It was never done to any one of us, for the iron rule is that what powers one gets *he must himself acquire*. And when acquired and ready for use the powers lie dumb and dormant in their potentiality like the wheels and clockwork inside a musical box; and only then does it become easy to wind up the key and set them in motion . . . Yet every earnestly disposed man *may acquire* such powers practically. That is the finality of it; there are no more distinctions of persons in this

than there are as to whom the sun shall shine upon or the air give vitality to. There are the powers of all nature before you; *take what you can.*"<sup>1</sup>

This is perfectly clear and strictly according to the Secret Canon. "When the materials are all prepared and ready, the architect shall appear"; and when we have *acquired* the powers we seek, by educing them ourselves from our inner being, the Master will then be ready and able to start into exercise that which we have obtained.

But — even here is an important point. This. If the Master can, so to say, wind the key and thus start the machinery, He can also refuse to give the necessary impulse. For reasons that have to do with the motives and life of students, it may be advisable for a while not to permit the exercise of these powers which "lie dumb and dormant in their potentiality." To sanction their use might in one lead to the ruin of other lives, or in another to personal disaster and retardation of true progress.

Therefore the Master says that quite often he may not only refuse to give the start, but yet further may prevent the wheels from moving.

**THERE ARE THE POWERS OF ALL NATURE BEFORE YOU; TAKE WHAT YOU CAN.**

—Rodriquez Undiana

*The Path*, February, 1889, and is included in *Echoes of the Orient*, p.98

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<sup>1</sup> (*The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, 2nd and 3rd ed., p. 65.)

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If you cannot be happy without phenomena you will never learn our philosophy . . . I tell you a profound truth in saying that if you but choose wisdom all other things will be added — in time.

*The Mahatma Letters to  
A.P. Sinnett*

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# FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

*To the 102nd Annual Convention Of The Theosophical Society*

*JOHN B. S. COATS, President*

When we look at today's world, it is both sad and alarming to note how standards of ethics and morals have declined and are still declining. Amnesty International has very recently stated that basic Human Rights are being set at nought in many countries of the world at this very moment. And yet most, if not all of these have signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Let me mention a few of the articles.

Article 3: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 5: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 9: No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 12: No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation.

Article 13: Everyone has a right to freedom of movement and residence. Everyone has the right to leave any country including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 16: Men and women have the right without any limitation due to race or religion to marry and to found a family.

Article 17: No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and (Article 19) to freedom of opinion and expression.

Does it mean nothing any more for the representatives of countries great and small to sign such a declaration without, it would appear, any real intention of upholding the substance of the matter at issue, should circumstance no longer suit those in power? Where, we may ask, is honour — that virtue of virtues — which

used to be so cherished by all men and women everywhere and which could confidently be expected from all having temporal authority over their fellows? Have we not all heard that a man's word is his bond and never doubted or questioned, that he would always be bound by it? And yet is it too cynical to say that many promises today are made subject to the further consideration of who offers more or who pays most?

We have reason to ponder, when we read the newspapers in many lands, upon the fact that fear — fear of losing a position and the salary that goes with it — unquestionably governs man's decisions, his behaviour and his willingness to act in a manner contrary to his own better judgment. Fear has seemingly forced people in high positions to behave in ways that are contrary to the code of honour that has been accepted down the centuries as the basis for human relationships.

What is happening to us and where must all this dishonesty lead? Born into a world where science, and more recently technology, have taken so leading a role in all fields, that tendency towards materialism grows stronger day by day, and man, having escaped from the various forms of slavery that have existed in the past, has now fallen victim to the economic slavery in whose toils nearly all humanity now languishes. Somewhere in this process man has lost his faith in the Good, the True and the Beautiful. Influenced by an educational system which is more concerned with cleverness than with goodness, he is wandering like a lost soul in a maze of perplexity — head-learning, based on text-books, has largely replaced that heart wisdom which inculcates a reliance on ethical behaviour that is community centred. Man's acceptance of

the false gods of money, status and power, has deprived him of the ability to distinguish clearly between right and wrong and the modern tendency is to reassure him when he has qualms of conscience that it does not matter very much anyway!

The so-called polite behaviour required by a society that is too concerned with what is and what is not done is all too often a mere cover up, concealing thoughts and feelings that are very far removed from forced smiles and conventional words. While we should exercise discrimination and by all means allow for sufficient time to bring a serious discussion to a useful conclusion, it might be more eloquent of real friendship if we were occasionally to say what we really think and feel. Most of us need to break down barriers and clear the ground for better friendships based on real understanding instead of indulging in mere superficial inanities. Let there be good behaviour that helps to oil the wheels of life, but true friendship between man and man is far more than that.

Dr. G.S. Arundale (whose Centenary year will centre around December 1st 1978) used to encourage those around him, particularly the young, to be "Free, Fearless and Friendly," and it is, as we have seen already, just these three enviable attitudes to life that are so difficult to maintain today. The younger generation, except where they are consciously in search of Truth — and many are — have little hope of living by such principles. So many want to have what they are looking for immediately, not at some future times, but are not prepared to really work for it. They are restless and find it almost impossible to commit themselves to any specific non-materialistic interest — sports, the cinema screen, the boy or girlfriend are the things that matter.

This hesitancy to commit oneself to being labelled as a member of some organization, affects the Theosophical Society seriously in some parts of the world. In a recent report from Europe, a General Secretary

comments on this question. Having written that more young people have been joining the Society recently though most new members are older, he continues:

"The problem lies elsewhere. Most of the younger members join because they are interested in spiritual matters in a general way and enjoy the large libraries our Lodges provide. They make use of our premises as meeting places and often have a deep concern with Theosophy but they have little interest in, let alone allegiance, to, the Theosophical Society itself. They would join any other association if it offered them the same facilities and opportunities. As they are not usually inclined to hold offices, the administrative work rests, therefore, in the hands of a few older members. This is a different situation from that which existed some 50 years ago. It was then one of the main attractions for the younger members to belong to a worldwide Society and the Theosophical Society as a Society was for the members as important as Theosophy itself. At present, the younger members especially have only a rather loose connection with the Society and it is doubtful whether they will suffice as a foundation for our work in the future. Certainly this rather loose attachment is partly due to the fact that they feel there is no longer any special knowledge offered by the Society that could not be obtained elsewhere, nor is 'Universal Brotherhood' the exclusive possession of our Society. On the contrary, there are other organizations which they find are more effective in that respect."

