



LETTERS TO THE EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

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Letters intended for publication should be restricted to no more than 500 words. The editor reserves the right to shorten any letter unless the writer states that it must be published in full or not at all. The editor will contact the writer prior to publication date – please include a phone number and or email address with all correspondence.

Board Members

Lois Brisbois, President/Secretary
104-40 Horseshoe Blvd
Oro- Medonte, On L4M 4Y8

Paul J. Carroll, Vice President/Editor
304-90 Ontario St.,
Toronto, ON M5A 3V6

Bohdan Wysochanskyj, Treasurer
66 Brookside Ave.,
Toronto, ON M6S 4G9

Simon Postma, Director
3322-112C St.,
Edmonton, AB T6J 3W8

Stan Treloar, Director
RR#3, Burks Falls, ON P0A 1C0



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304-90 Ontario Street | Toronto, ON M5A 3V6 | Paul_jCarroll@Yahoo.ca

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QUOTATION BY W.Q. JUDGE

It is true that a man cannot force himself at once into a new will and into a new belief, but by thinking much on the same thing he soon gets a new will and a new belief, and from it will come strength and also light. Try this plan.

OBJECTIVES:

To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

To encourage the Study of Comparative religion, Philosophy and Science.

To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.



ARE WE DESERTED?

FOLLOWING on the departure of H.P.B. from the scene of action, some weak voices in the Society have asked, "Have the Adepts deserted us?" This question has also come from those who are not weak in character, but who certainly do not understand very clearly what the Adepts are or how They work. And in the use of the term "Adept" are included also "Mahatmas," "Brothers," "Masters."

That these beings exist we have no manner of doubt, since for those who have studied in the right way plenty of proof has been offered; for others the proofs exist within themselves. The former class has had tangible evidence in the way of letters and appearances of the Adepts before their eyes; the latter long ago concluded that the Masters are necessities of evolution. Those who received proof palpable were those whose karma and past work entitled them to it; the others, having in previous lives gone through the experience and the argument, now quickly decided that, inasmuch as there are grades of intelligence and wisdom and power below ourselves, so there must beyond us be still other grades, all leading up, ex necessitate rei, to

the Adept or Master of whatever degree.

Now in the Society's ranks there have always been three mental positions held in respect to the question whether or not the Adepts - once admitted as existing - have anything in particular to do with the Theosophical Society. These are, first, that they have; second, that they have not; third, sometimes doubt about it, at others surety that they have, - in fact, wavering.

Those who think that the T.S. movement is merely a natural development of thought cannot be affected by the present discussion; the first and third classes are interested in the matter. To those it should at once occur that in the West the idea of the existence of the Adepts and of Their connection with our movement was first brought forward in this century and in our Society by H.P. Blavatsky, who, consistently throughout her career, has declared that the Adepts - whom she was pleased to call her Masters - directed her to engage in this work and have always helped and directed her throughout. That They should so direct her and then desert the Society she founded



merely because her body came to its dissolution seems so illogical as to be unthinkable. Many persons have affirmed to the reception of messages in writing from the same Masters, in which They said that some of Their efforts were for the benefit of the T.S. Among these persons we may mention Mr. A.P. Sinnett, who has never abandoned that position, and who today possesses a great number of such letters. Why should the unseen founders withdraw Their help when the work of the Society has but just begun to have its due effect upon the age? There seems to be no reasonable reply.

Once that we admit the existence of the Adepts and that They have adopted the T.S. as one of Their agents in this century for disseminating the truth about man and nature, we are bound to suppose that ordinary common-sense rules would govern as to the continuance of help or its withdrawal. Now one of the most obvious conclusions is that the Society should not be deserted until it had accomplished its mission or had utterly failed. Sixteen years of steady work show an enormous effect produced upon the thought of America, Europe, and Asia; but that portion of the work has been in

the line of fighting against odds and breaking down of opposition, with a beginning in this sixteenth year of an interest in the doctrines brought to the attention of the West by the efforts of our members. From that we must, as reasonable and foresighted beings, deduce the necessity for continuance of assistance. It is plain that our work of clear promulgation and wise building-up is still before us. Why then should the Adepts desert us? Still no reasonable reply can be found.

But considering what we know of the motives and methods held and pursued by the Adepts, we cannot for a moment suppose our real founders and constant helpers could yet leave us to fight alone. In letters and messages from Them we read that Their motive is to help the moral - and hence external - progress of humanity, and Their methods to work from behind the scenes by means of agents suited for the work. Those letters and messages also say that the agency is not restricted to one person, but that all sincere lovers of truth are used to that end, whether they know of it or not. The departure of H.P.B. does not remove the other sincere lovers of truth from the scene, nor does it prevent the



Adepts from sending messages if needed. Such messages have been received before H.P.B.'s departure by persons in no way connected with her, and have since that sad event also come to encourage those who are entitled to such encouragement. The contents of these are not for the public, nor indeed for any one save those to whom they have come.

Yet even if no such messages had been received, there is ample evidence, for those who are not blind, of the help of the Masters. For, as They said long ago that the work would be helped, so it has been; no other reason can be given for the increase of the work in America, since their personal effort put forth by the members will not account for the spreading of the movement. And now let it stand as a prophecy made in the messages spoken of, that in the kingdom of Great Britain and in Europe there will in five years be seen a similar spreading of Theosophy. Let no one of us, then, be in any way cast down. As the Masters exist, so They help us; and as we deserve, so will they repay.

W.Q.J
Path, August, 1891



THE SEVENFOLD DIVISION: WHY NOT CHANGE THE DESTINATION?

MR. Sinnett's book *Esoteric Buddhism* has done a great deal towards bringing before the West the Eastern philosophy regarding man and his constitution, but it has also served to perpetuate the use of a word that is misleading and incorrect. In that work on p. 61 he states, "Seven distinct principles are recognized by Esoteric Science as entering into the constitution of man," and then gives his scheme of division thus, The body, Vitality, Astral Body, Animal Soul, Human Soul, Spiritual Soul, and seventh, Spirit or Atma. Now if Spirit be, as the whole philosophy declares, in all and through all, it is erroneous to call it one of the series. This very early led to the accusation that we believed in seven distinct spirits in man. It always leads to misconception, and directly tends to preventing our understanding fully that the Atma includes, and is the substratum of, all the others. In India it caused a protracted and, at times, heated discussion between the adherents of the rigid seven-fold classification of *Esoteric Buddhism* and several learned and unlearned Hindus who supported a four-fold or five-fold division. During that debate the chief Hindu controvertor, while holding to a different system, admitted the existence of "a real esoteric seven-fold classifi-

cation," which of course cannot be given to the public. Mr. Sinnett also evidently made a mistake when he said that the first mentioned division is the esoteric one.

Now it would seem that many of these misconceptions and differences could be prevented if a word were adopted and invariably used that would clearly express the idea intended to be conveyed. As the prime declaration of theosophy is that all these so-called bodies and appearances are for the purpose of enabling the ONE - the Atma - to fully comprehend nature and "bring about the aim of the soul," why not denominate all that it uses for that purpose as *vehicles*? This name is strictly in accord with all parts of the philosophy. It is in effect the same as Upadhi, or basis, foundation, carrier. By its use we make no error when we say that theosophy declares there is Atma, which works with and through six vehicles. Strictly, the body is a vehicle for the astral body, it for the next, and so on up to Atma, which is therefore seen to be all and in all, as is clearly declared in *Bhagavad-Gita*.

