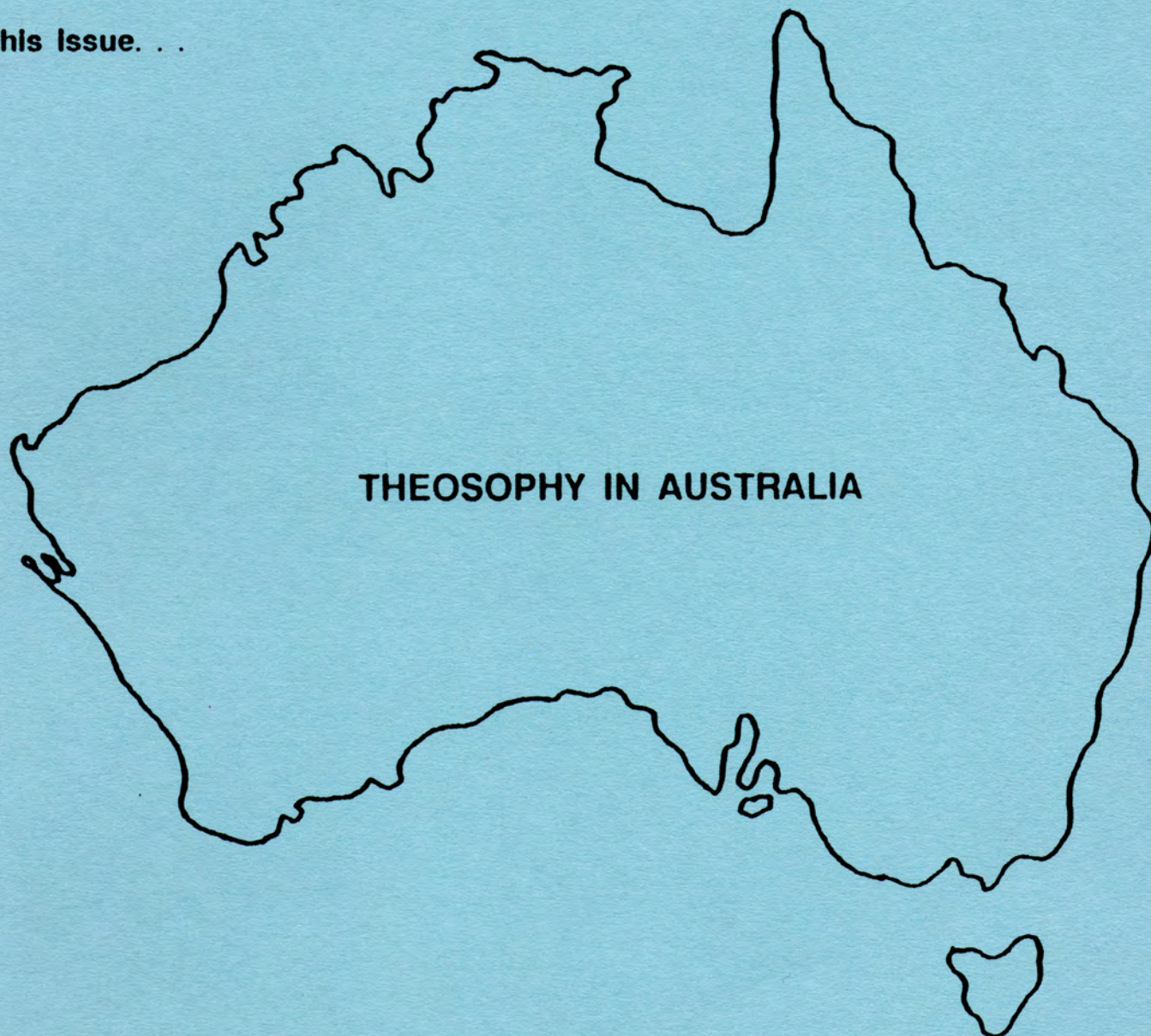


THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY

In this Issue. . .



THEODOR REUSS AND THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY by Ellic Howe

ANNIE BESANT WORKS IN INDIA by Catherine Lowman Wessinger

January 1990
Volume III, Part I

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Editorial: A New Beginning

As many of you may know by now, Mr. Leslie Price, the founder-editor of *Theosophical History*, no longer is involved in the publication of the journal due to circumstances not entirely of his making. Needless to say, those who were involved with *Theosophical History* were surprised, concerned, and saddened at this turn of events. It was not Leslie's wish, however, to suspend publication permanently but rather to transfer the ownership and duties to others willing to undertake such an enterprise. After some consideration and at the urging of friends and acquaintances, I decided to undertake the primary responsibility of continuing publication of the journal. Others also thought highly enough of *Theosophical History* to offer their assistance and resources to bring this to pass. John Cooper, Robert Ellwood, Joscelyn Godwin, Jerry and April Hejka-Ekins, J. Gordon Melton, Gregory Tillett therefore deserve recognition for their efforts and our gratitude.

Although a new chapter has commenced for the journal, we should be mindful of the significant and singular contribution of Leslie Price. Prior to *Theosophical History*, there was no journal that was exclusively devoted to the history of the theosophical movement. As a result, articles and monographs on the subject appeared in disparate publications, thereby causing considerable difficulty for the scholar to stay abreast in such an abstruse field. This deficiency was removed with the first appearance of *Theosophical History* in January 1985. Leslie's unique contribution, therefore, was to establish an informal community of researchers extending over three continents, united through the journal, whose foremost purpose was to conduct an on-going exchange of information on a movement that deserved greater attention than it was ordinarily accorded. On behalf of your colleagues and friends, Leslie, please accept our gratitude and appreciation for your tireless effort and numerous contributions to the advancement of the study of the theosophical movement.

Although *Theosophical History* will follow the format and scope established by Leslie Price, there will be a few changes, partially out of necessity. For one, the journal will be published by a recently established corporation, The Theosophical History Foundation. The Foundation, according to its Articles of Incorporation, is defined "as a nonprofit public benefit corporation" whose purpose is "to facilitate the study and dissemination of information regarding the Theosophical Movement." Those who now sit on the Board of Directors of the Foundation are Jerry and April Hejka-Ekins, J. Gordon Melton (University of California, Santa Barbara), and James A. Santucci. Besides publishing the journal, the Foundation will also be responsible for conducting conferences on the subject. In fact, I am now looking into the possibility of holding an international conference on theosophical history and related topics sometime in June, 1991. Anyone interested in participating in the conference is therefore requested to write to me for further information.

Theosophical History will also have an editorial board to ensure the quality of the articles that appear herein. Members of the board include Mr. John Cooper of the University of Sydney, Professor Robert Ellwood of the University of Southern California, Professor J. Gordon Melton, Professor Joscelyn Godwin of Colgate University, and Dr. Gregory Tillett of Macquarie University. All of us wish to affirm the original statement on the scope of the journal (vol. 1/1:2):

Our position is one of sympathetic neutrality to the different definitions of Theosophical truth, and our columns are open also to the growing body of professional historians and social scientists to whom Theosophy is a fascinating phenomenon worthy of research.

Theosophical History, therefore, will continue its role as an independent, impartial and scholarly journal conforming to the standards and expectations of the academic community. We wish to extend our invitation to researchers to submit articles and reviews for publication. Submissions should be sent to

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One final note. Since the journal has no financial backing or external support other than the subscriptions of its readers, it is crucial that those who wish to initiate or renew their subscriptions to the journal should do so as soon as possible. We need your support. Of course, we will honor subscriptions still in effect. The cost of subscriptions will be \$12 a year.

James A. Santucci
Editor, *Theosophical History*

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Response from Hugh Shearman

The Editor [former editor Leslie Price] has suggested that I might comment on some points in Gregory Tillett's paper published in the April, 1989 issue of *Theosophical History*, more particularly on his several references to myself.

When Sten von Krusenstierna, then Presiding Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church, was compiling in the 1970's a collection of C. W. Leadbeater's "theological" writings, subsequently published in 1983 under the title *The Christian Gnosis*, he asked me to contribute a short introductory account of Bishop Leadbeater's career. I accordingly wrote a paper on lines which seemed suitable to the publication in which it was to appear, referring particularly to the bishop's writings and his contribution to several organisations or movements.

Rather to my surprise and without my being informed, this was first published as a separate booklet, appearing in 1980 with the title *Charles Webster Leadbeater: a Biography*, a title which seemed to claim rather more for it than the material had originally been intended to fulfill. Gregory Tillett's own book, *The Elder Brother*, was published in 1982.

At the time of writing I was almost wholly dependent on other people's secondary accounts of the past. My own guess was that the young Leadbeater, probably in order to keep his end up among those of his own age, circumstances and antecedents and subsequently stayed with that account and perhaps even came himself to believe in it. But I had no means of researching this, which ran counter to the then "received" version of things. I therefore simply recorded the discrepancy in birth dates and my belief that Bishop Leadbeater had no brother. To have incautiously elaborated these material points any further, in the way Tillett suggests, would have been rash and improper.

Tillett objects to the statement that Bishop Leadbeater's family were "people of professional class," perhaps a matter of taste rather than fact. I had had in mind the Capes connection and the claim that Leadbeater's maternal grandfather was an accountant. The fact that his short-lived father was a railway clerk seemed irrelevant. I myself had a relative who, as a young teenager, became a clerk in the local railway station. He subsequently became President of the London Midland and Scottish Railway and a major figure in British transport, his early employment as a mere clerk never being held as evidence against his professional status.

I do not think it is true that, in announcements about the Coming," Mrs. Besant was "little more than a mouthpiece of Leadbeater." It was she who decided to "go public" on the subject, elaborating it in a distinctive way. Mrs. Ransom once told me that she herself was with Bishop Leadbeater when news came to him of Mrs. Besant's announcement in 1925, naming certain persons as arhats and apostles, and Leadbeater was quite startled by it.

Tillett refers to my “claims to be a historian.” I cannot recollect making such claims, least of all with reference to the booklet with which he was concerned. His real objection to that booklet seems to be that I was insufficiently clairvoyant in 1979, when I wrote it, to have read the book that Tillett himself was going to publish three years later. To this I plead guilty.

It is probable that nearly all account of the Theosophical Society’s past have been written by busy people who had neither time nor training to do research. Even personal testimony about events that the writers have lived through has sometimes been strangely unreliable. An example that comes to mind is the total omission of Oscar Köllerström, from accounts of events in which he played a major part, published by Lady Emily Lutyens. But this sort of thing occurs in the legends of many movements.

I am in complete agreement with Dr. Tillett’s condemnation of the publishing of deliberately corrupt texts in which deletions are made to accord with the opinions of persons of a generation later than that of the original authors.

Behind all these problems of the Theosophical Society’s history there is a view which I briefly referred to in that booklet. As I understand it, theosophy in itself is supra-rational. It cannot be contained within a system of thought or expounded as part of such a system, not even by a “Mahatma.”

Those who have tried to expound it have attempted the impossible. They have tried to express a higher order of experience in the language of a more limited order of experience.

When an individual gets an insight into the supra-rational, his attempt to express it results in its being clothed in the idiom of his own temperament, in the contents of his mind and memory, his expectations and illusions. I therefore do not look for a Cartesian consistency between the various theosophical structures expounded in different ways by Blavatsky, Leadbeater, Arundale, Hodson and others, nor between any of these and the structures offered by contemporary science.

I found Madam Blavatsky taking a similar attitude in those Bowen notes which I persuaded the late Laurence Bedit to have published about a quarter of a century ago by the TS in England, with the title *Madam Blavatsky on How to Study Theosophy*. This has now circulated widely and become increasingly understood.

There are still, however, many people who cannot respond to the fact that no theosophy can ever be definitive but only indicative; and they feel a need to battle in support of some particular theosophy on which they have come to depend.

The structure which Bishop Leadbeater expounded was a particularly remarkable one and serviceable to many people, to whose experience it responded in various ways. It seems to me to deserve, of some honour in the long history of attempted expositions of inner life.

Hugh Shearman

* * * * *

The First Member of The T.S. In Sydney: Professor John Smith - M.D., hon LLD., M.LC., C.M.G.

By Hugh S. Murdoch

The first resident of Sydney to join the Theosophical Society was Professor John Smith. He joined during a visit to the founders H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott in Bombay on Jan. 14, 1882. He was the sixteenth Australian member to join the Society, of which eleven were in Brisbane and Toowoomba, three in Melbourne and one in northern New South Wales who belonged to the Queensland group. The first branch had just been formed in Brisbane, with its president, Carl Hartmann, residing in Toowoomba. The first branch in Sydney was formed in 1891,¹ six years after John Smith's death, during a visit by Olcott.

Since he joined late in life, it is pertinent to ask what kind of man is drawn in his sixties to the fledgling Theosophical Society?

John Smith was born at Peterculter near Aberdeen in 1821. He studied Arts and Medicine simultaneously and graduated M.A. in 1842 and M.D. in 1843. He visited Australia as a ship's surgeon in 1847 on a voyage undertaken partly for his health. On returning to Scotland he lectured in chemistry for five years and gained a high reputation in that field.

University Professor

Australia's first university, the University of Sydney, was inaugurated in 1852 with three professors. These were in order of seniority (and salary), Woolley in classics (from Oxford), Pell in mathematics (from Cambridge) and John Smith with the strange title of Professor of Chemistry and Experimental Philosophy. The latter term really meant and was recognized as Physics. In many places until quite recently, and particularly in Scotland, Physics was known as Natural Philosophy. The term is by no means inappropriate. It seems that in Cambridge upon which the Sydney course was to modelled, certain topics which we now regard as Physics were taught as part of the Mathematics course. The remainder was referred to as Experimental Physics even though the instruction was in Smith's time at Sydney entirely theoretical. (Today Experimental Physics means that the students carry out experiments). Smith's chief interest and the subject considered most important was Chemistry. He was chosen for the position from among 13 applicants.

¹ The Lodge was formed on May 8 with twenty-three members, the same day that Madame Blavatsky died. Olcott had a presentiment of her death the following morning (Sydney time).

Emancipation of Women

At the time, only men were allowed to take university degrees, but Smith showed early emancipist views when, shortly after his appointment, he advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald a series of extra-curricular lectures in chemistry which were open to ladies as well as gentlemen. Later, a course entitled "Electricity for Young Ladies" became a popular offering. Note also that the first twenty-four members of the T.S. in Australia were all men. There is no evidence of Mrs. Smith, who was a spiritualist, becoming a member although she was obviously interested as we shall see. The first woman member was Margaret Woolley, widow of the first professor of classics. Jill Roe, Associate Professor of Modern History at Macquarie University, Sydney, comments that at the time the T.S. appeared to attract the liberal intelligentsia.

Smith was later instrumental in the admission of women to the university. In the 1870s he and Badham (who had replaced Woolley as professor classics) pressed for admission of women but were unanimously opposed by the remainder of the Senate who feared the disturbing effect on our young men." In 1879 the chancellor, Sir William Manning, expressed his doubts about mixed classes but noted that the relevant professors, this time Smith and Liversidge (Geology), were willing for a trial "if the demand on the part of the young women were sufficient to compensate for the introduction of what we may venture to call a disturbing element." The professors agreed to eliminate from their courses material that might be shocking to female delicacy. There were also practical problems to be overcome as the only space for "a suitable retiring room and other conveniences for female students" appeared to be in space allocated to the Professor of Classics as a residence. Nevertheless, two women were admitted in 1882; in 1884 an amending act was passed to allow the conferring of degrees to women. Thanks to Smith's enlightened attitude the University of Sydney was well ahead of most British universities.

Community Service

Smith took an active role in the affairs of the community; as a result, in 1871 he became the Hon. John Smith when appointed to the Legislative Council (the upper house of the N.S.W. parliament). His speeches were acknowledged as "sensible and practical, and evinced great knowledge of the subjects discussed." In 1876 he was made an honorary LL.D. at his old university, Aberdeen. In 1877 he was given the honour C.M.G.

Smith was for many years a director and chairman of the A.M.P. [Australian Mutual Providence] Society. This is now Australia's largest life insurance company but at the time mutual provident societies were regarded as a form of social service. The golden trowel which he used to lay the foundation stone of a new building for the A.M.P. Society in 1877 is preserved in the A.M.P. archives. Upon his death, the directors recorded that "the Society was deprived of a conscientious and painstaking director, the board of a courteous and able chairman, and the community of a valuable self-denying citizen." The A.M.P. records also describe him as "a man preeminently characterized by great honesty of purpose, impartiality, and even disposition, tolerance and uniform courtesy."

As an M.D. Smith opposed both in parliament and in the public arena a vigorous campaign by the medical profession for legislation banning any form of treatment by other than qualified medical practitioners. He argued that medicine was as much an art based on observation and experience as a science and quoted eminent authorities in support. He had wide public support and his views prevailed.

Throughout his time in Sydney, he was repeatedly involved as a scientific expert in investigation of Sydney's inadequate water supply and sanitation. He argued vigorously over many years for the upper Nepean River as an adequate and reliable source of water. This was finally realized after his death although he played a part in drafting the legislation which set up the Sydney Metropolitan Water Board in 1880.

Smith was largely responsible for the establishment of state education in N.S.W. In this role he became principal advisor to Sir Henry Parkes. He was for many years chairman of the Council of Education and in effect, minister for education until the appointment of a minister in 1876.

Other Interests

Smith was an expert amateur photographer. In 1955, a collection of over 400 photographic negative plates was discovered by accident in a basement storeroom of the old Chemistry building at the University. These glass plates were mostly stereoscopic pairs and were in excellent condition. The university archivist David Macmillan considers this remarkable considering the fragility of the plates. The discovery aroused great interest since Smith himself appeared in some of the photographs after timing the exposure. The subjects cover the whole range of colonial life including many expeditions to the bush and a series of photographs taken during the construction of the first buildings of Sydney University. Most were taken between 1854 and 1862, so the collection is considered one of the best in the world of that period. Macmillan comments that "from them an amazingly realistic and detailed picture of colonial life in the 1850s can be pieced together."

He was a keen traveller both within Australia and overseas on three extended tours which he took at about ten year intervals, publishing two volumes of wayfaring notes. These had originally appeared as articles in the Sydney Morning Herald. A further small clue to his character comes from his castigation of so-called "sportsmen" for slaughtering birdlife along the banks of the Nile.

Finally, he was a foundation member of the Philosophical Society of N.S.W. in 1855, which later became the Royal Society of N.S.W. He served on its Councils for eighteen years and was many times President or Vice-President.

Professor Smith and Theosophy

Professor Smith appears to have first come into contact with the Theosophical Society through a visit by the English spiritualist Emma Hardinge Britten, one of the seventeen founding members of the T.S. in New York in 1875, during a visit by her to Australia in 1878–1879. Smith's wife (whom he married in England in 1872) was a spiritualist, and it was not uncommon for scientists of the day to take an interest in the movement.

He was probably also aware of the spiritualist magazine *Harbinger of Light* published by William H. Terry of Melbourne. Terry joined the T.S. in 1880 (the second person in Australia to do so) and so publicized it in his magazine.²

Smith evidently corresponded with Mme. Blavatsky because she enclosed a letter for him to Terry dated November 5, 1881, saying that she had lost his address. Enclosed in this letter was a private and confidential note to Terry from the Master M. urging him to find the whereabouts of the professor as he had business with him.

Late in 1881, Smith, having obtained extended leave of absence, set out on a tour of Europe. Liversidge had become Professor of Chemistry, but Smith remained Professor of Experimental Physics. During his absence his lectures were to be given by Revd. Joseph Campbell, a graduate of the university. Smith may not have received Blavatsky's letter before he left, but he carried with him a letter of introduction to her from Emma Britten and was evidently expected. He arrived in Bombay on January 13, 1882; Colonel Olcott visited him in his hotel that evening. On the following day Olcott took him to the "Crow's Nest," where he and Blavatsky were staying. That evening at a meeting of the Society, Smith was admitted to membership.

Letters from the Masters

After a tour of northern India, he returned to spend a few days with the founders. He learned there of the letters being received from the Masters. One evening, Olcott invited him to open several letters which had arrived in the mail from all over India. He did so and found several which contained the typical red handwriting of the Master M. The following day (February 1, 1882), Mme. Blavatsky intimated to him that she felt one of the Masters present and asked Smith if he would like to receive a communication. He replied that he would be most gratified. She led him to his room, asked him to examine it carefully to check that everything was in its normal place and then close all the entrances to the room. Then, holding his hands, she sat him down alongside Olcott. Shortly a letter appeared from above his head; inside he found a note in the familiar handwriting which said,

no chance of writing to you in your letters but I can write direct. Work for us in Australia and we will not prove ungrateful, but will prove to you our actual existence, and thank you... M.

The following day Smith wrote out his experience in detail in the form of a letter to Olcott. This was published in April, 1882 in "Hints on Esoteric Theosophy," published anonymously by A.O. Hume in Calcutta under authority of the Theosophical Society. Smith's letter was headed "Statement of the Hon'ble J. Smith, member of the Legislative Council, N.S.W., Professor in Sydney University, President of the Royal Society of N.S.W. etc. etc."; and was noted as signed by "J. Smith, Bombay, 2nd February, 1882."

² *The Harbinger of Light* was published continuously until 1953.

From Naples in March, Smith sent a similar letter to Terry in Melbourne for publication in the *Harbinger of Light*. He did not, however, repeat the phrase “work for us in Australia” but indicated instead that there was a personal message at this point. This letter carried the pseudonym “Viator” because Smith wanted Terry to preserve his identity. Terry published the letter with the requested pseudonym but added a note attesting to the scientific acumen of the author. However, far from protecting Smith’s identity, Terry obliquely gave the game away for those with eyes to see, although this did not appear to have been picked up by Smith’s circle of friends. In the same issue of the *Harbinger of Light* (June, 1882) in which Smith’s letter appeared, Terry reviewed “Hints on Esoteric Theosophy” and stated that amongst the occult phenomena

we find one from the Hon. J.S. _____ whose name and titles are given in full. He is the writer of the letter on ‘occult phenomena’ which appears in the present issue of this paper.

Smith also wrote to Blavatsky from Naples and enclosed a letter for delivery to the Brother who had written to him. He got his wife to stitch this note with a double thread of coloured silks, of which he preserved a specimen. He wanted the note returned unopened since both he and his wife were convinced that it was not possible to open the note without cutting the paper or undoing the stitching. “If the stitching had been undone it was impossible by any known means to restore it to its original condition.”

Blavatsky’s reply dated July 23rd was sent to Smith care of Terry in Melbourne. Terry sent it on to London and it finally caught up with Smith in Cannes on January 18, 1883. Perhaps Blavatsky did not realize how long he would be away from Australia when she sent the reply to Melbourne. (Had she lost his address again?) Of more importance is the content of the letter. She reported that his experiment was a failure because the Masters dislike anything in the nature of a test. She asked him not to be angry with them. A sarcastic sentence in red ink in the handwriting he recognised as that of the Master M. who had written to him previously, added that this was kind and considerate advice.

Inside Blavatsky’s letter was another addressed to him in red ink. He could find no opening but opened it carefully with a knife. Inside he found the stitched up note which he had enclosed for the Master M. in his letter to Mme. Blavatsky. He examined it carefully with a magnifying glass and also asked his wife and several ladies to examine it. They all vouched that the stitching had not been disturbed. He then cut it open and inside found a note in red ink saying: “your ladies, I see, are unbelievers, and they are better needle-women than our Hindu and Tibetan lasses.” Smith recognised the handwriting as the same as he had received before.

An account appears in the *Harbinger of Light* for August, 1883, again under the pseudonym “Viator.” Smith wrote in detail to Mme. Blavatsky from Nice on January 31, 1883, describing what had happened. He said that the result was gratifying and astonishing to both him and his wife. He had hardly hoped for anything so good and was very grateful to Morya. He would like to receive more proof but hardly dared ask. He would

like to know details of how his letter was taken by M., how H.P.B. communicated with him and whether K.H. took away Mr. Hume's letters directly from his house. He said that "the whole thing seems to me so astonishing and perplexing that I wish to understand exactly what happens."

The only reply appears to be in the form of an article in *The Theosophist* of October, 1883 entitled "Some Scientific Questions Answered," which is included in an article by J. L. Davidge in the December, 1959 issue *Theosophy in Australia*. The reply, with an introduction by Blavatsky, was attributed to a chela who was familiar with Western science. The attraction or cohesion between atoms was said to be a manifestation of the Universal Divine Force, which can be interrupted and set up again as regards any group of atoms using the same Divine power as that localized in the human monad. An alternate explanation for "passing matter through matter" was to restore differentiated matter to its undifferentiated state so that it can pass through the interstices of a substance in similar fashion to electricity passing through a conductor.

Mme. Coulomb, Blavatsky's dismissed housekeeper, claimed to Hodgson, who was investigating the phenomena for the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), that she had unpicked the stitching in Smith's letter and sewn it up again with a hair. Smith cooperated with Hodgson and sent him the letter for inspection, not believing Mme. Coulomb. Hodgson accepted all of Mme. Coulomb's evidence uncritically and dealt with the Smith letter in an appendix to his report. It is not clear whether Smith actually saw Hodgson's report which was presented to the SPR in June, 1885 at a time when Smith was very ill and only a few months before his death. The report was published in 1886 after Smith's death. One hundred years later, in 1986, the SPR journal carried an article by a handwriting expert and member of the SPR, Vernon Harrison, which tore apart the evidence based on handwriting analysis and scathingly criticised Hodgson's methodology and his bias in uncritically accepting evidence which suited his conclusion and rejecting any which did not.

Return to Sydney

There is no evidence of Smith working for Theosophy on his return to Sydney. His colleagues were probably unaware of his membership and there is no mention in an extensive obituary. It may not be coincidence, however, that Margaret Woolley joined the T.S. shortly after Smith's return in mid-1883. As already mentioned, she was the widow of the first professor of classics at Sydney University³ and would certainly have been well-known to Smith. She was, in fact, the second member to join in Sydney.

Smith's health had not improved as a result of his overseas trip; in fact, it gradually deteriorated. He was, therefore, not particularly active on his return although he did resume his chairmanship of the A.M.P. Society, which he held until his death on October 12, 1885. A long eulogistic obituary was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* the following day. His grave in Waverley cemetery is marked by a large Celtic cross with a

³ Her husband died at sea in 1866.

decorative motif featuring swastikas and coiled serpents. The inscription on his grave records him as C.M.G., LL.D., M.D., M.L.C. and for thirty-three years Professor of Experimental Physics at the University of Sydney. Strangely, there is no mention of the fact that for twenty-nine of those years he was also Professor of Chemistry.

Today his interest and exploits in Theosophy are widely recognised in academic circles. *The Proceedings of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute* for August, 1959 carried an article by J.L. Davidge, former General Secretary of the T.S. in Australia, entitled "Professor John Smith and Theosophy." In the centenary volume of the Royal Society of N.S.W., Professor LeFevre has an article on "The Establishment of Chemistry in Australia." In the section on John Smith, he mentions his visit to Blavatsky and Olcott and his "experience in occultism." The University of Sydney published a book in 1988 on Smith, which contains a comprehensive article by Jill Roe on "John Smith and Theosophy."

In all of his fields of activity, John Smith was recognised as a responsible and very reliable citizen. If his career was not spectacular, it was certainly rich and varied. Such was the man who became the first member of the T.S. in Sydney. We can surely be proud of him.

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Book Review

Review of The Beginnings of Theosophy In France. By Joscelyn Godwin. London: Theosophical History Center, 1989. \$6.00 (£3.00).

By Daniel Caracostea

[Translated from the French by Joscelyn Godwin]

Here at last is an objective study of the beginnings of Theosophy in France. The author, an Englishman resident in the United States, wrote this essay while working on a larger project, "Musical Esotericism in France, 1750-1950." The French can only be grateful to him for filling a gap.

The introduction gives a survey of the esoteric and spiritualist context of the second half of the nineteenth century, in which the Theosophical Society was born and grew up. Next there are several pages on Madame Blavatsky's first visits to France. In last April's number of the *Lotus Bleu* (89), there was a review of a book *L'Illuminatrice*, *Helena Blavatsky*, in which was mentioned H.P.B.'s visit to Paris around 1850-51, during which a certain Alcide Rebaud hypnotized her and made use of her as a medium. The author gave no source to support his allegation.

Joscelyn Godwin, on the other hand, does not hesitate to give his sources and the exact name of the magnetizer: Victor Michal (1824-1889). Michal does not seem to have been very honest, and the author classes him among the dubious witnesses; but it is still interesting to read what he had to say, years later, about Mme. Blavatsky.

Next we find a detailed study of the first French members, including Commander Courmes, the Duchess of Pomar, Gaboriau, the Countess of Adhémar, Amaravella, Arthur Arnould, and Papus. The latter receives eight pages, covering the chapters "The Machinations of Papus" and "Papus Unveiled."

In his conclusion, Joscelyn Godwin speaks of the two obstacles that the Theosophical Society met with in France. The first was simple human egotism — not peculiar to France, of course.

In the person of Gaboriau we have the model of the well-meaning egotist who believes with iron sincerity that his own way is the right way, and cannot make the accommodations necessary to the functioning of any group, esoteric or exoteric. Once this type of enthusiast is installed in a position of power, quarrels and schisms are bound to follow...

The second problem was the more specific one of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and its claim to uniqueness and universality. Christian Hermetists such as Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, Papus, and Paul Sédir initially welcomed what Mm. Blavatsky's masters had to offer, but retrenched when they saw the dangers it posed to their native faith. Since the events described by Godwin, French esotericism has remained divided on this issue.

The value of this booklet is enhanced by the abundant notes on its last pages, and by a bibliography.

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Theodor Reuss and the Theosophical Society

By Ellic Howe

[Originally presented at the first International Conference
on Theosophical History on July 19, 1986]

Theodor Reuss, in 1905 the founder of the Order of the Templars of the Orient (known to many as the O. T. O.) had a previous connection with the Theosophical Society. I presume that this was no more than incidental in the course of his strangely momentous career. It is evident that he considered himself to be an occultist. In that context I can only define the word "occultist" in a very general sense. But then all who subscribed to Theosophical beliefs and interests during the brief period when Helena Petrovna Blavatsky was active in London during the late 1880s and early 1890s thought of themselves as "occultists." The majority of these people was completely obscure and were the rank and file members of a sort of cultural underworld. That it existed at all simply reflected their lack of satisfaction with conventional religious beliefs. It is probable, therefore, that the T.S. served only as an ersatz religion for them.

Reuss has interested me for a number of reasons. Firstly he was a promoter of fringe- or pseudo-masonic Orders; secondly, until quite recently very little was known about him; and finally, the O.T.O. achieved a certain notoriety because of its imagined connection with "sexual magic." Today the O.T.O. enjoys a modest popularity in the U.S.A., where Reuss's erstwhile colleague Aleister Crowley is taken far more seriously than he probably deserves. Reuss's connection with the T.S. was never more than peripheral but probably inevitable. However, during the next few minutes I can do no more than offer footnote material.

He was born in Augsburg in 1855. He was in London soon after his 21st birthday in 1876 and was initiated as a Freemason in the Pilgrim Lodge. This happened at a time when Freemasonry was very fashionable. His interest in the Craft was evidently brief because he was back in Germany during the early 1880s and does not appear to have joined a lodge there.

He was now earning his living as a singer in minor opera houses but nevertheless sang in the chorus at the first performance of Parsifal at Bayreuth in 1882. His voice failed and for a period he was a concert promoter and journalist. He was back in London, now mainly as a journalist, in 1885 and was active in William Morris's Socialist League. This was a cover for his role as an informer for the Prussian political police, and he was involved in the denunciation of a well-known German anarchist who had taken refuge in London.

In 1903, under the pseudonym Hans Merlin, he published in German a pot-boiler with the title "What is Occultism: How to Develop Occult Powers." In this he claimed to have been acquainted with H.P.B. or even to have been on friendly terms with her, also to have been present at Avenue Road when her ashes were placed in a casket there

after her death in May 1891. I feel tolerably sure that his presence on this occasion was a by-product of his work as a journalist rather than any really close connection with H.P.B.

He claimed to have joined the T.S. in London in 1885. In view of the current popularity of the Theosophical movement this was entirely possible. He turns up in a specifically German T.S. contest in August 1896 when he was present at the First National Convention in Germany.⁴ E.T. Hargrove and Katherine Tingley were both there, also Dr. Franz Hartmann, who was elected President. Reuss then became Vice-President. Reuss's friend, Leopold Engel—soon to become his enemy—then joined its executive committee. Engel and Reuss had recently revived the Order of the Illuminati.

Two years previously, in 1894, Reuss published a short article on "Prana Therapy" in Dr. Wilhelm Hubbe-Schleiden's periodical Sphinx. The title of Reuss's contribution suggests a Theosophical inspiration. Hubbe-Schleiden was a central figure in the new German theosophical movement. Hartmann was to play a prominent role in Reuss's somewhat later masonic promotions.

A search in the old German theosophical periodicals—all of them obscure and rare publications—might reveal further information about Reuse's Theosophical Society activities. However, I do not believe that they can have been extensive, largely because Reuse had other fish to fry. I have the impression that Reuss was always a more or less commercial occultist and no Freemason, and since there was no evident financial advantage to be derived from any connection with the T.S., he seems to have lost interest in it. Reuse was above all an "operator," a manipulator of his fellow human beings. He cannot be regarded as a representative Theosophist but he belongs, however obscurely, to the T.S.'s strangely complicated historiography. And that is my only excuse for this brief contribution to this evening's proceedings.⁵

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⁴ The Convention was organized by a group which had broken away from the Theosophical Society (Adyar).

⁵ For more information, see Helmut Möller and Ellic Howe, *Merlin Peregrinus: Vom Untergrund des Abendlandes* (Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 1986).

Service to India As Service to the World: Annie Besant's Work in India for Human Rights

By Catherine Lowman Wessinger

Annie Besant (1847–1933) came to India as a Theosophist in 1893 after a very turbulent and notorious career in England as an atheist and Fabian socialist. As an atheist and socialist, she had worked energetically for freethought, women's rights, the right to promulgate information about contraception, land reform to benefit English peasantry, proper pay, working and living conditions for industrial workers, and reforms in the London school system, so it was natural for her to turn her prodigious talents toward the improvement of the quality of life for Indians. Although Besant never used the term "human rights," she was working to make sure that all Indians possessed the universal rights that all humans should have since, as a Theosophist, she believed that each person was a spark of the universal divine consciousness. For Besant, service to India meant service to the world, since she felt India would become the religious teacher of the world and would lead the world into a millennial condition that she termed the "New Civilization."

Conversion to Theosophy

Although Besant was an atheist for fifteen years, she was never totally satisfied with her materialism (which was a monistic materialism), and she increasingly began to notice that despite intense efforts for social reform, human nature remained the same and continued to be motivated by the baser emotions.

In 1889, Besant reviewed *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky, one of the founders of the Theosophical Society. In this two-volume work Besant found the answers to her concerns and questions. Besant found in Theosophy a monistic philosophy that asserted that God as the one substance was conscious and intelligent, and that through meditation human faculties could be developed by which God may be perceived or at least the subtler levels of the universe may be perceived. *The Secret Doctrine* taught that human evolution takes place in succeeding series of human races known as Root Races. According to Blavatsky, the most recently evolved human race is the Fifth Root Race or the Aryan race, in which the mental faculty predominates. The Fifth Root Race is characterized by the development of the sense of individuality and an increasing concern with the rights of individuals. Blavatsky predicted that a new sixth sub-race of the Fifth Root Race would shortly develop and contain within it the seeds of the new Sixth Root Race. The Sixth Root Race would have a new faculty developed, known by the Sanskrit term "buddhi,"¹ which would enable these individuals to perceive that all are part of a great whole that can be termed God. Thus the Sixth Root Race would build a New Civilization that would be characterized by brotherhood, love and peace. Besant was attracted to these Theosophical teachings since they demonstrated the means by which

the human transformation for which she had worked so energetically would be effected both collectively and individually.

Besant, as an atheist, had worked so long for a human transformation or a “Heaven on Earth” with little concrete results, that she increasingly was drawn to the idea of a superhuman agent or agents effecting the needed change. This was prefigured in her socialist phase when she wrote that the “mighty, silent forces of evolution make for Socialism, for the establishment of the Brotherhood of Men”² regardless of human effort. Besant found in Theosophy various superhuman agents known collectively as the Masters of the Wisdom. These Masters were described as being men who had reached the pinnacle of human evolution and who were perfect channels of the divine will and who guided evolution on earth. Besant felt that she was in contact with the Masters, who for the most part were described as being remote and inaccessible to most humans. After becoming a Theosophist, Besant’s attention turned more and more to India as the home of the Divine Wisdom or Theosophy. After becoming President of the Theosophical Society in 1907, Besant made India her home base for her worldwide work. She felt that her religious, educational, social, and political work in India, as well as her grooming of a young Indian boy, J. Krishnamurti, to be the physical vehicle for another superhuman agent known as the World-Teacher, was sanctioned and guided by the Masters of the Wisdom. Both Krishnamurti and India were to present religious teachings to the world that would lead it into the New Civilization.

Progressive Messianism

In studying the thought of Annie Besant, I found a particular millenarian pattern that combines elements of both pre-millenarianism and post-millennialism that I choose to call progressive messianism.³ Following the widely accepted definitions of Norman Cohn and Yonina Talmon, I define pre-millenarianism as belief in a collective, terrestrial, and imminent salvation that will be total and accomplished by superhuman agents in a catastrophic manner.⁴ Messianism is often but not necessarily a part of the pre-millenarian pattern. Scholars have normally associated messianism with the pre-millenarian doctrine of decline. Also following common scholarly usage, I define post-millennialism as a view of history that sees the collective and terrestrial salvation as being accomplished gradually by the effort of humans who are subject to the impelling force of some superhuman agency.⁵

Progressive messianism, like post-millennialism, entails a progressive and evolutionary view of history. It sees human beings as being guided by superhuman agents to accomplish the goal of creating a Heaven on Earth. However, unlike post-millennialism, and like pre-millenarianism, progressive messianism involves the view that the terrestrial salvation will be accomplished imminently by a messiah who will enter the historical process to effect a radical but non-catastrophic change. This salvation is collective but not exclusivistic as in pre-millenarian movements. Thus progressive messianism combines an optimistic and evolutionary view of history with messianism. Progressive messianism has continued in our culture to the present and is found particularly in some

modern “New Age” movements, which have been influenced either directly or indirectly by the progressive messianic movement organized by Annie Besant.⁶

Annie Besant’s careers as atheist, socialist, Theosophist, Indian patriot, and announcer of the World-Teacher were motivated by a typically Victorian belief in progress and desire to ameliorate current social conditions. The typically Victorian belief in progress was strained in the face of widespread suffering in the Industrial Age, hence the typically Victorian desire to ameliorate current social conditions.⁷ These two factors would lead Besant to develop the religious pattern of progressive messianism when she began to despair that human effort could effect the needed reform.⁸

Besant contributed to Theosophical thought the millenarian expectation of the imminent appearance of a messiah, the World-Teacher, who would present a teaching that would become the New Religion of the new race and establish in the world a New Civilization. Under Besant’s leadership, a progressive messianic movement was organized known as the Order of the Star in the East.⁹ Besant saw her work in India as leading directly to the accomplishment of the New Civilization.

Uplift of Hindu Pride

When Besant first arrived in India in 1893, British officials were concerned that she would put her oratorical and organizational skills to seditious purposes, so she promised that she would stay out of politics. This was a promise that she kept for nearly twenty years.¹⁰ In the meantime, she focused her efforts on the uplift of Hindu self-esteem and education. From the beginning of Besant’s Indian career, the concept of India as a holy land played a key role in her Theosophical post-millennialism. When Besant turned her efforts to social reform and Indian Home Rule in 1913, Besant had been lecturing on the coming of the World-Teacher for five years, so Besant’s thought on how India would fit into her progressive messianic scheme appeared full-blown with no evidence of discontinuity with her previous millennial thought. The main change was the addition of the expectation of a messiah.¹¹

Upon her arrival in India, Besant found that Hindu pride had been seriously battered by British imperialism and Christian missionaries. English-educated Indians, particularly, suffered from a “feeling of inferiority coupled with a loss of respect for their own cultural heritage and traditions. . . .”¹² Hindus had already been impressed by the appreciation of Helena P. Blavatsky and Col. Henry S. Olcott for Hindu culture and religion when they arrived in 1879 to establish the international headquarters of the Theosophical Society in India. On their visit to Ceylon, Blavatsky and Olcott had demonstrated a similar appreciation for Buddhism and had even formally converted to Buddhism. Olcott had worked for the removal of many of the disabilities under which the Sinhalese suffered under British rule so that he became seen as a national savior.¹³

Besant found herself more drawn toward Hinduism. She felt that the teachings of Hinduism most perfectly matched the eternal “divine wisdom” found in Theosophy. Whereas Olcott’s special work had been to revive Buddhism in Ceylon, Besant saw her particular mission as the revival of Hinduism in India. Once Hindu spirituality was revived, a renewed Hindu intellectual life and material prosperity would automatically fol-

low.¹⁴ So Besant lectured widely to Hindu audiences about the greatness of their religious heritage. Besant undertook to master Sanskrit and produced a translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* that was widely disseminated. Later Besant published her commentary on the message of the *Bhagavad Gita*.¹⁵

When Besant became active in the effort for Indian Home Rule, she saw her work to elevate Hindu pride as the necessary prerequisite for Indian patriotism.

There was no progress possible for any form of human activity if the roots of that activity were not struck deep in the ocean of spiritual life. There was no possibility of National spirit in the country without self-respect being the very basis of the Nation, and therefore it was necessary to hold up the great ideal of the past India, mighty in intellect, mighty in religion, and in physical prosperity.¹⁶

The success of Annie Besant's efforts to raise Hindu pride in the face of the Christian critique has been attested by Valentine Chirol: "Is it surprising that Hindus should turn their backs upon our civilization when a European of highly-trained intellectual power and with an extraordinary gift of eloquence comes and tells them that it is they who possess and have from all times possessed the key to supreme wisdom; that their gods, their philosophy, their morality are on a higher plane of thought than the West has ever reached?"¹⁷

The primary attraction of Hinduism for Besant was that its scriptures, especially the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, taught a monism, which was the metaphysical basis of her Theosophical millenarianism. If all persons could perceive themselves as part of the Whole and that all possess the same spiritual nature, then a perfect condition of peace and harmony would exist in the world. The coming sixth sub-race and ultimately the Sixth Root Race would have this perception which was the mark of the awakened buddhi. India was destined to become the Holy Land of the world¹⁸ and present to the world the monistic philosophy that would lead it into the New Civilization.

That is the teaching which, spoken by the mouth of India, is spreading over the whole world, and behold! that is the very key-note of the race that is to be born. That race will recognize the spiritual unity of all humanity. Therefore is that unity the one obligatory object of the Theosophical Society, the recognition of the Brotherhood of man, which can only be defended on the ground of a spiritual unity. All men are brothers, no matter what their color may be, no matter what their race, no matter what their traditions, customs, and origin may be; they all are within the spiritual unity which underlies all mankind. That is the key-note of the next sub-race, the mark of the coming civilization. Is it without significance that the key-note of the coming sub-race is the supreme teaching of India?¹⁹

Educational Work

Besant's educational work in India cannot be separated from her work to uplift Hindu pride or from her goal of India becoming the spiritual teacher of the world. A modern education well-grounded in the Hindu religion would equip young Indians to raise India into this lofty position. Besant noted that Government colleges omitted religious education and that missionary colleges required the study of Christianity, both situations resulting in the alienation of educated boys from their native religion. Besant also noted that English-run schools neglected to instruct the Indian boys in Indian geography and history and used books that were derogatory of Hindu beliefs and gods.²⁰

To counter this situation, Besant, in 1896 and 1897, proposed to wealthy and influential Hindus that a Hindu high school and college for boys should be founded in Benares. Besant focused first on the education of Hindu boys, but planned that "As soon as the Hindu College is secure, I am going to open one for girls and try to raise the women." Besant travelled around India asking for donations and even appealed to the British public for donations. The Central Hindu College opened in July 1898 and later was the recipient of a donation in land and buildings from the Maharaja of Benares.²¹

Besant defined "Religion" as "the expression of the seeking of God by man, of the One Self by the apparently separated self."²² Since Theosophy revealed all religions as having one origin and as striving for this goal, all young people should be educated in their native faith. While education was needed to train the person's faculties on all levels, physical, emotional, and intellectual, education must first of all be religious and moral. Religious education promoted the perception of unity with all persons and things, and thus was the source of all service, public spirit, and patriotism.²³ Once a sense of unity with others and a spirit of patriotism prevailed, material prosperity would automatically follow for India.

Besant saw India's problem as lying in the lack of public spirit and patriotism. She saw individuals as being concerned solely with their personal goals and welfare. Besant argued that in order to promote public spirit and patriotism, the education of India's youth had to be based on their native religions. Besant founded the Central Hindu College for boys, which later became the Benares Hindu University. She also founded many other schools administered by the Theosophical Educational Trust.²⁴ She applauded the work being done for Muslim education at Aligarh, and she felt that the Parsees should organize their own schools.²⁵ All this work was necessary to promote the love of country that would eventually lead to India's self-government as well as the building up of the prosperity of India.

No liberty is possible until character is builded, and man's sense of duty to the country rules supreme. That sense grows out of religion; without religion no patriotism and no public spirit are possible; and without patriotism and public spirit there is no prosperity. The civic virtues grow out of religion.²⁶

At the Central Hindu College, each day started with the boys listening to the chant of the *Bhagavad Gita* as well as hearing a pundit "expounding some doctrine with some

moral illustration from the stories from the *Ramayana*, from the *Mahabharata*, and from the *Puranas*.”²⁷ Later, as students from other faiths came to attend the Central Hindu College, the day would begin with a Hindu, Zoroastrian, Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim reciting a prayer of his faith.²⁸

In order to provide religious instruction for Hindu students, Besant wrote a catechism entitled *Sanatana Dharma* in three versions, one for primary grades, one for high school students, and one for college students. “By 1906, in less than four years of first publication, about 130,000 copies altogether of the three textbooks in the original English, the several translations and reprints had gone into circulation throughout the country.”²⁹ Olcott had written a *Buddhist Catechism*, and Besant felt that Muslims and Parsees should compose their own catechisms.³⁰ Additionally, she composed a *Universal Textbook of Religion and Morals* in three volumes³¹ for the use of students of all religions. Besant edited *The Central Hindu College Magazine, A Journal for Hindu Boys*, which had a circulation of almost 15,000. She accepted articles from boys all over India as well as the Central Hindu College boys. The *Magazine* reported on Besant’s speeches on “Ancient Ideals in Modern Life” and “In Defense of Hinduism” as well as her stories drawn from the *Ramayana*. Besant also lectured to the Central Hindu College students on the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.³²

Besant felt that Indian schools should impart a modern scientific education coupled with a good grounding in Indian history, geography, and literature, along with the appropriate religion. She felt that every student should be educated in the vernacular, as well as study English, since this was becoming the world language. She felt that Hindi should be studied by all students and should become the official language of India. She recognized that this would create a hardship for Tamil- and Telegu-speaking people, but she felt that this was a sacrifice they should make for the unity of India. In addition, each student should study the classical language related to his own religious tradition, whether it was Sanskrit, Arabic, or Persian.³³ Since Besant was primarily concerned with Hindu education, she tended to emphasize the importance of a Sanskrit education.

The great stress on Sanskrit in Indian higher education today is a direct result of Mrs Besant’s pioneering efforts at the end of the nineteenth century, combined with Olcott’s more permanent building up at the Adyar Theosophical Library of one of the most remarkable of all Sanskrit collections today. . . .³⁴

Besant spoke out strongly for the education of girls and members of the depressed castes, and her opinions and efforts concerning these will be examined in the next section concerning Besant’s efforts for social reform in India.

Social Reform

Sixteen years after the fact, Besant reported that in 1913 she came into contact with the Rishi Agastya, “the Regent of India in the Inner Government” who requested that she begin to work for social reform in India. Upon his request, she formed the Brothers of Service, consisting of persons willing to “defy wrong social customs such as

premature betrothal and marriage”; she also gave a series of lectures entitled “Wake Up, India.” Besant saw her primary work in social reform as dealing with “the raising of the age of marriage, the drawing together of castes, and the uplift of the submerged classes. . . .”³⁶ This section on Annie Besant’s work for social reform will divide her work into two categories: caste and women. The issue of education of the members of the lowest castes and of women will be addressed in their respective sections.

Caste

When Besant first arrived in India, she was so enamored of all things Hindu that she found herself uncritically defending the caste system. Having accepted the doctrines of karma and reincarnation, she believed that each individual’s thoughts, desires, and actions determine the circumstances of life. She saw caste as a “great education system,” or a “path of Evolution along which a human soul develops.”³⁷ Besant saw the main lesson of caste as consisting of dharma, interpreted as duty to others, or service. Once an individual learned to serve as a Sudra, he would become a Vaisya to practice giving and charity. When an individual “had learned to sacrifice life itself as a Kshattriya; then, when he had become a lover of asceticism and learning, then was he permitted to pass into the order of Brahmanas, to give himself to the people as their teacher, counsellor, and guide.”³⁸ So Besant saw caste in its pure form not as “a system of rights claimed by a caste, but [as] a system of duties imposed on a caste; the higher the caste, the heavier the duties.”³⁹ Besant saw in the caste system the ideal of brotherhood which she hoped would be a living reality in the New Civilization since in caste one’s dharma or duty to all others is clearly spelled out.⁴⁰

Besant reported that by 1905 she had concluded that the caste system was not defensible since it was no longer working as it had originally been intended and that it was an obstacle to brotherhood. People were not performing the duties of their caste, and were nevertheless claiming the privileges of their caste. Brahmanas, in particular, were neglecting their duty as the teachers of India in order to follow other professions. Besant called on brahmanas to sacrifice their privileges to devote themselves to the service of the nation in order that India’s freedom might be gained.⁴¹

Besant deplored the number of sub-castes or jatis that had grown out of the original four varnas as promoting exclusiveness and vanity. She felt that each varna should try to maintain its racial purity, but she encouraged interdining and intermarriage with sub-caste members of the same varna as promoting greater brotherhood. She also urged that foreign travel be allowed without loss of caste as a means of increasing brotherhood with the outside world.⁴²

Besant felt that before India could teach the world about human unity, Indians must extend the hand of brotherhood to those who were beyond caste whom she variously referred to as outcastes, untouchables, pariahs, or the depressed or submerged castes. Moreover, India could not be a free country until she had lifted these people out of bondage. Besant saw education as “the lever by which we may hope to raise them. . . .”⁴³ While wanting to cultivate the ideal of brotherhood within a divine unity, Besant did not assert that all persons were equal. Rather, she saw the untouchables as “younger broth-

ers” who were deserving of social uplift due to their inherent divinity. But since they were not as highly evolved spiritually and physically as persons belonging to higher castes, Besant argued against “an artificial equality”⁴⁴ and advised that untouchable children should be educated in institutions separate from other Indian children. Besant felt that the first lesson in an untouchable school should be that of a bath and the putting on of a clean cloth. Secondly, these children needed a wholesome meal. Then the academic education of these children could proceed. However, it was Besant’s opinion that it would take “some generations of purer food and living to make their bodies fit to sit in the close neighborhood of a schoolroom with children who have received bodies from an ancestry trained in the habits of exquisite personal cleanliness, and fed on pure food-stuffs. We have to raise the depressed classes to a similar level of physical purity, not to drag down the clean to the level of the dirty. . . .”⁴⁵

Besant’s Theosophical beliefs provided her with the explanation for the condition and suffering of the untouchables. Her belief in karma and reincarnation, and also in the power of one’s habitual thoughts to have an effect on one’s body and physical surroundings, led her to affirm that it is not the conditions that make the people, but it is the people who cause the conditions.

. . . none the less, the environment reacts on the organism though it does not create it, and prolongs the existence of the worse qualities and retards the growth of the good. We, who have outgrown these conditions, can help our youngsters to grow out of them more quickly than they can do if we leave them to their own unassisted efforts.⁴⁶

Besant urged that untouchables be treated with respect and acknowledged as human beings who contained a spark of “the One Self in all equally dwelling.”⁴⁷ She felt that all educated Indians should either work personally to educate the untouchables and provide them with a trade, or, at the least, they should donate money for their education and uplift.⁴⁸

Women

As with caste, Besant initially defended the traditional role of women in Hindu society, including the keeping of women at home. Nancy Anderson has found 1896 and 1897 newspaper interviews where Besant argued that Indian women do not want emancipation. She stated that Indian women do not suffer disability by being restricted to the domestic sphere since they enjoy the company of other women in the large extended family where the mother is treated with great reverence. This a complete reversal of Besant’s feminist stance taken as a young atheist and freethinker who had recently broken away from a very authoritarian husband. In “The Political Status of Women,” a speech given at the beginning of her freethinking career, she seriously questioned gender roles and argued that professions should be opened to women.⁴⁹

When Besant began speaking on social reforms, many of her concerns related to women. She deplored the marriage of children, girls and boys, as leading to the deple-

tion of the vigor of the Indian race.⁵⁰ She deplored the number of girl-widows and the forcing of girls to bear children before they were mature physiologically. In the following statement, Besant very vigorously denounced the early marriage of girls and their early motherhood as being crimes.

Why down in Madras we have girl widows under one year of age! A baby married in the cradle, and then doomed to widowhood for life. Take the Census report. See that we have there widows under five years of age counted by the thousand. Realise that the death age of your wives between fifteen and twenty-five leaps up suddenly because of premature motherhood. These are crimes! Preventible death is murder, and every one of you who gives a child of twelve or thirteen into the arms of a husband, so that, when she is thirteen or fourteen years of age, she becomes the mother of a child, every one of you is committing this crime against nature, in the person of your girl-child. It is a cruelty, and it is only custom that blinds you to the horror of it. You know how many first children are born dead of child-mothers; you know how many child-mothers go through an agony to which no girl should be subjected in the bearing of the first child. You are so accustomed to it; you have a festival of marriage, and you give the little girl away—you the father, who ought to guard her, who ought to protect her from the wickedness of premature motherhood! And the curse comes down on the Nation because of it, the premature old age, the rapid death of girls becoming early mothers.⁵¹

Besant saw Hindu girls and women as “helpless victims” married into chattel slavery by their fathers. Indian women had to be freed before India could claim her freedom as a nation.⁵² Besant pointed out the double standard of not allowing girl-widows to remarry, while the husbands whose wives had died due to early child-bearing were free to remarry over and over. “And then you have the horror of old men marrying children, a man of fifty marrying a child of ten. It is these things which dishonour Hindu marriage in the eyes of the world.” Besant urged that “[t]hese are the things that Hindu men should take in hand and crush.” Besant argued that if marriage for girls were postponed, they would then have the opportunity to go to school.⁵³

Besant did not propose that women should be allowed to move outside the domestic sphere, but she urged that women be educated so that they would become the mothers of “a race of patriots and of heroes” so that India could return to her past glory.⁵⁴

As with men’s education, Besant felt that religion should be at the core of women’s education. The ethics inculcated by religion would promote patriotism in women, “the realisation of duty to the Motherland, of readiness to sacrifice for her weal.” The primary and secondary education of the girl should include literature, art, physical education, and science, “chiefly as bearing on the hygiene and the food supply of the home, domestic medicine, first aid. . . .”⁵⁵ Besant advised that, like the boys, Indian girls should be allowed to learn their subjects in the vernacular, but that they should learn the classical language of their religion, as well as English. Additionally, Indian girls should learn about Indian history and geography. The scientific training mentioned above should in-

clude an acquaintance with arithmetic for keeping household accounts, and the artistic training education of girls should include sewing and darning. All this was necessary to make Indian women “lights of the home.” The uplift of women was necessary to obtain future greatness for India Besant clearly subscribed to the Victorian notion that woman is the keeper and promoter of the family’s morality.

Of this we may be sure, that Indian greatness will not return until Indian womanhood obtains a larger, a freer, and a fuller life, for largely in the hands of Indian women must lie the redemption of India. The wife makes or mars the child. The power of woman to uplift or debase man is practically unlimited and man and woman must walk forward hand-in-hand to the raising of India, else will she never be raised at all.⁵⁶

It is quite clear from Besant’s remarks as cited above, that while she felt that Indian women needed to be educated and should not be kept in seclusion, she still saw the primary role of the Hindu woman as being that of wife and mother. Besant stressed the inherent differences of women and men, but saw both sexes as having complementary roles to perform for the good of all.

Woman and man are the two eyes of humanity, and the axes of vision are different though correlated, and make for fuller vision than one eye can compass by itself. But neither man nor woman should be artificially restricted; each should unfold their respective capacities to the full, nor be shut out of any field by law or custom.⁵⁷

Besant saw women as being more practical than men. Women were more likely to apply what they had learned to the problems of daily life, while men tended to deal more with theory. Like Gandhi, Besant emphasized the capacity of Hindu women for self-sacrifice. She wrote that, for the Hindu woman, “sacrifice is so essentially a part of her daily life as a wife, a mother, a mistress of her household, . . she does not calculate it as does a man.”⁵⁸ Thus, like Gandhi, Besant saw women as natural participants in the self-sacrificing struggle against the British to attain Indian self-government. But while Besant cited great Hindu heroines such as Damayanti being consulted by ministers of state, Sita and her indomitable courage and dignity, Gargi arguing successfully with learned men, Gandhari entering a council of warriors and chiefs to rebuke her son, as well as women of Rajputana and Maharashtra who sat in council with their husbands and sometimes fought beside them in battle, Besant warned that Indian women should not emulate western women and compete with men in the workplace. Probably drawing on her observations of abysmal working conditions in British industry, she felt that this would cause “great injury of the children born of them, whose vitality is lessened by ante-natal hardships”⁵⁹ Besant emphasized that Indian girls and women should receive an education which would make them “true helpmates of their husbands, rather than that which fits them to be teachers and writers, physicians and nurses.”⁶⁰

Besant was the first president of the Women’s Indian Association founded in 1917, but it remained for another Theosophist, Margaret E. Cousins, who became the general

secretary of the Association, to take a fully feminist stance. Cousins, while speaking out strongly against child marriage, dowry, immature motherhood, and purdah, as did Besant, argued that humanity was comprised equally of women and men, and so women should receive an education equal to that of men so that Indian women could become “valuable co-operators in every sphere of the life of the Nation, and more efficient and healthier household women at the same time.”⁶¹ She urged that where financial resources were scarce, they should be expended equally for the education of girls and boys, rather than giving it all to the boys, saying that the 2 per cent literacy rate for Indian women was deplorable. Cousins recommended raising the age of consent to 16 (at that time it was 13 in British India). Cousins spoke out frankly against the double standard of chastity, pointing out that when men were unchaste, a portion of the female population had to be unchaste for their sexual gratification and suffered the consequences of their profession. She also pointed out that the wives and children of unchaste men were made to suffer with venereal diseases contracted by the men.⁶²

Cousins’ main work for women in India consisted of . . . the organization of women on a local, regional, and national level; the editorship of *Stri Dharma*, the journal of the Women’s Indian Association; lobbying for the franchise for women, then seats for women in the legislature, and places on committees and commissions; and public relations work in India and abroad.⁶³

In 1932, Cousins was imprisoned for a year by the British government for publicly urging Indians to exercise their right of free speech. Cousins saw her imprisonment as a protest against not only the general curtailment of civil rights, but also specific discrimination against women.”⁶⁴

The Women’s Indian Association, founded by Besant, Cousins, and another Theosophist, Dorothy Jinarajadasa, has the distinction of being the first organization to raise the issue of Indian women’s suffrage, when Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, came to India to ascertain Indian demands in 1917. In 1927, Cousins was highly instrumental in forming the All India Women’s Conference, of which she was elected president in 1936. The AIWC became the most influential of the early Indian women’s organizations. It was an important stimulus to Indian feminism, and was an important agency for obtaining reform in marriage and inheritance laws as well as promoting education for women. The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 was passed primarily as a result of the lobbying of AIWC women.⁶⁵

While Besant’s work for the human rights of Indian women was significant, it must be noted that this was not the primary thrust of her work in India. Besant became occupied primarily with her work for Indian Home Rule and the gaining of rights for Indians in relation to self-government. Besant’s placing priority of Home Rule over women’s rights can be seen in her refusal “to make votes for Indian women a plank in the platform of her Home Rule League.”⁶⁶

Although Besant’s primary energies were directed toward gaining self-rule for India, the Theosophical Society contributed notably to the issue of women’s rights through

the work of Dorothy Jinarajadasa and Margaret Cousins. While Besant was not able to rid herself of the Victorian notion that woman's proper place is in the home as the nurturer of the family's finer sentiments, Cousins saw significance in Besant's life and activities as an example for future women. "She is the Forerunner of the New Age of which already the prominent feature is the emergence of Woman to power in all aspects of public service."⁶⁷ In the context of a Theosophical worldview, Cousins felt that it was no accident that Besant had chosen incarnation in a female body.

In her own person and life has been demonstrated the power of woman to surmount all the limitations set by out-of-date conventions, masculine monopoly and self-estimation, and feminine ideas of self-deprecation. She has shown the capacity of the sexless Soul to function as freely, as powerfully, as influentially and as ably in a woman's body as in a man's.⁶⁸

Notes

¹ Sanskrit words such as buddhi and karma which have become anglicized, at least in Theosophical terminology, will not be italicized. Nor will words be underlined that have had wide and common usage in scholarly writings, such as dharma and Satyagraha. Otherwise, Sanskrit terms will be italicized.

² Annie Besant, "The Socialist Movement," in *A Selection of the Social and Political Pamphlets of Annie Besant*, ed. John Saville (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Published, 1970), 24.

³ See my chapter "Millenarianism" in *Annie Besant and Progressive Messianism* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1988) for a more extended treatment of the various types of millenarianism as well as a history of millenarianism and the doctrine of progress.

⁴ Norman Cohn, "Medieval Millenarianism: Its Bearing on the Comparative Study of Millenarian Movements" in *Millennial Dreams in Action*, ed. Sylvia L. Thrupp (The Hague: Mouton and Company, 1962), 31; Yonina Talmon, "Millenarian Movements," *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 7 (1966): 159.

Following evidence provided by Margrit Eichlar, I prefer to stipulate superhuman forces rather than supernatural forces as Cohn's definition stipulates. See chapter entitled "Millenarianism" in Wessinger, and Margrit Eichler, "Charismatic and Ideological Leadership in Secular and Religious Millenarian Movements: A Sociological Study" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1971).

⁵ W. H. Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists: The Uses of Biblical Prophecy in England from the 1790s to the 1840s* (N.p.: Auckland University Press, 1978), 20-23; J.F.C. Harrison, *The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism 1780-1850* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, 1979), 7.

⁶ See my "Epilogue" in Wessinger 1988.

⁷ For discussions of the typically Victorian belief in progress see J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into Its Origin and Growth* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1921); E.L. Woodward, "1851 and the Visibility of Progress," in *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians*, ed. British Broadcasting Corporation (London: Sylvan Press, 1949); Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957); Frederick Copleston, "Herbert Spencer—Progress and Freedom," in *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians*.

For discussions of the typically Victorian desire to ameliorate current social conditions, see Humphrey House, "The Mood of Doubt," in *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians*; and Warren Sylvester Smith, *The London Heretics 1870-1914* (London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1967).

⁸ Annie Besant, "Why You Should Be a Theosophist," in *Theosophical Essays* (London: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1895), 4–5.

⁹ Prior to its dissolution in 1929 by Krishnamurti, the Order of the Star had 30,000 members. Bruce F. Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived: A History of the Theosophical Movement* (Berkeley: University of California, 1980), 128.

¹⁰ Arthur H. Nethercot. *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1963), 16, 23.

¹¹ The few instances where there is evidence of chronological progression in Besant's thought in relation to India, as for example in her thoughts concerning caste and women, are specifically mentioned in the text of this chapter.

¹² K.P.S. Choudhary. *Modern Indian Mysticism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. 1981), 55.

¹³ At that time, modern education in Ceylon could only be obtained in missionary schools where the study of Christianity was compulsory. Christian baptism was a requirement for government employment, and Buddhist marriages were not recognized as legal. Olcott spoke to large crowds of Sinhalese to raise their pride in their Buddhist heritage. Olcott, through the agency of the Theosophical Society, founded schools in Ceylon where a Buddhist education would be available in addition to modern subjects. Sixty schools were organized during the first decade of work of Ceylon and in the 1960s there were as many as 400 schools. Olcott wrote a *Buddhist Catechism* for the use of students and it went through forty editions in his lifetime. Campbell, 83–84; L. A. Wickremaratne, "An American Bodhisattva and an Irish Karmayogin: Reflections on Two European Encounters with Non-Christian Religious Cultures in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. 50 (June 1982): 237–54.

¹⁴ Annie Besant, *The Religious Problem in India: Four Lectures delivered during the Twenty-sixth Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras, 1901*, 2d ed. (Adyar, Madras: The "Theosophist" Office, 1909), 116-17.

¹⁵ Annie Besant, *The Bhagavad Gita or the Lord's Song*, 9th Adyar Printing (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1978); Annie Besant, *Hints on the Study of the Bhagavad Gita. Four Lectures delivered at the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras*, 6th reprint (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1973).

Dr. Nancy Fix Anderson of Loyola University in New Orleans tells of meeting an Indian woman in London who credited her rediscovery of Hindu culture and religion to the writings of Annie Besant. This woman was raised in British Guiana by her parents who had converted to Methodism. She was raised to feel ashamed of Hinduism with its backward superstitions. After moving to London, one day she happened to pass a Theosophical bookstore and saw a copy of Annie Besant's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* in the window. She went in and bought the *Bhagavad Gita*. After reading it as well as many other books by Annie Besant, she gained a sense of pride in her Hindu heritage while remaining a Methodist. She credited Annie Besant with returning her Indian heritage to her.

While it was not Besant's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* that had such an impact on the young Mohandas Gandhi, he was introduced to Sir Edwin Arnold's translation by two Theosophist friends in London shortly after having attended Besant's 1889 public lecture, "Why I Became a Theosophist." Elizabeth Lorelei Thacker, "Mahatma Gandhi and the Theosophical Movement," Part I, *The Canadian Theosophist* 64 (Nov.–Dec. 1983): 99–100.

¹⁶ Annie Besant, "Hinduism and Nationality," *New India* (Madras) (9 January 1915): 7. Besant was not blind to the existence of other religions in India and she lectured on their greatness as well. She felt that the peaceful coexistence in brotherhood and nationhood of so many different religions would be India's triumph. Besant, *The Religious Problem in India*, 1–2. But she placed a special importance on Hinduism as India's primary indigenous religion, seeing Hinduism as playing a significant role in promoting a sense of unity and nationalism of Indians from different regions who saw India as a sacred land and took pilgrimages to sacred spots all over the subcontinent. Annie Besant, *Lectures on Political Science*, 2d ed. (Adyar, Madras: The Commonwealth Office, 1920), 65–66; Annie Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics* (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1922), 7. In Besant's defense for not paying more attention to the political ramification of the other religions in India, especially Islam, it may be said that in her day, Muslim communalism was not as acute as in the final days before independence, and Jinnah, the future father of Pakistan, was still a member of the Indian National Congress and a close coworker of Besant.

¹⁷ Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest* (London: Macmillan and Company Limited, 1910), 29.

¹⁸ Annie Besant, "India and the World." *The Star* 2 (March 1929): 14.

¹⁹ Annie Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life. Being the four Convention Lectures delivered at the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Theosophical Society, at Benares, December, 1900*, 2d ed. (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925), 10.

²⁰ Annie Besant, "Education as a National Duty," in *The Birth of New India: A Collection of Writings and Speeches on Indian Affairs* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1917), 100–101; Annie Besant, "The Education of Hindu Youth," in *Birth of New India*, 108–109.

²¹ Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 62–63, 73.

²² Annie Besant, “The Place of Religion in the Life of the Student,” in *The Birth of New India*, 392.

²³ Annie Besant, “The Value of Theosophy in the Raising of India,” in *The Birth of New India*, 374–75.

²⁴ The Theosophical Society currently does not have statistics on the schools founded by Annie Besant. The Theosophical Educational Trust was merged with the Besant Cultural Trust founded by Rukmini Devi Arundale probably in the 1950s. By then there were very few schools left under the Theosophical Educational Trust, the principal one being the school founded by Besant at Madanapalle, Andhra Pradesh. The current president of the Theosophical Society, Radha Burnier, recalls that there were several dozen schools founded by Besant in India, which were called National Schools. Many of these schools continue to exist, but under new names and probably non-Theosophical administration. Felix Layton, who taught in some of these schools, reports that it was Besant’s policy to found a school and then hand it over to Indians as soon as possible. Burnier herself was a student at the National Girls’ High School in Mylapore, Madras (now called the Lady Sivaswamy Ayar Girls’ School) with Miss Helen Veale as Headmistress.

Since 1912, the Central Hindu Girls’ School (founded by Besant and Francesca Arundale) and the Central Hindu College have been administered by the Benares Hindu University. They continue to operate on their original grounds adjacent to the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society in Benares. After handing over the Central Hindu College and the Central Hindu Girls’ School to the Benares Hindu University, Besant founded the Theosophical National School on the compound of the Indian Section. In 1938 this school was shifted to a new location on the banks of the Ganges and was put under the control of the Rishi Valley Trust, which was connected with the work of J. Krishnamurti. In 1939, the Indian Section founded a new school on its compound in memory of Besant known as the Besant Theosophical School. This school is still functioning and is administered by the Besant Education Fellowship. When the Central Hindu Girls’ School was given to the Benares Hindu University, Besant founded the Theosophical National College for Women, which was later known as Vasanta College. This college operated on the Indian Section campus until 1954 when it was shifted to the Krishnamurti Foundation on the banks of the Ganges, where it is still in operation. In 1954, the Vasanta Kenya Mahavidyalaya, a college for girls, was founded by the Indian Section on its campus to replace the Vasanta College. It is still operating and is administered by the Besant Education Fellowship. (Letter from Radha Burnier dated July 8, 1988; Letter from Dr. C. V. Agarwal dated July 11, 1988; Letter from Seethe Neelakantan dated July 14, 1988; personal communication with Felix Layton.)

²⁵ Besant, “Education as a National Duty,” p. 101.

²⁶ Besant, “The Value of Theosophy in the Raising of India,” 375.

²⁷ Besant, “The Place of Religion in the Life of the Student,” 102.

²⁸ Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 68.

²⁹ Annie Besant, *Sanatana Dharma: An Advanced Textbook of Hindu Religion and Ethics*, 3d printing (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1974). p. viii.

³⁰ Besant, "Education as a National Duty," 102–103.

³¹ Annie Besant, *The Universal Text Book of Religion and Morals*. Part I (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1962); Annie Besant, *The Universal Text Book of Religion and Morals*, Part II, *Ethics* (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1967); Annie Besant, *The Universal Text Book of Religion and Morals*, Part III, Vol. I, *Hinduism* (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1915).

³² Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 69; Annie Besant, *Shri Ramachandra: The Ideal King. Some Lessons from the Rama vane for the Use of Hindu Students in the Schools of India* (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1969).

³³ Annie Besant, *Duties of the Theosophist, Being three Convention Lectures delivered in Lucknow at the Forty-First Anniversary of the Theosophical Society, December, 1916* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1917), 60–61; Annie Besant, *India: Bond or Free? A World Problem* (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, Ltd., 1926), 128–29; Annie Besant, "The Indian Nation," in *The Birth of New India*, 31; Annie Besant, "India's Awakening," in *The Birth of New India*, 18–19.

³⁴ Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 62–63.

³⁵ Annie Besant, "From Peace to Power," *The Theosophist* 51 (November 1929): 150.

³⁶ Annie Besant, "Britain and India," *The Theosophist* 43 (January 1922): 327.

³⁷ Annie Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life. Being the four Convention Lectures delivered at the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Theosophical Society, at Benares, December, 1900*, 2d ed. (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925), 70, 72.

³⁸ Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life*, 73. The Hindu caste system consists of four main divisions, known as varnas, and innumerable subcastes. Members of the different castes are supposed to follow the traditional occupations of their ancestors, and they should avoid interdining and intermarriage with members of other castes. The lowest varna consists of the Sudras, the laborers; the next caste consists of the Vaisyas, who are supposed to be the merchants and farmers; next the Ksatriyas, the kingly and warrior varna; and the highest, the Brahmanas, the priests and scholars.

³⁹ Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life*, 72–73.

⁴⁰ Annie Besant, *Wake Up India: A Plea for Social Reform* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1913), 266–67, 270–72, 274–75.

⁴¹ Besant, *Wake Up India: A Plea for Social Reform*, 267–68, 272–73, 275–77, 282–94; Annie Besant, “United India,” *New India* (Madras) (14 August 1915): 11.