Universal Brotherhood is necessarily a brotherhood of differences, unquenesses and polarities, since Nature never creates the same thing twice. But to be universal leads us to consider our relationship to and connections with *all* people, which means that in the Theosophical Society, we find those both more and less congenial to ourselves. Many other organizations practise very real brotherhood in a less universal context and therefore seem to be more successful. Our Society has

undertaken to follow the steeper path.

The letter continues: "So, if the Theosophical Society is to survive as a really vital organism, and not only remain as an institution of caretakers of a museum of very precious knowledge, we shall have to ponder deeply over the question in what respect we are still able to appeal to the world in a way that is unique."

No real student of Theosophy can doubt for a moment that vast stores of knowledge lie within the theosophical doctrine that are not at all readily available — if at all — elsewhere. They also know that the prolonged and continuing study of the doctrine, described by one of the Elder Brothers as "the only true one," opens the doors of the mind to the inflow of what we may call the Wisdom. A superficial look at Theosophy, the Theosophical Society and Theosophists will not bring such results and it is neither strange nor unjust that one of the guardians of the Gateway that leads to peace and liberation should be a patient, determined application.

It is our evident inability to present the great message of Theosophy clearly — which can only be done when we speak and act from strength and not weakness, knowledge not ignorance, from a wide contact with our science and not only from a smattering of rehashed ideas — it is this that stands in the way of our greater success.

We are all ambassadors for Theosophy and an ambassador must know his country well if he is to represent it effectively. For us our country is the vast field of the teaching that flows from the Ageless Wisdom and there is no member, old or new, who has not, as his dharma and his duty, to give time and effort to this study — not just for his own enjoyment but so that he can pass it on. "Learn that you may teach," said one of the Elder Brothers. "Acquire spiritual knowledge and strength that the work may lean upon you, and the sorrowing victims of ignorance learn from you the cause and remedy of their pain." *Letters from The Masters of The Wisdom. Series 1, p. 19.*

An ambassador must also take the trouble to know well the country to which he is accredited, otherwise his mission is unlikely to be a success. For us once again, the country to which Theosophists are accredited is nothing less than the world itself. We must go out to the circumference bearing, offering and sharing the gifts of the centre — nothing less — and valuable, even priceless, they can be when we have made that centre real to ourselves.

There is need then also for us to be in touch with what is taking place in the world around us so that we can choose what part of the circumference seems most in need. The centre and the circumference are two — but also one — so that we may never think we can escape permanently from one in order to concentrate on the other. The wholeness lives, moves and has its being as a Oneness basically indivisible and Karma binds us to the responsibility for accepting the work we have been born on earth to do. Once, then, that we have accepted the duty of serving the "Orphan Humanity" by all the means in our power, we start to examine our methods and there is probably no Lodge nor even any member anywhere in the world, that would not increase in usefulness by carefully looking into its present activities. The criterion clearly must be whether we attract newcomers and whether our ability to arouse continuing interest succeeds in creating, not only a new member of the Theosophical Society in terms of quantity which is less important, but in terms of quality, a new student of Theosophy, seeker for Truth and dedicated server of his fellow man. If we do not succeed in creating new students and servers, there must be something wrong with our methods and we need to think about changing them.

Lodges then should re-examine their programmes and experiment with new ideas. Let us ask ourselves, is our Lodge the kind of place that anyone would like to visit a second time — or is it dreary, dirty and dark? Should it not be clean, bright and



appear as if it were the expression of a group of people who are enlightened? Are the books in our libraries fulfilling the dharma of books, which is to be read by both members and public or do they remain indefinitely on the shelves, undusted, behind lock and key? Have we developed a method of making them available — of sharing the wisdom with others.

Individually, do we approach others rather aggressively seeking to force Theosophy upon them? Or are we so lukewarm that the visitor comes to wonder why we are in the Lodge at all? Who knows but that the negative reactions of some people to Theosophy are not due to some innate fear that they may be judged ignorant or unenlightened because they do not already know about it, or that their too eager acceptance is not due to the desire to appear to others as thoughtful and intelligent? Tact and discernment have to be at our elbow all the time. We may beware likewise of the person who having listened to a talk will immediately point out that all of what you have been saying is in the *Bhagavad Gita* or in the *Bible* or some other religious book. It may indeed be found in one or other of the great scriptures of the world, but what, one may ask politely, has the questioner done about it? To know where a marvellous and deep teaching is to be found may on occasion be of some use, but unless the action, which the passage exists to promote, should follow, that usefulness is minimal. What a man does is more important than what he says and what he is, is more important still.

Since, then, we are all responsible for promoting this wonderful work, which has been put into our hands, it requires each of us, singly or in groups, to find methods of making a success of our mission. Who should be of greatest concern to us? Surely it is the man who has not yet drawn near to the Ancient Wisdom and shared the immense benefit of some realisation of what that Wisdom can bring in terms of happiness, by giving its students a deeper understanding of life? This is not to say that

our members are not important, but when one looks at the situation objectively, it is not unreasonable to think that those who have found Theosophy or who have access to it are amongst the fortunate minority, whereas the vast majority of men still remain in ignorance. When we have this ageless Wisdom available to us it becomes our own individual decision to study or not to study, to try to live by certain teachings or to neglect them, to enter determinedly on the Path that leads to liberation or to dawdle foolishly on the way. If then, there is choice, we can accept the challenge or reject it.

It is true that we can be helped by others through books and through contacts to take Theosophy more seriously than we have done up till now. However, we have the duty to turn our attention to that majority group who so far have not had the benefits that you or I have received through our contacts with the Wisdom. It is to them, is it not, that one's heart goes out in the desire to reach them in some way or other so that their lives may be changed in the direction of deeper understanding and fulfilment?