This change, or to some other than "principles," should be adopted by all theosophists, for every day there is more inquiry by new minds, and



theosophists themselves, indeed, need to use their words with care when dealing with such subjects. Or if greater clearness is desired, let us say that there is *one principle* which acts through *six vehicles*. The scheme will then stand thus:

Atma (spirit), one principle,
indivisible

Its vehicles are:

Buddhi	Spirit Soul
Manas	Human Soul
Kama Rupa	Animal Soul
Linga Sharira	Astral Body
Prana or Jiva	Vitality
Rupa	The Body

Names have power, and if we go on talking of 7 principles when in truth there is but one, we are continually clouding our conception of theosophic truth.

EUSEBIO URBAN
Path, April, 1890



BOOK REPORT

The First Christmas Tree

Author: Dr. Eugene E. Whitworth

This is a book that I never miss re-reading during the Christmas season.

It's inspiring for all ages.

In this tale of the Seventh Wiseman, Krishna Mas' embarks on a very perilous journey in search of the

precious gift that he feels is waiting beneath the long awaited star.

His many trials are very distracting as he journeys, but he learns the importance of his own inner power.

He reaffirms his own faith and belief in the ancient wisdom. No matter how many times this book is read, it yields new wisdom for the reader.

Note: The author of this book also wrote *Nine Faces of Christ*, *Genesis—the Children of Thoth*, *The Song of God* and *The Jaguar Prince*.

The book is published by Great Western University Press and is available in hard cover for under \$20.

If you are interested in having a copy of *The First Christmas Tree* for yourself or for a Christmas gift, please contact Lois Brisbois at brisl@aol.com.



LETTER TO THE TREASURER

Hallo Bohdan

Again, enclosed my membership dues for another year. We sure enjoyed the latest Mag. I enclosed an old copy of "Introduction to The T.S. I was introduced to the teaching in my early teens. As a matter of fact, I arrived in Quebec City on July 29th 1949, then on a train 4 days and nights to Vancouver and then to Nanaimo – Gabriola Island and then by Row boat to Mudge Island to a personal student of A.A. Bailey- (Mrs. Cox).

I went to Canada upon the personal advice of Mrs.A.A.B. Having been a member since 1966-1967-1987 acted as Treasurer. This is part of my Autobio, keep up the good work. Greetings to all the Board members.

Fraternally
Simon



THEOSOPHY AND CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

Luke Michael Ironside, F.T.S.

From a lecture delivered at the Palompon Study Group of the Theosophical Society in the Philippines, February 2017

Rather than being a comparative analysis of two distinct systems of thought, this enquiry will instead seek to uncover the underlying truths which form the bedrock of the inner doctrines of the Christian religion, but which are ever so often disregarded by modern adherents of the faith. I feel it is important to emphasise, from the outset, the distinction between the exoteric and esoteric aspects of religion. The purpose of the exoteric, or outer doctrine, is to provide an easily digestible body of practices and truths suited to the temperament of the non-initiated, but which practices and truths rest firmly upon the foundation of Universal Truth – the root, so to speak, from which the tree of diversity arises; the branches of which may be considered as constituting the myriad religious traditions of past and present times. The danger lies in the loss of that underlying foundation, without which only the empty shells of religious doctrine and dogmatism remain. Without the sure foundation of Divine Wisdom, the exoteric forms of religious practice become

meaningless and at times even harmful.

Theosophy, then, may be considered as being the wisdom underlying all religions when the outward aspects of such are stripped away; it is the gold that lies hidden beneath the rock. [1] In all popular expressions of religion may still be found traces of this inner doctrine; though sometimes overshadowed by the accretions of superstitious practices, it remains ever latent beneath the surface, carefully guarded and preserved by an elect Brotherhood of Initiates whose duty it is to gradually promulgate the universal truths as the advancement in the evolution of Mankind permits. These custodians of Ancient Wisdom are variously referred to in Theosophical literature as the Masters, the Initiates, or the Mahatmas, among other terms. [2] Their role as the guardians of the Hidden Wisdom may be succinctly captured in the instruction of Christ to his disciples to not “cast pearls before swine”, and likewise in St. Paul’s feeding of milk, not meat, to his unready converts. If the exoteric,



or outward expression of religion may be regarded as the “milk” of spiritual Truth, then it is the inner, or esoteric doctrine which is the “meat” referred to in Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians.

And so, we have established that a dichotomy exists – that of the exoteric and of the esoteric. It is intrinsic to the nature of things that there must always be an inner and an outer; we see this in all aspects of human existence and further in the manifestation of the Cosmos itself. Religion has as its outward expression all that is temporary, fleeting, and impermanent – the customs and rituals which are created and celebrated by Man; which evolve, are dogmatized, and in time discarded – all these are all mutable, and thus, finite. It is only by moving beyond these outer forms that we may begin to perceive that which is eternal – the inner principle found at the core of all religious truth. Ritual, both in the ceremonial practices of the Christian Church and in all religions from the dawn of time to the present day, is essentially a representation of the natural forces and laws of the Universe in action. We see this in the timings of the festivals of Christianity, most of which have their roots in the pre-Christian practices of our pagan forefathers, such as Easter coinciding with the arrival of spring – clearly symbolic

of new beginnings and the resurrection of the Sun from its period of slumber in the darkness of the cosmic night. Ritual symbolises the cosmic process from manifestation back to unmanifestation – it is a story of our Evolution, and as such, is only a sheathe for an inner reality.

If ritual has any purpose, it consists in the bringing of the individual into a conscious relationship with the Greater Mystery which underlies the external expressions of religion; yet with this comes a recognition that the mystery itself is only mysterious insofar as our minds lack the ability to cognise it on account of our limited faculties at this present point in the evolutionary scheme. Religion and ritual can both be understood then as necessary and yet impermanent tools for the attainment of higher states of consciousness; they are the outward forms of something deeper – the veil upon the face of Truth. If the exoteric can be considered as the placing of the veil then the esoteric is found in the act of unveiling. The veil itself is fundamentally unimportant – it simply clothes that which lies beneath. The Revelation of the Mystery which is referred to by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians, consists of the casting-off of all temporal illusions of phenomena by which one arrives at the awareness of the ultimate fact of Unity. Yet trapped in the world



of form, the individual loses sight of the Eternal amid the mirage of Maya and is bound to the impermanent by the sense of separateness and duality. Only by moving beyond the outward forms does one attain consciousness of the truth of Unity in diversity and of the Substantial Reality beyond the temporality of the phenomenal world.

Christianity, like all the great religions of our world, likewise has its exoteric and esoteric forms. [3] The importance of preserving the secrecy of the Greater Mysteries of the Christian doctrine for those few who are ready for the receiving of such, expressed in the passage which refers to the casting of "pearls before swine", has been apparently dismissed by many of the modern expressions of the Christian tradition which, in their vigour to spread the news of Christ unto the masses, have presented a diluted and vulgarised distortion of the original teachings, failing to recognise the inequalities of conscious development in the mass evolution of Mankind, and instead opting for a "one-size-fits-all" mentality in the over-simplified promulgation of spiritual truths.

The redemption of Christianity lies in the rediscovery of that Divine Wisdom which is embedded in the heart of the arcane teachings which constitute the Greater Mysteries of that tradition. This restoration

of true knowledge may only come about by a return to the original teachings of Christ, freed from the fettering shackles of dogmatism and mass indoctrination which have so characterised the convictions of the Christian tradition since the First Council of Nicaea in the 4th century AD. As Gurdjieff is quoted as saying in Ouspensky's book *In Search of the Miraculous*, [4] it is the tendency of all religion to become gradually distorted over time, and their essential teachings forgotten. A basic example may be seen in the Christian emphasis on love and charity so clearly enunciated in the Gospels and the teachings of Christ which over time managed to distort into the terrors of the Inquisition. Religion is only as good as Man himself; no better, no worse. And it is the tendency of man's lower nature to corrupt; to transmute that which is pure into the base; to bring the higher down to his own lower level of being.