⁴² Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life*, pp. 78–79, 86–90; Besant, “United India,” p. 11.

⁴³ Annie Besant, “Education of the Depressed Classes,” in *The Birth of New India*, 144.

⁴⁴ Besant, “Education of the Depressed Classes,” 144.

⁴⁵ Besant, “Education of the Depressed Classes,” 145.

⁴⁶ Besant, “Education of the Depressed Classes,” 147–48.

⁴⁷ Besant, *Duties of the Theosophist*, p. 36.

⁴⁸ Besant, *Wake Up, India*, 93–106; Besant, “United India,” p. 11; Annie Besant, “Mrs. Annie Besant: Her Address at Allahabad on Training Indian Youth for Citizenship,” *New India* [Madras] (13 December 1915): 18.

The Theosophical Society still operates a free school for over one thousand poor children at Adyar, Madras, known as the Olcott School, since it is the continuation of a “Panchama School” founded by Olcott in 1894. It has classes from the primary level to high school, and many of its students receive free textbooks and school clothes. The nutritious midday meal has been continued, but is now administered by the State Government. See “Good News for Olcott School,” *Adyar Newsletter* (Nov.–Dec. 1987 and Jan. 1988): 2; “The Olcott Memorial School,” *Adyar Newsletter* (Feb.–March–April 1987): 5. In Annie Besant’s day, as many as five Panchama Schools were operated around the city of Madras. Besant, *Wake Up, India*, 95.

⁴⁹ Nancy Fix Anderson. “Annie Besant in India: The Conflict between Anti-Imperialism and Human Rights,” unpublished paper, 1988; John Seville. ed. *A Selection of the Social and Political Pamphlets of Annie Besant*.

⁵⁰ Besant, *Wake Up, India*, 50, 65–66, 71–73.

⁵¹ Annie Besant. “The Necessity for Social Reform, A Lecture at Cawnpore,” *The Commonweal* [Madras] (25 September 1914): 248.

⁵² Annie Besant, “Girls’ Education,” *The Commonweal* [Madras] (16 April 1915): 286.

⁵³ Besant, “The Necessity for Social Reform, A Lecture at Cawnpore,” *The Commonweal* [Madras]: 248. In regard to the education of girls, the Theosophical Society operated girls’ schools in Benares, Delhi, Kumbhakonam, and Madura. Annie Besant, “Education and the T.S.,” *The Commonweal* [Madras] (12 March 1915): 191.

⁵⁴ Besant. “The Necessity for Social Reform, A Lecture at Cawnpore,” *The Commonweal* [Madras]: 248.

- ⁵⁵ Besant, "Girls' Education," *The Commonweal* [Madras]: 285–86.
- ⁵⁶ Annie Besant, "The Education of Indian Girls," in *The Birth of New India*, 155–56.
- ⁵⁷ Annie Besant, "The Part of Women in the Uplift of India," *New India* [Madras] (16 July 1915): 9.
- ⁵⁸ Besant, "The Part of Women in the Uplift of India": 9.
- ⁵⁹ Besant, "The Part of Women in the Uplift of India": 9.
- ⁶⁰ Annie Besant, "An Appeal: Higher Education for Indian Girls," *New India* [Madras] (1 May 1916): 11. Despite Besant's moderate position on the social role of Hindu women, in 1915, a Madrasi, M. V. Srinivasa Aiyangar, published a pamphlet entitled "An Open Letter to Mrs. Annie Besant; Being a Reply to Her Attacks on Hinduism" stating that Besant's goal of individual liberty and education for Indian women "would mean ... the status of whoredom and brothel, not the sanctuary of hearth and home." Charles H. Heimsath, *India Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1964), 330n.
- ⁶¹ Margaret Cousins. "The Women's Movement in India Today," *New India* [Madras] (28 August 1926): 9.
- ⁶² Margaret Cousins, "Mrs. Cousins on Women's Problems at the Y.M.C.A., Bangalore City," *New India* [Madras] (25 September 1926): 8.
- ⁶³ Barbara N. Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, India, Women's Rights, and Indian Independence," in *The Extended Family: Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan*, ed. Gail Minault (Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1981): 126.
- ⁶⁴ Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, India, Women's Rights, and Indian Independence," 130.
- ⁶⁵ Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, India, Women's Rights, and Indian Independence," 130. Joanna Liddle and Rams Joshi, *Daughters of Independence: Gender, Caste and Class in India* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1986), 21, 35; Government of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, *Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India* (New Delhi: Department of Social Welfare, 1974), 299–300; Geraldine H. Forbes, "Caged Tigers: 'First Wave' Feminists in India," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 5, no. 6: 529–32.
- ⁶⁶ James H. Cousins and Margaret E. Cousins, *We Two Together* (Madras: Ganesh, 1950), 331, as quoted in Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, India, Women's Rights, and Indian Independence," 128.
- ⁶⁶ James H. Cousins and Margaret E. Cousins, *We Two Together* (Madras: Ganesh, 1950), 331, as quoted in Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, India, Women's Rights, and Indian Independence," 128.

⁶⁷ Margaret Cousins, "Margaret E. Cousins, B. Mus., J.P." in *Annie Besant: Servant of Humanity. Tributes to Dr. Annie Besant, D.L., P.T.S., Servant of Humanity from Representative Indians and Europeans, Special Jubilee Number* (Madras: New India, 1924), 35.

⁶⁸ Margaret Cousins, "Margaret E. Cousins, B. Mus., J.P." in *Annie Besant: Servant of Humanity*, 34.

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THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY

April 1990

\$3.00

A Quarterly Journal of Research

ISSN 0951-497X

Theosophical History

A Quarterly Journal of Research

Volume 3, No. 2, April, 1990

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THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY (ISSN 0951497X) is published quarterly in January, April, July and October by the Theosophical History Foundation. The journal's purpose is to publish contributions specifically related to the modern Theosophical Movement, from the time of Madame Helena Blavatsky and others responsible in establishing the original Theosophical Society (1875), to all groups that derive their teachings directly or indirectly, knowingly and unknowingly from her, or her immediate followers. In addition, the journal is also receptive to related movements (including pre-Blavatskyite Theosophy, Spiritualism, Rosicrucianism, and the philosophy of Emanuel Swedenborg to give but a few examples) that have had the influence on or displayed an affinity to modern Theosophy.

The subscription fee for the journal is \$12.00 (U.S.) a year. Single issues are \$3.00. The airmail rate for subscribers outside the U.S. is \$24.00 a year. Please make checks or money payable in U.S. funds to the Theosophical History Foundation. Subscriptions should be sent to *James Santucci, Department of Religious Studies, California State University, Fullerton, CA 926349480 (U.S.A.)*.

The Editors assume no responsibility for the views expressed by authors in *Theosophical History*.

The Theosophical History Foundation is a non profit public benefit corporation, located at the Department of Religious Studies, California State University, Fullerton, 1800 North State College Boulevard, Fullerton, CA (USA) 92634-9480 (U.S.A.). Its purpose is to publish Theosophical History and to facilitate the study and dissemination of information regarding the Theosophical Movement. The Foundation's Board of Directors consists of the following members: April Hejka-Ekins, Jerry Hejka-Ekins, J. Gordon Melton, and James A. Santucci.

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Editorial

The reader's indulgence is requested regarding the disparity between the issue date and published date of *Theosophical History* (April, 1990). It is our hope that issue and publication dates will coincide by April 1991. In order to accomplish this, the next two issues will be double numbers (July-October and January-April) with commensurate size. We hope that this will not cause you any inconvenience.

The present issue contains three articles, two of which are concerned with the periphery of the theosophical movement. The first, "The Provocation of the Hydesville Phenomena," is by an associate editor of *Theosophical History* and past contributor to the journal, Joscelyn Godwin. Dr. Godwin, the author of the Theosophical History Centre pamphlet (*Theosophy in France*), numerous works on the Western esoteric tradition and music, the most recent being *Paul Brunton: Essential Readings* (Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: Crucible, 1990), is a member of the Department of Music at Colgate University in New York.

The second article, "Lama Dorjief and the Esoteric Tradition," is again by a past contributor to this journal, Jeffrey Somers. Mr. Somers, a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain, has written numerous articles on Asian topics, including "Japanese Buddhism in Great Britain" for London University's *Religion Today*. Lama Dorjief has been the object of Mr. Somers' ongoing research for a number of years.

The final article is the conclusion of Catherine Lowman Wessinger's "Service to India as Service to the World: Annie Besant's Work in India for Human Rights." Dr. Wessinger teaches at Loyola-Marymount College in New Orleans, Louisiana and is the author of *Annie Besant and Progressive Messianism (1847-1933)* (Lewiston/ Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1988).

Turning to the topic of history, I mentioned in the last issue that there is no journal exclusively devoted to the history of the theosophical movement. There is, however, one journal, *The Canadian Theosophist*, under the joint editorship of Ted G. and Doris Davy, that deserves recognition for publishing many significant articles devoted to events and individuals within the movement. One author in particular, Michael Gomes, has contributed a steady supply of material to that journal since 1987, including "Beatrice Hastings and the 'Defence of Madame Blavatsky'" (vol. 68/4-5) and "Studies in Early American Theosophical History" (vol. 69/6 - vol. 71/4). Inquiries should be sent to the editors, their address being 2307 Sovereign Crescent S.W., Calgary, Alberta T3C 2M3.

While on the subject of historical material, the Edmonton Theosophical Society is performing a valuable service by reprinting several rare theosophical books and journals. These include the independent Australian journal *Dawn* (1921-1924), *Psychic Notes* (November, 1881 - March, 1882), and *Solovyoff's Fraud* by Beatrice Hastings. Inquiries should be sent to the Edmonton Theosophical Society, P.O. Box 4804, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 5G6.

Correspondence

We invite comments and observations on the articles that have appeared in the journal. It is our hope that such comments will appear in future issues of Theosophical History. Such communications should be addressed to

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Back Issues

There have been many queries on back issues of both the journal and the Theosophical History Centre publications. Mr. Michael Rainger, the Manager of The Theosophical Publishing House Ltd., has recently informed me that he will be in a position to fill all orders. Requests should be sent to the Manager of T.P.H., 12 Bury Place, London WC1 2LE.

Airmail Postage

Although it is our wish to airmail the journal to overseas subscribers, it is simply beyond our means to do so. We ask, therefore, that those who desire airmail postage remit an additional \$12 a year. An increase in postal rates is expected shortly and this sum will barely meet the added expense.

James A. Santucci

THE HIDDEN HAND, PART 1: THE PROVOCATION OF THE HYDESVILLE PHENOMENA

Joscelyn Godwin

It is common knowledge that the movement known as Modern Spiritualism began on 31 March 1848 in the village of Hydesville, near Rochester, New York. The tale has been told, and told again, of how the Fox sisters acted as mediums for the mysterious raps that occurred in their house; how they developed a code for communication with the rapper; how it told them that it was not “Mr. Splitfoot” (the Devil), but the spirit of a pedlar who had been murdered in the house; and how the discovery of human remains in the basement seemed to confirm that the dead were indeed able to communicate with the living. Within months, spiritualist circles were rapping away all over America, and within a few years the phenomenon had spread worldwide.

Occurrences such as the “Rochester knockings” are common enough in the chronicles of hauntings, and the Hydesville house had already witnessed them some years previously. What was different about the 1848 phenomena was the attempt to communicate with the unseen agent, now regarded not as a pestilent spook or demon, but as a conscious and rational being that had once been human.

Once launched, Modern Spiritualism succeeded with astonishing speed in converting hundreds of thousands who had hitherto doubted the immortality of the soul.

Even for those Christians who already believed in immortality, the new faith promised to replace the prospect of unconscious limbo, until the Last Judgement dispatched them to eternal Heaven or Hell, with a grand vista of eternal progress, combined with loving care for those left on earth.

This must suffice as a sketch of the background. I draw attention here to a suggestion that is found in several sources but little discussed, despite its consequences for cultural and religious history, if there be any truth in it. The suggestion is that the Hydesville phenomena were not a spontaneous manifestation, but something provoked by living persons, acting with no lesser intent than that of changing the world-view of Western civilization.

An early witness to the theory of provocation is the anonymous narrative called *Ghost Land*,¹ surely one of the most interesting books of the nineteenth century and as rich in suggestiveness as Bulwer Lytton’s *Zanoni*. The early chapters of *Ghost Land* recount the experiences of Louis, the narrator, as child medium for a Berlin circle of occultists, “the German branch of a very ancient secret society,” around the 1830s. One of their experiments involved the deliberate causing of poltergeist-type disturbances.

On one occasion, the society having thrown me into a profound sleep by the aid of vital magnetism, and the vapors of nitrous oxide gas, they directed my "atmospheric spirit" to proceed, in company with two other lucid subjects, to a certain castle in Bohemia, where friends of theirs resided, and then and there to make disturbances by throwing stones, moving ponderable bodies, shrieking, groaning, and tramping heavily, etc., etc. I here state emphatically, and upon the honor of one devoted only to the interests of truth, that these disturbances were made, and made by the spirits of myself and two other yet living beings, a girl and a boy who were subjects of the society; and though we, in our own individualities, remembered nothing whatever of our performance, we were shortly afterwards shown a long and startling newspaper account of the hauntings in the castle of Baron von L— —, of which we were the authors.

The mechanism of the experiment was apparently as follows: the young mediums were made unconscious through hypnotism and laughing gas, and their "atmospheric spirits," elsewhere called "doubles," were projected to a distance by the controllers, where they were able to work on the physical plane.

The members of the Berlin circle are presented by Louis as dogmatic disbelievers in the immortality of the soul. Motivated solely by scientific curiosity, they were as indifferent to the effects of such experiments on the witnesses as on their young mediums. Whether fact or fiction, the Ghost Land account takes its place within a long tradition of using children in magical practices, especially for clairvoyance or scrying.

Quite a different mechanism for producing a haunting is described by Bulwer Lytton in his short story "The Haunted and the Haunters," first published in Blackwood's Magazine in 1857. The house in the story is haunted by fearful apparitions that are exorcised only when a peculiar apparatus is found in a sealed safe, and dismantled:

Upon a small thin book, or rather tablet, was placed a saucer of crystal; this saucer was filled with a clear liquid on that liquid floated a kind of compass, with a needle shifting rapidly round, but instead of the usual points of the compass were seven strange characters, not very unlike those used by astrologers to denote the planets. . . . Impatient to examine the tablet, I removed the saucer. As I did so the needle of the compass went round and round with exceeding swiftness, and I felt a shock that ran through my whole frame, so that I dropped the saucer on the floor. The liquid was spilt—the saucer was broken the compass rolled to the end of the room and at that instant the walls shook to and fro, as if a giant had swayed and rocked them. . . .

Meanwhile I had opened the tablet: it was bound in plain red leather, with a silver clasp; it contained but one sheet of thick vellum, and on that sheet were inscribed, within a double pentacle, words in old monkish Latin, which are literally to be translated thus: "On all that it can reach within these walls sentient or inanimate, living or dead as moves the needle, so work my will! Accursed be the house, and restless be the dwellers therein."

Lytton presents us with the idea of forces summoned by ceremonial magic, and remaining active so long as the ritual apparatus is intact. Andrew Lang and M.R. James believed that Lytton had based his description of the haunting on a real occurrence at Willington, Northumberland, but the accounts of that haunting do not contain anything to suggest a deliberate human agency, which is the novelty of Lytton's story.

The exact nature of these forces is unclear. If they are the spirits of the dead, compelled by the will of the living, then it is a special case of necromancy. If they are a detached part of the medium, as in the Berlin experiments, it is what the French call *dédoublement* or bilocation. A third alternative is that the spirits are nonhuman entities, such as elementals.

Henry Olcott was of the last opinion. He had entertained conventional Spiritualist views until he witnessed the changes in phenomena that accompanied the presence of Mme. Blavatsky, both at the Eddy's séances in Chittenden, Vermont, and at the Holmes's in Philadelphia. Towards the end of the book in which he describes these, *People from the Other World* (1875),³ Olcott drops a hint, perhaps at Mme. Blavatsky's prompting:

After knowing this remarkable lady ... I am almost tempted to believe that the stories of Eastern fables are but simple narratives of fact; and that this very American outbreak of spiritualistic phenomena is under the control of an Order, which while depending for its results upon unseen agents, has its existence upon Earth among men. (453–54)

Not long after writing this, Olcott would grow quite accustomed to living in an apartment swarming with Mme. Blavatsky's helpful, and not so helpful, elementals (see his *Old Diary Leaves*, vol. I), and would be learning more about the Order to which she belonged.

So far as I know, none of these theories were applied specifically to the Hydesville phenomena until many years later. In a previous article⁴ I drew attention to C.G. Harrison's *The Transcendental Universe*, a book based on lectures given early in 1893, in London, to the Berean Society.⁵ Harrison, an Anglican, was surely aware that his allegations would be unwelcome to Spiritualists and Theosophists alike: the former, by showing that their whole faith is based on a rather cynical machination by living persons; the latter, by his sensational remarks on H.P.B.'s "occult imprisonment."

Harrison explains the origins of Spiritualism as follows. By about 1840, modern Europe had reached the "point of physical intellectuality" in its evolutionary cycle, involving it in gross materialism. Occultists debated as to whether they should counteract this by revealing that there is an unseen world around us, as real as the world of sense; and if so, how it could be done safely. Experiments were made with mediums, first in America, then in France and Britain.⁶ "But the whole thing was a failure. The mediums, one and all, declared that they were controlled by spirits who had departed from the earth."⁷ Realizing that they had created a Frankenstein's monster,

the occultists withdrew from the experiment but the mischief was done. "The door had been opened to extramundane influences, and could not be reclosed." The mediums were thereupon manipulated by the less scrupulous occultists, the "Brothers of the Left," for political or temporal advantage, while the more conservative ones strove to throw discredit on the whole movement.

Among those who noticed Harrison's book was A.E. Waite, who wrote a lengthy review in his periodical *The Unknown World*, summarizing the tale of "occult imprisonment" and the idea of the deliberate launching of Modern Spiritualism.⁸ But Waite wisely adds that until Harrison, or someone else, comes forward with some proof, we are obliged to suspend judgement on the truth of his contentions.

Sure enough, corroboration "of the most desirable kind" came a few months later, with the publication of a lecture given by A.P. Sinnett to the London Lodge,⁹ and Waite, in his report,¹⁰ emphasizes that Sinnett could not have known of Harrison's lecture before giving his own.¹¹

Sinnett says that he has received information from persons whom he believes in a position to know, to the effect that:

... in the beginning the development of modern spiritualism was earnestly promoted by a school of living occultists, not the school to which the Theosophical development has been due, but a school of which I should never think without great respect. . . .

I am fully prepared to believe that spiritualism has thus had, from the first, a certain amount of Adept support. Without this, Theosophists will feel pretty sure, a great many of its developments in the beginning would have been impossible. Now, however, the whole system has acquired such momentum, that it has, I venture to think, entirely outrun the original design in one way; though in another—in reference to the effort to show mankind at large, that forces independent of the physical plane are at work around us—it has attained a very imperfect success.¹²

When he came to incorporate this lecture into his book of 1896, *Some Fruits of Occult Teaching*, Sinnett explained the status of the school in question as a "subordinate lodge of occultism." Such lodges, he says,

merge themselves sooner or later into the main stream, but following the bent of their own individual characteristics some people, gravitating upwards, may move for a long time in the almost exclusive companionship of their own original associates, and may in this way attain to positions of influence on the superphysical planes of Nature, from which they will be doing their best to help on the spiritual progress of others by the light of their own convictions. Now the movement which is known as modern spiritualism has been largely fostered and was practically set on foot in the beginning, by just such an independent lodge of occult initiates of the kind I have been describing. Eventually the whole system acquired such momentum that it entirely outran the original design in one way. . . .¹³

This version of Spiritualist origins reached France the same year (1895); it would reach Germany soon afterwards with the translation of Harrison's book as *Das transcendente Weltall* (Munich, 1897), which Rudolf Steiner read with profit and which, if reports are true, was open on his desk at the time of his death in 1925.

Who were these occultists who, according to Harrison, keep watch over the signs of the times? Neither he nor Sinnett divulges their identity. But a certain Jean Léclaireur, writing later in 1895 of the Comte de Saint-Germain,¹⁴ is not so reticent: he says that the enigmatic Count was a disciple of that Fraternity of extraordinarily evolved men who command the forces of nature, and whose goal is ever the material, moral, intellectual and spiritual advancement of the race. This Fraternity was long unknown except through its secondary branches; in Paris, up to the end of Louis-Philippe's reign (1848), they were called "Nobles Etrangers, Boyards, Gospodassvalaques, Nababs indiens, Margraves hongrois." Another secondary fraternity to which some Westerners have belonged is the Druses, though their field of action is limited to Asia Minor, Arabia and Abyssinia. Today in the United States, a fraternity pretends to be affiliated closely with one of the most powerful paternities of the East: the Brotherhood of Luxor. It has long existed, but in secret. Mackenzie's *Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia*¹⁵ makes it descend from the Rosicrucians, but that is an error: it is of Oriental origin.

Then Léclaireur says, in a perfect summary of Harrison's allegation: "It played a capital role in the birth and the propagation of the Spiritualist movement, which, despite its mistakes, arrested the flood of materialism which threatened half a century ago to submerge the West." He adds in conclusion that since the Comte de Saint-Germain's seed was spoiled by the French Revolution, another has been planted in the Anglo-American world by Mme. Blavatsky.

In mentioning the "Brotherhood of Luxor," Léclaireur gives a most pregnant hint. Going under various names," this brotherhood is supposed to have included several of the early British, French, and American Theosophists, among them Emma Hardinge Britten, the editor of *Ghostland* and a founding member of the T.S. in New York. One might think that it was these of whom Sinnett spoke, as we have heard, with distanced respect.

This theory about the origins of Modern Spiritualism was not much discussed after the turn of the century. It is found again in the long series of articles by Narad Mani, published in an anti-Masonic journal during 1911–1912.¹⁷ Mani says:

... from 1848 onwards, under an impulse given by an occult Centre, the fact of communication with the Invisible had begun to be studied practically everywhere, most often in private circles and by means of individuals of a peculiar psychical organization called mediums.¹⁸

The last phrase is taken verbatim from Harrison (28). Many of Narad Mani's facts and opinions would be borrowed by René Guénon, a writer of powerful intellect and inside knowledge who, driven by a fierce contempt for both Theosophy and

Spiritualism, wrote the first of his books against these movements immediately after World War I. In *Le Théosophisme, Histoire d'une Pseudoreligion*, Guénon amplifies the provocation theory by naming the group in question as the "H.B. of L." —the "Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor," a later offshoot of the Brotherhood of Luxor or of Light. Guénon alludes to the group as having "played an important role in the production of the first phenomena of 'spiritualism' in America," adding that the H.B. of L. is formally opposed to the theories of the Spiritualists, since it teaches that these phenomena are due not to the spirits of the dead, but to certain forces directed by living men.¹⁹

Guénon is more informative in *L'Erreur Spirite* (1923), saying there that the first Spiritualist phenomena were caused by people acting at a distance, by means only known to a few initiates, members of the Inner Circle of the H.B. of L.²⁰ He goes on to give some alternative explanations: either the H.B. of L. provoked the Hydesville phenomena by using the favourable conditions that they found there; or they imparted a certain direction to phenomena which had already begun; or else the H.B. of L., or another agency, profited by what was going on in Hydesville by acting on the inhabitants and visitors through suggestion. Without this minimum contribution, he says, there is no way to explain why Modern Spiritualism began then and there, rather than at the many other places where strange phenomena have manifested.

Guénon adds that since the beginning of the nineteenth century there were secret societies, apart from Freemasonry, which worked with magical evocations and magnetism; as a source, he refers us to none other than *Ghost Land*. He says that the H.B. of L., or whatever preceded it, was in contact with certain of these German organizations.²¹

Guénon scarcely distinguishes between the various groups with similar names, and his very failure to do so is significant, for it shows that he thought of them as a single entity, called for convenience by the its latest name, the "Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor." Guénon's theory, more precisely phrased, is that there was a relationship between (1) the German magical societies of the 1830s such as are described in *Ghost Land*, (2) the nameless group that provoked the Hydesville phenomena in 1848, which he calls the "Inner Circle of the H.B. of L.," and (3) the "Brotherhood of Luxor," active around the foundation of the Theosophical Society in the mid-1870s (and not distinguished by him from the *Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor* of the mid 1880s).

So far, we may feel that a semi-identifiable brotherhood is beginning to emerge from all these hints. But we now encounter a parallel stream that attributes the responsibility for Modern Spiritualism to a far different agency. The new theory was first announced by the Countess Wachtmeister in 1897, when this stalwart Theosophist gave an address to a Spiritualist camp meeting near San Francisco in which she revealed the origin and purpose of the Spiritualist movement as it had been explained to her:

A group of Atlantean Adepts, who had brought with them the traditions of that older period of time and the knowledge of Occultism, as practiced in those early days, seeing how the world was rushing down into materialism with rapid strides, noticing how, as persons were developing their intellectual powers, the churches gradually lost their hold upon them, and so having nothing to cling to they were drifting down into materialism, the Lodge determined to stop this terrible downward course; and a spiritual influx was thrown down here into America, and then began the Rochester manifestations, these Adepts being living men, great souls from Atlantis incarnated into the bodies of North American Indians. It was they who brought forward this grand movement of Spiritualism.²²

The purpose of Countess Wachtmeister's lecture was not to shock the Spiritualists, so much as to assure them that a superior teaching had come through H.P.B. from the great White Lodge of the Adepts in the Himalayas; and that mediumistic powers should only be sought in order to put oneself in the service of these divine Teachers and Helpers of humanity.

Years later, Annie Besant showed that she concurred with the Countess Wachtmeister's version of the story, in a series of talks given in India during World War I and published in 1921.²³ In a chapter called "The Yucatan Brotherhood," she gives the fullest version yet of the story, of which I extract the most relevant parts:

Many of you may perhaps know that the impulse which originated the Spiritualistic movement came from the White Lodge itself, and was passed through certain Initiates and Disciples of the Fourth Race; and it is that which gave it its peculiar character. Most of you have doubtless heard of the Brotherhood of Yucatan, in Mexico, an exceedingly remarkable group of Occultists, who came down by definite succession in Fourth Race bodies, maintaining the Fourth Race methods of occult progress. . . . (37)

Their methods have always been—as were Fourth Race methods of the past—those which dealt with the advance of mankind through what is now called "the lower psychism"; that is, through a number of occult phenomena connected with the physical plane and tangible, so that, on the physical plane, proofs might be afforded of the reality of the hidden worlds. . . . (38–39)

Hence, when it was seen that the Fifth Race was drifting into materialism in its most advanced members, the scientific world, and that knowledge was progressing much faster than the social conscience and moral evolution, it was thought necessary to start a movement which would appeal to those who were materialistically-minded, and would afford them a certain amount of proof, tangible on the physical plane, of the reality of the super-physical, of the unseen, though not of the spiritual, worlds. Hence the Spiritualist Movement. . . . (39)

The Yucatan Brotherhood, accustomed to the use of that method [of materialization, handed down from ancient days, took up the guidance of this rescue movement (40)

But when [the sensitives], in a time of ignorance of Occultism, came into the world, and were exposed to all its difficulties without any kind of outer protection, they became the ordinary mediums of the last century, who could not protect themselves at all. They were open to every influence which came from the astral world and from the higher regions of the physical world. Hence they were mostly in touch with the less developed human beings who had passed on, the crowds of average people who throng the lower reaches of the astral world. (41)

Annie Besant's account closely resembles the Countess Wachtmeister's, except that the Atlantean agents are now explicitly placed under the direct guidance of the White Lodge itself.

The status accorded to the initiators of Modern Spiritualism could go only one step higher: and this we find when A.P. Sinnett returns, in a lecture of 1920,²⁴ to the old theme of Spiritualist-Theosophical rivalry, urging a fraternal respect and saying that:

Some of us know now, and all should see how reasonably they may believe, that the Masters of the Divine Hierarchy who instituted the Theosophical movement were equally concerned at a previous date, in setting the Spiritualist movement on foot. It was urgently needed at the time to combat Materialism, and did magnificent work in that direction. If all had gone well it would also have proved a broad highway leading up to its sequel the Theosophical movement . . . (4)

... there are various lines of activity in which the great Masters specialize, to use our familiar phrase, and thus, while two of whom readers of Theosophical books have most often heard, do truly concern themselves especially with the progress of Theosophy, another especially watches over and sympathetically promotes the progress of Spiritualism, as he has done from the beginning of that grand development designed to arrest the poisonous growth of disbelief in any future life beyond the delusive finality of physical death. (10–11)

So the entity behind Modern Spiritualism is now a Master to rank with Koot Hoomi and Morya.

What could have been the source for the Atlantean Adepts theory? By a process of elimination, surely Charles W. Leadbeater emerges as the most likely one. His first experiments in reading occult history took place in 1896, in time for their results to have reached prominent Theosophists; and where else, after all, did Annie Besant get such ideas that have no source in H.P.B.'s works? Our witnesses, of both schools, are virtually unanimous on one point: that the beginnings of Modern Spiritualism in Hydesville were deliberately caused, and nurtured thereafter, by living persons. They agree substantially about the motivations for this action, and about the eventual failure or perversion of the original intent. Beyond there, it seems, we have the choice of Theosophical orthodoxy as it would develop in the Besant-Leadbeater era, giving

ultimate responsibility to the White Lodge; or else the intriguing suggestion concerning a less lofty occult order, the “Brotherhood of Luxor,” whoever they may have been in 1848. A third option that there is some truth in both would involve one in the most complex speculations about the hidden influences on history and on esoteric movements, and may in the end be the most fruitful line to pursue.

Notes

¹ *Ghostland, or Researches into the Mysteries of Occultism, illustrated in a series of autobiographical sketches*. Two parts. Trans. and ed. Emma Hardinge Britten. Part I first published in the *Western Star*, 1872; the whole first in published New York, 1876. Reprinted by Health Research, Mokelumne Hill, CA. I quote from the Chicago editions of 1897, 34.

² Harold Armitage, *The Haunted and the Haunters, with an introduction and an account of the Haunted House at Willington* (London: Simpkin, 1925), 67–69.

³ First Published in the New York *Daily Graphic*, 1874; edition enlarged with account of the Philadelphia phenomena, Hartford: American Publishing Co., 1875, (also reprinted by Health Research).

⁴ H.P.B., “Dorjjeff, and the Mongolian Connection” in *Theosophical History*, Vol. 11, No. 7 (July, 1988): 253–60.

⁵ C.G. Harrison, *The Transcendental Universe: Six Lectures on Occult Science, Theosophy, and the Catholic Faith* (London: James Elliott & Co., 1894). I quote and summarize from the second edition (London: George Redway, 1896). The Berean Society, according to Harrison’s preface, “was in association of students of theoretical occultism, and derived its name from Acts 17:11, which was considered appropriate as indicating, not so much the nature, as the direction of their studies.” Harrison was its President for the year at the time of the lectures.

⁶ In France, the reference is probably to the Cideville Parsonage knockings of 1850–1851; see Robert Date Owen, *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1860), 272f. In Britain, perhaps this campaign began with the visit of the American rapping medium Mrs. Hayden, in 1852; see Emma Hardinge Britten, *Nineteenth Century Miracles* (New York: William Britten, 1884), 128f.

⁷ *The Transcendental Universe*, 289.

⁸ *The Unknown World*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (15 Nov. 1894): 72–74.

⁹ A.P. Sinnett, “The Phenomena of Spiritualism considered in the Light of Theosophical Teachings,” in *Transactions of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society* 23 (March, 1895), reporting

a lecture of 21 November 1894. I am grateful to Leslie Prince, founder of *Theosophical History*, for drawing my attention to this and to the lectures by the Countess Wachtmeister and Annie Besant.

¹⁰ *The Unknown World*, Vol. I, No. 4 (15 Nov. 1894): 172–74.

¹¹ Waite says that Sinnett had certainly not attended the 1893 lectures, and that Sinnett's lecture on 21 November 1894 was given "on the eve of publication [of Harrison's book], and practically before any copies had been issued." Waite seems to have forgotten that he himself had reviewed and summarized *The Transcendental Universe* on 15 November, having presumably had a prepublication copy from James Elliott, publisher both of the book and of *The Unknown World*. While I believe that Sinnett did not get the idea from Harrison, Waite seems to protest too much that he could not have done so.

¹² Sinnett, "The Phenomena of Spiritualism considered in the Light of Theosophical Teachings," *Transactions of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society*: 15–16.

¹³ A.P. Sinnett, *Some Fruits of Occult Teaching* (London: T.P.S., 1896), 437.

¹⁴ Jean Leclaireur [presumably a pseudonym], "Le Secret du Comte de Saint-Germain" in *Le Lotus Bleu* (September 1895): 314f.

¹⁵ *The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia of History, Rites, Symbolism and Biography*. Edited by Kenneth R. MacKenzie, IX° (1877): title shortened in his dedication to *The Cyclopaedia of Freemasonry*.

¹⁶ See David Board's groundbreaking article, "The Brotherhood of Luxor and the Brotherhood of Light," in *Theosophical History*, Vol. II, No. 5 (January, 1988): 149–57.

¹⁷ Swami Narad Mani, Chef de l' Observatoire secret européen de la 'True Truth Somaj' d'Adyar, "Baptême de Lumière; Notes pour servir à l'Histoire de la Société dite Theosophique" in *La France Antimaconique*, various numbers from 25th year no. 43 (26 October 1911), to 26th year, no. 9 (29 February 1912). This history, although hostile and scandalous, contains information and suggestions found nowhere else in the Theosophical literature. The unidentified author seems to have had access to documents later in Papus's collection of papers, and I suspect Papus himself of having a hand in it.

¹⁸ "Baptême de Lumière; Notes pour servir à l'Histoire de la Société dite Theosophique," year 25, no. 43 (26 October 1911): 461.

¹⁹ R. Guenon, *Le Theosophisme* (enlarged ed., Paris: Editions Traditionnelles, 1982), 23.

²⁰ R. Guenon, *L'Erreur Spirite* (2nd ed., Paris: Editions Traditionnelles, 1952), 20.

²¹ Guenon, *L'Erreur Spirite*, 27.

²² Countess Constance Wachtmeister, *Spiritualism in the Light of Theosophy* (San Francisco: Mercury Print, 1897), 89. The Lecture was given on 23 July 1897.

²³ Annie Besant, *Talks with a Class* (Madras & London: T.P.H., 1921).

²⁴ A.P. Sinnett, *Spiritualism as related to Theosophy* (London: T.P.H., 1920); a lecture given at the T.S. Convention, 23 May 1920.

LAMA DORJIEFF AND THE ESOTERIC TRADITION

Jeffrey Somers

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Since time immemorial there has been a myth, and that is not to say that it is not true, that in every age there exists a chain of Masters who are linked with one another and pass, as necessary, esoteric knowledge into this world. This idea or something close to it was put forward by Mme. Helen Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891), who also claimed to be in touch with some of those Masters. I do not have either the knowledge or intention to question what she avowed. This theory that there is a chain of Masters of Wisdom has been put forward in connection with several Teachers and can even be found in forms such as the Khwajagan of the Sufi tradition¹ or that of the Zaddik in Judaism.² The latter term can be roughly translated as “a righteous man” or, more usually, as “a just man.”

The concept of the “just man” first appears in as early as Genesis 6:9: “Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.” It appears again in Proverbs where it states that, “The righteous man is the foundation of the world.” The Talmud, Judaism's most important commentary on the Pentateuch (the first five books in the Hebrew Scriptures) declares that the world only continues to exist on the merits of the Zaddik and that it always contains 36 of them. In another variation of this story the Talmud states that there are 45, of whom 30 are in Palestine and the other 15 elsewhere.³

The Zohar, Judaism's preeminent Cabalistic work, states that there is one outstanding Zaddik in each age who is akin to Moses and who is the potential Messiah, should his generation be found worthy of redemption. As one would expect the Zaddikim are hidden in each age.

It is surely natural that having heard that Mme. Blavatsky was taught by these Masters or, for example, that someone like Gurdjieff (1866?–1949) studied at a Sarmoung Monastery⁴ we should wish to establish who they were and where they existed. Why, to find the address of the Sarmoung Monastery, cannot we just use the Yellow Pages? It seems so difficult for us to accept that these Teachers and their abodes are necessarily ‘above’ us. If they wish to contact us it is their prerogative. If we wish to contact them it is up to them to decide if they wish to be contacted. By all means in the interest of history and scholarship we can try to ascertain who these Masters were and where they were from.

Perhaps the first thing that has to be said is that historians and people in the West in general like things very cut and dried but in the East matters are not quite like that, reality has other dimensions. I am reminded of the Jewish joke where a boy is asked, “What does two and two make?” His reply was, “Am I buying or selling?”

Similarly in traditional Persia they say, "Take a lie, a myth and a fact and we may get near to the truth."

Now I would like to attempt to examine the life and some associates of Lama Dorjjeff (1854–1938) and consider whether or not he might have been such a Master, and might he have had any connection with Mme. Blavatsky.

Lama Dorjjeff was not the name of the individual whose life we will be examining, at least not his name in Tibet. It is a Westernization of his name or rather a Russification of it and even that we can find in many variations. In Tibet he was known as Ngawang Lobsang; his first name was Dorje and it was to this the suffix was added in the West.

Who was this man and in what manner was he remarkable? We will try to answer these questions. Lama Dorjjeff (let us go on using this version of his name for convenience) was born in 1854 in the Transbaikial region of Buriat Mongolia and was therefore a Russian subject.⁵ His given name, "Dorje," might not have been given to him by accident. It has many meanings in Tibetan, the most usual being the name for one of the chief ritual objects, the sceptre. It is a sceptre with both its ends alike indicating balance or harmony. Sometimes it is referred to under its Sanskrit name, "vajra." It has been applied to many things of an exalted religious character which are lasting, immune to destruction, occultly powerful and irresistible. It can also represent a link between heaven and earth.

When Dorjjeff was fourteen years old, he went to the Ganden Monastery in Urga and started his studies to become a monk. In 1873, at age nineteen, he left Mongolia and entered the college of Tashi Gomang, part of the great monastery of Drepung near Lhasa. It was not particularly unusual for inhabitants of Buriat to come to Tibet to study, but it was not common for them to enjoy the success that came to Dorjjeff. He eventually became a Tsanit Khanpo, which could be roughly translated as a Professor of Metaphysical Theology.

It was not long before his exceptional qualities attracted attention. He received two special appointments to the thirteenth Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso Pelzangpo (1876–1933). The first was as "The Abbot of the Innermost Essence" and the second as "The Work Washing Abbot." In the former, he was responsible for the philosophical studies of the Dalai Lama's education. The latter was a largely ceremonial position of sprinkling water scented with saffron flowers over the Dalai Lama and over the sacred objects kept near to him.⁶ As one can easily imagine these positions brought Dorjjeff considerable influence over the Dalai Lama and therefore over the affairs of Tibet. There was another side to this. Dorjjeff was often able to be present when some of Tibet's foremost lamas would give spiritual instruction to the Dalai Lama, and so he was able to receive important inner teachings.

Nor were these the only appointments that Dorjjeff received. He was also entrusted to collect donations from Mongolian Buddhists as well as from the Kalmucks of the Stavropol and Astrakhan regions of Russia, they too being followers of Tibetan Buddhism. This meant that Dorjjeff was not always at the Dalai Lama's side but sometimes traveling. The result of this was to give Dorjjeff a greater perception of

foreign affairs than perhaps any other of his countrymen. Thus he became something like the Foreign Minister of Tibet. He writes in his autobiography⁷ of his early views of what we would now call superpower politics. He saw Great Britain as wishing to devour Tibet and at that time he thought that Russia might have a similar idea. He preferred the latter. This was the period which is often referred to as "The Great Game." Russia was expanding her empire to the South and East and the British Empire covered much of the map of the world in pink. Lord Curzon, then Viceroy of India, began to be worried by intelligence reports stating that the Russians were taking an interest in Tibet and her affairs.⁸

Dorjjeff began to advise the Dalai Lama and other important Tibetans that Russia was the natural enemy of Great Britain and might come to the aid of Tibet and prevent her falling into the hands of the British. He put forward a number of arguments in support of his case including the fact that Buddhism was practiced in Russia (meaning of course, Mongolia and the Kalmuck regions). He was also a great advocate for the idea that Shambhala (a sort of promised land⁹ ruled by a king that would protect Tibet from all its enemies) was Russia, and that that king was the Czar. His argument was helped by the fact that the mythical kingdom was traditionally situated to the North. There has always been among the Tibetans a belief that Shambhala existed and that it could be located. Indeed, many texts give detailed descriptions of it. There are other legends which state that it disappeared from the earth many centuries ago. At a certain point, all its inhabitants became enlightened and the entire kingdom vanished to a celestial realm where its kings continue to watch over humanity and one day will return to save mankind from destruction.

In 1898 Dorjjeff went on one of his visits to the Kalmuck regions and from there went on to Paris where, among other things, he performed a Buddhist ceremony at the Musée Guimet.¹⁰ We may well begin to wonder at this point how someone from so remote a place as Tibet or even from a visit to the Astrakhan region of Russia suddenly turned up in Paris. It is at this point that the plot begins to thicken. Dorjjeff was the guest in Paris of Joseph Deniker (1852–1918), a French national but born in Astrakhan and a fluent Russian speaker. He was the librarian in Paris for the Museum of Natural History as well as being Secretary of the Paris Geographical Society. Because of his linguistic ability and interests he was, at the time, the main link between Russian experts on Central Asia and the West, regularly translating their articles for publication.

Now we arrive at a pivotal figure in the person of "prince" Esper Esperovitch Ouktomsky (1861–1921).¹¹ The first thing to point out is that the title "prince" in Romanoff Russia meant much the same as the title "baron" does in England. He was, therefore, a nobleman, not a royal prince, although strongly connected to the imperial family. As such, he accompanied Czar Nicholas II' as aide-de-camp when he was Czarevitch on his tour of the East in 1890-91.¹² It is here we get a definite connection with the Theosophical Society since Nicholas and Ouktomsky visited its headquarters at Adyar, a suburb of Madras, during their tour on February 7, 1891. Ouktomsky was passionate about the East, particularly the Buddhist East, and there were many who suggested that he was a crypto-Buddhist. His family had various

many who suggested that he was a crypto-Buddhist. His family had various interests in Eastern Russia and he himself collected Oriental art, was a Director of the Russo-Chinese Bank, and a member of the Department of Foreign Creeds, which controlled non-Christian religions in the Russian Empire. Nor did his interests end there. He was also the editor of the newspaper, *The Riga Vedomost*, and a member of the Council of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society.

There is no doubt that Ouktomsky knew Mme. Blavatsky. He referred to her as, "Our talented Countrywoman."¹³ He also translated, or perhaps caused to be translated, Colonel Olcott's Buddhist catechism into Mongolian. Ouktomsky's description of the Theosophical Society conforms with his own outlook;

At the insistence of H.P. Blavatsky, a Russian lady who knew and had seen much, the idea sprang up of the possibility, and even the necessity, of founding a society of theosophists, of searchers for the truth in the broadest sense of the word, for the purpose of enlisting adepts of all creeds and races, of penetrating deeper into the most secret doctrines of oriental religions, of drawing Asiatics into true spiritual communion with educated foreigners in the West, of keeping up secret relations with different high priests, ascetics, magicians, and so on.¹⁴

Ouktomsky provides us with our closest link between all the participants in this story. We can liken him to a gateway, a bridge or perhaps even a key. The Russian advance southwards towards Afghanistan and eastwards through Mongolia towards China was phenomenal as the century turned. Ouktomsky was at the centre of this advance, advocating Russian expansion to the East.¹⁵ Did Russia have designs on Tibet as well? Lord Curzon began to have his suspicions.

Let us begin to weigh the evidence which was disturbing him. We have to look more and more at ordinary exoteric history; in doing so we begin to find yet more connections.

The celebrated Count Serguey Yulyevich de Witte (1849–1915), born in Tiflis and later the Russian Minister of Finance who talked of Russia prevailing "from the shores of the Pacific to the heights of the Himalayas,"¹⁶ "was the son of Mme. Blavatsky's aunt and therefore her cousin."¹⁷ He had been instrumental in organising the finances for the development of the Russian railways, which had helped to a great degree in opening the eastern and southern Russian Khanates.

On October 15, 1900, the official column of the *Journal de St. Petersburg* announced that His Majesty the Emperor had received in audience a certain Aharamba-Agvan-Dorjjeff.¹⁸ The British embassy was taken by surprise and could supply no additional information. One year later, Dorjjeff appeared again and received a great deal of attention in the Russian press. This visit was described as extraordinary and its diplomatic nature was emphasized. Its purpose was described as further cementing the already existing good relations between the two countries. One paper argued that Russia was the only power able to counter British intrigues.

This second mission included eight persons with Dorjjeff as leader. It was received not only by the Czar but also by the minister of finance, Count Witte. The foreign minister, Count Lamsdorff, assured Great Britain that the Mission was purely for the purpose of fostering good relations between Tibet and a country (Russia) which had many Buddhist subjects. The British Government was disturbed, but Lord Curzon more so.¹⁹

In the autumn of 1902 there were rumours of a Sino-Russian agreement regarding Tibet. Since 1899 Curzon had been writing to the Dalai Lama to try to enforce a trade agreement with Tibet which had provision for various trading posts to be set up in that country. These letters were not even acknowledged; therefore, against the background of the Dorjjeff Missions Curzon sent in the troops. Two hundred at first went in during May 1902, but in 1903 a force of three thousand under Francis Younghusband (1863–1942) and J.R.L. Macdonald reached Lhasa by 1904. The Dalai Lama fled through Mongolia to Peking accompanied by Dorjjeff.²⁰ The Dalai Lama was not to return to Tibet until 1910, which was by then a country supervised by Britain. Dorjjeff had not such an easy return. The British never forgave him for what they considered his machinations.

Not long after he left Tibet forever he took up residence in Mongolia and later in St. Petersburg at his most remarkable creation, the Tibetan Buddhist Temple.²¹ This was erected with the permission of the Czar no doubt obtained through the good offices of Ouktomsky, with public donations and with a considerable sum from the Dalai Lama. The structure still stands today, and I understand that under the policy of glasnost it is being converted into a museum. One can hardly believe the perniciousness of the Communists under Stalin, however. The temple was then converted into a vivisection research centre, thereby desecrating it, in Buddhist eyes, in one of the worst possible ways.

I do not want to dwell on Dorjjeff's later life. It continues to show how remarkable he was, but I think we rule out any possible connection with Theosophy in this part of his life. A man of such stature, who had already occupied a place in world history, was more than a match for the local Communist bureaucrats in Mongolia. He even stirred them up by propagating a dangerous theory (to them) which alarmed them considerably. He proclaimed that there was no conflict between Soviet theories and Buddhism either on the ideological or on the practical political level. Some of his disciples went even further by saying that the spirit of the Buddha lived in Lenin and even suggested that Buddha, not Lenin, founded Communism!

Dorjjeff was so learned that in public debates he was more than able to hold his own, quoting often from Communist sources to prove his points. By 1934 Stalin had had enough. First of all, Dorjjeff was forced to leave Mongolia and live in Leningrad as an exile. Then in 1937 he was arrested and put in prison in Ulan Ude, where he died the following year. In effect Stalin had him killed. I recently expressed to a professor of Georgian Studies my surprise that anyone would do such a thing to someone of such an advanced age, only to be told that to a Georgian, as was Stalin, 84 was quite young!

Dorjief then was perhaps the one lama of his time who could speak Russian, Tibetan, Mongolian, some French, some English, and the only Lama to be so well travelled, visiting Tibet, France, Italy, India, Russia, China, Japan and much of Central Asia.²² It has not been possible here with relatively little space to go into all the teachings that Lama Dorjief received and to begin to try to attempt to interpret from these teachings an assessment of his spiritual knowledge, but we can take it that it was profound. Nor have we had time to indicate the fact that he had a great sense of humour. Perhaps just to give a sense of the man we could quote directly from the translation from his preface to his autobiography.

The story of one who looks like a monk but really is a beggar deprived of the jewel of the sacred Dharma. In the thrall of the demon of the eight worldly winds who slinks meaninglessly around the world.

OM Svasti!

What other protector of endless world is there but you
Who sees with single-minded mercy
With endless love and compassion
The endless sentient beings as your only child?

This fortunate person who has met you
Feels entirely empowered by that encounter
May all those for whom this has occurred
Always be with you without separation.

That which is called a "spiritual biography"
Should, on account of the great benefits brought to the world

Through the omniscient and tender teachings revealed therein,
Inspire faith and respect upon just being seen.

But this mess of words recounting my confused deeds:
What is it but a scattered way of seeing things?

Notes

¹ Hasan Shushud, *Masters of Wisdom of Central Asia* (Ripon: Coombe Springs Press, 1983).

² Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1955), 344.

³ Gershom Scholem, "The Tradition of the Thirty-Six Hidden Just Men," in Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971), 251–56.

⁴ G.I. Gurdjieff, *Meetings with Remarkable Men* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), 90, 149–64.

⁵ India Office Library & Records. Confidential file. IOR L/P + S/11/198.

⁶ Sir C.A. Bell, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama* (London: Collins, 1946), 61.

⁷ Unpublished manuscript translated by Stephen Batchelor. This manuscript is due to be published in 1991.

⁸ Foreign Office Document No. FO 17 1551/39 and India Office Library Political and Secret File No. L/PS/11/195/PI46/8 .

⁹ James George, "Searching for Shambhala," in *Search. Journey to the Inner Path*. Edited by Jean Sulzberger (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979). See also R.A. Rupen, *Mongols of the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Publications, 1964), 106 [*Uralic and Altaic Series*, Vol. 37].

¹⁰ J. Deniker, "A Leader of the Tibetans," *The Century Magazine* 69 (1904–1905): 73–74.

¹¹ P.L. Mehra, "Tibet and Russian Intrigue," *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, XLV/I (1958): 28f.

¹² Prince Esper Ukhtomsky, *Travels in the East of Nicholas II, Emperor of Russia, 1890–91*. Two volumes (London: Constable, 1896 [vol. I] and 1900 [vol. II]). Also, Henry S. Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, Series 4 and 6 (Madras: Proprietors of *The Theosophist*, 1910 [vol. 4] and 1935 [series 6]).

¹³ James Webb, *The Harmonious Circle* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 58. There is also some evidence that the Prince and Mme. Blavatsky met at Paris in 1884. See Joscelyn Godwin's pamphlet, *The Beginnings of Theosophy in France* (London: Theosophical History Centre, 1989).

¹⁴ Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 58.

¹⁵ G. Drage, *Russian Affairs* (London: John Murray, 1904), 62.

¹⁶ P.L. Mehra, "Tibet and Russian Intrigue," *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* XLV/I (1958): 28f.

¹⁷ Jean Overton Fuller, *Blavatsky and her Teachers* (London: East-West Publications, 1988), 19.

¹⁸ Alastair Lamb, *British India and Tibet: 1766–1910* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 205.

¹⁹ Lamb, *British India and Tibet: 1766–1910*, 210.

²⁰ If anyone wishes to read about this disgraceful episode in British history, I recommend Peter Fleming's *Bayonets to Lhasa* (London: Rupert Hart Davis, 1961), a most readable book.

²¹ W.A. Unkrig, "Aus den letzten Jahrzehnten des Lamaismus in Russland," *Zeitschrift für Buddhismus and verwandte Gebiete*, VII/2 (1926): 149.

²² Deniker, "A Leader of the Tibetans": 73.

SERVICE TO INDIA AS SERVICE TO THE WORLD: ANNIE BESANT'S WORK IN INDIA FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CONCLUSION

By Catherine Lowman Wessinger

Political Work

Besant saw her religious, educational, and social work in India as necessary preparation for the attainment of Indian self-government. Besant entered Indian politics in 1913, and as with her work for social reform, she felt that she had been commanded to enter this new field of endeavor by the Masters. For Besant, Indian self-government was necessary for India to lead the world into the New Civilization. The connection between India and Great Britain had been providential since it had been the cause of the introduction of Indian thought to the West, and it had brought India into the world community with English being the language with which India would present her religious teachings to the world. But Besant was very clear that the imperial connection had outlived its usefulness and had become detrimental to India, so the time for Indian Home Rule had come.⁶⁹ Home Rule was essential for the important role India was to play in Besant's millennial scheme.

To disseminate the demand for Home Rule, Besant operated two newspapers out of Madras. A weekly, *The Commonweal*, was begun in January 1914, and a daily, *New India*, was started in July 1914. Also in 1914, Besant traveled to England to try to form an Indian party in Parliament. This effort failed but she did manage to arouse sympathy through her public addresses on India.⁷⁰

Besant introduced to India the nationwide use of political agitation as she had learned it in her atheist days from her mentor and coworker, Charles Bradlaugh, who during their association became the first atheist member of Parliament. This political methodology included public rallies and speeches, newspaper and pamphlet campaigns, and litigation. Besant formed her all-India Home Rule League in September 1916. By the end of 1917, its membership had grown to 27,000. Besant's League was strongest in Bombay city, Gujarat, Sind, the United Provinces, Bihar, and southern India, those areas where the influence of the Theosophical Society was great. Her League, as well as Tilak's Home Rule League, demonstrated the importance of having an organization based on a network of local political committees. Many young Indian men, such as Jawaharlal Nehru, were given their first experience of performing responsible political tasks in Besant's League.⁷¹

Besant strove to make Indians conscious of the need for Home Rule and willing to struggle to achieve it. Indians have testified to her success in this regard. An Indian National Congress leader, C. Y. Chintamani wrote that "she stirred the country by the spoken as well as the written word as scarcely anyone else could do." Padmini Sengupta related how Besant's example inspired Indian women to take part in the freedom movement as well as work for women's rights. Gandhi stated that "There seems not a cottage in the country where Mrs. Besant's Home Rule League is unknown."⁷²

In Besant's work for Home Rule, she was very conscious of the importance of promoting patriotism in young people. Consequently, in 1914, she founded the Young Men's Indian Association in Madras to promote devotion to India as Motherland. She revived an earlier organization known as the Sons and Daughters of India. In 1916, since the Baden-Powell organization admitted only Europeans, she started the Indian Boy Scouts' Association. These organizations were important to Besant not only to promote patriotism in India, but also to promote a sense of brotherhood and connection with other young people in the world. All of these organizations impressed on their young members the importance of service.⁷³

In 1916, Besant was externed from Bombay Presidency, Central Provinces, and Berar.⁷⁴ On June 15, 1917, the Government of Madras interned Besant and two other Theosophists and coworkers on New India, G. S. Arundale and B. P. Wadia. While Besant was in seclusion in Ootacamund and later Coimbatore, the indomitable Besant spirit seemed to be crushed by the enforced inactivity. But Besant expressed her defiance by designing a Home Rule flag that later developed into the flag of the new Indian nation.

With her flair for publicity and her love of symbols, she had devised a Home Rule flag of green and red, to represent the Moslem and Hindu sections of people, respectively. This later turned into the first flag of Congress, when a white section with a spinning wheel was added to symbolise the minorities and the importance of Gandhi's cottage industries; only a slight modification was finally necessary to turn this into the flag of independent India. One of Mrs Besant's first actions on reaching Gulistan was to erect a flagpole and fly her flag upon it. When the flag was raised in the morning and lowered at night, the residents lined up and saluted it.⁷⁵

The whole of India was convulsed with indignation at Besant's internment, and there was criticism in Great Britain and abroad. Protest meetings were held on a nationwide basis, and Besant's popularity soared, leading to her election as President of the 1917 Session of the Indian National Congress. Congress had begun to plan passive resistance against the Government when E. S. Montagu made his important but ambiguous statement about the British goal being "the increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of Responsible Government in

India as an integral part of the British Empire.”⁷⁶ Besant, Arundale, and Wadia were released and they were welcomed as heroes in Madras, Calcutta, and Benares.⁷⁷

Besant’s presidency of the December 1917 Congress Session in Calcutta was the high point of her political career in India. The Session drew a record attendance: 4,967 delegates, and about 5,000 visitors including about 400 women. In her Presidential Address, Besant said “that India is demanding her Rights, and is not begging for concessions.” Besant pled for Commonwealth status for India by 1923 or by no later than 1928. The Congress passed a resolution demanding self-government within an unspecified period.” Under Besant’s leadership, the Congress for the first time addressed social issues, and passed a resolution urging “the necessity, justice and righteousness of removing all disabilities imposed by custom on the Depressed Classes” Not only was Besant the first woman to be elected President of Congress, she was the first person to make that office a yearlong active position as opposed to “a three-day distinction.”⁷⁹

Besant’s political fortunes turned shortly after the 1917 Congress Session. When the Montagu-Chelmsford Report was issued in 1918, the vast majority of delegates to the 1918 Congress voted to reject the proposed Reforms as inadequate. Besant incurred disfavor by her advocacy of the Reforms as a first step toward Home Rule. Many Indians perceived Besant as turning against the cause of Home Rule. Additionally, as Gandhi became more and more active in Indian politics, Besant felt that she had to oppose his nonviolent method known as Satyagraha. She pointed out that despite professions of nonviolence, violence inevitably broke out in connection with his campaigns. She felt that Gandhi’s followers were not sufficiently mature to adhere to the principle of nonviolence. Besant lost much favor with the Indian public for opposing their new hero, and although she condemned the massacre of Indian civilians at the Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar by General Dyer’s troops, she was wrongly perceived as condoning this government action.⁸⁰

Besant wanted to rely upon constitutional reform to achieve Home Rule for India within an Indo-British Commonwealth of Nations. Commonwealth status for India was a crucial part of her millennial scheme. Besant saw evolution as tending toward larger and larger aggregations of humanity and the Indo-British Commonwealth would be a major step toward actualizing the worldwide brotherhood of all nations.⁸¹ Conversely, Besant saw Gandhi’s nonviolent agitation as a revolutionary method that would destroy the connection between India and Great Britain. Stressing the divisive aspect, Besant most often referred to Gandhi’s method as “Non-Co-Operation.” Besant saw Gandhi’s work and his goal of an independent India as opposing the intent of the Divine Plan which would lead to the New Civilization, so she was compelled to oppose Gandhi⁸² despite the adverse effect on her political work in India. During those times when the stated Congress goal was complete independence and when Satyagraha was employed, Besant withdrew from participation in Congress.

Despite Besant’s loss of popularity, she continued to work for her vision of “New India.” From 1923 through 1925, she orchestrated meetings of a National Convention consisting of 231 Members and ex-Members of the Central and Provin-

cial Legislatures and 24 other delegates to frame a constitution for India known as the Commonwealth of India Bill.⁸³ The Bill was presented before Parliament, but it never received widespread British or Indian support. By this time, Besant's political career in India was essentially over, and the number of articles on the World-Teacher found in *New India* from 1925–1927 indicate that she was focusing more and more on that line of work to achieve her millennial goal. Krishnamurti, now a young man, was beginning to teach in his own right, and Besant's hopes rested on his presenting a religious message that would lead the world into the New Civilization.

Conclusion

All of Besant's work for India was motivated by a deep love for India which she regarded as her motherland. Besant felt that she was an Indian at heart, by faith, and by virtue of past incarnations.⁸⁴ Upon her arrival in India, Besant had adopted as nearly as was possible for her the Indian mode of living and dress. In every aspect of her work in India, Besant approached her projects not as an outsider telling Indians how to improve their country, but as a sincere Indian patriot who wanted to see India "take her right place amid the nations, and fitting her to be the spiritual teacher of mankind."⁸⁵ Besant recognized that Indians themselves had to determine the fate of their country and be intimately involved in the movements for education, social reform, and Home Rule. In Besant's educational work, she urged that Indians determine the type of education that was best for their children. Referring to Besant's social reform work, S. Natarajan acknowledged that "the Theosophical Society must rank among Indian organisations that contributed to the reformation of Indian society, and that one thinks of it as Indian is in no small measure due to the leadership of Mrs. Besant."⁸⁶ Besant was particularly proud of the Commonwealth of India Bill as a constitution framed by Indian lawmakers, and she hoped that it would bring self-government to her beloved India.

If Annie Besant were alive today, she would probably be very pleased at the impact Indian philosophy and Theosophy have had on western popular thought. While she would probably be critical of the manner in which India obtained Home Rule and the manner in which the partition of India was effected, she would probably feel that her prediction that India would become the spiritual teacher of the world is being fulfilled.

Besant's service to India was an attempt to implement enlightenment not only of Indians, but of all people. India was to play a key role in the Divine Plan as envisaged by Besant, whereby India as well as the World-Teacher, J. Krishnamurti, were to present to the world the religious teaching that would bring enlightenment first to the sixth sub-race of the Fifth Root Race, then to the Sixth Root Race, and then to all persons, resulting in a New Civilization based on a sense of unity and brotherhood. Thus India played a key role in the progressive messianism of Annie Besant, and her service to India was meant to benefit the whole world in a very ultimate sense.

Notes

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS. My thanks go to Lakshmi Narayanswami, librarian at the Olcott Library and Research Center in Wheaton, Illinois, for graciously allowing me to keep books for an extended period of time, and for sending me unrequested but very useful books. My thanks also go to Mary Jo Kokochak, librarian of Betty Warrington Memorial Library, Krotana Institute of Theosophy, Ojai, California, for providing me with the information referenced in note 48. I am very grateful to Radha Burnier, international president of the Theosophical Society, Dr. C. V. Agarwal, general secretary of the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society, Seethe Neelakantan, head librarian of the Adyar Library and Research Centre, and Felix Layton, vice-president of the Krotana Institute, School of Theosophy, for responding to my inquiries about schools founded by Annie Besant in India. The information provided by them is found in note 24. I am grateful to Dr. Nancy Fix Anderson of Loyola University, New Orleans, for bringing Barbara Ramusack's article on Margaret Cousins to my attention, and for our continuing dialogue about Annie Besant.

¹ Sanskrit words such as buddhi and karma which have become anglicized, at least in Theosophical terminology, will not be italicized. Nor will words be underlined that have had wide and common usage in scholarly writings, such as dharma and Satyagraha. Otherwise, Sanskrit terms will be italicized.

² Annie Besant, "The Socialist Movement," in *A Selection of the Social and Political Pamphlets of Annie Besant*, ed. John Saville (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Published, 1970), 24.

³ See my chapter "Millenarianism" in *Annie Besant and Progressive Messianism* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1988) for a more extended treatment of the various types of millenarianism as well as a history of millenarianism and the doctrine of progress.

⁴ Norman Cohn, "Medieval Millenarianism: Its Bearing on the Comparative Study of Millenarian Movements" in *Millennial Dreams in Action*, ed. Sylvia L. Thrupp (The Hague: Mouton and Company, 1962), 31; Yonina Talmon, "Millenarian Movements," *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 7 (1966): 159.

Following evidence provided by Margrit Eichlar, I prefer to stipulate superhuman forces rather than supernatural forces as Cohn's definition stipulates. See chapter entitled "Millenarianism" in Wessinger, and Margrit Eichler, "Charismatic and Ideological Leadership in Secular and Religious Millenarian Movements: A Sociological Study" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1971).

⁵ W. H. Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists: The Uses of Biblical Prophecy in England from the 1790s to the 1840s* (N.p.: Auckland University Press, 1978), 20-23; J.F.C. Harrison, *The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism 1780-1850* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, 1979), 7.

⁶ See my “Epilogue” in Wessinger 1988.

⁷ For discussions of the typically Victorian belief in progress see J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into Its Origin and Growth* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1921); E.L. Woodward, “1851 and the Visibility of Progress,” in *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians*, ed. British Broadcasting Corporation (London: Sylvan Press, 1949); Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957); Frederick Copleston, “Herbert Spencer—Progress and Freedom,” in *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians*.

For discussions of the typically Victorian desire to ameliorate current social conditions, see Humphrey House, “The Mood of Doubt,” in *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians*; and Warren Sylvester Smith, *The London Heretics 1870-1914* (London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1967).

⁸ Annie Besant, “Why You Should Be a Theosophist,” in *Theosophical Essays* (London: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1895), 4–5.

⁹ Prior to its dissolution in 1929 by Krishnamurti, the Order of the Star had 30,000 members. Bruce F. Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived: A History of the Theosophical Movement* (Berkeley: University of California, 1980), 128.

¹⁰ Arthur H. Nethercot. *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1963), 16, 23.

¹¹ The few instances where there is evidence of chronological progression in Besant’s thought in relation to India, as for example in her thoughts concerning caste and women, are specifically mentioned in the text of this chapter.

¹² K.P.S. Choudhary. *Modern Indian Mysticism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. 1981), 55.

¹³ At that time, modern education in Ceylon could only be obtained in missionary schools where the study of Christianity was compulsory. Christian baptism was a requirement for government employment, and Buddhist marriages were not recognized as legal. Olcott spoke to large crowds of Sinhalese to raise their pride in their Buddhist heritage. Olcott, through the agency of the Theosophical Society, founded schools in Ceylon where a Buddhist education would be available in addition to modern subjects. Sixty schools were organized during the first decade of work of Ceylon and in the 1960s there were as many as 400 schools. Olcott wrote a *Buddhist Catechism* for the use of students and it went through forty editions in his lifetime. Campbell, 83–84; L. A. Wickremaratne, “An American Bodhisattva and an Irish Karmayogin: Reflections on Two European Encounters with Non-Christian Religious Cultures in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. 50 (June 1982): 237–54.

¹⁴ Annie Besant, *The Religious Problem in India: Four Lectures delivered during the Twenty-sixth Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras, 1901*, 2d ed. (Adyar, Madras: The “Theosophist” Office, 1909), 116–17.

¹⁵ Annie Besant, *The Bhagavad Gita or the Lord's Song*, 9th Adyar Printing (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1978); Annie Besant, *Hints on the Study of the Bhagavad Gita. Four Lectures delivered at the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras*, 6th reprint (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1973).

Dr. Nancy Fix Anderson of Loyola University in New Orleans tells of meeting an Indian woman in London who credited her rediscovery of Hindu culture and religion to the writings of Annie Besant. This woman was raised in British Guiana by her parents who had converted to Methodism. She was raised to feel ashamed of Hinduism with its backward superstitions. After moving to London, one day she happened to pass a Theosophical bookstore and saw a copy of Annie Besant's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* in the window. She went in and bought the *Bhagavad Gita*. After reading it as well as many other books by Annie Besant, she gained a sense of pride in her Hindu heritage while remaining a Methodist. She credited Annie Besant with returning her Indian heritage to her.

While it was not Besant's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* that had such an impact on the young Mohandas Gandhi, he was introduced to Sir Edwin Arnold's translation by two Theosophist friends in London shortly after having attended Besant's 1889 public lecture, "Why I Became a Theosophist." Elizabeth Lorelei Thacker, "Mahatma Gandhi and the Theosophical Movement," Part I, *The Canadian Theosophist* 64 (Nov.–Dec. 1983): 99–100.

¹⁶ Annie Besant, "Hinduism and Nationality," *New India* (Madras) (9 January 1915): 7. Besant was not blind to the existence of other religions in India and she lectured on their greatness as well. She felt that the peaceful coexistence in brotherhood and nationhood of so many different religions would be India's triumph. Besant, *The Religious Problem in India*, 1–2. But she placed a special importance on Hinduism as India's primary indigenous religion, seeing Hinduism as playing a significant role in promoting a sense of unity and nationalism of Indians from different regions who saw India as a sacred land and took pilgrimages to sacred spots all over the subcontinent. Annie Besant, *Lectures on Political Science*, 2d ed. (Adyar, Madras: The Commonwealth Office, 1920), 65–66; Annie Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics* (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1922), 7. In Besant's defense for not paying more attention to the political ramifications of the other religions in India, especially Islam, it may be said that in her day, Muslim communalism was not as acute as in the final days before independence, and Jinnah, the future father of Pakistan, was still a member of the Indian National Congress and a close coworker of Besant.

¹⁷ Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest* (London: Macmillan and Company Limited, 1910), 29.

¹⁸ Annie Besant, "India and the World." *The Star* 2 (March 1929): 14.

¹⁹ Annie Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life. Being the four Convention Lectures delivered at the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Theosophical Society, at Benares, December, 1900*, 2d ed. (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925), 10.

²⁰ Annie Besant, "Education as a National Duty," in *The Birth of New India: A Collection of Writings and Speeches on Indian Affairs* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1917), 100–101; Annie Besant, "The Education of Hindu Youth," in *Birth of New India*, 108–109.

²¹ Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 62–63, 73.

²² Annie Besant, “The Place of Religion in the Life of the Student,” in *The Birth of New India*, 392.

²³ Annie Besant, “The Value of Theosophy in the Raising of India,” in *The Birth of New India*, 374–75.

²⁴ The Theosophical Society currently does not have statistics on the schools founded by Annie Besant. The Theosophical Educational Trust was merged with the Besant Cultural Trust founded by Rukmini Devi Arundale probably in the 1950s. By then there were very few schools left under the Theosophical Educational Trust, the principal one being the school founded by Besant at Madanapalle, Andhra Pradesh. The current president of the Theosophical Society, Radha Burnier, recalls that there were several dozen schools founded by Besant in India, which were called National Schools. Many of these schools continue to exist, but under new names and probably non-Theosophical administration. Felix Layton, who taught in some of these schools, reports that it was Besant’s policy to found a school and then hand it over to Indians as soon as possible. Burnier herself was a student at the National Girls’ High School in Mylapore, Madras (now called the Lady Sivaswamy Ayar Girls’ School) with Miss Helen Veale as Headmistress.

Since 1912, the Central Hindu Girls’ School (founded by Besant and Francesca Arundale) and the Central Hindu College have been administered by the Benares Hindu University. They continue to operate on their original grounds adjacent to the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society in Benares. After handing over the Central Hindu College and the Central Hindu Girls’ School to the Benares Hindu University, Besant founded the Theosophical National School on the compound of the Indian Section. In 1938 this school was shifted to a new location on the banks of the Ganges and was put under the control of the Rishi Valley Trust, which was connected with the work of J. Krishnamurti. In 1939, the Indian Section founded a new school on its compound in memory of Besant known as the Besant Theosophical School. This school is still functioning and is administered by the Besant Education Fellowship. When the Central Hindu Girls’ School was given to the Benares Hindu University, Besant founded the Theosophical National College for Women, which was later known as Vasanta College. This college operated on the Indian Section campus until 1954 when it was shifted to the Krishnamurti Foundation on the banks of the Ganges, where it is still in operation. In 1954, the Vasanta Kenya Mahavidyalaya, a college for girls, was founded by the Indian Section on its campus to replace the Vasanta College. It is still operating and is administered by the Besant Education Fellowship. (Letter from Radha Burnier dated July 8, 1988; Letter from Dr. C. V. Agarwal dated July 11, 1988; Letter from Seethe Neelakantan dated July 14, 1988; personal communication with Felix Layton.)

²⁵ Besant, “Education as a National Duty,” p. 101.

²⁶ Besant, “The Value of Theosophy in the Raising of India,” 375.

²⁷ Besant, “The Place of Religion in the Life of the Student,” 102.

²⁸ Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 68.

²⁹ Annie Besant, *Sanatana Dharma: An Advanced Textbook of Hindu Religion and Ethics*, 3d printing (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1974). p. viii.

³⁰ Besant, "Education as a National Duty," 102–103.

³¹ Annie Besant, *The Universal Text Book of Religion and Morals*. Part I (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1962); Annie Besant, *The Universal Text Book of Religion and Morals*, Part II, *Ethics* (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1967); Annie Besant, *The Universal Text Book of Religion and Morals*, Part III, Vol. I, *Hinduism* (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1915).

³² Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 69; Annie Besant, *Shri Ramachandra: The Ideal King. Some Lessons from the Rama vane for the Use of Hindu Students in the Schools of India* (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1969).

³³ Annie Besant, *Duties of the Theosophist, Being three Convention Lectures delivered in Lucknow at the Forty-First Anniversary of the Theosophical Society, December, 1916* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1917), 60–61; Annie Besant, *India: Bond or Free? A World Problem* (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, Ltd., 1926), 128–29; Annie Besant, "The Indian Nation," in *The Birth of New India*, 31; Annie Besant, "India's Awakening," in *The Birth of New India*, 18–19.

³⁴ Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 62–63.

³⁵ Annie Besant, "From Peace to Power," *The Theosophist* 51 (November 1929): 150.

³⁶ Annie Besant, "Britain and India," *The Theosophist* 43 (January 1922): 327.

³⁷ Annie Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life. Being the four Convention Lectures delivered at the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Theosophical Society, at Benares, December, 1900*, 2d ed. (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925), 70, 72.

³⁸ Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life*, 73. The Hindu caste system consists of four main divisions, known as varnas, and innumerable subcastes. Members of the different castes are supposed to follow the traditional occupations of their ancestors, and they should avoid interdining and intermarriage with members of other castes. The lowest varna consists of the Sudras, the laborers; the next caste consists of the Vaisyas, who are supposed to be the merchants and farmers; next the Ksatriyas, the kingly and warrior varna; and the highest, the Brahmanas, the priests and scholars.