It is in order to reach out to this large group that many changes have been made in recent months in the magazine, *The Theosophist*, not only in terms of its format but to some extent also in the content. We are finding our way towards a balance between the serious articles for students and the somewhat lighter articles for those who still require what one can only call stepping stones from the life which knows nothing of spiritual ideals to the ineffable Wisdom that we call Theosophy; for there are, as we know, millions of such people in the world today who are dissatisfied with superficiality and beginning to seek for something deeper.

The transition from one point of view to the other is for many not easy and there has to be, or so it seems to me, an attempt made to lead such people from where they stand at present towards where we, more than most, are in a position to offer that which they are unable to find in the many

peculiar and often fraudulent organisations which have arisen in recent years all around the world. We have to reach out towards the circumference, but what we have to offer there must be that which we have found at the centre. There is little use for us to offer on the circumference that which is already there. Our duty is to take in our hands all that we have understood of the Wisdom at the centre and offer it to those who are able to take a few steps towards it. Some will come more quickly and some more slowly, but we must have confidence that the Wisdom itself is of such a nature that it will inevitably attract everyone in the end.

H.P.B., speaking of the century which lay ahead of her own day, has told us that it would be a very different world, as indeed it is — a world of great temptations, of great scientific advances, social turmoil and confusion and a tremendous lack of discrimination in the ability to choose the false from the true. We must not be afraid of change because it is inevitable, and even more apparent to-day than ever before. Everything is moving quickly towards an uncertain future and surely towards a great crisis in human affairs. It is the continuing work of the Theosophical Society to maintain steadiness in the midst of all the upheaval around us. Steadiness, however, does not mean sameness. It does not mean that we merely have to go on in the same old way as though we were living 50 or 100 years ago. It means maintaining steadiness in a world of change in which it has become our duty to continue to hold out the promise of further understanding to every man or woman who is prepared to work in order to attain it. In order to reach all such, we must also review, as I have said before, what we are doing.

We have thought for many years about the statement that at the end of the century there would be another effort made by the Elder Brothers to introduce some new keynote into the existing chord of human life. We need to be extremely open-minded if we hope to recognise what that keynote

is. Just as in music there may be very many variations on a theme, so the theosophical theme will surely remain in the background as fundamental as it ever has been, but the variation in the presentation of that theme may differ quite as much as one religious presentation differs from another. We may recall how 2,000 years ago, the Jewish people of Palestine were looking for a Messiah and they had very definite ideas as to what that Messiah should be and say and do. There arrived on the scene the teacher whom we now know as the Master Jesus, and who did not at all fit into their picture and yet perhaps he was, in truth, the great one that they were awaiting.

Do not let us fall into the same trap in supposing that the teaching of the end of this century will be exactly like that of 100 years ago. It may, indeed, be very different. The emphasis may be on something that we have not considered to be very important in the past, but which today has assumed a quite different importance in the eyes of those who stand behind the scenes. Probably we have assumed that the Torchbearer as H.P.B. called him would come from the East, in the physical sense, but though his teaching may come from the East symbolically, he might, after all, appear in the West, and may speak more of the Oneness which lies behind universal brotherhood, rather than of brotherhood itself. It may be universality that is stressed and more particularly the love which has to be in every heart if each is to live that universality as part of his life. Could it be that the tremendous interest in yoga that we find all around the world today is not just fortuitous? Could it be part of a plan, at present only in its beginnings to help thousands of our fellow human beings to understand that there is a way that leads to freedom and peace?

Whilst it is not our work to promote psychism, except in a very objective

*(Continued on page 18)*

## NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

I regret to report the death in Victoria on January 19, 1978, of Mrs. Margaret Ellis. She was a member of Victoria Lodge, joining the Society in 1973.

To her family and friends we extend our sincere sympathy.

\* \* \*

Following business commitments in Vancouver and vicinity on January 27, I walked over to the old but impressive looking Dominion Building on West Hastings Street. In Room 413, where Vancouver Lodge members hold their meetings, members of both Orpheus and Vancouver Lodges gathered for the better part of three hours for an informal discussion and to partake of delicious homemade refreshments.

It is always a treat to meet with this combined group, many members of which Doris and I have come to know quite well over the years since our first visit to Vancouver in 1964. Our discussion ranged from the T.S. and the Theosophical Movement generally to various matters of interest arising out of Theosophical teachings.

The possibility of holding the 1978 Annual General Meeting in Vancouver was also considered. I hope to have something more definite to say on this in the not too distant future.

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Readers who enjoyed the article on AE in the last issue might be interested in the following:

Fifty years ago . . . The following is from the "Official Notes" of the General Secretary, Mr. Albert E.S. Smythe, in *The Canadian Theosophist*, March, 1928.

"The event of the last four weeks for Toronto was the visit of Mr. George W. Russell of Dublin, the greatest Irishman

resident in Ireland, and the greatest occultist publicly in the eye of the world today. Seldom has a visitor to the city had such publicity with less solicitation. His work is so well known by the intelligent men of the press that it was sufficient to announce his coming to have the public fully informed about him. The reports of the meeting which he addressed were also very full and appreciative, but were alike in the studied silence about Madame Blavatsky to whom he attributed his inspiration and his outlook on life. What a world we should have had, had all her pupils remained as loyal!"

\* \* \*

Yet another indication of the remarkable achievements of the former Point Loma Theosophical Society is "A List of Publications 1898 - 1942". This was published recently by the Friends of the University of California, San Diego Library. In addition to the list itself, which alone covers 120 of the 132 pages, there are several illustrations, a brief but useful introduction and some notes on the bibliography.

There are no plans for the promotion and distribution of this publication, which may be ordered from Mrs. Alvina Robertson, Library Administration, University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, CA 92093 U.S.A., price \$4.00.

\* \* \*

I have much pleasure in welcoming the following new member into the fellowship of the Society:-

*Victoria Lodge*: Alice G. Smith.

T.G.D.

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Try with consistent attempts to conquer the prominent weaknesses of your nature by developing thought in the direction that will kill each particular passion.