In this discussion of Theosophy and Christianity it is again important to understand that a comparison between the two is illogical. It would be akin to a comparison between a core of an apple and the apple itself. One could, certainly, compare the modern manifestations of the Christian and Theosophical movements through, say, a comparative analysis of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and that of the Theo-



sophical Society. Yet Theosophy extends far beyond its expression in the teachings of the Theosophical Society, as Christianity extends beyond the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. And so, we must differentiate between the essence and the outward manifestations, which take the form of churches, institutions, or societies at different points in history. Theosophy is not a separate religion or belief system with which Christianity may be compared, rather it is Christianity in its unadulterated and esoteric form, just as Theosophy is likewise the inner core of the Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, and Islamic religions. It is that which is referred to the Gospel of John 1:9 as the “true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world”. Theosophic Christianity is therefore a return to the original Christianity as expounded in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles. As such, it only appeals to those few who, in the spirit of genuine faith, thirst for the nectar of Theosophia; those few who seek beyond the external for the inner core of Truth that resides within.

If Theosophy is the essence of all religion, and if Christianity is one of these religions, it becomes necessary to first arrive at an understanding of what is meant by the term “Religion” before delving further into the specifics of the Christian faith.

And in this examination, we must further distinguish between religions and Religion, the former being merely the products and manifestations of the latter. Religion is not ritual, nor doctrine, nor worship, nor scripture. These are all the outward expressions of Man’s religious instinct and as such constitute the external forms of Religion; yet these are not Religion itself. The function of these outward forms of expression is to convey ideas regarding Truth which may only be glimpsed in the process of symbolisation; that is, through symbolic representation of these religious truths through the channels of ritual, doctrine, and worship.

It is this, then, that explains the multiplicity of beliefs; many of which stand in conflict to one another. Beliefs are not universal; they do not always correspond and are not always compatible with those of other religions, traditions, and sects. Many a war has been waged on the grounds of difference in belief. Ritual, as mentioned earlier, is a symbolic re-enactment of natural law. On a pragmatic level, all ritual may be regarded as a form of ceremonial magic: it is the enactment of certain ceremonies and rites for the purposes of attaining specific results. Worship is rooted dually in devotion and fear, and as such, has its positive and negative forms of expression. Worship



which brings one closer to a sense of union with the Absolute may be regarded as conducive to the spiritual evolution of the individual, whereas that which stems from fear results only in the fuelling of superstition and thus stunts spiritual growth.

Religions are the products of the cultures to which they are attached. And so, the Greek pantheon of the Hellenic tradition epitomises the values and tendencies of Greek culture at that stage in history; as likewise the Hindu religion does for the customs and traditions of the Indian people, and so on and on. The Greek philosopher Xenophanes once irreverently remarked that if horses had gods, they would look like horses. In this intricate tapestry of world religions each possesses a common blight: the claim to uniqueness and at times superiority; this manifests most strongly in the Abrahamic faiths when compared to those of the Hindu and Buddhist religions which are, as a rule, more tolerant of diversity. Especially in the Islamic and Christian faiths, a tendency exists, both presently and historically, to ostracise and at times even persecute those who disagree with the prevailing doctrines of the religious authorities and their interpretation of the holy texts. This claim to exclusivity is at the root of all religious hatred and discrim-

ination, from which has sprung all the persecutions, inquisitions, and bloodshed that so plague the supposed sanctity of the institutions of the religious domain. We are, reassuringly, transitioning into an era of greatly increased tolerance as regards the multiplicity of religious belief, and unique to this time in history there is a growing body of spiritual freethinkers who remain unattached to any formal religious tradition, preferring instead to tread the path alone, unfettered by the restraining doctrines of the religious institutions in the quest for Ultimate Truth.

And so it becomes obvious to the observant student that that which we call religion is, in the most part, rather merely an occurrence of Religion in its unadulterated form: it is a by-product, not the thing itself. These numerous religious traditions, so objectionable in themselves and too often in discord with one another, must be understood only as the outer sheathes of that inner essence that is Religion.

It is as a result of this power-struggle which emerges as an unavoidable consequence of the mentality of exclusivity that contemporary Christianity so often finds itself at odds with the prevailing scientific theories, liberal political philosophies, and progressive educational



development of modern times. The rise of atheism in the West, coinciding with the spread of communist philosophies in the 20th century, can be considered as an effect of the growing dissatisfaction of the modern man with the irrationality of religious doctrine, yet this rejection of religion in toto stems from his inability to separate the wheat from the chaff. In the slaying of the irrational the inner truths have fallen unobserved beneath the wreckage.

And so herein lies the danger: when religion is presented only in its exoteric, or outward, forms, in which superstition and dogmatism prevail, the modern intellect, rooted so deeply in the fertile fields of rationality, feels forced to renounce it and take refuge instead in the scepticism of agnostic thought with touches ever so cautiously upon only such things as can be known to the mind of Man. Seemingly paradoxically, the increasing prevalence of agnosticism coincides with a dawning academic interest in comparative religion and a tracing of religious ideas and mythologies back to common primordial roots. Although one would suppose that such a comparative study would lead the scholar to a deeper and more enlightened appreciation of religion in its essential form, this essence too often eludes the academic mind for the reason that it

must be necessity transcend the limitations of the intellect and intellectual enquiry. Man's primal urge to religious devotion is a result not of the yearnings of the intellect, but of intuition; and thus, much of what may be termed religious understanding comes about only when the intuition is given its rightful place alongside the intellectual in the constitution of the faculties of Man. Indeed, just as religion is fundamentally a transcendent condition, beyond and above the limits of academic and rational speculation, so does the intuition transcend the peripheries of the intellect by tapping into that something which lies beyond.

It is the tendency of the intellect to continually overcome and defeat itself; and so intellectual understanding is an evolutionary process where one theory is developed and defended within the limitations of the intellect at that point in its development, until at some future stage when the further-evolved intellect presents as its rival a grander and more satisfying theory to occupy the throne. Thus, the intellect, in its current stage of evolution, is apt to reject religion wholly as something irrational and anti-modern; it prides itself on its agnosticism in all matters beyond the scope of scientific and secular thought. The intellectual boasts of his dismissal



of dogmatism and doctrines and yet in so doing constructs a dogma of his own: that of the sovereignty of secularism and teleological outlooks on life and scorn for the credos of ages past.

The Christian Church, as an outward and institutionalised manifestation of the Ageless Wisdom, is itself rooted in the limitations of the intellect and as such differs, in some significant respects, from the original teachings of Jesus Christ. Stemming from dogmas of 2000 years past they bear all the primitivism of Man in that period of his evolution, and rather than evolving with Man's conscious development they have instead served to limit Man in his intellectual and spiritual potentials both, forcing him ever backwards, into the antiquated past. Despite the many scientific, cosmogonical, and anthropological discrepancies in a literal interpretation of biblical texts, still such interpretations remain popular to this day for the simple reason that Man abhors change; he fears to step beyond the limits of his solacing perspective on life.

In its purest form, Christianity is a unique cultural expression of the Ageless Wisdom, or Theosophy, expounded through the teachings of Christ and his followers in the early centuries AD. Like all such

expressions, or branches of the Ageless Wisdom teachings, Christianity has at its core the emphasis on brotherhood and love, as well as of the essential unity of the Many and the One. In the statement of Christ that "I and the Father are one" we see mirrored the ancient aphorism of the Upanishads: "Tat Tvam Asi – Thou Art That", and this relationship between Man and God is aptly summed up in St. Paul's address to the citizens of Athens:

"The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and he made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he is not far from each one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said. For we are also his offspring."