³⁹ Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life*, 72–73.

⁴⁰ Annie Besant, *Wake Up India: A Plea for Social Reform* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1913), 266–67, 270–72, 274–75.

⁴¹ Besant, *Wake Up India: A Plea for Social Reform*, 267–68, 272–73, 275–77, 282–94; Annie Besant, “United India,” *New India* (Madras) (14 August 1915): 11.

⁴² Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life*, pp. 78–79, 86–90; Besant, “United India,” p. 11.

⁴³ Annie Besant, “Education of the Depressed Classes,” in *The Birth of New India*, 144.

⁴⁴ Besant, “Education of the Depressed Classes,” 144.

⁴⁵ Besant, “Education of the Depressed Classes,” 145.

⁴⁶ Besant, “Education of the Depressed Classes,” 147–48.

⁴⁷ Besant, *Duties of the Theosophist*, p. 36.

⁴⁸ Besant, *Wake Up, India*, 93–106; Besant, “United India,” p. 11; Annie Besant, “Mrs. Annie Besant: Her Address at Allahabad on Training Indian Youth for Citizenship,” *New India* [Madras] (13 December 1915): 18.

The Theosophical Society still operates a free school for over one thousand poor children at Adyar, Madras, known as the Olcott School, since it is the continuation of a “Panchama School” founded by Olcott in 1894. It has classes from the primary level to high school, and many of its students receive free textbooks and school clothes. The nutritious midday meal has been continued, but is now administered by the State Government. See “Good News for Olcott School,” *Adyar Newsletter* (Nov.–Dec. 1987 and Jan. 1988): 2; “The Olcott Memorial School,” *Adyar Newsletter* (Feb.–March–April 1987): 5. In Annie Besant’s day, as many as five Panchama Schools were operated around the city of Madras. Besant, *Wake Up, India*, 95.

⁴⁹ Nancy Fix Anderson. “Annie Besant in India: The Conflict between Anti-Imperialism and Human Rights,” unpublished paper, 1988; John Seville. ed. *A Selection of the Social and Political Pamphlets of Annie Besant*.

⁵⁰ Besant, *Wake Up, India*, 50, 65–66, 71–73.

⁵¹ Annie Besant. “The Necessity for Social Reform, A Lecture at Cawnpore,” *The Commonweal* [Madras] (25 September 1914): 248.

⁵² Annie Besant, “Girls’ Education,” *The Commonweal* [Madras] (16 April 1915): 286.

⁵³ Besant, “The Necessity for Social Reform, A Lecture at Cawnpore,” *The Commonweal* [Madras]: 248. In regard to the education of girls, the Theosophical Society operated girls’ schools in Benares, Delhi, Kumbhakonam, and Madura. Annie Besant, “Education and the T.S.,” *The Commonweal* [Madras] (12 March 1915): 191.

⁵⁴ Besant. “The Necessity for Social Reform, A Lecture at Cawnpore,” *The Commonweal* [Madras]: 248.

- ⁵⁵ Besant, "Girls' Education," *The Commonweal* [Madras]: 285–86.
- ⁵⁶ Annie Besant, "The Education of Indian Girls," in *The Birth of New India*, 155–56.
- ⁵⁷ Annie Besant, "The Part of Women in the Uplift of India," *New India* [Madras] (16 July 1915): 9.
- ⁵⁸ Besant, "The Part of Women in the Uplift of India": 9.
- ⁵⁹ Besant, "The Part of Women in the Uplift of India": 9.
- ⁶⁰ Annie Besant, "An Appeal: Higher Education for Indian Girls," *New India* [Madras] (1 May 1916): 11. Despite Besant's moderate position on the social role of Hindu women, in 1915, a Madrasi, M. V. Srinivasa Aiyangar, published a pamphlet entitled "An Open Letter to Mrs. Annie Besant; Being a Reply to Her Attacks on Hinduism" stating that Besant's goal of individual liberty and education for Indian women "would mean ... the status of whoredom and brothel, not the sanctuary of hearth and home." Charles H. Heimsath, *India Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1964), 330n.
- ⁶¹ Margaret Cousins. "The Women's Movement in India Today," *New India* [Madras] (28 August 1926): 9.
- ⁶² Margaret Cousins, "Mrs. Cousins on Women's Problems at the Y.M.C.A., Bangalore City," *New India* [Madras] (25 September 1926): 8.
- ⁶³ Barbara N. Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, India, Women's Rights, and Indian Independence," in *The Extended Family: Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan*, ed. Gail Minault (Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1981): 126.
- ⁶⁴ Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, India, Women's Rights, and Indian Independence," 130.
- ⁶⁵ Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, India, Women's Rights, and Indian Independence," 130. Joanna Liddle and Rams Joshi, *Daughters of Independence: Gender, Caste and Class in India* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1986), 21, 35; Government of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, *Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India* (New Delhi: Department of Social Welfare, 1974), 299–300; Geraldine H. Forbes, "Caged Tigers: 'First Wave' Feminists in India," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 5, no. 6: 529–32.
- ⁶⁶ James H. Cousins and Margaret E. Cousins, *We Two Together* (Madras: Ganesh, 1950), 331, as quoted in Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, India, Women's Rights, and Indian Independence," 128.

⁶⁶ James H. Cousins and Margaret E. Cousins, *We Two Together* (Madras: Ganesh, 1950), 331, as quoted in Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, India, Women's Rights, and Indian Independence," 128.

⁶⁷ Margaret Cousins, "Margaret E. Cousins, B. Mus., J.P." in *Annie Besant: Servant of Humanity. Tributes to Dr. Annie Besant, D.L., P.T.S., Servant of Humanity from Representative Indians and Europeans, Special Jubilee Number* (Madras: New India, 1924), 35.

⁶⁸ Margaret Cousins, "Margaret E. Cousins, B. Mus., J.P." in *Annie Besant: Servant of Humanity*, 34.

⁶⁹ Annie Besant, *India: A Nation*, rev. ed. (London: Home Rule for India League, 1917); Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics*; Besant, *India: Bond or Free?*

⁷⁰ R.C. Majumdar, *The History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. II (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1963), 361.

⁷¹ H. F. Owen, "Towards Nation-Wide Agitation and Organisation: The Home Rule Leagues, 1915–18," in *Soundings in South Asian History*, ed. D. A. Low (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

⁷² Majumdar, *The History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. II, 363; Padmini Sengupta, *Sarojini Naidu: A Biography* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1966), 148; Thacker, "Mahatma Gandhi and the Theosophical Movement," Part I: 106.

⁷³ Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 232, 237, 255–56; Annie Besant, "The Order of the Sons of India," *New India* [Madras] (30 August 1915): 3; Annie Besant, "The League of Young Nations," *New India* [Madras] (21 February 1921): 6; Annie Besant, "Unification of the Scout Movement," *New India* [Madras] (14 March 1921): 6; Annie Besant, "The Call to Youth: Dr. Besant's Lecture at the Y.M.C.A. Madras," *New India* [Madras] (14 November 1923): 3.

⁷⁴ Owen, "Towards Nation-Wide Agitation and Organisation: The Home Rule Leagues, 1915–18," in *Soundings in South Asian History*, 174.

⁷⁵ Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 263.

⁷⁶ Majumdar, *The History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. II, 371, 498.

⁷⁷ Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 265–66.

⁷⁸ Majumdar, *The History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. II, 376, 378, 506–507.

⁷⁹ S. Natarajan, *A Century of Social Reform in India*, 2d ed., rev. and enl. (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1962), 81, 148.

⁸⁰ Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 282–90, 301–302, Annie Besant, “Steps to Revolution,” *New India* [Madras] (26 January 1922): 67; Annie Besant, “The Political Situation,” *New India* [Madras] (20 January 1922): 3.

⁸¹ Besant, *The Future of Indian Politics*, 310–316.

⁸² Annie Besant, “Dr. Besant and Mr. Gandhi,” *New India* [Madras] (21 March 1922): 3.

⁸³ Annie Besant, *The Besant Spirit*, Vol. 3, *Indian Problems* (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1939), 137–55.

⁸⁴ Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life*, 3; Besant, *Duties of the Theosophist*, 45.

⁸⁵ Besant, *Ancient Ideals in Modern Life*, 3.

⁸⁶ Natarajan, *A Century of Social Reform in India*, 81.

THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY

July 1990
\$3.00



A Quarterly Journal of Research
ISSN 0951497X

Theosophical History

A Quarterly Journal of Research

Founded by Leslie Price, 1985

Volume 3, No. 3, July 1990

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THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY (ISSN 0951497X) is published quarterly in January, April, July and October by the Theosophical History Foundation. The journal's purpose is to publish contributions specifically related to the modern Theosophical Movement, from the time of Madame Helena Blavatsky and others responsible in establishing the original Theosophical Society (1875), to all groups that derive their teachings directly or indirectly, knowingly and unknowingly from her, or her immediate followers. In addition, the journal is also receptive to related movements (including pre-Blavatskyite Theosophy, Spiritualism, Rosicrucianism, and the philosophy of Emanuel Swedenborg to give but a few examples) that have had the influence on or displayed an affinity to modern Theosophy.

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The Theosophical History Foundation is a non profit public benefit corporation, located at the Department of Religious Studies, California State University, Fullerton, 1800 North State College Boulevard, Fullerton, CA (USA) 92634-9480 (U.S.A.). Its purpose is to publish Theosophical History and to facilitate the study and dissemination of information regarding the Theosophical

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Editor's Comments

Theosophical History has for the past two issues concentrated only on the publication of articles. Several readers have since suggested the inclusion of book reviews and letters as well, which has been our intention all along; only now, however, has it been feasible to do so. Two book reviews on J. Krishnamurti are contained herein: Ingram Smith's *Truth is a Pathless Land: A Journey with Krishnamurti* and Sidney Field's *Krishnamurti: The Reluctant Messiah*. In addition to these, the first part of an extended critique of Jean Overton Fuller's *Blavatsky and Her Teachers* by David Caldwell appears in this issue; the concluding part will appear in the next issue. A response to Mr. Caldwell's review from Miss Fuller is also included.

Three articles also appear in this issue. Joscelyn Godwin continues his series, "The Hidden Hand," James Moore writes on the relationship between G.I. Gurdjieff and H.P. Blavatsky, and Nell C. Taylor discusses Madame Blavatsky's Cagliostro Jewel and its fate.

James Moore has been active in British Gurdjieffian circles since 1956 and is the author of *Gurdjieff and Mansfield* (RKP 1980). In 1987, he led the first seminar on Gurdjieff's ideas at Oxford University, and in 1988 presented a film of Gurdjieff's *Sacred Dances* at Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand. He lives in London, where in 1989 he contributed to the Fourth International Conference on Theosophical History. His full-length biography, *Gurdjieff: the Anatomy of a Myth*, is expected to appear in October, 1991.

Miss Nell C. Taylor's career began as a research scientist at the Clayton Foundation Biochemical Institute, University of Texas from 1945 to 1965, followed by a position at the Pritikin Research Foundation in Santa Barbara from 1977 to 1985. As a member of the Theosophical Society (Adyar), Miss Taylor has written numerous articles and book reviews for Theosophical journals and served as secretary at the Krotona School of Theosophy in Ojai (CA) from 1967 to 1971. She currently resides in Santa Barbara, California.

Dr. Godwin's background was noted in the last issue. He is a member of the Department of Music at Colgate University (Hamilton, New York) and serves as an Associate Editor for *Theosophical History*.

Mr. Daniel H. Caldwell, a resident of Tucson, Arizona, has been researching the life and teachings of H.P. Blavatsky for the past twenty-three years. A native of Littlefield, Texas, he has a Master's Degree in Library Science from the University of Arizona. He is currently working on two projects concerning Madame Blavatsky, which will be published this year.

Light

Mr. John Cooper, one of this journal's Associate Editors, recently located, while on a lecture tour in New Zealand, the first nineteen volumes of the Spiritualist journal *Light*, which was then edited by M.A. Oxon (William Stainton Moses, b. 1839, d. 1893) and his successors. These volumes cover the years 1881 to 1899 inclusively. Researchers of the Theosophical Society will find a wealth of material in *Light*, including articles by M.A. Oxon, letters by Helena Blavatsky, information on Coleman, Coues, Collins, Eglinton, Kiddle, Sinnett, and much more. Many readers may also be aware of one significant article published in *Theosophical History* (1/7:175-87) from Volume 15 (1895), "The Real Origin of the Theosophical Society" by Quaestor Vitae.

Copies of this publication can be obtained from the Editor of *Theosophical History* (Dept. of Religious Studies, California State University, Fullerton, CA 92634-9480) at a cost of \$5 (U.S.) for postage and mailing.

Theosophical History Conference

It was announced in the first number of this journal (III/1, January 1990) that an international conference on theosophical history and related topics was planned for June 1991. Unfortunately, the press of work in reorganizing the journal and bringing it up to date has prevented such an arrangement. The new target date for the conference will be early June or August 1992; the location will be Southern California (Los Angeles or San Diego). More information will appear in future issues as planning for the conference progresses. In the meantime, I welcome correspondence from readers who intend to participate and who might be willing to offer some assistance in organizing the conference.

James A. Santucci

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Letters

From Mr. Roger Worthington, F. T.S. (Kent, U. K.)

I would like to congratulate you on the return of an important periodical. *Theosophical History* is both interesting and valuable and I am delighted that someone has been able to pick up the work started by Leslie Price which forms a significant contribution to theosophical literature and which will become increasingly valuable as time passes. Memories fade and documents disappear and there is a finite time during which such research can be carried out.

The article on Prof. John Smith in Vol. III, Part I I found particularly interesting; such comments as “until quite recently ... Physics was known as Natural Philosophy” and “he argued that medicine was as much as art based on observation and experience as a science” especially revealing in the light of modern trends of thought.

From Mr. Andrew Rawlinson (Lancaster, England)

I wonder if you have any bibliographical suggestions for following up the esoteric connections of Count Hermann Keyserling (the subject of the first chapter of Rom Landau's *God is My Adventure?* We have a research student here who is doing a Ph.D. on him. Or if you haven't any leads, maybe you know of someone who does.

I am glad that *Theosophical History* is continuing. Although it is somewhat tangential to my own research interests, I have found that it contains a lot of useful material which has helped me in my work. That is one of the signs of a first-rate journal, I think (when non-specialists find it stimulating).

If any reader can help Mr. Rawlinson on Count Hermann Keyserling, please send all information to the editor of Theosophical History. The information will be then be forwarded to the correspondent.

From Mr. Vincente Hao Chin Jr. (Quezon City, Philippines)

The articles of April 1990 are good.

Perhaps you could feature regularly a book review, and a section on miscellaneous news and notes that has relevance to theosophical history. Also, letters.

From this issue on, letters and book reviews will be a regular feature.

We do urge correspondence on any point of historical interest covered by the journal, including articles printed elsewhere and ongoing research.

From Mr. Joseph Ross (Santa Barbara, CA)

After seeing and reading the second issue of *Theosophical History*, I would like to propose a suggestion for a new title: “Perspectives in *Theosophical History*,” plus a com-

ment or two on that we should not forget to remember that the only valid reason for studying history lies in its lessons for the present. The gratifying of curiosity as a selling motive is less important although it has its uses. The real importance of history viewed as the experience of that unity called Mankind, is Mankind knowing Himself.

For if we view history as “those people” doing whatever, we merely further the separatist attitude. To make the magazine of real service there needs to be a brief editorial statement in each issue, of the policy embodying the idea of its usefulness in helping us to further the enlightenment of humanity by seeing events as they are.

A good beginning, looking forward to future issues!

Any comment on Mr. Ross' observation will be welcome.

* * * * *

The H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: A Correction

By John Cooper

In editing the Collected Letters of H.P. Blavatsky I am analyzing much of the material available on her life and writings. Through the kindness of The Theosophical Society, with Headquarters at Pasadena, I have received copies of all the Blavatsky letters and telegrams in their Archive, including a telegram dated 18 October 1889 from Blavatsky to Judge. This telegram enables a correction to be made to the “Open Letter to All the Fellows of the Theosophical Society” in the H.P. Blavatsky: *Collected Writings* XI: 55160. This telegram also allows us to date the circular at about mid-October 1889.

In the telegram mentioned above H.P.B. asks that a correction be made, so that the third line on page 553 should read:

I received Mr. Lane’s application for the Esoteric Section with Mr. Judge’s recommendation.

The underlined words replace “Theosophical Society.”

Mr. Judge sent a circular to the Esoteric Section dated 23 October 1889, in which he slightly modified the correction to read: “Mr. Lane’s application for the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society.”

This correction makes more sense of the original as H.P.B. would not be required to approve applications for the Theosophical Society.

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The Hidden Hand, Part II: The Brotherhood of Light

By Joscelyn Godwin

Emma Hardinge-Britten (1823–1899), writing as “One Who Knows” in her periodical *The Two Worlds*,¹ defends her claim to be considered “an exponent of true Occultism” by relating that, before she was thirteen, a group of upper-class ladies and gentlemen sought her out to observe her “somnambulist” faculties. For several years she and some other young persons took part in their experiments.

The persons thus came into contact with were representatives of many other countries than Great Britain. They formed one of a number of secret societies they claimed an affiliation with societies derived from the ancient mysteries of Egypt, Greece, and Judaea they claimed that alchemy, mediaeval Rosicrucianism, and modern Freemasonry were off-shoots of the original Cabala, and that during the past 150 years new associations had been formed, and the parties who had introduced me into their arcanum were a society in affiliation with many others then in existence in different countries I am at liberty to say that Lord Lytton, the Earl of Stanhope, and Lieut. Morrison (better known as “Zadkiel”), and the author of “Art Magic,” belonged to this society.

I should have known but little of its principles and practices, as I was simply what I should now call a clairvoyant, sought out by the society for my gifts in this direction, had I not, in later years, been instructed in the fundamentals of the society by the author of “Art Magic.” When modern spiritualism dawned upon the world, for special reasons of my own, the fellows of my society gave me an honorary release from every obligation I had entered into with them except in the matter of secrecy.

This Orphic Circle was magical and experimental in nature, its method largely that of scrying (crystal-gazing) with the assistance of child mediums. The most famous of those who had pursued analogous researches in the past were John Dee, whose scryers included Edward Kelly, and Alessandro Cagliostro, who used boys and girls as his visionaries. Closer in time and place was Francis Barrett (1765–1825) who brought the practice to wider notice in his popular book *The Magus, or Celestial Intelligencer* (1801), where he advertised himself as giving instruction in occult sciences (Barrett 1801, 11: 135ff). Perhaps Barrett had been the founder of the circle in question. Of those whom Emma names, Lord Lytton is of course Bulwer Lytton (1803–1873), author of *Zanoni* (1842) and other novels of the occult. The Earl of Stanhope is presumably the Fourth Earl (1781–1855), a Fellow of the Royal Society and brother of the flamboyant Lady Hester Stanhope, whose career as a kind of feminine Messiah to the Arabs of Syria is another story. The Earl himself took an interest in the case of the enigmatic Caspar Hauser, and

paid to support the boy until his death.² Zadkiel, or Lieutenant Richard Morrison (1795-1874), was the most visible English astrologer of his century (Howe 1967:33-50), who made no secret of his scrying, actually writing to the press in the 1850s with accounts of his experiments.³

I think that it is plausible to accept the first part of *Ghost Land*, first published by Emma in 1872 in her periodical *The Western Star*, as a novelistic description of this society and its activities. The author of that book, the still unidentified Chevalier Louis de B____, tells there of how he contacted the “Orphic Circle” in London circa 1847, when he was about twenty-two and already experienced in mediumship. He says that soon afterwards, when the news of the Hydesville phenomena arrived in London, efforts were made by the Orphic Circle to emulate the new American spiritualism (Anonymous 1897:199).

Louis hints that above and beyond such magical and experimental groups there is one quite different secret society.

Its actual nature is only recognized, spoken, or thought of as a dream, a memory of the past, evoked like a phantom from the realms of tradition or myth; yet as surely as there is a spirit in man, is there in the world a spiritual, though nameless and almost unknown association of men, drawn together by the bonds of soul, associated by those interior links which never fade or perish, belonging to all times, places and nations alike. Few can attain to the inner light of these spiritually associated brethren, or apprehend the significance of their order; enough that it is, has been, and will be, until all men are spiritualized enough to partake of its exalted dispensations. Some members of this sublime Brotherhood were in session in England, and their presence it was which really sent thither my master and myself, at the time of which I write (Ibid.:68f.)

What Emma understood by these lines of her master is not known; there is of course no particular reason to take them as true, any more than other accounts of “Unknown Superiors.” However, by the 1870s she was herself a member of a different order called the “Brotherhood of Light,” which seems to have had a definite relationship with the activities and ideals of the mysterious orders of *Ghost Land* and of Emma’s youth.⁴ Let us hear the official story of how this brotherhood was founded, written by Peter Davidson in 1887. (He calls it the “H. B. of L.,” i.e. the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor.⁵)

In 1870 (and not in 1884, as the January number of *The Theosophist* says), an adept of the serene, ever-existing and ancient Order of the H. B. of L., after having obtained the consent of his Brother initiates, resolved to choose a neophyte in Great Britain who would answer to his plans.

After having performed an important private mission on the European continent, he went to England in 1873 and discovered by chance a neophyte who satis-

fied his ideas; after having thoroughly tested him and had his credentials verified, he gradually instructed this neophyte

The neophyte in question then obtained permission to establish an Exterior Circle of the H.B. of L., and thus to prepare all those who deserved it among the members for the form of initiation for which they were qualified ...⁶

There is plenty of evidence that this Order existed in the 1880s; but what interests us far more is the claim that it began as early as 1870, for this would lend credibility to the idea that it was involved in the beginnings of the Theosophical Society. Unfortunately we have only its own word for it.

However, there are a number of coincidences, insignificant if taken separately, which might together point to something of the kind. First, Lieutenant Morrison, mentioned as a member of the earlier Orphic Circle, promoted in his 1870 almanac (published 1869) "The Most Ancient Order of the Suastika (*sic*), or Brotherhood of the Mystic Cross," with an apprentice membership half a guinea.⁷ Morrison died in February 1874, but the name of this order, at least, survived him.

Second, in October and November 1873 the English occultist Francis George Irwin (1823–1898), who for years had been crystal gazing with his son Herbert as seer, was contacted by an entity that called itself "Count Cagliostro," and given, through the crystal, the history and rituals of an order calling itself the *Fratres Lucis*, "Brothers of Light" (Hamill 1986: 22f; Howe 1972: 257ff). Irwin was a retired Army officer and an avid pursuer of fringe and occult Masonry. "Cagliostro" told him that the *Fratres Lucis* had originated in fourteenth century Florence' (where, he said, they still existed), and had numbered among their members Ficino, Fludd, Thomas Vaughan, Saint Germain, Martin de Pasqually, Swedenborg, Schüssler, Mesmer, and Cagliostro himself. Other names used for the order were "Brotherhood of the Cross of Light" and "Order of [swastika symbol]," the latter surely a borrowing from Morrison. Its objects were the study and practice of "Natural Magic, Mesmerism, the Science of Death and of Life, Immortality, the Cabbala, Alchemy, Necromancy, Astrology and Magic in all its branches" (Howe 1972:260).

There had been a much earlier order called the *Fratres Lucis*, otherwise the "Asiatic Brethren of St. John the Evangelist in Europe," founded in Germany 1780 or 1781 by Hans Heinrich von Ecker und Eckhoffen and thought to have been extinguished early in the nineteenth century. As Christopher McIntosh says, "Its symbolism and ritual practice were an extraordinary amalgam of Jewish elements, Christian mysticism, alchemy and mystical Freemasonry."⁸ But there is no visible continuity between that order and the one that used the same name in the 1870s. The mythology of Irwin's Brotherhood of Light is dominated by the figure of Cagliostro, founder of Egyptian Masonry and martyr to the Roman Inquisition, who likewise does not figure in the records of the earlier *Fratres Lucis*.

Francis Irwin enrolled a very few friends in his *Fratres Lucis*: we know of Benjamin Cox, admitted in 1875 after being kept waiting for nearly a year (Howe 1972:258f); William Hockley, another veteran researcher into crystal gazing; and the Masonic histo-

rian Kenneth Mackenzie, admitted in 1876 at the earliest (Hamill 1986:23). To these we should add Irwin's son Herbert, who until his untimely death acted as the medium for his father's investigations. Mackenzie's versatile but frittered talents enabled the Brotherhood to acquire a wider, though no less mysterious, reputation: in his *Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia* of 1875–1877 he calls it “a mystic order, established in Florence in 1498. Among the members of this Order were Pasqualis, Cagliostro, Swedenborg, Saint-Martin, Eliphas Levi, and many other eminent mystics. Its members were much persecuted by the Inquisition. It is a small but compact body, the members being spread all over the world.” (Mackenzie 1877:453) Levi, whom Mackenzie had visited, had died in 1875 and hence could neither confirm nor deny his membership.

Mackenzie had earlier hinted at the existence of a secret order called the “Hermetic Order [or “Hermetic Brothers”] of Egypt.” In an article for the Rosicrucians' journal (Mackenzie 1874), he said that he had known only six members, of whom two were Germans and two Frenchmen. In adapting the description for his *Cyclopaedia*, he revised this estimate:

The body is never very numerous, and if we may believe those who at the present time profess to belong to it, the philosopher's stone, the elixir of life, the art of invisibility, and the power of communication directly with the ultramundane life, are parts of the inheritance they possess. The writer has met with only three persons who maintained the actual existence of this body of religious philosophers, and who hinted that they themselves were actually members (Mackenzie 1877:309).

In Mackenzie's semi-fictional scheme of things, this Hermetic Brotherhood of Egypt seems to bear an analogous relation to the *Fratres Lucis* as the unnamed secret society of *Ghost Land* did to the Orphic Circle. Both exemplify the principle of Unknown Superiors behind the societies that can be joined and the adepts who can be named.

William Hockley would also have been familiar with this kind of arrangement, having been instructed years before (probably in the mid-1850s) by his spirit guide, the “Crowned Angel of the Seventh Sphere,” about “that sacred society of which the Fathers are in Jerusalem ... followers of the Rosy Cross.” Members of this order “study the occult sciences after an interview with an invisible power.” Hockley's ghostly informant added that both Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Napoleon I had been members, and that if Hockley wanted to join, he would have to go to France. His letters show that he did visit Paris, but nobody knows what happened to him there (Hamill 1986:16).

Francis Irwin, for his part, was in Paris early in 1874, and claimed to have met with a warm reception there from members of the *Fratres Lucis*. In a confidential memorandum “To Aspirants Only,” Irwin says that five years before—i.e., in 1869—there had been only twenty-seven members in all (Howe 1972:259). Evidently this order, or its various branches, was a very modest affair.

However, their connections with France, coupled with the allusions in our sources to an “important private mission” in Paris on behalf of the Brotherhood of Light, put one on the alert. Was it not in June 1873 that Madame Blavatsky, who had settled in

Paris with her cousin, was suddenly interrupted by an “order from the Brotherhood” to go to America? From the French side there are rumors that the order was accompanied by a gift of 25,000 francs from Lady Caithness.⁹ This remarkable lady deserves a special study. Born in Spain and bearer also of the Papal title Duchess of Pomár (through her first husband), she had been involved in Spiritualism at least since the London Dialectical Society’s investigation of spiritualistic phenomena in 1869 (Anonymous 1925:17), where she would have encountered, among other testifiers, Emma Hardinge-Britten and William Hockley. In 1874 Lady Caithness herself went to America, and visited important Spiritualists including the Brittens in Philadelphia.¹⁰ Along with Charles Sotheran, she is a likely link between the three centers of Paris, London, and the American East Coast.

The question that now arises is whether Mme. Blavatsky’s mission to go to America could have been part of the same impulse as the reorganization of the Brotherhood of Light. Paul Johnson has recently shown, in his challenging book *In Quest of the Masters*, the role of Albert Rawson, Charles Sotheran, and others active in Cagliostro’s Egyptian Masonry in influencing her decision to leave Europe, and in guiding her once she was settled in New York. Their work, that of the British *Fratres Lucis*, and the contributions of Emma Hardinge-Britten and Lady Caithness begin to seem all of a piece.

As a last event of 1873, I would add that this was the year when the Reverend William Stainton Moses (1839–1893), having unexpectedly developed mediumistic gifts, received his first series of messages in automatic writing from a guide called “Imperator +.” Moses, who wrote under the pen-name of “M.A. (Oxon.),” was one of the best educated, and would become one of the most respected, of all Victorian mediums. We will see later something of his relations with Henry Olcott and the Theosophical Society.

Synchronism, however striking, is no proof of collusion. All esoteric orders must be known and judged, in the last analysis, by their fruits. A brief comparison of doctrines will show what sort of ideas were being given out during these crucial years. Here are some of the most important things that Stainton Moses learned through Imperator, mostly in 1873:

A new revelation is coming now (paraphrased from Moses 1933:131); We are doing for Christianity what Jesus did for Judaism (148)
 The Bible is a compilation, not literally true (183)
 Much of Jesus’s life is to be understood symbolically (256)
 Modern Christianity is a degenerate offspring of the original (233)
 Each religion is a ray of truth from the Central Sun (131)
 There have been many Messiahs (212)
 India is the source of all religions, and deserves to be studied (212)
 The ancient Egyptians were wise and erudite philosophers (217); Jesus was educated there (262)
 Man makes his own future, stamps his own character, suffers for his own sins, and must work out his own salvation (277)
 The only devils are the ones you create yourself (98)
 The spirit is a temporarily separated portion of divinity, which grows more and more like God (228)

The doctrine of transmigration is an error (218)
In America, many have developed so as to speak to “us” directly (239)

Some of these thoughts were strong stuff for a rather stubborn Church of England curate (just how stubborn can be seen from Moses’ written objections to his guide). Imperator was trying patiently to give him a broader view of religion, and of reality, while at the same time playing down the vulgar Spiritualist themes of communication with the dead and physical phenomena, with which so many in the movement were obsessed. Whoever Imperator was—and Mme. Blavatsky thought he might simply be Moses’ own Higher Self (ML 1924:43)—his teaching was perfectly adjusted to the needs of this pupil, at least.

The 1870s are also the period of *Art Magic*, published in 1876, attributed to the “Chevalier Louis whose autobiographical sketches had appeared as *Ghost Land*, and likewise edited by Emma Hardinge-Britten. If it is true, as Mme. Blavatsky’s critics like to say, that most of *Isis Unveiled* was taken from a hundred books, then *Art Magic* must have been taken from about ten! It is not an impressive work, though it was launched with much ado in a supposedly limited edition. Eric Dingwall thought that it may have been by the Baron de Palm¹¹ but Emma had a considerable stake in its success and in the reputation of her master, the Chevalier Louis. She must have felt completely upstaged by the appearance of *Isis* the following year, treating the same kind of material as *Art Magic*, but on a far grander scale and with the advantage of learned collaboration from such as Sotheran and Wilder; she never had another good word to say for her former colleague. However, the perpetrators of *Art Magic* thought they were doing something important, and we can extract the following doctrines from the mass of irrelevant padding:

One God can be traced through all ancient faiths (paraphrased from Anonymous 1898:35)
Jesus’s life is an allegory (50)
Much of ancient religion concealed solar or phallic worship (637)
India is the oldest source of wisdom (23)
Besides the Jewish Cabbala there is an Oriental Cabbala, but its key is found only in Oriental fraternities (81)
The Egyptian priests were masters of occult arts (187)
The human being is triple: Body, Astral Spirit, and the deific Soul (124)
Spirits have come from a heavenly, sexless state (this from a Hindu source) and lived on many earths before this one (29)
Modern reincarnationism is a fantasy (83)
There is evolution from elementals to humans, and from humans to angels and planetary spirits (93)
One can contact spirits on all three levels (8792)
Modern American Spiritualism marks a great spiritual outpouring (347)
Spiritualism needs scientific investigation (362)

Certainly these were far broader doctrines than those held by most American Spiritualists. The author, and presumably the editor, were encouraging the study of the Western magical tradition and of Oriental religions, and teaching that Spiritualism includes commerce with sub-mundane elementals and super-mundane angels, as well as with the “mundane” spirits of the unprogressed human dead. The common run of Spiritualists, on the other hand, believed all manifestations to be due to the latter alone. The author of *Art Magic* had said categorically in *Ghost Land* that the great names that seem to communicate in *séances* are merely adaptations to our need for great names: a deception, but a kind one. And he goes on to say of Spiritualism: “This modern movement is but the chaotic reflection of the ignorance, bigotry, credulity, and materialism of the age. Still it is the first step towards breaking the seals of that apocalyptic age that is even now upon us.” (Anonymous 1897: 288)¹²

How close Mme. Blavatsky was to this movement appears from her earliest article, “A Few Questions to ‘Hiraf,’” published in *The Spiritual Scientist*, 15 and 22 July 1875. In these half-dozen pages, which she called “my first occult shot,” she manages to air, among others, the following ideas (as paraphrased from BCW 1: 112):

This planet is a place of transition where we prepare for eternity. There is eternal progress for every living being (112)

The elementary spirits, often mistaken for those of the dead, are to us as we are to “Summer Land” (112)

Reincarnation is a “modern doctrine” (112)

Oriental philosophy denies the existence of Satan (111)

The Jewish religion is derived from the pagan Mysteries (118)

Ancient Cabalists knew as much as modern scientists (115)

Egyptian initiation took away the fear of death (115)

The Scriptures are full of secret meanings (114–115)

With the Hydesville rappings, the door is ajar (117)

Now Occultism needs to explain and alter much of Spiritualism (117)

These three doctrinal lists have a certain unanimity: they envisage a hierarchical universe and promise us eternal progress through it, though this does not necessarily involve reincarnation; they have a high regard for ancient and Eastern wisdom, and a low one for dogmatic Christianity; they imply that the Hydesville rappings of 1848 initiated an important era, but that the doctrines of Modern Spiritualism are inadequate. Much of *Isis Unveiled* would be a gigantic commentary on these themes. Yet there was nothing really new in them, at least to those familiar with the literature of Western esotericism and with recent scholarship in the history of religions. The novelty lay in their presentation in popular form, to a public already softened up by Spiritualism. As Louis put it:

The thoughts which shone in resplendent imagery before the eyes of my associates and myself a quarter of a century ago, have gradually been leavening the lump of civilized society during that whole period of time. (Anonymous 1897: 265)

The scattered evidence collected here will suggest different things to different persons, depending on their preconceptions. My own mind is open to the possibility of events for which materialistic science, and the historical scholarship modeled on it, has no place; consequently, I do not automatically dismiss the idea of immaterial influences, such as were suggested by many writers on the Hydesville incident. The triple purpose of this article is to furnish certain facts and references, which are not disputable; to suggest connections, whose significance is debatable (and should be debated); and to encourage speculation at the level for which Henry Corbin coined the valuable term of “hierohistory” (*hiérohistoire*): the superior or sacred history that gives meaning to earthly events. I would suggest that there was another hierohistorical event in the early 1870s; another move to affect public opinion, mainly by working from within the Spiritualist movement. The mediums in this case were not country folk like the Fox Sisters, but educated and articulate people, connected through the intersecting domains of Spiritualism, psychic research, magnetism, Freemasonry, etc.

There is circumstantial evidence that points to France as the immediate source of this impulse. Hockley was told that he would have to go there to be received by the “sacred society.” Irwin went to Paris himself and met members of the Brotherhood while gathering a small branch around him in England. Stainton Moses tuned in, as it were, and was contacted by an “Imperator” whose one bit of biographical revelation is that he studied at Paris (Moses 1933:182); before long, Moses was in the thick of things and knew all the *dramatis personae* of Spiritualism. Madame Blavatsky was in Paris when she received her orders to go to America, where she worked with Emma Hardinge-Britten, Henry Olcott, Charles Sotheran, and other people who may already have been known to such an occult center.¹³ She wrote to Stainton Moses in 1875: “I was sent from Paris to America on purpose to prove the phenomena and their reality, and show the fallacy of the spiritualistic theory of spirits.” (Moses 1892:331; ODL 1:13)

We are now in a position to turn once more to that most teasing witness, C.G. Harrison, whose book, *The Transcendental World*, was mentioned in Part One of this article, and to reread his statements about Mme. Blavatsky. Harrison learnt from an unnamed but well-placed informant:

... that modern spiritualism is an experiment on modern civilization decided on, about fifty years ago, by a federation of occult brotherhoods for the purpose of testing its vitality and ascertaining whether it is capable of receiving new truths without danger

That the “aspect of the heavens” at the time of the birth of Madame Blavatsky frightened the “Conservatives,” and resulted in a kind of “coalition ministry,” which gave place to a Liberal one in the year 1841.

That a “Brother of the Left” revealed this fact to Madame Blavatsky in Egypt about twenty years ago [1873], that she returned to Europe immediately, and imposed certain terms as a condition of reception into an occult brotherhood in

Paris, which were indignantly refused; that she was subsequently received in America and expelled very shortly afterwards (Harrison 1896: 31f).

Following this account, we would have to suppose that it was the “Liberal” ministry that decided to launch the leaky vessel of Modern Spiritualism in Hydesville; while presumably the “occult brotherhood in Paris” was the Inner Circle of the Brotherhood of Light that was just then, in 1873, choosing one or more neophytes for public work. I shall return to this event, and to this “Brother of the Left,” in Part Four of this article, on “The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor.”

A still more fantastic version is suggested by the mischievous historian of the Theosophical movement who lurks behind the pseudonym of “Narad Mani,” and who supplied much of the information for René Guénon’s account of early Theosophy.¹⁴ Referring to Mme. Blavatsky’s failed attempt to start a “miracle club” in Cairo, he writes:

The truth is that from her adventure in Cairo until the foundation of her so-called Theosophical Society, Mme. Blavatsky, pushed by someone, was only playing an undignified comedy, whose purpose was to support secretly the politics of those [i.e., the Jesuits] in whose favour Des Mousseaux had once fought, when, affirming without proof that the psychic fluid or vital spirit was exactly the same thing as the diabolic agency, he accused mediums of being simply under diabolic possession, and gave to Spiritualism the name of Satanism (Mani 1911–1912:542).

It would certainly have been the height of irony for Mme. Blavatsky, of all people, to have ended up working on the side of the “Black Brothers,” whom even Harrison names among the practitioners of the Left Hand Path. But it is naïve to suppose, as he and Narad Mani do, that she was nothing but a pawn in the hands of one or another manipulative group. H.P.B. was not, after all, a mere Katie Fox. And if for a time she worked with, and for, the Brotherhood of Light, they were soon to receive a rude shock, as will be described in Part Three of this article, “The Parting of East and West.”

Notes

¹ I am grateful to Leslie Price for obtaining a copy of this article (Hardinge-Britten 1887) for me. Emma’s authorship is confirmed by the repetition of much of it in her posthumous autobiography (Hardinge-Britten 1900: 3f.)

² See Hamill 1986: 36, 38n, on Lord Stanhope as purchaser of a crystal and supporter of Hauser. Johnson 1990 gives information on Lady Hester’s connections with Theosophy.

³ See Howe 1967: 42, for a list of aristocratic witnesses of Morrison’s sessions.

⁴ On Emma’s membership of the Brotherhood of Light, see Guénon 1952: 20f. Guénon’s information on this matter came from Félicien-Charles Barlet (= Albert Fauchaux), head of the “Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor” in France during the 1880s (Guénon 1965: 314).

⁵ See Board 1988 for evidence that Luxor and Light are synonymous.

⁶ Translated from Peter Davidson's essay, "Origine et Objet de l'H.B. of L.," in Anonymous 1988: 4.

⁷ Howe 1967: 46. Hockley calls it by the second name in a note recorded in Hamill 1986: 91. Morrison habitually used the sign of the swastika on his publications.

⁸ Citation from Christopher McIntosh's forthcoming book on the Gold- and Rosen-kreuz. See also Waite 1924: 503–528.

⁹ See Mani 26 Oct. 1911: 469; but compare Henry Olcott's story (ODL 1: 440), which shows Mme. Blavatsky living in poverty on her arrival in New York, while waiting to deliver some 23,000 francs, given her by her Master, to its destined recipient.

¹⁰ Caithness 1876: 117. This book is so similar in doctrine to *Art Magic* and *Isis Unveiled* (its sole divergence being in Lady Caithness's belief in reincarnation) that I suspect that the three women were, at the time of writing, consciously working towards a common goal.

¹¹ See his Introduction to Hardinge-Britten 1970: xvi.

¹² Emma Hardinge-Britten had been teaching many of these things for years: her *Six Lectures* in 1860 read like a sketch for *Art Magic*, which is plausible if, as she says, Louis taught her all she knew in the way of doctrine.

¹³ Emma had been in Paris as a child-Medium, and again in 1855 just before she first went—or "was sent"—to America. Olcott had been in London in 1870 and knew the Dialectical Society circle.

¹⁴ If he was not, indeed, Guénon himself.

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The Blavatsky Gurdjieff Question: A Footnote on Maude Hoffman and A. T. Barker

James Moore

It is not difficult to see striking similarities between Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff, nor is it difficult to see striking disparities. Each of them in an era when the convergent ideas of Darwin, Marx, and Freud threatened to rule out the noumenal as a domain meriting serious adult consideration offered to modern man a coherent model of an essentially sacred universe: a 'hearth' for man's lawful spiritual aspiration. This alone makes them neighborly. We do no service alike to their memory, to scholarship, or to the unknown springs of their teaching, if we load this affinity with a weight it will not safely bear. To deal justly with their markedly discrepant views would require an entire book, and surely a degree of knowledge and impartiality difficult to reach. Any rush to judgement must veer towards an ignoble polemic.

Gurdjieff's theoretical ideas (perhaps in contradistinction to his practical methods) were chiefly propagated in England by Piotr Demianovich Ouspensky (1878–1947) and by Alfred Richard Orage (1873–1934) in America. These two gifted and sincere men first put down their spiritual roots in theosophical ground: Ouspensky in St. Petersburg and Orage in Leeds. Both had relinquished theosophy long before they met Gurdjieff, and not with any animus. Indeed, Ouspensky briefly conferred with Annie Besant at Adyar as late as the second half of 1913.

Let us turn for a moment from Gurdjieff to mainstream theosophy. Shortly before his death on 26 June 1921, Alfred Percy Sinnett appointed as his sole legatee Miss Maude Hoffman (? –1953), who had tended him with a daughter's devotion during his last illness. In the light of differences lately arising between Mr. Sinnett and Mrs. Besant, Miss Hoffman herself elected to make public the Mahatma letters and chose as their editor Mr. Alfred Trevor Barker. Miss Hoffman was an American, a Shakespearean actress with some literary talent, and a friend of Mabel Collins, author of *Light on the Path*; Mr. Barker was a personal friend, who had been initially a member of the Parent Theosophical Society at Adyar and subsequently a member of the Point Loma Theosophical Society.

On 5 April 1919, when Mr. Baillie Weaver made the presentation of an honorarium to Mr. Sinnett at 146 Harley Street, Miss Hoffman was sharing that house with two distinguished ex-pupils of C. G. Jung, namely Dr. Henry Maurice Dunlop Nicoll (1884–1953) and Dr. James Carruthers Young (? –1950). Miss Hoffman and these two psychiatrists also jointly owned a weekend cottage at Chorley Wood in Buckinghamshire.

What is arguably significant to the Blavatsky Gurdjieff question is that Hoffman, Barker, Nicoll, and Young all became pupils of Ouspensky at 38 Warwick Gardens, Kensington during the autumn of 1921, and of Gurdjieff himself during the spring of 1922. In the autumn of 1922, all four became residential pupils at Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, situated at the Prieuré at Fontainebleau-Avon.

Dr. Nicoll's and Dr. Young's accounts of their stay with Gurdjieff are tangential to our consideration here. Mr. Barker appears to have left no comparable personal record of his time at the Prieuré, but the unpublished journal of Miss Ethel Merston (1879– ?) places him there with reasonable reliability as early as Saturday 30 September 1922, the date the building was actually leased to Gurdjieff. Although frail, Mr. Barker was doing vigorous preparatory work as part of a tiny team consisting of Dr. Young and no less personages than Gurdjieff's wife, Julia Ostrowska, and Ouspensky's wife, Sophie Grigorievna. His continued presence there is corroborated by Katherine Mansfield's undoubtedly reliable letter of 19 November 1922 to John Middleton Murry. Maude Hoffman's account of her even longer Prieuré stay was published in the *New York Times* (10 February 1924, Section VII, 13). The legatee of A. P. Sinnett, the custodian of the Mahatma letters, says of Gurdjieff: You get a first impression of a nature of great kindness and sensitiveness. Later you learn that in him is combined strength and delicacy, simplicity and subtlety. The key words of the Gurdjieff Institute are 'work' and 'effort'. Nothing is made easy in this place.

To calibrate all this with the actual editing and publication of the Mahatma letters and to draw sensible inferences would demand a more intimate knowledge of theosophical chronology and of successive editions than I, a Gurdjieffian, possess. The key may have disappeared with the death of Maude Hoffman on 20 June 1953; up to the last she remained in close touch with Dr. Nicoll, who had become one of the chief expositors of Gurdjieff's ideas.

Then do we lose ourselves in dreamy historical speculation? Or do we struggle to bear witness here and now in our diurnal round to the perennial vitality of an esoteric impulse which, though it finally transcends history, requires on this plane an apt human instrument?

* * * * *

THE MYSTERIOUS LIFE AND TRANSITIONS OF THE CAGLIOSTRO JEWEL

Nell C. Taylor

Imagine a silver and gold pendant shaped as a jeweled compass, surmounted by an emerald-studded crown, carrying between the arms of the compass a cross of rubies above a gold and silver pelican feeding its young in a nest. Imagine further that the gem stones in the emblem are living galvanometers responding to the vital vibrations of its owner. Such is a description of the mysterious 18th Degree Rosicrucian Jewel, formerly belonging to Cagliostro, but in recent times worn by H.P. Blavatsky. Set with yellow, green, white and red gems, the pure white stones “had the occult property of changing their color to a dark green and sometimes muddy brown, when she was out of health.”¹

What do we know about the history of this remarkable jewel?² Is it valuable because of the precious gems and metals comprising it? Is it coveted for its astonishing occult properties, or as a talisman? For its association with the Rosicrucians? With Cagliostro? With H.P.B? Perhaps all of these. But what is certain, and what is important is that the jewel is a historical landmark and belongs in the archives of the Theosophical Society.

H.P.B. wrote in her diary of 1878, on 2 December, “Found the Rosy Cross Jewel missing from the bureau drawer. Know who took it. It will come back.”³

And it did come back. The adept Serapis refers to it in a brief note to Olcott, “The lost one is restored in its proper place. The gueburs [mischievous elementals] made it invisible out of malice.”⁴ And other people have been solicitous for the keeping of this Jewel.

But first let us look at the physical structure of the jewel. Its most recent owner was Rukmini Devi Arundale, deceased 23 February 1986, the wife of Dr. George Arundale, third International President of the Theosophical Society.

The accompanying diagram was prepared from a sketch made by Joseph E. Ross in 1978, with her permission, and from notes on the gems he made at the time.

the head of the bird. . . . the head of the phoenix being far more like that of an eagle than of a pelican. In the Mysteries it was customary to refer to initiates as phoenixes or men who had been born again for just as physical birth gives man consciousness in the physical world, so the neophyte, after nine degrees in the womb of the Mysteries, was born into a consciousness of the spiritual world.⁹

H.P.B. devotes considerable attention to the meanings of the cross and circle.¹⁰ The compass, being the instrument for constructing a circle, symbolizes the abstract Deity—thus, the rationale for including it in the 18th Degree Jewel. The equal-armed cross of rubies, represents man in incarnation, enclosed within the arms of the compass—the cross representing man’s divine aspect, the rose color, the symbol of Nature and virgin Earth, the celestial mother and nourisher of man.¹¹ Above the compass is the crown, emblem of royalty, shedding its beneficent aura over all the symbols of the Jewel. In Oriental scriptures, the highest spiritual teachings are called “the Royal Secret Doctrine.”¹²

Who Was Cagliostro?

For readers unacquainted with the history of the Rosicrucians or Cagliostro, the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross, H.P.B. says, was founded in the mid-thirteenth century by a German knight named Rosencranz.¹³ As the Christian religion is divided into various sects, so the Rosicrucian sect subsequently gave birth to other Cabalistic branches of Masonry.

Of the life of Count Alessandro di Cagliostro, little is known, but much is presumed. Most of his biographers depict him as quite a scoundrel and connect him with a Giuseppe Balsamo, a native of Sicily. H.P.B. remarks in her article “Was Cagliostro a ‘Charlatan’?” that this was a symbolic name, likely given to him by his adept teacher, as was customary for disciples destined to work in the world.¹⁴ Validity for his title, however, can be traced to a distant relative through his maternal grandmother’s family. Dates of his life are estimated to be 1743 to 1795.

After a somewhat stormy youth, the still young Cagliostro went to Malta and there studied the Mysteries. He always told people he was born in Malta, meaning that he was there born into the spiritual life, there first initiated into magical rites.

Ordinarily he was the most captivating and charming of gentlemen, kind to the afflicted and generous to the indigent. But when hypocrisy goaded him too much, he could exhibit a violent temper.

In the early 1770s, while living in England, Cagliostro and his wife Serafina were very poor, and at first earned their living by selling his drawings. Later they lived in wealth. Cagliostro was reputed to be able to enlarge pearls and to transmute base materials into gem stones and precious metals. In London, he was initiated into Freemasonry in the Scottish rite. Cagliostro travelled to many cities in Europe, some in Russia, in each place establishing Masonic lodges. His powers of healing were spectacular. Wherever he travelled his reputation preceded him, and large crowds sought his drawing room. He never took money for treatment and was persecuted by the medical

authorities for practicing medicine without certification. When life became too complicated in one place, he moved to another.

In France, Cagliostro was held in great esteem by many noblemen and royalty. Goethe and Schiller were among his admirers. A scheming Countess de la Motte implicated him in a scandal involving a diamond necklace allegedly ordered by Marie Antoinette. For this, both Cagliostro and his wife were for a time incarcerated in the Bastille until he could prove their innocence. His indiscretion in demonstrating his alchemical powers—making diamonds and gold “out of nothing”—perhaps, one may surmise, led to these quick karmic results.

Cagliostro was a clairvoyant who predicted many incidents which actually came to pass. Furthermore, other remarkable predictions from mediumistic children he utilized in his masonic lodges also came to pass. Among those attending his meetings were priests and high churchmen, including Cardinal de Rohan, himself of the royal family. But Cagliostro’s being a Mason and an occultist and knowing “many secrets—deadly to the Church of Rome”¹⁵ brought him the persecution of the Jesuits.

He worked, in 1785, in the Lodge of Philalethes along with Mesmer and other professional, literary, legal, financial, and clerical men. He attempted to bring into it the Eastern teaching of the divine and intermediate principles in man. But they refused to give up their traditional forms. He remained a Mason, but created his own ritual in the Egyptian tradition.

A letter of 1789 refers to the Count di Cagliostro and his wife arriving in Italy, having great wealth and being sought by many for private interviews. In 1790, he, his wife and a Capuchin monk were arrested and brought before the Inquisition. On April 7, 1791, he was condemned to death after a lengthy trial, lengthy because they could find no suitable evidence to prove his guilt. His books and family possessions were burnt in a public square.

As he was about to be turned over to civil authorities, a stranger appeared at the Vatican and demanded a private audience with the Pope, sending him a word instead of a name. He was received immediately by the Pope and shortly after, the Pope commuted the sentence to life imprisonment in the Castle of San Leo. He was reported to have died in prison, but some say he escaped and that the jailors, to save face, had to pretend that he died and was buried below the Castle.

Cagliostro, along with his contemporary, the Count de St. Germain, was believed to have discovered the secret of longevity and thus appeared again in 1861.¹⁶ H.P.B. says, “The Count de Saint-Germain is, until this very time, a living mystery... The countless authorities we have in literature, as well as in oral tradition (which sometimes is the more trustworthy) about this wonderful Count’s having been met and recognized in different centuries, is no myth.”¹⁷ And quoting Eliphas Levi that “Cagliostro, who died forsaken in the cells of the Inquisition,” H.P.B. in a footnote says, “This is false, and the Abbe Constant (Eliphas Levi) knew it was so.”¹⁸

Chronology of the Jewel

To outline the transitions of ownership of the Cagliostro Jewel during the past one hundred and more years, we have seen that H.P.B. in 1878 noticed it gone from her bureau drawer, and that it came back to her. How she came to have it initially, Rukmini Arundale, interviewed by Joseph Ross, said, "During the French Revolution, Cagliostro was really very busy and working with the Master, the Prince [Count Saint Germain]. I don't know how H.P.B. got it, but she saw him on the physical plane. He was evidently still living somewhere. So, he gave it to her, for the real Masonic Order is there. And she gave it to Dr. Besant."¹⁹

Annie Besant said late in 1893 that she saw evidence supporting the rumors that William Q. Judge had forged messages from the Master.²⁰ In 1894, she issued a "Statement Prepared for the Judicial Committee" containing six charges of untruthfulness in his claimed communications with the Master. Charge III was titled "Deception Practised Toward H.S. Olcott with regard to the Rosicrucian Jewel of H. P. B." ²¹

Mrs Besant described the Jewel incident in her pamphlet on the case, published in 1895:

... at Colonel Olcott's request she [H.P.B.] lent it to him, and it remained in his possession when H.P.B. finally left India in 1885.

In 1888, when Colonel Olcott came to England, he brought over a number of H.P.B.'s things for her, this Rosicrucian Jewel among them, and handed it over to her at 17, Lansdowne Road. She sometimes wore this Jewel afterwards, and it was among H.P.B.'s things after her death. Mr. Judge saw it among them when he came over to London in May, 1891.

In August, 1891, after Mr. Judge had returned to New York, I received a letter from him, on which was written an order in the Mahatma M's script desiring me to send this Rosicrucian Jewel to Mr. Judge. I accordingly sent the Jewel carefully packed in a sealed packet to New York by Colonel Olcott (the Colonel knowing nothing of the contents of the packet), he handed the packet to Mrs. J.C. Ver Planck, who wrote to me acknowledging the receipt, and said she would lock it away. I also wrote Mr. Judge, telling him that I had sent the Jewel by Colonel Olcott.

On September 12th, 1891, Mr. Judge, writing in the train, and dating 'In Wyoming on the R.R.', wrote me: —

"Yes, it is the silver phoenix. I will tell J.C.V.P. to keep the package in my safe."...

In October, 1891, when Colonel Olcott was at the house of Dr. J. Anderson, in San Francisco, he was telling Dr. A. about H.P.B.'s Rosicrucian Jewel and the mysterious property possessed by the stones in it, of changing colour with the state of her health. In this connection the Colonel remarked that he had the Jewel at Adyar, and when he got back there would look and see if the stones had changed colour since H.P.B.'s death. Mr. Judge was present at this conversation. On hearing this last remark he said to Colonel Olcott:

"Olcott, the Master tells me to say that He has taken the Jewel away from Adyar, and that when you get back you will find it gone. Let this be a proof to you of the genuineness of the communications that I receive from the Mahatmas."

After his return to Adyar, Colonel Olcott recounted what had occurred to B. Keightley, who thereupon said that he had seen the Colonel give the jewel to H.P.B. in London in 1888 or 1889. His servant Babula corroborated, saying that he had himself put the jewel in the Colonel's trunk .”²²

In the same pamphlet, similar evidence is given in a statement by Bertram Keightley:

... in 1888, I was present in H.P.B.'s room when H.S.O. gave to H.P.B. the Rosicrucian-Jewel...” and that in 1891, “while driving up to Adyar Headquarters from the harbour on his return H.S.O. related to me his conversation with W.Q.J. in San Francisco... I at once reminded H.S.O. that he had given the Rosicrucian Jewel to H.P.B. as above described in 1888 in London. I was also present when Babula reminded H.S.O. that he (Babula) had himself packed the Jewel in H.S.O.'s trunk when H.S.O. was going to Europe in 1888.”²³

On July 18, 1894, a joint statement by Judge and Olcott give conflicting reports of the incident of 1891:

William Q. Judge & Col. H.S. Olcott hereby together agree in writing that the following states what ...Judge said ...in Oct. 1891 at Dr. Anderson's house.

W.Q. Judge says: “Col. Olcott having stated that the Jewel was at Adyar, I went into my room adjoining. In a few moments I came back to Col. Olcott's room and said to him, ‘Col., Master says I may tell you that the Jewel is not at Adyar and you will not find it there.’ No more was said and not a single word was uttered by me to the effect that Master had taken the Jewel away.”

“Col. Olcott says: ‘My recollection of the incident differs from the above. At the same time, as no notes of the conversation were made by me at the time, it is but fair to say that my memory is as likely to have misled me as Mr. Judge's or Dr. Anderson's to have misled them. The scene occurred, to the best of my recollection, in Mr. Judge's bedroom...; the persons present were Dr. Anderson, Mr. Judge and myself... I described to Dr. Anderson the well-known Rosicrucian jewel... I said that on returning to Adyar I should ...see whether the crystals had resumed their proper hue or perhaps turned black since H.P.B.'s death. Judge, who was standing next me...said, ‘Olcott, the Master tells me that you will not find the jewel at Adyar...’ ...I should be disposed ...to indicate that the Master had taken it away, but my memory fails me in this respect and I will not venture to say that such words were spoken. The clear impression made on me, however . . . is that Judge was giving me a test of his power to get communications from the Masters; and. ...as soon as I got to Adyar I hunted for the jewel, and then discovered that I had myself taken it to London in 1888 and returned it to H.P.B. herself. [Signed] H.S. Olcott, London 18 July 1894.”²⁴

In preparation for his defense against charges brought against him to the General Council, Judge telegraphed to Dr. Anderson, June 18, 1894, that one charge was that Judge told Olcott the Master said the Jewel was not at Adyar, and asks Anderson to mail

at once an affidavit whether this was true or false. Surprisingly, Anderson's notarized reply stated:

There did not to the best of my recollection and belief, occur in my presence any conversation between them relative to the Rosicrucian jewel of the late Madame H.P. Blavatsky, nor was there in my presence any statements to the effect that "Judge told him (Olcott) Master then said that the Jewel was not at Adyar," as quoted in a telegram hereunto attached, nor was there any reference to said jewel nor to Master in this or any cognate connection.... That the conversation referred to in the telegram hereunto attached did not occur, and that there is no lapse on the part of my memory will be appreciated when I state that this was the first time I had ever had the pleasure of meeting Col. Olcott, and the first time I had ever had the opportunity of conversation with Mr. Judge, and, owing to the prominent connection of both with the Society, I was both attentive and watchful for any hint as to the Society, generally, and any mention of the Masters, particularly, as I was most intensely eager for information concerning the latter. [Signed] Jerome A. Anderson, M.D."²⁵

Now follows a gap of nearly three years wherein the writer has not been able to trace the actual location of the Jewel. It is of record that Mr. Judge or Mrs. Ver Planck had it in September 1891. Mrs. Ver Planck wrote to Mrs. Besant, 23 September 1891:

I note your instructions re packet. Mr. Judge has told me to place it, endorsed, in the safe of Mr. Neresheimer, as our own here is used by several persons.

And again on 26 September 1891:

Col. H.S. Olcott handed me the parcel from you, Mr. Neresheimer being present, and as the Col. left the room, & Mr. Neresheimer remained, I put the whole into one of our large linen envelopes, sealed it, and Mr. Neresheimer endorsed it for Mr. Judge & took it at once to his safe. It occurred to me afterwards, that had you been so gracious as to send me a line within the outer envelope addressed to me, I have now to wait till Mr. Judge returns for the contentment of reading it!!"²⁶

It is also of record that Colonel Olcott or Mrs. Besant had it in July 1894. The Archivist of the Theosophical Society, Pasadena, California, made a search for any reference in Judge's papers to the return of the Jewel to Mrs. Besant, and reported "for the present... we have no information to send you. 27 No response has been received from Radha Burnier at the Theosophical Society, Adyar, India, regarding anything among Mrs. Besant's or Olcott's papers relating to the return of the Jewel. Perhaps some day a document will be found to clarify this period in the Jewel's chronology.

So, from Judge's or Mrs. Ver Planck's possession, the Jewel came back somehow to Mrs. Besant. C. Jinarajadasa, fourth International President of the Theosophical Society, referred to two paintings of the Cagliostro Jewel:

The first one is painted and signed by John Varley on July 28, 1894, and is witnessed at back "as being a fair representation" by Mrs. Varley and countersigned with Col. Olcott's signature of the same date. The second painting a week before was painted by Mrs. Isabel Cooper-Oakley and witnessed by H.S. Olcott, G.T. Campbell and A.J. Willson. If H.P.B. gave it to Amma [Mrs. Besant before her death in 1891, it must have been in her possession and she must have lent it to Col. Olcott for the paintings. Furthermore, evidently Col. Olcott was under the impression when he made his will that the jewel was with him in Adyar.²⁸

Colonel Olcott's Will,²⁹ dated Adyar, 11 January 1907, states:

The Rosicrucian jewel and Master M.'s portrait (painted by Mrs. Jibhart) now loaned to Annie Besant, are to be returned to the curios [sic] at Headquarters after her death.

Jinarajadasa wanted to have a bust made of Mrs. Besant, not when she was old but in the year 1902. He wrote to Rukmini Arundale:

. . . in the year 1902 ... a photograph of her [Besant was taken in Florence by an Italian painter... In this photograph Amma [Besant] is wearing H.P.B.'s Rosicrucian Jewel. You will recall my sending you the part of the Will of Colonel Olcott where he leaves the Jewel to the Society. It is now with you and you said sometime you would return it. I presume Amma herself did not recall this clause in the Colonel's Will, so that when she made her own Will... she did not mention the jewel... I presume it is locked up with your other jewels ...and if so I would like you to hand the jewel over to me and take a receipt from me. I can then see to the cast being made for the bust and that the jewel is placed in Amma's safe in her room."³⁰

Mrs Arundale recounted how the Jewel came to her:

And one day, Dr. Besant called Dr. Arundale over to her room and invited me also to come. Then she put this around his neck and said, "I want you to wear this." Then, next minute she smiled at me and she said, "Of course, it's also for Rukmini." She said, "And so she can wear it any time." So I kept it."³¹

When Jinarajadasa insisted on her returning it because Colonel Olcott wrote in his Will that the Jewel should go to the Society after his death, Rukmini Arundale said to him:

"How can that be true? Because, here Dr. Besant gave it directly to us, and how could he have said that in his will? And she said H.P.B. gave it. She couldn't have told an untruth." And then he looked still further and discovered that this was worn by Dr. Besant before Colonel Olcott died. 1902, and Colonel Olcott died in 1907. So then, he wrote to me saying, "You are quite right. So Colonel Olcott must have made a mistake." He [Olcott] probably thought, having seen this rare

thing, “You see, we don’t know what will happen. It should go to the Society.” But not meaning that legally it was his property, he must have put it that way.³²

Rukmini Arundale responded to Jinarajadasa’s letter, saying:

Two years ago I started travelling by aeroplanes, and at the suggestion and with the help of Henry Hotchener I made a will. Knowing the value of the Cagliostro jewel I have left it to the Theosophical Society at my death with many other valuable possessions.”³³

The fascinating Cagliostro Rosicrucian Jewel no doubt is, or was, a highly magnetized object. Its significance when worn by a person of the 18th Degree may not be so much in the attainment of occult status as in the work the wearer is intended to do. Seven people have possessed it since Cagliostro—HPB, bringer of light; Olcott, spreader of light; Besant, expositor of light; Ver Planck, keeper of light; Judge, counsellor of light; George and Rukmini Arundale, devotee and transformer of light. All these have made significant contributions to the theosophical movement. Whether or not the Cagliostro Jewel is destined to further assist humanity’s evolution remains to be seen.

Notes

* The author gratefully acknowledges her indebtedness to Joseph E. Ross for the use of his unique archives and for his valuable comments and suggestions during the preparation of this article.

¹ Henry Steel Olcott. *Old Diary Leaves, Fourth Series, 1887–1892*. Vol. IV (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1910), 395.

² In the terminology of Masonic and other secret orders, the symbol representing a stage, degree, or function of an office is called a “Jewel,” whether or not it contains one or more precious gems.

³ Boris de Zirkoff, comp., *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: Volume I. 1874–1878*. Second ed. (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1977), 425.

⁴ C. Jinarajadasa, *Letters From the Masters of the Wisdom: Second Series*. Transcribed and Annotated by C. Jinarajadasa (Chicago: The Theosophical Press, 1926), 54.

⁵ Boris de Zirkoff, comp., *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: Volume XIV: Miscellaneous*. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff. Second ed. (Wheaton IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1985), 59. Also, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion And Philosophy*: Volume 5. Fourth ed. (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1938), 85.

⁶ *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, XIV: 200. *The Secret Doctrine* V: 201.

⁷ Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy, Vol. I, Cosmogogenesis* (Pasadena, Theosophical University Press, 1988), facsimile of the original edition, 19. Also, see the Adyar edition, Vol. I, 4th ed. (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House 1938), 84.

⁸ *The Secret Doctrine* (Pasadena edition), I: 80; Adyar ed., I: 146.

⁹ Manly P. Hall, *An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolic Philosophy; Being an interpretation of the secret teachings concealed within the rituals, allegories and mysteries of all ages* (Los Angeles: The Philosophical Research Society, 1977), [Reduced facsimile of 1928 ed.], 39.

¹⁰ Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy, Vol. II, Anthropogenesis* (Pasadena, Theosophical University Press, 1988), 54562. Also, Adyar edition, Vol. 4. 4th ed. (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House 1938), 115–32.

¹¹ *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings XIV: 292; The Secret Doctrine*, Adyar ed., V: 293.

¹² Bhagavan Das, trans., *Mystic Experiences Tales of Yoga and Vedanta from the Yoga Vasishtha*. Third ed. (Varanasi. The Indian Bookshop, 1959), 36.

“And for the Science was first given to kings, it has come down under the name of Raja-vidya, Raja-guhya, Science of Kings and King of Sciences, the Royal Secret Doctrine.”

¹³ *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings I: 104-5.*

¹⁴ Boris de Zirkoff, comp., *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: Vol. XII: 1889–1890*. (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1980), 79. The entire article (78–88) appeared first in *Lucifer*.

¹⁵ *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: Vol. XII: 81.*

¹⁶ *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings I:161.*

¹⁷ *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: Vol. I:109.*

¹⁸ *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings I:1 61.*

¹⁹ Rukmini Devi Arundale. Tape-recorded interview. April 8, 1978. Joseph E. Ross private archives.

²⁰ Annie Besant, *The Case Against W, Q. Judge* (Publ. at the offices of the Theosophical Publishing Society 7, Duke St. Adelphi, W.C., 1895), 14.

²¹ Annie Besant, *The Case Against W, Q. Judge*, 23–26.

²² Annie Besant, *The Case Against W, Q. Judge*, 44–45.

²³ Annie Besant, *The Case Against W. Q. Judge*, 77.

²⁴ Archives, Theosophical Society (Pasadena).

²⁵ Letter of Jerome A. Anderson, M.D., "To Whom it May Concern," 18 June 1894, Archives, Theosophical Society (Pasadena).

²⁶ Letters to Mrs Besant, 23 September and 26 September 1891. Archives, Theosophical Society (Pasadena).

²⁷ Letter from The Archivist of the Theosophical Society (Pasadena), Kirby Van Mater, 6 March 1990.

²⁸ Letter from C. Jinarajadasa to Srimati Rukmini Devi Arundale, 2 June 1948. Joseph E. Ross private archives.

²⁹ Copy of Colonel Olcott's will, dated 11 January 1907, certified by T.S. (Adyar) Treasurer A.J. Hamerster, Adyar, 20 October 1933, that this is a true copy of the original Will and Codicil deposited in the Registry of the High Court at Madras, certified by the 2nd Assistant Register, 24 April 1912. Joseph E. Ross private archives.

³⁰ Letter from C. Jinarajadasa to Rukmini Devi Arundale, 26 May 1948. Joseph E. Ross private archives.

³¹ Arundale, Rukmini Devi. Tape-recorded interview, 8 April 1978. Joseph E. Ross private archives.

³² Arundale, Rukmini Devi. Tape-recorded interview, 8 April 1978.

³³ Letter from Rukmini Devi Arundale to C. Jinarajadasa, 28 June 1948. Copy in Joseph E. Ross private archives.

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Book Reviews

James A. Santucci

TRUTH IS A PATHLESS LAND: A JOURNEY WITH KRISHNAMURTI. By Ingram Smith. Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1989. Pp. x + 220: Illustrations, Paper, \$8.25.

KRISHNAMURTI: THE RELUCTANT MESSIAH. By Sidney Field. Edited by Peter Hay. New York: Paragon House, 1989. Pp. vii + 157. \$16.95.

Both books are concerned with the authors' acquaintance with one of the most influential philosophers of the twentieth century, Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895–1986): Ingram Smith recalling his association from 1949 to 1983, Sidney Field's from the 1920s to the early 1970s.

Mr. Smith is a noted writer-producer for the Australian Broadcasting Commission; Mr. Field (1905–1988), born into the family largely responsible for establishing the Theosophical Society in Costa Rica, was once a writer for the Walt Disney Studios (California). Despite their differing backgrounds, it is perhaps not surprising that both authors share such a similar opinion of Krishnamurti: one of great admiration to the point of adulation, especially in Mr. Smith's case. The philosopher takes on somewhat of a mythical and mystical quality that perhaps may cause the skeptical reader to wonder whether the accounts are balanced and accurate. They will nonetheless certainly confirm the sentiments of his disciples and admirers. Both books are therefore concerned more with the impact of Krishnamurti on the authors; as such, they are less biographical, less historical, and more contemplative.

Still in all, the general reader will find some insight into the personality and teachings of Krishnamurti. This is especially true of Mr. Smith, who provides snippets of his teaching and teaching method. One drawback of the book in my opinion is the author's raising but never pursuing the question of one of the more perplexing problems of the whole Krishnamurti movement. Why have an organization to perpetuate a teaching when truth, according to Krishnamurti, is considered a pathless land? The question is certainly valid but left completely unanswered; in fact, once raised it is completely ignored. It is almost as puzzling as the classic question raised in Buddhism: what is reborn if the soul is denied. At least an answer is attempted in Buddhism.

Sidney Field, on the other hand, writes less of Krishnamurti's teachings and more on the arena where he, Field, and Krishnamurti were the main actors. The interest in this book rests more with the Field family's relative importance in the theosophical world. We learn, for instance, that his parents and grandparents were in part responsible for establishing the Theosophical Society (Adyar) in Costa Rica and were the first representatives of the Order of the Star in the East. His family was therefore associated with the O.S.E. from the early years, shortly after the discovery of the young boy Krish-

namurti by C. W. Leadbeater and Mrs. Besant as the intended vehicle for the Christ. Mr. Fields' reminiscences of this period (1915 to 1920) of two prominent theosophists and O.S.E. members who happened to become Presidents of Costa Rica—Federico Tinoco and the artist Tomás Povedano de Arcos—the latter once the court painter to Queen Cristina, as well as Krishnamurti's status in the country, are mentioned in passing.

After Costa Rica, the Field family settled in Hollywood in 1925. Krishnamurti's connection with the Hollywood film community is somewhat well known, and this is brought out very well by the book. One amusing story told by him concerns the film actress Luise Rainer's opinion that Krishnamurti would make a great actor because of his looks and personality. Other names prominent in the community who frequented Krishnamurti's Arya Vihara in Ojai, not very far from Hollywood, are also mentioned, most notably Charlie Chaplin, Greta Garbo, Yul Brynner, Angela Lansbury, and John Hustin.

Scattered throughout the book are vignettes and opinions of the prominent players in the Order of the Star and the Theosophical Society, with Krishnamurti's remarks sprinkled here and there, that will surely interest the reader. Also the problems and eventual rupture between Krishnamurti and his longtime business associate and President of Krishnamurti Writings Inc., Rajagopal, are presented in some detail.

Of the two books, Field's is of greater historical interest and will surely appeal to those readers familiar with Krishnamurti's frequent sojourns in Ojai. Smith's book is the more contemplative and certainly more the work of a disciple. Both come up rather short, in my opinion, in giving a critical assessment of Krishnamurti the man and the teacher. Admirers and disciples usually present mythicized and rarified accounts of teachers and spiritual preceptors; seldom is the individual presented with those qualities, admirable and otherwise, that make him more human. Furthermore, one wonders whether the difficulty in grasping many of Krishnamurti's teachings are due more to his inability in getting his ideas across, as was formerly observed in Cyril Scott's *The Initiate in the Dark Cycle*, rather than to his profundity. Whatever one's opinion, we will have to await future studies to provide a more balanced and sober account of this important figure.