*Practical Occultism*

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## CALGARY LODGE

The Calgary Lodge used the impetus of additional energy in the New Year to organize their public meeting at the Memorial Park Library on Thursday, January 19.

The topic for the evening was "Myth, Magic and Mystery", based on the book *The Unfinished Animal* by Theodore Roszak.

A panel of three members of the Lodge each gave a short introduction to the subject and this was followed by group discussion; the findings of the groups being brought back to the meeting for a short general discussion before the evening closed.

Approximately fifteen people were present and several members of the Lotus Lodge attended and added their welcome support.

Our small group continues the regular Thursday evening sessions with the study of *The Secret Doctrine*. Members' individual projects were also continued with Stan Elliott giving a paper on "Eros and Psyche" and Doris Davy on "The Lunar Pitris".

Laetitia van Hees  
Secretary

## TORONTO LODGE

A memorable occasion in the heart of winter was the night of the Solstice, December 21, falling on a Wednesday program evening. Long before this time a theosophical study class of the Lodge dedicated an evening to drawing out meanings of, and teachings concerning, the Solstice. The students worked together to prepare a program where each might explore and present some aspects of spiritual significance to this season.

The seminar which was held on that evening opened on a high note to Dudley Barr's article, "The Love That Truly Serves", and following through was an

atmosphere of intense concentration and harmony, as though all present were linked by the single realization of the sacred solemnity of the night when the sun turns northward.

The focus was on the concept of the Spiritual Sun behind the material manifestation, a universal centre of energy ceaselessly giving inspiration and life to all. At the physically darkest time of the year, its spiritual power is the greatest, for "the life of the interior spirit is the death of external nature; and the night of the physical world denotes the day of the spiritual." Initiation into the Mysteries therefore has always taken place in the night, and the mystical birth of the Christ principle in man is celebrated in mid-winter.

The questions and interchange of comments, which pervaded the evening's program, reflected high thinking and the unifying aspiration to understand spiritually the actuality of the Solstice in one's individual life and work. It seemed to be truly a very holy night, which correspondingly stirred the spiritual centre in each, giving rise to more questions and searching as each took away with him a little flame of truth to spur on endeavours and guide progress.

Since then, the unavoidable cancellation by a lecturer caused the class to devote another evening to preparing a program for the public. Two full hours were spent in individual searches for all that could be found in H.P.B.'s writings on Zoroastrianism, then bringing together the findings for discussion.

The evening's work brought some rather wonderful discoveries, the true wisdom of the first Zoroaster tracing back to the first Root Races, and the Zend commentary on the Zend Avesta linking with the sacred ideographs of Senzar. Adhering to the guidelines of the three fundamental propositions of *The Secret Doctrine*, a program was arranged introducing the

seed ideas of the sacred philosophy, whose higher cosmic principle is symbolized by fire.

Classes at the Toronto Lodge are now taking a purposeful direction, and this is encouraging. Inspired by the opportunity to work as a team in making Theosophy known to others, members of the classes are energetic in study and sensitive in apprehending the more spiritual side of the teaching.

A new and interesting association for the Lodge is with a class of three students in the Peterborough area, who are studying independently *The Secret Doctrine*. It seems to be a worthwhile study, and members of the group show insight and pose vital questions. They state that they wish they had started their Theosophical studies with H.P.B. Perhaps this is another indication of the awakening Theosophical urge, which will grow more fully in this second century.

Joan Sutcliffe  
Secretary

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## VICTORIA LODGE

Mrs. Margaret Ellis, a member of Victoria Lodge for several years, passed away suddenly on January 19 at the age of 82. Although unable to attend meetings regularly during the last two years, we remember her quiet gentleness and cheerful disposition. Margaret demonstrated the practical side of her Theosophical philosophy by giving freely of her time and effort to make life more enjoyable for others in a Golden Age group in Victoria. Our loving thoughts go with Margaret Ellis on her journey towards the Light.

For the spring season, Victoria Lodge is holding two concurrent meetings on the same evening. One group, mostly

enquirers, is studying the Introductory Course on Theosophy, and is chaired by the Vice-President, David Makins.

Members of the Lodge, and visitors who have some background of Theosophy are studying Sri Krishna Prem's *Initiation into Yoga*. This meeting is conducted by the President, Dorothy Armstrong.

Attendance has been good in spite of

January's inclement weather, but we were fortunate in being able to advertize free of charge on our local TV community channel, and also on notice boards at the University of Victoria. In this way we have attracted several newcomers, all of whom seem quite keen.

Dorita Gilmour  
Secretary

## THE GATEWAY TO REALITY

MOLLIE GRIFFITH

When we become interested in the teachings of Theosophy one of the most important things we learn is the difference between the personality and the individuality. It may take some time to grasp the difference, but it is essential to both our understanding and growth to recognize this, in our everyday life.

The personality, or lower self, has many different facets or qualities, some good and some bad. It has its likes and dislikes, its prejudices, its attractions and repulsions — and some strange twists, often difficult to understand.

In the light of reincarnation we can see that many lives have been spent in the development of the personality and as we sense a purpose guiding both involution and evolution, it is interesting to consider how the personality fits into the pattern. It is obvious that to succeed in any endeavour, certain qualities are required such as persistence, endurance, courage and understanding. In the past, we have needed these qualities sometimes just for survival and sometimes to develop certain skills. So, from life to life we have gradually built up

what are now our present personalities. Even games, if played in the right spirit, have contributed to this development.

In life it seems there must be a driving force if we are to put forth effort and accomplish what we desire. In the past this driving force has expanded from self-love or egotism to love of family, state or country, and today the ideal of "one world" is emerging. So perhaps this is also a good time to emphasize that great teaching of the Wisdom Religion — the Oneness of all Life.

To accept this teaching and to try to live up to what it implies must be one of the great turning-points in evolution. We can no longer follow without question the dictates of the personality, but must look for guidance to the individuality, or higher self. Is this the purpose towards which life has been steadily leading us?

To quote Sri Krishna Prem:

"The mind is the gateway which leads to the knowledge of the Reality, and it must be thoroughly cleansed of the thorns and thickets of desire before it can turn on its

hinges and allow the traveller a sight of the wonderful world beyond."