Perhaps the central teaching of the Christian doctrine is found in the realisation that "the Kingdom of God is within you", as it is in this that Man becomes aware of the



fact that the spiritual journey is a fundamentally individual endeavour: the priest has a role, most certainly, as advisor and interpreter; and yet the final Mystery lies in Man's own relationship with God and not in the presumed authorities of Church elders and ideological impositions on spiritual thought. Christianity in its true expression is not reliant on traditions, books, nor priests, but is rather solely a matter between the individual and his relationship with his fellow Man and by an extension of such, with God in which "we live, and move, and have our being."

Ecclesiastical Christianity and Theosophical Christianity therefore possess a fundamental difference: one is the outer form, and the other the essence. This essence, constituting one aspect of that Ageless Wisdom termed by many Theosophy, by fact of its being ageless, predates the life of Christ. Christianity is ageless; its teachings, practices, and rituals may be found in the pagan traditions of bygone times; its message is anticipated in the Hindu and Buddhist scriptures and echoed in the later religions such as Islam, Sikhism, and the Baha'i Faith. Every symbol, vestment, and tradition in the rituals of the Christian Church are in truth survivals of pagan ceremonies and festivals reinterpreted and stripped of their mystical significance. We see this in the Eucharist's origins in

the sacred rite of Mithras, and in the prominence of the sacramental meals in the Mystery Cults of Greece and Rome.

It is worth remembering that Christ himself was a reformer and rebel who challenged the religious doctrines and outdated moralism of the Judaic tradition; it was his work to transmute such into the higher cosmic religion of the Christian teachings. Jesus was, undoubtedly, an Initiate of the highest order, well versed in the traditions of the East and West both; a freethinker, reformer, challenger, and revolutionary of spiritual thought who paved the way for the moral foundations of our contemporary society, who fearlessly and defiantly gave his life in defence of Truth that others may also attain salvation by the realisation of ultimate Oneness. [5]

Christianity transcends the limits of cultures by making itself a truly universal religion; this is of the factors which distinguishes it from Judaism with its roots in Semitic culture. St. Paul made it his mission to spread the teachings to the previously reviled gentiles through a universalisation reapplication of ancient doctrines to the lives of individuals across the globe. Christianity was thus from the very beginning an adaptable system of religious philosophy, able to coincide and assim-



ilate with pagan and folk beliefs in societies, tribal communities, and nations from East to West. Here it differs significantly from Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, which, while arguably also very adaptable at times, do not reach the level of adaptation found in the vastness of the Christian tradition. There are commonalities to be found within all, and yet the diversity of interpretation and practice can be rather astonishing. It is interesting to note that in the majority of cases where Christianity has been introduced to a people through missionary efforts, the local populace have found no contradiction between their traditional beliefs and that of the new religion; and rather than rejecting the old in favour of the new instead incorporate the former into the latter so that the two become one – old wine in new bottles.

The earliest Christianity was almost certainly a gnostic religion in which the Greater Mysteries were given precedence over the Lesser [6] (as found in the rituals and ceremonies of the Church). It was a Mystery Cult through and through, with specific Initiatory rites intended to lead the devotee to an ultimate realisation of his oneness with God. It is this oneness that gives the devotee the right to declare himself a “Son of God” – God here understood in

the highest sense of the term, as that supreme, impersonal PRINCIPLE which transcends all limiting definitions and characterisations as an anthropomorphic deity or intellectual concept [7]. And it is this aspect of Christianity which has been so neglected and persecuted throughout the centuries, to the extent that the mystic and esoteric teachings have been all but lost. Although preserved in the teachings of the Rosicrucian tradition, with its merging of the Egyptian mysteries with the teachings of early Christianity, and the mystical theology of the Martinist Order with its emphasis on the return of Man from his fallen, or sinful state, to a state of reunion with God through the process of Reintegration, these Greater Mysteries have all but vanished from the doctrines of the Christian orthodoxy, resulting in the mass rejection of Christianity by a large number of the most educated members of society.

The esoteric aspect is truly at the heart of Christianity, and without such it cannot continue to survive. If Christianity is to claim its place as a religion of the future it must first rekindle that flame of mystic knowledge and regain those teachings it has lost – it must again discover its mystic and occult aspects and stand steadfast as a custodian and authoritative teacher of the Ageless



Wisdom which constitutes its very core. If these Greater Mysteries may be considered as the missing pieces of the puzzle of Christianity, then it is only when they are regained the picture may become fathomable and complete; without them the dogmas of the Church are naught but empty shells and fetters upon the freedoms of Man.

There can be no contradiction between Theosophy, as the esoteric root of all religion, and Christianity. An impartial and unbiased examination of all the world's religions reveals the fact that as regards the doctrines of ethical conduct, spiritual law, cosmogony, and the fundamental oneness of life. It is Christianity which sets itself apart from the rich tapestry of world religions by its assertion of exclusiveness and intolerance of doctrines which differ from those of its own.

This is the difference between the modern expressions of Christianity and the teachings of Christ himself: that in the latter there is no contradiction at all between his message and Theosophical teachings; in fact, there is an absolute harmony and correspondence between them. As the body of Ageless Wisdom underlying the foundations of all world religions there can never be any new or contradictory doctrines arising from Theosophy; such would

be an impossibility. Theosophy is simply Religion in the latter's purest form.

So, whilst the teachings of the Christian Church are not all reconcilable with those of Theosophy, the original teachings of Christ are at all times in accordance with such. The Christian Scriptures are in fact an expression of the Ageless Wisdom through allegory, and it is not the message of the Scriptures but the literal interpretation of them which the rational mind is forced to reject.

Thus, we find three great events which constitute the core of the Gospel allegory, these being, chronologically: the Virgin birth; the Crucifixion; and the Resurrection. These three events are known well by every Christian from all denominations across the globe, and much debate and controversy has arisen regarding the historicity of this timeline of the life of Christ. What is interesting is that in each case can be found the traces of an earlier mythos; and in fact, it could be said that they are indeed rooted firmly in the mysticism of the pagan past.

Theosophically interpreted, and literalism aside, it is clear that the birth of Christ was by necessity an immaculate conception. When we consider who Christ is it becomes clear that He is what Theosophy refers to as the Logos, or the Divine



Man; and thus in the life of Christ we find a representation of the entire Cosmic Process from Manifestation through to Desolation and onward to Rebirth. In the divinity of Christ is found perhaps the greatest expression of mystery of the relationship between Man and the Divine. For though Man has "fallen into matter" he still retains with him the divine spark; that which links him in his deepest essence with God. This is the invisible thread which while unseen is yet ever present. He, the Divine Man, thus remains beyond the world of form; He is "eternal in the heavens", and yet it is He, as Humanity itself, who, at the same time, is crucified upon the Cross of Matter in the process of the Cosmic Cycle. In light of the Hermetic axiom, "As Above, So Below", Christ's birth, death, and resurrection can be understood as an allegory for the eternal process whereby the One becomes the Many in the act of Manifestation, before again returning to its state of singularity at the dusk of the Cosmic Night. The significance here in relation to the Divine Man is that while the One becomes the Many, yet It remains ever the One – it is thus both Manifest and Unmanifest; both Being and Becoming. In like wise is Man both Matter and Spirit, and yet his body of Matter is but temporal and fleeting, and as with Christ upon the Cross, death awaits us all.