Review Of Blavatsky and Her Teachers Letter From Mr. Daniel Caldwell PART ONE

[Editor's Note: Mr. Daniel Caldwell, in a letter dated 9 December 1988 to the former editor Leslie Price, gave a lengthy estimation and critique of Jean Overton Fuller's biography of Blavatsky. Herein are reproduced the relative passages from that letter in addition that section of his letter entitled "The Location of the 'Ravine in Tibet'." Miss Fuller's response follows.]

... I have been waiting for more than three years to read *Blavatsky and Her Teachers*. After having now read it, I find this biography exciting and thought-provoking ...

Miss Overton Fuller (hereafter referred to as J.O.F.) has obviously done a great deal of work in researching and writing this biography of H.P.B. She has also made some very significant discoveries. The most outstanding discovery (in my mind) is chapter 58, "The Language of the Coulomb Letters," on pages 148–53. If her discovery holds up under close scrutiny (I believe it will!) then J.O.F. has shown that H.P.B. did not write the "Coulomb letters, at least not the incriminating parts!"

In documenting that Madame Coulomb knew Italian, J.O.F. writes:

In her pamphlet Madame Coulomb obligingly lets slip that they did not go direct from Cairo to Ceylon but went first to Calcutta, where she gave Italian lessons to Lady Temple. (153)

J.O.F. does not give Madame Coulomb's own words or the exact page reference. Readers might like to see Madame Coulomb's own words as found on page 4 of her 1884 pamphlet:

Being strangers in this town [Calcutta], we had a good deal of trouble to find occupation, but finally did. I was employed in a school from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M., and in the spare hours I used to give private lessons, both in French and Italian to several ladies belonging to the elite of the society there. I also had the honour of giving lessons in Italian to Lady Temple, wife of Sir Richard Temple, late Governor of Bombay...

J.O.F. also quotes from Josephine Ransom's *Short History of the Theosophical Society* that Madame Coulomb knew both French and Italian. Ransom's information is derived from the Supplement to *The Theosophist*, June 1881, second page of Supplement where the relevant extract reads:

Assistants to the Corresponding Secretary:... Mme. E. Coulomb, French and Italian...

I found Chapter 68 on “The Medical Certificate” very interesting. In this chapter J.O.F. refutes certain statements made by Marion Meade in her biography [of Madame Blavatsky (1980)].

Appendix I on “The ‘Bolt’ or Dondoukoff-Korsakoff Letters” is guaranteed to provoke controversy among Theosophical and Blavatsky scholars. J.O.F. contends that the 16 letters from H.P.B. to Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff are forgeries written by some unknown Russian and palmed off on the Theosophists. It should be noted that both C. Jinarajadasa and Boris de Zirkoff believed these letters were genuine H.P.B. After reading and rereading this appendix, J.O.F.’s arguments have failed to convince me that these particular H.P.B. letters are forgeries

Although I have enjoyed reading J.O.F.’s biography, I must add that numerous errors (some trivial, some not so trivial) are to be found in this volume. In the remainder of this letter, I will detail ten mistakes under three headings (I, II, and III).

I. The Location of the “Ravine in Tibet

In Chapter 12 entitled “Tibet,” pp. 24–27, J.O.F. writes:

Morya lived near the Grand Monastery of Trashi Lhunpo... Trashi Lhunpo, and the little town of Shigatse beneath its walls, are on the River Nyang... about 150 miles west-south west of Lhasa. Morya’s house was in a ravine where a stream was flanked by higher mountains than those at Shigatse. He had arranged that Madame Blavatsky should stay at the house of his friend and colleague Koot Hoomi... Koot Hoomi received at his house young Tibetan chelas... Presumably, they had been sent from Trashi Lhunpo... His house was near enough for them to have ridden there daily from the monastery... Djwal Khool... later... made for Madame Blavatsky a picture of the ravine... on silk, in misty blue, green and silver tones (24).

J.O.F. informs the reader that the “picture of the ravine” shows Master Morya “wearing a white.. .turban... [and]. riding a... horse... He is approaching the steps of his house... Djwal Khool stands in the stream, holding a pole. At bottom right is a tiny temple, typically Tibetan, with two prayer-flags. Out of the picture, we are told, is a bridge leading to Koot Hoomi’s house, off right round a bend.” (24–25)

Where is this “picture of the ravine” preserved? J.O.F.’s text and endnotes provide no answer. The answer (if one is lucky enough to find it!) is on the second page of the illustrations (between pp. 136–37) where the picture in question is reproduced with the caption “The Ravine in Tibet. Morya riding to his house.” See p. 24. Theosophical Society Adyar.

But where does J.O.F. get her information about the picture being on silk “in misty blue, green and silver tones”? The illustration in J.O.F.’s book is in black and white. Did she view the original picture at Adyar or obtain a colored photo from Adyar? Or...?

Furthermore, where does she derive the information that Djwal Khool made the picture? Where did she get the information that Koot Hoomi's house is "out of the picture... off right round a bend?" J.O.F. writes "we are told." By whom? Where is the source? She gives no source in her text or the accompanying endnotes.

I assume that she may be deriving some of her information ("we are told") from C.W. Leadbeater's *The Masters and the Path*, 2nd ed., pp. 16–18.

But even more important is the question: what are J.O.F.'s sources for the statement that the Masters Morya and Koot Hoomi lived in two houses in a ravine in the vicinity of "Trashi Lhunpo and "Shigatse," Tibet? As far as I can ascertain, her endnotes (pp. 243–44) to Chapter 12 do not document the source(s).

Several other Theosophical writers¹ have also claimed that K.H.'s house (or in some versions, his sister's house) where H.P.B. stayed was at or near Shigatse, Tibet. From the primary sources these writers cite, I do not understand how this "claim" was derived. With the appearance of this new H.P.B. biography, I am even more puzzled by J.O.F.'s undocumented assertion that "The Ravine in Tibet" is near Shigatse!

I do not deny the possibility that Morya and Koot Hoomi may have had residences in or around Shigatse. They may even have had residences at "Trashi Lhunpo!" But my research indicates that the "Ravine in Tibet" is located in the vicinity of "Little Tibet, i.e. Ladakh (As the crow flies, Ladakh is more than 600 miles to the northwest of Shigatse. Rudok in western Tibet is approximately 600 miles (northwest) from Shigatse; Leh, Ladakh is about 725 miles (NVV) from Shigatse.)

To support my hypothesis, I submit the following primary source documents:

(a) Letter from H.S. Olcott to A.O. Hume (dated 30 September 1881):²

I have also personally known—[Koot Hoomi] since 1875. He is of quite a different, a gentler, type, yet the bosom friend of the other [Morya]. They live near each other with a small Buddhist Temple about midway between their houses.

In New York, I had... a colored sketch on China Silk of the landscape near [Koot Hoomi's] and my Chohan's residences with a glimpse of the latter's house and of part of the little temple.

(b) Letter from H.S. Olcott to Damodar K. Mavalankar (dated 4 October 1880):³

. . . the Tibetan temple... you will see the very image of in a coloured painting on silk that lies on my bureau in my bed-room, and that was magically produced by her [H.P.B.] for me in New York one day

(c) Article by H.P.B. in reply to Arthur Lillie's criticisms (dated 3 August 1884):⁴

. . . I have lived at different periods in Little Tibet as in Great Tibet... I have stopped in Lamaistic convents... I have visited Tzigadze [Shigatse], the Tashi-Lhunpo [Trashi Lhunpo] territory and its neighbourhood... As to my having been in Tibet, at

Mahatma Koot Hoomi's house, I have better proof in store—when I believe it needed
....

- (d) Letter from H.P.B. to Franz Hartmann (dated 5 December 1885):⁵

A lake is there, surely, and mountains plenty—if where Master is; if near Tchigadze [Shigatse]—only little hillocks.

- (e) Letter from H.P.B. to Mrs. Mary Hollis Billings (dated 2 October 1881):⁶

Now Morya lives generally with Koot Hoomi who has his house in the direction of the Kara Korum Mountains, beyond Ladak, which is in Little Tibet and belongs now to Kashmire. It is a large wooden building in the Chinese fashion pagoda-like, between a lake and a beautiful mountain

- (f) Letter from Damodar K. Mavalankar to William Q. Judge (dated 28 June 1881):⁷

... I was getting out of the body... I saw I was in a peculiar place. It was the upper end of Cashmere at the foot of the Himalayas. I saw I was taken to a place where there were only two houses just opposite to each other and no other sign of habitation. From one of these came out the person... 'Koot Hoomi :.' It was his house. Opposite him stops :. [Morya] Brother K—ordered me to follow him. After going a short distance of about half a mile we came to a natural subterranean passage which is under the Himalayas There is a natural causeway on the River Indus which flows underneath in all its fury After walking a considerable distance through this subterranean passage we came into an open plain in L—k [Ladakh]. There is a large massive building thousands of years old What was that I saw? was taken in some mysterious way in my astral body to the real place of Initiation

I now give several extracts from *The Mahatma Letters* which possibly relate to K.H.'s house in the vicinity of Ladakh

- (g) Letter III B from K.H. to A.P. Sinnett (dated 20 October 1880):⁸

... the present [note] is...dated... from a Kashmir valley.

- (h) Letter III C from K.H. to A.P. Sinnett (dated 20 October 1880):⁹

your last note... was received in my room [in a Kashmir valley!] about half a minute after the currents for the production of the pillow-dak [involving the brooch No. 2 and Letter III B] had been set ready and in full play. [Underlining added.]

Compare the above-quoted words of K.H. in extracts (g) and (h) with J.O.F.'s comments (178) on Mahatma Letter III B:

. . . Ill B was sent by Koot Hoomi from a Kashmir valley, where presumably he had no paper. He might have used his trip to Amritsar to buy paper, but even if he did, it was probably packed on to his horse and he had perhaps not thought to buy ink and a pen, having these in Tibet.

Contrary to what J.O.F. writes, K.H. could have had not only paper, but pen and ink in his room in the residence located “in a Kashmir Valley.” Furthermore, K.H. did not go to Amritsar until sometime after October 20!

(i) Letter IV from K.H. to A.P. Sinnett (dated 29 October 1880):¹⁰

. . . the other day... I was coming down the defiles of Kouenlun—Karakorum you call them... I had gone personally to our chief... and was crossing over to Ladakh on my way home.

(j) Letter 49 from K.H. to A.P. Sinnett (dated early August 1881):¹¹

Just home... I now come from Sakya-Jong . . . From Ghalarang-Tcho Lamasery..., I crossed to Horpa Pa La territory... and thence—home.

(k) Letter 13 from Morya to A.P. Sinnett (dated January 1882):¹²

. . . the iceberg now before me (in our K.H.’s home)....

Is Morya referring to a glacier (in the mountain/lake area of Ladakh) that he sees as he looks out the window(s) of K.H.’s home?

(l) Letter 22 from K.H. to A.O. Hume:¹³

. . . the lake near which, with my fingers half frozen I now write to you this letter.

Could this be the lake near K.H.’s house (located beyond Ladakh) which is mentioned in several extracts quoted above??

(m) Letter 140 from H.P.B. to A.P. Sinnett (dated 6 January 1886):¹⁴

. . . I was... in Mah. K.H.’s house. I was sitting in a corner on a mat and he walking about the room in his riding dress... as Master [Morya] was not at home, I took to him [E.K.H.] a few sentences I was studying in Senzar in his sister’s room I am bidding goodbye to his sister and her child and all the chelas

Is “Mah. K.H.’s house” in the vicinity of “Little Tibet?”

I give two more sources relevant to the subject under discussion:

(n) Comment by Vera Johnston on one of H.P.B.'s letters to her relatives:¹⁵

She [H.P.B.] had once spent seven weeks in a forest not far from the Karakoram mountains, where she had been isolated from the world, and where her teacher alone had visited her daily, whether astrally or otherwise she did not state. But whilst there she had been shown in a cave-temple a series of statues representing the great teachers of the world

(o) Reply by Countess Constance Wachtmeister to a question about H.P.B.'s stay in Tibet:¹⁶

I cannot tell much about H.P.B.'s stay in Tibet. I only know that she lived there for three years, that she resided in the house of the sister of the Master K.H.... She learned the Tibetan language, and her time was chiefly occupied in reading and writing. There was an extensive library for reference.

If I am mistaken in placing the "Ravine in Tibet" in the vicinity of Ladakh, then how does one reconcile the extracts I have quoted with some better hypothesis about the location of the "Ravine?"

Daniel Caldwell

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¹ Boris De Zirkoff, "Helena Petrovna Blavatsky: General Outline of Her Life Prior to Her Public Work," *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings, Vol. I: 1874–1878*. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff (Wheaton IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1966), xlviii; Howard Murphet, *When Daylight Comes* (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1975), 56; H.J. Spierenburg, "Dr. Steiner on H.P. B.," *Theosophical History*, Vol. I, No. 7 (July 1986): 168–69.

² Anonymous, *Hints on Esoteric Theosophy*, No. I. First ed. (Calcutta: Calcutta Central Press Co., April 1882), 83.

³ *Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Compiled and annotated by Sven Eek. First ed. (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965), 158.

⁴ Boris de Zirkoff, comp., *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings, Vol. VI: 1883–1884–1885*. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff (Los Angeles: Blavatsky Writings Publication Fund, 1954), 272, 274.

⁵ “Letters of H.P.B. to Dr. Hartmann,” *The Path* (January 1896): 299.

⁶ *The Theosophical Forum* (Point Loma, CA), Vol. 8, No. 5 (May, 1936): 345.

⁷ *Damodar and the Pioneers of The Theosophical Movement*: 60–62.

⁸ *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*. Transcribed, compiled, and with an introduction by A. Trevor Barker. 2nd ed. (Point Loma: Theosophical University Press, 1926), 11. Same page in 3rd ed. (edited by Christmas Humphreys and Elsie Benjamin. (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1962).

⁹ *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*.

¹⁰ *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, 12.

¹¹ *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, 280, 284, 286; 3rd ed., 276, 280, 282.

¹² *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, 73; 3rd ed., 72.

¹³ *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, 140; 3rd ed., 137.

¹⁴ *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, 478–79; 3rd ed., 471.

¹⁵ “The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky. II,” *The Path* (January 1895): 299.

¹⁶ *The Theosophical Forum* (New York, NY), no. 59 (May 1894): 12.

* * * * *

The Ravine In Tibet: A Reply To Mr. Caldwell

Jean Overton Fuller

The picture is at Adyar. The information that it was on silk, in misty, blue, green and silver tones was given to me in the letter which accompanied the black and white print of "A Ravine" in Tibet and conveyed the permission of Adyar to reproduce it. Note that it was referred to as "A Ravine in Tibet", not "A Ravine in Ladakh or Kashmir". It is true that I somewhat reserved my references at this point, because it seemed to me unfair to burden the particular member of the staff at Adyar with the responsibility for what I felt sure was simply the orthodox tradition of Adyar. It would have come to Adyar with the rest of Olcott's things, on his death. They may have no precise statement in his hand with regard to details of and concerning this picture, because he would have told them by word of mouth while he was alive. It was defined to me in the letter as having been precipitated by Djwal Khool. I took from Leadbeater's *The Masters and the Path* that the house of Koot Hoomi and the spot where Madame Blavatsky was accustomed to bathe were round the corner to the right, trusting that he was here relaying simply the Adyar tradition. That the temple in the bottom right-hand corner, with a Chinese style roof, is flying two Tibetan prayer-flags is simply a fact of my own observation. Nobody pointed it out to me. It can be seen, on inspection of the print. That the architecture of Morya's house is not Tibetan but could be Nepalese, is also my own observation. As to the letter from Madame Blavatsky to Mrs. Billing, I would be interested to see a copy. The references to Kashmir and Ladakh in *The Mahatma Letters* are naturally familiar to me, but did not seem to me to prove the Masters lived there. They travelled about. In one letter, Koot Hoomi mentions that he is in Pari Jong. That is in Tibet, on Younghusband's 1904 route. I was aware also of the slight differentiation made by Madame Blavatsky in her letter to Hartmann between Shigatse, where there were only hillocks, and where Morya was, where there were mountains. Shigatse is at the bottom of a small hill, but it was never said the Masters lived in Shigatse. I considered them as living nearer to Trashi Lhünpo, or to the Panchen's private residence. The latter seemed to me the more likely in view of what Mrs. Cleather understood from the Panchen who succeeded him; and he said his predecessor had known Madame Blavatsky very well. This would hardly have been the case unless she had been staying pretty near him. It surprises me that Mr. Caldwell's letter makes no reference to Mrs. Cleather's book.

If the school was in Ladakh or Kashmir, why should Morya, after he moved to it, have forsaken his white turban and put "a yellow saucer" on his head, as Koot Hoomi did? This was obviously a courtesy to the Panchen, as a great personage of the Gelukpa

or Yellow Hats. The Masters were not monks. Yellow Hats would, however, be suitable to their status as guests of the Panchen donned by them in that tradition of courtesy that impels our Queen to put on a slit skirt when a guest in Thailand and a small veil when a guest of Muslims, and the Princess of Wales to put on a severe, dark blue, tunic-like looking dress to visit the police at Scotland Yard, or saucy white sailor-style hat to visit an Italian naval port.

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Theosophical History



A Quarterly Journal of Research

ISSN 0951-497X

Volume 3, No. 4 October 1990

\$3.00

Theosophical History

A Quarterly Journal of Research

Founded by Leslie Price, 1985

Volume 3, No. 4, October, 1990

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THEOSOPIICAL HISTORY (ISSN 0951-497X) is published quarterly in January, April, July and October by the Theosophical History Foundation. The journal's purpose is to publish contributions specifically related to the modern Theosophical Movement, from the time of Madame Helena Blavatsky and others responsible in establishing the original Theosophical Society (1875), to all groups that derive their teachings—directly or indirectly, knowingly and unknowingly—from her, or her immediate followers. In addition, the journal is also receptive to related movements—including pre-Blavatskyite Theosophy, Spiritualism, Rosicrucianism, and the philosophy of Emanuel Swedenborg to give but a few examples) that have had the influence on or displayed an affinity to modern Theosophy.

The subscription fee for the journal is \$12.00 (U.S.) a year. Single issues are \$3.00. The air mail rate for subscribers outside the U.S. is \$24.00 a year. Please make checks or money payable in U.S. funds to the Theosophical History Foundation. Subscriptions should be sent to *James Santucci, Department of Religious Studies, California State University, Fullerton, CA 92634-9480 (U.S.A.)*.

The Editors assume no responsibility for the views expressed by authors in *Theosophical History*.

The Theosophical History Foundation is a nonprofit public benefit corporation, located at the Department of Religious Studies, California State University, Fullerton, 1800 North State College Boulevard, Fullerton, CA (USA) 92634-9480. Its purpose is to publish *Theosophical History* and to facilitate the study and dissemination of information regarding the Theosophical Movement. The Foundation's Board of Directors are: April Hejka-Ekins; Jerry Hejka-Ekins; J. Gordon Melton; James A. Santucci.

* * * * *

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Brief communications, review articles and book reviews are welcome. They should be submitted double-spaced.

All correspondence, manuscripts and subscriptions should be sent to:

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THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY

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Editor's Notes

The present issue continues with the third in the series of articles by Dr. Godwin on the nineteenth century occult world entitled "The Hidden Hand", part three entitled "The Parting of East and West." The next issue will conclude with "The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor."

The second article is a reprint from the *New Californian* supplied by Mr. Wane Kell. It is actually a letter from Colonel Olcott to the *Madras Mail* reacting to a review of a Mr. Stuttfield's *The Brethren of Mount Atlas* and confirming an "adept brotherhood in Africa."

Of the other contributions herein, Mr. Caldwell concludes his review of Miss Fuller's *Blavatsky and Her Teachers*. Also enclosed is Miss Fuller's response.

Robert Boyd concludes the issue with his review of the historically important *The Memoirs of Count Witte*. Mr. Boyd taught Spanish and Portuguese at universities in the U.S. and Canada and has served as editor of the *Illinois Bulletin of Foreign Language Teachers*. He also has been a volunteer at The Theosophical Society headquarters at Adyar for the past several years.

Back Issues of Theosophical History

All previous issues dating from January, 1985 to April, 1989 are now available at \$3.00 per issue. In addition, Theosophical History Centre Publications are now available at the prices stated below. The following list

includes all articles and historical documents published in the journal under Leslie Price's editorship. Xeroxes of individual articles and documents may also be ordered at \$1.50 per title.

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Krishnamurti and Blavatsky
Jean Overton Fuller

S.P.R. Archives: "Astral Bells in Notting Hill"
(Introduction by Leslie Price)

I/3 JUL 1985

Jesus in Theosophical History
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The 'Anacalypsis' of Godfrey Higgins - Precursor of Isis Unveiled and The Secret Doctrine
Leslie Shepard

S.P.R. Archives: "The British Letter"

(* Original articles are italicized.)

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Of the Centenary*
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Adyar"
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*H.P. Blavatsky's Annotations in Madame
Coulomb's Pamphlet in the Archives of
the Society for Psychical Research,
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Michael Gomes

I/7 JUL 1986

*Dr. Rudolf Steiner on Helena Petrovna
Blavatsky* H.J. Spierenburg
Trans. by J.H. Molijn)

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Quaestor Vitae

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Daniel H. Caldwell & Michelle B.
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H.J. Spierenburg (Trans. by J.H.
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II/1 JAN 1987

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*H.N. Stoke's Early Contact
With the Theosophical Society*
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A Word of Warning

Walter A. Carrithers, Jr.

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Jeffrey Somers

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Jean Overton Fuller

"Madame Blavatsky of Ceylon"
Emily Kislingbury

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Leslie Price

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of H.P.B.'s work.

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Dr. Vernon Harrison

\$3.00, 24 pages, 1986. The official S.P.R.
offprint of the paper in the April 1986 issue
of the *Journal of the Society for Psychical
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Autobiography of Alfred Percy Sinnett

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Paul Johnson

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the T.S. a Sufi project.

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Leslie Leslie-Smith

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perspective.

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1987 [Out of stock]

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John Algeo

\$6.00, 32 pages, ISBN 0 948753 08 0,
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The Beginnings of Theosophy in France

Joscelyn Godwin

\$6.00, 39 pages, ISBN 0 948753 09 9,
1989.

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Letters

Included herein are two letters from Jean-Jacques Gauthé (Sin le Noble, France), one dated 25 February 1991, the second dated 5 May, 1991:

... I am studying the links between the boy scout movement and the theosophical movement. Baden-Powell is said to have been a member of the Theosophical Society. And when it appeared in France (1911), scouting was accused of being linked to the Theosophical Society. Articles on that subject are found up to 1940. Could you let me know if "Theosophical History" has published anything on the theme "Scouting and Theosophy"...[?](25 February)

... I would like to take the opportunity of this letter to mention that I have just written an article "The scout secret" for the French review "Politica Hermetica." I am studying the relations between Baden-Powell and the freemasonry and the theosophical movement. However, because of the lack of materials, I cannot conclude.... (5 May)

In response to Mr. Gauthé's question in his first letter, Theosophical History has not published any article on the relationship of scouting and Theosophy. This is a topic that should be examined in more detail; Theosophical History would therefore welcome any contribution in this area.

In response to the second letter, if there are any readers who are interested in Mr.

Gauthé's research and who can aid him in any way, please send any correspondence to the editor of TH and he will pass it along.

Two letters were also received from Robert Dulaney (Prospect, Kentucky), one dated 10 February, 1991, the other 3 March, 1991.

I was glad to hear that someone had decided to continue with the magazine [*Theosophical History*]. I enjoyed the earlier issues because they did not seem to be defending the position of any one faction....

I am particularly interested in Rudolf Steiner's relationship to the TS (Adyar) and to theosophical history in general. I have read the biographies put out by the Anthroposophical Society, but they give very little about the years when Steiner was General Secretary of the German Section of the TS. Can you give me any guidance? Do you know of any books or articles that treat the subject? I already have the H.J. Spierenburg article "Dr. Rudolf Steiner on the Mahatmas." (10 February)

I hope that someone will write an article about Anna Kingsford, since I am interested in the theosophical approach and contribution to esoteric Christianity throughout the TS's history. Best of luck with the publication! (3 March)

As already indicated by Mr. Dulaney, Theosophical History has published Dr. Spierenburg's article, "Dr. Rudolf Steiner on

the Mahatmas" (Part I in I/8 and Part II in II/1). I have been aware since 1989 that a Ph.D. candidate at the University of California at Riverside was working on a thesis on Dr. Steiner. Now that the thesis is completed, an article on the relationship between Dr. Steiner and the T.S. The article will be published sometime in 1992.

Responding to Mr. Dulaney's second letter, any contribution on Anna Kingsford will be welcomed by the editor. The one document that was published by Miss Kingsford in TH was her "Address of the President...to the London Lodge..." (II/3).

The Hidden Hand, Part III: The Parting of East and West

Joscelyn Godwin

In the previous article on "The Brotherhood of Light," evidence was assembled to suggest that Mme. Blavatsky's coming to America in 1873 was part of a larger movement, whose purpose was the further spiritual education of Western civilization. This hypothesis may cast a clearer light on her early public activity, including the founding in 1875 of the Theosophical Society.

During the first years of their American collaboration, Mme. Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott's sights were set not on Hindu and Buddhist ideals, but on Egypt and on the Hermetic tradition that had brought Egyptian wisdom to the West. The first public announcement of this was an advertisement to Spiritualists placed by Henry Olcott on 17 April 1875 in *The Spiritual Scientist*. After he had written it, Mme. Blavatsky told him to sign it: "For the Committee of Seven, Brotherhood of Luxor" (*ODL* I:75). Olcott was thereupon introduced to a new spiritual guide, called by the Egyptian name of "Serapis Bey," who communicated not in séances but by letter.

The *Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia* of Kenneth Mackenzie, in 1877, called the Brotherhood of Luxor "A fraternity in America having a Rosicrucian basis, and numbering many members" (Mackenzie 1877:461). David Board, in his study of "The Brotherhood of Light and the Brotherhood of Luxor," (Board 1988:151) shows from

various allusions in Mme. Blavatsky's and Mackenzie's works that the American fraternity was probably inspired by the English *Fratres Lucis*, the most likely links between them being Charles Sotheran and Emma Hardinge Britten. Sotheran was a Cagliostro enthusiast; a founder member and the first librarian of the Theosophical Society; a colleague of Irwin, Mackenzie and Hockley in the "Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia" and in other masonic bodies.

A distinctly Egyptian atmosphere prevailed in the Theosophical Society up to the publication of the significantly-titled *Isis Unveiled*. The very meeting at which the Society was first mooted, on 7 September 1875, was a lecture given in Mme. Blavatsky's apartment by George Felt on "The Lost Canon of Proportion of the Egyptians." Felt also claimed to have rediscovered the Egyptian methods of evoking the spirits of the elements, though he disappeared without fulfilling his promise to demonstrate this. Evidently the early Theosophists saw themselves as inheritors of Thrice-Greatest Hermes.

The summer of 1875 saw the appearance of Mme. Blavatsky's first doctrinal article, "A Few Questions to 'Hiraf'," and of the first letters from Serapis to Henry Olcott. Also much in evidence at this period was John King, a spirit entity who had been appearing since 1854 at séances in Britain and America, and whom Olcott

himself had come across in his London investigations of 1870. On 12 April 1875, Mme. Blavatsky wrote to the Russian psychical researcher A.N. Aksakov that John King

is very fond of me, and I am fonder of him than of anything on earth. He is my only friend, and if I am indebted to anyone for the radical change in my ideas of life, my efforts and so on, it is to him alone.... John King and I are acquainted from old times, long before he began to materialise in London...(Solovyoff 1895:247).

On 10 September, she told Aksakov that John King was in a bad humour with her, while the Spiritualists were furious at her and Olcott, and on 20 September she announced that Olcott was now organising the Theosophical Society in New York.

It will be composed of learned occultists and cabbalists, of *philosophes Hermétiques* of the nineteenth century, and of passionate antiquaries and Egyptologists generally. We want to make an experimental comparison between Spiritualism and the magic of the ancients [evidently an allusion to Felt's promise] by following literally the instructions of the old Cabbalas, both Jewish and Egyptian (256-7).

She adds that she is writing a big book, called on John's advice *Skeleton Key to Mysterious Gates*. This was the working title of *Isis Unveiled*.

Evidently John King, whoever or whatever he was, had an important role in the early Theosophical program; and perhaps we should heed the shrewd observation of Narad Mani, who says that "'John King'—or at least the gentleman who set in action all the false mediums controlled by this false spirit—belonged to a Lodge and Mr. Olcott met him in London in 1870" (Mani 1912:14).

René Guénon thought that the changeover from John King to the Egyptian-named Serapis, as Mme. Blavatsky's chief control, reflected her joining the Brotherhood of Luxor (or of Light) (Guénon 1965:25f). Paul Johnson suggests that Serapis was the Coptic magician Metamon. All these connections should be kept in mind, along with the possibility that some person was now acting in a similar way to those who manipulated the phenomena at Hydesville in 1848. This, too, is the place to mention the curious advice Olcott gave Stainton Moses, at the very moment when Mme. Blavatsky was writing her "Questions to 'Hiraf'":

Try to get private talk with "John King"—he is an initiate, and his frivolities of speech and action are meant to cover serious business. You can see him at Herne's or Williams's, and privately arrange with him to come and talk to you and *bring others* (Moses 1892:354).

As for the motives of all this activity, there is no question that at this period Henry Olcott, Mme. Blavatsky, and Stainton Moses, along with Emma Hardinge Britten, Charles Sotheran, Lady Caithness, and other early members of the Theosophical Society, were more or less conscious allies in a grand attempt to change the attitudes of the Western world to religion and to science. One implication of the neo-Hermeticism that they propounded was that Christianity would have to be put firmly in its place, as a link in a chain rather than as the hub of the spiritual universe. Another was that modern scientists had better stop priding themselves on their achievements, and start investigating phenomena which contradicted the very basis of materialism.

So far, so good. But there was little in any of this material of the reverence and the high moral tone that permeates the actual Hermetic treatises, and virtually no indication of how, Christianity once rejected, the disciple might proceed on the quest to perfection, beyond indulging a fascination with occult phenomena. The letters of Serapis to Colonel Olcott are strikingly deficient in this regard, reading more as the advice of a Machiavellian schemer than as the words of a "Master of Wisdom." Serapis, who is "not a disembodied spirit [but] a living man, gifted with such powers by our Lodge as are in store for thyself someday," (*LMW* 1966 II:23) is mainly concerned, in these letters, to bind Olcott to his cause by way of occult promises and financial ties. He urges the Colonel to involve his in-laws in dubious business ventures with Mme. Blavatsky's temporary husband Michael Betanelly, for whom "there are millions in the future in store" (26). He has Olcott trick Mme. Blavatsky by telling her that they are going from Boston to Philadelphia, but only buying tickets as far as New York City (30). With deplorable lack of prophetic vision, he tells him: "Your distant future is at Boston." Brother Henry is obliged to report every night, by mail sent to the address of "our good Brother John"—for evidently Serapis' plans are at one with those of John King. Only the most credulous Theosophist could accord Serapis mahatmic status, and not take the hint of his absence from the letters of the more famous Oriental adepts, Koot Hoomi and Morya.

I do not expect entirely to resolve the mystery of who Serapis and John King really were. But Serapis, at least, had something to

do with India. In the first letter of a Master to Henry Olcott (the "Tuitit Bey" document), he is assigned not to Luxor, as his Egyptian name would lead one to expect, but to the "Ellora Section." Ellora, the site of great caves and temples near Aurangabad, India, must have had some peculiar significance to these early Theosophists. In his own letters to the Colonel, Serapis twice calls Mme. Blavatsky an "Ellorian" (34ff). Also, it was in India, upon joining the "Ellora Brotherhood," that the Chevalier Louis of *Ghost Land* attained the adeptship that Europe could not bring him. In that book, the first principles of the fraternity are given as the sentiment of brotherhood to humanity at large, and the discovery of occultism (Anonymous 1897: 260). Since these happen to be two of the three principles of the future Theosophical Society (the third one being the study of religions), it seems that the Ellora Brotherhood, headed by nameless Oriental adepts, is a remarkable anticipation of future developments in the Society.

Mme. Blavatsky herself was even now leaning toward the wisdom of the Ganges, over that of the Nile. In "Some Questions to 'Hiraf'," she says that the Europeans take Heaven by force, struggling alone, violently robbing Nature of her secrets, whereas the Orientals, "in the serene beatitude of their divine knowledge, are ever ready to help the earnest student..." (*BCW* I:107f). She speaks of the "only authority I know" as lying scattered throughout the East; and says that it is actually from the East that Modern Spiritualism made its unexpected appearance (116f.). This is an extremely pregnant statement, implying the attribution of the 1848 phenomena to an Oriental source

familiar to her. Two months later, at the close of her second article¹, she says: "One single journey to the Orient, made in the proper spirit...may quite as likely as not throw wide open to the zealous student, the heretofore closed doors of the final mysteries"—and adds that it would be better than a dozen years' study of occultism from books.

As the year 1875 proceeded, Olcott's letters to Stainton Moses spoke more freely of a true fraternity of adepts, and warned the English medium to beware of false ones, but to join no society for the time being. These no longer read like letters between colleagues in fringe-masonic or occultist orders of the *Fratres Lucis* type, but like the measured revelations of someone with a great discovery that puts him at an advantage over his friend. Two days before the Theosophical Society met at Emma Hardinge Britten's residence to organize and elect officers, Mme. Blavatsky had confessed in print that "The BROTHERHOOD OF LUXOR is one of the sections of the Grand Lodge of which I am a member", and challenged her critic to write to Lahore for information.² True, Lahore is a long way from Ellora, but at the time they were at least in the same country, and they are practically anagrams!

But it was one thing for Olcott to play with the numinous idea of Oriental adepts and show off his superior occult connections to Stainton Moses, and quite another to give up his American life in favor of an unknown destiny in the East. After Olcott had been, as he said, a year at these studies, he told Moses that he had become very uneasy about Mme. Blavatsky.³ In early 1876 he writes:

I want you to ask Imperator, while presenting him with my compliments, if he could do something of a psychological kind to prevent Mme. Blavatsky from going to India." Twice in the same letter he repeats this request: "Do not forget Imperator."

However, if Mme. Blavatsky was turning to the East and dragging Olcott along with her, one does wonder how good her own information was at this point. When Olcott advises Stainton Moses on his reading, far from recommending to this erudite clergyman the works of Max Müller, the *Dhammapada* (which even Serapis knew--see LMW II:48f) or the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, he tells him to read about the Hindu Brothers in the books of Louis Jacolliot, a sensational and by no means trustworthy author.

Moses, for his part, entertained both affection and respect for Mme. Blavatsky. On 7 October 1876 he wrote to her: "It is because I dimly see—and far more because + [Imperator] tells me that in Occultism I shall find a phase of Truth not yet known to me that I look to it and you." In an undated letter of the same period, he says: "Certainly all doubt as to the Brotherhood and their work is gone." Olcott would later surmise that both HPB and Stainton Moses were inspired by the same Intelligence, and would be "almost certain" that one of Moses' guides, called "Magus," was "a living adept; not only that, but one that had to do with us" (ODL I:325ff). But it remains a mystery why Olcott should have gone to Moses behind Mme. Blavatsky's back, when already enrolled as a pupil of Serapis and the "Brotherhood of Luxor," unless he had become worried by 1876 that another

influence had come to bear on his "old chum."

At this point, Mme. Blavatsky begins to turn away from the whole machinery of Western secret societies in favor of the East. It is very curious that among the decorations of the "Lamasery," Olcott and Mme. Blavatsky's apartment on 47th Street, New York, there happened to hang a photograph of two Indians whom Olcott had met on the boat when he crossed to England in 1870. One day in 1877, a visitor called James Peebles noticed the photograph and recognized one of the people as a certain Moolji Thackersey, a wealthy mill-owner whom he had met in Bombay. He was able to give Olcott Thackersey's address, and the Colonel promptly wrote to his old acquaintance about the Theosophical Society and its interest in the ancient wisdom of India. Thackersey responded by telling Olcott about a new religious movement which he had joined, the Arya Samaj ("Aryan Church", also spelt Somaj), and about its leader Swami Dayananda Sarasvati. Both Founders proceeded to correspond with the president of the Arya Samaj's Bombay Branch, Hurrychund Chintamon, with a view to cooperation.

The earliest news of Chintamon is that he was employed as "political agent" by a notoriously incompetent and corrupt ruler of the state of Baroda, Malharrao Gaikwad.⁴ A committee of enquiry into the exploitation of the peasantry in Baroda was held in London in February 1874, and the Gaikwad was cautioned to put his house in order. It was in the same year that Chintamon published in London *A Commentary of the Bhagavad-Gītā*, which he dedicated "To the

Freemasons of the World...as a mark of high esteem and fraternal consideration" (Chintamon 1874). My copy of this insignificant work contains a letter from Chintamon on his own letterhead, dated 3 October 1874 from 4 Addison Terrace, Kensington, presenting the book to the Rev. W. H. Channing, of Huntingdon.⁵ Evidently Chintamon had been sent to London to lobby on his employer's behalf, and was taking the opportunity to commend himself to liberal-minded clergymen and freemasons—as well he might, because by early 1875 he was out of a job, as the Gaikwad was forced by the British to abdicate. His next port of call seems to have been Bombay, where the Arya Samaj was established on 10 April 1875; and as we have seen, his rise in the order was rapid.

Mme. Blavatsky was under the impression that Dayananda's order was the Indian equivalent of Gnosticism, instituted "to save the Hindus from exoteric idolatries, Brahmanism and Christian missionaries" (BCW I:381f). This made her an eager candidate for Chintamon's advances, and she became quite confidential in her letters to him. In one of them she unkindly referred to Olcott as a "psychologized baby" and implied that he would dance to whatever tune she chose to play. (Olcott said that the worst moment of his life was when Richard Hodgson told him of these letters—*ODL* III:220f.). Toward the beginning of September 1877, when Volume I of *Isis Unveiled* was about to appear, letters came to the Founders from Dayananda himself, and negotiations went forward for the union of the Theosophical Society with the Arya Samaj.

On 16 May 1878 the Founders were told by their Masters, through Mme. Blavatsky, to prepare for departure for India, and on the 22nd their society's name was officially changed to "The Theosophical Society of the Arya Samaj of India"—the proposer being, of all people, Alexander Wilder, the Platonist who had contributed so much to *Isis Unveiled*. The system of fees for members, long suspended, was reinstated, and the money sent to India in the care of Chintamon, who appropriated it as he would do the funds of his master Dayananda.

On the surface, as Mme. Blavatsky herself admitted, the flight from America at the end of 1878 was precipitated by the publication of D. D. Home's accusations of fraudulent mediumship, and his embarrassing stories of her past. She wrote to Aksakov: "It is for this that I am going for ever to India, and for very shame and vexation I want to go where no one will know my name" (Solovyoff 1895:278). In the light of Olcott's letters to Stainton Moses in 1875-76, it is extraordinary that two years later he should have consented to ally the Theosophical Society with a Vedic fundamentalist movement—and in a subordinate position, at that. Mme. Blavatsky's cruel words may hold a deeper truth: that she had used some psychological or hypnotic power to bring Olcott to the point where he could say: "Our two hearts drew us towards the Orient, our dreams were of India, our chief desire to get into relations with the Asiatic people" (*ODL* I:395). It must be added that once there, this reluctant traveler threw himself into the Eastern cause with such enthusiasm, and to such good effect, that the Buddhists of Sri

Lanka commemorate him to this day as a national hero.

The relationship of the Theosophical Society with the Arya Samaj never got off the ground, once the Founders had met with Dayananda in India and each had realized what the other stood for. Certainly Dayananda was against Spiritualism, which was apparently as rife in India as elsewhere; he was against Christianity, and against the rules and regulations of Brahmanism, which he considered as the usurper of the pure Aryan Vedic religion. But he was all the less sympathetic to Buddhism, or to any other religion but his own; he even regarded the *Bhagavad-Gītā* as spurious (Rai 1915:43n). By 1882 he was ready to denounce Mme. Blavatsky as an impostor. This was doubly embarrassing, since she had claimed that his body was occupied by a Himalayan adept. Koot Hoomi overcame the difficulty in a letter to Sinnett:

D. Swami was an initiated Yogi, a very high chela at Badrinath, endowed some years back with great powers and a knowledge that he has since forfeited...also H[urrychund] C[hintamon] was a chela of his, who preferred to follow the "left path." And now see what has become of this truly great man, whom we all knew and placed out hopes in him: There he is—a moral wreck, ruined by his ambition and panting for breath in his last struggle for supremacy, which *he knows* we will *not* leave in his hands.⁶

As for Chintamon, he decamped from India in 1882 to escape the consequences of relieving the Samaj of some 4000 rupees (*BCW* II:48). Coming to England, he made contact with C. C. Massey, the President of the London Theosophical Society, whom he told that Mme. Blavatsky and her Mahatmas

were frauds.⁷ Perhaps he had strings left to pull from his earlier visit, because he is also found (according to the researches of Christian Chanel) in contact with Thomas Burgoyne,⁸ of whom we will hear much more in the concluding part of this article. Back in India once more, Chintamon met Richard Hodgson while the latter was engaged on the famous investigation for the Society for Psychical Research, and showed him the unkind things Mme. Blavatsky had written to him about Olcott. I have not been able to trace Chintamon's subsequent career, so cannot say whether it ended with a well-deserved knife in the back.

Shortly before her departure for India, at Charles Sotheran's request,⁹ Mme. Blavatsky was sent by John Yarker a certificate of the female branch of the Sat B'hai ("Seven Feathers"),¹⁰ a fringe-masonic order which is given an impressive eulogy in Kenneth Mackenzie's *Cyclopaedia* (Mackenzie 1877:649). It was probably concocted by Mackenzie for his friends, including Yarker, Irwin, and Benjamin Cox. With its Indian atmosphere and symbolism drawn from the Avatars of Viṣṇu, it strikes a resonance with the Indian elements in the earlier mythology of the Brotherhood of Light. But trivial as it may seem, the later history of the Sat B'hai is also suggestive, for it was amalgamated with an "Order of Light" founded in 1882 by Maurice Vidal Portman, an orientalist and politician who also rejoiced in the title of "Supreme Magus of the Rosicrucians in India" (Howe 1985:22). This points, of course, to a previous membership of the S.R.I.A., meeting-point of so many of the *dramatis personae* of this story.

Portman was in India at least from 1879,¹¹ in the entourage of the Viceroy who was none other than Lord Lytton, son of the author of *Zanoni*.¹² It may be that, just as Chintamon used Freemasonry for an entry into English society, Mme. Blavatsky's masonic status gave her, through Portman, the necessary connections to obtain Lord Lytton's protection from police molestation.¹³ Portman himself evidently experienced the tug-of-war between East and West. In Mahatma Letter No.45, datable to February 1882, K. H. says: "Young Portman is seriously meditating to leave all, to come over to us and 'become a Tibetan monk' as he puts it" (ML 1924:261). Evidently he decided for the other path, working with the same coterie of English fringe-masons as before.

Mme. Blavatsky, on the other hand, having ceased to cooperate with the broadening movement within Western Spiritualism, now began to give out, with the help of her Masters, some of the Oriental esoterism of which she had long claimed knowledge. In one of his letters, K. H. defines her from the Himalayan point of view: "After nearly a century of fruitless search, our chiefs had to avail themselves of the only opportunity to send out a *European body* upon European soil to serve as a connecting link between that country and our own."¹⁴ Morya goes further in describing the whole Theosophical enterprise:

On the 17th November next [1882] the Septenary term of trial given the Society at its foundation¹⁵ in which to discreetly "preach us" will expire. One or two of us hoped that the world had so far advanced intellectually, if not intuitively, that the Occult doctrine might gain an intellectual acceptance, and the impulse given for a new

cycle of occult research. Others—wiser as it would now seem—held differently, but consent was given for the trial. It was stipulated, however, that the experiment should be made independently of our personal management; that there should be no abnormal interference by ourselves. In casting about we found in America the man to stand as leader—a man of great moral courage, unselfish, and having other good qualities. He was far from being the best, but (as Mr. Hume speaks in H.P.B.'s case)—he was the best one available. With him we associated a woman of most exceptional and wonderful endowments. Combined with them she had strong personal defects, but just as she was, there was no second to her living fit for this work. We sent her to America, brought them together—and the trial began. From the first both she and he were given clearly to understand that the issue lay entirely with themselves.¹⁶

According to this extract, of which every word deserves scrutiny, it was the Himalayan Brotherhood that located Olcott, sent HPB to America, and brought the two of them together. Yet from the Western side, this was supposedly arranged by the living persons behind the Brotherhood of Light, John King, Serapis, etc. Each side, in other words, wants to claim credit for the launching of the Theosophical Society, although from the Westerners' point of view the enterprise turned sour. Yet are the two claims mutually exclusive? I think not. If Mme. Blavatsky had to launch her mission in the West, there was nowhere better to start than the Spiritualist milieu which she already knew well, and which was burgeoning in France, England, and America. That being so, her best strategy was to ally herself with the enlightening movement currently under way. This would explain what Harrison says about her demand for admission to an occult brotherhood in Paris (see Part Two of this article), and her admission to it in America,

where it was emerging as the Brotherhood of Luxor. Her parting gift to this movement was *Isis Unveiled*, before she earned expulsion by turning her face once more to the East.

It was at this point, according to Harrison, that the American brotherhood, despite the disapproval of almost all European occultists, performed an operation of ceremonial magic that resulted in Mme. Blavatsky's disabling through "occult imprisonment" (Harrison 1895:36); but she was released by Hindu "Brothers of the Left" who wanted to make use of her, on condition that they would not interfere with anything that had already happened (167). (These Hindu Brothers sound much more like the Arya Samajists than the Himalayans.) This mysterious event may well coincide with HPB's five-day period of unconsciousness in April 1878, during which the Colonel received a reassuring telegram from a Master in Bombay.¹⁷ One will never know exactly what happened, but the unprejudiced reader will probably get closer to the truth than Harrison, for whom Koot Hoomi could be nothing but a scoundrel, HPB nothing but a pawn, and esoteric Buddhism nothing but a threat to Christian supremacy. If, as Koot Hoomi says, the Himalayan Brothers did indeed leave her to sink or swim, she had no choice but to grasp at the straws of John King, Serapis and the Brotherhood of Luxor; then at the Sat B'hai, Hurrychund Chintamon and the Arya Samaj. The more one reads and thinks about her, the more sympathy one feels for the woman who had undertaken such a mission, while hampered by a sickly, elephantine body and by helpers so exasperating that she scarcely had need for enemies.

The subsequent history of the Theosophical Society as the channel of Oriental philosophy to the West is well enough known. In the concluding part of this article we will follow the fortunes of the Western side, and see what became of the Brotherhood of Light after it had lost, in Mme. Blavatsky, its most promising recruit.

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- ¹ "Madame H.P. Blavatsky to her correspondents: an open letter such as few can write," *Spiritual Scientist*, 23 Sept. 1875:25-7 (BCW I:126-33).
- ² "The Science of Magic," *Spiritual Scientist*, 14 October 1875:64-5 (BCW I:142).
- ³ The correspondence between Olcott and Moses was published in the latter's journal *Light* (Moses 1892). This letter is not dated exactly, but as it mentions a visit from Baron de Palm, it must predate the latter's death on 20 May 1876.
- ⁴ On Baroda, see Hardiman 1978.
- ⁵ I cannot locate Channing in Crockford's dictionary of the Church of England clergy; he may have been a Nonconformist.
- ⁶ ML 1924:309 (Letter No. 54, received October 1882).
- ⁷ See the many comments in Mahatma Letter No. 54, cited above.
- ⁸ Personal communication from Christian Chanel, Lyon.

- ⁹ See Yarker's statement in *BCW* I:311f.
- ¹⁰ On the Sat B'hai, see Howe 1972:257ff.
- ¹¹ Deduced from the information in Portman 1881.
- ¹² Guénon 1965:300. For fuller information on Portman's orders, see Howe 1972:273; 1985:21f. According to Guénon, Portman was Jewish, and according to Howe, his order had "a Cabbalistic top-dressing."
- ¹³ To thicken the plot, I mention here that Lord Lytton was First Secretary in Paris from April 1873; that he mentions an affectionate meeting there with his "old acquaintance" Princess Dolgourouky [Dolgorukov], a relative of Mme. Blavatsky (Lytton 1906 I:297); and that he later translated a work of Saint-Yves d'Alveydre's (*Le Poème de la Reine*) and presented it to Queen Victoria.
- ¹⁴ *ML* 1924:263; no. 44, received February 1882.
- ¹⁵ I.e., seven years from 17 November 1875, the date of Olcott's inaugural address to the Theosophical Society at Mott Memorial Hall, New York.
- ¹⁶ *ML* 1924:263; no 44, received February 1882.
- ¹⁷ See Chronology in *BCW* I:lxiii; the source is Vera Zhelikovsky's biography of her sister.

THEOSOPHY IN AFRICA

Mr. Wane Kell has kindly sent us a note which appeared in the *New Californian*, Vol. 1 No. 10 (March-April 1892). Victorian periodicals often reprinted from each other, and this piece appeared first in the *Madras Mail*.

James A. Santucci and Leslie Price

Colonel H. S. Olcott, President of the Theosophical Society, writes to us from Adyar: "I have been struck, upon reading in Thursday's paper your very interesting review of Mr. Stuttfield's 'The Brethren of Mount Atlas,' with the fresh proof it affords that the romancer and poet often unwittingly stumble upon important truths. Though he intends his book as a pot-boiler and selects the subject of Theosophy as his most promising card at the moment, yet there is in reality an adept brotherhood in Africa, where it has existed since the remotest ages. Its seat is elsewhere than on the Atlas range; but that does not matter. It is a section of an universal Brotherhood composed of members of all nations and creeds; who occupy themselves in the acquisition of knowledge and altruistic efforts to benefit mankind morally and spiritually. They find their agents wherever there are good men and women who dream philanthropic dreams and are impelled to work in any way for their brother man. When such willing workers band together into a Society without selfish motives, then these hidden benefactors are

drawn to them, inspire their zeal, and help to make their way smooth. Race and creed are not even considered, for these are only bars to the lower self. They themselves are of all nations and have evolved out of all the world's religions. I speak from personal knowledge. Before I came into contact with the Indian Section of the Blessed Brotherhood I was under a Teacher of the African Section, and saw him last in Egypt, while passing through to India, in 1879. From him I received the ethical and philosophical instruction which I needed at that stage. I shall not divulge his name nor tell where is the African Headquarters, but if you will drive out to Adyar some day I will show you in confidence a document in which he had a hand, and which you will admit to be a most interesting case of telepathy, or psychical rapport. The invitation is not extended to third parties, as I have had enough of giving sacred things to be trampled in the mire. The instance of Mr. Stuttfield's accidental find of the African Adepts reminds me of a similar instance in the case of the late Wilkie Collins. Writing to me about a notice in the *Theosophist* of his strange novel 'Two Destinies,' in which I explained scientifically the phenomena of projection of the thoughtbody and the precipitation of writing by will-power, described in his book, he declared that among the many strange incidents in his eventful life none had so struck him with surprise as the fact, shown by me, that he had unconsciously hit upon principles of

occult science when he thought he was exercising the purely imaginative faculty. And he said his only regret was that I had not been his friend while he was writing the book, as he might have made it better. The late Charles Reade had told him he, Wilkie Collins, had written more into the novel than he suspected. The simple fact is, as these two and many more examples prove, that when men forget their physical selves and surroundings and pass into the creative realm of the 'imagination,' they are on a plane of consciousness where they get glimpses of arcane truths hidden from them in the normal waking state." - *Madras Mail*.

Review of Blavatsky and Her Teachers

Letter from Mr. Daniel Caldwell

Parts Two and Three

II. "Maitreya" and "Serapis"

In Chapter 44 entitled "Maitreya", J.O.F. [Jean Overton Fuller] tries to identify the individual she calls "Maitreya" (the Buddha to be) with an adept mentioned by Colonel Olcott:

It was while he [Olcott] was trying to do something for a blind man, Badrinath Babu, with his magnetic passes, that the latter began to say he saw a 'shining man', though it was through closed eyelids. He then described what seemed the unlikeliest person (113).

At this point J.O.F. quotes Colonel Olcott's own narrative:

...he [Badrinath]...described to me an individual with blue eyes, light flowing hair, light beard, and European features and complexion...the description...fitted accurately a real personage, the Teacher of our Teachers, a *Paramaguru*,...who had given me a small colored sketch of himself in New York....¹⁷

J.O.F. comments:

No name is named.... There is, however, in the Theosophical Society a legend that a portrait of Maitreya was precipitated to Olcott and is possessed at Adyar. It is, moreover, asserted that the features and colouring are as described above (113).

Who is this individual "with blue eyes, light flowing hair...and European features"? J.O.F. writes that "no name is named" in Colonel Olcott's narrative. Then she attempts

to identify him as "Maitreya!" But there is evidence to show that this individual "with European...complexion" is Serapis (who is written about elsewhere in J.O.F.'s book but who is not identified by her with the "real personage" seen by Badrinath).

J.O.F. could have consulted Howard Murphet's *Hammer on the Mountain*¹⁸, where Olcott's diary for 21 April 1883 is quoted: "Badrinath saw S...again."

Who is "S...?" For an answer to this question, I submit the following extracts:

(1) Letter of Morya to H.S. Olcott¹⁹:

...once you had determined to make of India your new home, it was in compliance with the direct orders of our beloved Lord and Chief—him whom you know under the name of S.—and Maha Sahib that you sailed *not sooner but later than you ought to*.

(2) Extracts from H.S. Olcott's diary for 1878²⁰:

October 22. Narayan left watch—and in came Sahib [Morya]. The latter with orders from Serapis to complete all by the first days of December....

November 14. ...Morya walked in.... Came with definite orders from Serapis. Have to go [to India]; the latest from 15 to 20th Dec....

(3) "Editor's Answer" by H.P.B.²¹:

...among the group of Initiates to which his [A.P. Sinnett's] mystical correspondent [Koot Hoomi] is allied,

are two of European race, and...one [Initiate, Serapis?] who is that Teacher's [Koot Hoomi's?] superior is also of that [European] origin, being half a Slavonian in his 'present incarnation', as he himself wrote to Colonel Olcott in New York. [Underlining added.]

(4) A note by K.H. to A.P. Sinnett²²:

This [healing] is all done thro' the power of a lock of hair sent by our beloved younger Chohan to H.S.O.

What is one to make of J.O.F.'s reference to "a legend" about a portrait of Maitreya given to Olcott? What is her source for this "legend"? Is this just a "rumor" J.O.F. has heard bandied about in Theosophical circles?

In the *Old Diary Leaves* extract previously quoted, Colonel Olcott states that "the Teacher of our Teachers" ("S...") had given Olcott "a small colored sketch of himself in New York."

Is this "small colored sketch" identical with the one described by C. Jinarajadasa?²³

...a picture of the Master Serapis...is among these early letters. It is painted on thin paper, and its size is 3 1/2 by 2 5/8 inches. It is drawn in pencil, and painted with a brush in a brown which is now faded. The background is blue. The picture shows an ascetic face, somewhat resembling Cardinal Newman's, with brown flowing hair and short rounded beard....

Is this paragraph by Jinarajadasa the source for the "legend" J.O.F. writes about?

Are there any other descriptions of Serapis that would clearly identify him as the "shining man" seen by Badrinath?

A.P. Sinnett has described Serapis in these words²⁴:

I saw K.H. in astral form on the night of 19th of October, 1880—waking up for a moment but immediately afterwards being rendered unconscious again (in the body) and conscious out of the body in the adjacent dressing-room where I saw another of the Brothers afterwards identified with one called 'Serapis' by Olcott—"the youngest of the chohans'."

William Q. Judge gives even more details about Sinnett's "out-of-the-body experience"²⁵:

I asked him [Sinnett] about his sight of K.H. and he related this: "He was lying in his bed in India one night, when suddenly awakening, he found K.H. standing by his bed. He rose half up, when K.H. put his hand on his head, causing him to fall at once back on the pillow. He then, he says, found himself out of his body, and in the next room, talking to another adept whom he describes as an English or European, with light hair, fair, and of great beauty. This is the one Olcott described to me in 1876 and called by name—. Please erase that when read.... S. [Sinnett] says he [the adept] is very high...."

In summary, J.O.F.'s attempt (to identify "Maitreya" with the "shining man" seen by Badrinath) is in error. I should also note here that she makes erroneous statements about Serapis elsewhere in her biography. I will document these in a later letter.

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²⁰ *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1874-1878*. Volume I. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff. First edition (Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1966), 414-15, 420 [revised edition of *The Complete Works of H.P. Blavatsky*, edited by A. Trevor Barker. Volume I (1874-1879). London: Rider & Co., 1933].

²¹ *Lucifer*, October 1888; in *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings, 1888-1889*. Volume X. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff. First edn. (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1964), 153.

²² *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom (Second Series)*, 45.

²⁴ *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett from the Mahatmas M. & K.H.* Transcribed, compiled, and with an introduction by A.T. Barker. Second edn. (London: Rider & Company, 1926), 10. Same page in third edn. (London: Rider & Company, 1926), 10. Same page in third edn. [Edited by Christmas Humphreys and Elsie Benjamin. Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1962.]

²⁵ W.Q. Judge. *Letters That Have Helped Me* (Los Angeles and New York: The Theosophy Company, 1946) 196.

III. A Partial List of Other Errors in J.O.F.'s Biography

(a) On page 66, J.O.F. writes:

...it [reincarnation] did not figure in *Isis Unveiled*, save in a few lines dismissing it..."She [H.P.B.] told Olcott that the first her Master told her about it [reincarnation] was when they reached India, in 1879. [Underlining added.]

J.O.F.'s source for this latter statement is: "ODL, I, p. 280." If the reader turns to that page in volume I of *Old Diary Leaves [First Series: America 1874-1878]*. Second edn. (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1941), he will find what Colonel Olcott actually wrote:

She [H.P.B.] told Mr. Walter R. Old—who is my informant—that she was not taught the doctrine of Reincarnation until 1879—when we were in India. I willingly accept that statement....

Therefore, contrary to what J.O.F. writes, H.P.B. did not tell Olcott....!

J.O.F. ends "her" account of "reincarnation in *Isis*" with a question and an answer:

Why was the mistake in *Isis Unveiled* allowed to occur? My guess is that... (66)

J.O.F.'s "guess" is in contradiction to the written answers to this very question given

by H.P.B., Koot Hoomi and Morya! The reader can find a summary of their views on pages 46 to 50 of the "Introductory" to volume I of *Isis Unveiled* [H.P. Blavatsky *Collected Writings: 1877: Isis Unveiled*. Edited by Boris de Zirkoff (Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1972.)

(b) On page 130, J.O.F. writes:

...in August, 1888, a letter was precipitated to Olcott by Koot Hoomi, in which,...[K.H.] says [P. Sreenivasrow] ...has made mistakes..."in helping thrust out of the Headquarters house one who deserved a more charitable treatment...tell my devoted though mistaken 'son' that it was most theosophical to give her protection, most untheosophical and selfish to drive her away.

J.O.F. continues:

I suggest the reference is to the expulsion of Madame Coulomb, ...the 'son' being Brown, whose part in the events cut him off from his Master.

This may sound plausible until one looks carefully at what K.H. says:

P. Sreenivasrow...has made occasional mistakes, e.g., once recently, in helping thrust out of the Headquarters house, one who deserved a more charitable treatment....²⁶ [Underlining added]

It is hard to believe (at least for me!) that K.H. is referring to the expulsion of Madame Coulomb (an event that happened more than four years prior to the receipt of this K.H. letter) when the Master writes "once recently..."!!

J.O.F. thinks that the 'son' is W.T. Brown. From reading K.H.'s words, I

understand the phrase "my devoted tho' mistaken 'son'" to refer to P. Sreenivasrow!

(c) On page 142, J.O.F. writes:

This [Mahatma Letter No. 66, 2nd ed., 366-70] appears to have been the last Mahatmic letter received by Sinnett.

Well, as the saying goes, "appearances can be deceiving!" Sinnett received at least three more "Mahatmic letters" (MLs, numbers 63, 64, and 65) after the receipt of ML no. 66.

(d) On page 75, J.O.F. writes:

[Concerning the 'cup and saucer' picnic incident]...The Sinnetts' servants packed six hampers, for Madame Blavatsky and Olcott, the Sinnetts and Major Henderson and another woman (Mrs. Henderson?)

No, not Mrs. Henderson. Mrs. Reed. There are several sources for this tidbit of information. For example, see Olcott's account of the picnic in *Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement* [Compiled and ann. by Sven Eek (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1965)], 156.

(e) On the same page [75], J.O.F. writes:

...Mrs. Sinnett told one of them [the servants] to go to a nearby brewery. Olcott wrote a note for him to take...

But in *The Occult World* [9th edition, (London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1969), 65], A.P. Sinnett pens a somewhat different account:

The only thing to be done was to send to a brewery, the nearest building about a mile off, and ask for water. I wrote a pencil note and a coolie went off with the empty bottles. [Underlining added]

(f) On page 81, J.O.F. writes:

How had Olcott blundered? He had received a letter from H.M. Durand...Olcott had written a jubilant but unguarded letter about this to an acquaintance who had, without his permission, made it available to *The Times of India*, where its publication had sparked new vexations.

Is this an accurate account of what actually happened? I think not. Consult the "article" entitled "The 'Purloined' Letter from Col. H.S. Olcott to Damodar" on pages 155-59 and the following "Letter to *The Times of India* (by Damodar) on pages 159-60 of the book *Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*.

(g) On pages 65-66, J.O.F. writes:

On 29 March [1879], Madame Blavatsky told Mooljee to fetch a buggy.... They came to the sea-shore and drove along it. Finally, they arrived at a private estate with a rose garden in the front and a bungalow with spacious verandas in the background.... He [Mooljee] watched Madame Blavatsky walk up to the front door, and saw it opened to her by a very tall Indian, dressed entirely in white...the tall Indian in white...gave [a bunch of roses] to Madame Blavatsky ...Back home, she handed the roses to Olcott, telling him Morya had said they were for him....

Just after this, Olcott was working in his office when Babula came to say a gentleman had called and would like to see him in Madame Blavatsky's bungalow...He went in and found waiting for him, in the flesh, the Master [Morya]...After speaking...he [Morya] left, on his horse.... [Underlining added]

Then on the next page (67), J.O.F. writes:

On 4 April 1879, Madame Blavatsky and Olcott set out, at Morya's suggestion, for the Karli cave temple.... [Underlining added]

From this narrative, some readers may think that Morya's visit on horseback to see Olcott and Blavatsky occurred sometime between 29 March and 4 April 1879, especially when J.O.F. uses the phrase "just after this." But the Master's visit to the T.S. Headquarters at Bombay occurred on 15 July 1879. See [*H.P.B.*] *Collected Writings (1879-1880)*, volume II [(Wheaton, Ill: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1967)], xxviii. I have verified this from the microfilm of Olcott's 1879 diary.

(h) In Chapter 33, entitled "The Arrival of the Coulombs", J.O.F. writes (72):

On 28 January [1880], the Coulombs arrived [at Bombay].

In the endnote (245-246) to this sentence, J.O.F. comments:

Ibid. [*Old Diary Leaves. Second Series, 1878-83* (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1900), p. 147. Olcott writes 28 June, but on 28 June Madame Blavatsky and he were...in Ceylon. Olcott takes all his dates from his diary, and the abbreviation 'Jan' can look much like 'June'."

If one carefully reads page 147 where Olcott mentions the "June" date, and then compares that section with the dates mentioned at the top of pages 143 and 144, one can see that "June" is obviously a mistake! But J.O.F.'s date of 28 January

1880 is also wrong! A careful reading of these pages (just cited) indicates that the date is 28 March 1880. Further confirmation is to be found in, at least, two different primary sources:

- (1) Emma Coulomb's pamphlet²⁷ where she writes:

...our journey from Galle (Ceylon) to Bombay...we were not able to leave before the 24th March, 1880 arriving at Bombay...on the 28th of the same month. (7)

- (2) Colonel Olcott's handwritten diary entry for 28 March 1880 also confirms the date of the Coulombs' arrival at Bombay.

* * * * *

Some of these 8 mistakes (under III a-h) are somewhat minor and even trivial but they need to be considered (and corrected) for a second edition.

I am compiling a further list of minor errors. And unfortunately, there are several other major mistakes that mar this latest biography of H.P. Blavatsky. I will be working on the documentation for these corrections and hope to send it in a few months.

These criticisms are offered in a friendly spirit. We stand on the shoulders of those we criticize....

Best wishes,

[signed]
Daniel H. Caldwell

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Tucson, Arizona 85702
U.S.A.

REFERENCE SOURCES

²⁶ *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom, 1870-1900, First Series*. Transcribed and compiled by C. Jinarâjadâsa. Fifth edn. (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1964), Letter 19, 26. Quote found on p. 47 [1973 reprint].

²⁷ *Some Account of My Intercourse with Madame Blavatsky from 1872 to 1884* (London: Elliott Stock, 1885).

Maitreya, Serapis and the Maha Chohan

Jean Overton Fuller

The strangest thing about Mr. Caldwell's article is that nowhere in it does he mention the Maha-Chohan. In silence, he has obliterated him, wiped him away, and put Serapis in his place. Can it be Mr. Caldwell thinks the Master Serapis is the Maha Chohan. If so he is in error. I wrote to Dr. Corona Trew about this, and she replied, in two letters, "I believe there are pictures at Adyar of Master Serapis and of the Maha Chohan but these are probably in the E.S. archives and not with the other archives... The Master Serapis should not be confused with the Maha Chohan".¹

As I seem to detect in Mr. Caldwell's letter a slight anti-Adyar bias, or at any rate distrust of Leadbeater, I will point out that the relative positions of the Master Serapis and the Maha Chohan were first made public not in *The Masters and the Path* by Leadbeater (Adyar, 1925) but in *Initiation, Human and Solar*, by Alice Bailey (Lucis, 1922). There is a difference in the setting out. In Mrs. Bailey's, Morya and Koot Hoomi come under the Manu and Bodhisattva respectively but not under the Maha Chohan, the Venetian coming under the Maha Chohan and the Masters of Rays 4-7 inclusive under him through the Venetian.² this has the effect of depressing Serapis, Hilarion, Jesus and Rakoczy beneath Morya, Koot Hoomi and the Venetian. In Leadbeater, Morya, Koot Hoomi, the Venetian, Serapis, Hilarion, Jesus and Rakoczy (Saint-Germain) are seven

equal brothers, the Venetian, Serapis, Hilarion, Jesus and Rakoczy coming under the Maha Chohan.³ Whilst I prefer the setting out with seven equal brothers, my own study of *The Mahatma Letters* teaches me that both authors are slightly wrong, in excepting Morya and Koot Hoomi from his higher direction. On the contrary, they refer to him continually as their great chief. Their "Rock of Ages", their "Venerable Hobilgan", "the sternest of Hobilgans", "my great Master" and "the Maha-Chohan" are all titles of one person - and he is old. On one occasion, he "laughed till the tears streamed down his old cheeks".⁴

He cannot, therefore, be "the youngest of the Chohans", seen by Sinnett - Serapis, according to what Sinnett later understood from Olcott.⁵

It will be noticed that in the anecdote concerning the restoration of a letter eaten by a goat, Koot Hoomi ascribed to the Maha Chohan the phrase, "Kam mi ts'har", and translating it, "I'll do it".⁶ I submitted this phrase to Mr. Stephen Hodge, with whom I have for some months been taking lessons in Tibetan, and he gives me his opinion some person not Tibetan was trying to write down what he thought he had heard. Mr. Hodge suggested the words should read, "Nga mi tshar", which would, however, mean, "I have not done it", not "I'll do it".⁷ There are further mysteries concerning the transcription of this phrase which I am still exploring, and

which may form the basis of a future paper I shall present on the Tibetan words in Blavatsky's writings and in *The Mahatma Letters*. Koot Hoomi was not Tibetan, and may have made a mistake in the sentence he attributes to the Maha Chohan, or there can have been a slip in the transmission, but at any rate, it tries to be Tibetan.

Mr. Caldwell cites a passage from one of Morya's letters to Olcott, "it was on the direct orders of our beloved Lord and Chief him whom you know under the name of S - and Maha Sahib that you sailed..." but, he fails to mention the all important footnote to that phrase, "Maha Sahib is an appellation given to the Master Serapis, must be distinguished from the Maha Chohan".⁸ S and Maha Sahib are, therefore, two people. Since it is Maha Sahib who is "Our Lord and Master" surely Serapis, the S must stand for somebody else. Who? We are never told the personal name of the Maha Chohan. Can that begin with S?

As to the two entries by HPB in Olcott's 1878 diary, referring to Morya as coming in with orders from Serapis concerning sailing, that does not have to mean that Morya was under the orders of Serapis. If a child wrote, "Da came in with orders from Mum", that would not be taken to mean that Dad was under the orders of Mum, but that Mum had entrusted Dad with some instruction she wished him to pass on to the child on her behalf.

There is another aspect to this. Koot Hoomi, in one of his letters, refers to "three centers of the Occult Brotherhood, in existence, widely separated geographically, and as widely *exoterically*".⁹ From the context, I take two to be those at Shigatse

and at Luxor, the third perhaps in Europe, in a place convenient to the European Masters. Koot Hoomi made the point that these great schools taught the same true esoteric doctrine though in outwardly differing forms, which seems to mean they had grown up and were organized independently. In that case, the head of the great school at Luxor would, on his visit to India and Tibet, have been addressed with titles of the highest Oriental courtesy, hence Maha Sahib.

As to the picture in question, my source is not the note by Jinarajadasa, which Mr. Caldwell informs me appears in the second edition of *Letters from the Masters of Wisdom, Second Series*. I worked from the first edition, in which I do not find it. I was told, a very long time ago, a portrait of Maitreya had been precipitated to Olcott whilst he was in New York, and was at Adyar. Was it added, "But they think of it as Serapis?" and had I forgotten? Or did I dream it? It came back to me in a flash this morning, as if from the past. If I cannot furnish a proper reference (which is why I referred to a "legend", so as not to seem to be making an assertion), yet my logic comes in now, and tells me this may be the explanation.

In the earliest Theosophical literature, Serapis is a Copt; see Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*.¹⁰ Rawson, likewise, associates H.P.B. in Egypt with a Coptic magician, whether the same or another.

The Copts were descendants of the ancient Egyptians.¹¹ It was this, of course, that drew Madame Blavatsky to them. Despite that under foreign conquests they had become Christians, taken Greek names, then to speaking Arabic, it was they, not the

Arabs in Egypt, who were the true Egyptians, amongst whom some remembrance of the ancient teachings and magic was still to be found.

With Alice Bailey, Serapis was still an "Egyptian".¹²

I feel that Mr. Caldwell has followed Leadbeater¹³ and David Anrias¹⁴ in making him a Greek, and fair, misled, I suggest, by the Greek name. I suspect that there has been a confusion with Macedonian Greek Ptolomeic dynasty, which after the death of Alexander the Great ruled Egypt, till Cleopatra lost it to Rome. Arthur Weigall makes the point in his biography of the Queen, that Cleopatra, as a Macedonian Greek, may have been fair.¹⁵ He makes another point, that Ptolemy's knowledge of the country hardly extended south of Alexandria.

A Copt, if of the true ancient Egyptian blood, would surely have looked like an ancient Egyptian, with straight, black hair, dark eyes, and skin of a tan verging on red, as can be seen on the ancient papyri.

There is another point. Serapis was a Bey, as was his colleague Tuitit. That was an administrative title for an office held under the Turkish suzerainty. Although this was before the Graeco-Turkish war, the conditions that led up to it, the tensions between Greeks and Turks in Crete and Cyprus, were such that I cannot think the Turks would be happy to appoint a Greek to a position of any authority in what they regarded as part of their lands, whereas a Copt would pose no such threat. Even his always writing to Olcott in French is in line with his being Coptic, for French was, at that time, the main European language

spoken in Egypt. Hilarion, who was Greek, wrote English (except when on behalf of Serapis, when he used French). England had the closer ties with Greece. Remember Byron's espousal of the cause of the liberation of Greece from the Turks.