—Initiation into Yoga, p. 38.

We see that the building up of the personality has had a purpose but that the further accomplishment of that purpose is in our own hands, and must be tackled by each one of us, in our own way.

When the personality is more or less in control of our lives, it may give us some trouble, but once we make up our minds to transfer our allegiance to the individuality, it really starts to fight, and it is a foe not to be despised.

The bulk of our work now lies in clearing away "the thorns and thickets of desire" so that the light of the Higher Self can penetrate our consciousness. This is extremely difficult because the deadly foe of egotism can so easily deceive us. Personalities are of many different types and even the most endearing and pleasant personality is hard to deal with in this way, perhaps one of the most difficult, because it is easier for it to get its own way, and so satisfy its desires.

If at this point we are beginning to understand that great teaching of the Wisdom Religion, the Oneness of Life, our allegiance must expand once more. No longer can we seek only to benefit ourselves, our tribe or our country, but must include them in the whole. This, as said before, is one of the hardest turning-points in our many lives, and all the good qualities we have acquired in the past, and even some others are necessary for success. It is important in this respect to impersonally examine our personalities with the object of freeing them from selfishness, and making them fit to rise to a higher level and act in harmony with the individuality, or Higher Self.

The struggle between this double constitution of man is dramatically told in *Through the Gates of Gold*, where the author says, "It is upon the union, the right relationship of these two forces in himself that man stands as a strong king and is

enabled to raise his hand and lift the bar of the Golden Gate . . . this is the whole secret."

When we are going on a journey, especially if it is an unusual one through difficult country, we can receive great help from those who have taken this journey before us. They can tell us of dangers we may have to meet and where we may find help. They cannot assume our burdens, for if they did we would never be able to stand on our own feet, but they can help us if we are willing to listen to them and follow their advice.

They tell us to begin by cleansing the mind, for if we try to control our lower desires while leaving the mind free, we shall be approaching the problem the wrong way around. They say that if our thoughts are right, our desires will follow their lead in time.

Another piece of advice from our teachers is that instead of wasting our energy fighting those things within ourselves which we dislike, we should use our imagination and picture something of an opposite nature. In this way, the pendulum will gradually shift. We are told never to sweep anything under the carpet, but to face all things both in the inner and outer world with courage.

If man contains within his being the potentialities of the whole of life, it must include the dark as well as the light side. It is the harmonizing of these forces which leads to progress. If then, we try to understand and follow the advice of those beings whose purpose is the helping of humanity, the words of our own great teacher, H.P. Blavatsky, will come to mind. In *The Voice of the Silence*, we read:

"Give light and comfort to the toiling pilgrim, and seek out him who knows still less than thou."

It follows, then, that as we reach out one hand for help from above, we should stretch out our other hand to those who know less than we do.

# MASTER TEACH ME

IANTHE H. HOSKINS

*In one of the great classical texts of India, the Crest-Jewel of Wisdom, written some 2,500 years ago, a disciple comes to the teacher seeking earnestly and anxiously for answers that will put an end to his perplexity. He finds himself caught up in the wheel of births and deaths, does not understand his own nature and sees no escape from the common predicament of man. What is it, he wants to know, that keeps one bound to the cycle? Is it possible to break free? What is the ultimate reality? How can one distinguish between the essence of things and the veil of mere appearances, between the real and unreal? By thus putting into the mouth of a questioner some of the problems that interest — that torment even — the thoughtful individual, the teacher creates a simple literary form through which to offer to the world the knowledge that leads to salvation.*

But a remarkable feature of this text is the manner in which the *guru* addresses the anxious seeker: not a deprecating “my good man, can’t you see . . .”, not a benevolent “you poor thing, don’t you know . . .”, but on the contrary, a congratulatory “O wise man”, and again “O wise man, thou art happy, thou hast obtained thy end.”

How is it that the disciple, for all his ignorance and perplexity, is addressed by the teacher as wise? that when he approaches, confused and questioning, he is said already to have obtained his end? The answer is clear: he is wise *because* he is seeking, *because* he has recognized his condition and knows that he does not know; he has obtained his end *because* he has tasted the dissatisfaction of the false and is eager to find the true, *because* he has taken seriously the precepts of religion and has begun to put them into practice.

The one who knows the great truths of

life, of Nature and of Man, is undoubtedly wise. But the one who has turned in the direction of truth is also wise in his degree — wise by anticipation, maybe, but wise none the less. There is a Wisdom of realization, the end of the merely human pilgrimage, and there is also a wisdom of conversion, that is, of turning about and taking the first step in the direction in which the greater Wisdom lies. The first is *Brahmavidya*, the knowledge of the Supreme, and the second is *Viveka*, the discriminative wisdom that sifts the true from the false, that seeks the real beneath the veil of appearances, that recognizes where may be found those things that pertain to our peace.

Pearls are not scattered in the street for anyone to pick up. That which is holy is not given into hands that are unclean. Is not this why we are enjoined to ask, to seek and to knock? For until a person, out of his own experience, has developed the lesser wisdom that turns him towards the greater, the door must remain closed and the answers be withheld. The disciple must take the initiative, must seek out the teacher and ask to be taught, for the Master cannot appear until the pupil has made himself ready to receive him.

—*The Theosophical Journal*  
November-December 1977

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Search for the Paths. But, O Lanoo, be of clean heart before thou startest on thy journey. Before thou takest thy first step learn to discern the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the everlasting. Learn above all to separate Head-learning from Soul-Wisdom, the “Eye” from the “heart” doctrine.

*The Voice of the Silence*



# EQUALITY OF THE SEXES

How are souls born male or female?

Souls, my son Horos, are all equal in nature, since they come from one region wherein the Creator has formed them. There are not among them either males or females; this distinction exists only between bodies, and not between incorporeal beings.

—Hermes Trismegistus, *The Virgin of the World*, trs. Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland.

Q. What is the spiritual status of woman among Buddhists?

A. According to our religion they are on a footing of perfect equality with men. "Woman," says the Buddha in the *Chullavaddalla-sutta*, "may attain the highest path of holiness that is open to man — Arhatship."