Death is then the Great Trial; the return of the Many to the One. It is for this reason that the Scriptures are filled from beginning to end with allegorical references to death and to the heaven that await those who grasp the Divine Wisdom that lies latent within the recounting of the resurrection of the Christ.

We may appropriately quote Evelyn Underhill, from her work titled *Mysticism* [8], on the topic as follows:

"The Incarnation, which, is for popular Christianity synonymous with the historical birth and earthly life of Christ, is for the mystic not only this but also a perpetual Cosmic and personal process. It is an everlasting bringing forth, in the universe and also in the individual ascending soul, of the divine and perfect Life, the pure character of God, of which the one historical life dramatized the essential constituents. Hence the soul, like the physical embryo, resumes in its upward progress the spiritual life-history of the race. 'The one secret, the greatest of all,' says Patmore, 'is the doctrine of the Incarnation, regarded not as an historical event which occurred two thousand years-ago, but as an event which is renewed in the body of every one who is in the way to the fulfilment of his original destiny.'"

The question of the literal interpretation of the Gospels therefore



becomes redundant in the light of their essential truths; wherein the Christ, as the Logos, or Divine Man, is crucified in manifested Humanity, and thus becomes the sacrificial lamb upon the altar of the Cosmic Process. From the alchemical and Hermetic perspective, where the individual is brought into consideration, this represents the final struggle, where the individual soul must conquer the human aspect of its being and cross the threshold of immortality. Here the human in its material aspect is sacrificed upon the altar of the Spirit. Thus slain he may rise again – a phoenix from the ashes – freed from the tomb of Matter to ascend to the heavenly heights which so await him.

Again, the question of the historicity of the Resurrection is revealed to be a needless debate, as the concern here is not with the physical process but with the spiritual truths it elucidates. The Four Gospels in their entirety are essentially an embodiment of the esoteric doctrine of the Christos the Divine Man in the process of the “Fall and Resurrection”. The theological doctrines of atonement and redemption are merely the by-products of this truer meaning and bear no fundamental relation to the central message itself.

In brief summary, an examination of Theosophy of Christianity reveals that rather than being at odds with one another, the latter is really one facet of the former – Christianity, like all the major world religions, forms one branch of the tree of Ageless Wisdom, and as such shares and expounds the same universally held ideals regarding ethics, spirituality, and the redemption of Man. A clear distinction must be made between Christianity in its exoteric form, as expressed in the rituals and doctrines of the Church; and Christianity in its inner, or esoteric aspect, which concerns itself with the Greater Mysteries and the attainment of salvation through union with God.

We find, therefore, that the teachings of Jesus are in total accord with the central doctrines of Theosophy. If Christ was to return today, he would perhaps find a clearer expression of his teachings in the Theosophical emphasis on Universal Brotherhood and tolerance for all Mankind than in the rigid doctrines and persecutions of the Church. We must only hope that Christianity and Theosophy may be reconciled, and that in such that the ideal of Universal Brotherhood, expressed by Christ’s instruction to “Love thy neighbour as thyself”, may be realised; for it is only in the actualisation of this ideal that we may plant the fertile seeds of tolerance and love,



and from which may spring forth the nucleus of Universal Brotherhood which will serve to unite us along the path of liberation; that each one may bear the sword of the Spirit in the conquest of the self and raise high the torch of Truth that they may be as bearers of light unto the world.

"He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more."
(Revelations iii. 12)

FINIS.

Endnotes:

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[3] Dr. Annie Besant. *Esoteric Christianity; or the Lesser Mysteries*. The Theosophical Publishing House. Adyar, Chennai. 1914.

[4] P. D. Ouspensky. *In Search of the Miraculous: Fragments of an Unknown Teaching*. Routledge & Kegan Paul PLC. London. 1950.

[5] Yogi Ramacharaka. *Mystic Chris-*

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[7] H. P. Blavatsky. *The Secret Doctrine – Vol. I*. The Theosophical Publishing Company, Limited. London. 1888.

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CYCLES

A PAPER READ BY WILLIAM Q. JUDGE BEFORE THE ARYAN T.S.,
OCTOBER 22, 1889

IN advancing these few observations upon the doctrine of cycles, no claim to an exhaustive study of the matter is made. This paper is merely by way of suggestion.

The subject was brought before my mind by our discussion, some evenings ago, when the question of the descent upon earth, or ascent from it, of celestial beings or progressed souls engaged our attention. It seemed certain that such ascent and descent were governed by cyclic laws, and therefore proceeded in regular periods. Some sentences from the *Wisdom of the Egyptians* by Synesius in matter furnished me by Bro. Chas. Johnston, now of India, read:

After Osiris, therefore, was initiated by his father into the royal mysteries, the gods informed him . . . that a strong tribe of envious and malignant dæmons were present with Typhos as his patrons, to whom he was allied and by whom he was hurled forth into light, in order that they might employ him as an instrument of the evil which they inflict on mankind. For the calamities of nations are the banquets of the evil dæmons . . .

Yet you must not think that the gods are without employment, or that their descent to this earth is perpetual. For they descend according to orderly periods of time, for the purpose of imparting a beneficent impulse in the republics of mankind. But this happens when they harmonize a kingdom and send to this earth for that purpose souls who are allied to themselves. For this providence is divine and most ample, which frequently through one man pays attention to and affects countless multitudes of men.

For there is indeed in the terrestrial abode the sacred tribe of heroes who pay attention to mankind, and who are able to give them assistance even in the smallest concerns.

. . . This heroic tribe is, as it were, a colony from the gods established here in order that this terrene abode may not be left destitute of a better nature. But when matter excites her own proper blossoms to war against the soul, the resistance made by these heroic tribes is small when the gods are absent; for everything is strong only in its appropriate place and time. . . . But



when the harmony adapted in the beginning by the gods to all terrene things becomes old, they descend again to earth that they may call the harmony forth, energize and resuscitate it when it is as it were expiring. . . . When, however, the whole order of mundane things, greatest and least, is corrupted, then it is necessary that the gods should descend for the purpose of imparting another orderly distribution of things.

And in the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said by Krishna:

When Righteousness

Declines, O Bharata! when
Wickedness

Is strong, I rise, from age to age,
and take

Visible shape, and move a man
with men,

Succoring the good and thrusting
the evil back,

And setting Virtue on her seat again,

And,

At the approach of Brahma's day,
which ends after a thousand ages,
all manifested objects come forth
from the non-developed principle.
At the approach of Brahma's night
they are absorbed in the original

principle. This collective mass of existing things, thus coming forth out of the absolute again and again, is dissolved at the approach of that night; and at the approach of a new day it emanates again spontaneously.

In the foregoing quotations two great aspects of cyclic law are stated.

The latter has reference to the great cycle which includes all cycles of every kind. All the minor cycles run their course within it. When it begins a new creation is ushered in, and when it ends the great day of dissolution has arrived. In Arnold's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* the beginning of this great cycle is beautifully called by him "this vast Dawn," and of the close he reads:

When that deep night doth darken,
all which is

Fades back again to Him who sent
it forth

The real figures expressing the moral years included in this period are not given. Each Manwantara, according to the Hindus, is divided into the four Yugas or Ages, with a certain number of years allotted to each. Speaking on this subject in the *Key to Theosophy* (page 83), H. P. Blavatsky gives us a clue thus:



Take as a first comparison and a help towards a more correct conception, the solar year; and as a second, the two halves of that year, producing each a day and a night of six months' duration at the North Pole. Now imagine, if you can, instead of a solar year of 365 days, *ETERNITY*. Let the sun represent the universe, and the polar days and nights of six months each – days and nights lasting *182 trillions and quadrillions of years* instead of 182 days each. As the sun rises every morning on our *objective horizon* out of its (to us) subjective and antipodal space, so does the Universe emerge periodically on the plane of objectivity, issuing from that of subjectivity - the antipodes of the former. This is the "Cycle of Life." And as the sun disappears from our horizon, so does the Universe disappear at regular periods when the "Universal Night" sets in. . . .