If the picture at Adyar is that of a person with blue eyes and fair or brown hair, precipitated to Olcott in New York, I cannot think it is of Serapis, the Copt. Olcott understood the portrait was of "the Teacher of our Teachers." That, Serapis was not. The reference could only be to the Maha Chohan or one higher still. The reference could only be to the Maha Chohan or one higher still. The Maha Chohan may have been Slav on his mother's side, but if he had blue eyes, I feel we would have been told and his hair would have been white with age. We do know, however, from a non-Theosophic source, McGovern's *To Lhasa in Disguise*, that in Tibet, Maitreya, the next Buddha "is frequently portrayed almost as a European. I have sometimes seen representations of him with white skin and blue eyes, and in nearly all cases his image is sitting on a chair in European style as opposed to the Oriental cross-legged attitude assumed by the other Tibetan deities."¹⁶

If I am right, what they have at Adyar is a treasure far more precious than they have realized.

REFERENCE SOURCES

- 1 Two letters from Dr. Corona Trew to myself, dated 20 and 21 February, 1989, the latter on the headed notepaper of the E.S.T.

- ² Alice A Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar* (N.Y.: Lucis Publishing Company, 1922), 52-3, 62.
- ³ C.W. Leadbeater, *The Masters and the Path* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925), diagram facing p. 409.
- ⁴ *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett from the Mahatmas M. & K.H.*, Transcribed, compiled, and with an introduction by A.T. Barker. Second edn. (London: Rider & Co., 1926), Letter LXIX, p. 282
- ⁵ *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, IIIA, note by Sinnett, p 10
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, Letter LIV, p. 321
- ⁷ Letter from Stephen Hodge to myself, 15 February 1959.
- ⁸ *Letters from the Masters of Wisdom (Second Series)*. Transcribed and annotated by C. Jinarajadāsa (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1926), No. 27, p. 68.
- ⁹ *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, LXXXV, p. 399.
- ¹⁰ Henry Steel Olcott, *The True Story of The Theosophical Society Old Diary Leaves by Henry Steel Olcott President Founder of the Society America 1874-1878*. Second edn. (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1941), 19, 23, 432.
- ¹¹ Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar, Being An Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), 4, 5. See also *The Harmsworth Encyclopedia*. Ten volumes (London: The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., T. Nelson & Sons, 1906 and *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edited by F.L. Cross (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1958).
- ¹² *Bailey, Initiation, Human and Solar*, 62.
- ¹³ Leadbeater, *The Masters and the Path*, 52.
- ¹⁴ David Anrias, *Through the Eyes of the Masters*. First edn. (London: Routledge & Sons, 1932), ix, 59.
- ¹⁵ Arthur E.P. Brome Weigall, *The Life and Times of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt* (N.Y.: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1914), 6.
- ¹⁶ William Montgomery McGovern, *To Lhasa in Disguise: A Secret Expedition through Mysterious Tibet* (Grosset & Dunlap, 1924) 57.

BOOK REVIEW

Robert Boyd

THE MEMOIRS OF COUNT WITTE, VOLS. I-II-III. Translated and edited by Sidney Harcave. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1990. Pp. xxxiv + 885. Bibliography. \$39.95 (U.S.). Available through Nautilus Books, 125 No. Broadway, Suite 2A, Turlock, CA 95380.

Pawn your jewelry, sell up everything if necessary, but do plan to place this fascinating book in your collection as it is probably the most useful reference to anecdotes and vignettes of pre-revolutionary tsarist *generalitet* and events by the man who built modern Russia, Count Sergei Iulevitch Witte (1849-1915). It is, at least, outside the confines of the Slavonic Section of the New York Public Library or Columbia University's Bakhmeteff Archive of Russian and East European History and Culture, particularly in English. Sidney Harcave, professor emeritus of history at SUNY, Binghamton, New York, has at last provided the definitive edition of a work that has received considerable attention over the last seventy years from virtually every writer Theosophical or other who has ever written a biographical sketch of Witte's cousin and founder of the Theosophical Society, Helen Petrovna *Blavatskaia* (Madame Blavatsky to us, but otherwise correct in Mother Russian because she is so named in the feminine while *he* was Blavatsky). We learn a good deal more as well about other lightly balanced members of the Fadeev clan, even

Witte's appraisal of another talented cousin who could have gone her one better if he had not been burdened with governmental chores. These character sketches of 'more or less interesting personalities' confirms the opinions of Gogol (in *The Inspector General*) and others that life in small-town Russia during the last century was not so dull as outsiders might think. All that ice and cold made it more cozy.

This edition, the third *redaction* after those of Avrahm Yarmolinsky, late of the New York Public Library's Slavonic Division, whose first translation appeared under the Doubleday, Page imprint on 30 March 1921, was followed by editions in the UK, France (Plon-Nourrit) and Spain (Editorial Saturnino Calleja), including a more recent one in Japanese. But German and Russian editions, to be prepared by Ullstein Verlag, Berlin, (and destined perhaps for the emigre community there?) somehow failed to appear, possibly owing to the dissatisfaction of Witte's widow with Yarmolinsky's effort and by the subsequent dilatory attitude of its second editor, I.V. Hessen, in Germany, who clearly had so much varied editorial work to attend to that this was something with which he could scarcely cope. Not surprising either since Professor Harcave makes clear that his edition actually comprises the two sets of memoirs, the "Zapisi Grafa Vitte", the "handwritten memoirs", and a later set of "dictated memoirs" begun in late 1910 entitled "Vospominaniia (rasskazy v

stenograficheskoi zapisi)...)", (recollections ... in stenographic transcription), which came to 2,438 pages by the last entry on 5 March 1912. These two sets are the basis of all editions of the memoirs thus published, including this one, and present problems of organization and repetition, along with noticeable difference in tone. Tsar Nicholas II, for example, in the "handwritten memoirs" is a weak man whose shortcomings are masked by an air of breeding, while in contrast, the Nicholas of the "dictated memoirs" is basically decent but unprepared for his task as ruler and ill-served by the inadequacies of his subordinates.

Library of Congress rules for transliteration from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet have been followed ... with some exceptions, and some readers of Russian may observe a dismayingly French influence therein as opposed to the current difference in Soviet style. And unless otherwise noted, dates have been given according to the Julian calendar.

The first volume of these memoirs is accompanied by copious and wittily informative notes that also provide source material on the life and work of H.P.B.'s sister, Vera de Zhelikovskaia. Now mostly remembered, if at all, as a writer of children's books, she edited a Petersburg journal, *Rebus*, the organ of the Russian section of the Theosophical Society, in which she commented (as she did in the 1883 issue) at length on the merits of her sister. (A translated edition of the same would be useful today as it is available and would supplement the translation of Russian works into English begun by the American Section President, Henry Smith, in the 1960's.)

Beyond what is arguably the most accurate word picture of H.P.B. and the founding of the T.S. in Sax Rohmer's First World War study of mystical tradition, *The Romance of Sorcery*, later evaluations providing less than adulatory praise have often been deemed unflattering, including Count Witte's, primarily because he also viewed H.P.B. as just another strong-willed and socially well placed member of an aristocratic family who was accustomed to doing as she pleased. Whether Witte was acquainted with any contemporary literature defending or attaching H.P.B. is the point up for discussion.

Witte, who tried to distance himself from the Baltic-German origins of his family, was apparently as charmed as the Russian public in general by the collection of stories *In the Jungles of Hindustan* published by Katkov in *Ruskii vestnik*, but really took serious exception to H.P.B.'s abilities only in that he believed her to have been unduly influenced by the well-known 19th century spiritualist, Daniel D. Home. Moreover, in light of some inconsistencies in reporting her own activities which bothered Witte, some enterprising theosophist ought to check the records of the Royal Courts of Serbia or the Belgrade newspapers of the period in question to discover if H.P.B. really directed a choir for Prince Milan ... and if so, did she have as good a press as my guess would be since she managed to do most things well.

What impedes a serious rewriting of theosophical history is, I suggest, that the society evidently lacks both scheming scholarly talent adequate to the task and sufficient kidney to enforce the results amongst a motley membership. If a master

like, say, Stendhal were alive today, he could surely manufacture a masterpiece, for 'according to him, the society of his day was based on "charlatanism and endless intrigue without which talent has no chance".'¹

To put the Blavatskian canon in order will probably require a more ruthless suppression of biased nonsense and Victorian (read especially English) prejudice that originally aimed to make theosophy something of a drawing-room religion for jaded socialites. If that happened, fuzzy thinking that passes for scholarly erudition would be in for closer re-evaluation by a membership that ought to know its own holy writ more accurately.

¹ Stendhal, *Lucien Leeuwen*. Volume 2. N.Y.: New Directions, 1950, xiii.

Theosophical History

A Quarterly Journal of Research

Volume 3, No. 5 January 1991
ISSN 0951-497X

THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY

A Quarterly Journal of Research

Founded by Leslie Price, 1985

Volume 3, No. 5, January 1991

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Theosophical History (ISSN 0951-497X) is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October by the Theosophical History Foundation. The journal's purpose is to publish contributions specifically related to the modern Theosophical Movement, from the time of Madame Helena Blavatsky and others who were responsible in establishing the original Theosophical Society (1875), to all groups that derive their teachings - directly or indirectly, knowingly or unknowingly - from her or her immediate followers. In addition, the journal is also receptive to related movements (including pre-Blavatskyite Theosophy, Spiritualism, Rosicrucianism, and the philosophy of Emanuel Swedenborg to give but a few examples) that have had an influence on or displayed an affinity to modern Theosophy.

The subscription fee for the journal is \$12.00 (U.S.) a year. Single issues are \$3.00. The air mail rate for subscribers outside the U.S. is \$12 a year. Please make checks or money orders payable in U.S. funds to James Santucci. Subscriptions should be sent to *James Santucci, Department of Religious Studies, California State University, Fullerton, CA 92634-9480 (U.S.A.)*.

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The Theosophical History Foundation is a nonprofit public benefit corporation located at the Department of Religious Studies, California State University, Fullerton, 1800 North State College Boulevard, Fullerton, CA 92634-9480 (USA). Its purpose is to publish *Theosophical History* and to facilitate the study and dissemination of information regarding the Theosophical Movement. The Foundation's Board of Directors are April Hejka-Ekins, Jerry Hejka-Ekins, J. Gordon Melton, and James A. Santucci.

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Layout and composition by Robert L. Hütwohl, GraphicType Southwest, P.O. Box 1162, Taos, NM 87571 USA, (telephone: 505-751-0041) using Adobe type 1 typefaces: ITC Garamond 1, Linotype Frutiger and Linotext.

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Editor's Notes

In This Issue

Theosophical History finally enters 1991 with this issue. The present issue continues and completes Professor Godwin's "The Hidden Hand", the first three parts of which previously appearing in III/2-4. This final study investigates the somewhat mysterious Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor.

One of the interests of this journal is the exploration of theosophical societies and movements in countries not usually associated with such organizations. Professor Bernardino del Boca, a former Italian Consul in Singapore, was kind enough to send information on what he calls in the title of his essay, "The First Practical Expression of Theosophy in Italy: The Villagio Verde."

Reviews are also included of two rather significant historical publications. The first book, *In Search of the Masters* by Paul Johnson, is bound to generate considerable discussion. Just who the Mahatmas in the Theosophical Society are has been argued since the inception of the Society. The last significant discussion on these mysterious personages came with the Hare brothers' denial of their very existence in their book *Who Wrote the Mahatma Letters?* (by Harold Edward Hare and William Loftus Hare [London: Williams and Norgate Ltd., 1936]). Mr. Johnson has taken a more middle-of-the road approach, indicating that they were neither superhuman nor figments of Madame Blavatsky's imagination. The review is contributed by Dr. Gregory Tillett of Macquarie University (Australia). The second review examines Joseph Ross's publication on the origins of the Krotona Institute of Hollywood (California). Mr. Ross has provided us with much valuable

information not only of the Institute but also of the American Section of the Theosophical Society during the early portion of the twentieth century. We eagerly await future volumes of this study.

Please note the cover photograph for the July 1990 journal is of Annie Besant wearing the Cagliostro Jewel. See the page 79 drawing of that jewel. The picture was donated by Mr. Joseph E. Ross.

International Theosophical History Conference Call For Papers

It is with great pleasure that we announce plans to hold an International Theosophical History Conference at Point Loma, California from 12-14 June 1992. As many of our readers are already aware, four previous conferences took place at the headquarters of the English T.S. in London from 1986 to 1989 under the auspices of the Theosophical History Centre. With this in mind, the Theosophical History Foundation wishes to continue the valuable work of the Centre and the founder of this journal, Leslie Price.

The location of the conference will be on the grounds of the old Point Loma theosophical community (Lomaland), now the Point Loma Nazarene College, from Friday, 12 June 1992, to Sunday, 14 June 1992. The conference activities will be in Boney Lecture Hall. For those who wish to remain on the campus of P.L.N.C., Finch Hall has been reserved at a cost of \$15 a person or \$30

for a double room. This residence hall is a short walking distance to Boney Hall and provides a lovely view of the Pacific Ocean. A quote in the standard work on the Point Loma community, Emmett A. Greenwalt's *California Utopia: Point Loma: 1897-1942* [second and revised edition (San Diego, CA: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1978), 33], aptly describes the locale:

Point Loma is the northern and westernmost land-arm protecting San Diego Bay. Its elevation of nearly four hundred feet commands a view which Charles Dudley Warner in *Our Italy* described as one of the world's three finest, with San Diego and the mountains to the east, and the broad Pacific to the west. The site [Lomaland] is itself three miles short of the lighthouse standing at the tip of the point.

No particular theme is intended to dominate the Conference proceedings. Papers on any aspect of the Theosophical Movement as defined on the inside cover of the journal will be welcomed. We suggest that the paper title and a short precis (50 to 100 words) be sent to the editor at your earliest convenience. We do intend to publish the summaries and abstracts of the papers and presentations in *Theosophical History*. It is our hope that the Conference and the publication of the proceedings will establish and strengthen a network of scholars in theosophical studies. Since the papers will be considered for publication in *Theosophical History*, it is important that the full length paper be sent no later than two weeks in advance of the Conference. Scheduling constraints may require that papers be summarized, but the full paper will definitely be made available either through the journal or through some alternative publication.

Registration and Accommodations,

Theosophical History

Meals, and Information forms were included in the last issue (III/4). Should you require additional forms or information, please write to the editor (James A. Santucci, Department of Religious Studies, California State University, Fullerton, California 92634-9480).

Book Notes

Although *Theosophical History* customarily includes reviews of books addressing historical topics on the Theosophical Movement, we will include occasional notices of publications that might be of more general interest. Readers are welcome to send in titles and comments on such works they wish to see mentioned herein.

The Human and Divine Universe: Platonic, Neo-Platonic and Theosophic Insight into the Nature of Reality (San Diego, California: Point Loma Publications, 1989, 116 pages, \$6.75) consists of essays by "mystic scholars" William Laudahn and Kathleen Raine as well as short selections from late nineteenth and early twentieth century writers in the theosophical movement: G.R.S. Mead, Alexander Wilder, Fritz Darrow, Henry T. Edge, and Thomas Taylor.

Point Loma Publications has also announced the publication of Dr. H.J. Spierenburg's *The Buddhism of H.P. Blavatsky*. The book "is a compilation in one volume of her perspective, both controversial and stimulating [in] value, for all interested in the Buddhist and Theosophic world view." The address of Point Loma Publications is P.O. Box 6507, San Diego, California 92166 (U.S.).

Expanding Horizons by a former Leader of the Theosophical Society (Pasadena), James A.

Long, is a 1990 reprint of the 1965 edition published by the Theosophical University Press (P.O. Bin C, Pasadena, California) as a Sunrise Library Book. It is available in cloth (\$12), softcover (\$7), and three audiocassettes (\$15). The question and comment format in this 248 page book includes topics on karma, 'theosophia', psychic vs. spiritual development, good and evil, the Lord's Prayer, the Golden Rule, and much more.

H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: Cumulative Index, volume XV, compiled by Boris de Zirkoff and assisted by Dara Eklund (Wheaton, Illinois: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1991, xiii + 633 pages, \$27.95) has just been published and was given a favorable review in *The Canadian Theosophist* (May-June, 1991) by Ted G. Davy. In the same issue is mention of a limited Centenary Edition of H.P. Blavatsky's *Voice of the Silence*, now available at a cost of \$20 (U.S.) through the Edmonton Theosophical Society, P.O. Box 4804, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T6E 5G6.

Adjustment of Subscription Rates

The publication of the past four issues of *Theosophical History* require that the subscription rates be brought more in line with the costs of its publication. An increase in the postal rates and the high cost of printing in California require increases in actual subscription rates for both the U.S. and overseas. These adjustments take effect with number **seven** of volume III (July 1991). The new rates are as follows:

U.S. and Canada	\$14
Elsewhere (surface)	\$16
Air mail (outside the U.S. and Canada)	\$24
Price per issue	\$4

Correspondence

The following letter is from Professor Robert Ellwood, Professor of Religion at the University of Southern California and Associate Editor of Theosophical History.

I appreciated the suggestion by Joseph Ross in the Letters column of the July 1990 *Theosophical History* that we think in terms of “perspectives” in history. Whether or not a change in the title of TH is needed, the reminder that no historical work can entail all possible angles of vision is important. Historical insight or “truth” is always partial and selective. The finite human mind can never know all the virtually infinite number of factors that go into any contemporary event, much less comprehend all those that make up a happening back in the past. Furthermore, the selection by historians of the data that seems significant out of all the rest often tells us more about the historians themselves, and the age in which they write, than it totally unlocks the past, even though it is surely possible to undertake *some* significant reconstructions of former ages.

I would, however, not go so far as Mr. Ross in stating that “the only valid reason for studying history lies in its lessons for the present.” Certainly there are lessons—though often ambiguous and hard to decipher aright—to be gleaned from the study of history. But for myself I find that the perusal of history can be no less important as what in the sixties was called an “expansion of consciousness,” and as finally a kind of spiritual experience—stemming like all

such from the rapture of exploring new dimensions of awareness. History helps us to get out of the one-dimensionality of the present, and grow in wisdom and compassion by sensing what it would be like to be a person of a very different time and place. To me, this is a most profound and rich experience, entirely worthwhile in its own right.

I believe this is what Mr. Ross means when he finally says, “The real importance of history viewed as the experience of that unity called Mankind, is Mankind knowing Himself.” I would, though, have preferred the term Humanity or Humankind, and I hope TH would also. If it is thought necessary to use a single-gender term generically to cover the entire human race, it would be more rational—especially in the context of Theosophical history!—to employ the feminine, e.g., “Womankind knowing Herself,” since there are more women in the world than men.”

Best wishes, and thanks for the excellent job you are doing with this interesting and important journal.

The Hidden Hand, Part IV: The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor

Joscelyn Godwin

The Brotherhood of Luxor, or “of Light,” lost its most famous members when Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott left for India in 1878. Now it disappears from view for several years, so that when a “Hermetic” Brotherhood of Luxor emerges in the mid-1880’s, there is some question as to whether this was still the same group, under a modified name. For Olcott, it was definitely not: he said that the title Brotherhood of Luxor “was pilfered by the schemers who started, several years later, the gudgeon-trap called ‘The H.B. of L.’”¹ Olcott was determined to dissociate the Brotherhood of Luxor, whose Masters Tuitit and Serapis had enrolled him in 1875, from the H.B. of L. as represented by Peter Davidson in the mid-1880’s. The H.B. of L. was equally keen to emphasize its pedigree, and this is obviously what prompted the remark in the later, official history of the order: that the Brotherhood was founded in 1870, “and not, as the January number of *The Theosophist* says, in 1884...”²

In “The Brotherhood of Light” (Part II of this article) I concluded that, while there was no

solid evidence for the foundation of such an order in 1870, the succeeding years saw a lot of activity of the sort that might be expected to follow on the launching of an occult movement. One character had no place in the description of those events, because his association with them is purely on hearsay; but now it is time to introduce Max Théon (1847-1927), born in Warsaw as Louis-Maximilien Bimstein, the son of a rabbi. If we can believe the story told, years later, by his sometime pupil in occultism, Mirra Alfassa-Richard³ (later the “Mother” of Sri Aurobindo’s ashram), Théon was very young when he became involved in occultism, and mastered many languages and crafts.⁴ He had “worked with Madame Blavatsky,” and had “founded an occult society in Egypt.”⁵ Until reading Nahar’s book on Mirra, I could make no sense of the rumor, published by René Guénon,⁶ that Théon was the son of Paulos Metamon, the

¹Henry Steel Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves: The History of the Theosophical Society. First Series: America 1874-1878*. Second edition (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1941), 76. The order in question has always been known by its initials alone, which leaves it ambiguous whether the L. stands for Luxor or Light (though they may mean the same thing).

²Peter Davidson, “Origine et objet de l’H. B. of L.” in *H. B. of L. Textes et documents secrets de la Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor* (Milan: Archè, 1988), 4.

³For Théon’s biography, see Sujata Nahar, *Mother’s Chronicles*, Book 3: *Mirra the Occultist* (Paris: Institut des Recherches Evolutives, 1989). This contains the findings of Patrice Marot and Christian Chanel; the latter cautions, in private communication (8 June 1991) against attributing too much importance to Nahar’s account. I am grateful to Paul Johnson for access to this book.

⁴*Ibid.*, 51f.

⁵*Ibid.*, 48.

⁶René Guénon, *Le Théosophisme: Histoire d’une Pseudo-religion* (rev. & augmented ed., Paris: Ed. Traditionnelles, 1982), 313.

Coptic magician whom Mme Blavatsky met in paternity in question was that of master to pupil, several dissociated facts fall into place.

To continue with Mirra's sketchy biography of Théon,⁷ we find him appointed Grand Master of the Outer Circle of the H. B. of L. in 1873, at the age of only 26, while the Scotsman Peter Davidson was its frontal Chief. Olcott and Blavatsky were both members until 1877, the same year in which Théon, then in Egypt, severed his relationship with the Brotherhood. Théon came to London at some time after that and was a great social success, with his long hair and a reputation akin to that of the Comte de Saint-Germain. In 1885 he married a mediumistic Englishwoman, Mary (or "Alma") Ware, and held séances with her in England and France. In 1887 he moved to Algeria, restoring a large villa at Tlemcen where he lived until his death, heading (as "Aïa Aziz") a movement for the propagation of the "Cosmic Philosophy" for which his wife acted as the writing medium.

It is odd that one has never before heard of such a social lion in the London of the early 1880's. Leaving that aside, however, I turn again to the H. B. of L.'s official account of its own origins. This mentions an adept who resolved in 1870 to seek a neophyte in Great Britain who would establish an Exterior or Outer Circle. "After having performed an important and secret (private) mission on the European Continent, he arrived in Great Britain in 1873 and discovered by chance a neophyte who satisfied his plans."⁸ This language makes it sound as if the adept came from outside Europe, and allows for the possibility of Théon,

sent from Egypt by Metamon, passing through Paris to England, and making contact with the neophyte Peter Davidson. In any case, this document of 1887 makes frequent allusion to Théon, showing that he cannot have left the H. B. of L. in 1877, as Mirra understood him to have done. He was publicly acknowledged in Peter Davidson's *Occult Magazine* as "the eminent Occultist" and "an exalted Adept" behind the scenes. This magazine was produced in Glasgow from the beginning of 1885 through 1886, by Davidson and the Order's secretary, Thomas H. Burgoyne.

With the activities of Davidson and Burgoyne, we come to the ascertainable beginnings of the H. B. of L. and its public appearance under that name. Probably its first advertisement was in a note inserted in the 1884 edition of *The Divine Pymander*, published by Robert Fryar in Bath with an Introduction by Hargrave Jennings.⁹ Against the skepticism of the Theosophists, Davidson writes in a letter to *The Theosophist*¹⁰ that he has himself known the adepts of the H. B. of L. in the flesh for fourteen years (thus from 1871). So we must take a glance into the past of this interesting character.¹¹

Peter Davidson first came to public notice in 1871 with a book not on occultism but on *The Violin*¹², which was widely reviewed and

⁹Information from Christian Chanel, Lyon. The note is not to be found in the reprint of this work (Minneapolis: Wizards Bookshelf, 1973).

¹⁰*The Theosophist*, December 1884.

¹¹The Library of Congress Catalogue gives Davidson's dates as 1842-1916. R. Swinburne Clymer, *The Book of Rosicruciae* (Quakertown: Philosophical Publishing Co., 1946-9), which contains a brief idealized account of Davidson's life and extracts from his works, gives (III, 215) the dates 1837-1915.

¹²Glasgow: Porteous Bros., 1871.

⁷This paragraph is based on Nahar, 50-56.

⁸*H. B. L. Textes*, 4. Another version in René Guénon, "F.—Ch. Barlet et les sociétés initiatiques," *Le Voile d' Isis*, Yr.30, No.64 (April 1925), 216f.

eventually ran to five editions. We learn from this that he lived in Forres, near Findhorn, Scotland, and worked as a violin dealer and repairer.¹³ He had a wide knowledge of violin collections in Scotland and England, and had traveled to Paris in 1859.¹⁴

When his violin book went into its third edition (1881), Davidson enlivened it with remarks on the symbolism of color and of number and on the marvelous powers of music, referring to Hargrave Jennings's *The Rosicrucians, Their Rites and Mysteries* (first published 1870).¹⁵ He suggests that the claims of the Rosicrucians concerning music may not be so far-fetched as they seem, [p.37] and speaks of the Astral Body that is set free in sleep, and the imperishable tablets of the Astral Light on which all things are recorded. [p.193] An appendix of musical anecdotes brings in trance and Spiritualistic phenomena, and also prints the entire story "The Ensouled Violin," taken from *The Theosophist*. (Mme Blavatsky attributed it to Hilarion Smerdis, one of her Masters.) Praising India as the cradle of music, as of all arts and sciences, Davidson cites the *Surya Siddantha*, a Hindu astronomical work much used by Mme Blavatsky, and the *Agroushada Parikshai*, one of Jacolliot's sources. At the end of the book he takes the opportunity to mention the

¹³Elsewhere he is called a cabinet-maker, which is what violin-makers sometimes have to do to earn a living; also a teacher. After immigrating to the USA, he tried to establish a model farm. He appears to have had a family. I do not think that he ever had an easy life.

¹⁴In the third edition of *The Violin* (London: Pitman, 1881), p. 90, Davidson says that he saw a certain instrument in Paris twenty-two years ago. This may incline one to favor the earlier birthdate, which would make him twenty-two and not seventeen at the time.

¹⁵P. Davidson, *The Violin* (1881), 19, 190.

ghastly crimes of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, and the greed of the Church.

If one mentions such things in a book that is supposed to be about the violin, it must be for a reason. These digressions alone would place Peter Davidson unambiguously in the camp of the Brotherhood of Light, as I have outlined its doctrines in Part II of this article, for he has managed to mention astral travel, occult phenomena, the superior science of the ancients, the primacy of Indian wisdom, and the shortcomings of official Christianity. Moreover, in printing his own address, he was not only soliciting trade for his violin business, but inviting communications from those who were intrigued by these hints of another sort. It may be that the first members of the H. B. of L. were enrolled in this surreptitious way, at the beginning of the 1880s.

The third person active in the propagation of the H. B. of L. was Thomas H. Burgoyne (1855-94), the son of a Scottish physician.¹⁶ Apparently he was making enquiries among occult students in 1882, contacting among others Hurrychund Chintamon and the Rev. William Ayton, the "Alchemist of the Golden Dawn." Burgoyne did not get along well with Ayton, as we will see below, but he and Chintamon were birds of a feather. As we may remember from Part III of this article, the erstwhile President of the

¹⁶None of the sources on Burgoyne is entirely trustworthy, with the exception of Ellic Howe's notes in his edition of Ayton's letters, *The Alchemist of the Golden Dawn* (Wellingborough: Aquarian, 1985). I have consulted Waite's *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* (reprinted New York: Weathervane, 1970), I, 349-50 (based on an article Waite wrote for *The Occult Review*, May 1925); its correction by René Guénon in "Quelques précisions à propos de la H. B. of L.," *Le Voile d'Isis*, Yr. 30, No. 70 (Oct. 1925), 592-95; and the expurgated versions in "The Church of Light," P.O. Box 76862, Los Angeles, Ca. 90076), and in the Introduction to Burgoyne's *The Light of Egypt*, I (see note 39 below).

Bombay Arya Samaj had fled to England after relieving his master Dayananda of 4000 rupees, and was now spreading calumnies about Mme Blavatsky to the members of the London Theosophical Society. In January 1883, Burgoyne, under what must have been his true name of Thomas Dalton, and described as a grocer, was sentenced at Leeds to seven months' imprisonment for swindling.¹⁷

After his release, Dalton/Burgoyne contacted Peter Davidson and forthwith became the Secretary of the H.B. of L. Davidson and Burgoyne ran the H.B. of L. from Scotland, soliciting membership from likely people such as Ayton. *The Occult Magazine* is the best source for their ideas and activities. Most of the magazine was written pseudonymously by "Mejnour" (presumably Davidson himself), with help from "Zanoni" (Burgoyne), later joined by "Glyndon," a French occultist (probably F.-Ch. Barlet). Taking their names from Bulwer Lytton's *Zanoni* perhaps had no more significance than any other attempt made in the later 19th century to enroll the enigmatic novelist to one's cause. Among other hints of filiation, *The Occult Magazine* praises Lieut. Morrison (the astrologer "Zadkiel") and Sampson Arnold Mackey, the author of *The Mythological Astronomy of the Ancients Demonstrated* (1822-3), the latter being called "the Neophyte of an Initiate of the H. B. of L., whence he got his information."¹⁸ Among the few books recommended in the magazine that are not by Davidson himself are *The Temple of the Rosy Cross* by F. B.

Dowd,¹⁹ and *Palingenesia, or The Earth's New Birth*, by "Theosopho" and "Ellora."²⁰ *Ghostland* and *Isis Unveiled* are quoted, but virtually no other modern authorities are acknowledged.

Some of the language in this magazine is not without its resonances. At pains to make itself agreeable to the Theosophists, it says: "The H.B. of L. is purely and simply the Western Division of the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD OF ADEPTS."²¹ And again: "The Adepts who guide the Interior Circle of the H. B. of L. are however not Mahatmas, though members of the same Sacred Band of the Himalayas."²² In a note to a correspondent we read: "*there is a Section of our Order*, who have certain Lodges in the United States, who are under the control of a Committee of Seven. But there are *other Orders* in the States, entirely distinct from ours, whose Lodges also consist of a Committee of Seven."²³ (Remember the mysterious document sent to Olcott in 1875 by "The Committee of Seven, Brotherhood of Luxor.") It speaks of the "unseen races of elementals, made visible by our MASTERS," recalling George Felt's promises made to the early Theosophists in the same year. I consider these coincidences as strong pointers

¹⁹Freeman Benjamin Dowd was one of the successors of P.B. Randolph's "Rosicrucian" order. *The Temple of the Rosy Cross* was first published in 1882.

²⁰Ellora again! (See Part II of this article.) This very strange utopian book is by G. J. R. Ouseley (1835-1906), published Glasgow: Hay & Nisbet, 1884. The Revd. Ouseley was a close friend of Edward Maitland, the collaborator with Anna Kingsford in her revelations.

²¹*The Occult Magazine*, I/7 (Aug. 1885), 56. Compare the words of Blavatsky, cited in Part III of this article: "The Brotherhood of Luxor is one of the sections of the Grand Lodge of which *I am a member*."

²²*Ibid.*, II/12 (Jan. 1886), 7.

²³*Ibid.*, I/8 (Sept. 1885), 63.

¹⁷Poor Burgoyne's swindle was the most timid and pathetic kind of mail fraud, getting people to send him stamps and then keeping them! I am grateful to John Patrick Deveney for this information.

¹⁸*The Occult Magazine*, II/15 (April 1886), 31.

towards a connection of this new H. B. of L. with the Brotherhood of Light of the 1870's.

As far as doctrine is concerned, the magazine is rather vague. It has a strongly anti-ecclesiastical tone, tending towards the christology of Dupuis and his English disciple Robert Taylor: that Jesus is just another solar symbol, his Cross solely that of the vernal point in the celestial zodiac. Someone - probably "Glyndon," the French occultist - seems to have read Jean Sylvain Bailly (the historian of astronomy), Fabre d'Olivet, and Louis Figuier. A new translation of the Hermetic treatises *Asclepius* and *The Virgin of the World* is published in parts. But above all, the H. B. of L. stands not for theoretical research and scholarship, but for precisely that practical instruction in occultism that the Theosophical Society was failing to provide for its members: hence its idea that the two movements were not competitive but complementary.

Mme Blavatsky felt otherwise. To judge by her letters written from Germany to A. P. Sinnett, she was taken unawares when in late 1885 an American Theosophist enquired about the H. B. of L. Her first reaction was that "It is evident there's some new treachery emanating from the fair Anna,"²⁴ i.e., Anna Kingsford, who had recently founded the "Hermetic Society" upon her resignation from the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society. A friend of Countess Wachtmeister later investigated the H. B. of L., and identified Burgoyne as a convicted felon. Mme Blavatsky commented that "It is the work of the Jesuits I spoke to you of. Now the Kingsford is mixed up in it and many others...Warn all the theosophists..."²⁵ This sounds like paranoia, but perhaps that is understandable, at the height of

the Hodgson Report and attendant scandals.

What did the H.B. of L. do? Besides the material published by Davidson and Burgoyne, a sizable collection of manuscripts has survived, including essays that were given out as instruction,²⁶ and a correspondence between Peter Davidson and some French members. I base the following account on these materials.

People joined the H.B. of L. by contacting Peter Davidson and sending him their photograph, the details of their birth, and a five-shilling fee. He then drew up and interpreted the horoscope of the postulant. If accepted, one filled out a pledge of secrecy and sent Davidson the admission fee of one guinea. One was then permitted to borrow and copy a series of manuscript essays and instructions, for an annual fee of five shillings. (These sums make Ayton's remarks on Davidson's profiteering—see below—seem a little unfair.) The idea was that members should work as far as possible by themselves. Davidson provided personal guidance and answered queries by letter when these could not be handled by the "Provincial Grand Masters." But there was no initiation ceremony or other rituals; the whole thing could

²⁶Most of these have been published in the Archè volume (see note 2 above), with an anonymous preface based uncritically on Guénon. See Christian Chanel's review in *Politica Hermetica*, 3 (1989), 146-152. The manuscripts owned by Barlet, with related correspondence, are now in the Fonds Papus of the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon. A guide to them has been prepared by Robert Amadou. An additional letter of early 1890, presumably from Barlet to Chaboseau, is published in Jean-Claude Frère, *Vie et mystères des Rose+Croix* (Paris: Marne, 1973), 197-207, outlining the H.B. of L.'s policies and the means of joining it. Frère is otherwise quite inaccurate (see his uninformed treatment of Randolph, 199f.) Further useful information is in Paschal Thémanlys, *Max Théon et la Philosophie Cosmique* (Jerusalem: Bibliothèque Cosmique, 1955). I am grateful to Gérard Galtier for knowledge of these works, and to Christian Chanel for sharing with me the researches for his dissertation on Théon and other matters. No one but myself is responsible for any errors here.

²⁴ This paragraph is based on Nahar, 50-56.

²⁵Ibid., Letter CXIII, 240; see also CLXXXII, 348.

be done, as it were, by mail-order.

The H.B. of L. allowed its members complete liberty of thought; they might belong to anything else they liked, and several of them belonged to the Theosophical Society.²⁷ Its specialty was the teaching of practical occultism. Here follows a summary of its basic manuscript instructions.

1. *Eulis*, extracted from P.B. Randolph's book of that name (1874) with notes by Burgoyne.

2. *Brief Key to the Eulian Mysteries*, otherwise called *Eros*, partly arranged (from an unpublished work of Randolph) by Burgoyne; on the development of the will and its magical use; also on sexual mysteries.

3. *Symbolic Notes for the First Degree*, largely adapted from Hargrave Jennings' *The Rosicrucians* (1870) and Thomas Inman's *Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names* (1868) also on sexuality and love.

4. The Abbot Trithemius *On Secondary Causes* (Nuremberg, 1522), a treatise on the cycles of history and their angelic rulerships; almost certainly translated by the Rev. William Ayton.²⁸

5. *The Key*, a short explanation of Trithemius.²⁹

6. *The Hermetic Key*, a system of histori-

²⁷Peter Davidson himself had originally been on the Council of the Theosophical Society, and other members of both included William Ayton, Barlet, Arthur Arnould, Louis Dramard, and Papus.

²⁸See H.P. Blavatsky, *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1874-1878*. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff. Volume I (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1966), 421. Olcott records in his diary, dated 20 November 1878, the arrival of Ayton's translation of Trithemius' prophecies. William Hockley was also a student of the Abbot of Spanheim; see John Hamill, *The Rosicrucian Seer* (Wellingborough: Aquarian, 1986), 80.

²⁹Reprinted in Burgoyne's *The Light of Egypt*, I, 109-117.

cal cycles, developed from Mackey's *The Mythological Astronomy of the Ancients* and from Trithemius, and compared with Hindu chronology.³⁰

7. *Psychic Culture*, by Peter Davidson, on moral and physical hygiene, dated 1887. This urges total abstinence from alcohol, drugs, and meat.

8. *Magic Mirrors*, partly arranged by Davidson from P.B. Randolph's *Seership* (1870); on the types, construction, consecration and practice of magic mirrors, and on the invocation of planetary angels at the appropriate times.

Davidson's teachings are strongly moral, and have a reverent, devotional air, as do his letters. While he makes ample use of Randolph's work, in *Psychic Culture* he warns the aspirant against the sexual doctrines which misled Randolph and ruined many others, namely the idea that through concentration during sexual intercourse, one can obtain anything one wants. Davidson's adaptation of these doctrines and mental techniques is always with the intention to raise and refine the brute instincts, especially of the male. He says categorically that the sexual magic of the H.B. of L. has only two purposes: the spiritual elevation of the partners, and the benefit that this confers on any child conceived.

Here is an extract from a letter of Davidson's to Barlet, circa October 1889, containing a long message for Arthur Arnould who was mourning the recent death of his wife and hoping to get in touch with her.

Tell Mr Arnould then that after a certain stage of occult development is reached there is no longer "mine" or "thine" as commonly understood, there is a new degree in fact of preferential Love. An Arch-Vril is formed and

³⁰Reprinted in *ibid.*, 86-108.

condensed in which the living forms of the affections are enabled to become embodied as was impossible formerly. If a man loved his wife before, he now loves her with a love of singularity enhanced more than a hundred fold, and she is enabled to demonstrate to him according to the measure of this abundance. Oriental Buddhist initiates assert that in the states arising beyond, and superior to Devachan personal affection is *less and less*—but this is a gross and mighty misnomer—a cold, heartless, *untrue* philosophy, for, in reality and in truth, affection and love become *intensely more concentrated*. They also assert that in order to renew the physical frame, man must die out of the affections that unite him to his kind. This I again repeat is an outrageous delusion, for in the Adeptship of the Divine Science progress is first made by cleansing loves from the *taint of self-desire*, then, by loving till we hold a creation of loves, living loves, fashioned in the heaven of our body, as the spirits of the glittering stars in the blue immensity of heaven.

The Barlet-Davidson-Arnould correspondence emphasizes one point that places the H.B. of L.'s teaching on this matter poles apart from that of common Spiritualism. This is that efforts to contact the dead are justified only if they involve raising the living person to the higher, spiritual level which their loved ones now inhabit, and never trying to drag the dead down to earth. This can be done, perhaps, but only at dreadful cost to those who have been released from matter; whereas the opposite ideal involves not merely an emotional indulgence but a notable step forward in the living person's progress. The correspondence makes moving reading, one's intrusion into Arnould's private grief being justified, perhaps, by what one learns from his example as an earnest follower of this path.

At the very time of this correspondence, Arthur Arnould was President of the newly-founded Hermès Branch of the French Theosophical Society, and a member of the Esoteric Section.³¹ It was natural for him to wonder whether the two were compatible. Barlet, for his part, was beginning to find the Theosophical teaching deficient in precisely this element of love, significantly enough the central teaching of the Christianity that Mme Blavatsky seemed to reject.³² He had come to believe that:

above this [Buddhist] Theosophy, and also above Christian esotericism, there is Esotericism unqualified (whose Masters are also in India), which is far above all our heads. You have no need to share my conviction. But I think that Christianity, and especially Catholic Christianity, approaches more closely to this transcendent degree than Orientalism, and that Egypt (from which India probably derives) possessed it more than India, and that it is from this that Christianity came.

All this implies, as you can see, the conviction that the Mahatmas of the Theosophical Society are not of a superior order. More than that: since Sinnett (and *Esoteric Buddhism*), these Mahatmas are said no longer to involve themselves with the Theosophical Society. Mme Blavatsky may still be in communication with Koot Hoomi, but not with him personally—and he declares himself a gifted beginner. I add in confidence that such was also the opinion of our friend

³¹See J. Godwin, *The Beginnings of Theosophy in France* (London: Theosophical History Centre, 1989).

³²On Barlet's esoteric career, see Guénon, "F.-Ch. Barlet et les sociétés initiatiques" and "Quelques précisions à propos de la H. B. of L.," cited above, notes 8, 16.

Dramard [...] If only we can ever arrive at this “inferior” degree, for all this is relative!³³

Barlet’s qualms resemble those felt on the other side of the English Channel by certain people who were at that very moment making up their minds between the Theosophical Society and the “Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn” - or both. The parallel is complete if one realizes that Barlet is alluding, between the lines, to certain “Secret Chiefs” of whom he has heard rumors, though in his case they are those of the “Brahmatmic” center with which Saint-Yves d’Alveydre believed himself to be in touch.³⁴

The Occult Magazine, for the two years it appeared, is full of news of Davidson and Burgoyne’s plans to emigrate to America and found an agricultural community there. According to René Guénon, who must have learnt this, too, from Barlet, Mme Blavatsky got wind of their plans and drew the attention of the immigration authorities to Burgoyne’s criminal record, supposedly in revenge for her own expulsion in 1878 from the Brotherhood of Light.³⁵

Another who learnt of Burgoyne’s record was the Rev. William Ayton. He was appalled to discover in 1886 that the man whom he had known as Secretary of the H.B. of L. was identical with “T.H. D’Alton, or Dalton, alias Seymour, a convicted felon.”³⁶ Ayton adds: “I do not think

P.D. knew that T.H.B. was a convicted felon, but when he did know it, he still embarked with his family and this felon for America. He has not been over scrupulous and has been making use of Occultism for mere secular gain. I could tell you much of it if I were to see you personally.” On 29 December 1890, Ayton went into more detail about Burgoyne: “It came to my knowledge that Burgoyne, the Secretary, of whom I had always been suspicious, was no other than a man I had known previously under the name of D’Alton who made such a confession of Black Magic that I rejected him altogether as being impossible.” [p.58] Evidently Ayton was one of the occultists whom Burgoyne had contacted earlier in the hope of joining some order, before his imprisonment and change of name.

However, both men eventually succeeded in emigrating, Davidson to the remote village of Loudsville, Georgia, and Burgoyne to Carmel, California. Here Burgoyne met Norman Astley, a retired British Army officer who had studied occultism in India, and received from Astley and some other members a commission to write a series of lessons for the H.B. of L.’s teachings.³⁷ These lessons were at first privately circulated to members, but in 1889 were published as *The Light of Egypt*, of which a second volume followed in 1900; both have been reprinted recently.³⁸ Burgoyne signed his own name to them followed by “Zanoni” and a swastika, the traditional signature of the Fratres Lucis, which, according to

³³Undated letter in Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon (Fonds Papus), circa May 1889.

³⁴See J. Godwin, “Saint-Yves d’Alveydre and the Agarthian Connection,” in *Hermetic Journal*, 32 (1986), 24-34; 33 (1986), 31-8.

³⁵Guénon, *Le Théosophisme*, ed. cit., 314.

³⁶Ellic Howe, *The Alchemist of the Golden Dawn* (Wellingborough: Aquarian, 1985), 20.

³⁷See “The Church of Light,” note 16 above.

³⁸Thomas H. Burgoyne, Zanoni, [swastika symbol], *The Light of Egypt, or The Science of the Soul and the Stars*. Two volumes (Albuquerque: Sun Books, 1980).

Kenneth Mackenzie, was otherwise known as the Order of the Swastika.³⁹

The Light of Egypt may not be the loftiest of teachings, but it certainly does not read as the work of a grocer turned felon—nor, one might say, of the rather slick customer pictured in the frontispiece photograph. It also seems exceedingly doubtful that if, as is stated, *The Hermetic Key* dates from 1880, it was from the pen of the 25-year-old Dalton whom Ayton had spurned on first sight. Possibly Burgoyne was simply turning his secret H.B. of L. manuscripts to profit; but it is only fair to hear his own statement about their publication:

The chief reason urging this step was the strenuous efforts being systematically put forth to poison the budding spirituality of the western mind, and to fasten upon its mediumistic mentality, the subtle, delusive dogmas of Karma and Reincarnation, as taught by the sacerdotalisms of the decaying Orient.⁴⁰

Already in *The Occult Magazine*, Burgoyne had been much more anti-Theosophical than Davidson, on occasion making remarks that Davidson later had to apologize for and retract. Hostile remarks about Oriental Theosophy are scattered throughout *The Light of Egypt*, while even the Western branch, represented by Anna Kingsford and Lady Caithness, is not spared. Yet when one tries to pinpoint the motives for this

polemic, Burgoyne's disagreements with Theosophical teachings come down to only three: (1) The fifth of the Seven Principles in Man is the Spiritual Body, not, as Theosophy has it, the Higher Manas; (2) It is impossible for mediums to contact the "shells" of the dead; (3) There is no reincarnation.

The title of the book of course puts it in the Egyptian, rather than the Indian current, yet though it gives historical precedence to Egyptian wisdom over Indian, it is not anti-Oriental. The author praises the true Hindu and Buddhist religions, which apparently do not teach these "poisonous doctrines," and, surprisingly enough, speaks favorably of A.P. Sinnett's outline in *Esooteric Buddhism* of the system of rounds and chains. More predictable is Burgoyne's friendliness to the author of *Art Magic*, and even to *Isis Unveiled* as a work from before the time of Mme Blavatsky's defection to the East. Emma Hardinge Britten would return the compliment by calling *The Light of Egypt* "a noble, philosophical and instructive work."⁴¹ But by that time Burgoyne was dead.

The syllabus of the H. B. of L., as described above, was evidently a creation of Davidson and Burgoyne, including sources that were not even published at the supposed time of its foundation in 1870. It seems as if Théon was content to remain in the background as *éminence grise*, leaving his colleagues to design and run the practical work on the basis of whatever they themselves found helpful. Thus, for example, Davidson was obviously much taken with Hargrave Jennings' *The Rosicrucians, Their Rites and Mysteries*—as was Mme Blavatsky, in her New York period—and therefore made extracts from it re-

³⁹It might be fruitful to investigate other authors of the period—Rudyard Kipling, of course, the chief among them—who decorated their books with this symbol, with the idea that it might imply membership of this or a cognate order. I return to this subject, and to much else tangential on the present topic, in *Arktos: Myths and Mysteries of the Pole* (Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 1992).

⁴⁰*The Light of Egypt*, I, v.

⁴¹Publisher's advertisement at the back of *Ghost Land*, 1897 edition.

quired reading for neophytes. The same probably applies to the books of P. B. Randolph. One is left with the intriguing question of whether Jennings and Randolph themselves acquired their ideas, in some degree, from earlier initiatic orders of the H. B. of L. type.⁴²

After his marriage in 1885, Théon seems to have been totally taken up with the “cosmic” teachings given through his wife. Peter Davidson kept in touch for a few years with the French occultists whom he had initiated, of whom Papus, with his new Martinist Order, was the most prominent. In 1892 Davidson started a new journal, *The Morning Star*, which resembled his *Occult Magazine*, but with a more Christian outlook. A French Martinist, Edouard Blitz, went to the USA and contacted Davidson in 1894, reporting back to Papus that Davidson had “not yet given a single grade,”⁴³ presumably referring to the H.B. of L. rather than to the Martinism which Davidson was still hesitating to join, not being a Freemason.⁴⁴ Blitz founded a Martinist group in Pentwater, Michigan, and *The Morning Star* served for a while as voice for that order, too. But by 1896 Blitz had broken with Davidson and was slandering him to Papus as a plagiarist, for having printed the *Golden Verses of Pythagoras* without acknowledging their modern translator, Fabre d'Olivet.⁴⁵

⁴²See my article “Hargrave Jennings,” in *The Hermetic Journal*, 1991. A parallel study of Paschal Beverly Randolph is in preparation.

⁴³The correspondence with Blitz, and other essential materials for any history of Martinism, are in the Fonds Papus of the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon.

⁴⁴Neither was Papus, but he had obtained certain high grades such as those of the Order of Memphis and Misraïm.

⁴⁵This was a calumny. Fabre d'Olivet is credited on the cover of *The Morning Star*, I,1.

Davidson, doubtless disillusioned by the ceaseless squabbles of the Paris occultists, now renewed his contact with Max Théon, and henceforth devoted his magazine, until its cessation in 1910, to Théon's “Cosmic Philosophy.” Since the revelations of Alma Théon were made in her native English, they could be taken over directly by *The Morning Star*. Mirra Richard translated many of them for publication in France, in the two-volume *La Tradition Cosmique* (1900-01) and the journal *La Revue Cosmique* (1900-08). Barlet also threw in his lot with Théon and helped with these publications; he is credited as co-author of the anonymous *La Tradition Cosmique*. The subsequent history of Mirra is well documented, but it is worth mentioning that although she moved into a very different sphere as soon as she settled with Aurobindo Ghose in Pondicherry, to this day the publications of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram carry the symbol that Théon devised for his own: the lotus within the six-pointed star. Perhaps in the last-ditch efforts of the nonagenarian “Mother” to attain physical immortality, one can detect an echo of Théon's “transcendental materialism.”

In the German-speaking world, the most notable member of the H. B. of L. was the Austrian industrialist Karl Kellner (1850-1905). In 1895, Kellner met Theodor Reuss, and the two of them conceived the idea of a “masonic academy” which was later to materialize as the OTO (Ordo Templi Orientis).⁴⁶ Based on the Rite of Memphis and Misraïm, which had been obtained from John Yarker, the OTO was supposedly the more exoteric part of Kellner and Reuss's enterprise, while, in the latter's own words, “the teachings of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light were reserved for

⁴⁶See the biography of Reuss by Ellic Howe and Helmut Möller, *Merlin Peregrinus. Vom Untergrund des Abendlandes* (Würzburg: Königshoven & Neumann, 1986), 87.

the few initiates of the occult inner circle.”⁴⁷ One does not have to look further than the H. B. of L.’s secret documents for the source of the sexual practices developed by Kellner and taught to Reuss, and later elaborated by Aleister Crowley.

It is hard to believe that Rudolf Steiner did not also penetrate to these inner teachings upon joining the OTO in 1906 and being immediately delegated Grand Master to found a Berlin Lodge. How seriously they were pursued in the OTO itself is another matter. Peter Davidson put the Outer Circle of the H.B. of L. “to sleep” in 1913, which may simply mean that being old, tired, and very far away, he ceased to have anything to do with it. The H. B. of L. under his administration had never had a fraternal system with group work and ceremonial initiations, having been in effect a correspondence course for solitary aspirants. Oaths were taken not to pass on the manuscripts, but without a strong organization there was little to prevent leaks from occurring, or to stop other orders from adopting the teachings that, after all, were not original except in their combination. By 1917 the distinction in the OTO of inner and outer circles appears to have broken down, for in that year a manifesto published from Monte Verità, Ascona, openly named “the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light, known as the O.T.O.” as the pioneering organization for world-reform.⁴⁸ From what is known of Reuss, it seems unlikely that he would have long withheld his order’s most precious assets from the eager initiate. One such, H. Spencer Lewis,⁴⁹ founder of the AMORC, was

surely not ignorant of the H. B. of L.’s teachings, though it cannot be sufficiently stressed that such knowledge, or for that matter membership of the OTO, did not necessarily imply depraved sexual practices masquerading as “yoga.” (This was an issue in the “War of the Roses” of the 1930s between Lewis and R. Swinburne Clymer.)

At least two groups today claim to carry on the tradition of the H. B. of L. The Church of Light in Carmel, California descends from the Astleys who had patronized T.H. Burgoyne, and propagates the *Light of Egypt* teachings. I have not made a special study of this branch, but I have noticed the Brotherhood of Light credited on publications by John H. Dequer and Coulson Turnbull.⁵⁰ In less direct line, Clymer’s Rosicrucian Fraternity, based in Quakertown, Pennsylvania, traces its descent from P.B. Randolph and his successor F.B. Dowd, while recognizing Peter Davidson as a “great initiate.” Théon’s Cosmic Philosophy still has a small following, mainly in France and Israel.

But these obscure groups do not exhaust the influence of the H. B. of L., which was out of all proportion to its scale. As I have shown, its teachings of practical occultism reached many of the key figures of modern esotericism. These include the most important German-speaking occultist of the century, Rudolf Steiner; the most influential French one, Papus; the most notorious English one, Crowley; and the most successful American, Spencer Lewis. To these one should add René Guénon, who never condemned the H. B. of L. as he did most modern “esoteric” move-

⁴⁷Ibid., 136, citing Reuss in *Oriflamme*, Jubilee No. (1912), 15.

⁴⁸Howe & Möller, 214.

⁴⁹Lewis received an OTO diploma from Reuss in 1921, but does not seem to have had a closer relationship. See Howe & Möller, 247.

⁵⁰J.H. Dequer, *Arrows of Light from the Egyptian Tarot. A practical application of the Hermetic System of Names and Numbers, based upon the teachings of the Brotherhood of Light* (New York: Author, 1930); C. Turnbull, *The Divine Language of Celestial Correspondences* (San Diego: Gnostic Press/Los Angeles: Brotherhood of Light, 4th ed., [1913]).

ments; and, through Mirra, Sri Aurobindo.

This article has presented hints and suggestions—nothing more is possible—that there was a hidden hand at work behind the launching of Modern Spiritualism in 1848; the foundation of the Theosophical Society in 1875; and the H. B. of L. in the 1880s. I believe that Paul Johnson's researches into Egyptian Freemasonry⁵¹ are highly relevant to this operation, with its agents in Cairo, Paris, and New York. However, Blavatsky and Olcott set themselves apart from it when they settled in India under the influence of Himalayan Masters (whom I am not quite ready to identify with Johnson's Sikhs and Sufis). Western esotericists were thereupon faced with the challenge of assimilating Eastern wisdom, or of rejecting it.

From the point of view of the H. B. of L., the Theosophical episode would have been seen in terms of Mme. Blavatsky's meteoric appearance in Cairo and her equally meteoric fall fourteen years later, leaving the Brotherhood shaken but not overwhelmed, and faced with the imperative need to disavow her brand of esotericism. For a moment, she and Colonel Olcott, with their formidable occult and organizing powers, must have seemed the Brotherhood's greatest hopes for a broader activity and a deeper influence on the course of human thought. But this promising pair was lured away by the wiles of the Orient into preaching phony Mahatmas, working fraudulent phenomena, and teaching misleading doctrines.

That, as I said, is one view of the matter. Blavatskian Theosophists, in turn, might regard the Brotherhood of Light as an order with worthy ideals, but not of the highest inspiration, and the H.B. of L. as a rather pathetic hotch-potch. Why

read *The Light of Egypt* when one can read *The Secret Doctrine*? Why stare into magic mirrors and cultivate mediumship if one has understood *The Voice of the Silence*?

The parting of the Eastern and Western streams goes far deeper than the backbiting and criticism of their respective leaders. It hinges on two contrary philosophic views of the ultimate destiny of the human being and the purpose of life on earth. The H. B. of L. and its higher Spiritualist allies imagine the soul, single or with its beloved partner, leaving this earth after a single lifetime to travel ever finer, grander spheres, leading ever more marvelous angelic and cosmic existences in universes beyond universes, finally being reabsorbed into God. Mahayana Buddhism and Advaita Vedanta, on the contrary, see the ultimate goal as being attainable here on earth, in a human body that is the fruit of many incarnations. The Bodhisattva or Jivan-mukti who achieves this goal is simultaneously in the world of existence and in that of Non-Being or Nirvana which is the support of all universes, no matter how spectacular or how sordid. In Buddhist language, the H. B. of L. can only lead to the realm of the "Long-Lived Gods"; while in Hindu terms, its practical occultism, taken as an end in itself, can only reinforce the bondage of the Mayavic illusion.

⁵¹See P. Johnson, *In Search of the Masters: Beyond the Occult Myth* (South Boston, Va: Author, 1990), Pt. I.

The First Practical Expression of Theosophy in Italy: The “Villaggio Verde” (Green Village)

Bernardino del Boca

From 1947 to 1951 I was the Italian Consul in Singapore and, being a member of the Theosophical Society and former president of the “Besant-Arundale” Lodge in Novara, Italy I would often visit the Singapore Lodge located on 8 Cairnhill Road. At a meeting of the Malayan Vegetarian Society, I met a Chinese nun, Pitt Tze Hui, who asked me to help her establish a Buddhist society in Singapore. I did my best to help her, as did other theosophists, such as Rie and S.H. Ph. von Krusenstierna (now Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church in Australia), Mrs. H.B. Moorhead, Mr. V. Rajagopal, and Mr. Chan Chim Lee.

Together with Pitt Tze Hui, we published *A bilingual graduated course on the Fundamental Teachings of the Lord Buddha (Jen Chien Fu Chion - Buddhism for this Sansara World)*. We also established a model for a community in Italy where it was possible to live “to be and not to have.” We had many dreams and we hoped to be able to make people understand the invisible reality of the “Continuous Infinite Present.”

At that time I was very young, but this dream of a community or village with individuals living in harmony, not just intellectual harmony but a harmony with the invisible reality of the Spiritual Realm, has persisted to be somewhat of an obsession to me. To this end, I began to collect books and magazines on alternative and spiritual

literature. At the present time, the Villaggio Verde possesses a library of 13,000 books and magazines.

In 1970 I founded, together with the theosophist Edoardo Bresci, the Publishing House, “L’Età dell’ Acquario” (The Age of Aquarius), and the magazine *L’Età dell’ Acquario*, now in its seventy-first issue.

In 1981 we bought some wooded land near the place of origin of my family, Boca, not far from Lake Maggiore and Arona, and we started the Villaggio Verde, a community conforming to the principles of Theosophy, trying to escape from both the illusion of Time and Space and especially from the negative influence of the mind and of the sensory illusion of materialism. Our goal is to build fifty-one “moduli” (apartments) around a small artificial lake, the already completed lake being the symbol of the Aquarian Age. At the time of this writing, sixteen have been constructed (see photo). In front, at the entrance of the Village, is a shrine of the *phi* [spirit beings who usually inhabit rivers, mountains, wild places and trees. In front of many Thai homes is the *Sam-Phra-Phum*, the ‘home of the earth spirit,’ to which this most certainly is - *ed.*] originating from Bangkok, Thailand. It is a symbol of our greater belief and confidence in the invisible world and its spiritual energies. Our agricultural endeavors give us food enough for the inhabitants.

We are now in the process of establishing a Museum of Animism. To that end, we have collected many statues of the *nats* [spirit-beings] of Burma, the *phis* of Thailand, the *kami* of Japan, and fetishes.

For many years I have been a friend of John Coats [the late President of the Theosophical Society, Adyar], who often visited us in Singapore and Italy, and who discussed the Villaggio Verde with us on numerous occasions. It is a pity that John did not see the realization of the project.



A visitor (left) and Bernardino del Boca (right) standing in front of the entrance to the Villaggio Verde, on either side of the shrine to the phi.

Book Reviews

IN SEARCH OF THE MASTERS: BEHIND THE OCCULT MYTH. By Paul Johnson. South

Boston, VA: author, 1990. Pp. 305. \$11.95 + \$2.00 handling. May be ordered through the T.S. bookshops in Paris, Sydney, and London, and directly from the author.

This is a difficult book, both to read and to review. Different readers, and reviewers will find it difficult for different reasons. The typical, historically ill-informed Theosophist will be unlikely to read it, but, if he or she does, will doubtless reject it outright as an unjustified attack on Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, which it is not. Scholars of Theosophical history may likewise be deterred by the methodology and the speculation, both of which are an inevitable consequence of the subject matter. Neither Blavatsky nor those who have followed her in Theosophical organizations have had any great enthusiasm for history; they preferred mythology, though usually under the guise of history, but history edited, adjusted and laundered (in the tradition of religious and political movements generally) to adjust the often inconvenient fact to suit ideology.

The trail that Paul Johnson has sought to follow has therefore been far from straight, or well sign-posted. Blavatsky, no less than her disciples, sought to obscure rather than to reveal her, and indeed their, history. In addition, the circles into which Johnson's explorations took him were often preoccupied with secrecy and obscurity, and were not usually of sufficient significance socially or culturally to have been documented independently.

Speculation about Blavatsky, the origins of her teachings, and the nature of her Masters, has produced some of the worst pseudo-scholarship and most vividly mindless hagiographies or exposes in the writing of religious history. This book, as the author notes, falls neither into the "true believer" nor the "all lies" camps. For that reason, Johnson may succeed in pleasing no-one. But that will not be his fault.

He takes on the difficult, and probably impossible, task of seeking to answer the question: who were Blavatsky's masters? To which can be added: and what were they trying to do? Johnson provides quite clear answers to both questions, and his conclusions are extraordinarily original and interesting.

Previous Theosophical authors, as Johnson notes, have tended to argue that the Masters were supernatural, or at least superhuman, beings (or Beings), remote from the ordinary world; this was not what Blavatsky taught, but it became the general Theosophical tradition after her death when the Masters became oriental variants on the Inner Plane Adepts of the tradition of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn or, less flatteringly, the Guides of Spiritualism. Questions about the Masters and their earthly activities have tended to be avoided by Theosophical commentators, apart from those such as Leadbeater who (in works like *The Masters and the Path*) offered extraordinary guides to their physical appearance, characters and personal tastes.

Essentially, Johnson's thesis is this: The Mahatmas to whom Blavatsky referred were historical human beings, men of flesh and blood rather than the ascended spirit being of later neo-Theosophy, and they, and Blavatsky, were involved in what amounted to a network of political-cum-religious conspiracies. For example, Johnson identifies the Master KH with Sirdar Thakar Singh Sandhanwalla. The Masters were not Tibetan, but rather Indian or Persian.

The myth, or "masks", of the Mahatmas was, Johnson argues, established to conceal the real identities and purposes of the men. Blavatsky was prepared to allow herself to be declared a fraud and a charlatan rather than disclose the real identities of her Masters.

However, the problem Johnson faces, given the elaborate concealment and mythologizing in which (if his hypothesis is correct) Blavatsky and her Masters engaged, is to establish coherent and historically convincing evidence for his thesis. Like all who enter the shadowy realms of conspiracy theory, he is caught in something of a trap: if there was a secret conspiracy, there is unlikely to be any direct evidence of it. He is therefore reduced to circumstantial evidence, suggestions, implications, coincidences, and associations. This is the major, and inevitable, criticism of his book.

And this, to a large extent, explains the difficulty of the book, no less than of the research on which it is based. The research is virtually beyond criticism; Johnson has explored, uncovered and documented both major pathways and obscure byways and dead-ends of Theosophical and occult history with a zeal and enthusiasm for detail which is otherwise almost unknown in

writers of Theosophical history, and conspicuously lacking in previous writers on Blavatsky. His research took him on a world-wide journey in an attempt to trace the outlines of the conspiracy and the conspirators. Although assisted by a wide range of scholars and Theosophical organizations he joined the distinguished ranks of those against whom the Adyar Society kept its secret archive door closed. Although one suspects that there may have been little there to assist him.

It is easy to find minor flaws in the book; they have nothing to do with the major thesis or the substance of his research. In large part they are the result of the author publishing his own book. Mainstream Theosophical publishers presumably found the subject matter too challenging and controversial. Playing a game of trivial pursuit to find fault with the book does not detract from the central arguments, and the overwhelming (and, for some readers, probably almost unendurable) mass of detail and documentation.

Does the author satisfactorily establish his thesis? Inevitably, not, but through no fault of his own. The case he makes out is coherent and well-documented; it depends, however, on substantial conjecture, rather than on soundly documented history. This is hardly unorthodox in the area of Theosophical history, or the history of occultism generally. Two relatively recent studies of Blavatsky - Meade's *Madame Blavatsky: The Woman behind the Myth* (1980) and Fuller's *Blavatsky and her Teachers* (1988) - make no less use of speculation and conjecture, from diametrically opposed positions, and without the degree of supporting evidence which Johnson employs.

The book lacks an index which, particularly in works arguing complex historical con-

spiracies, makes serious study difficult. The extensive endnotes and bibliography are, however, extremely helpful.

In Search of the Masters is difficult reading, but it is also fascinating and challenging reading. Whether or not the reader accepts Johnson's central thesis, the mass detail, the curious byways of Theosophical, occult and political history, and the vivid impression of it all the author creates, makes it compelling, if exhausting, reading. This book ought to be read, and carefully, by anyone interested in Blavatsky and the origins of the Theosophical Society or, indeed, in the occult revival of the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Dr. Gregory Tillett

KROTONA OF OLD HOLLYWOOD: VOLUME I, 1866-1913. By Joseph E. Ross. Montecito, CA: El Montecito Oaks Press, 1989. Pp. xiv + 298. \$22.95. [A free supplement of the Krotona letters will be included with the book.]

In her informative book, *100 Years of Theosophy: A History of the Theosophical Society in America*, Joy Mills has observed that the "full history of the Hollywood Krotona is still to be written." (51) I am happy to report that this deficiency is now being remedied by a former resident of Krotona (Ojai) and the present Director of the International Lalita Kalas Foundation, Inc., Joseph Ross. Mr. Ross is in a unique position to conduct this study because of his foreknowledge in collecting and preserving a treasure trove of letters from the founders of Krotona, including

such notables as Mrs. Annie Besant, C.W. Leadbeater, and A.P. Warrington, that would otherwise have never seen the light of day. This material serves as the basis of a detailed and fascinating account of the conception, origin, and first year of operation in this first volume on the history of the Krotona Institute. From its very inception it was characterized as "a community of members of the Esoteric Section [now known as the Esoteric School of Theosophy] of the Theosophical Society" (iv) by the then head of the Esoteric Section and, later, General Secretary of the American Section, Albert Powell Warrington.

The author divides the book in six chapters, beginning with the early life of Mr. Warrington from his birth in 1866 to his admission to the E.S. in 1906 [Chapter 1]; his dream of "establishing a community on Pythagorean lines" (letter from C.W. Leadbeater to A.P. Warrington on p. 12) consisting of a community "dedicated to the ideals of discipleship and brotherhood" (11) [Chapter 2]; the search for the ideal location of the community [Chapter 3]; the establishment of the Krotona Institute in 1912 as an "educational nucleus" (132) as well as becoming the center of the Esoteric Section (the owner of the Krotona Institute), the American headquarters of the Order of the Star in the East and of the American Section of the Theosophical Society, and to house for a time the Temple of the Rosy Cross [Chapter 4]; the expansion and growth of Krotona during the remainder of 1912 [Chapter 5]; and its first full year of operation in 1913 [Chapter 6].

Because of the wealth of detail and the copious reproduction of letters by the principals containing much extraneous information, readers might well be advised to read Mr. Warrington's address, "Krotona— Past and Present," delivered

on 2 February 1913 during the opening day ceremonies of the Winter Session (216-221). In its principal role as a center of learning, he states that the Krotona Institute provides the

adult an opportunity for a measure of instruction which he cannot get in other institutions of learning.... We discover Theosophy, feel its grandeur, and then yearn to spread its message. To such the opportunity will here be given to learn of that light of truth and love which is so filling the world today.... Men and women who, for lack of training, have no capacity to express the things that fill their souls, who have had no opportunity to study and to qualify themselves to express something of the soul's fullness—it is for such that the Krotona Institute is brought into existence. (218-9)

Although Mr. Ross does not provide a complete list of the courses that were provided by the Institute during 1913 Winter Session, that list does appear in the journal, the *O.E. Library Critic* (II/5, 23 Oct. 1912). In a most sympathetic article by the future scourge of the T.S. (Adyar), the editor, H.N. Stokes, considered Krotona at its inauguration to be not merely a school of Theosophy but “the beginning of a university in which every subject so far as it admits of it will be treated from the theosophical standpoint, just as the universities treat everything from the standpoint of evolution.” (4) The courses that were offered were:

The Aryan Sub-Races
Applied Theosophy
The Astral World
Elementary Philosophy
Science and Theosophy Correlated
Abnormal Psychology

Child Life—in the Light of Theosophy
Anthropology and Folklore and Development of Religion
Everyday Law
Government
Untried Theories, Social and Political
Esoteric Interpretation of the Drama
Esoteric Interpretation of the Poets
Music Theosophically Interpreted
Care of the Body

Turning to the style of the book, the reader should be forewarned that this is not an easy book, the main reason being that the narrative is broken up repeatedly by often lengthy letters that, on numerous occasions, contain references to topics and events that have little or nothing to do with Krotona, and this usually without the benefit of the author's annotation. This may cause some frustration on the part of those attentive readers having little or no knowledge of the Theosophical Society and its leaders in the earlier part of the twentieth century. Unfortunately, a full understanding of some of the contents of the letters cannot always be complemented by secondary reading material. For this reason, the book would have been of even greater value had Mr. Ross pursued these nooks and crannies of theosophical history. Examples include mention of Douglas Pettit (56, 69, 103, 125, 185, 193, 203-4, 206-7), the unusual role of Marie Russak in the American Section and her supposed psychic powers (23, 160, 253-5, 260-1), the presence of rival ‘occult’ societies such as the Universal Brotherhood (171, 185) or the Mahacakra Society (179), the role of that supposed nemesis of the T.S., the Jesuits (171-2, 186). One last regret is the failure to give a more rounded, three-dimensional portrait of General Secretary Mr. Warrington's immediate predecessor, Dr. Weller Van Hook. He is a most

shadowy figure who appears only as the opponent to Warrington's dream of establishing the Krotona Institute. Also, Mr. Ross has purposely chosen to follow a purely narrative style rather than to attempt to analyze and define events and personalities in the book. This will be welcomed by some readers, but the author's perspective, after examining this subject so meticulously, would be appreciated.

On the other hand, it is unfair to fault the author for omitting what was admittedly beyond the purview of the book. Admittedly, our knowledge of theosophical history has been greatly expanded. Indeed, the original source material reproduced therein is enough to make the book required reading for all historians of theosophical, communal, and Californian history. Mr. Ross is to be especially commended in shedding light where only lacunae previously existed. It is my fervent hope that succeeding volumes will offer as much insightful material as this first initial effort.

James A. Santucci

Theosophical History

A Quarterly Journal of Research

Volume 3, No. 6 April 1991

ISSN 0951-497X

THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY

A Quarterly Journal of Research

Founded by Leslie Price, 1985

Volume 3, No. 6, April 1991

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Theosophical History (ISSN 0951-497X) is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October by the Theosophical History Foundation. The journal's purpose is to publish contributions specifically related to the modern Theosophical Movement, from the time of Madame Helena Blavatsky and others who were responsible in establishing the original Theosophical Society (1875), to all groups that derive their teachings - directly or indirectly, knowingly or unknowingly - from her or her immediate followers. In addition, the journal is also receptive to related movements (including pre-Blavatskyite Theosophy, Spiritualism, Rosicrucianism, and the philosophy of Emanuel Swedenborg to give but a few examples) that have had an influence on or displayed an affinity to modern Theosophy.

The subscription fee for the journal is \$12.00 (U.S.) a year. Single issues are \$3.00. The air mail rate for subscribers outside the U.S. is \$12 a year. Please make checks or money orders payable in U.S. funds to **James Santucci**. Subscriptions should be sent to *James Santucci, Department of Religious Studies, California State University, Fullerton, CA 92634-9480 (U.S.A.)*.

The Editors assume no responsibility for the views expressed by authors in *Theosophical History*.

The Theosophical History Foundation is a nonprofit public benefit corporation located at the Department of Religious Studies, California State University, Fullerton, 1800 North State College Boulevard, Fullerton, CA 92634-9480 (USA). Its purpose is to publish *Theosophical History* and to facilitate the study and dissemination of information regarding the Theosophical Movement. The Foundation's Board of Directors are April Hejka-Ekins, Jerry Hejka-Ekins, J. Gordon Melton, and James A. Santucci.

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Layout and composition by Robert L. Hütwohl, GraphicType Southwest, P.O. Box 1162, Taos, NM 87571 USA, (telephone: 505-751-0041) using Adobe type 1 typefaces: ITC Garamond 1, Linotype Frutiger and Linotext.