—Henry S. Olcott, *The Buddhist Catechism*.

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

—Epistle of Paul to the *Galatians*, iii, 27-28.

(*Question by A.P. Sinnett*): Is there any essential spiritual difference between a man and a woman, or is sex a mere accident of each birth — the ultimate future of the individual furnishing the same opportunities?

(*Answer by K.H.*): A mere accident — as you say. Generally a chance work yet guided by individual karma, — moral aptitudes, characteristics and deeds of a previous birth.

—*The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, p. 117.

Woman has as good a chance as any man has to reach high Adeptship. Why she does not succeed in this direction in Europe is simply due to her early education and the social prejudice which causes her to be

regarded as inferior to man. This prejudice, amounting to a curse in Christian lands, was mainly derived from the Jewish Bible, and man has profited by it.

—*H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, XI, 301.

. . . the love of the adept burns only for the highest of the highest — that perfect knowledge of Nature and its animating Principle, which includes in itself every quality of both sexes, and so can no more think as either man or woman, than the right or the left lobe of one's brain can think of itself apart from the whole entity of which it is a component. Monosexual consciousness exists only on the lower levels of psychic development; up above, the individual becomes merged as to consciousness, in the Universal Principle; has "become Brahma."

—*H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, IV, 341.

There are those who say that the female sex is not to be thought of in the spirit; that all is male. Others say the same for the female. Now both are wrong. In the True there is no sex, and when I said "There all men are women and all women are men," I was only using rhetoric to accentuate the idea that neither one nor the other was predominant, but that the two were coalesced, so to say, into one . . . When I say the female *principle* represents matter, I do not mean *women*, for they in any one or more cases may be full of the masculine principle and *vice versa*.

—William Q. Judge, *Letters That Have Helped Me*, Semicentennial Edition pp. 58-9.

There are not two sorts of Spirit, one immanent in male forms and the other immanent in female forms. We think of ourselves as men or women because of the distinctions of physical forms and emotional patterns with which we identify ourselves. But, when we look to the Spirit

and not to the form, we can no longer differentiate between ourselves and the selves that dwell in other forms.

—Sri Madhava Ashish, *Man, Son of Man*, p. 213.

... man is a dual being, not masculine only or feminine only, but both of these; not man only or woman only, but man and woman. And he is this in respect, not of his exterior and physical, but of his interior and spiritual nature. For, since humanity is dual, that which, being man, represents humanity, must be dual also . . .

Only because it is already so with Humanity on the inner plane, is it so on the outer. Whatever the sex of the person physically, each individual is a dualism, consisting of exterior and interior, manifested personality and essential individuality, body and soul, which are to each other masculine and feminine, man and woman; he the without, and she the within.

—Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, *The Perfect Way*, VII, 11-12.

Esotericism ignores both sexes. Its highest Deity is sexless as it is formless, neither Father nor Mother; and its first manifested beings, celestial and terrestrial alike, become only gradually androgynous and finally separate into distinct sexes.

—H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 136fn.

The sex polarity which in the lower order of life is simple and direct and marked mainly by the distinctive procreative functions of each sex, in man is complex, and its range is greatly extended. Man is not an animal; he is a spiritual being using an animal body. In this body he is subject to sex, but a woman is not merely a female animal, nor man a mere male. Men-women, or Man the race, is caught in the great cycle of sex, but the particular sex of the body used by an individual is not of any tremendous importance in relationship to the primal problem of Man's spiritual nature. When the founders of the Theosophical Society incorporated the words "without distinction of sex" in the

first object of the Society, they doubtless did so for the above reasons. Various societies and groups have attempted on religious and other grounds, to exalt one human sex over the other, but this merely accentuates the problem and beclouds the truth that men and women alike are divine and that the sex of their bodies is only incidental — "accidental" is the word used in the *Mahatma Letters*.

—Dudley W. Barr, *Theosophy, An Attitude Toward Life*

And the Lord Himself, having been asked by someone when His Kingdom should come (into active being) said — "Whenever the two shall be one: and the without as the within: and the Male (being merged) with the Female there shall be neither Male nor Female."

—Clement of Alexandria, *Str.*, III, 13. trs. by Omicron in *Letters from Paulos*, p. 42.

And as a last word — and please remember this carefully — the Reincarnating Ego is neither masculine nor feminine. He who is a man in one body may be a woman in the next. It is a matter which depends upon an aggregate of karmic tendencies.

—G. de Purucker, *The Dialogues*, I, 306.

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## FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

(Continued from page 10)

manner, it is surely true that if we can find a means of showing to the rank materialist that there is something beyond the world of his five senses, then we have done something to break down the totality of his materialistic outlook. I mention this tentatively, because it is a field in which, if we move at all, we will have to move very carefully. Let us at least understand that even for the materialist, there has also to be a beginning and that that beginning may not immediately be in terms of a philosophy of life but only something which urges him, to concede that there is something more behind appearances even

though he may not yet understand it fully.

What does this all add up to then? It adds up to the fact that you and I and all our membership throughout the world have a great work to do. We are beginning to move towards the ability to help our neighbour and not merely to remain dependent on somebody else for such help. It is no longer sufficient simply to sit at someone's feet to reread what we have read in one form or another so often before. We are moving towards the position where we can be positive, where we can stand on our own feet, be self-reliant, realise our responsibility, accept the willingness to practise what we preach and begin to forget ourselves in the service of others. It is not any use to rely on a few people to do all the work. The work is too big and it will only be accomplished when everybody is concerned to help with it as best he can. Do let us all, then, move away from any feeling, not that all is well because all is always well, but from the feeling that we can just sit down complacently and hope for the best. The future will come about happily for the world when a sufficient number of citizens of the world work for that future and in the field within which the Theosophical Society may be said to move, the work depends upon all of us.

#### *Adyar Library and Research Centre*

The Library has been asked by the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare to undertake the project of the reconstruction into Sanskrit of some of the lost Sanskrit texts which, however, are still preserved in their Tibetan translation. As the Adyar Library has the complete set of Tanjur and Kanjur volumes, it has accepted the offer. The Library has already reconstructed some of the works of Nagarjuna and brought them out in the Adyar Library Series when the services of a Sanskrit-Tibetan scholar were available.