This is about the best idea we can get of it. It is impossible for the human mind to conceive these periods. No brain can grasp 182 trillions of years, much less if quadrillions are added. Few if any persons can mentally traverse the full extent of even a million. But we can make an approximation to the idea by using her suggestion of dividing the year and calling six months a day and six months a night, and then extending each into what is

equivalent to infinity with us, since it is impossible to seize such immense periods of time.

And carrying out the correspondence suggested by her, we have at once a figure of the inclusion of all the minor cycles, by calling each day when we rise and night when we sleep as the beginning and ending of minor cycles. Those days and nights go to make up our years and our life. We know each day and can calculate it, and fairly well throw the mind forward to see a year of perhaps a life.

A quotation from VOL. I., at 31 of *Isis Unveiled* will give us the Indian figures. She says:

The Maha-Kalpa embraces an untold number of periods far back in the antediluvian ages. Their system comprises a Kalpa or grand period of 4,320,000,000 years which they divide into four lesser yugas running as follows:

- Satya yug1,728,000 years
- Treta yug.....1,296,000 years
- Dwapara yug.....864,000 years
- Kali yug.....432,000 years

4,320,000



which make one divine age or Maha yuga; seventy-one Maha Yugas make 306,720,000 years, to which is added a sandhi, or twilight, equal to a Satya yuga or 1,728,000 years, to make a manwantara of 308,448,000 years. Fourteen manwantaras make 4,318,272,000 years, to which must be added a sandhyamsa or dawn, 1,728,000, making the Kalpa or grand period of 4,320,000,000. As we are now (1878) only in the Kali Yuga of the 28th age of the 7th manwantara of 308,448,000 years, we have yet sufficient time before us to wait before we reach even half of the time allotted to the world.

Further H. P. Blavatsky clearly states that the other cycles are carried out within this greater one, as at 34, Vol. I.

As our planet revolves once every year around the sun and at the same time once in every 24 hours upon its own axis, thus traversing minor cycles within a larger one, so is the work of the smaller cyclic periods accomplished and recommenced within the Great Saros.

Leaving the region of mathematics, we find this great period represents the extension of pigmy man into the vast proportions of the great man, whose death at the close of the allotted period means the resolving of all things back into the absolute. Each of the years of this Being

embraces of our years so many that we cannot comprehend them. Each day of his years brings on a minor cataclysm among men; for at the close of each one of his days, metaphorically he sleeps. And we, as it were, imitating this Being, fall asleep at night or after our diurnal period of activity.

We are as minor cells in the great body of this Being, and must act obediently to the impulses and movements of the body in which we are enclosed and take part.

This greater man has a period of childhood, of youth, of manhood, of old age; and as the hour arrives for the close of each period, cataclysms take place over all the earth. And just as our own future is concealed from our view, so the duration of the secret cycle which shows the length of life of this Being is hidden from the sight of mortals.

We must not, however, fall into the error of supposing that there is but one of such great Beings. There are many, each being evolved at the beginning of a new creation. But here we touch upon a portion of the ancient philosophy which is fully explained only to those who are able to understand it by virtue of many initiations.

The Sandhya and Sandhyamsa referred to in the quotation taken



from *Isis Unveiled* are respectively the twilight and the dawn, each being said to be of the same length and containing the same number of years as the first or golden age -i.e., 1,728,000. It is in strict correspondence with our own solar day which has its twilight and dawn between day and night.

In going over the figures of the four ages, a peculiarity is noticed to which I refer at present as merely a curiosity. It is this:

The digits of Satya Yug 1. 7. 2. 8. added together make 18; those of Treta Yug 1. 2. 9. 6 make 18; those of Dwapara Yug 8. 6. 4 make 18; while those of Kali Yug 4. 3. 2 sum up only 9; but if those of the grand total of 4,320,000 be added together they make 9, and that with Kali give 18 again. 18 is a number peculiar to Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, and the poem has 18 chapters in it. If the three 18's and one 9 found as above be added together, the result will be 63, and $3 \times 6 = 18$, and if added make 9, and 18 added gives nine. If we multiply the three 18's and 9 produced from the different ages, we get 5. 8. 3. 2. which, if treated as before, give 18 again. And in the process of thus multiplying we discover a recurrence of the three eighteens and one 9, only inverted, as: The first 18 multiplied by the second one gives 3. 2. 4,

which added results in 9; 324 multiplied by the third 18 gives 5. 8. 3. 2, which being added gives 18; and the product of the multiplication of 5,832 by 9, which is the result of adding the figures of Kali Yuga, is 5. 8. 4. 1, which on being added gives 18 again. Now, as the last of these apparently fanciful operations, let us add together the results gained by multiplying the figures which were obtained during the various steps we have gone through and then adding the results.

The first figures are $1 \times 8 = \dots\dots 8$

The second $3 \times 2 \times 4 = \dots\dots\dots 24$

The third $5 \times 8 \times 3 \times 2 = \dots\dots\dots 240$

The fourth $5 \times 8 \times 4 \times 1 = \dots\dots\dots 160$

These added together give ...4.3.2, which are the digits of the Kali Yuga

Now turning to *Isis Unveiled* at p. 32 of Vol. 1, we find this remarkable paragraph:

Higgins justly believed that the cycle of the Indian system, of 432,000, is the true key of the secret cycle.

But in the following paragraph she declares it cannot be revealed. However, we may get some clues, for we see in the figures of Kali Yuga, 432,000, and in the great total (leaving out the Sandhis), 4,320,000. What this secret cycle is, I, however,



am not competent to say. I only desire to throw out the hints.

Having thus glanced over the doctrine of the great cycle which includes all others, let us now devote a little consideration to the cycle referred to in the passages from the *Egyptian Wisdom* first quoted.

This cycle may be called for the present purpose *The Cycle of Descending Celestial Influences*. By "descending" I mean descending upon us.

Osiris here signifies most probably the good side of nature, and his brother Typhos the evil. Both must appear together. Typhos is sometimes called in the Egyptian books the opposer, and later with us, is known as the Devil. This appearance of Typhos at the same time with Osiris is paralleled in the history of the Indian Krishna who was a white Adept, for at the same time there also reigned a powerful Black magician named Kansa, who sought to destroy Krishna in the same way as Typhos conspired against the life of Osiris. And Rama also, in Hindu lore the great Adept or ruling god, was opposed by Ravana, the powerful Black magician king.

In instructing Osiris after the initiation, the gods foresaw two questions that might arise within him and

which will also come before us. The first is the idea that if the gods are alive and do not mingle with men to the advantage of the latter and for the purpose of guiding them, then they must necessarily be without any employment. Such a charge has been made against the Beings who are said to live in the Himalayas, possessed of infinite knowledge and power. If, say the public, they know so much, why do not they come among us; and as they do not so come, then they must be without employment, perpetually brooding over nothing.

The instructor answered this in advance by showing how these Beings - called gods - governed mankind through efficient causes proceeding downward by various degrees; the gods being perpetually concerned in their proper sphere with those things relating to them, and which in their turn moved other causes that produced appropriate effects upon the earth, and themselves only coming directly into earthly relations when that became necessary at certain "orderly periods of time," upon the complete disappearance of harmony which would soon be followed by destruction if not restored. Then the gods themselves descend. This is after the revolution of many smaller cycles. The same is said in *Bhagavad-Gita*.