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Editor's Comments

In This Issue

One of the purposes of *Theosophical History* is to include informative articles on organizations related to the Theosophical Movement. Dr. Godwin's "The Brotherhood of Light" (III/3) and the "Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor" (III/5) provide examples of nineteenth centuries organizations that conform to this criteria. Mr. Drais's article on a recently organized "theosophical monastic order" is the subject of one of the articles presented herein, "The Paracelsian Order." Situated in Dulzura (Southern California) not far from the Mexican border on a vast tract of land known as the Madre Grande Monastery, the Order regards itself as a "religious monastic, healing, and teaching order" whose aim is to "help bring in A New Age." (*The Paracelsian Handbook*)

The author, John H. Drais, is currently abbot of the Paracelsian Order and prior of Madre Grande Monastery. He is the editor of *The Zohar* and the author of the *Hebrew-Egyptian and Numerical Index* as published with James R. Skinner's *The Source of Measures* (published by Wizard's Bookshelf). His indices are included in each of the twelve volumes of *Esoteric Instructions* (Point Loma Publications). Mr. Drais has also contributed several articles to the *Eclectic Theosophist* (San Diego, California). He is represented in the *First Symposium of Secret Doctrine Studies* (Wizard's Bookshelf).

The second article, "Boris de Zirkoff and the *Blavatsky Collected Writings*," written by his close associate, Dara Eklund, adds valuable information on both the man and his work. For those

who are familiar with the *Collected Writings* but know little of how they came to being, this article should prove to be most revealing.

Dara Eklund is uniquely qualified to comment on Boris de Zirkoff and his *magnum opus*. After meeting Mr. de Zirkoff in 1951, she soon became his assistant researching and proof-reading for the *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*. After Mr. de Zirkoff's death in 1981, two volumes (numbers 14 and 15) of the *Collected Writings* have since been published. (A complete bibliographical listing of the set follows Miss Eklund's article.) During her early years with Mr. de Zirkoff, she found the time to receive B.A. and Master of Library Science degrees at U.C.L.A. in 1956 and 1963 respectively. Besides her work in the *Collected Writings* series, Miss Eklund has also compiled a three volume edition of the writings of William Quan Judge, entitled *Echoes of the Orient* (Point Loma Publications). At present, she is working on a revised index together with her husband, Nicholas Weeks, for the entire *Collected Writings* series (including the *Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled*).

Reprinting old newspaper articles can sometimes shed added light on the principals in the Theosophical Movement. With this in mind, the well-known article that appeared in the *New York World* (26 March 1877), "A Lamasery in New York," is herein printed in full together with the newspaper's editorial on its contents.

Finally, a review of Ann Braude's fascinating account of Spiritualism and its relation to the women's rights movement appears in the final portion of the journal. The book, *Radical Spirits*, is a worthy addition to academic studies of the Spiritualist Movements or aspects thereof.

Book Notes

A selection of the writings of the British philosopher and Neo-Platonic mystic Paul Brunton (1898-1981) appeared in 1990 under the title *Paul Brunton: Essential Readings*. Selected and edited by Joscelyn Godwin with Paul Cash and Timothy Smith, excerpts include passages gleaned from his books *A Search in Secret Egypt* ("A Night Inside the Great Pyramid"), *A Search in Secret India* ("Meetings with Indian Sages: Sri Shankaracharya and Sri Ramana Maharshi"), and *The Quest of the Overself* ("The Overself in Action"). Selections from his posthumously published notebooks include discussions on "The Teacher," "From Mysticism to Philosophy," "The Sage," and the "World-Mind and Mind." The collection serves as an excellent introduction to the Brunton's philosophy. The book is published by the Thorsons Publishing Group (Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, NN8 2RQ, England) as a Crutable paperback.

Pilgrimage to the East for spiritual enlightenment has been a popular activity for well over a century, judging from the many accounts of that have appeared in print over the years. A recent book adds to this catalogue of accounts. Entitled *Turning East. New Lives in India: Twenty Westerners and Their Spiritual Quests* (N.Y.: Paragon House, 1989) and edited by Malcom Tillis and Cynthia Giles, the book includes personal accounts of spiritual seekers from the U.K., Europe, and the U.S. For those who have travelled to India

in the past few years, one cannot help but notice the sizable number of Western travellers in the major airports and bus terminals involved in such activity. *Turning East* gives these often faceless travellers a personality, identity, and a humanity. It should prove interesting reading for those who themselves plan to embark on a quest or who simply wish to know the intentions of such seekers.

Adjustment of Subscription Rates

As mentioned in the previous issue, the subscription rates for *Theosophical History* will be adjusted beginning with the July 1991 (III/7) due to increased expenses. The new rates are as follows:

U.S. and Canada	\$14
Overseas (surface)	\$16
Air mail (outside the	
U.S. and Canada)	\$24
Price per issue	\$4

Subscribers outside the U.S. may pay in their own currency should conversion prove to be too burdensome. We simply ask that the amount equal as closely as possible the U.S. rate.

International Theosophical History Conference

Plans to hold the International Theosophical History Conference on the former site of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society's headquarters at Lomaland, now the Point Loma Nazarene College from 12 - 14 June 1992 are almost completed. Registration and

Accommodation Forms were included in the III/4 issue. Should you require additional forms or information, please write to James Santucci, Department of Religious Studies, California State University, Fullerton, CA 92634-9480.

Light

Apropos the note that appeared in the third number of *Theosophical History*, former editor Leslie Price has advised me that *Light* is currently published by the College of Psychic Studies (16 Queensberry Place, London SW7 2EB) and is edited by Brenda Marshall. Quoting from its pages, *Light* “exists for the reasoned and courteous examination of all aspects of spiritual and psychic exploration and experience.”

Three issues appear yearly at £6.00 (U.S.\$16.00) for British residents and £7.00 (U.S.\$18) overseas. Single copies are £1.75.

Correspondence

From Mr. William Laudahn (Ojai, California)

...In your review of Krishnamurti books [*Truth is a Pathless Land* by Ingram Smith and *Krishnamurti: The Reluctant Messiah* by Sidney Field, both in III/3] you were bold enough to question his “profundity.” In the early days, he was considered on the dull side. His brother [Nityananda] was the bright one. But, now he is called a “philosopher.” How about that? He himself often wondered why the same people came returning to his “talks,” when he always said about the same thing. Although I never noticed it, he must have “it.”

Great, also, is the article by Dr. Godwin where he quotes from the Luxor Brothers [Fratres Lucis]. They were on the scene giving advice before the Masters from Tibet appeared. Some good advice they imparted was that “the doctrine of transmigration is an error” and that “modern Reincarnation is a fantasy.” So, their teachings varied radically from the later revelations. In the chapter on Reincarnation in the first vol[ume] of *Old Diary Leaves*, Col. Olcott observed that there are many orders and degrees of “Masters.” So, we are free to pick and choose. In this area, I prefer the “H. B. of L [*sic*, the Brotherhood of Light].”

I am impressed that Reincarnation was *not* presented at the inception of the T.S. in 1875. Furthermore, H.P.B.’s article on “What Is Theosophy” (Oct. 1879) failed to mention the subject. Reincarnation appeared [around] 1880 or 1881, when it was revealed in a “Mahatma Letter” from a Tibetan Adept. (In Letter LVII, pg. 329, it is

written “that you were possessed of the Oriental views of reincarnation...first pointed out to you on July 5th at Bombay....” Certain experts have concluded that the year is 1881 & suggest checking Letter IX on pg. 38, which they claim was dispatched on July 5, 1881. Among the “experts” was Virginia Hanson.)

As one can gather from this, I am not a keen defender of Reincarnation. I find the subject to be rather a drag. Why should anyone with any sense want to come back to this stupid world? Of course, it could be worse, and it is with many people in many areas. This pattern has always been so—and will continue. They say that we are here for “experience” and to learn “Lessons.” But, in 099 cases out of 100 what does this experience and these lessons amount to? At their best, the old mystics did not want to return, they wanted to advance to the Absolute, where there is no ending....

The Paracelsian Order

John Drais

The Paracelsian Order was formed as “a theosophical monastic order” in 1975. It is a non-profit, religious, California, church, corporation. This is an essay on its founding and standing as a theosophical organization, and the criteria upon which such a decision is to be based. The question has long been labored as to what makes an organization “theosophical.”

There were theosophists and Theosophical Schools for the last 2,000 years, from Plato down to the medieval Alchemists, who knew the meaning of the term, it may be supposed. Therefore,...¹ the question is not whether the T.S. is doing good, but whether it is doing that kind of good which is entitled to the name Theosophy’....¹

So just what are these criteria? These words come from H.P.B. [Helena Petrovna Blavatsky] in her writings published as *The Original Programme of the Theosophical Society* by C.J. Jinarâjadâsa, in which she states her guiding principles in establishing the Theosophical Society:

(1) The Founders had to exercise all their influence to oppose selfishness of any kind, by insisting on sincere fraternal feelings, ... working for it to bring about a spirit of unity and harmony, the great diversity of creeds not withstanding; expecting and demanding ... a great mutual help in the research of truths in

every domain - moral or physical - and even, in daily life.

(2) They had to oppose in the strongest manner possible anything approaching dogmatic faith and fanaticism - belief in the infallibility of the Masters,... a great respect for the private views and creeds of every member was demanded.... The greatest spirit of free research untrammelled by anyone or anything, had to be encouraged.²

Simply stated, these principles relate to brotherhood and dogmatism. The society must be all of the first and have none of the second. Furthermore, to be successful a practical difference must be made in man’s “code of life.”

Theosophy must be made practical, and has, therefore, to be disencumbered of useless discussion... It has to find objective expression in an all-embracing code of life thoroughly impregnated with its spirit - the spirit of mutual tolerance, charity and love.³

That is, it must affect humankind’s behavior, both ethically and materially. And she goes on to say:

The problem of true theosophy and its great mission is the working out of clear, unequivocal conceptions of ethic ideas and duties which would satisfy most and best the altruistic and right feeling in us, and the modelling

¹H.P. Blavatsky, *The Original Programme of the Theosophical Society* (Adyar, Madras, India: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1966), 44-45.

²Ibid., 4-6.

³Ibid., 45.

of these conceptions for their adaptation into such forms of daily life where they may be applied with most equitableness.⁴

There are, then, three criteria on which a decision as to a group's theosophical nature is to be based. The organization must make no distinctions as to better or best on the basis of prejudice. Every race, sex, social status, nationality, religion, creed, and cultural expression must be equal. Truth must be sought religiously. The organization must function in such a manner as to make a difference in man's behavior. It must be a model and working example of theosophical concepts, and it must provide a means for theosophical creativity. In short, these are the requirements: Universal brotherhood, Freedom from dogma, and a Code of life that is all embracing.

The Paracelsian Order was established to provide a practical example of these three theosophical principles as guides for everyday worldly activity. At a time when the world's theosophical societies have dogmatically fragmented into arguing sects held together by claims of apostolic succession, is not this the time to restate our theosophical intentions? Is it tenable for societies supposedly theosophical to be so intolerant of another's "private opinion"? Do we already have theosophical authority? If we do, it would seem we are doomed to argue papal infallibility yet again in this Messianic Cycle.

As an organization The Paracelsian Order is an universal brotherhood, open equally to everyone, and it is free of dogma, all opinions as to one's positive path to perfection are expressible. Does it have an all embracing code of life? And, if it does, is this code of life practical for daily

⁴Ibid., 46-47.

right livelihood, without compromising any theosophical principles? The Paracelsian Order declares its theosophical intention with H.P.B.: "You are Free-workers on the Domain of Truth, and as such, must leave no obstructions on the paths leading to it."⁵ The Paracelsian Order, furthermore, agrees with the view of the Maha Chohan:

For our doctrines to practically react on the so-called moral code or the ideas of truthfulness, self-denial, charity, etc., we have to preach and popularize a knowledge of theosophy. It is ... the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead on the right path our neighbour, to cause as many of our fellow creatures as we possibly can to benefit by it, which constitutes the true Theosophist.⁶

In this statement, the Maha Chohan gives us the principles on which a code's practicalness can be judged. In order to make a practical impact on the moral code of life, a system must be pursued and practiced according to what Buddhism calls "right livelihood". That is it will inculcate a compassionate, self-sacrificing, charitable and honest nature. Monks of The Paracelsian Order may be men or women, single or married, freed from the outside world or as yet having outside obligations. If freed they may reside at and be supported by their monastery, and volunteer their services to the order's healing and teaching purposes. Healing and teaching are broadly applied to all aspects of "man physical and man psychical" and to all beings, animate and inanimate. Monks of the order operate according

⁵Ibid., 47.

⁶Margaret Conger, *Combined Chronology for use with The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett and The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky* (Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1973), 43.

to these principles, which become vows to full monks.

Non-ownership and non-attachment I recognize that I own nothing and that non-attachment to things of this material world is important to my spiritual unfoldment. I accept the responsibility of being a caretaker for the bounty of the Universe.

Moral Chastity Recognizing freedom for all beings, I will strive not to impose on anyone to do anything against his or her highest consciousness, nor will I allow anyone to impose on my highest consciousness.

Obedience I will endeavor to be obedient to my Highest Self, my Godself. I seek to recognize the group mind of the monks, the church and the rule as a reflection of the Highest.

Root Digger I pledge all my energy to the work of the Order. I recognize that I am a channel for infinite abundance, and I accept the responsibility for meeting my material needs.

Openness and honesty I strive to be honest with myself and others and to encourage openness through positive and loving communication.

For a comparison, read the “Preliminary Memorandum” and “Rules,”⁷ published in Volume 12 of *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*.

If a real change is to be effected in humankind’s code of life, a means other than

⁷“Preliminary Memorandum” and “Rules”, in *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: Volume XII*, compiled by Boris de Zirkoff (Wheaton, IL.: Theosophical Publishing House, 1980), 488-498.

market forces must be found to provide for the needs of all. Each of us must provide for their own self; that is the lot of “the great orphan humanity.” Maimonides, in the *Guide of the Perplexed*⁸, while discussing this dilemma, advises a simplification of life style, so that only a minimum of time need be spent for personal maintenance. Thereby, the rest of one’s time can be spent on spiritual development. If that minimum work period is spent in right livelihood, then the concept of work-for-pay vanishes. As right livelihood, the work becomes both karma yoga and *satipatṭhāna*, a duty to give to this world and an awareness meditation to increase ability for skillful action, respectively. All extremes of association with the monastery are allowed, even to the extent of Monks at Large, who have no monastery affiliation, and Associate Members, who are merely supporters of the church’s purposes and theosophical ideals. This broad association allows a maximum of individuals exposure to theosophical ideals and gives them all a steady process for development of those very traits expressed by the Maha Chohan as necessary theosophical criteria. They are also necessary for full monastic commitment.

The very thought of “monastic commitment” brings up archetypal fears in freedom loving people, but what we call “monastery,” the Buddhist call *saṅgha*, the Hindus call *āśrama*, and Kabbalists call *chabura*. Clearly lacking in western society is the ability to provide a means for doing selfless work, *sādhana*. Although other monastic orders provide right livelihood and spiritual support, there certainly are few at which one might be eclectic in one’s spiritual quest!

⁸Moses Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*. Trans. by M. Friedlander (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., n.d.), 126.

Monks may volunteer their time and gain both good works through right livelihood and a sangha by unifying their efforts with like-minded theosophists of every persuasion. The theosophical creativity thus released will flow forth with blessing on all who contact and help it. This Order was conceived to provide both right livelihood and theosophical monasticism. Recall that monastic derives from Greek *monas*, meaning unity. Unity neither implies, nor desires, nor benefits from identity of its individuals. Diversity and fallibility are expressions of truth and are thus to be encouraged. Even Mme. Blavatsky held to “monastic” principles.

Theosophy teaches mutual-culture before self-culture to begin with. Union is strength. It is by gathering many theosophists of the same way of thinking into one or more groups, and making them closely united by the same magnetic bond of fraternal unity and sympathy that the objects of mutual development and progress in theosophical thought may be best achieved....⁹

Could a better definition of monastic be found? Read Olcott’s *Old Diary Leaves* for many comments on the “monastic” model of life at Adyar. Furthermore:

... for the first year the Members of the T. Body who, representing every class in Society as every creed and belief - ... - lived and met under these rules of peace and friendship.¹⁰

If the “monastic” hurdle has been passed, the next seems greater. Association of Theosophy with Religion has been abused, but one dogma is

⁹*Original Programme*, 28.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 6.

no better than another, and religion is after all the practice of “binding one’s self back” to one’s source. The Paracelsian Order is a religious, church, organization, and, indeed, H.P.B. said:

... the two Founders were told ... what they should never do, what they had to avoid, and what the Society should never become. Church organizations, Christian and Spiritual sects....¹¹

However, this opinion is too narrowly stated. For, in the same article, H.P.B. states her opinion more clearly:

Our Society had never certainly any idea of rising superior to the brotherliness and ethics preached by Christ, but only to those of the sham Christianity of the Churches - as originally ordered to, by our Master.¹²

Even KH [Koot Hoomi], whose statement in Mahatma Letter No. 10,¹³ blaming two-thirds of the world’s suffering on the world’s religions, only means those institutions who dogmatically define Truth. By disallowing personal integrity, the ability of each to gain knowingness is lost.

You and your colleagues may help furnish the materials for a needed universal religious philosophy; one impregnable to scientific assault because itself the finality of absolute science; and, a religion, that is indeed worthy

¹¹*Ibid.*, 3.

¹²*Ibid.*, 20.

¹³*The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, edited by A. Trevor Barker (Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1975 [facsimile edition]), 57.

of the name, since it includes the relations of man physical to man psychical, and of the two to all that is above and below them. Is not this worth a slight sacrifice?¹⁴

Furthermore, in the “View of the Chohan on the T.S.,” it is explicitly stated as a prime function of the theosophical movement that, “... the Theosophical Society was chosen as the corner stone, the foundation of the future religion of humanity.”¹⁵ Clearly the Maha Chohan is predicting a “universal religious philosophy” as the basis for religious expression in the ensuing messianic age. The Paracelsian Order accepts monks of all cultural expressions without prejudice, in order to accelerate their intercultural awakening. Its monasteries are theosophical expressions of its universal religious philosophy.

One of the cycles said to be beginning in our time, and in preparation of which Blavatsky was sent, is the Aquarian Messianic Age. There have been and always will be divergent opinions on our true date of entry into this Age. This diversity suggests that a broad transition period is more likely than an abrupt date. But the Kabbalistic tradition indicates the cycle is measured according to Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions, H.P.B. tells us: “the sign of his (messiah’s) coming ‘is the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in the sign Pisces.’”¹⁶ As shown in previous publications, transition from

the significant conjunctions of 1961 to that of 1981 marked the resurrection of the new Messianic Age.¹⁷ H.P.B.’s remarks relative to the year 1975 are well known and, regardless of the actual date of entry into the Aquarian Age, 1975 was certainly between these conjunctions. We agree with H.P.B. that what mankind does in the next few years determines whether the next century is to be a relative heaven or hell. Current world wide politics would appear to corroborate this prediction. Universalism is the keynote of the Aquarian Age. The inception of The Paracelsian Order was auspiciously chosen as 1975. As in *The Voice of the Silence*: “Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.”¹⁸

As we transit out of the Age of Pisces with its vicarious atonement for the “faithful” alone, we will correspondingly enter an age of universalism. The ancient order of Melchizedek¹⁹ must continue as before, but priests now help prepare all people to share equally in the self-sacrifice and so celebrate their own christos illumination, as the Christians might say. This is astronomical and psychological fact, and the mystical truth will be equally expressible in all cultural types. Is there, then, to be a theosophical priestcraft? I hope not, but priests of all crafts can certainly become more theosophical. The Paracelsian Order has no priesthood, only monks of all expressions. All monks are equal. They may be priests or officers

¹⁴*Combined Chronology*, 38.

¹⁵*Original Programme*, 44.

¹⁶H.P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*. Volume II (Los Angeles: The Theosophy Company, 1968 [centenary anniversary edition]), 256.

¹⁷John H. Draais, “Age of Aquarius – 1981, Part I & II,” *The Eclectic Theosophist*, No. 62 (Jan./Feb. 1981) and No. 63 (Mar 1981).

¹⁸H.P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence* (Springfield Rd., Vernon, B.C.: The H.P.B. Lending Library, 1978), 14.

¹⁹“Epistle to the Hebrews,” *The New Testament*, Chapter 5, vv. 1-10 and Chapter 7, vv. 1-3.

in any or all religious systems, but they have no priestly standing within the Order.

The Johannine Catholic Church is the founding, parent corporation of The Paracelsian Order. This church is apostolic, with accepted consecration stemming from Bishop Miendaarts of the Old Catholic See of Utrecht in 1739. The Old Catholics were excommunicated from Rome primarily over the question of papal infallibility. The Johannine Catholic Church is not a member of the Old Catholic or Liberal Catholic movements; it is independent, and it is eclectic. Members may be Christian as well as other expressions simultaneously, once they have gained intercultural awareness. It is a part of the ancient wisdom movement. It is lotus like, its roots are in the mud of the past, its stem is from the water now peaking, and its flowering is in the sunlight of the future. It has no dogma, for "there is no religion higher than truth." By establishing a theosophical monastic order, it has opened its heart in true Christ-like fashion, to allow the essence of the messianic avatar to inspire our universal (i.e., catholic) spirit. "These tears, O thou of heart most merciful, these are the streams that irrigate the fields of charity immortal."²⁰ But monks of The Paracelsian Order are not required to declare membership in the Johannine Catholic Church, and neither organizations define beliefs for its members. The message of the spiritual self immolation of the bodhisattvic and messianic avatar allows vicarious atonement to be replaced with individual responsibility.

The namesake for this organization is, appropriately, Phillipus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, called Paracelsus, the father of modern medicine. This controversial figure,

contemporary to Martin Luther and Huldreich Zwingli, differed with the practitioners of his time. He insisted on treating the whole being, not merely the part displaying disease. This holistic philosophy of Paracelsus lead him to introduce, controversially, allopathy, homeopathy, dosage, chemotherapy, hypnotism, mesmerism and faith healing into the practice of medicine. Religiously he tolerated both Protestants and Catholics. Scientifically he researched the traditions of the common person, the alchemy of the mystics, and the chemistry of the modern. He used astrology, charms, magic, and faith, whatever it took to make the cure. He drew on every source from the east and west and acted in concert with his understanding of each. He dedicated his life and bequeathed his money to the cause of the poor, who he treated for free as much as possible. This pioneer of holism left no stone unturned in his search for truth. He was, furthermore, recognized as a Theosophist by H.P.B.

...although there had been alchemists before the days of Paracelsus, he was the first who had passed through the true initiation, that last ceremony which conferred on the adept the power of traveling toward the 'burning bush' over the holy ground, and to 'burn the golden calf in the fire, grind it to a powder, and strow it upon the water.'²²

The Paracelsian Order provides a theosophical response to dogmatic theosophy. As an intercultural religious expression, free from dogma, it provides means for theosophists of every persuasion to occupy themselves in truly theosophical selfless service and support themselves by right livelihood at the same time. It is a universal brotherhood with Truth as its religious path. It has

²⁰*The Voice of the Silence*, 13.

²¹*Isis Unveiled*, 349.

also worked out a model that allows “as many of our fellow creatures as we possibly can to benefit by it.” This code engenders “the altruistic and right feeling in us” in “clear, unequivocal conceptions of ethic ideas and duties.” It is indeed justified in its claim as a theosophical organization.

Boris de Zirkoff and the *Blavatsky Collected Writings*

Dara Eklund

To trace the editorial life of Boris de Zirkoff with respect to the *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, one would need to examine carefully not only marginal notes on his mss., but his entire correspondence regarding them. These are available in the archives of the Olcott Library in Wheaton, Illinois, often in the form of first editions into which he entered his editorial marks.

Those who knew and worked for Mr. de Zirkoff trusted his honest and thorough scholarship. They realize that he did on occasion make minor alterations. Most often these involved correcting a quotation by filling in missing words, perhaps dropped by the original typesetter. He would editorially plunge into a quote, placing the reference after the paragraph, rather than interjecting it in the passage. These were mostly matters of style and did not interfere with the meaning of a passage.

How many of those who rigidly insist the editor changed H.P.B.'s words, have really examined his MSS to give his editorial labors a fair hearing?

In my years of assisting him, Boris would point out passages where a quote seemingly closed off in the original, yet would continue into portions of the text to follow and not be given quote marks again (again, perhaps dropped by the typesetter). As solution for these encounters, he would sometimes extract the portion, or phrase, and rejoin it to the body of the quote where it belonged. At least he would replace the quote

marks into the discourse where they were required.

The reader of Boris' editions will also find bracketed remarks where the original word is shown first and H.P.B.'s rendition next to it. This occurs for instance on page 284 of *The Secret Doctrine* (vol. I), where the Wilson edition of the *Vishṇu Purāṇa*¹ was quoted. After checking the Wilson edition, the word "development" was restored, but H.P.B.'s word [evolution] kept in brackets. This was meant to provide the reader a source for comparison. [In H.P.B.'s time, how many other translations existed for the reader to consult? Generally very few!]

Boris made every effort to consult those editions available to students of H.P.B.'s time. For example on p. 286 (*Secret Doctrine*, vol. I) the reader will observe that the footnote to Hermetic Fragments in *The Virgin of the World*² cites the 1885 edition, 153. H.P.B.'s parenthetical "It?" is placed by Boris in brackets, providing the editorial impact of her pen by qualifying a Westernized attempt to deify the impersonal Deity. This type of attention to scholarly detail in no way hampers

¹Translated by H.H. Wilson (London: John Murray, 1840). There is also an editing of Wilson's translation by Fitzedward Hall (London: Trübner & Co., 1864-77) in five volumes.

²Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, *The Virgin of the World of Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus* (Minneapolis: Wizards Book Shelf, 1977). This is part of the *Secret Doctrine* Reference Series. Wizards Book Shelf (now spelled Bookshelf) is presently located in San Diego.

the student's comprehension of a passage. In restoring what Boris might dub "the family honor" the quotation is found as originally printed, along with a key to a less anthropomorphic teaching of Gnostic antiquity. B. de Z.'s tremendous effort to relocate H.P.B.'s textual references is complemented by the current availability of modern reprints. Today a number of these ancient texts are available through the fine publications of Wizards Bookshelf in San Diego, as well as by such august publishers as Sam Weiser and WisdomBooks.

Another example of changes made in the *B.C.W.* series is explained with regard to changing Cosmos with a "C" to Kosmos with a "K." The editor explains this usage on pages 656–57 of Volume XII, in the crucial Esoteric Teachings Section.

It somewhat distresses this writer to observe Boris de Zirkoff's labor of over fifty years questioned by those who have never retraced his steps through the great University Libraries, or perused his worldwide correspondence in ardent search for documentation. There are after all numerous notes and letters to track down the hundreds of quotations checked. But why repeat that labor merely to satisfy some skeptical whim, or in order to please scholarly pride? It is the message beyond the quotes which counts anyway. Boris knew that message well, as anyone reading his 'forty-year journal, *Theosophia*, can prove to himself.

Perhaps, for the newer students, a brief sojourn into his Theosophical history would be a keen way of appreciating what Boris de Zirkoff accomplished.

Growing up in St. Petersburg Russia, Boris knew little about his illustrious great aunt until around the age of sixteen. Escaping across Finland in the aftermath of the Russian Revolu-

tion, he settled in Stockholm with his mother and step-father. There, at 'the home of the Russian Consul, he saw *The Secret Doctrine* for the first time. This moment marked a beginning of his lifetime dedication to Theosophy.

In 1923, at the age of 21, Boris met Katherine Tingley during one of her European tours as world leader of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society. She invited him to come to her headquarters in America, where at Point Loma his mission to compile the *Collected Writings* of H.P. Blavatsky would surface. There, some months later, he was afforded every chance to further explore H.P.B.'s articles in *The Theosophist*, *Lucifer*, and other Theosophical journals.

Sometime during 1924, while browsing through these journals, B. de Z. resolved to compile H.P.B.'s works into one uniform edition. He could by then see that the bulk of her accomplishment exceeded one-thousand items, aside from her sublime literary tomes. For nearly six further years it was a private venture, involving a search for clues to other mss. from her pen, locating undated or incorrectly dated sources and starting a far-flung correspondence to elicit information not available at Point Loma.

In 1929 Dr. Gottfried de Purucker suggested publishing a uniform edition of H.P.B.'s writings, and formed a small committee to bring out the first volume for her 1931 birth centennial. Since A. Trevor Barker (of Rider & Company) had been working along similar lines, he joined forces with the committee. Due to Barker's reputation as the editor of *The Mahatma Letters*, his name was to be on the title page.

On April 1st of 1930 this became an Inter-Organizational publication venture, dovetailing with the *Fraternization Movement* inspired by G. de Purucker, leader of Point Loma after the passing of Mrs. Tingley. Dr. Annie Besant's

cooperation was secured at the T.S. Convention that July in Geneva, Switzerland. This meant permission to utilize the T.S. Archives at Adyar, and the collaboration of N. Sri Râm, Mary K. Neff, Jinarâjadâsa and others. Meanwhile, The United Lodge of Theosophists kept faithfully in print *The Modern Penarion*, which was the Theosophical Society's initial attempt to collate all of Blavatsky's articles. However, since 1895, nothing further had been accomplished towards the total magnum opus until the 1930 publication venture. Although ready for the printer in the summer of 1931, the first volume was actually published in 1933 as *The Complete Works of H.P. Blavatsky*. Volume II also came out in 1933. Volume III appeared in 1935 and Vol. IV in 1936, the year in which a new edition of *Isis Unveiled* was reset. All the Rider edition plates were lost in the London "Blitz"! However, the lost volumes were eventually expanded and printed anew by Boris for the Theosophical Publishing House edition of the series. This was after Boris had moved to Los Angeles and was working independently of any society. Volumes V and VI had been sponsored by the Philosophical Research Society under the auspices of Manly Palmer Hall, and a world-wide H.P. Blavatsky Writings Fund. When T.P.H. of the American Section of the Theosophical Society took over the funding of the entire project, naturally the later reprints bore the imprint of the T.P.H. Boris continued to work independently from his Los Angeles office, with a handful of student helpers and co-workers. As president of the American Section, Joy Mills always gave full support to his efforts, as have all the presidents since the time of Dr. Henry Smith. Stockton Trade Press of Los Angeles was his typesetter. However, after a fire wiped out much of the stock in the mid-seventies, the binding of future volumes was done in the mid-West, where as manager of

T.P.H., Clarence Pedersen was of immense assistance. *The Secret Doctrine* edition of 1978/79 was typeset in Adyar originally, but in 1990 it was decided to buy the plates, so that future editions could be printed in the United States. A reset edition is forthcoming, just as soon as the existing stock at Olcott is depleted.

Boris de Zirkoff died on March 4, 1981, after fifty years of labor, seeing the twelve volumes of *Blavatsky Collected Writings* into print. Subsequently Volumes XIII and XIV have been published from his manuscripts, as well as a combined Index (Vol. XV) which came out this year [1991].

I wish only to add that Boris always gave credit to a wide range of resource people from such co-workers of H.P.B. herself as Henry T. Edge, Bertram Keightley and E.T. Sturdy, to his own early co-workers at Point Loma. These early co-workers, namely Geoffrey Barborka, Grace Knoche and Emmett Small, (and later John and Kirby Van Mater of the Theosophical Society Pasadena) were all involved in the production at one stage or another. The librarians contacted through world-wide correspondence, his own research assistants and co-workers were always meticulously noted. The man's frame was weak but his spirit never remitted towards his inspired mission.

In the year before his passing, Boris dictated an autobiographical sketch which later appeared, along with selections from his magazine *Theosophia*, in a Point Loma Publication entitled: *The Dream that Never Dies*³ From these articles one can surmise the inner astuteness of the editor and his deep comprehension of Theosophical Philosophy. His reverence for H.P. Blavatsky is

³Compiled and edited by W. Emmett Small (San Diego: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1983).

unquestionable. In his publisher's note to this 1983 tribute collection, Mr. Emmett Small, the editor states on page v:

As the last living relative of H.P. Blavatsky, Boris de Zirkoff held a unique place in the hearts of all Theosophists, and to them it has always seemed peculiarly appropriate that he should, in the karmic course of 'events, become the compiler-editor of *Blavatsky Collected Writings*.

Addendum

Blavatsky Collected Writings

James A. Santucci

Listed below is the complete bibliographical record for the Blavatsky Collected Writings.

Articles

Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1874-1878*. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff. Volume I. Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1966. [Second edition: 1977.]

Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1879-1881*. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff. Volume II. Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1967.

Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1881-1882*. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff. Volume III. Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1968.

Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1882-1883*. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff. Volume IV. Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1969.

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Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1883-1884-1885*. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff. Volume VI. First edition. Los Angeles: Blavatsky Writings Publication Fund, 1954.

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Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1888-1889*. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff. Volume X. First edition. Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1964.

Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1889*. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff. Volume XI. First edition. Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1973.

Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1889-1890*. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff. Volume XII. First edition. Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1980.

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Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: Miscellaneous. Volume XIV*. First edition. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff and assisted by Dara Eklund. Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1985.

Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: Cumulative Index*. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff and edited by Dara Eklund. Volume XV. Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1991.

The Secret Doctrine

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Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings, 1888: The Secret Doctrine*. Edited by Boris de Zirkoff. Volume II: *Anthropogenesis*. Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1979.

Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings, 1888: The Secret Doctrine*. Edited by Boris de Zirkoff. (Volume III): *General Index and Bibliography*. Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1979.

Isis Unveiled

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Blavatsky, H.P. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings 1877: Isis Unveiled*. Edited by Boris de Zirkoff. Volume II: *Theology*. Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1972.

Note: The Rider publications edited by A. Trevor Barker that are mentioned by Ms. Eklund are listed as follows:

Blavatsky, H.P. *The Complete Works of H.P. Blavatsky*, edited by A. Trevor Barker. Volume I (1874-1879). London: Rider & Co., 1933.

Blavatsky, H.P. *The Complete Works of H.P. Blavatsky*, edited by A. Trevor Barker. Volume II (1881-1882). London: Rider & Co., 1933.

Blavatsky, H.P. *The Complete Works of H.P. Blavatsky*, edited by A. Trevor Barker. Volume III (1881-1882). London: Rider & Co., 1935.

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A Lamasery in New York

Practicing Magical Rites In a Prosaic Eighth-Avenue House An Astonishing Conversation with the Presiding Genius of the Place

[From the *New York World*, Monday 26 March 1877, 1.

H.P. Blavatsky's first masterwork, *Isis Unveiled*, was published in 1877. Interest in the work was particularly intense prior to and following its publication. Michael Gomes, in his detailed account *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement* (Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1987, 137f.), observed that the *World* as early as 23 January 1877 contained an article entitled "A Coming Buddhist Book. 'The Veil of Isis' and the Lady Who Is Writing It." Following this article appeared the present article written (according to Gomes, 138) by David Curtis. The Lamasery itself was located at 302 West 47th Street in Manhattan (New York City),

just off 8th Avenue. Walking up one flight of stairs, the visitor came to the door of the apartment which led into a narrow corridor giving entrance to seven rooms. Mme. Blavatsky's 'den' was at the end of the hallway, and its blue glass windows looked out on both the avenue and West 47th Street. (Gomes, 119)

A picture of the building appears on the same page in the book.

The article seemed to have sparked a reaction among the newspaper's readers in the days following the interview. Just what this reaction was will be printed in coming issues, in the hope that some light will be shed on those individuals and groups who took an interest in magic.]

The rose-pink curtains were no longer there, but when the reporter entered, the softly-shaded gas-light shone back by reflection from the same blue-glass window on the same heaps of manuscripts and proof-sheets that lay on Mme. Blavatsky's table when he called before. Mme. Blavatsky, it will be remembered by the *WORLD's* readers, is a Russian countess, who now lives on Eighth avenue in this city, and is Corresponding Secretary of the Theosophical Society - the same which conducted the cremation of the late Baron de Palm.

Mme. Blavatsky's parlor is rather large, but so full of all manner of furniture and articles of virtu as to seem small. Two good-sized bookcases, three library-tables and a piano are the most conspicuous articles of furniture, but a lounge and an infinite number of easy-chairs fill nearly all the remaining space. On the piano is a hideous image of Buddha, on the marble mantel a Chinese god in a gilt shrine. In one window stands an enormous ape, stuffed and grotesquely half-dressed. In another window hung a tuneful canary, on the occasion of the reporter's visit, while half a dozen Javanese sparrows frantically pecked at the bars of their spacious cage on the opposite side of the room. A huge palm-leaf waved in one corner of the room, and a ferocious tiger's head gaped hungrily in another. Heavy tapestry curtains half hid a sacred alcove, and Oriental nick-knacks filled every niche and chink that could be discovered. Within a brief yard of the visitor's elbow reposed the ashes of Baron de

Palm. An Oriental pipe, finished in velvet, gilt filigree and amber, and filled with a seductive mixture of Turkish tobacco and perique, was handed to the visitor (Mme. Blavatsky has a true Russian's indulgence for a smoker's weakness), and lying back in one of the easy-chairs, he listened attentively - as, indeed, he was compelled to do - to understand the words that came rapidly, and with a strong foreign accent, from the lips of the hostess.

Mme. Blavatsky has spent some thirty years of her life in Oriental countries, and, a mystic by nature, has embraced the Buddhic faith. A profound scholar and a remorseless critic, she is fearless in her attacks on what she holds to be error, wherever it is found. The reporter had called to learn about magic.

"Magic?" said Mme. Blavatsky. Well, magic is what science has not learned. That is the reason that people who arrogate to themselves the epithet 'civilized' scoff at magic. They are divided into two classes, those who follow the priests, and those who follow the scientists, and both priests and scientists, being either knaves or fools, teach their followers that magic is flapdoodle, because they are afraid to grapple with it themselves."

"But this is a negative description of magic," urged the interviewer. "Easy enough to say that magic is what science has not learned, but what is that? Is it fair to say that magic is the exercise of power in contravention of known natural laws?"

"No. The natural laws are not to be transgressed. What science calls the natural laws can every one of them be broken, but the real laws of nature cannot. What is magic? You ask. Magic is the great original religion. It has been handed down from father to son among the people who live in 'the cradle of humanity' - the East. Science

and religion quarrel over the age of the world, and religion, as usual, gets the worst of it; but even science is greatly at fault. I find in Max Muller the statement that there are some reasons for supposing that there was a language before the Sanscrit; that there are indications in the formation of that language that would tend to show that it must have been derived from some other language; but he says that there are absolutely no traces of it; that there is not a word of it left, not a monument of its existence. Why, my dear sir, that language, older than the Sanscrit - that tongue which was once the universal language of mankind - is today a written and a spoken language. We know it."

"Who do you mean by 'we'?"

"The adepts."

"What is an adept?"

"An adept is one who has nothing more to learn. I am not yet an adept, but I have taken some steps in the initiation in the great societies of the East in which knowledge of the mysteries is handed down from father to son, from one member of the society to another."

"But you say, 'has nothing more to learn.' Surely life is too short for one man to learn everything."

"Oh! an adept need not know the details of every branch of knowledge. It is only necessary for him to master the principles of knowledge, and he can learn the details of whatever he chooses."

"And there are such men!"

"Undoubtedly. There are even adepts in Europe, but the European mind is not well adapted to grasping subtle knowledge. It is in the East, where the people inherit this knowledge, that it is preserved. You know it has been scientifically proved that the people of Cashmere can distinguish 300 more colors than Europeans can. So the Hindoo has the sixth or seventh sense,

which enables him to perceive mystic truth.

“And does he thus acquire the power to perform the wonders that are told of the magicians of the East?”

“Yes. Magic, you must understand, is of two kinds - white and black. White magic is that produced by the exercise of a true understanding and knowledge of general principles. The holy men of the East are great magicians, but they never perform any of their feats for money. Black magic is a perverted use of a knowledge which is often, indeed generally, imperfect and partial. The jugglers of India and of Egypt, who are hired by travellers to perform their wonders, are men who have learned from their fathers a sort of mechanical knowledge of how to perform tricks - not merely sleight-of-hand feats, but genuine wonders. True magic,” she continued, “comes of an understanding of the constitution of man. As I have said to you before, the nature of man is three-fold. He has a physical body, and an astral body, and a soul. The astral body is the ‘spiritual body’ spoken of by St. Paul - the ‘irrational soul’ of Plato. It is not identical with the physical body, but permeates it, occupying the same position with it in space, although it can be separated from it. This separation, however, is the very last and highest possible achievement of magic. The soul hovers above the head of a man, and is a portion of the Divine Essence. It is God himself. By the separation of the astral and physical bodies the latter is left inert and lifeless, while the former becomes almost omnipotent. We live in one of the lowest of the spheres, but as we progress in successive lives from one sphere to another our astral body becomes purged of its imperfections and grossness, and becomes more and more nearly omnipotent and omniscient. You find the possibility of this separation hinted at in the Hebraic table of the creation, when Jehovah said

that he did not want man to become ‘as one of us.’ This separation has been accomplished in well-attested cases. The British Government tested it by hermetically sealing up the physical body of a Hindoo in a glass coffin, in which it was kept for months, constantly watched night and day by a military guard. When it was taken from the coffin the astral body and the soul rejoined the physical body and apparent life was restored. In the case of the lower animals, who have astral bodies, this separation is easily accomplished. The very shepherds in Thibet - ignorant people - know the trick of doing this. They frequently put to temporary death such of their sheep or cattle as they wish to preserve for any time, and then, when they desire to do so they bring them to life again. I have done this myself a number of times. It is done by a certain manipulation of a certain artery in the neck. I prophesy to you that within a year from now scientists will discover how this is done in the case of the lower animals.”

“You speak of different countries. Is magic commonly practiced in all of them?”

“Yes. Through all the countries of the East there are veritable magicians. In Thibet, in the city of colleges, there are over fifteen hundred lamas engaged in teaching the principles of magic to students. Many of them study to be lamas, and enter the lamaseries, but many more only learn enough for the education of a layman.”

“What is a lamasery?”

“It is to the original religion what its modern copy, the monastery, is to the Roman Catholic. The monastery, with its rules of conduct and general management, is modelled after the Thibetan lamasery, as has been shown by a great number of writers who are accepted as authorities. And the lamaseries have suffered from the same abuses that have crept into the monasteries of the Christian. The Dalai-lama who was born,

or rather who was inspired, in the thirteenth century, caused over 500,000 unworthy lamas to be driven out from the lamaseries. They were unworthy men, who used their profession merely as a means of livelihood. You know the Dalai-lama is the divinely inspired head of the Church. When a Dalai-lama dies Buddha enters the body of another human being - generally that of a child less than a year old. Some of the European ambassadors who have paid their respects to new Dalai-lamas in different centuries have recorded their amazement at being received by an infant of a few months with the courtesy and grave demeanor of an old man."

"But of the actual operation of magic - the working of wonders - what have you seen?"

"What have I seen? Look there!" And Mme. Blavatsky pointed to a window - not the one with a blue-glass sash, but another.

The reporter looked, and promptly dropped his pipe. Across the window was passing a shadow. That of itself was not remarkable; but the shadow was not cast from the inside and there were certain reasons why it seemed impossible that it could have been cast from the outside.

It was a clear, dark night. The only lights visible outside the windows were the street gas-lights, the stars and a few night lights of other keepers of late hours besides the party in Mme. Blavatsky's room. None of these lights could by any possibility have cast the shadow that was seen, no single one was brighter or nearer than many others, and the shadow was as distinct as if cast by the noonday sun. Then, again, the shadow - if it was really a shadow - must have been cast by a body very near the window, for it was the exact profile image of a man, not distorted or disproportionate in any particular, and exactly life size. And another reason why it must have been cast by a body near the window lies in the

fact that it was a second-story window, and there was no place nearer than the width of Eighth avenue where the body could have been, excepting a ledge below the window, about eighteen inches wide. And the reporter will make affidavit that no solid body passed along that ledge when the shadow passed across the window.

Of the six persons who sat in the room one besides the reporter was a skeptic. All looked carefully. All saw the shadow, and four asserted and two admitted the facts detailed as showing the strange character of the apparition.

"Colonel Olcott," said Mme. Blavatsky, after the examination had been made, "please pull down the curtain." Colonel Olcott complied and Mme. Blavatsky left the room leaving the company in silent and not altogether comfortable expectancy.

When she returned she was asked, "What was that?"

"It was a friend of mine, an adept who lives on the Mediterranean and who is this moment at home. You will hear his music-box in a few minutes."

"Did you mean that it was really he and that he has returned to the Mediterranean already?"

"I do. It was his astral body. He comes here frequently, and generally appears inside the room. I don't know why he did not come in here to-night unless it was because you were here. I went into the next room and spoke with him. Listen! Do you hear music?"

The reporter did not, and for a full minute all was silent. Then there came the sound of a music-box playing an unfamiliar air.

"It is a very old box," said Mme. Blavatsky, "and I wish it played more than two old tunes. They set me almost wild at times, do those two tunes."

"But is that the sound of a music-box that is playing on the shores of the Mediterranean?"

"It is. You carry sound by means of the telephone. All that is necessary to do is to establish the current. We can do that without a wire. But this is nothing unusual. You will see and hear many such things if you come often to this house. And you may read of far more wonderful things in the books of travel in the East. I have seen a man throw a large ball of cord into the air which unwound as it ascended, one end being fastened to the ground. As the ball unwound it disappeared in the clouds and the cord remained stationary. In a few moments the man sent a little boy up the cord, pretending that it was to find out what held the other end up. The boy went up and up, till he was entirely lost to sight. And he stayed up so long that the man pretended to become enraged and climbed up after him with a drawn sword in his hand, and he, too, disappeared from sight. And presently down fell a bloody foot, and then another, then a leg, and then different pieces of the boy, all bleeding. We dipped our handkerchiefs in the blood to see if it was really blood, and it was. At last the boy's head fell down, and presently the man climbed down, all bloody, and still simulating rage. He collected the fragments of the boy that lay around and threw them in a heap on the ground. Then he threw a cloth over the pieces, and the boy instantly jumped up, alive and well. The man and the boy were entirely naked, and the trick, if it was a trick, as you will say it was, was done on an open plain, out of doors. I say it was actually done. There were hundreds of spectators. That is the kind of things that Eastern magicians do."

"But why is it, if such things are true, and not tricks, that we of the Western countries do not know more of them? Are we not as intelligent as those of the East?"

"Our Western civilization is young yet," replied the occultist, "and, as I have said, the mind of the Caucasian is not as well adapted to the perception of subtle truths. But there are many Europeans who are real adepts, and there is quite a number of persons in New York who are studying occultism. Some of them only study it philosophically, but some are practicing it. There is one who has several times accomplished the separation of his astral body from his physical body, though only for a few moments. But I can make all this much clearer to you after a time by showing you a copy of the book I am writing - 'The Veil of Isis' - than I can do in conversation."

"Is this coterie of students then a lamasery?" asked the reporter.

"You may term it so," said the mystic, "though technically it is not exactly that. The students are mastering slowly the knowledge possessed by the lamas, but do not expect to become lamas themselves."

The Oriental pipe had gone out again. The cuckoo sang "one". The ape grinned in ghastly fashion and (or the reporter fancied it) nodded a derisive "good night". Buddha's serenity was now almost slumber, and groping their way slowly back from what seemed dreamland, and yet was indubitably a reality, the party dispersed.

Lamaseries

[From the New York World, Monday, 26 March 1877. This is an editorial that is based on the article "A Lamasery in New York" and found on page 4 of the same issue.]

A lamasery is a place where lamas are kept, and if Mme. Blavatsky knows what she is talking about, it is the school of strange knowledge. It is the home of the Eastern priesthood and the seminary of all magic arts. There the students learn to speak the mystic language older than Sanscrit in which the adepts throughout the world converse with each other. There they acquire knowledge until they have nothing more to learn. There they are taught to distinguish between white and black magic. There they analyze the human being into his astral and physical bodies and acquire the art of separating them for indefinite intervals, throwing the subject into a trance like a certain tribe of Western Indians who deposit their pappooses at the bottom of a lake during winter and fish them out again in good condition in the spring. The graduate of the lamasery flits at will from place to place, and communicates with friends across the sea to the sound of sweet music. In fact the lamasery appears to be far in advance of the ordinary American university, and if the professors in those institutions would consent to advertise in our newspapers, there can be no doubt that Harvard, Yale and Columbia would be deserted for the more erudite colleges of the East. Why are not respectable fathers of families furnished with catalogues of the leading lamaseries of the world? It might be well too that as a

matter of guarantee some of the prizemen from these institutions should travel through Europe and America, giving exhibitions of their wonderful acquirements. We should like to see an adept seat himself upon a piece of magic carpet and soar away through the clouds, or touch a corpse and recall it to life, or turn a rod into a serpent or build a stately palace by dulcet sounds. It would be pleasant to hear one of those men who have nothing more to learn deliver a course of lectures at the Cooper Institute. The spiritualists and magicians that have heretofore come among us seem ignorant of everything but the fact that others possess ineffable knowledge, and incapable of performing any feats worthy of the attention of sensible people. They can tilt a table or produce cracked tunes, but that is all. Let us by all means have a genuine Senior Wrangler from a lamasery; a wizard with troops of genii at his command; a man who can bestride a broomstick and outpace an Arabian courser; a necromancer who can smooth the wrinkles from the cheek of age. We want an Owen Glendower sort of personage, at whose nativity.

"The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
Of burning cressets, and at whose birth,
The frame and huge foundation of the earth
Shaked like a coward."

We are weary of all pale and sickly imitations.

Book Review

James A. Santucci

RADICAL SPIRITS: SPIRITUALISM AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA.

By Ann Braude. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989. Pp. xiii + 268. \$24.95.

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the voluminous *History of Woman Suffrage* (edited by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony) astutely observed that Spiritualism was “the only religious sect in the world...that has recognized the equality of woman....” Now, more than a century later, an assistant professor of religion at Carleton College (Minnesota), Ann Braude, has undertaken the task of uncovering the reasons behind this curious bond between the Spiritualist and the Women's Rights movements. Basing her information on original source material located in archives around the country as well as already published primary and secondary articles and monographs (the complete list in the Reference section of the book covers seventeen pages), Dr. Braude apparently has left no stone unturned in shedding insight on the attitude, motivation, and involvement of women in this quasi-religious movement.

The book covers a number of themes and questions that naturally arise from this interrelationship. Since the core of Spiritualism is the role of mediumship, Dr. Braude discusses the conditions that allowed women to function as mediums, thereby leading the way for them to function outside their traditional sphere of activity, the

hearth and home. Furthermore, she examines the results of this activity on the broader women's rights movement. Included in her study is what she considers the chief inhibiting factor to a woman's basic rights: the institution of marriage as practiced and understood in the nineteenth century (Chapter Five). The following chapter (Six) considers the fostering of alternative views of health and the practice of medicine designed to advance women's health and to help improve their overall position in society. The next chapter discusses the decline of Spiritualism in the 1870s as a social force advancing the position of women in society and the two movements that competed with it from this time on: Christian Science and Theosophy.

Although the beginnings of Spiritualist ideas can be traced back to earliest antiquity, the origin of modern Spiritualism as a Western phenomenon is recognized to have begun with the Hydesville rappings as witnessed by Margaret and Kate Fox. Why this event is considered the beginning of the Movement is, according to the author, due in large part to the interest and persistence of two Quaker dissidents and abolitionists, Amy and Isaac Post, and their colleagues in the Congregational Friends of Waterloo, New York. Their efforts, coupled with the Quaker belief that religious truth resided as an “inner light” in all humans allowing for communication between the human and divine realm, sustained interest in the Fox sisters' (Margaret, Kate, and shortly thereafter, Leah) mediumship. The formal

conjunction between what was to be called Spiritualism and the issue of the “‘social, civil, and religious’ rights of women” (57) was formally recognized at the Seneca Falls Convention. From that time to the 1850s and beyond, Spiritualism and women’s rights were closely bound to the abolitionist movement and dissident Quakerism. Radical abolitionists, for instance, were attracted to both Spiritualism and women’s rights because of the presence of the principle of individualism within the latter movements (60f.); disaffected Quakers similarly found a freedom of conscience in Spiritualism.

The success of women in Spiritualism was in part answered by the happy coincidence of the main function of Spiritualism, mediumship, occurring within the accepted domain of women’s activities: the home and family. Their acknowledged responsibility therein was to preserve the family’s morals and to offer comfort and solace at the time of death of family members, the latter event a common occurrence in the home. If I understand Dr. Braude correctly, she implies that a number of interacting sentiments - home, family, death, the American attitude of heaven, morality - all associated with the woman’s sphere of activity, helped contribute to the acceptance of women as mediums. Indeed, one Spiritualist writer, unidentified in the book, observed that spirit communication was a decidedly feminine (here implying passivity and the ‘negative’ force) property, a characteristic that was not necessarily restricted to the feminine gender.(23) Many within the medical profession recognized this association and so attempted to provide professional, albeit bizarre and ludicrous judgments for it. One Dr. R. Frederic Marvin offered this typical contemporary interpretation in his book *The Philosophy of Spiritualism and the Pathology and*

Treatment of Mediomania (N.Y.: Asa K. Butts & Co., 1874): mediumship is a form of insanity, which he labels “mediomania”, brought about by the “natural pathology of female organs” (159); it sometimes afflicts men though not as frequently. Come again? In the same vein, the good doctor writes elsewhere:

Utromania frequently results in mediomania.... The angle at which the womb is suspended in the pelvis frequently settles the whole question of sanity or insanity. Tilt the organ a little forward—introvert it, and immediately the patient forsakes her home, embraces some strong ultraism—Mormonism, Mesmerism, Fourierism, Socialism, oftener Spiritualism. She becomes possessed by the idea that she has some startling mission in the world. She forsakes her home, her children, her duty, to mount the rostrum and proclaim the peculiar virtues of free-love, elective affinity, or the reincarnation of souls. (160)

It is little wonder that Spiritualists sought alternative practices in place of orthodox medicine! Health reform, dress reform (women’s clothes were designed to be inhibitive to keep them in their proper place, the home), gymnastics, vegetarianism, and abstinence from tea, coffee, tobacco, alcohol, and drugs (151) were all designed to relieve women of their general state of ill health. The most active challenge and alternative to orthodox medicine, however, was the appearance of healing mediums, in the main women, who provided hope in areas where ordinary medicine was inadequate.

Another inhibiting factor for women’s rights was the institution of marriage, the laws of which deemed by many Spiritualists as robbing “the wife of her child, her property, of her name,

and of her individuality.” (118) This opinion led to the expected charge by their detractors that the Movement advocated “free love.” It is not unexpected, therefore, that reference to the extreme, antimarriage position of Victoria Woodhull naturally is raised. (136f.) Dr. Braude observes, however, that the term denoted different things to different people. It could, for instance, either refer to an opposition to the institution of marriage or simply against those specific marriage laws that discriminated against women (127), depending upon whether individuals regarded the phrase in a negative or positive light. Different interpretations could be also based upon the position of the genders: men for the most part considering free love in unfettered sexual contact, women considering it in many cases as a “freedom not to love....” (140) Without substantiating evidence, however, one must question just how common such interpretations were; furthermore, the second interpretation from the outlook of the genders, may bespeak more of a preconception, perhaps even a decidedly feminist bias, on the author’s part rather than the actual sentiments of the genders at the time.

Chapter Seven brings the book full circle by tracing the decline of Spiritualism and those feminine qualities that were evident in the early decades of the Movement. “Sensational” mediumship replaced trance mediumship from the 1870s on, with many exercising it for personal gain. In some ways, this chapter is the least satisfying because Dr. Braude seems to let her ideology get the better of her. Does she appraise the decline of Spiritualism as a reform movement to attempts to organize it: organization regarded by the contemporary medium Lizzie Doten as a masculine, positive characteristic, something that the “spirits were averse to...” (165). Is such a

decline to be construed as the same as the decline of the Movement itself, anchored as it was in mediumship? This seems to be so, since the rest of the chapter includes a discussion of the two main rivals of Spiritualism, Christian Science and Theosophy, and the ascent of sensational mediumship, both casting considerable suspicion on the validity of mediumship and hence on the Movement itself and not just women’s place within it.

This last observation highlights what I believe to be the one shortcoming of the book. All too often monographs that profile individuals or sub-groups within the greater society, in this instance, women in Spiritualism, have a tendency to overemphasize or exaggerate their role. To a small degree, this is evident in the present work. In addition to the confusion that is evident in Chapter Seven, one can call into question the reason for the success of the Hydesville phenomena in launching and sustaining the Spiritualist Movement. Dr. Braude’s explanation conforms to her general thesis but it is not necessarily the only reason for its success. No mention is made of the speculation that Hydesville was provoked by a “hidden hand” or secret society of individuals whose main purpose was to change the world view of Western civilization. Such a view, discussed in an earlier issue of *Theosophical History* (III/2) by Joscelyn Godwin, may not be the accepted explanation in many circles, but it nevertheless deserves mention. To ignore alternate theories and interpretations imparts a propagandist air to the account.

Regardless of these weaknesses, *Radical Spirits* is a fascinating account of nineteenth century Spiritualism and the women who played a major role in it. It should take its rightful place

in feminist and cultural studies as one of the more balanced and insightful accounts of the role of Spiritualism in furthering women's rights.

Theosophical History



A Quarterly Journal of Research

Volume 3, Nos. 7-8 July-October 1991
ISSN 0951-497X

THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY

A Quarterly Journal of Research

Founded by Leslie Price, 1985

Volume 3, No. 7-8, July-October 1991

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Theosophical History (ISSN 0951-497X) is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October by the Theosophical History Foundation. The journal's purpose is to publish contributions specifically related to the modern Theosophical Movement, from the time of Madame Helena Blavatsky and others who were responsible in establishing the original Theosophical Society (1875), to all groups that derive their teachings - directly or indirectly, knowingly or unknowingly - from her or her immediate followers. In addition, the journal is also receptive to related movements (including pre-Blavatskyite Theosophy, Spiritualism, Rosicrucianism, and the philosophy of Emanuel Swedenborg to give but a few examples) that have had an influence on or displayed an affinity to modern Theosophy.

The subscription fee for the journal is \$14.00 (U.S.) a year. Single issues are \$4.00. The air mail rate for subscribers outside the U.S. is \$24 a year. Please make checks or money orders payable in U.S. funds to **James Santucci**. Subscriptions should be sent to *James Santucci, Department of Religious Studies, California State University, Fullerton, CA 92634-9480 (U.S.A.)*.

The Editors assume no responsibility for the views expressed by authors in *Theosophical History*.

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Layout and composition by Robert L. Hütwohl, GraphicType Southwest, 924 Alto St., Santa Fe, NM 87501 USA, using Adobe type 1 typefaces: ITC Garamond 1, Linotype Frutiger and Linotext, with an adapted Sanskrit-Tibetan diacritical Garamond typeface designed by Mr. Hütwohl.

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Editor's Comments

In This Issue

In an effort to bring *Theosophical History* up to date in a more expeditious manner, both the July and October issues have been herein combined. Readers' views are welcomed if they wish to comment on this format. Future issues may on rare occasion appear as double numbers in order to avoid dividing an exceptionally long article over two or more issues. It is hoped that readers will approve this format rather than wait for the second part of an article to appear in the following issue.

The contents herein include a mix of offerings, including articles by Michael Gomes, Henk Spierenburg, and Daniel Caracostea. In addition, three pieces of historical interest are reprinted: one a pamphlet by W.T. Brown, entitled *Some Experiences in India*, the other two an article and editorial from the pages of the *New York World*. Three book reviews also appear in this issue: Robin Waterfield's *Rene Guénon*, Alain Daniélou's *The Way to the Labyrinth: Memories of East and West*, and Radha Rajagopal Sloss' *Lives in the Shadow with J Krishnamurti*. Mr. Gomes' article, "Mabel Collins' *Romance of the White Lotus*," discusses Miss Collins' explanation of her theosophical compositions, with special reference to the discarded 1882 version of Chapter 7 of the novella *Romance of the White Lotus*. Mabel Collins (1851-1927) is best known for *Light on the Path*, but it may interest residents of California that she is also the author of *The Story of Helena Modjeska (Madame Chiapowska)* [London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1885, 2nd edn.], a well-known Polish actress and founder (in 1876) of a short-lived art commune in Orange County, California.

Michael Gomes, an historian of the Theosophical Society best known for his well-received *Dawning of the Theosophical Movement* [Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1987], is the author of a sizable number of articles on various facets of theosophical history, including "The Coulomb Case, 1884-1984" (*The Theosophist*, Dec. 1984 - Feb. 1986) and "The History of a Humbug" (*The Canadian Theosophist*, Sept. 1984 - Feb. 1986), the latter containing eleven previously unknown letters of H.P. Blavatsky to Elliott Coues. His long awaited annotated bibliography, *Theosophy in the Nineteenth Century*, published by Garland Publishing, is due out in June 1992. Mr. Gomes is presently on academic leave from Columbia University in order to engage in his research interests in India.

Dr. Spierenburg and Mr. van Egmond's article, "The Succession of H.P. Blavatsky: A Documentary History," is a compilation of "official documents" that shed light on this subject. Readers are probably familiar with Dr. Spierenburg's articles in *Theosophical History* I/ 7,8 and II/1,2,5 as well as his recently published *The Buddhism of H.P. Blavatsky* (Point Loma Publications), announced in *TH* III/5:134.

Daniel Caracostea, the author of "Alexandra David-Neel's Early Acquaintance with Theosophy: Paris 1892," presents herein a letter discovered in the archives of the Theosophical Society in Paris from Alexandra David-Neel to G.R.S. Mead, the General Secretary of the European Section. Mme. David-Neel [1868-1969, she married Philippe Neel in 1904], an intrepid traveler to Tibet and other parts of Asia in her pursuit

of Buddhist wisdom, is the author of more than forty books, including *Magic and Mystery in Tibet* (N.Y.: C. Kendall, 1932), *With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet* (London: John Lane, 1931), *Voyage d'un Parisienne a Lhassa* (Paris: Plon, 1927), and *The Secret Oral Teachings in Tibetan Buddhist Sects* (Calcutta: Maha Bodhi Society of India, 1971, co-authored with Lama Yongden) that detail her experiences.

Mr. Caracostea is perhaps best known as a member of the editorial staff and frequent contributor to *Le Lotus Bleu* on the history of Theosophy in France and the translator of Subba Row's "Notes on the Bhagavad-Gītā" into French. Born into a family of theosophists (T.S. Adyar), Mr. Caracostea is a bookbinder by profession. The translator of the article, Diana Dunningham-Chapotin, was a few years previous on the staff at the Krotona Institute in Ojai, California. She currently lives in France.

W.T. Brown's *Some Experiences in India*, first published in 1884, comes by way of the archives of the Society of Psychical Research. Our gratitude is extended to the S.P.R. for allowing the pamphlet to appear in this issue and to Leslie Price for uncovering this important document. Since its inception in 1985, *Theosophical History* has regularly included documents originating therein, and we see no reason why this practice should be discontinued. This is the first of three pamphlets written by Brown that will eventually appear in this journal: the other two being *My Life* and *The Theosophical Society: An Explanatory Treatise*. As the reader will discover upon reading *Some Experiences*, W.T. Brown claimed in no uncertain terms to have beheld (in 1883 and 1884), the Mahatmas Koot Hoomi *in propria persona* and to have received letters from the same. The pamphlet presented herein is very rare indeed since Georges Meautis remarked in a 1954 article "Those

Who Have Seen Them" (published in *The Theosophist*, January 1956: 262f. and first appearing in the French original in *Lotus Bleu*, 1954, no. 6) that it

is not in the library of the English Section, and it is not in the British Museum. There is a copy in the Adyar Library, but unfortunately it was mutilated, as owing to faulty rebinding one or two lines are missing at the end of some of the pages. It is to be hoped that another copy will be discovered, so that the missing text can be filled in.

Readers who wish additional secondary information on Brown's experiences may consult, besides Meautis' article, H.S. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves* (III: 21f.) and Katherine A. Beechey's "Some Little-Known Letters of the Master Koot Hoomi" (*The Theosophist*, 75/2 [November 1957]: 129-32).

"The New York School of Magic" and "Levitation and Other Light Matters" both appeared in the March 27 (Tuesday) edition of the *New York World*. They served as a follow up to the article, "A Lamasery in New York," which appeared the previous day. Who the correspondent was is not revealed.

Book Notes

Kabbalah: New Perspectives by Moshe Idel (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988) is a major work that challenges many of the basic assumptions and conclusions of the foremost scholar on Kabbalistic studies in the twentieth century, Gershom Scholem. Mr. Idel, now an associate professor of Jewish thought at Hebrew University (Jerusalem) includes chapters on the state of Kabbalah scholarship, varieties of *devekut* ("a call upon the Jew to strengthen the

bond between himself and God”: 38) in Jewish mysticism, mystical union and techniques leading to this union, Kabbalistic theosophy [*theosophy* referring here to “manifestations that are either part of the divine structure or directly related to the divine essence, serving as its vessels or instruments...”, 112], and on the evolution from Jewish Esotericism to European Philosophy. The price of this 464 page book is \$40.00.

The Maha Bodhi Society’s celebration of its one hundredth anniversary and the one hundred and twenty-seventh anniversary of the birth of its founder, Anagarika Dharmapala, can now be shared its publication of the *Centenary Souvenir*. Among the articles that appear in this publication is Michael Gomes’ “Anagarika Dharmapala and the Theosophical Society”, Suniti Kumar Chatterji’s “Dharmapala and the Cultural Renaissance in India and Ceylon”, and Dr. G. John Samuel’s “Indigenisation of Buddhism in Tamil Nadu.” Copies may be obtained from The Maha Bodhi Society (17, Kennet Lane, Egmore, Madras 600 008 India).

Skoob Books Publishing Ltd, an outgrowth of the London secondhand bookshop Skoob Books Ltd, has published or is in the act of publishing a number of interesting works, among which are Kenneth Grant’s *The Magical Revival* and *Remembering Aleister Crowley*. According to the catalogue description, *The Magical Revival* “contains a detailed analysis of certain occult traditions which...have reappeared in recent times.... The continuity of this magical current as reflected in the work of Aleister Crowley, Austin Spare, Dion Fortune and others is here traced through the Tantric Tradition of the Far East, the Sumerian Cult of Shaitan and the Draconian, Sabean, or Typhonian rites of the ‘dark’: dynasties of ancient Egypt.” The second book is a “memoir of the personal relationship between Kenneth

Grant and Aleister Crowley in Crowley’s latter years. These books may be ordered from Skoob directly (11a-15 Sicilian Ave., London WC1A 2QH), or from their agents (U.K. distributor: Gazelle Book Services Ltd, Falcon House, Queen Square, Lancaster LA1 1RN; U.S. distributor: New Leaf Distributing Co. 5425 Tulane Drive S.W., Atlanta, GA 30336-2323). We hope to include reviews of these books in due course.

The State University of New York Press (SUNY) has recently announced the publication of Bernadette Roberts’ book, *The Path to No-Self*, which maintains that the spiritual journey moves beyond the “transcendence of the self center or ego,” beyond the “abiding awareness of oneness with God.” The book “verifies a path beyond union ” and that it “exists between the transcendence of the ego (self-center)...and the later falling away of all self.” One may order the book directly from SUNY (c/o CUP Services, P.O. Box 6525, Ithaca, N.Y. 14851). The price is \$12.95 (paperback) and \$39.50 (hardcover).

SUNY also has announced the forthcoming publication of Carl W. Ernst’s *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History, and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center*. This book describes the “mystical teachings and practices of the *Chishti* Sufi order as taught by the Shaykh Burhān al-Din Gharib (d.1337) and his disciples.” Dr. Ernst is a specialist in classical Sufism and Indo-Muslim culture and is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Religion at Pomona College in Claremont, California.

Larson Publications (4936 Route 414, Burdett, New York, U.S.A.) has announced two forthcoming publications of interest: *Sacred Paths: Essays on Wisdom, Love, and Mystical Realization* by Georg Feuerstein (ISBN 0-943914-56-6, \$14.95), a book on “yoga, tantra, and vedanta, and what they mean for people today,” and a new edition

of Stephen MacKenna's *Plotinus: The Enneads*. According to the catalogue description:

Stephen MacKenna worked on only the first of the four editions of *The Enneads* translation bearing his name.... Since in general the fourth edition is the superior text, we use that edition as our main text. In passages where changes may be questionable, however, we show (in footnotes) how MacKenna originally translated them. Endnotes also show, where relevant, how other major translators (e.g., Guthrie, Taylor, Armstrong, Deck) handled them with comments when needed.

Both books may already be in print if the publisher kept to its schedule.

Subscriptions

Beginning with this issue, the new subscription rates take effect.

U.S. and Canada	\$14
Overseas (surface)	\$16
Overseas (airmail)	\$24
Single issues	\$4

Until further notice, subscriptions may be payable in British Sterling, French and Swiss francs, and German marks.

All checks and money orders should be made payable to **James Santucci**.

U.K. Subscribers

An arrangement has been made with Mr. Michael Rainger of the Quest Bookshop (12 Bury Place, London) for him to accept subscriptions to *Theosophical History*. Checks or money orders

payable to *Theosophical History* for the amount of £11 for four issues.

Theosophical History Conference

Arrangements for the International Theosophical History Conference at Point Loma Nazarene College from 12 - 14 June 1992 are nearly complete. The indulgence of the participants and attenders is requested in two matters.

First, adjustments in accommodations and meals were made by the College. They are the following:

Breakfast:	\$3.75	(rather than \$3.50)
Lunch:	\$4.75	(rather than \$4.50)
Lodging	\$16.00	(rather than \$15.00)

[Note: Linens per person remain at \$7.50 per stay, *i.e.* whether the lodger arranges either a one or two day stay]

Banquet: the tentative price is \$10.00. Since, however, the meal will be vegetarian, the caterer may request a higher figure, not to exceed \$15.00.

Should you wish to arranging for all meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) and lodging, the total price per day will be **\$64.00**.

My apologies for these changes.

P.L.N.C. has requested that I finalize the number for lodging and food services no later than ninety days prior to the Conference. If you wish to stay at Finch Hall or use the food services, please notify me as soon as possible. I cannot guarantee accommodations should requests arrive later than **March 31**. Please fax (714-773-3990) or telephone (714-773-3727) me of your attentions.

Correction

In the III/6 issue of *Theosophical History* (page 156), I inadvertently erred in describing Dara Eklund's and Nicholas Weeks' current research activity to be that of revising their index of the *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings* to include *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. Rather, Mrs. Eklund writes that they are presently compiling the index for the *Echoes of the Orient* series.

Correspondence

From Daniël van Egmond (The Netherlands)

I like to express, first of all, my gratitude to you for reviving *Theosophical History* in such a splendid and well-balanced form. Next, I wish to respond to Mr. Robert Dulaney's letter in *TH* III/4 re Rudolf Steiner. In the German language two excellent books are available in which Steiner's relationship to the T.S. is quite fully dealt with. [Therein,... all papers of his Esoteric Section are published [i.e. the Esoteric Section of the T.S. of which he was the German secretary] as well as many letters from A. Besant and other important members. Furthermore, a quite good description is given of the problems between Steiner and the T.S. officials. This description is less one-sided than is usually the case in books published by the Anthroposophical Society. The books are part of the *Gesamtausgabe* (Collected Writings) of Rudolf Steiner: *Rudolf Steiner - Zur Geschichte der Esoterischen Schule I & II: GA 264-265*, Dornach: Rudolf Steiner Verlag, 1904, 1907. Vol. I is the most important in view of Mr. Dulaney's question.

*At my behest, Miss Eileen Lloyd of the journal Anthroposophy Today (London) forwarded information on the contents of GA 264 and 265 (no English translation is believed to exist). Both numbers cover the years 1904 to 1914. Pertinent in 264 is the section **Zur Geschichte der Gliederung der Esoterischen Schule of Theosophy in eine östliche und westliche Schule im Jahre 1907**. Contents include "Drei Briefe im Zusammenhang mit dem sogenannten Fall Leadbeater, durch den die Trennung von der Esoterischen Schule of Theosophy eingeleitet wurde/Elf Briefe und ein Aufsatz im Zusammenhang mit*

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der Wahl von Annie Besant, Leiterin der Esoterischen Schule, zur Präsidentin der Theosophischen Gesellschaft, was zur Trennung von der Esoteric School führte..."

The contents of GA 265 is briefly described in the following excerpt: "Die mit diesem Band vorliegende Dokumentation gilt der äusseren und inner Geschichte von Steiners erkenntnis-kultischem Arbeitskreis, der die zweite und dritte Abteilung seiner Esoterischen Schule 1904 bis 1914 bildete."

It may interest readers that Rudi Lissau, a member of the Council of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain, contributed a seven part article entitled "In Search of Rudolf Steiner" in Anthroposophy Today (No. 1, Summer 1986, to No. 7, Summer 1989). Interested readers wishing further information may write to Miss Eileen Lloyd (36 Church Walk, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 8HH, England).