The Library is continuing translations of many Indian classics and editing of texts and the high standing of the Library in the

academic world is clear from the visits of many scholars for research purposes and study.

With its unique collection of manuscripts and books on Indological studies and with the service facilities available, it is able to give much assistance to all who consult it.

#### *Theosophical Publishing House*

During the year sales reached nearly six hundred thousand, the highest in the history of the Theosophical Publishing House. The import of books from the United Kingdom and from the United States of America amounted to Rs.27,500, mainly from the theosophical publishing houses in those countries.

#### *Archives*

The airconditioning of a section of the Archives has been carried out and now many valuable and precious items are housed in cooler temperatures. The fumigation of the entire Archives was carried out by the Pest Control of India. A full-time staff for lamination and binding has been appointed and the work is proceeding well. Owing to the generosity of overseas members, the Archives now have an ample supply of negative microfilms. The work of microfilming is proceeding smoothly. This department has received its full share of researchers and our holdings of Mrs. Besant's papers relating to her social and political work have been requested by research scholars and institutes from several countries, including the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, which provided a senior archivist to catalogue the collection. These papers are currently being microfilmed by a representative of the Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi, in connection with the Home Rule League Movement.

Other work has been done in connection with H.P.B.'s first book, *Isis Unveiled*, to assist Mr. Boris de Zirkoff in his series of *The Collected Writings of H.P.B.* and also to help Dr. Dubbink with his forthcoming publication of the *Collected Writings of T.*

Subba Row. Work has also begun on the biographical data of Dr. G.S. Arundale, whose birth centenary occurs on December 1, 1978.

*International Centre of  
Theosophical Studies  
and Research*

At the opening session on October 4, 1976, there were 26 registered students. A number of observers and unregistered students attended, making the average attendance at each session about 20. The International President, Mr. John Coats, presided over the inaugural meeting and Miss Joy Mills, International Vice-President and Director of Studies at the Centre, and Dr. B.R. Mullik also spoke. Courses of study were conducted by Dr. Mullik, Miss Joy Mills and Dr. A. Kannan. A number of students and officers of the Society at Adyar presented papers during the first session. Other sessions continued

from January to April, when Professor H.L. Dubbink of Holland was the guest teacher. Then, after a break for the hot summer months, there were further sessions in July and August, when Mrs. Seetha Neelakantan, Professor Hakim and Mr. Suryanarayan Moorti gave talks on Buddhism, Islam and Self-realisation respectively.

*World Membership*

It is interesting to note that from the reports we have received there is an overall increase of 145 members. However, it is also of importance to notice that some of the large sections have decreases, for example, India with 153 and Australia with 58. East and Central Africa records an increase of 334. An interesting item of the Israel Lodge Covenant is that its increase of 13 includes many young soldiers.

## YGGDRASIL — THE WORLD TREE

L. GORDON PLUMMER

The symbolism of the World Tree, called Yggdrasil in the Scandanavian legends is far wider and more comprehensive than the casual glance would lead us to expect.

It has been depicted as inverted, with its roots in the heavens, and its branches and leaves on the earth. In this form it clearly points to Man's innate Divinity, having his spiritual roots or beginnings in the Boundless, and his highly complex nature pursuing its evolutionary course in the universe of which he is a part. If there were no other interpretations of the symbolism, this would seem to be enough, but as with all genuine symbols, they are open to numerous interpretations. Let us pursue the subject further, considering in this case a living tree such as might grow in your own garden.

Since people everywhere are talking to plants, it will not be taken amiss if we talk to the tree. In fact, we shall go a step

farther, and in imagination we shall endow the tree with capability of understanding and communication, and our conversation might go something like this:

Tree: "What a glorious day! See how I lift my leaves toward the sun? I am thankful that I have all the sunlight that I need."

"Yes, you are fortunate indeed. But do you think that you can take in all the sunlight that there is?"

Tree: "I don't know. I never thought about it."

"Well, look around you. See all the other plants and trees in the garden. They also seek the sun, and find that there is enough light for all."

Tree: "True."

"And out beyond the garden, there are parks and forests, and there is sunlight enough for all of these."

Tree: "You don't say!"

"You can't imagine how large the world is, and the uncounted billions of trees and plants there are, all depending upon the same sunlight. And yet there is enough for all."

Tree: "Perhaps I am not as important as I thought I was."

"Oh, but you are very important. Everything in the universe is important."

Tree: "I suppose then that everything receives what it needs?"

"Yes, and another way of putting it is that everything receives as much as it can take, and no more."

Tree: "What do you mean?"

"Well, suppose that all of the sunlight that reaches this garden were condensed into just the small space that you take, you would get far more than is good for you. In fact, you would shrivel away from the heat and light. So, although the amount of sunlight that you need is infinitesimal as compared with all of the sunlight that reaches the earth, it is still very important to you."

Tree: "I see what you mean."

"And yet the amount of sunlight that the earth receives is very small as compared with the total output of the sun. Do you realize that there are other planets, some larger than the Earth, and some smaller, all of which are a part of Father Sun's family?"

Tree: "Do you mean that they all receive their share of sunlight?"

"Right. And yet all of this is very small compared to the sunlight that is streaming out into space in all directions, above and below and all around."

Tree: "That seems to be very wasteful."

"Ah, yes, but that seems to be Nature's way. We can't say that just because we cannot use all that energy, it is necessarily wasteful of Father Sun. There may be uses that we know nothing about."

Tree: "Well, I had better be content with what I have, and be thankful that it is always there. When I have grown to my full height and need more sunlight, will it always be there?"

"It will always be there."