But frequently during the minor cycles it is necessary, as the *Egyptian Wisdom* says, "to impart a beneficent impulse in the republics of mankind." This can be done by using less power than would be dissipated were a celestial Being to descend upon earth, and here the doctrine of the influence among us of Nirmanakayas or Gnanis is supported in the Egyptian scheme in these words:

For there is indeed in the terrestrial abode the sacred tribe of heroes, who pay attention to mankind, and who are able to give them assistance even in the smallest concerns.

This heroic tribe is, as it were, a colony from the gods established here in order that this terrene abode may not be left destitute of a better nature.

These "heroes" are none other than Nirmanakayas Adepts of this or previous Manwantaras who remain here in various states or conditions. Some are not using bodies at all, but keep spirituality alive among men in all parts of the world; and others are actually using bodies in the world. Who the latter are it would of course be impossible for me to know, and if I had the information, to give it out would be improper.

And among this "sacred tribe of heroes" must be classed other

souls. They are those who, although now inhabiting bodies and moving among men, have passed through many occult initiations in previous lives, but are now condemned, as it were, to the penance of living in circumstances and in bodies that hem them in, as well as for a time make them forget the glorious past. But their influence is always felt, even if they themselves are not aware of it. For their higher nature being in fact more developed than that of other men, it influences other natures at night or in hours of the day when all is favorable. The fact that these obscured adepts are not aware now of what they really are, only has to do with their memory of the past; it does not follow, because a man cannot remember his initiations, that he has had none. But there are some cases in which we can judge with a degree of certainty that such adepts were incarnated and what they were named. Take Thomas Vaughan, Raymond Lully, Sir Thomas More, Jacob Boehme, Paracelsus, and others like them, including also some of the Roman Catholic saints. These souls were as witnesses to the truth, leaving through the centuries, in their own nations, evidences for those who followed, and suggestions for keeping spirituality bright - seed-thoughts, as it were, ready for the new mental soil. And as well as these historical characters, there are countless numbers of men and



women now living who have passed through certain initiations during their past lives upon earth, and who produce effects in many directions quite unknown to themselves now. They are, in fact, old friends of "the sacred tribe of heroes," and can therefore be more easily used for the spreading of influences and the carrying out of effects necessary for the preservation of spirituality in this age of darkness. We find in our present experience a parallel to this forgetting of previous initiations. There is hardly one of us who has not passed through circumstances in early life, all of which we have forgotten, but which ever since sensibly affect our thoughts and life. Hence the only point about which any question can be raised is that of reincarnation. If we believe in that doctrine, there is no great difficulty in admitting that many of us may have been initiated to some extent and forgotten it for the time. In connection with this we find in the 2d volume of the *Secret Doctrine*, on page 302, some suggestive words. The author says:

Now that which the students of Occultism ought to know is that the "third eye" is indissolubly connected with Karma.

In the case of the Atlanteans, it was precisely the Spiritual being which sinned, the Spirit element being

still the "Master" principle in man, in those days. Thus it is in those days that the heaviest Karma of the Fifth Race was generated by our Monads.....

Hence the assertion that many of us are now working off the effects of the evil Karmic causes produced by us in Atlantean bodies.

In another place she puts the date of the last Atlantean destruction as far back as 11,000 years ago, and describes them as a people of immense knowledge and power. If we allow about 1,000 years for our period in Devachan, we will have only passed through some eleven incarnations since then; and supposing that many more have been our lot - as is my opinion, then we have to place ourselves among those wonderful though wicked people at the height of their power. Granting that we were guilty of the sinful practices of the days in which we then lived, and knowing the effect of Karma, it must follow that since then we have passed through many very disagreeable and painful lives, resembling by analogy dreadful situations in the years between youth and maturity. No wonder, then, if for the time we have forgotten outwardly what we then learned.



But all these historical personages to whom I have referred were living in a dark cycle that affected Europe only. These cycles do not cover the whole of the human race, fortunately for it, but run among the nations influenced for the allotted period, while other peoples remain untouched. Thus while Europe was in darkness, all India was full of men, kings and commoners alike, who possessed the true philosophy; for a different cycle was running there.

And such is the law as formulated by the best authorities. It is held that these cycles do not include the whole of mankind at any one time. In this paper I do not purpose to go into figures, for that requires a very careful examination of the deeds and works of numerous historical personages in universal history, so as to arrive by analysis at correct periods.

It is thought by many that the present is a time when preparation is being made by the most advanced of the "sacred tribe of heroes" for a new cycle in which the assistance of a greater number of progressed souls from other spheres may be gained for mankind. Indeed, in *Isis Unveiled* this is plainly stated.

Writing in 1878, Madame Blavatsky says in Vol. I of *Isis*:

Unless we mistake the signs, the day is approaching when the world will receive the proofs that only ancient religions were in harmony with nature, and ancient science embraced all that can be known. Secrets long-kept may be revealed; books long-forgotten and arts long-time-lost may be brought out to light again; papyri and parchments of inestimable importance will turn up in the hands of men who pretend to have unrolled them from mummies or stumbled upon them in buried crypts; tablets and pillars, whose sculptured revelations will stagger theologians and confound scientists, may yet be excavated and interpreted. Who knows the possibilities of the future? An era of disenchantment and rebuilding will soon begin--nay, has already begun. The cycle has almost run its course; a new one is about to begin, and the future pages of history may contain full proof that--

If ancestry can be in aught believed,
Descending spirits have conversed
with man

And told him secrets of the world
unknown.

Now the way to get at the coming on of the period or close of a larger cycle without wandering in the mazes of figures, is to regard the history and present state of mankind as known.



Thus in the darker age of Europe we find India almost unknown and America wholly so. That was a period when cycles were operating apart from each other, for men were separated from and ignorant of each other. In these continents there were great and powerful nations ruling in both North and South America, but they were not in communication with Europe or India.

Now, however, China knows of and communicates with England and America, and even dark Africa has constant visitors from all civilized nations, and to some extent is affected by us. Doubtless in the greater number of towns in Africa the white man and his doings are more or less like fables, but we with larger knowledge know that those fables rest upon the fact of our explorations there.

Judging, then, from the appearances in the affairs of men, we can conclude that now some great cycle is either ending or beginning, and that a number of minor cycles are approaching each other.

At the same time with these social or material cycles, there are corresponding ones on a higher plane. One is quite easy to trace. It is the influence of Eastern metaphysics upon the Western mind. This higher cycle had been revolving for many

years among the Orientals before we came within its power. Our falling under it is due to a physical cycle as a means. That one which is represented in the progress of trade, of science, of means for transportation. In this way the philosophical system of India and Tibet has begun to affect us, and no man can calculate its course.

Taking into account the spiritual cycles all so intimately connected with Karma and reincarnation, one would be compelled to conclude that this cycle will not be slow or weak. For, if we in Europe and America are the reincarnations of the ancients who formulated this philosophy, we must certainly be powerfully affected upon having it presented to our notice in this life. And as the very air is getting filled with theosophical ideas, and children are growing up every day, the conclusion is irresistible that as the new generation grows up it will be more familiar with theosophical terms and propositions than we were in our youths. For in every direction now, children are likely to hear Karma, Reincarnation, Buddhism, Theosophy, and all these ideas mentioned or discussed. In the course of twenty-five years, then, we shall find here in the United States a large and intelligent body of people believing once more in the very doctrines which they,



perhaps ages ago, helped to define and promulgate.