From Geoffrey Farthing (Surrey, England)

I read with interest the July 1991 number of *Theosophical History* and in particular Joscelyn Godwin's "The Hidden Hand, Part 2: The Brotherhood of Light." Having read it I wondered if Joscelyn Godwin had read of the notice which the Master Koot Hoomi had taken of the Secret School mentioned in the Mahatma Letters, page 209/210, second edition, where reference is made to a club with a dozen or so enthusiastic members under the leadership of Lord Lytton's father and of which Eliphas Levi, Regazzoni, and the Kopt Zergvan-Bey were named as members. In the letter there

is the sentence “I visited it about half a dozen times, and perceived from the first that there was and could be nothing in it. This was because of the pestilent London atmosphere.” Then follows a criticism of the British T.S.

From Jean Overton Fuller (Northamptonshire, England)

I have read Paul Johnson’s book *In Search of the Masters*, but am unable to share Gregory Tillett’s admiration of his methodology. [Editor’s note: Dr. Tillett’s review appears in TH III/5.]

His principal aim, like that of most Gurdjieffans, appears to be to transfer the source of Mme. Blavatsky’s inspiration from Buddhism to Islam. A serious flaw in his method is that to do this he makes frequent reference to her association with Copts and with persons and things Egyptian, even where it is obvious that ancient Egyptian is meant, without ever once warning the reader that the blood of the ancient Egyptians flows in the Copts, who became, at an early date, Christians and took Greek names. The Arab race that has moved in and become dominant is of the religion of Islam, which forbids the making of sculptured or painted images of deities or even people and is totally out of sympathy with the old religion of the country, with its animal-headed, anthropomorphic pantheon. To adduce any organisation with “Luxor”: in its title as evidence of a connection with Islam is wrong. To perceive the sleight of hand involved in the arguments of this type is to see a great part of Paul Johnson’s case fall away.

A second respect in which I criticise his method, is in his persistent use of *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindoostan*, pseudonymously signed Hadji Mora, to refute statements made by Mme. Blavatsky to Sinnett and to Countess

Constance Wachtmeister, without mentioning her warning that work under her Hadji Mora pseudonym is a good deal fictionalised.

His suggestion that the “Master Morya” whom she met in London was the Italian patriot Giuseppe Mazzini seems to me wild. She would have sympathised with Mazzini, but neither in physique nor in temperament did he in any way resemble Morya. Mazzini was essentially a man of the pen, writer, founder of two newspapers and editor of another; he was the theoretician of the Risorgimento rather than a man of action, not a man to inspire the devotion she had for “Master.”

I find myself frequently cited but sometimes for things I have not said. On page 140, he says I make Morya both a Rajput Singh and a Nepalese Buddhist; but I do not. I see him as born a Rajput, who however entered at one moment into the train of the Rajah of Nepal before moving to Tibet. Paul Johnson makes earlier a kindred error when he says on page 115 that I say Morya and Koot Hoomi were members of the Gelugpa brotherhood. On the contrary, if he looked [on] page 25, he would see that I distinguished them, by their long hair, from the monks, with their shaven heads.

References to one’s own name catch one’s eye, but these instances cause me to wonder with how much accuracy other writers are cited in Paul Johnson’s work.

I wish he would not class me amongst those who, he says, want their “heroine” virgin. I would have been only too happy for her to have had a full woman’s life and would not have minded her having an illegitimate child (though I would have been sorry if, having had one, she lied about it) but all the evidence appeared to me against her having been capable of bearing one. I have never considered virginity a requisite of spiritual illumi-

nation. Mrs. Besant was not a virgin (though I feel that she, too, was a little under-developed in respect of one side of life); neither, it appears, was Krishnamurti.

Paul Johnson is making me sail under what, if I made no protest, would be false colours.

Paul Johnson responds:

In a previous letter to *TH*, Miss Fuller called the study of Sufi links to Gurdjieff and H.P.B. “an attempted takeover by an element alien inimical to our Masters teachings.” Now she warns of a “principal aim, like that of most Gurdjieffians...to transfer the source of Mme. Blavatsky’s inspiration from Buddhism to Islam.” In fact, few Gurdjieffians have much interest in H.P.B. or even in the relative influence of Buddhism and Islam on Gurdjieff himself. *In Search of the Masters* is not the work of an enemy agent on a subversive mission, but of a Theosophist searching for truth. Rather than trying to define the source of H.P.B.’s inspiration, it identifies many different sources: Buddhists, Rosicrucians and Freemasons in Book I; Sufis and Jews in book II; Hindus and Sikhs in Books III and IV; others less readily classified throughout. Of the dozen characters indicated as having the greatest influence on H.P.B., only one is Muslim; he is introduced as her means of access to a pre-Islamic document, the *Chaldean Book of Numbers*. Even the discussion of Egypt identifies mostly non-Muslim Masters. The last chapter’s personal account of Hindu/Muslim conflict in Kashmir has an unmistakably pro-Hindu slant. All these factors make the book an unlikely product of the Islamic takeover plot Miss Fuller imagines.

Caves and Jungles of Hindustan, signed Radda-Bai, has been too long overlooked as a source of clues regarding the Masters. But while my book cites it frequently, it is not presented as

pure non-fiction. Immediately following the first discussion of *Caves and Jungles*, its semi-fictional status is explained by Olcott in a lengthy quotation from *Old Diary Leaves*.

Maharaja Rangir Singh of Kashmir, identified as Master Morya by *In Search of the Masters*, corresponds in appearance, temperament, surname, caste, and religion to descriptions of M. given by the Founders. Mazzini is proposed solely as the M. (not Morya) whom H.P.B. met in London in 1851, on the basis of evidence from five different sources. The book clearly suggests that the Morya/London episode was a blind, combining aspects of two characters.

Two of three complaints about my references to Miss Fuller’s book are valid. It would be more accurate to say that she attempts to reconcile the Rajput Singh and Nepalese Buddhist versions of M. rather than simply that she accepts both. And it would be more accurate to say “allied to” or “associated with” the Gelugpa brotherhood rather than “members of” it which she never asserts. However, these regrettable misstatements are matters of nuance rather than substance. The passage on her discussion of H.P.B.’s sexuality (p. 28) nowhere claims she is biased toward the virginity hypothesis but implies that she will please those who are. The passage about “Theosophists, eager to believe in the virginity of their beloved leader” (p. 38) does not refer to any individual.

Gregory Tillett responds:

Miss Overton Fuller’s preoccupation with Blavatskian hagiography makes it virtually impossible for her to objectively consider anything venturing beyond the orthodox canon of Theosophy. In this case, her attempt at undermining Paul Johnson’s scholarly labours is built on trivia. Even

allowing for the minor errors she has identified, the underlying hypothesis remains unchallenged.

On the basis of Miss Overton Fuller's method of criticism, one might well write off her own books. Taking one off the shelf at random - it happened to be her study of Victor Neuburg - it took no effort to locate a handful of factual errors. Presumably she must agree that this undermines the methodology of that work?

Where the game of trivial pursuit fails, Miss Overton Fuller attacks on the basis that Johnson's "principal aim" which is "like that of most Gurdjieffans."

And, for good measure, a defence of Blavatsky's alleged virginity.

I am reminded of a conversation with one of the leaders of the Adyar Society when I was undertaking research on Leadbeater. She denounced Nethercott's biography of Besant as "full of lies." After a long and painful (for me at least) questioning, the lies were disclosed as being three minor errors of fact. However, those totally undermined the book, its methodology and its author!

Paul Johnson's book is, as my review noted, flawed in a number of minor ways, none of them immediately relevant to his interesting, if unproven, central hypothesis.

MABEL COLLINS' "ROMANCE OF THE WHITE LOTUS"¹

Michael Gomes

Mabel Collins' account of the writing of her theosophical books, re-published in *Theosophical History* for October, 1987, offers an interesting example of how selective the distance of time and personal feeling can be in transforming the recollection of events. In her narrative, taken from Sinnett's *Broad Views* for May 1904, she recounts the event that eventually led her to Theosophy — a psychic experience upon seeing Cleopatra's Needle as it was brought to be set up on the Embankment in London; it turned into an Egyptian face, "full of power and will, and intensely alive," then a procession of white-robed priests came to her.

When L.W. Rogers, President of the American Section of the Theosophical Society (Adyar), met Mabel Collins in Glastonshire, England, in Nov. 1920, she promoted much the same story. She was 69 at the time, but she still credited the Egyptian face, and the procession of priests as her inspiration. One day she closed her eyes, and started to write "rapidly, pushing page after page aside as they were finished until finally she dropped the pen and opened her eyes. The

prologue and first chapter of the *Idyll of the White Lotus* was finished."² The first seven chapters were completed in this manner, but then the priests ceased to appear and the writing stopped.

Judge Khandalavala, a veteran member of the Theosophical Society, follows the Obelisk story and the "strange-looking men coming out from the monument," when he came to write about this episode. "She [Mabel Collins] went into a sort of a trance, but her hand went on working and sheet after sheet was written in a different hand."³ He adds that "a friend of hers introduced her to Colonel Olcott, to whom she told how the *Idyll of the White Lotus* was written but left unfinished. Col. Olcott recommended that, if she had ever thought of making money by publishing the *Idyll*, she should give up such a thought and try again. She did so and the writing of the *Idyll* was completed in the same manner, by automatic writing."⁴

²Rogers, "News From England," *The Messenger* (Chicago) 8/8 (Jan. 1921): 597. After reporting these and other thrilling stories from Mabel, Rogers could only exclaim: "[s]urely the clairvoyant sees some strange and dramatic things."

³N.D. Khandalavala, "Madame Blavatsky As I Knew Her," *The Theosophist* 50/9 (June 1929): 221.

⁴H.P. Blavatsky indicates that it was E.D. Ewen, a Scottish gentleman of psychic temperament, and friend of Olcott's, who pioneered Theosophy in Scotland and the West Indies, who "unearthed" the fragment and brought it to their attention during their 1884 visit to England [Boris de Zirkoff, compiler. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1889*. Volume XI. First edn. (Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1973), 326], H.P.B. meeting Mabel Collins "three or four times" in November 1884 enroute to Adyar [*"Light on the Path" and Mabel Collins* (N.Y.: 1889), 5.256.]

¹Throughout we refer to the author's maiden name used in her books, although at the time she was introduced as Mrs. Cook. Of her husband, Dr. Kenningale Cook (1845-86), little is heard of, other than they were married in 1871, and later separated. His obituary in *Light* (10 July 1886), which deals with his long and painful illness which carried him away at 41, mentions:

He married Mabel, only child of the late Mortimer Collins, and the fine and delicate mediumship of his wife was of the utmost service to him in the early days of his study of Spiritualism. (307)

These accounts fail to take any notice of the letter from Mabel Collins published in the New York *Path* (September, 1887, 188). She writes from London, 17 July:

I should be very glad if you would allow me to inform your readers that the Preface which I have added to the new edition of *The Gates of Gold* I propose to add also to *The Idyll of the White Lotus* and *Light on the Path*, as soon as there is any opportunity for me to do so.... That book [*The Gates of Gold*] and the *Idyll of the White Lotus* were written in the same manner.

The Preface referred to states:

Once as I sat alone writing, a mysterious Visitor entered my study unannounced and stood beside me.... He spoke from knowledge, and from the fire of his speech I caught faith. I have written down his words; but alas, I cannot hope that the fire shall burn as brightly in my writing as in his speech.

This mysterious visitor, "The True Author," to whom the *Idyll* was dedicated, has been held in Theosophical circles to be the "semi-European Greek brother," Hilarion Smerdis of Cyprus. The annotated title page of Basil Crump's copy of *Light on the Path*, crediting authorship to this adept, supports this idea,⁵ as it would seem the following letter from H.P. Blavatsky to Judge Khandalavala, 12 July 1888, London:

Till the year we came with O. here (1884), she [M.C.] was a woman of the world - never giving a thought to spiritual matters, a fashionable beauty. That year she saw before her, time after time, the astral figure of a dark man (a Greek who belongs to the Brotherhood of our Masters), who urged her to write under his diction. It was Hilarion, whom Olcott knows well. The results were *Light on the Path*, and others. Could she have written this herself? *Never*. To this day she has no idea of philosophy, nor does she like it. She wants simply power, and this cannot get until the *woman is dead in her*.⁶

Confirmation that a change had occurred in the production of her writings comes from Mabel Collins herself. She states that after receiving the first seven chapters of the *Idyll* in 1878, she could not continue it until

in '84-5, in the midst of much trouble and illness, when the wonderful fragment was almost forgotten by me, the work was taken up again by the mysterious power outside myself for whom I was a chosen instrument, and it was finished in the same manner that the first seven chapters were written, without being aware of a single word.⁷

In this later account the "mysterious visitor," from whom she caught the fire of speech, becomes a mysterious "power."

Whatever the source, Mabel Collins literary work during her first seven years of contact with the Theosophists bears a marked difference to her later books. She applied for membership in the

⁵ Facsimile reproduced in *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1887*, vol. VIII (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1960), 428, under the entry "Collins, Mabel." Crump says that it was so inscribed by his step-aunt, M.C.

⁶ Theosophical Society Archives, Adyar.

⁷ M.C.s' Narrative," *Theosophical History*, II/4 (Oct. 1987), 122. This statement is backed up in the article by the facsimile of a page of the Ms. for the *Idyll*, Ch. VII, in a handwriting according to Sinnett "utterly unlike her own."

London Lodge 19 April 1884, and later that year the completed *Idyll of the White Lotus* was published by the London company of Reeves and Turner. It was favourably received, the reviewer in the 10 January 1885 issue of *Light* highly recommending this “charmingly written” little work on the trials of initiation in ancient Egypt. *Light on the Path*, a slim blue-grey booklet of 31 pages was out by Oct. 1885, and achieved instant recognition. After her 1887 *Through the Gates of Gold*, regarded by the reviewer in the *Path* for March 1887 as a “commentary on *Light on the Path*” which “will surely rank as one of the standard books on Theosophy,” she broke with the Theosophists, going so far as to take Mme. Blavatsky to court for libel, but dismissing the case when it came to trial in 1890.

Her novel *The Blossom and the Fruit*, out in 1888, had appeared serially in Mme. Blavatsky’s magazine, *Lucifer*, co-edited with Mabel Collins from 1887 to 1888. It is an excellent example of her novelist’s background assimilating theosophical themes to portray the trial of a female aspirant on the Path. While the *Blossom and the Fruit* is a delight, another attempt at storytelling, “The Angel Peacock, which ran through eight issues of the *Theosophist*, from Feb. 1888, was distinctly leaden. Her 1892 attempt to satirize her former theosophical friends in *Morial the Mahatma* fell flat.⁸

In the 1 June 1889 *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, Elliott Coues published an unsigned and undated letter to him from Mabel Collins, 72 Clarendon Road, Notting Hill, admitting that “The

⁸ Like the *Blossom and the Fruit*, *Morial the Mahatma*; or *The Black Master of Tibet*, was also published serially. Twenty chapters appeared in the London weekly *Short Cuts* from 14 Oct. to 30 Dec. 1891. Her anonymous novel, *The Mahatma, A Tale of Modern Theosophy* (London: Downey & Co., 1895), is a reprint of this from the Lovell, Gesterfeld & Company, New York edition of 1892.

writer of the *Gates of Gold* is Mabel Collins, who had it as well as *Light on the Path*, and the *Idyll of the White Lotus* dictated to her by one of the Adepts of the group which through Blavatsky first communicated with the Western World. The name of this inspirer cannot be given, as the personal names of the Masters have already been sufficiently desecrated.” Mabel Collins claimed that this letter was written at Mme. Blavatsky’s dictation, and corrects it by saying that *Light on the Path* “was not to my knowledge inspired by anyone, but that I saw it written on the walls of a place I visit spiritually” [This tallies with her 1887 letter to the *Path* where she says that *Light on the Path* “is a collection of axioms which I found written on the walls of a certain place to which I obtained admittance, and I made notes as I saw them”]. “I have myself never received proof of the existence of any Master though I believe (as always) that the Mahatmic force must exist.”⁹

Yet in a 1922 article in the *London Occult Review* she acknowledges that by the help of a Master, and for an object which will be of service to the world, it is possible for the spirit of a disciple on earth to visit this higher state we call ethereal and enter the Hall of Learning, in full waking consciousness. It was in that way that I obtained the stanzas of *Light on the Path*...The point I want to bring before the attention of my readers is that the stanzas are written on the wall of one of the chapels, that they have always been there and always will be there while the phenomenal world lasts, and evolution continues. The time had come for them to be written down in human language and I was chosen for the task - an honour I had earned in a past incarnation. This is obvious to any student of Karma, for these

⁹ Letter from Mabel Collins to Elliott Coues, 18 April 1889, in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* 46/12, (11 May 1889): 5.

wonderful things do not come by chance.¹⁰

Apparently the “blazing jewels of the words of wisdom” in the Hall of Learning did not shine forth as strongly in her later works. Three slim volumes dealing with the interior life were issued from her pen in the 1890s without much success. Many of her books till her death in 1927 were commentaries on the earlier classics, such as *A Cry From Afar, To the Students on the Path* (London 1905), *As the Flower Grows, Some Visions and Interpretations* (London 1915), *The Story of Sensa, An Interpretation of the Idyll of the White Lotus* (London 1913). The *Idyll* was also adapted as “A Mystery Play in Three Acts,” under the name of *Sensa*, the story’s narrator, with the help of the American actress Maude Hoffman. A London correspondent to the *Adyar Bulletin* of Sept. 1919, thought the music

the best feature of the performance...The theme proved too lofty for its interpreters to do it full justice, the dancers did not appear to understand the inner meaning of this work, and what part of it they did grasp they were unable to express.

Although it is now superseded by *Light on The Path*, Mabel Collins’ first theosophical work, the *Idyll of the White Lotus*, was regarded as a gem of occult learning for most of the nineteenth century, containing as it did the often reprinted “three truths.” George Russell (Æ) in Dublin wrote Carrie Rea in 1886, “Did you read the *Idyll of the White Lotus* yet...? If you have not you missed a great deal, it will bear reading hundreds of times, and each time you will find something new in it.”¹¹ An equally high appraisal came from

the South Indian scholar, T. Subba Rao, who gave the *Idyll* a long review in the *Theosophist* under his pen name of the “Solar Sphinx.” Personally he informed a correspondent, “I send you a small book by book-post today as a present. It is dictated by an Initiate to an English lady - the daughter of an eminent English poet - in England. It deserves your careful study, and you will no doubt be profited from it.”¹²

The original seven chapters of the *Idyll*, published separately as “A Fragment found in a Pyramid,” offers a chance to examine the effect of the author’s contact with Theosophy on the development of the story. It appears in Volume III of *Cobwebs* (London: Timsley Brothers, 1882), a collection of Mabel Collins’ short stories and novellas, under the title of the *Romance of the White Lotus*. The seven chapters of the *Romance* cover from pages 87 to 165 of that volume, but the seventh chapter here was not the one that was finally used, and has never been reprinted. We can see why. Chapter 7 in the 1884 book version and subsequent reprints introduces a new character into the story, Sensa’s playmate, the little girl who also reappears in an older version in the second part of the novel. It is at this point that the action picks up, and the remaining four chapters which complete the first part of the book form a transition to the second part of the story, “Book II,” where the sequence of chapters begins anew, and which forms the most engaging part of the tale.

Reading the discarded Chapter 7 of the *Romance* offers a useful contrast of methods. If

¹⁰Collins, “The Astral and Ethereal Worlds. Part II,” *The Occult Review* (London), Oct. 1922: 225.

¹¹George Russell (Æ) to Carrie Rea [1886] in the *Letters from Æ* (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1961), 5. Selected and edited by Alan Denson.

¹²Subba Rao to V.V. Sivavadhanulu Garu, 1 July 1885, in the *Esoteric Writings of T. Subba Row* (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1980), 567. His 1886 review of the *Idyll* is included in that volume and can be found as a commentary to the Re-Quest edition of the *Idyll* published by the Theosophical Publishing House (Wheaton, 1974).

Mabel Collins had conscious control of being able to enter the Hall of Learning at will, she certainly failed to use it to any great advantage after her years with the Theosophists. Her last work published, *The Locked Room* (1920) reads like the gothic novels that were popular during her own youth; in this tale of the perils and pitfalls of Spiritualism, the fiery speech of her mysterious visitor is equally absent. The chapter where the early version of the *Idyll* breaks off shows a similar withdrawal of inspiration.

Leading up to it, Chapter 6 ends with Sensa being led into the Holy of Holies of the temple by the high priest Agmahd, who then departs. The Lady of the Lotus appears and guards Sensa as he sleeps. Chapter 6 in the early version ends with a slight variation, the main deviation in the text so far:

I lay down at her bidding, and though I knew I rested upon a cold, hard floor, I also felt that my head was pillowed upon an arm so soft and so full of magnetic soothing, that I rested as though upon a couch of angel's plumage. And I fell into the deep, dreamless, undisturbed slumber which gives to infancy its vitality and delight.

.....

Agmahd, upon the step without where he had taken up his watch, felt the silence. No sound was there within the sanctuary. Had the child died that he never moved?

When the dawn penetrated the high windows of the outer temple, he stealthily entered the inner hall where the child was. Carefully he searched for him, and soon found his recumbent form. Placing his hand upon his breast, he discovered that he was wrapped in tranquil sleep. He raised him in his arms and carried him out of the sanctuary, across the corridor, and into the

room where his couch stood. Upon this he laid him, and then passed behind the curtain into his own chamber.

There was writ in Agmahd's secret volume of records but one word that night,—— 'Vain'."

[The passage that follows is Chapter VII of *The Romance of the White Lotus*, taken from volume III of M. Collins' *Cobwebs* (1882), 166-71. ed.]

And he was compelled to write that word many times in the pages of his secret book, for the Lily Queen having taken the child-seer under her protection, refused to allow him to be disturbed or used by the other spirits which filled the desecrated sanctuary, and with whom Agmahd desired to communicate. He did not wish to obtain direct speech with the Lily Queen; her presence troubled him, for there was no harmony between them. He knew her, and that light is the messenger of divine love which dwelled within the walls of the temple, and would not desert it utterly, although her partner Wisdom had long spread his broad wings of white and soared away from that home of priestcraft. What Agmahd desired was to obtain direct speech with that spirit of the earth which had so terrified the child-seer, when in the darkness it had made itself visible to him. The spirit of the earth which was known to Agmahd as Selk, or the Mother of the broods of darkness, was the prop of his strength, the supporter of his life. She had won from him the nearest approach to passion, which any being of spirit or of earth had ever succeeded in evoking from his cold and ice-locked breast. His heart was chilled as with the snows of a thousand winters; for he had turned himself wholly from the con-

templation of life without him, and had concentrated his gaze upon his own concerns and his own career. He naturally, in doing this, turned himself from the sunshine of life. And his heart was ice-locked also by the unflinching pressure of Selk's grasp upon it. She held him, body, soul, affections and aspirations, within her unyielding embrace.

And yet these strange beings were unable even to exchange thoughts without the aid of a third person—a seer, such as was this child. Before his time there had been seers in the temple; the priests were taught that through them, they should learn of love and wisdom, of religion and truth. But there are men who, even though they are clothed in the garb of religion, weary of love and wisdom. Agmahd, and others before him and with him, had learned of their own desires, and had been aided in the evil lesson by Selk. Religion, love, and wisdom were alike driven forth from the temple; the holy of holies became a place of which the secrets had need to be hidden in darkness and in silence. The dignity of the temple walls, and the splendour of the priestly rites and ceremonies, covered over and disguised within them the lives and beliefs of men, infamous and evil. The worship of the people was unchanged, for the people are in all ages made to believe that which is shown them. The priestly garments were spotless in their eyes; the temple walls enclosed within them a degree of saintliness which made the common man of clay blush for his sins. Yet though the people lived in this faith, their religious atmosphere was depressed and darkened. They knew not themselves why the teaching of the priest left them with unlifted hearts. They had no eyes with which to penetrate his disguise, and discover the hypocrisy and insincerity which it cloaked.

Into the midst of this strange college was

placed our boy-seer by his trusting mother.

Reared in the country among the flocks, he was innocent as one of the birds of the air. And not only was he innocent as are the ignorant, but he was pure of heart. His mother's influence, and his life among the pure nature of his home, had surrounded him with an untainted atmosphere. Selk found, when she approached him, that the way was closed to her. She could not penetrate the inner circle in which the child's breath was drawn.

But the Lily Queen made him her own; for, like herself, he was a child of nature.

Agmahd held within himself a capacity, which few courtiers possess, for intrigue, and powers of diplomacy which politicians might have envied. He would have chosen, with every responsibility and burden which it entailed, the wearing of a crown. He felt himself a king; and perhaps, with that icy heart and chill self-possession, the priest judged himself rightly in thinking he should have been a ruler of men.

Being a dedicated priest, sworn by every sacred vow to the service of religion, Agmahd found that his nature must, even yet, be gratified. Without mingling in the worldly affairs of nations he could not live. But as he must pass his days within the narrow limits of the temple walls, he was unable to exercise his powers over courts and kings, unless by some abnormal means.

These means, by the aid of Selk, he found.

But at the present time the aid of Selk was withdrawn from him. For months before the child entered the temple there had been no seer; and now the child upon whom his hopes were based forced him to spend vain hours and waste himself in idle anticipations.

Thrice had he invoked Selk's presence. Thrice, with all priestly ceremonies, he had urged her to make herself visible to his seer. This, aided

by the presence of the whole desiring priesthood, she had done. But she had been repelled by the instinctive horror of the child.

He did not feel this to be a disappointment. The child had seen her. But when he endeavoured to summon her again, in the silence of the lonely night, in such manner that their intercourse should be undisturbed, then he found her place taken by the Lily Queen, who banished him from the holy of holies by the written law of the temple, that one mortal only should enter there.

Up and down the long avenue of sphinxes and shrubs, within the shadow, walked Agmahd, pondering. His golden beard fell heavy on his breast. His white robes, with the gold brocade at the hem, gleamed in the light.*

*The papyrus unfortunately ends here.

THE END.

THE SUCCESSION OF H.P. BLAVATSKY: A Documentary History

Henk J. Spiereburg
and Daniël van Egmond

1. The reason for this paper.

Since the death of H.P. Blavatsky on May 8, 1891, the history of the theosophical movement has been dominated by the question to which the title of this paper refers. Only fifteen years ago such a paper would occasion the arousal of fierce emotions. Nowadays, however, most of the existing theosophical organisations seem to be inclined towards some form of cooperation. Hence, within this climate it must be possible to examine the succession of H.P. Blavatsky on the basis of **official documents** and to publish the results in such a way that they can easily be verified.

2. The officers of the T.S.

It is generally known that November 17, 1875 has been given as the date of the foundation of the Theosophical Society. In this paper we shall not deal with the question of the correctness of this date nor with the debate over which persons were really involved. The published *Preamble and By-Laws* of October 30, 1875, which has several times been reprinted in books and articles¹, mentions the names of several officers. This is the first of the official documents we shall

use in this paper. It gives the following names and functions:

OFFICERS AND COUNCIL

—○—

President,

HENRY S. OLCOTT.

Vice-Presidents,

S. PANCOAST, M.D., GEORGE HENRY FELT.

Corresponding Secretary,

Mme. H.P. BLAVATSKY.

Recording Secretary,

JOHN STORER COBB

Treasurer,

HENRY J. NEWTON.

Librarian,

CHARLES SOTHERAN

Councillors,

Rev. J.H. WIGGIN,

Mrs. EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN,

R.B. WESTBROOK,

C.E. SIMMONS, M.D.,

HERBERT D. MONACHESI.

Counsel to the Society,

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

In the years before the departure of Olcott and Blavatsky to India, several changes in this list occurred. For instance, in July 1878, W.Q. Judge

¹E.g. in *The Golden Book of the Theosophical Society: A Brief History of the Society's Growth from 1875-1925*. Edited by C. Jinarājadāsa (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925), 21-3.

²*A Short History of the Theosophical Society*. Compiled by Josephine Ransom (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1938), 108.

became the Recording Secretary of the Society.²

In April 1878, the “Council of the Society” met and provided the President with:

...full discretionary powers to establish Headquarters wherever he chose, to adopt whatever measures he might see fit in the Society’s interest, the Council ratifying in advance whatever he might do.³

This was obviously related to the departure of H.S. Olcott and H.P. Blavatsky to India on December 18, 1878.

After he landed in England, Col. Olcott issued an order about which he wrote the following in his *Old Diary Leaves*:

This arrangement was for the purpose of carrying on the work at the New York Headquarters until the future disposal of the Society should have been decided upon, according to what should happen after we had settled at Bombay.⁴

The text of this order has been published by J. Ransom:⁵

[Foreign Order, No. 1:]

By virtue of the authority vested in me, I hereby designate and assign the following named Fellows of The Theosophical Society to perform the duties of the offices respectively named, with full power.

President, ad interim, Fellow Major-Gen. Abner Doubleday, U.S.A.; Corresponding Secretary, **ad interim**, Fellow David A. Curtis;

Treasurer, Fellow George Valentine Maynard; The Recording Secretary, Fellow W.Q.J., will officially notify them of this order, and after consultation with Fellow Doubleday, call an early meeting of the Society’s officers to carry out certain instructions which that gentleman has received, among which are a change of the passwords.

By authority of the .. H.S. Olcott, President T.S.

It follows that both Olcott and H.P.B. were temporarily replaced; he as the President, and she as the Corresponding Secretary. As far as we know there does not exist an official document which shows that they reassumed their functions after their arrival in India. However Ransom writes:⁶

Next day [March 24, 1879] the Colonel began framing and discussing with others new Rules, and arranging a new Council of the Society, since the rest of the early members were so far away it was impossible to transact business with them.

Furthermore, H.P.B. signed an article in *The Madras Times* for May 28, 1879 with: H.P. Blavatsky, **Corresponding Secretary of the Theosophical Society**.⁷

Finally, on page 1 of the first issue of *The Theosophist*, published in October 1879, “the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society” is mentioned and we may infer from the statements made on this page that it now had its seat at 108 Girgaum Back Road, Bombay, India.

Next followed a period of 8 or 9 years which are not very important in view of the aim

³Ibid., 104.

⁴Henry Steel Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves. Volume II (1878-83)* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophist Office, 1900), 4 [first edition]; Adyar 1928, 8.

⁵Ransom, *A Short History*, 124-5.

⁶Ibid., 128.

⁷*H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1879-1880. Volume II* (Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1967), 46.

⁸*The Golden Book*, 253-4.

we are pursuing in this paper. In a published list⁸ we find the names of fourteen persons who were **Vice-President of The Theosophical Society** during this period and the previous years:

S. Pancoast, M.D.
G.H. Felt
Alexander Wilder
J.A. Weisse
Rt. Rev. Sumangala
A.O. Hume, C.B.
H.H. Daji Raja Chandra Singhjee,
Thakore Saheb of Wadhan
Raja Shyama Shankar Roy
Major-General Abner Doubleday
Rao Bahadur Gopalrao Hari
Deshmukh
A.P. Sinnett
Pandit Adityaram Bhattacharya
C.C. Massey
Camille Flammarion
The Hon'ble Alexandre Aksakoff
David E. Dudley, M.D.
Pasquale Menelao
Baron Jules Denis du Petit.

A letter in which H.P.B. advised the former President ad interim, Major-General Abner Doubleday that he was nominated to this office, is dated April 17, 1880.⁹

In December 1888, W.Q. Judge was elected as **Vice-President** during the convention of the Theosophical Society.¹⁰ He filled this office until 1895. H.P.B. was **Corresponding Secretary** until her death in 1891, and H.S.O. remained President until his death in 1907.

⁹"Leaves of Theosophical History," *The Theosophical Forum* (Point Loma), XV (Nov. 1939), 368.

¹⁰J. Ransom, *A Short History*, 252-3.

3. The officers of the E.S.

3.1. H.P. Blavatsky

In the October 1888 issue of *Lucifer* the following official document was published:

Official Notice

Owing to the fact that a large number of Fellows of the Society have felt the necessity for the formation of a body of Esoteric Students, to be organized on the ORIGINAL LINES devised by the **real** founders of the T.S., the following order has been issued by the President-Founder:-

I. To promote the esoteric interests of the Theosophical Society by the deeper study of esoteric philosophy, there is hereby organized a body, to be known as the "Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society".

II. The constitution and sole direction of the same is vested in Madame H.P. Blavatsky, as its Head; she is solely responsible to the Members for results; and the section has no official or corporate connection with the Exoteric Society save in the person of the President-Founder.

III. Persons wishing to join the Section, and willing to abide by its rules, should communicate directly with:- Mme. H.P. Blavatsky, 17 Lansdowne Road, Holland Park, London, W.

(Signed) H.S. OLCOTT,
President in Council.

¹¹*H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1888-1889*. Volume X (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1964), 154-5.

Attest:- H.P. BLAVATSKY.¹¹

It is not necessary to say anything more about H.P.B.'s status within the "Esoteric Section".

3.2. H.S. Olcott

The following quotations clearly show that H.P.B. considered H.S.O. to be the right authority able to found the Esoteric Section:

The only Esoteric Society which has any LEGAL right to the name "Theosophical" is that which Col. Olcott founded and chartered in October, 1888, for the proof of which see *Lucifer* of that month¹²

"The Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society" was formed under the orders of the President-Founder, in October, 1888, in London...¹³

Several other quotations could be given, yet we shall only add one more because it shows a different aspect of Olcott's authority:¹⁴

...the term "Esoteric" and "Esotericism" having been so desecrated... [that] our Esoteric Section had better drop its name. The Council in England has decided to call it "Arcane" instead of the "Esoteric" Section...

Hoping this name will be sanctioned by our President, Col. H.S. Olcott...

(Signed) H.P. BLAVATSKY.

Head of the Arcane (late Esoteric) Section of the T.S. Fontainebleau, July 7th, 1889.

Despite the fact that the Mahatma K.H.

made in a letter to H.S.O. the following statement:

H.P.B. has next to no concern with administrative details, and should be kept clear of them, so far as her strong nature can be controlled. **But this you must tell to all- With occult matters she has everything to do.** We have **not** abandoned her; she is **not** "given over to chelas". She is **our direct agent**.¹⁵

which determined the distinction between the functions of H.P.B. and H.S.O., H.P.B. still appointed him as an officer of the E.S.:¹⁶

Theosophical Society, Esoteric Section
London, 25th December, 1889.

I hereby appoint Colonel H.S. Olcott my confidential agent and sole official representative of the Esoteric Section for the Asiatic Countries.

All correspondence relative to admission into, and resignation from, the Section shall be referred to him, and all **Instructions** transmitted by him, and his decision is to be taken and accepted as given by myself. Such correspondence to be invariably marked "Private" on the envelope.

(Signed) H.P. BLAVATSKY.

A possible solution to this apparent contradiction may be found in an article written by

¹²*H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1889*. Volume XI (Wheaton, Ill: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1973), 295.

¹³*Ibid.*, 307.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 342.

¹⁵*Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom 1870-1900, First Series*. Transcribed and compiled by C. Jinarājādāsa (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1919) [fifth edition, 1964], 46.

¹⁶*Lucifer* (January 1890): 437; *The Theosophist* (March 1890, suppl.): cv; *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1889-1890*. Volume XII (Wheaton, Ill: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1980), 89, 484.

¹⁷*Collected Writings*, vol. XI, 382.

H.P.B. for the August 1889 issue of *Lucifer*.¹⁷

...she [H.P.B.] recognizes but one person in the T.S. besides herself, namely Colonel Olcott, as having the right of effecting fundamental re-organizations in a Society which owes its life to them, and for which they are **karmically** responsible.

3.3. W.Q. Judge

The many quotations compiled by Sven Eek and Boris de Zirkoff in their booklet *William Quan Judge, 1851-1896*¹⁸ clearly show that H.P.B. considered Judge as one of the three founders of The Theosophical Society. Just like Olcott, he was appointed by H.P.B. as her representative within the E.S. for a part of the world: in his case America. This appointment is dated December 14, 1888:¹⁹

KNOW		DARE
	[SEAL]	
WILL		SILENCE
Esoteric [TS] Section		

As Head of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society I hereby declare that William Quan Judge of New York, U.S., in virtue of his character as a chela of thirteen years standing and of the trust and confidence reposed in him, is my only representative for said Section in America and he is the sole

¹⁸Sven Eek & Boris de Zirkoff, *William Quan Judge, 1851-1896* (Wheaton, Madras, London 1969), 7-10; *Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Quan Judge*. Compiled by Dara Eklund (San Diego: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1975), xxi-xxiv.

¹⁹The text, with its facsimile, has been published several times, e.g. in *The Theosophical Forum*, vol. XXV, no. 12 (December 1947), facing 705; *Collected Writings*, vol. X, 194-5; vol. XII, 482-3.

channel through whom will be sent and received all communications between the members of said section and myself, and to him full faith, confidence and credit in that regard are to be given. . . . Done at London this fourteenth day of December, 1888, and in the fourteenth year of the Theosophical Society. . . .

[Seal]

H.P. BLAVATSKY . .

On October 23, 1889, H.P.B. wrote a letter to W.Q.J. in which she unambiguously defined their relationship in the following way:²⁰

London Oct. 23, 1889

He or she, who believes that under any circumstances whatever, provocations, gossips, slander or anything devised by the enemy, H.P.B. will ever dream even of going against W.Q.J. - does not know H.P.B. - even if he or she **does** know H.P. Blavatsky, or **thinks** he knows her.

The idea is absurd & preposterous. If W.Q.J. get **riled** under any provocation - for more than 5 minutes by the city clock, then he is a flapdoodle. H.P.B. would given 7 dozens of Bridges [J.R. Bridge], 77 dozens of Noyeses [E.I.K. Noyes] & the whole esoteric brood in the U.S.A. for one W.Q.J. **who is part of herself since several aeons**. Those having ears will hear, those who are deaf & blind, let them provide themselves with **false** ears and glass eyes, or - vanish away.

The Esoteric Section and its life in the U.S.A. depends on W.Q.J. remaining its agent & what he is now. The day W.Q.J. resigns, H.P.B. will be virtually dead for the Americans.

W.Q.J. is the **Antaskarana** between the

²⁰Eek & de Zirkoff, *William Quan Judge, 1851-1896*, 20-1; Dara Eklund, *Echoes of the Orient*, vol. I, xxxviii-xxxix.

two **Manas(es)** the American thought & the Indian - or rather the trans-Himalayan Esoteric Knowledge.

Dixi

H.P.B. . .

P.S.

W.Q.J. had better show, & **impress this** on the mind **of all those whom it may concern.**

3.4. Annie Besant

Annie Besant was not one of the founders of The Theosophical Society, yet in letter Nr. 33 to A.P. Sinnett, the Mahatma K.H. wrote:²¹

Meanwhile use every effort to develop such relations with A. Besant that your work may run on parallel lines and in full sympathy...

The date of this letter is unknown; yet it obviously is an early letter because the last letters by M. and K.H. published in the book with letters to A.P. Sinnett, were written in 1885, as is shown by both the chronology of Margaret Conger and Mary K. Neff. Linton and Hanson have argued that it was written in 1884.²²

That such an early date is probable follows among other things from the fact that the *Collected Writings* of H.P.B. contain some early references to Annie Besant. These references are always

²¹*The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett from the Mahatmas M. & K.H.* Transcribed, compiled, and with an Introduction by A.T. Barker. First edn. (N.Y.: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1924), 244-5; third edn. edited by Christmas Humphreys and Elsie Benjamin (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1962), 241.

²²George E. Linton & Virginia Hanson, *Readers Guide to the Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett* (Wheaton, London, Madras 1972), 214.

²³*H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1882-1883*. Volume IV (Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1969), 124.

kind, even if H.P.B. absolutely disagreed with some of A.B.'s opinions. Indeed, in June 1882 H.P.B. even made the following remarks:²³

Another lady orator, of deservedly great fame, both for eloquence and learning - the good Mrs. Annie Besant - without believing in controlling spirits, or, for that matter, in her own spirit, yet speaks and writes such sensible and wise things, that we might almost say that one of her speeches or chapters contains more matter to benefit humanity, than would equip a modern trance-speaker for an entire oratorical career.

On August 20, 1890, the **Inner Group of the Esoteric Section** met for the first time.²⁴ Present were: H.P. Blavatsky, Annie Besant, George R.S. Mead, Constance Wachtmeister and Claude Falls Wright. About the meaning of this **Inner Group**, it was recorded that:

H.P.B. said that the Inner Group was the Manas of the T.S. The E.S. was the Lower Manas; the T.S. the Quaternary.²⁵

On April 1, 1890, H.P.B. appointed A.B. as the most important member of the Inner Group:²⁶

[SEAL]

E.S. Order

I hereby appoint in the name of the MASTER, Annie Besant Chief Secretary of the Inner Group of the Esoteric Section & Recorder of the Teachings.

H.P.B. . .

²⁴H.J. Spierenburg, *The Inner Group Teachings of H.P. Blavatsky*, San Diego: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1985), 1.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 27.

²⁶*Ibid.*, x-xi, with facsimile copied from *The Theosophist* (June 1932): 230-1; *Collected Writings*, vol. XII, 485.

To Annie Besant, C.S. of the I.G. of the E.S.
& R. of the T.

April 1, 1891.

Read and Recorded April 11/91. William
Q. Judge, Sec. U.S.

This appointment ensued after H.P.B. had written a letter to W.Q. Judge on March 27, 1891. Due to the fact that this letter was added to the official record of the meeting of the Council of the E.S. after the death of H.P.B., it became recognized as an official document. H.P.B. wrote:²⁷

UNSELFISHNESS AND ALTRUISM is Annie Besant's name, but with me and for me she is Heliodore, a name given to her by a Master, and that I use with her, it has a **deep Meaning**. It is only a few months she studies occultism with me in the **innermost** group of the E.S., and yet she has passed far beyond all others. She is not psychic nor spiritual in the least - all intellect, and yet she hears Master's voice when alone, sees His Light, and recognizes his voice from that of D—. Judge, **she is a most wonderful woman**, my right hand, my successor, when I will be forced to leave you, my sole hope in England, as you are my sole hope in America.

3.5. A. Besant and W. Q. Judge

H.P.B. died on May 8, 1891. On May 27, the Inner Group of the *Eastern School of Theosophy* [the Esoteric Section] convened to discuss the succession of H.P.B. in the E.S.; W.Q. Judge was also present. The minutes of this meeting have been published a number of times, but only in

fragmentary form. However, in 1987 a complete version appeared in a readily available book:²⁸

Eastern School of Theosophy

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE E.S.T.

A full meeting of the Council, as appointed by H.P.B., was held at the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Europe, 19, Avenue Road, London, England, on May 27, 1891. The American Councillors were represented by Brother William Q. Judge, with full power, and Brother Judge attended as the representative of H.P.B. under a general power given as below:

[follows the document as given under 3.3., dated December 14, 1888]

The Council passed the following minute: In virtue of our appointment by H.P.B., we declare:

That in full accord with the known wishes of H.P.B., the visible Head of the School, we primarily resolve and declare that the work of the School ought and shall be continued and carried on along the lines laid down by her, and with the matter left in writing or dictated by her before her departure.

That it was recorded that there was ample proof by witnesses, members of this School, that her last words in reference to the School and its work were: "KEEP THE LINK UNBROKEN! DO NOT LET MY LAST INCARNATION BE A FAILURE."

That her words to Brother Judge in a recent letter were read stating that this Section (now School) is the "throbbing heart of the Theosophical Society".

That it was resolved and recorded that the highest officials in the School for the present are Annie Besant and William Q. Judge, in accordance with the above-quoted order to

²⁷*Theosophy* [Journal of the U.L.T.] (February, 1929): 151; *The O..E. Library Critic* (August-September 1935).

²⁸Dara Eklund, *Echoes of the Orient*, vol. III, San Diego 1987, 350-3.

William Q. Judge of December [14], 1888, and with the order of April 1, 1891, to Annie Besant, as well as with the written declaration of H.P.B. in a letter to William Q. Judge dated March 27, 1891,

[see the text of the letter under 3.4.]

which we now here have read, in which she wrote that Annie Besant should be so considered. The order of April 1, 1891, is as follows:

[follows the document as given under 3.4.]

That it was resolved and recorded that the outer probationary degree should continue its existence and work with the material in hand [etc., etc.]...

That this Council records its decision that its appointment was solely for the purpose of assisting H.P.B. in a consultative way, and that as she had full power and authority to relieve us from duty at any time, our office and that of each of us ends with the above resolution passed in order as far as possible in our power to place the future conduct of the School on the basis directed and intended by her; therefore we collectively and individually declare that our office as Councillors ceases at this date, and that from henceforth with Annie Besant and William Q. Judge rest the full charge and management of this School.

(Signed.)

Annie Besant
Alice Leighton Cleather
Isabel Cooper-Oakley
Laura M. Cooper
H.A.W. Coryn
Archibald Keightley
William Kingsland
Emily Kislingbury
G.R.S. Mead
W.R. Old

Councillor E.S.T.

E.T. Sturdy
Constance Wachtmeister
W. Wynn Westcott
Claude F. Wright
William Q. Judge, **for the entire American Council E.S.T., and individually.**

However, it occurred that due to several causes William Q. Judge and Annie Besant were unable to work together and in 1894 they issued a document in which they announced their decision to split up the E.S. into two separate parts:²⁹

E.S.T.

London, **July 18th, 1894.**
New York, **August 1st, 1894.**

To the members of the E.S.T.:

You all know that during the last few months the activity of the E.S.T. has been to a great extent suspended in consequence of events..., etc.

In the E.S.T. time is needed for the full restoration to a state devoid of friction, as well as for the revival of as perfect mutual trust and confidence as human nature will permit. Without this full restoration and revival no two persons can act as a single channel for spiritual influences.

But we have our fundamental unity and channel in the Masters and in Their mouth-piece - our Teacher in this School - our recognized Head H.P.B. . . . On this the School was founded and rests today. We will proceed under the arrangements made and left by her at the time of her passing away. She declared that William Q. Judge was the Antaskarana, or channel for the Americans, and made him under herself the sole authority in America by the following documents:

²⁹Dara Eklund, *Echoes*, vol. III, 451-3.

[follow the documents as printed under 3.3., dated December 14, 1888 and October 23, 1889]

Subsequently H.P.B. changed the "Section" to the "School" and declared it not a part of the T.S. Organization. She made the then Inner Group the Council, and shortly before her departure made Annie Besant its chief officer, as Chief Secretary of the I.G. and Recorder of the Teachings, by the following:

[follow the document as printed under 3.4., dated April 1, 1890]

Thus it was when she departed.

Out of these two appointments was constituted... the Dual Headship in 1891 for the management of the School, an arrangement that has not on the whole at any time worked well in practice. At the present time the only way to preserve the E.S.T. unbroken and give time for the restoration of the mutual trust referred to and smooth out friction is returning to the above arrangements. We remain throughout the world the one School - "the throbbing heart of the T.S." - founded by H.P.B., recognized her as our Teacher and the Masters as our foundation, having in common her Headship, the Instructions she left, and the Rules of the School. The E.S.T. thus will remain the heart of the T.S., energizing the movement, all its parts working together as belonging to one whole, but administration proceeding as during her stay with us, under those appointed by her as her chief agents in the way stated...

The Rules remain the same save as to verbal alterations, and will remain the same for the whole School: any further additions thereto or amendments under the provision therefor which time may disclose as needful will be made by said two chief officers by mutual agreement.

ANNIE BESANT

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

It is not necessary to add anything more. According to this document both "successors" of H.P.B. could impossibly "dismiss" each other. Obviously, their "solution" did not concern the organization of the T.S. and its later fragmentations, nor the presidency of the T.S., since this arrangement was only meant for the E.S.

Alexandra David-Neel's Early Acquaintances With Theosophy Paris 1892

By Daniel Caracostea

Translated by Diana Chapotin-Dunningham

[This article was originally published in the December 1986 issue of *Le Lotus Bleu* (402-10) as "Sejour d'Alexandra David-Neel Paris 1892."]

Some years ago in Theosophical Society archives in Paris we found a letter dated 10 December 1892 from Alexandra David-Neel to G.R.S. Mead,¹ General Secretary of the European Section² which was based in London. This letter is of quite some historical interest because it belongs to a period of A.D-N.'s life lacking in clarity, both as we know it through her memoirs, *Le Sortilège du Mystère*,³ and through her biographies such as Jean Chalon's *Le Lumineux Destin d'Alexandra David-Neel*.⁴

Although this letter deals mainly with a dispute between two T.S. [Theosophical Society] members and might seem therefore of relatively

minor interest to readers, it is published here in full because it reveals a difference in attitude between A.D-N. at that time and A.D-N. as we know her in *Le Sortilège du Mystère*. These memoirs were written many years after the events in question; in them the author speaks sarcastically about things in which she had in fact been far from uninvolved at the time.

On pages 73-75 of the above work A.D-N. gives an account of a purportedly ludicrous conversation she held with M. Coulomb⁵ about humanity's lunar ancestors. It is difficult to imagine Coulomb capable of the inanities she credits him with, in the light of the articles he wrote in theosophical magazines of the time, or that A.D-N. had never heard of this doctrine while staying with Theosophists in London prior to her arrival in Paris. The doctrine is explained by Madame [H.P.] Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*.

¹ G.R.S. Mead (1863-1933) had a university education in classics, Latin and Greek, and joined the T.S. in 1884. He met H.P. Blavatsky for the first time in 1887 and became her private secretary in 1889. After H.P.B.'s death he co-edited the magazine *Lucifer* with Annie Besant. Together they published H.P.B.'s posthumous writings and revised certain works such as *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Key to Theosophy*. He wrote numerous works on Gnosticism and the Gnostics.

² During that era there were only a few national sections: The American Section founded in 1886; Great Britain founded in 1888; and then from 9 July 1890 the European Section headquartered in London, with H.P.B. as head and G.R.S. Mead as General Secretary; finally India in 1891. For the record, the French Section was formed in 1899.

³ Published in 1973 by Plon, 63-84.

⁴ Published in 1985 in Paris by Librairie Académique Perrin.

⁵ A native of Nates, E.J. Coulomb was a friend of F.K. Gaboriau, who founded the theosophical magazine *Le Lotus* and edited it from March 1887 to March 1889. It is likely that Coulomb came to know Theosophy through his friend. He lived for part of 1887-88 in London with H.P.B. and contributed articles or translations to a variety of French theosophical magazines. He took the pen name of Amaravella. We lose track of him in June 1894. Nevertheless, another book by him, *Le Secret de l'Univers, selon le Brahmanisme Esotérique*, was published in 1900 by Editions de l'Initiation, 3 rue de Savoie, Paris; and an article bearing the same title was published in October 1897 in *L'Initiation*, the magazine edited by Papus. E.J. Coulomb is not to be confused with his namesake, Alexis Coulomb, who became notorious through the scandal which took place at Adyar in 1884.

In 1892 the T.S. in France was represented by Ananta Lodge, opened in January and chartered in February. It replaced Lotus Lodge and had Arthur Arnould as President and E.J. Coulomb as Secretary. Both were members of the Esoteric School which they had joined while H.P.B. was alive and who greatly respected them both. With H.P.B.'s financial and moral support Arnould had founded the *Lotus Bleu* magazine in March 1890 but was later forced by his health to withdraw from active work which Coulomb continued as secretary.

It was apparently at the Latter's instigation that the office of the French branch of the European Section was transferred from 14 rue Chaptal to 30 boulevard St. Michel. In Coulomb's view this new center should resemble 19 Avenue Road, London, where the movement's workers led to a great extent a community life. He envisaged a center from which Theosophy in France would radiate out. The move to the new Paris center took place on 1 October 1892 and its inauguration on 27 October with Mr. Mead present. It was an apartment with seven windows overlooking the boulevard and contained a very large room serving as office, library and meeting room, and a dining room as well as accommodations for boarders.⁶ We know from Coulomb that among the activities taking place at the center, classes in Sanskrit⁷, Hebrew, English and German were given. In an unpublished letter in English of 30 October 1891 to Mead, Coulomb writes:

An idea has come to me. There are several fellows, including G(aboriau), who wish to learn Sanskrit. So I mean to go to Burnouf, who is interested to the solar-myth aspect of Theosophy, and ask him to start a class of

Sanskrit for theosophists at a cheap price.

It appears that these classes did in fact take place but not under Burnouf. It is not known how long the community experience at the Paris center at 30 Bd St. Michel lasted but most likely not beyond the end of 1893 or beginning of 1894.

In the archives there are 2 letters from Madame Kolly,⁸ mentioning the visit of Miss David, then aged 24, to the center. The first, dated Thursday 24 November 1892, is addressed to Mr. Mead:

I'm going to write and invite Miss David to come; she'll be able to do what I have been doing, only better, since she's more capable at everything; the difficulty is that she has no steady income and wants to travel.

The second is addressed to Mrs. Cremer, dated Monday, 28 November 1892:

Miss David has been with us since Friday evening but is only here on a visit at the invitation of a theater director, so she won't be living at the center this winter....

Finally, we learn in a letter from Annie Besant to A.D-N., dated 17 March 1893, that she had asked for admission to the Esoteric Section. However, according to information obtained at Adyar in December 1986, it seems that A.D-N. did

⁶ *Le Lotus Bleu*, 4/5 (5 July 1893): 131.

⁷ *Le Lotus Bleu*, 3/8 (8 October 1892): 254.

⁸ Louise Kolly was a T.S. member resident in Russia who came to live at the center at the invitation of Mr. Coulomb. She became lodge librarian in 1895 and secretary of the Paris Lodge Ananta on 27 December 1895 after the death of M. Arnould.

not join this section.⁹

We know nothing of the length of A.D-N.'s stay at the center and even less of her departure.

Daniel Caracostea

30 Blvd. St. Michel
Paris, Dec. 10, 1892

Dear Mr. Mead,

Thank you for your kind letter of last month and the friendly concern which prompted you to put me in touch with Mrs. Windhurst. I have no doubt that this new relationship will be indeed very fruitful. I have been so busy with all manner of activities that I haven't had a moment to write to Amsterdam. On Mon-

⁹ English version of the letter now held at the A.D-N. Foundation in Digne.

London, 17 March 1893

My Dear Mademoiselle,

I am not able to give advice on the best way to present Theosophy. This is a question which demands an essay, not a letter. The spiritual nature of man, reincarnation, karma, are three of the easiest subjects to share. To go into them deeply is difficult, but it is easy to understand the basic principles. You will find in my little book on reincarnation, popular arguments which you can use. The best hours for meditation are before sunrise and at sunset. Meditation is the basis for spiritual progress. But I can only give you really helpful advice on this subject after you are admitted to the School. Six months after your entry, you will receive detailed instruction. It is not worth giving you platitudes now which you can find in books, since you have requested admission to the School. I have sent M. Coulomb the preliminary papers.

Faternally yours

Annie Besant

day I intend to repair this omission. As you can see by this letter, I am presently at the Paris center. You know that I have had to break with my family because of my refusal to renounce membership of the T.S.¹⁰ I have therefore decided to try to establish myself in Paris, which will enable me to swell the numbers of those who are deeply involved in the work of the Paris center.

You who have always treated me as an incorrigible sceptic can hardly suspect me of intemperate enthusiasm if I tell you that never in my life have I encountered what I find here. I would like all those who, with me, have wondered if there is anything but selfishness at the bottom of men's hearts to be able to spend just one week with our brother Mr. Coulomb.¹¹ I have never seen such impersonality, such complete selflessness. Ten theosophists of his kind would be more than enough to cause Theosophy to catch on. Through conversations I have had with members of Ananta Lodge, I know that everyone considers Mr. Coulomb, as I do, to be the heart and soul of this little band of French theosophists. If some misfortune should snatch him from the fellowship of T.S. members, I believe it would be a rude shock to the movement.¹² ...As for the management of the center, he is admirably supported by Mrs. Coulomb. You met her at the center opening but you can't have come to know and appreciate her well in such a short time. She is just the right person for a center. She is very uncomplicated, gentle and dedicated. The most she can be reproached for is her shyness; she is always afraid of bothering others and remains in another room on the grounds that the baby

¹⁰ A.D-N.'s T.S. membership diploma is held at the A.D-N. Foundation in Digne. It is dated 7 June 1892 and was presented in London and not in Adyar as Jean Chalon writes in *Le Lumineux Destin d'Alexandra David-Neel*, 82.

¹¹ Called Edmond Jourdan in *Le Sortilège de Mystère*.

¹² Compare this passage with what A.D-N. says in her memoirs.

mustn't come into the office. The woman scarcely resembles the confident traveller [A.D-N.] you went to fetch one evening at Victoria Station! At any rate it is very fortunate for the T.S. that one like her exists, if only to establish the Paris center which couldn't function without her quiet dedication.¹³

Dear Mr. Mead, I won't hide from you my amazement at seeing an attempt to create disharmony in this miniature paradise. At first, quarreling revolving around food (questions of pasta, pulses, etc., - I'll spare you the details) made me laugh. But things became nasty and I must say that Mr. Coulomb demonstrated exceptional patience. On her return from London, Mme. Kolly demanded that meals be served in her room, that her fire be tended all day, etc. These were done. She requested books and these were brought to her. As she expressed a wish for publicity leaflets Mr. Coulomb sent her a plentiful supply. She had asked if she could purchase *Le Secret de l'Absolu*.¹⁴ Mr. Coulomb made a gift of 2 copies to her and the same evening asked me again if I didn't think Mme. Kolly would be open to a reconciliation. I could see quite clearly how inclined toward it he was himself. I suggested as much to Mme. Kolly, in fact I did and said all that came to me in my love of harmony but it was a complete waste, alas! I found in Mme. Kolly only a fierce ill-will toward Mr. Coulomb. She didn't attempt

to hide it moreover, promising herself to do all she could to harm him, and she made it quite clear to me that her goal was to get the running of the French center into other hands. This wish is clear enough in itself but the spiteful way in which it was expressed made me shiver. In truth if I hadn't had other experience to the contrary or felt within myself that Theosophy was capable of producing good results, I would be wondering if this is what we come to after a long time in T.S. circles — I wouldn't have written to you about this, I am too much of a newcomer amongst you to have the right to involve myself in your private affairs, but I witnessed such a scene this morning that I am unable to remain silent any longer. Mme. Kolly was moving out and since she was taking with her books belonging to Mr. Coulomb and the key to the apartment, I took it upon myself to request that she return them. I believe I wrote as politely as possible; in any case when Mme. Kolly received the note I sent to her new lodgings¹⁵ with one of the moving men, she came rushing back into the office, and began insulting Mr. Coulomb who was reading and said nothing. Twice she returned, saying she was going to the police commissioner's, that she was looking for the concierge, that she would make the affair public, etc. She ended up calling Mr. Coulomb a thief and other similar names. You probably know that when she moved in she gave 500 francs to the French center. When she came to leave, she asked for her money back and it was returned immediately. What's more she was never asked for the cost of her room and board since her return from London. If I'm writing all this to you it's not a result of taking sides; I am not personally involved. I am merely considering the T.S.'s interests and the unfortunate influ-

¹³ See the description of Mme. Coulomb-Jourdan given by A.D-N. (79-80): "The little woman was the most deliciously foolish creature imaginable...."

¹⁴ *Le Secret de l'Absolu* by E.J. Coulomb, published in 1892 and with a preface by the famous Sanskrit scholar M.E. Burnouf. This work appeared in the collection published by Coulomb: Bibliothèque de la Renaissance Orientale (Library of the Eastern Renaissance) at T.S. Headquarters, 30 Bd St Michel. The two other works appearing in this collection were *The Voice of the Silence* by H.P. Blavatsky, translated by Amaravella (Coulomb), and *An Epitome of Theosophy* by W.Q. Judge (*le Lotus Bleu*, 3/8: 254).

¹⁵ 45 boulevard St. Michel (unpublished letter from Mme. Kolly to Mrs. Cremer, 28 November 1892).

ence on new members all this negative emotion and nastiness could have, coming from someone who certainly doesn't realize the harm her rancour is capable of causing. I do believe that in this respect Mme. Kolly has shown herself in her true light. She has argued with all the workmen she has engaged and even this morning her movers in exasperation became angry with her. She can be forgiven when all is said and done, what's more where real theosophists are concerned everything is forgivable, but it's important in this case to try to contain the damage and stop it spreading further. Oh well, we must never give up; if Mme. Kolly chooses to invite me to visit her, I will do all in my power to quieten her spirits and to dispel the misunderstandings and irritations at the root of all this mischief.—The T.S. needs perfect harmony to have a hope of winning adherents amongst the French public. There are already enough financial problems arising for the creation of a center. I am addressing you as I would a brother and I count on your discretion. You cannot imagine the heroism and self-sacrifice shown by Mr. Coulomb and his wife. With his talent, Mr. Coulomb could easily have established a fine position for himself as an artist whereas at the moment he's living in penury. If the fact that I have left behind the comfort of my former life and am trusting myself to fate rather than leave the T.S. entitles me to speak familiarly to you, then I say that Mr. Coulomb's allowance seems utterly insufficient to live on. I don't quite know how I can have the audacity to address you like this but I hope you will keep it secret. I don't believe Mr. Coulomb would ever forgive me for interfering in his business. If I am acting childishly, forgive me, I don't believe I am behaving wrongly but am pushed by the ardent wish to see the T.S. win a wide following in France where Eastern philosophy, too little known, could do immense

good. Once again I beg your absolute silence about this letter; if you have any advice to offer about appropriate conduct in this situation, you may write to me in Paris. Farewell, dear Mr. Mead, remember me to those of your friends whom I met this summer and know that I am your sincere, devoted,

Alexandra David¹⁶

¹⁶ Her marriage to M. Neel took place in 1904.

SOME EXPERIENCES IN INDIA

W.T. BROWN, B.L., F.T.S.

The following Narrative by Mr. W. T. Brown, a Member of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, who has recently gone out in India, is published as a contribution to the literature of a subject which has lately excited a good deal of interest in this country.

I am about to attempt the writing of a narrative, which I trust may prove interesting and encouraging, especially to my fellow students in the Theosophical Society.

The members of the London Society, with which I have the honour to be connected, are perhaps aware of the immediate circumstances which led to my coming out to India; but for the interest of the general reader I shall endeavour to give a short sketch of preceding events by way of introduction.

After a long course of study, pursued in Strassburg, in Zurich, and in Edinburgh, I graduated in the University of Glasgow in April, 1882, and then resolved to take a lengthy holiday, and visit the United States and Canada, which I did in the summer of that year. On my return I took a hurried trip to Switzerland to visit the family of a gentleman who had recently died, and returned to Scotland about the end of August. The result of my long travelling was that I was completely knocked up, my vitality being at a very low ebb. After being treated by an allopathic doctor, who, I venture to say, did me a great amount of harm, I travelled still more, and finally came to London

in April 1883. Here I resided with Dr. Nichols, the eminent homeopathist, in South Kensington, and, under the benign influence of the "natural and sympathetic treatment," I recovered my pristine vigour, and was quite restored to health.

There were several visitors besides myself in the house of Dr. N., and among them Madame G., F.T.S. of Germany. Madame G. had been a pupil of the late Abbé Louis Constant (better known as Eliphas Levi), and had come to England to be initiated into the Theosophical Society by Mr. Sinnett, who had just arrived from India. I soon became deeply interested in occult literature, was made acquainted with Mr. Sinnett, with whom I had long conversations, and was admitted a member of the Theosophical Society.

I need not expatiate upon the effect which the reading of Mr. Sinnett's book, "The Occult World," had had upon me, how I felt intuitively that the work contained more absolute truth than was usually perceivable, and how I was moved by the teachings of Mahatma Koot Hoomi.¹ Suffice it to say, gradually I had become imbued with a desire to come to India, to partake to some extent in the labours of the Theosophical Society, and thus to come nearer, if possible, to the great teachers of the East.

¹A Mahatma, or "Great Soul," is one who, by walking along the Path of Righteousness and Truth, has purified or spiritualised his nature. He has brought himself into relationship with laws which, to natures unprepared, belong to the "unknowable." There is essentially *nothing supernatural* in the "science of the Divine," and the higher laws are those which operate in the spiritual region of sublimated matter.

Accordingly, after due consideration, I wrote to Mr. Sinnett, a letter from which the following is an extract:-"You will be aware by this time that I take a deep interest in Theosophy, and am inwardly convinced of the grand realities to be discovered within its pale. Well, it so happens that I am unusually fortunately situated for pursuing a career in Occultism, and, after much careful consideration, I have resolved to offer myself in the Search for Truth. Belonging, as I do, to a good Scotch family, I have had ample opportunity of realising the value of true religion, but all along, and especially in later years, I have been convinced that in Protestantism, Catholicism, Presbyterianism, Episcopalianism, and all the other "Isms," of which we hear so much, only partial truth is to be found. It has always been a puzzling matter to me to define how it was that among Christians there should be so many divisions and strifes, and it has been only since becoming a Fellow of the Theosophical Society that I have been satisfied that it is owing to the dearth of Esoteric doctrine. Now, I am aware that the step which I am about to take is a most important one, and one in which the responsibility must rest upon myself alone; but, after viewing the matter from all points, I have come to the conclusion that in Theosophy there is a wide sphere of labour and usefulness, and that a young man could not devote himself to nobler work than to learning and teaching its transcendent truths. It is my desire, then, my dear Sir, to go to the head centre of Theosophy and Rosicrucianism-viz., to India."

Having received in answer very kind letters from Mr. Sinnett, and from others to whom I had written upon the subject, I prepared for my departure, and finally sailed for India upon the 25th of August.

Before transferring our narrative from Europe to the East, it may not be out of place to

simply refer to a correspondence, which had taken place in the spiritualistic paper "Light," on the subject of "Esoteric Buddhism." I just mentioned the matter here in order to connect it with a memorandum which I had the honour to receive from Mahatma Koot Hoomi shortly after my arrival in Madras.

It was at Colombo in the Island of Ceylon that I first had the pleasure of seeing some brother Theosophists of a different race, creed, and complexion. The kindness of the Singhalese Theosophists to an Englishman, who was, in every sense but one, a stranger, was sufficient evidence of the unity of sentiment which prevails among the brotherhood, in at least two widely separated parts of the globe. At Colombo I made the acquaintance of the Rev. H. Sumangala, F.T.S., the learned scholar and high Priest.

At length I reached the Head Quarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras, and was welcomed by Madame Blavatsky,² the learned Author, Editor, and Corresponding Secretary. I was established in a bungalow, situated beautifully by the river side, and felt at home in a very short time.

In regard to Madame Blavatsky, I need not say more than this, that never before have I met anyone who evinces such vast and varied learning, nor one who is more large hearted.

²Madame Blavatsky, we may here remark, is the widow of General N.V. Blavatsky. Governor, for many years, of Erivan. She is the eldest daughter of the late Colonel Hahn of the Russian Horse Artillery and niece of General Fadeef. She is connected with some of the most noble families in Russia and is "Son Excellence Madame la Generale Helene P. Blavatsky." Her broad humanitarian views induced her to drop all distinctions and become a citizen of the United States when the Theosophical Society held its first meetings in New York. Colonel Olcott, we may add, has a wide and national reputation, gained during the late Civil War, for services to his country as an Officer of the War Department.

The surroundings at the head quarters are as genial as one could well conceive, and the editorial staff (including as it does some Chelas³ of the Himalayan masters) is of a most spiritual and intellectual order.

At this point I may endeavour to show why I mentioned the correspondence, which is before referred to as having taken place in "Light." One evening, shortly after my arrival at Adyar, some letters were being sent by Chelas to their masters, and I was permitted to enter the "Occult Room" and see the process going on. The letters were put into an almirah, in a richly ornamented recess called by some "the Shrine." There were some seven of us then present, four of whom were Chelas. These gentlemen, after placing their letters as aforesaid, offered up incense and prostrated themselves according to the Hindu manner of evincing devotion and respect. In about two minutes Madame, who was standing by my side in an attractive attitude, received a psychic telegram, and indicated that the answers had come to hand. The almirah was accordingly opened, and in place of the letters "posted," others were there, enclosed in Tibetan envelopes and written on Tibetan paper. D.K.M. (a Chela of the master Koot Hoomi) discovered something more than was expected, and exclaimed, "Here is a letter from my master for Mr. Brown!" I then received from his hands a memorandum, written with blue pencil, and in the following terms:-"Why feel uneasy? Perchance we may yet become friends: I have to thank you for your defence of Esot. Bud, K.H., W.T. Brown, B.L., F.T.S."

I need scarcely say how honoured and grateful I felt at being noticed by the Mahatma, whose teachings had so strongly impressed me in the metropolis of England. I rose, and going

forward, reverently said, "Mahatma Koot Hoomi! I sincerely thank you." Immediately all those present in the room said, "There's a bell-did you hear it?" I said that I had *not*, but, perceiving the earnestness displayed on all the faces, added that I *believed* it had been rung. Madame B. then expressed regret that I had not observed the Master's acknowledgement of having heard my words, and said "Oh Master! let us hear the bell once more, if it be possible." We stood silently for about a minute and then there was distinctly heard by all of us (myself included) the sound of a bell. I may add also that, along with the letters received, there was a sprig, which had been freshly plucked and which I kept as a memento until it faded utterly away.

Colonel Olcott, the President of the Theosophical Society, had before my arrival, started on a tour through Central India and the North West Provinces, and it was soon arranged that I might take advantage of the opportunity and join him in his travels. Before leaving Madras, however, I received from Colonel Olcott the letter, of which the following is an extract-a letter which I make bold to say speaks strongly for the kind consideration and manly honesty of this great and genuine man:-

"And now, before finally taking up the Society's work with me, you must be told just what to expect, so that there shall be no disappointment, nor room for future complaints.

"Firstly, then, the situation here in India is as regards relations of the paramount and subject races, strained and painful to a degree. In short they mutually hate each other. Until this Theosophical movement began, no philanthropist had found a common ground upon which they could unite, nor any upon which the several castes and sects of Asiatics could stand. But there are ample proofs now that in our Society this potential union

³Disciples.

may be found. Until an act known as the 'Ilbert Bill' was introduced in Council, things were getting on nicely and a cordial spirit was gradually springing up. The Bill in itself was not so important; it simply gave effect, to a very limited degree, to promises often held out to the 'natives' of possible careers in the Civil Service. Events now prove that it was an untimely measure. An explosion of wrath and hatred occurred among the Anglo-Indians and every expression of scorn and contempt was used towards the 'natives.' This of course provoked reprisals in kind, an agitation spread throughout the Peninsula, and a chasm opened between the two races.

"Our Society is so far outside the political hurly-burly that the only effect has been to check the drift of Anglo-Indian kindness towards Theosophy. We are devoted to the revival of the old Aryan wisdom, and therefore have to partake of the moment's hatred of everything Indian. Of course the affection and respect for us is correspondingly growing among the 'natives.' As American Citizens, Madame B. and I have no difficulty to keep ourselves free from the passions and prejudices that rage about us, and I go about the country as unmoved by the things that are goading the Europeans as though they did not exist. But can you do the same? Do you feel in your heart that the missionary work of Theosophy is thoroughly attractive? Are you prepared to eat with me the plainest food - to expect neither luxury nor even comfort - to have your private character traduced, your motives pictured as base and sordid, to endure extremes of climate, the fatigue of hard journeys in all sorts of conveyances by land and sea, to know of the existence of the *Masters* yet be denied the privilege to go to them, until by years of toil you have purged your innermost nature of its selfishness and accumulated moral filth, and by working unselfishly for

the enlightenment of mankind you shall have fitted yourself for the holy companionship? Think of all this. You have not begun the career as yet. Ponder the situation. If your caste or the world attract you, go to them and be happy. The philanthropist's lot is a hard one; few covet its crown of thorns, fewer still are able to wear it. You are young, life is before you, choose thoughtfully."

"Next, as to serving with me. With me there is your widest and surest field of usefulness, and doubtless the *Masters* will tell you, as they did me years ago, that you must seek them through the Theosophical Society. Should you come to me it must be in the spirit of one who is teachable, earnest and unprejudiced. If you are likely to dislike me because I am American and have my national traits and ways, if you are likely to take offence at brusqueness, perhaps even imperiousness (for in my absorbing devotion to my work I am sometimes stern and dogmatic, neither sparing myself nor seeing individuals apart from their place in the carrying on of this Herculean work), if you are liable to soon tire of my constant movement and sigh for rest and inertia at home, then do *not* come. For I tell you I am so dead in earnest that I would be ready to die any day for my society, and there is no room for any one in my department who is half-hearted.

"But if all these warnings do not repel you, and you have decided to sacrifice yourself, your strength, your talents for our cause, then come and I shall treat you as a son or a younger brother, as the difference in our ages may call for."

After careful perusal of Colonel Olcott's letter and reading between the lines, another indication merely of the "realities" with which in Theosophy an aspirant is presented, I telegraphed in answer the simple words "I come." I then received a cheering message from Colonel Olcott,

and prepared to join him on his northward journey.