Now, what is all of this leading to? Well, there are two ideas that come to mind. First of all, there is a vast store of knowledge that we have barely begun to grasp. Untiring research has disclosed so many fascinating things about the universe that it becomes well nigh staggering. However, turning to those areas of particular interest to theosophical students, we have a so vast an amount of teaching placed before us by the Masters, their Messenger H.P.B., and various contributions from their followers that there is more than any one of us can fully grasp. Each of us must take in according to his capacity for understanding. And yet all that has been written and said is infinitesimal as compared with all the knowledge embodied in the Ancient Wisdom. The understanding of a student may serve his needs for a while, but he is ever seeking more light. The understanding of the Teachers is far greater, and they also are ever seeking more light. The understanding of the Gods is incomparably greater, and even they are ever seeking more light. There is no end.

Another application of the lesson concerns each individual. Each one of us represents in whatever manner he can his own Inner God. None of us, as we are today could tolerate the full radiance of the Higher Self, and we are protected from it, even though we are seeking an alliance with it. As we grow, we shall be able to express more and increasingly more of it. Everyone is potentially a Mahatman. It is all a matter of growth which means a growing manifestation of the Divinity within.

So, Yggdrasil, the World Tree is also Yggdrasil the human tree. It too is rooted in the Divine. Its limbs are the various monads which combine to form our wonderfully complex being, and the ultimate manifestation of the Higher Self is the flowering and the final fruition of the Tree of Life that is each one of us.

# 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 will be the nature of "the astral human forms (or the highest elementals) of the Sixth and the Seventh Races?"

**Answer.** This question was submitted after reading a passage in *The Secret Doctrine*, in Volume I, page 184 (of the original edition). In order to understand the significance of the points that are involved in the question, the whole passage in which the above quoted portion appears is now presented (the first two sentences are quoted from a Commentary):

"...In the present age, the physical embryo is a plant, a reptile, an animal, before it finally becomes man, evolving within himself his own ethereal counterpart, in his turn. In the beginning it was that counterpart (astral man) which being senseless, got entangled in the meshes of matter."

"But this 'man' belongs to the fourth Round. As shown, the MONAD had passed through, journeyed and been imprisoned in, every transitional form throughout every kingdom of nature during the three preceding Rounds. But the monad which becomes human is not the Man. In this Round — with the exception of the highest mammals after man, the anthropoids destined to die out in this our race, when their monads will be liberated and pass into the astral human forms (or the highest elementals) of the Sixth and the Seventh Races, and then into lowest human forms in the fifth

Round — no units of either of the kingdoms are animated any longer by monads destined to become human in their next stage, but only by the lower Elementals of their respective realms." (S.D. I, 184-5; I, 235-6 6-vol. ed.; I, 206-7 3rd ed.)

The question that was submitted deals with the *anthropoids* (NOT humans) and refers to what they will have become when they are no longer anthropoids; nor will they have become humans in the forthcoming Sixth or Seventh Races of humanity (of the Fourth Round).

It is suggested that the clue to an understanding of the question that was submitted lies in the explanation which will be provided in these two phrases: (1) "the anthropoids destined to die out in this our race, when their monads will be liberated"; (2) "Then into lowest human forms in the fifth Round."

The significance of phrase (1) means that the monads will no longer appear in anthropoid vehicles. The anthropoids will then assume elemental vehicles (or rupas) in which no human evolution will be experienced. The significance of phrase (2) means that no stages of evolutionary development will be undertaken by the entities who have passed into the "highest elementals of the Sixth and the Seventh Races", for the reason that the monads are using vehicles in which no evolutionary stages are experienced (termed "highest elementals"); therefore these elemental rupas are not progressing evolutionally during the Fourth Round. They will take on

the vehicles of the "lowest human forms in the fifth Round."

There is also this point to consider. In order to graduate from this Earth-globe during the fourth Round, so as to pass into the next globe of the Earth-Chain (designated Globe E), a Human being is required to complete his evolution of functioning in seven Root-Races on Globe D. However, those entities who were anthropoids have not experienced the functioning of the Manas principle, and will not achieve this status until the Fifth Round — as stated in the quoted passage from *The Secret Doctrine*.

**Question.** What is the principle that is undergoing development — evolutionally speaking — during the present Fourth Round?

**Answer.** The principle which is undergoing predominant evolutionary activity during this Fourth Round is the development of the Kama principle in its sevenfold aspects. This is not possible for the entities who were once anthropoids and become similar to elementals (as described in the passage quoted from *The Secret Doctrine*).

At this point it is appropriate to quote the footnote which was added in *The Secret Doctrine* after the phrase: "the highest elementals of the Sixth," and calling special attention to the closing sentence of the quotation:

"Nature never repeats herself, therefore the anthropoids of our day have not existed at any time since the middle of the Miocene period; when like all cross breeds, they began to show a tendency, more and more marked as time went on, to return to the type of their first parent, the black and yellow gigantic Lemoru-Atlantean. To search for the 'Missing Link' is useless. To the scientists of the closing sixth Root-race, millions and

millions of years hence, our modern races, or rather their fossils, will appear as those of small insignificant apes — an extinct species of the *genus homo*." (S.D. I, 184 fn.; I, 236 6-vol. ed.; I, 207 3rd ed.)

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## BOOK REVIEW

*Reincarnation: The Phoenix Fire Mystery*, compiled and edited by Joseph Head and S. L. Cranston. Published 1977 by Julian Press/Crown Publishers, Inc., New York. (In Canada by General Publishing Company Limited.) xix + 620 pp. Price \$10.00.

Here is a book of universal character, placing the idea of rebirth before the reader with clarity and persuasive certainty. It could be given to anyone in any walk of life and I am sure they would not be able to put it down. As they turned page after page, they would find the reality and processes of rebirth, testified to by the finest minds of the ages, striking a chord in their own minds and hearts.

The importance of the work is such that it shows a continuing concern of reincarnation through the language of myth and symbol; the religious view; the early races; the western tradition; and right down to new horizons in science, psychology and philosophy. It also covers the Theosophical movement and the Reincarnation Renaissance.

Here indeed is a veritable symphony of ideas where opinions unify study. A journey through time resulting in self-discovery, an agreement with the thought of antiquity that feels right in place today. A scholar will find a window into old volumes and new ideas, and will have a source book for many a year to come.

I found it to be full of hope, and a lifter of my spirits.

—S. Elder

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