Why not, then, call one of our present cycles the cycle of the Theosophical Society? It began in 1875, and, aided by other cycles then beginning to run, it has attained some force. Whether it will revolve for any greater length of time depends upon its earnest members. Members who enter it for the purpose of acquiring ideas merely for their own use will not assist. Mere numbers do not do the work, but sincere, earnest, active, unselfish members will keep this cycle always revolving. The wisdom of those who set it in motion becomes apparent when we begin to grasp somewhat the meaning of cyclic law. The Society could have remained a mere idea and might have been kept entirely away from outward expression in organization. Then, indeed, ideas similar to those prevalent in our Society might have been heard of. But how? Garbled, and presented only here and there, so that perhaps not for half a century later would they be concretely presented. A wise man, however, knows how to prepare for a tide of spiritual influence. But how could an everyday Russian or American know that 1875 was just the proper year in which to begin so as to be ready for the oncoming rush now fairly set in? To my mind the mere fact that we

were organized with a definite platform in that year is strong evidence that the "heroic tribe of heroes" had a hand in our formation. Let us, then, not resist the cycle, nor, complaining of the task, sit down to rest. There is no time for rest. The weak, the despairing, and the doubting may have to wait, but men and women of action cannot stand still in the face of such an opportunity.

Arise, then, O Atlanteans, and repair the mischief done so long ago!

Roll on, O Wheel, roll on
and conquer;

Roll on forevermore!

Path, December, 1889



THE MAHATMAS AS IDEALS AND FACTS

A VISITOR from one of the other planets of the solar system who might learn the term *Mahatma* after arriving here would certainly suppose that the etymology of the word undoubtedly inspired the believers in *Mahatmas* with the devotion, fearlessness, hope, and energy which such an ideal should arouse in those who have the welfare of the human race at heart. Such a supposition would be correct in respect to some, but the heavenly visitor after examining all the members of the Theosophical Society could not fail to meet disappointment when the fact was clear to him that many of the believers were afraid of their own ideals, hesitated to proclaim them, were slothful in finding arguments to give reasons for their hope, and all because the wicked and scoffing materialistic world might laugh at such a belief.

The whole sweep, meaning, and possibility of evolution are contained in the word Mahatma. *Maha* is "great," *Atma* is "soul," and both compounded into one mean those great souls who have triumphed before us not because they are made of different stuff and are of some strange family, but just because they are of the human race. Reincarnation, karma, the sevenfold division, retribution, reward,

struggle, failure, success, illumination, power, and a vast embracing love for man, all these lie in that single word. The soul emerges from the unknown, begins to work in and with matter, is reborn again and again, makes karma, develops the six vehicles for itself, meets retribution for sin and punishment for mistake, grows strong by suffering, succeeds in bursting through the gloom, is enlightened by the true illumination, grasps power, retains charity, expands with love for orphaned humanity, and thenceforth helps all others who remain in darkness until all may be raised up to the place with the "Father in Heaven" who is the Higher Self. This would be the argument of the visitor from the distant planet, and he in it would describe a great ideal for all members of a Society such as ours which had its first impulse from some of these very Mahatmas.

Without going into any argument further than to say that evolution demands that such beings should exist or there is a gap in the chain - and this position is even held by a man of science like Professor Huxley, who in his latest essays puts it in almost as definite language as mine - this article is meant for those who believe in the existence of the *Mahatmas*, whether that faith has



arisen of itself or is the result of argument. It is meant also for all classes of the believers, for they are of several varieties. Some believe without wavering; others believe unwaveringly but are afraid to tell of their belief; a few believe, yet are always thinking that they must be able to say they have set eyes on an Adept before they can infuse their belief into others; and a certain number deliberately hide the belief as a sort of individual possession which separates them from the profane mortals who have never heard of the Adepts or who having heard scoff at the notion. To all these I wish to speak. Those unfortunate persons who are ever trying to measure exalted men and sages by the conventional rules of a transition civilization, or who are seemingly afraid of a vast possibility for man and therefore deny, may be well left to themselves and to time, for it is more than likely they will fall into the general belief when it is formed, as it surely will be in the course of no long time. For a belief in *Mahatmas* - whatever name you give the idea - is a common property of the whole race, and all the efforts of all the men of empirical science and dogmatic religion can never kill out the soul's own memory of its past.

We should declare our belief in the Adepts, while at the same time we demand no one's adherence. It is

not necessary to give the names of any of the Adepts, for a name is an invention of a family, and but few persons ever think of themselves by name but by the phrase 'I am myself.' To name these beings, then, is no proof, and to seek for mystery names is to invite condemnation for profanation. The ideal without the name is large and grand enough for all purposes.

Some years ago the Adepts wrote and said to H.P.B. and to several persons that more help could be given to the movement in America because the fact of their existence was not concealed from motives of either fear or doubt. This statement of course carries with it by contradistinction the conclusion that where, from fear of schools of science or of religion, the members had not referred much to the belief in *Mahatmas*, the power to help was for some reason inhibited. This is the interesting point, and brings up the question "Can the power to help of the *Mahatmas* be for any cause inhibited?" The answer is, It can. But why?

All effects on every plane are the result of forces set in motion, and cannot be the result of nothing, but must ever flow from causes in which they are wrapped up. If the channel through which water is meant to flow is stopped up, the water will



not run there, but if a clear channel is provided the current will pass forward. Occult help from Masters requires a channel just as much as any other help does, and the fact that the currents to be used are occult makes the need for a channel greater. The persons to be acted on must take part in making the channel or line for the force to act, for if we will not have it they cannot give it. Now as we are dealing with the mind and nature of man, we have to throw out the words which will arouse the ideas connected with the forces we desire to have employed. In this case the words are those which bring up the doctrine of the existence of Adepts, *Mahatmas*, Masters of wisdom. Hence the value of the declaration of our belief. It arouses dormant ideas in others, it opens up a channel in the mind, it serves to make the conducting lines for the forces to use which the *Mahatmas* wish to give out. Many a young man who could never hope to see great modern professors of science like Huxley and Tyn-dall and Darwin has been excited to action, moved to self-help, impelled to seek for knowledge, by having heard that such men actually exist and are human beings. Without stopping to ask if the proof of their living in Europe is complete, men have sought to follow their example. Shall we not take advantage of the same law of the human mind and

let the vast power of the Lodge work with our assistance and not against our opposition or doubt or fear? Those who are devoted know how they have had unseen help which showed itself in results. Those who fear may take courage, for they will find that not all their fellow beings are devoid of an underlying belief in the possibilities outlined by the doctrine of the existence of the Adepts.

And if we look over the work of the Society we find wherever the members boldly avow their belief and are not afraid to speak of this high ideal, the interest in theosophy is awake, the work goes on, the people are benefitted. To the contrary, where there are constant doubt, ceaseless asking for material proof, incessant fear of what the world or science or friends will think, there the work is dead, the field is not cultivated, and the town or city receives no benefit from the efforts of those who while formally in a universal brotherhood are not living out the great ideal.

Very wisely and as an occultist, Jesus said his followers must give up all and follow him. We must give up the desire to save ourselves and acquire the opposite one, - the wish to save others. Let us remember the story in ancient writ of Arjuna, who, entering heaven and finding that his dog was not admitted and some of his friends in hell, refused



to remain and said that while one creature was out of heaven he would not enter it. This is true devotion, and this joined to an intelligent declaration of belief in the great initiation of the human race will lead to results of magnitude, will call out the forces that are behind, will prevail against hell itself and all the minions of hell now striving to retard the progress of the human soul.

EUSEBIO URBAN

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