After a railway journey of six and twenty hours, I joined Colonel Olcott at the town of Sholapur, which place will always be imprinted on my memory as that at which I had the honour first to meet our worthy President.

With the details of our journey my Indian Brothers are familiar, but, in the hope that it may prove interesting to the Theosophists of America and Europe, I shall endeavour to sketch briefly some of the principal events which occurred on Colonel Olcott's northern tour.

At Poona, Damodar K. Mavalankar, the chela of Mahatma Koot Hoomi, before spoken of, joined the party, which had previously consisted of four persons, viz. - Colonel Olcott, two Native members of the Madras Society, and myself. Poona was the place at which Colonel Olcott last treated patients by mesmerism, and great was the disappointment of the branches at all the places, which were subsequently visited, on learning that the Colonel had received peremptory orders from his *Guru* (his immediate superior and teacher) to desist from further treatment for some time. The fact was that the Colonel had benevolently given away so much of his vitality (having treated thousands of sufferers in the course of a single year) that it was necessary to allow recuperative action to take place, so that he might be spared for the onerous and legitimate duties of his office. Accordingly, at all the places subsequently visited, Colonel Olcott confined himself to teaching the members who happened to be medical men, or who evinced special interest in the subject, the art of healing by transfusion of vitality. So much for the mesmeric treatment of disease, which formed but a small part of the worthy Colonel's labours.

From Poona we went to Bombay, the west-

ern capital of India and former head-quarters of the Theosophical Society. Here one notices particularly the nation of the Parsis, who, though differing in nationality and customs from the Hindu nation, yet live on terms of brotherly good feeling, thus setting an example to the Anglo-Indians, who never can forget the *material* superiority on which they pride themselves. In the Branch Society in Bombay there are many Parsi gentlemen, who, by the light of the Esoteric Doctrine, can recognise in the "Sacred Fire" their national representation of the seventh or universal principle.

In order to give a detailed account of Colonel Olcott's tour from Bombay, northwards to Lahore, and thence to the glittering Himalayas at Cashmere, it would be necessary to write a special treatise on the subject, but as my object is rather to show how I became a searcher after hidden truth and to give a few experiences in the search, I shall confine myself to speaking of a few of the places on our journey which call for special mention.

After a journey of twenty-six hours by rail from Bombay, we arrived at Jubbulpore, and we may take this place as offering an example of Colonel Olcott's labours throughout India.

Throughout the day he discusses questions in Theosophy with all who may come to pay him visits, and many are the learned pundits who express their satisfaction at finding one who, though highly trained in western modes of thought, is yet so learned in the sacred writings of the East. In the evenings he lectures on Aryan Science and Philosophy to large and enthusiastic audiences, and here it may not be out of place to say a word or two in regard to the worthy lecturer himself.

He speaks with the earnestness of one who knows the truth of what he says, and his appeals to this audiences to study the records of the

Eastern civilization, of which the Western is but a feeble copy, are not likely to be forgotten. The revival of Sanscrit learning, which is taking place all over the Continent of India, and the sense of national self respect which is felt to be everywhere arising, are recognised to be due in a measure to the public efforts of Colonel H. S. Olcott.

At Jubbulpore a phenomenon took place. A phenomenon the affirmation in regard to which would with difficulty be accepted in a court of law. Yet I shall attempt to put the facts in writing, because I *know* that they occurred. On the evening of the lecture, Colonel Olcott, Damodar, several fellows of the Society and I drove together to the place of public meeting. There the Colonel delivered an impressive address to a large audience, and so marked was the national feeling awakened that a subscription for the formation of a Sanscrit School was commenced immediately thereafter. Among all the contributors perhaps the most enthusiastic were the teachers and students of the public high school, the former sacrificing a whole month's salary and the latter the scholarships which they had won. The sum of 1,700 rupees was raised for this good object on this single occasion, and the Sanscrit School at Jubbulpore will soon be *un fait accompli*.

The meeting terminated, we returned to our host's bungalow just as we had come, the party being formed of the Colonel, Damodar, some other brothers and myself, and it is at this point that the mysterious element begins. On our return, both Colonel Olcott and I asked Damodar how he had enjoyed the lecture, and were to our amazement informed that he had not been present - in fact was conscious of having been elsewhere. This was indeed astonishing, looking to the fact that he had been seemingly in our company at the lecture and had not been out of our presence for

some hours; but now we have got to learn that the "Damodar" who was with us was a high chela (now an initiate) of the Mahatma K.H.

Again it is worthy of notice that during the lecture some three or four majestic figures had attracted my particular attention. They did not seem to hang upon the lips of the speaker, as did the rest of the audience, but remained calmly dignified, occasionally only exchanging pleasant glances and throughout seemingly more familiar with the subject treated of than the Lecturer himself. I was not surprised to learn afterwards that some Mahatmas had been present at the meeting in astral form. All this accounts, to my mind, for the enthusiasm of the meeting, especially over the subject of the Sanscrit School, for it is well known that Mahatma K.H. was a Brahmin of high birth, and has not yet lost entirely his patriotic fervour.

And now let us proceed to Allahabad, at which place we were the guests of the "Prayag Psychic Theosophical Society." At this ancient city a most stirring lecture was delivered, and here also a large sum was raised for the formation of a Sanscrit School. Here I saw *and recognised* the Mahatma.

Although I was enabled to look at him but for a minute I knew that it was he and recognised him by his portrait, which I had scrutinized some weeks before. On our return to the bungalow at which we were being entertained my impression was corroborated by Damodar, who volunteered the remark that his master had been there. Damodar, I may remark, had not been at the lecture.

By those who rely upon the acquisition of knowledge by the ratiocinative process solely, all this will be put aside as not providing any evidence whatever, and to critics of the order of the *St. James's Gazette* and *Saturday Review* it will

appear as worse than foolish; but to those of the most modern (and also the most ancient) school, who recognise the failure of science to lie in its neglect of the spiritual faculty of intuition, the statement of my experiences will, I hope, be full of meaning. Theosophical writers have in all ages dwelt largely on this mode of thought, and among the most modern exponents of natural religion we may reckon Wordsworth, who writes:

“Nor less I deem that these are powers
Which of themselves our minds impress,
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.”

and the late Lord Lytton, who says in *Zanoni*:

“In some feelings there is all the strength and
all the Divinity of Knowledge.”

Allahabad may be taken as an example of true culture, and among our Fellows there we may reckon some of the most intellectual and spiritual in India. Indeed I may assure the Society's Fellows in America and Europe that it will be difficult to produce gentlemen with the great and varied attainments which are possessed by the Fellows of the many Theosophical Societies spread over this vast continent. The average of graduates in our societies in India is large, and we know that the standard of education which the Universities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras provide, is high, so far as materialistic science goes.

But in regard to learning in the East, one thing especially is discernible, and that is that the true Indian scholar is not usually carried away by a sense of his own importance. Among the educated “natives” of Europe and America education and conceit not infrequently go hand in hand,

but the natives of Hindustan have learned enough to know the relative littleness of personal knowledge, and are thus enabled to preserve a healthy philosophical equilibrium. The Indian scholar is a follower of the faculty of Divine Perception, “the inward eye which is the bliss of solitude,” the Intuition of which we have been speaking. This it is which proves a lamp unto his feet and light unto his path. It is by means of *this* that he perceives that intellectual science is but dross, if there be not added to it a science of a loftier character - the science of Divinity - the Esoteric Doctrine.

Moradabad was visited on 10th November, and there an event occurred which furnished a proof of the much doubted fact that an occultist can project his inner self or soul instantaneously to any place at any distance.

Colonel Olcott, as we have seen, had been ordered by his *Guru* to desist from treating patients until further notice, and, when application was made to him by Mr. Shankar Singh, of Moradabad, on behalf of two orphan children, he was under the necessity of refusing the request. Damodar, however, became interested in the matter, and said that he would ask for permission to be granted for this special case. His *Guru*, as we know, is Mahatma Koot Hoomi, while Colonel Olcott's and Madame Blavatsky's *Guru* is Mahatma M—, but by going to Adyar, in astral body, Damodar was enabled, through Madame B—, to communicate with Mahatma M— without the knowledge of the Colonel. Accordingly, Damodar retired to his room, went into *Samadi*, projected himself to Adyar, Madras (a distance as the crow flies, of over a thousand miles) and returned in a few minutes with a message from Mahatma M—. The Mahatma had spoken along the communication line established between himself in the Himalayas (where he resides) and his Chela,

Madame Blavatsky, at Adyar. At Moradabad the words were taken down to dictation and the document signed and authenticated by all the gentlemen present. Damodar had informed us that he had requested Madame Blavatsky to corroborate the fact of his astral visit by telegram and to repeat the words of Mahatma M— heard through “the Shrine.” Next morning a deferred night message was received from Madame B—, which was officially marked as having been dispatched twenty-five minutes after the time of Damodar’s reported visit, and in it the visit was fully corroborated and the Master’s words repeated *verbatim*. The telegram was opened in the presence of those who had heard the message dictated on the previous day, and is in the following terms: “Voice from Shrine says ‘Henry can try parties once, leaving strongly mesmerized Cajaputte oil-rub three times daily to relieve suffering. Karma cannot be interfered with.’ Damodar heard voice. - Telegram sent at his request.” - *Vide Theosophist* for December 1883, pp. 88-89.

Some important incidents might be recorded in connexion with the Colonel’s visit to Lucknow and Delhi, and also perhaps with my own and Mr. Naidus’ special tours to Gorakhpore, to Rawal Pindi, and Peshawur, but the place to which our narrative really next pertains is the City of Lahore. Here, as elsewhere, Colonel Olcott delivered stirring addresses to large audiences; but Lahore has a special interest, because there we saw, in his own physical body, Mahatma Koot Hoomi himself.

On the afternoon of the 19th November, I saw the Master in broad daylight, and recognised him, and on the morning of the 20th he came to my tent, and said “Now you see me before you in the flesh; look and assure yourself that it is I,” and left a letter of instructions and silk handkerchief,

both of which are now in my possession.

The letter is as usual written seemingly with blue pencil, is in the same handwriting as that in which is written communication received at Madras, and has been identified by about a dozen persons as bearing the caligraphy of Mahatma Koot Hoomi. The letter was to the effect that I had first seen him in visions, then in his astral form, then in body at a distance, and that finally I now saw him in his own physical body, so close to me as to enable me to give to my countrymen the assurance that I was from personal knowledge as sure of the existence of the Mahatmas as I was of my own. The letter is a private one, and I am not enabled to quote from it at length.

On the evening of the 21st, after the lecture was over, Colonel Olcott, Damodar and I were sitting outside the *shamiana*,⁴ when we were visited by Djual Khool (the Master’s head Chela, and now an Initiate), who informed us that the Master was about to come. The Master then came near to us, gave instructions to Damodar, and walked away.

On leaving Lahore the next place visited was Jammoo, the winter residence of His Highness the Maharajah of Cashmere. Colonel Olcott had been specially invited, and was received and entertained as a distinguished guest. Here everything presents a novel aspect to the stranger. Being a native state and independent of British rule, one is enabled from it, to form an idea of the pomp and splendour of ancient Aryavarta. “Native” Statesmen Councillors and Judges, “native” Generals and Officers of Court reflect their glory on the Maharajah, who is literally and absolutely “The Monarch of all he surveys.”

Our party was kindly provided with elephants and horses for private use, and we

⁴Pavilion or pandal.

enjoyed a most inspiring holiday in full view of the Himalayan Mountains.

At Jammoo I had another opportunity of seeing Mahatma Koot Hoomi *in propria persona*. One evening I went to the end of the "compound,"⁵ and there I found the Master awaiting my approach. I saluted in European fashion, and came, hat in hand, to within a few yards of the place on which he was standing. . . . After a minute or so he marched away, the noise of his footsteps on the gravel being markedly audible.

I need not dwell upon the disappearance of Damodar for several days, for he himself has told us his experience, and in whose company he spent his time (*vide Theosophist* for January 1884, pp. 61 and 62), but while he was away I received, by occult means, another letter from his Master. It was enclosed in an envelope, which had been addressed by Madame G—, and had come by post from Germany. This was very significant, because it proved, to my mind, that the master was aware of the part which Madame G— had had in bringing me into the light of Theosophy. The writing is the same as usual and the contents are as follows:—"I have pleasure in granting, in part at least, your request. Welcome to the territory of our Kashmir Prince. In truth my native land is not so far away but that I can assume the character of host. You are not now merely at the threshold of Tibet, but also of all the wisdom it contains. It rests with yourself how far you shall penetrate both, one day. May you deserve the blessings of our *chobans*.—K.H."

After a tour which had extended almost over the whole length of the Indian Empire, our homeward journey was commenced. Short visits, full of pleasing incidents, were made to Kapurthala, Jeypore and Baroda, and the party finally reached

Adyar upon the 15th of December. Preparations were then made for the Society's Anniversary, held on 27th and 28th December, on which occasion delegates from Branch Societies in India, Ceylon, Europe and America attended and most important questions were discussed.—(*Vide Journal of the Theosophical Society and Theosophist* for January 1884.)

To the several phenomenal occurrences, which took place during our anniversary gathering, many of the gentlemen present can testify; but I shall confine my remarks to two or three incidents within my own experience.

During the last evening session of the Convention the Officers and Councillors for the ensuing year were being chosen. It had been determined to give the overworked President founder a number of assistants, and on his asking me if I would accept such an appointment I replied that, if my chosen Master (meaning Mahatma Koot Hoomi) should so decide, the accepting of such an honourable post would be a pleasure. Thereupon Damodar was hurried off to the main building (situated about one hundred yards from the pavilion or *pandal* in which we were assembled) being asked to communicate with his Master, whose answer he would receive through the usual means (the so-called Shrine.) In a few moments he came running with a note in his hand. It was in Mahatma Koot Hoomi's handwriting and bore the following message:—"it is my desire that Mr. Brown should accept the appointment offered him."

I shall now have pleasure in presenting an experience of a somewhat different character.

Having heard that Mahatma Koot Hoomi was at Mysore, I wrote a letter to him (my first) upon the 16th of December, in which I asked if I might be permitted to come and see him in the flesh once more, giving as a reason the desire to

⁵Private enclosure

make this present narrative, which I then anticipated writing, convincing to the Western reader. This letter I wrote without its contents being known to any second party, and I myself sealed it thoroughly. It was at my request placed in “the Shrine,” in my presence, and in about a minute it was gone. Damodar who officiated, then said “My Master tells you to have patience.” Next evening my letter was returned by occult means, unopened and with seal intact, in the presence of H. R. Morgan (Major General), Mrs. Morgan, F. Hartmann, M.D. (Munich) Mohini M. Chatterjee, M.A., B.L. (Calcutta), and several other Fellows of the Theosophical Society. The address (to the Master Koot Hoomi) was scored out and my name in blue pencil substituted. In the presence of several witnesses I had thus the satisfaction of opening the envelope, which I myself had closed, and, in addition to my own letter, which was there as I had placed it, there was, in the well-known handwriting, the following gracious and pertinent reply:—“I have told you through Damodar to have patience for the fulfilment of your desire. From this you ought to understand that it cannot be complied with for various reasons. First of all it would be a great injustice to Mr. Sinnett, who after three years of devoted work for the society, loyalty to myself and to the cause, begged for a personal interview and was refused. Then I have left Mysore a week ago, and where I am you cannot come, since I am on my journey and will cross over at the end of my travels to China and thence home. On your last tour you have been given so many chances for various reasons. We do not do so much (or so little if you prefer) even for Chelas until they reach a certain stage of development, necessitating no more use and abuse of power to communicate with them. You can say truthfully as a man of honour, “I have seen

and recognised my Master, was approached by him and even touched.” What more would you want? Anything more is impossible for the present. Young friend, study and prepare . . .—Be patient, content with little, and never ask for more if you would hope to ever get it. My influence will be over you and this ought to make you feel calm and resolute.—K.H.”

And now I relate my concluding incident and bring my lengthy narrative to a close. Having intimated to Mahatma Koot Hoomi my desire to become a Chela of “The Brothers,” I presented myself on the evening of the 7th of January 1884 for acceptance on probation.

On that occasion I was warned as to the difficulties of the road, which I desired to tread, but was assured that by a close adherence to truth, and trust in “My Master,” all must turn out well.

THE NEW YORK SCHOOL OF MAGIC

A DISCIPLE OF THE ADEPT LADY TELLS OF LEVITATIONS.

THE SCIN LECCA AND HOW IT AND OTHER WONDERS ACCORD WITH NATURAL LAW.

[From the *New York World*, Wednesday 28
March 1877, 2]

To the Editor of The World.

SIR: Considering that your reporter took no stenographic notes during his interview with Mme. Blavatsky the other evening, he has given a remarkably fair account of what was said by that lady. He did, however, permit certain inaccuracies to creep in, which I ask permission to correct.

The report in to-day's paper contains the following:

"The WORLD reporter-Is it fair to say that magic is the exercise of power in contravention of known natural laws?"

"Mme. Blavatsky-No. The natural laws are not to be transgressed. What science calls the natural laws can every one of them be broken, but the real laws of nature cannot."

This conveys an impression very different from what Mme. Blavatsky said or your intelligent representative intended to represent her as saying. She is too learned a person, too familiar with the actual progress of Occidental science, to affirm that every one of what science calls natural laws can be broken. What she believes (and made the rest of us understand) is that the assumption by our Western men of science that all

the laws of nature are discovered and that no phenomena in contravention of them can occur, is wholly unwarranted by fact. In short, that the real laws and limitations of nature are only understood in those Eastern countries where force-correlation is no mystery-where magic is still regarded as a science and practically demonstrated.

In support of this view she instanced the current notions about the attraction of gravitation. That solid bodies unsupported by physical props would not necessarily fall to the ground, she argued from the levitation of the human body, certified to by numerous trustworthy witnesses, and the transport of suspension in mid-air of inanimate material objects. The Prince of Wales and his staff witnessed a fakir so levitated, in full day and under circumstances precluding the possibility of trick or illusion. Louis Jacolliot, the learned French author, saw it done in his own bungalow by the Fakir Kovindasamy: Lucian, who will certainly not be charged with credulity, says (IV., 280-281, Ed. Lipsise) that when visiting a certain shrine in Asia the high priest was levitated. 'I will tell also,' says Lucian, "another thing which he did in my presence. The priests, lifting, brought him, but he left them down on the ground while he himself was borne alone in the air."

What Lucian and multitudes of ancient witnesses saw, the Prince of Wales, his staff, Louis Jacolliot and many hundreds more have seen in our day. Then again, to leave magic and magicians wholly aside and come to that crude and unregulated thing, modern Spiritualism, we have a large number of cases of levitation reported by such unimpeachable witnesses as Dr. John W. Gray and Dr. L.S. Warner and others, of New York; Mr. Crookes, Karl Dunraven, William Hewitt, S.C. Hall, Lord Adair, Lord Lindsay and others, of London, and Prince Wittgenstein, of Russia.

The calendar of the Romish Church contains numerous instances of ecstasies who have been caught up into the air, and who have since-like St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Ignatius Loyola-been canonized.

Finally, the records of witchcraft, including the Salem outbreak of 1692, present examples of this phenomenon. The body of one Margaret Rule, of Salem, was visibly raised from the bed, in the night of witnesses, and held suspended by some invisible power for a considerable while.

To all these testimonies to the fact of levitation Mme. Blavatsky added her own, which is perhaps as credible as any other's, being founded upon some thirty years' personal experience in Eastern countries. She maintained, therefore, that our Western scientists had yet much to learn about the law of gravitation.

Another natural law, supposed fixed and untransgressible, is that a man cannot live when cut open and disembowelled. But Mme. Blavatsky had seen a hundred proofs that this is an unwarranted assumption: Self-mutilation, self-dismemberment, self-disembowelling, the exposure of the human body to fire, without chemical or other preparation; inhumation for days, weeks and even months, and subsequent resuscitation-these all show that our biologists know next to

nothing of the law of animal life. It is useless to deny facts easily verifiable by any one who will take the trouble to go where they can be seen, or who has the courage and self-denial to develop those latent powers common to all men.

Mme. Blavatsky referred her interrogator to the "*Souvenirs d'un Voyage dans la Tatarie, le Thibet et la Chine*," by the Abbe Huc; to the "Report of the Embassy to Siam in the Seventeenth Century," by M. de la Loubere, Ambassador of Louis XIV of France, and to other works.

The Abbe Huc says that it was no uncommon thing in those parts for the lamas to cut themselves open, expose their entrails, and then, bringing the severed edges together, with a few passes of the hand to cause the wound to heal instantaneously without leaving a scar. "This spectacle," says the Abbe, "atrocious and disgusting as it is, is nevertheless very common in the lamaseries of Tartary." Other powers of a like kind, he adds, "are less grandiose and more in vogue. These they practice at home and not on public solemnities. They will heat a piece of iron red-hot and lick it with their tongues. They will make incisions in their bodies, and an instant after not the least trace of the wound remains."

The Princess Belgiojosa, in her "*Souvenirs de Voyage en Asie Mineure et en Syrie*," gives a most thrilling account of similar feats performed in her presence by dancing dervishes, who cut and hacked each other with daggers, and then had their wounds instantly healed by the chief laying his hand upon the place.

In your editorial comments upon the reporter's account of the interview, you say that "if Mme. Blavatsky knows what she is talking about," the Thibetan lamasonry "is the school of strange knowledge." Let me ask whether the concurrent testimony of every reputable traveller not incapable of telling the truth by reason of religious or

scientific preconception does not show that she is only talking about what others besides herself have seen, and any one may see for himself. She never puts herself forward as an "adept" but nevertheless is constantly doing things that are commonly associated with initiation into mystical knowledge.

The flitting of the shadows (for the reflected images of two even instead of one were seen to pass and repass twice) before the window was the most striking of proofs that the law of animal life is not fully comprehended in civilized Europe and America. What your reporter and five other witnesses saw was the projection of the *Scin Lecca*, or astral body, of an adept whose physical form was at that moment asleep at the other side of the ocean. Bulwer describes this phenomenon with vividness in his "Strange Story." To learn how to disentangle the inner from the outer man and travel whithersoever one wills, always retaining one's consciousness, is the highest feat of magic. The shadows we saw that night I personally have seen often, and know and have conversed with. I may add as a sequel to your reporter's narrative that one of the witnesses, a physician living in Baltimore, but then here for a few days' visit saw the shadow of the larger of the two men outside his window that night when about to retire. His bedroom was in the fourth story of a hotel. The gentlemen is one of the coolest of observers.

One word more. The tape-climbing feat repeated by your reporter from the lips of Mme. Blavatsky has been seen by many European travellers. In Colonel Yule's admirable translation of the "Book of Ser Marco Polo" this feat and every other described or practically exemplified by the learned Russian lady, is reported in detail. There was a time when the narrative of Marco Polo was regarded as a tissue of barefaced lies-obviously

because it contained so many evidences against Christianity, chronological scientific and philosophical-but as "Appletons New Cyclopedia" justly admits, "there is now no doubt that he spoke the truth."

It may suit the prejudice of the hour to jest over the Thibetan lamaseries and the alleged powers of their denizens, and to fling the epithet of "liar" at Mme. Blavatsky's head, as gingerly as our ideas of breeding may permit, but witnesses are accumulating in this very city that that distinguished lady and profound scholar makes no false assertions nor displays any tricks of charlatanry. As Colonel Yule remarks about the tape-climbing reported by Marco Polo, it is impossible to think that so many witnesses in different countries and at different times, who have seen this feat, should have agreed together to propagate a falsehood.

My name and address are at your disposal as also are those of all the others present on the occasion in question. The party included one lawyer, two physicians and two writers for the press, besides myself.

Levitation and Other Light Matters

[From the *New York World*, Tuesday 27 March 1877: 4]

Far be it from us to enter into any controversy with a magician. We are too well read in the “Arabian Nights” to commit such a folly as that, and only desire to remain on good terms with those powerful beings who in the twinkling of an eye might transform us into a Third avenue car-horse or a writer on the *Tribune*. Neither do we wish to discuss theories which are confessedly too subtle for the European or American mind. They are altogether too thin for controversy. The correctness of THE WORLD reporter must be defended, however; and to the correspondent who undertakes to correct our report of Mme. Blavatsky’s conversation on lamaseries we suggest that the sentence, “What science calls the natural laws can every one of them be broken, but the real laws of nature cannot,” seems to convey succinctly and correctly the very idea which he is at so much pains to elucidate in a column letter. To the clumsy Anglo-Saxon mind the use of the word “calls” explains the whole thing. The law of gravitation may possibly be one of those which are merely called natural laws as distinguished from those which are really so; but the illustrations given by our correspondent do not disprove the Newtonian theory, but simply show that he does not understand it. If Eastern fakirs do rise in the air we presume they ascend, like smoke, in obedience to the law of gravity, not in spite of it. Your fakir merely goes up because he is for the time being lighter than the atmosphere. The faculty of fakirs for levitation should not be taken

for granted too readily, however, notwithstanding the cloud of witnesses that testify to it. The most celebrated of these Indian adepts was long known as the “man who sits in the air.” He was accustomed to sit comfortably aloft in the air, smoking a pipe and having his legs crossed in the true Oriental fashion. He had no visible means of support, except that he had one hand laid carelessly on the top of a tallpole, which he had used to climb to his elevated perch. He always made preparations for ascending within a tent, and stipulated before exhibiting the feat that no examination of his person should be made. He explained his stipulation on the ground of religious scruples; but it was found afterwards that he had more substantial reasons for it. After he had been the wonder of the Europeans in India for years, it was discovered that he had a neat iron chair in the seat of his baggy trousers, and that an iron rod attached to it, and bent to follow the shape of his arm, ran down to the palm of his hand and fitted over the top of the pole upon which he was poised. A British officer, notwithstanding the clumsiness of the European intellect, contrived to sit in the air in the same way, but as he made no secret of how the feat was done and had not graduated at a lamasery he won no renown by the performance. As to our correspondent’s assertion that the people in India can live after they have been cut open and disembowelled, we have only one thing to say, to wit, that this acquirement must be the source of great comfort during the famine season. The tendency of the Anglo-Saxon mind, however, is toward a preference for the retention of the bowels and their employment in their

functions as part of the human machinery. This prejudice is strongly put by the learned Edmund Burke in his "Reflections on the Revolution in France:" "In Enland we have not yet been completely embowelled of our natural entrails. We still feel within us, and we cherish and cultivate, those inbred sentiments which are the faithful guardians, the active ministers of our duty, the true supporters of all liberal and manly morals. We have not been drawn and trussed in order that we may be filled, like stuffed birds in a museum, with chaff and rags and paltry blurred shreds of paper about the rights of man. We preserve the whole of our feelings still native and entire, unsophisticated by pedantry and infidelity." So strong is this prejudice that the substance of it has passed into a proverb, and the most abusive epithet we apply to a person is to say that he is a man of no bowels.

BookReviews

THE WAY TO THE LABYRINTH: MEMORIES OF EAST AND WEST.

By Alain Daniélou. Translated by Marie-Claire Cournand. New York: New Directions Books, 1987. Pp. 338. \$13.95 paper.

François Mauriac enquired, “Who will write the mystery of the Daniélous?”. In part perhaps, this fascinating memoir replete with sassy and illuminating aperçus will have to serve for the present. Surely a piece of a puzzle that troubles the attention, this work deserves careful re-reading in order to reconstruct not only past relationships but also the author’s influence on the current state of affairs at the Theosophical Society’s Adyar Library in India as a result of his tenure as librarian there over thirty-five years ago. Things are much the way he left them and but for his innovations, many valuable books by this time would probably have been reduced to dusty, worm-eaten shells.

The candor of a good French artist such as this certainly may not please everyone, but his refreshing honesty sets the tone:

The fact that I had so many interests, such a total lack of ambition, that I had no ties of any kind and never sought a career or a conventional place in society, created the very conditions that made it possible for me to become a link between two civilizations. (2)

Daniélou deals with personal interests and perceived social inequities which currently arouse

considerable sympathy somewhat at length though his whining seems a bit out of place in the case of so determined a professional outsider and practical mystic. Even if, as he says, ‘In a world based on systems of belief, free spirits tend to lead marginal lives,’ (312) social convention generally seems intent on keeping order in an otherwise unruly world of uneven mentality and ability, where such progress, social-scientific-artistic, is a slowly learned process hardly measured by any reasonable standard. When repeatedly asking why human nature is so limited in its apparent lack of understanding, surely he could concede that social conditioning in all parts of the world is a contributory factor that makes it so. It is not a fact of life that just because one class—or caste—may understand its own inherent obligations clearly that all others do, too. Rather more likely only those executive personalities, evolved or not, who are leaders in said groups may be able to recognize broader aspects on occasion. To evaluate another culture arbitrarily in terms specifically used amongst Hindus involves an exercise in semantics that may make an imprecise comparison with Western tradition.

The reader would do well to start with the last chapter and read forward as a sense of greater continuity might be gained. This elegant panegyric in praise of things peninsular, Indic and Eurasian has an aroma that cannot be bettered by the accomplishment of smoking Joss sticks or the liquid bubble of twanging instruments. What serves to amuse to a great extent is the manner in which contradictions of social life at higher levels appear as combatants joust and jostle for ap-

plause.

Had it not been for Raymond Burnier, would this memorial have been written and would Alain Daniélou have believed that their shared ambitions had been fulfilled? Daniélou, a scion of an ancient Celtic Breton family (the Clamorgans) on his mother's side, and Burnier, of grand bourgeois Swiss origin that included a minor Russo-Baltic lineage, made a formidable combination with their essentially hedonistic and romantic outlook on life, but an impractical view implemented early on allowed Daniélou to keep his balance as he comments, 'I already sensed that the religion of men had nothing to do with the divine reality of the world'. (6) It seems that the cause of so many personal problems that inconvenienced them both later owed to the fact that others failed to comprehend and embrace that truth.

Sometimes it happens that the reader who wants to learn more of the real Daniélou and the source of his later interests is hard put to hone in on the facts of his development. This reviewer suggests starting with the years our author spent in America at St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland, which came about when a former French ambassador to Washington had a few scholarships for study on offer. He was eighteen and happily survived the stay from 1925 to 1927. His father thought a knowledge of languages would be useful if the necessity arose to pursue a consular career, luckily avoided.

Upon returning to France in the summer of 1927, Daniélou became acquainted with Zaher, destined to become the future King of the Afghans (and may yet if the present mess is ever sorted out). Zaher's father, Nadir Shah, invited Daniélou to pay him a visit, and *voilà*, 'That was how I came to discover the Orient ...'. (69)

This was followed by a stint in the French

navy at Toulon, made the more bearable by frequenting Parisian art centers while on leave. Then, in 1929, the Governor of Algeria, at the request of Daniélou père who was working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under Briand, offered him a grant to study Arab music. The point of departure for his fame as an ethno-musicologist in years ahead began then, along with the gifts of sufficient leisure and patience.

Clearly the turning point in Daniélou's life was the meeting with Raymond Burnier¹ at Villefranche, near Nice, on the Riviera in the summer of 1931. Both were in a sense complementary to the other and of course it helped matters materially to have had Raymond's maternal grandfather invent a condensed milk product for children called Nestlé, which became immensely popular. Their entire attitude toward life could be summarized in this quote, 'We always appeared to be poking fun at everything—not because we were frivolous, but in an attempt to discredit false thinking and get to the bottom of things'. (78)

Their travels onward began by going to Venice in April 1932, in style of course, and from there on the good ship Conte Rosso to Bombay. With an obligatory visit to the Elephanta caves secured, they hired a car and drove through the Khyber Pass to Kabul (Afghanistan) to visit the King and renew acquaintance with Zaher. Without royal authorization, they went on their own nothing daunted to Jellālābad (recently the scene of heavy fighting in the Afghan conflict), well entertained en route. The experience was recorded on film in an interesting documentary. Georges Henry Riviére, the famous ethnologist, put together a large exhibition of Raymond's

¹ The International President of the Theosophical Society is the widow of Raymond Burnier.

photographs which can still be seen at the Musée de l'Homme, Paris's anthropological museum. (85)

Returning to India after the Afghan adventure, character sketches are provided of prominent Indian and European figures in artistic and political circles met along the way, introductions to whom were facilitated to some degree by Alain's sister, Christine, who became manager of the girls' residence at Tagore's arts center, Shantiniketan, in 1934, and later, in the early 1940s, director of Alliance Française in Calcutta. Those were truly the years when the going was good.

How many people today remember the name of Alice Boner? This Zurich artist, who had inherited a large fortune in industry, helped found a well-known Kathakali dance school in Kerala; advanced the career of Uday Shankar after his talent had suffered under the doubtful patronage of Pavlova; and whose most lasting contribution to Indian dance was in the field of costume. 'What passes today for the traditional costumes of Indian ballet was in fact invented by an artist from Zurich' (91) by having liberated Indian dancers from very heavy outfits inspired by ancient frescoes and medieval sculptures. She died in 1975 at Benares, close to the palace in which Alain and Raymond lived for some fifteen years (1939-1953).

Visits to Shantiniketan for a few months each year after 1932 are written of with obvious affection. Regretfully Daniélou abandoned the idea of running the music school there, settling for spending a few years travelling between India, Paris and various other places before settling permanently in Benares.

Daniélou and Burnier began a long stay in India in March 1939. Two years earlier they had been alerted that a three storey palace belonging to the Maharajah of Rewa was to be had for \$100

monthly and both felt that it would be better to put up at a marble-balconied palace fronting on the Ganges rather than at Clark's Hotel, then located amid the garish British military section right outside the city. And what a wickiup Rewa Kothi was, flanked by circular balcony and gallery, eighty-foot hall and sixteen-foot ceiling; and with an open-work loggia that looked out upon the river.

The incredibly poetic atmosphere which surrounded them of folk musicians and Brahmin priests ministering to the faithful strikes a nostalgic chord matched perhaps by wilder phantasies from the Arabian Nights. We learn from the author that he first became interested in Indian religion and philosophy from the works of René Guénon, the scholar who also influenced Coomaraswamy and Eliade.

'A man born outside of India is considered a *mleccha*, a barbarian who is assimilated with the lowest castes of artisans ... If he observes the proprieties and taboos, however, he is allowed to be instructed in the highest teachings of traditional philosophy and science'. (136) Many Westerners, even theosophists, have difficulty trying to blend with Hindu society or find a place in it, try as they will, for in spite of the country's trend to greater openness, long standing traditions still prevail. But Daniélou came to deeper discovery of Hindu culture through an introduction to Swami Karpātrī in Benares, an influential holy man who later created the *Dharma* Sangh, a movement for the defense of Hinduism against modern trends. His first encounter with Hindu mythology, the significance of the different gods and their relationship to cosmological theories on the nature of the world led him farther into a study of the religion, so that the questions he posed to the swami were answered in a series of published articles which later formed the basis of his Bollingen

book, *Hindu Polytheism*, long the prime source for Western students. Both Daniélou and Burnier subsequently turned to the Shaivite cult of Hinduism and took names that would reflect starting life anew, with a new basis, new purposes, goals and duties. The process of development at the individual's own rate of speed is essential to that tradition, and often envied by those in others. At the same time, the cultural importance of any Indian city 'depends on the great traditional scholars who teach a few chosen disciples in their own homes'. Traditional Hindu studies which deal in rote memorization have nothing to do with education offered in India's modern universities. The two civilizations live side by side but are totally unaware of one another, and wage war against so-called ashrams which exploit people's gullibility, against theosophy, Aurobindo, Ramakrishna followers and especially against politicians. It always seemed true to this reviewer that most of the inhabitants of ashrams were usually Westerners.

The 1940s found the Indians uninterested in Europe's war as neither were most South Americans, and, having become a Hindu, Daniélou found his sympathies, along with most patriotic nationalist Indians turned towards Japan, a heroic Eastern land struggling against European imperialism. When World War II did come to an end, Alain and Raymond made trips to Calcutta and Kerala, easing the long period brought about by the international emergency.

In 1953 Alain Daniélou left Benares forever to become director of the Theosophical Society's Adyar Library. The invitation was offered by Sri Ram, then international president of the Society. Daniélou's description of the "spiritual center" of the Theosophical Society at Adyar should have been amplified, for he would seem to be referring to a group of its members who are required to live

by rules imposed by a human master to oversee an ascetic discipline to be learned and obeyed, by which an attempt has been made to establish an ethical system whose principle in the widest sense of the term is community-building. But it often happens, as Herbert Guenther has pointed out, 'that in this process the energy of the ethical impulse is gradually drained off into a set of rules which define the morality of the community. The ethical problem of existential "good" becomes neglected and the social problem of "right" conduct substituted for it and in the end confused with it'.² Whether expediency informs the activities of the Society there or elsewhere and defines its goals in a moot point.

What may be best to keep in mind when reading Daniélou's comments about Adyar is that as the average Westerner (which he isn't) believes himself in the midst of intrigues, then his assertive individualism has found no part in the collective consensus that is part of the Hindu mentality and ultimately becomes the price of his personal experience.

Adyar Library's services were greatly improved by Daniélou's contributions which included the up-grading of its bulletin of Sanskrit studies, now edited by the Honorary Chairman, Dr. K. Kunjunni Raja, former Chairman of Sanskrit studies at Madras University; publication of rare texts; and the preservation and restoration of manuscripts according to methods advanced by the French Bibliothèque Nationale. A new decimal system for classifying Sanskrit texts was employed and subsequently adopted by other libraries. It is fair to say that what Daniélou put into place in the 1950s remains with little change to this day. As one reads his further comments there is no doubt that Adyar had no place for an

²Herbert Guenther, *Kindly Bent to Ease Us* (Emeryville, CA 1975), 186.

innovative individual and that his only alternative was to resign his post in 1956 and move to Pondichéry. There he joined the Institute of Indology under its distinguished director, Jean Filliozat (who died in November 1981) and was asked to prepare a number of critical editions of Sanskrit texts. It must be altogether agreed 'that ashrams too often prevent much of any context with the real India and what teaching there is usually done in English is in a language quite ill-suited to Hindu conceptions'.

Thus after having spent 'twenty years of study in the most sophisticated circles of traditional Indian culture' Daniélou returned to Europe around 1960 to establish an Institute in the Monastery of San Giorgio in Venice from where he was able to carry out plans to promote the study and performance of Asian music. He lived in Italy thereafter with characteristic vitality and enthusiasm for everything that came to his attention. Staying on however also meant that he carried on without his friend, Raymond Burnier, who passed away at Zagarolo, Italy, near Rome apparently in 1968 after having put paid to a love that promised no future in India. If the moral of this cautionary tale is just possibly that Westerners will always be Westerners and Indians will always be Indians, then it isn't absolutely necessary for one group to try to adopt the lifestyle of the other or even dilute it so as to destroy the integrity of their own culture. It is commonly said that through a series of disillusionments we are led to the truth. Westerners, to quote Daniélou, 'often speak of Oriental "Wisdom" without realizing that this so-called wisdom is simply an attitude of realism in the pursuit of knowledge'. (328) And knowledge is inherently a closer observation and evaluation of facts that solve problems beyond immediate grasp. If that is the case, it is a surprise that no Western cult group has grown up around

the philosophy of, say, Luigi Pirandello.

One more thing. The Brahmin elite who constitute the sages in Benares and other Indian spiritual centers really touch the lives of a very small small percentage of the country's population. And fortunately they do not interfere with the general determination of the people to improve their standard of living according to their own, not Western-style, values. Notwithstanding any romantic inclination to let fatalism take its toll, government leaders in India make heroic efforts every day to stop the progressive deterioration of large cities and improve levels of health and education. It's there in all the papers every day, the *Hindu*, the *Times*, the *Express* and the rest.

Robert Boyd

RENÉ GUÉNON AND THE FUTURE OF THE WEST: THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF A 20TH-CENTURY METAPHYSICIAN. By Robin Waterfield. Wellingborough, Northants, UK: Crucible, 1987. Pp. 159. ISBN 0-85030-545-4 (paperback). £6.99.

Although this book has been available for some time, it deserves to be brought to wider attention as the only study in English of this important figure. René Guénon (born in Blois, 1886; died in Cairo, 1951) is of particular interest to Theosophical historians as the author of *Le Théosophisme, Histoire d'une Pseudo-Religion* (Paris, 1921; revised and augmented, 1928; edition supplemented with Guénon's reviews concerning Theosophy, Paris: Editions Traditionnelles,

1965 and reissues). Because he is relatively unknown in America, this review is mainly devoted to explaining Guénon's own significance. It follows that Waterfield's book is particularly valuable as an introduction to Guénon's life and thought, especially for those who do not read French.

By his early twenties, Guénon was deeply embroiled in Parisian esoteric circles. In 1908 he was attending the courses of the Christian Hermetist Paul Sédir at the "Ecole Hermétique" of Papus, but broke with the latter publicly at the Spiritualist-Masonic Congress when Papus insisted on the dogma of reincarnation—something for which Guénon had a lifelong aversion. In the same year, during an automatic-writing séance with a group of fellow Martinists, instructions were received for the foundation of an "Ordre du Temple Rénové" (O.T.R.), of which Guénon was to be the head. This did not materialize, but by the next year Guénon, now consecrated bishop in the neo-Gnostic Church of Fabre des Essarts, was writing articles which already embodied the essential doctrines of his later books.

There are many mysteries surrounding Guénon's early life and intellectual formation: mysteries which he made no effort to dispel, maintaining that his personality and private life were of no interest, his published works containing all that he wished to give the world. Among the sources of his knowledge and "initiation" (a concept on which he set great store) were the French Taoist Matgioï (= Albert de Pouvoirville); the Swedish Sufi Ivan Aguéli; and certain Hindu contacts who have never been identified.

Guénon's first two books appeared in 1921. One was titled *Introduction Générale à l'Etude des Doctrines Hindoues*: it was submitted as a doctoral dissertation, but the degree was denied him, setting him henceforth at odds with the

academic study of religion. The other book was his history of Theosophy as a "pseudo-religion."

A number of Guénon's books have been translated into English, but not *Le Théosophisme*, nor its sequel *L'Erreur Spirite* (1923), which is a polemic against every sort of Spiritualism. For all their negativity, these books are a mine of information. Any advanced student of the place and function of Theosophy in the context of the history of ideas (which is not to say every Theosophist, by any means) should regard them as essential reading. Although one may disagree entirely with Guénon's conclusions, the experience is sure to be enriching, and one will learn things not easily to be found elsewhere. As one example, *Le Théosophisme* contains the essentials of the notorious series of articles on the Theosophical Society written for *La France Antimaçonnique* by Narad Mani in 1911-13.

Guénon's metaphysical works are like a spider's web of adamant: so finely argued, so consistently and almost geometrically presented, so unsparing of sentiment in their adherence to the highest level of impersonal discourse. His many articles and books on symbology and on esoteric history are full of illuminating connections and breathtaking leaps across the world's traditions. His writings constitute a self-contained and self-consistent world which, virtually neglected in his lifetime, is now the focus of increasing interest among intellectuals, especially in Europe; as one proof of this, all his books are still in print. I would go further and say that, from the historian's point of view, H. P. Blavatsky and René Guénon are the two most important esotericists of our time, and that any view that pretends to universality must take both of them into consideration.

Guénon's condemnation of Theosophy rests on his claim that it lacks any grounding in

“Tradition” and the initiations that alone, in his view, carry the transmission of wisdom and the possibility of spiritual realization. By Tradition, Guénon means first the “Primordial Tradition” of our cycle; secondarily, the branches of it which manifest as the “great religions,” past and present. Outside these there is, in his opinion, no authentic initiation, hence only “pseudo-religions” and “counter-initiation.” In his own life, he gave up his attempts to bring the Roman Catholic Church to a realization of its own, Christian brand of esotericism, and ended his life as a Sufi, i.e., an esotericist within the Islamic tradition. How could he fail to be at daggers drawn with a movement whose master K. H. wrote, in the tenth Mahatma Letter, that “the chief cause of nearly two thirds of the evils that pursue humanity ever since that cause became a power..is religion under whatever form and in whatsoever nation?” Nevertheless, much of what Guénon writes of cosmology, symbology, metaphysics, and prehistory is in accord with the teachings of H. P. B., to whose *Secret Doctrine* he probably owed much more than he would ever have admitted.

These recommendations must be accompanied by a warning that Guénon, like H. P. B., is not always accurate. As Paul Bertrand showed in a brochure of 1922, *Théosophie et Théosophisme; Réponse à une critique de la Théosophie de M. René Guénon* (Paris: Publications Théosophiques), Guénon does not play fair. He cites mainly documents that are hostile to Theosophy, neglecting other witnesses. His documentation, apparently so secure, has a large element of *trompe l'oeil*, as he deforms statements by Olcott and others to suit his brief. Most disreputably and quite unfairly, Guénon castigates the Theosophists for their “moralism,” as if that were too lowly a concern for “initiates.” In short, Bertrand says, *Le Théosophisme* resembles a history of the

Catholic Church based on the Inquisition. Yet for the scholar, such a history might be invaluable, as containing insights and documents absent from the official version.

This explains why the publication of Robin Waterfield's book was a noteworthy and welcome event. Since its appearance, the author has also translated Luc Benoist's *The Esoteric Path: An Introduction to the Hermetic Tradition* (Wellingborough: Crucible, 1988), and has written on Julius Evola in *Gnosis* no. 14 (Winter 1990). He is not related to the Robin Waterfield who edits the Penguin “Arkana” series and translated the *Theology of Arithmetic* attributed to Iamblichus (Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 1988).

Unlike the two standard French books on Guénon's life and works (Jean-Pierre Laurant: *Le Sens Caché selon René Guénon* [Paris: L'Age d'Homme, 1975]; Jean Robin: *René Guénon, Témoin de la Tradition* [Paris: Guy Trédaniel, 2nd augmented ed., 1986]), Waterfield's study does not pretend to cover the subject entirely, but rather to call it to the attention of English readers. It is fresh with the realizations of Waterfield's own discovery of this extraordinary philosopher, and of the problems that Guénon poses to every serious and open-minded reader. Facts are there, but always in a context of the attempt to understand and place Guénon sympathetically in his intellectual, social, national, and religious milieu.

Although disquieted and sometimes puzzled by his subject, Waterfield acts as the most courteous of guides to the labyrinths of Guénonian thought, ending with a moving attempt to rescue practical Christianity from Guénon's blanket condemnation of the modern West. Waterfield is an ecumenical Anglican; and Christianity is, in practice, a bhaktic path. Guénon's path and doctrine, on the other hand, were those of a gnani. In this book, therefore, we have the Way of Love trying

to embrace the Way of Knowledge—which is, perhaps, more promising than the other way round.

Joscelyn Godwin

LIVES IN THE SHADOW WITH J KRISHNAMURTI. By Radha Rajagopal Sloss. London: Bloombury, 1991. pp. xiii + 336. £17.99 ISBN 0 7475 0720 1.

Heroes - religious and secular - are becoming increasingly rare nowadays. In these cynical and suspecting times the *myth* of the hero is perceived solely through the tincture of a fairy tale, with a subliminal fatalism that can never be elevated to the harsh and uncompromising light of historical investigation. Just so, the denotation of the term 'myth' underwent a substantive degradative transformation that converted its sense from transformative truth to pretentious fiction. Is it any wonder that admirers and devotees are finding it increasingly difficult in sustaining and substantiating the myth of their heroes? Consider the cases of the two notable heroic subjects in recent times: the secular paragon John F. Kennedy and his religious opposite number Jiddu Krishnamurti. The moment that J.F.K. was assassinated in the winter of 1963, a moderately popular President underwent a metamorphosis approaching the Kafkaesque in dimension. Such a status remained in effect for many years until reports began to circulate in the popular press of his piccadillos. Recently, a most devastating assault on Kennedy, Thomas C. Reeves' *A Question of Character: A Life of John F. Kennedy*

(New York: Free Press; Toronto: Collier Macmillan Canada; New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1991), has provided what many consider overwhelming evidence that Kennedy the myth was more the figment of the collective imagination of the populace. Similar questions have also been raised about that other modern day icon, Martin Luther King, much to the distress of his legion of admirers.

Similar assaults have been the norm for religious heroes as well. Whether it be Mary Baker Eddy, Joseph Smith, Ellen White, John Paul Twitchell, or the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, none have escaped substantive challenges to their status. And now Jiddu Krishnamurti, the recently deceased nonagenarian teacher and purveyor of the "pathless land." The book under review brings to mind Reeves' book, especially its title. Rather than expressing the theme of the book in such an obvious manner, its author, Radha Rajagopal Sloss, employs the more nubilous image of the "Shadow," *scilicet*, of fear, of unanswered potential, of darkness of land, the "twilight kingdom," the "dead land," the "cactus land," and "death's twilight kingdom" deriving from T.S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men":

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow

For Thine is the Kingdom

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the Shadow

Life is very long

Between the desire
And the spasm
Between the potency
And the existence
Between the essence
And the descent
Falls the Shadow

For Thine is the Kingdom¹

So here we have a memoir that does not call attention to the sainted and supernal Krishnamurti [neither does it totally ignore this side of his personality] but rather his darker side, an aspect that sometimes borders on the flagitious. Consequently, the image of the Shadow rather than the image of the Sun in Lady Emily

¹ The Shadow, itself derived from Ernest Dowson's "Cynara" ("Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno Cynarae" — "I am not as I was under the reign of the good Cynara" — a poem referring to the frustrated desire of love:

Last night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips and mine
There fell thy shadow, Cynara! thy breath was shed
Upon my soul between the kisses and the wine:
And I was desolate and sick of an old passion....

The image of the "Hollow Men" prompts images of William Morris' "The Hollow Land," Rudyard Kipling's "The Broken Men," and most assuredly Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (IV.ii):

When love begins to sicken and decay,
It useth an enforced ceremony.
There are no tricks in plain and simple faith;
But hollow men, like horses hot at hand,
Make gallant show and promise of their mettle;
But when they should endure the bloody spur,
They fall their crests, and, like deceitful jades,
Sink in the trial.

Lutyens' *Candles in the Sun*²: "the sun being the World Teacher [K.] in whose light all the candles (those who awaited his coming) were dimmed." (247)

This controversial narrative cannot be dismissed as unsubstantiated mudraking based merely on hearsay, innuendo, and sensationalism, for the author possesses credentials that requires the reader to grant her account serious consideration.. As the daughter of Desikacharya and Rosalind Rajagopal, both of whom were close associates to Krishnamurti extending back to the years prior to his break with the Theosophical Society in 1929, Mrs. Sloss draws not only on her own reminiscences of living with J.K. in Ojai and Hollywood (California), but on the reminiscences and written records of her mother and, to a lesser extent, of her father. Her parents, in the words of a biographer, Pupul Jayakar,³ became, following the break in 1929, "guardians, *sarvadbikaris*, holders of authority around the young seer, taking over all decision-making in [his] personal life and the work connected with his teaching." D. Rajagopal assumed the role of President of Krishnamurti Writings Inc., the successor to the Star Publishing Trust, and the organization to which all donations were sent in support of Krishnamurti and his work.⁴ Rosalind was a nurse, companion, and helper to Krishnamurti during his years at Ojai (California) and was the Director of the Happy Valley School in Ojai for eighteen years until her retirement in 1964 — and much more.

It comes as no surprise that this book is

² Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1957.

³ *Krishnamurti: A Biography* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 84.

⁴ Mary Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: His Life and Death* (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 82-3.

primarily focussed on Krishnamurti's relations with both the author's parents. Rajagopal's relationship with Krishnamurti is common knowledge due to the accounts found in Mary Lutyens' biographies⁵ and Sidney Field's memoir, *Krishnamurti: The Reluctant Messiah*⁶; his relationship with Rosalind, however, is no doubt far more astonishing and shocking. And so the book's merit rests primarily on the Rosalind Rajagopal-Krishnamurti relationship, a relationship that was both emotionally and sexually intimate for some twenty-five years. It is a story that contains within it a measure of romantic feelings, tenderness, and joy on the one hand, and on the other a naïveté mixed with often shocking incidents that call into question Krishnamurti's character. Aside from the obvious question of morality and the latent demands of celibacy and chastity placed upon Krishnamurti by the Theosophical Society (Adyar) and by his followers, one cannot resist the conclusion that we have before us a person trapped by the expectations of the leadership of the Theosophical Society, of his followers, even of his own teachings, forcing him to lead a double life: his public *persona* as the teacher who spoke with authority on the human condition, and his private *persona* as the fatherly "Krinsh" to the child Radha, the lover to Rosalind, the derogator of the theosophists, friends and protectors (including Mrs. Besant, who was supposedly like a mother to him [75]), and the "shadowy Krishna who could deceive and betray a man [Rajagopal]

upon whom he depended." (221)⁷ And the one person who fostered and responded to the affectionate side of his character - as 'wife' and lover in this case - was Rosalind Rajagopal, née Williams. Born in 1903 to a family in which some of its members had loose connections to Theosophy, here initial contact with Krishnamurti and his brother Nitya came through the efforts of her aunt, Erma Williams Zalk, who persuaded both Rosalind and those responsible for the brothers that she could be entrusted to care for the sickly Nitya while at Ojai in 1922. (54) This meeting quickly led to a budding love between Rosalind and Nitya, a love that was never to be consummated. Mrs. Sloss writes: "...because she only knew him for three years before his death, this love, with its innocent and magical quality, haunted not only her and her marriage, but also my childhood. Such love, etern[all]ized

⁷ On this subject of duality of personality, it is well to consider Arthur H. Nethercot's observation in his *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1963), 450-1:

Here then is an extraordinary case of a man who, after a long and bizarre struggle with life, has finally got himself and his mind under almost complete control—has perhaps hypnotised himself so that he can relegate to oblivion most of the things he does not want to remember, because they recall the unhappy days when he was becoming an individual and was escaping from the domination of others whom he had cause to love and admire. One of his favourite discussion topics is that of "exploitation," by which he means the influence exerted on one human being by another to bring the other round to one's own point of view in order to use that individual for one's own purpose. When, however, I temerarily suggested that perhaps he might have been "exploited" by Annie Besant in that sense, he flared up in what I would have called an angry denial in any less philosophic a person than he. I should hate to think of him as a charlatan; I prefer to think of him as a sort of schizophrenic, or at least a man of a now permanently divided dual personality.

⁵ Ibid., passim.

⁶ Edited by Peter Hay (N.Y.: Paragon House, 1989), 103f. The book was reviewed in *Theosophical History* III/3: 88-89.

([sic] by death, may not survive the realities of a living relationship.” (55) As for Krishnamurti, she hardly noticed him, until the “process”⁸ that first manifested itself required Rosalind’s nursing. Although this episode is well-documented, it is not mentioned elsewhere that during Rosalind’s caring for him Krishnamurti “would put his head in her lap for comfort” and ... “sometimes fondled her breast,” which she, perhaps in her naïveté, thought was his need to be mothered. (60) This was, incidentally, Krishnamurti’s own assessment, who wrote that he mistook Rosalind “for my long lost mother,” guessing that she might be using Rosalind or perhaps has even reincarnated in Rosalind.⁹ By 1926, despite rumors [suspected by Mrs. Besant to have been generated by the rival leader of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society, Mme. Tingley (88)] in the press that Krishna was romantically linked with Rosalind (87), Rosalind’s growing attraction to Rajagopal led to their announced engagement later that same year, much to Mrs. Besant’s relief. Because the laws in the U.S. made it very difficult for interracial marriages with Orientals to take place (American women lost their citizenship and Orientals were not allowed to become American citizens), they were asked by Mrs. Besant to call

it off. (88) Instead of a wedding in the U.S., their marriage took place in London the following year (3 October) at St. Mary’s Liberal Catholic church. By 1929, she became pregnant with Radha. Krishnamurti’s reaction to her marriage and pregnancy was one of disapproval and so displayed a coolness toward them (88); when she became pregnant, Krishna responded by repeating his long time view that since ‘the Work’ must be uppermost, none close to him should have children. So negative was his reaction that Rosalind contemplated having an abortion, a portent to times to come. This displeasure on the part of Krishnamurti, speculates the object of the intended aborticide, was decidedly selfish: all who were his close associates were not expected to lead an independent life (109):

More than one person of talent was driven to abandon a promising career - fortunately not all succumbed. In this case, another reason may have been an emotional reaction he had at the thought of them having a child. When Nitya died Krishna had assumed that Rosalind would then be closest to him. Her marriage to Raja had probably been a shock that he had to endure in isolation. For them to have a baby was at the very least a further affront.

Yet after Radha was born, Krishnamurti took up the role of the father. In fact, years later, the author recounts many engaging stories about ‘Krinsh’ (the child’s pronunciation of Krishna), the pranks she played on him, the games they engaged in, indeed the fatherly role he assumed. In fact, so much was Krishnamurti a part of the Rajagopal family that the child Radha often identified her family as consisting of a Mummy, a Daddy, and a Krinsh. (129)

Part of the reason for this fatherly role was Raja’s work habits. Always working on behalf of Krishnamurti and often in poor health,

⁸ The “process,” referring to episodes of intense pain, sensitivity to sound, vivid recollections of boyhood incidents and occult visions (58-60), was and is considered by some to have been the first sign of a transformation wherein Krishnamurti, the Vehicle of the World Teacher or Maitreya, was gradually merging with the World Teacher himself. For further references, see Annie Besant, *How a World Teacher Comes* (London: Theosophical Publishing House Limited, 1926), Mary Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening* (London: John Murray, 1975), 165-6, and Hillary Rodrigues, *Insight and Religious Mind: An Analysis of Krishnamurti’s Thought* (N.Y.: Peter Lang, 1990), 8.

⁹ Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening*, 166. Mention of this episode is also found in Nethercot’s *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 343.

the opportunity for the “cuckoo in the other bird’s nest” (in the words of Mme. de Manziarly) arose:

...she (Rosalind) came to realize that he had been playing the role of her own child’s father for some months and had lavished on all the care and solicitude of a passionate and fond husband - a role from which Raja appeared to have withdrawn, enabling Rosalind to slip into a love affair that would last for more than twenty-five years. (117)

The love affair began in 1932, apparently begun by Krishnamurti knowing the condition of the marriage, in which the couple lived apart, especially after Rajagopal indicated that there was no more need for sex in the marriage, since a child had been born to them. From that time on, Krishnamurti lived the public life of a chaste and ‘perfect’ being while in private assuming the role of Rosalind’s lover.

That this ‘perfect’ being could have such a relationship would have been a *reductio ad absurdum* to the Theosophists, who would have been shocked enough had Krishna entered into a legitimate marriage, and the new non-Theosophical followers would continue to place him on a celibate pedestal.

Because the prospect of a non-celibate and non-chaste relationship was so unthinkable, very few were capable of suspecting anything more than mere friendship. Only Mme. de Manziarly (117-8) and Rosalind’s mother (133), Sophia, recognized the abnormality of this three-way relationship. Of course, the one person who witnessed the close bond between Rosalind and Krishnamurti was her daughter Radha, who writes of her experiences in 1937 when she was a little girl of seven:

Nor did I ever mention to anyone those frequent early mornings when from my bedroom window I saw Krinsh, in the white raw silk nightshirts that my mother made for him, creeping up the stairs [of Arya Vihara] with a flower in his hand. Those were their times together, early mornings and sometimes late evenings, after I was supposed to be safely tucked away in bed. (147)

It was a liaison that resulted in three pregnancies: two culminating in abortions, one in a miscarriage. The first pregnancy was in 1935, and since Rosalind was warned that any future childbirth was life-threatening to her, the decision to abort was not particularly difficult. Krishnamurti, aware of the pregnancy and abortion, provided what comfort and compassion that was expected of him but not, apparently, any sense of responsibility. (132) A miscarriage occurred in the following year, on “an isolated field” somewhere between Hollywood and Ojai (141), the miscarriage brought on, it is conjectured by Mrs. Sloss, by a particularly upsetting argument between Krishnamurti and Rajagopal. As if this were not enough, a second abortion occurred in 1939. This was far more difficult to endure than the first, for by this time Rosalind contemplated having the baby. Krishna, however, ambiguously communicated his disapproval (“he never needed words to make his wishes clear”), so “again she got on the bus alone, he solicitous and loving as ever and giving her the same tender care when she returned.” (166)

The relationship continued throughout the period of the Second World War during which time Krishna remained at Ojai. Following his return from a trip to India in India, it appeared that a new woman entered his life— Nandini Mehta, and with it a sense of disloyalty. This was the first

crevice that appeared in their relationship, by 1953 resembling a marriage that was by then no longer beneficial for either party. Through it all, Rajagopal was completely ignorant of the affair until Rosalind, distressed over Krishnamurti's emotional involvement with another woman, finally revealed all to him in 1950, much to his own shock. (220) Krishnamurti in the following years never discussed the affair with Rajagopal as he promised Rosalind he would. (261) Rajagopal then came to realize Krishnamurti for what he was: a duplicitous figure that caused Rajagopal to gradually withdraw from his sphere. Years later Rajagopal told Mima Porter (née de Manziarly) that

he would have understand people falling in love, that was only human, but he could not understand Krishna leaving him in darkness all these years, while living a life so contrary to the life which Raja had believed he wished them all to live. (222)

By 1956 the relationship was effectively over, Krishna acceding to Rosalind's wishes to remain apart from her. In 1961, Rajagopal and Rosalind got a Mexican divorce after years of living separate lives. This allowed Rajagopal to marry a friend and associate (at the Happy Valley School) of Rosalind's, Annalisa Beghe.

The book then proceeds to the second major story, that of Krishnamurti's relations with Rajagopal. Rajagopal, born in 1900 in Tamil Nadu to a Vaishnavite Ayyangar brahmin family and to a theosophist father, was discovered by Leadbeater in 1913 as a possible vehicle for the Maitreya, in response to the growing rebelliousness (41) and jealousy of Krishna. One wonders if Krishna ever totally accepted Raja as a friend although the two were to become close associates in their mutual work: Rajagopal the loyal assistant and compan-

ion and Krishnamurti of course the teacher-philosopher. Years later (1966), Krishnamurti allegedly replied to the author's mother-in-law that he "was my friend but I was never his." (297)

Following the death of Nitya, Mrs. Besant asked Raja to take over the work of the Star¹⁰; one specific duty delegated to him was to organize the Star Camps at Ommen. After Krishnamurti dissolved the Order, Rajagopal remained with him "realizing not only his own dharma but also fulfilling the expectations that had been placed on him by Leadbeater and Mrs Besant." It was this sense of duty to the Work that led him to protect Krishnamurti against the muddles and messes he made. (237) Raja promised Nitya and made a commitment to Mrs. Besant that he would help Krishna in his work (103), this despite the fact that he was distressed by the "extreme bifurcation" in Krishnamurti's private behavior (*i.e.* towards Mrs. Besant and Leadbeater) and his public message." (102)

One of the themes of the book is Rajagopal's continued loyalty and commitment to Krishnamurti, despite the fact that there were serious altercations and arguments over the years resulting from Krishnamurti's "changeable personality that often led to misunderstandings between them and others" (134) and from his "lying and undercutting of [Rajagopal]." (135) The criticism that Rajagopal heaped upon Krishna was enough to cause Krishnamurti to retaliate by slapping Raja on more than one occasion (135).

By the 1950s trouble between the two became far more serious with Rosalind's revealing her affair with Krishnamurti to him and Krishna's subsequent suspicions of Rajagopal, thinking him (Raja) to have been taken over by

¹⁰ The Order of the Star in the East, renamed in 1927 the Order of the Star.

“black forces.” (273) Krishnamurti, the author contends, was actually afraid of him because of Raja’s knowledge of the liaison and so wanted him out of the way. (288)

This led Krishnamurti to accuse Raja behind his back of usurping his responsibilities, money and property. (288). By 1966, Krishnamurti again wanted to take over KWInc. (Krishnamurti Writings, Inc.), having originally resigned from it in 1958 and leaving the organization under Raja’s full responsibility as its founder. (287) Thus KWInc. was a publishing venture centered around, but not run by, Krishna. (287). The legal troubles between Rajagopal and Krishnamurti becomes more of a legal brief wherein the author assumes the position of advocate for her father. Readers may read about this crisis over KWInc. in Mary Lutyens’ *Krishnamurti: The Years of Fulfilment* and *Krishnamurti: His Life and Death* for an alternate account. The conflict between the two men led to a series of litigations that lasted even beyond Krishnamurti’s death. As related by Mrs. Sloss, Krishna accused Raja of barring him from KWInc. and of withholding and misappropriating funds intended for Krishna’s use (290). The dispute was further compounded by a six year battle over the Arya Vihara, the house in Ojai where Rosalind lived for many years. Krishnamurti intended it to be Rosalind’s home for the remainder of her life, after which it would then revert back to KWInc. (275) Because the non-profit status of the KWInc. prevented any property to be given to an individual, Raja found that the best method of carrying out Krishnamurti’s wishes was to turn the house over to the Happy Valley Foundation, of which Rosalind was a member, for her lifetime use. (275) This angered Krishna, who accused him of making arrangements behind his back. (291-3). Two letters from Rosalind to Krishna attempting to explain and resolve the

misunderstanding were unsuccessful. Krishna remained adamantly opposed to this arrangement.

Suspicious and accusations on Krishnamurti’s part (in 1964) and Rajagopal’s growing disillusionment with K. eventually led to K.’s initiating a complete break in their association in 1966. (297) The hatred generated led to the point of Krishna no longer speaking his name. (296) The irony of this observation is not lost on Mrs. Sloss, who observes that “he [K.] was not, in his own view of himself and that of his devotees, supposedly able to feel hatred.” (297)

According to Mrs. Sloss, in January 1968 Krishnamurti, “accompanied by members of his new circle” [their names are not mentioned], went in person to the Attorney-General’s office in L.A. to accuse Rajagopal of mismanaging funds. So the first legal step was taken in a series of actions that led to an out-of-court settlement in December 1974 (304-5) wherein KWInc. was dissolved with all assets transferred to the Krishnamurti Foundation of America (K.F.A.). The K & R Foundation (controlled by Rajagopal) was granted the copyright to all of Krishnamurti’s writings prior to 1 July 1968. Furthermore, the acreage in Ojai, including the Oak Grove and the land on which the Arya Vihara and Pine Cottage (the site where the ‘process’ took place in 1922) stood, was transferred to K.F.A. with Rajagopal being allowed to retain his house for life.¹¹ (305) After the settlement, Rosalind was asked to vacate the Arya Vihara by the same Krishnamurti who insisted that she was to live there for life.¹² (304)

¹¹ Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: His Life and Death*, 131; Krishnamurti: *The Years of Fulfilment*, 201.

¹² Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Fulfilment* (205) gives no comment on this seeming breach of faith on the part of K. She only observes that Rosalind had left Arya Vihara “in a bad state of repair” and “denuded of almost all its furniture.”

Further legal actions, the issue being the papers and documents held by Rajagopal, were initiated in the 1980s which were not to end until after Krishnamurti's death. The outcome was in Rajagopal's favor: he was allowed to keep the documents, with this conclusion by Mrs. Sloss:

Whether or not such a settlement would have been possible during Krishna's lifetime is a moot point. It is certain he would not have fared well on the witness stand. Rosalind was spared the pain of such an appearance also, although she was prepared to go through with it. Sixteen years of litigation and three separate lawsuits all dropped at the final hour, hundreds of thousands of dollars that might have been spent on schools or publications, add up to a chronicle of waste. (322)

That *Lives in the Shadow with J. Krishnamurti* is - and should be - a most distressing book to those who consider him more than mere mortal is an understatement. If all the observations and allegations are even partially true, then we are witnessing here the dismantlement of the myth of Krishnamurti as religious hero: a status that was not only foisted upon him by the Theosophical leadership in his youth but even apparently accepted by himself to the very end of his life. Indeed, the artist Beatrice Wood, in a letter dated 22 February 1981, reports that rumors abound that "Krishnamurti is supposed to have said that he is even greater than Buddha or the Christ...." (307) Of course, the charge is only hearsay, but it tends to support some of the claims that Krishnamurti made of his status throughout his life.

In the sense of fair play and balance, however, the question must be raised on the motivation of the author in writing and publishing an account of a relationship and association that

was so intimate and damaging not only to Krishnamurti but also in some measure to her mother as well. Explanations are provided, but they only lead to further doubts and suspicions *re* deeper intent. In the Preface, Mrs. Sloss remarks that recent biographies and a biographical film "left areas, and a large span of years, in mysterious darkness." Therefore, the book was written because it "is not in the interest of historical integrity, especially where such a personality is concerned, that there be these areas of obscurity." (ix) In the final pages of the book, the impetus came from none other than Rosalind herself. In an effort to make Krishnamurti drop a lawsuit (the latest in what was apparently an unrelenting period of strife that lasted over twenty years) against her now former husband, Rosalind "wrote a complete and detailed account of her relationship with Krishna" (313) and sent it to K. so that he would realize the damage that could be done to him if a court trial would actually take place. Despite the fact that the lawsuit was withdrawn in 1983, Rosalind was fearful that the letter would be misused at some future time, and so the decision was made to reveal the whole truth. Her effort to defend Rajagopal against the charges brought against him by Krishnamurti in the interest of justice finally dictated her decision to reveal the hidden past. But with the death of Krishnamurti in 1986 and the subsequent resolution of the lawsuit that cleared Rajagopal of any wrongdoing would render the reason for this book moot. A caveat to this whole issue must be considered: legal acquittal, however significant, does not make up for the injustice and anguish experienced by her father. In the light of past and future biographies of Krishnamurti passing a less than favorable judgement on the author's parents, it does not take a leap of imagination to conclude that the book is primarily intended to restore a

more balanced interpretation of their long relationship. In so doing, the lesson learned from this book is that one cannot judge the main characters in terms of black and white or good and evil. Krishnamurti was far from the perfect being that his devoted followers believed him to be, nor was Rajagopal the scurrilous villain that these same followers believe he was. Indeed, the “Shadow” appearing in the title reveals Mrs. Sloss’ view of the relationships between K. and those near him.

One obvious issue must be raised apropos the subject of the book: is all of it true? There is no incontrovertible evidence that can convince those who have already made up their minds vis-à-vis Krishnamurti’s character. The love relationship described herein is primarily based on the revelations made to the author by her mother. As compelling as the attestation is, charges such as this in a court of law would never stand up to the rules of evidence. Documentation is necessary, but as the author correctly points out copyright laws prevent publication of a person’s letters without permission from the writer or his literary estate. The letters of Krishnamurti to Rosalind Rajagopal, in the author’s possession, would have been the intended documentation establishing beyond any doubt the facts surrounding the relationship. This is but one instance of many in recent years that illustrates the difficulty that historians face in their effort to present a complete documentation of their subject of investigation. The impetus of this application of the fair-use defense of the copyright originates in the highly controversial case of *Salinger v. Random House, Inc.*, which, according to R.A. Gorman, “creates a significant risk of chilling serious scholarship.”¹³

¹³ A discussion of the case appears in Robert A. Gorman’s “Copyright and the Professoriate: A Primer and Some Recent Developments,” *Academe* 73 (Sept.-Oct. 1987): 29-33, esp. 33. My thanks to Mr. R.E. Mark Lee of the Krishnamurti Foundation of America for supplying me with this article.

As for the legal altercation between Krishnamurti and Rajagopal, it is impossible to determine the guilt or innocence of the parties. I must admit to considerable confusion as one who knew nothing of the litigation and bad blood between the two. On the side of Krishnamurti one can read the somewhat truncated account in Sidney Field’s memoir (101f.), and of course, Mrs. Sloss’ interpretation of the events in Rajagopal’s favor. It is not up to this reviewer to decide who is right or wrong; no decision can be reached since the evidence is far from conclusive on either side. Furthermore, there still exists too much emotional content on both sides to allow an impartial observer to arrive at a substantive and informed decision. If this issue is of importance, the reader should retain an open mind and await further evidence or examine the court transcripts before making any judgement in the matter.

Lives in the Shadow with J Krishnamurti is a book that should be read by all as an abject lesson on the dangers of dealing with personalities who either claim to be the disclosers of Truth or *accept* the adulation of his (or her) votaries. It is becoming more and more obvious to me that studies of religious or spiritual communities require not only profile studies of leaders and founders of religious movements but also of their audiences, consisting usually of so-called true believers and of less committed but nonetheless influenced auditors of the leader. Studies do exist but not enough attention are paid to them. It seems to me that Mrs. Sloss’ memoir, besides revealing the flawed personality of Krishnamurti, sheds some light in establishing personality profiles of his devotees. What those lessons are should be best left to experts to determine.

Finally, what of the consequence of the messenger or teacher failing to replicate the message? Does the failure of the messenger

invalidate the message? In the Hindu teaching tradition, there is a common observation that the instruction is important, not the teacher or guru. Words have power independent of the speaker, and this is made quite explicit in the Mīmāṃsā, Yoga, Grammarian, and Tantric traditions of India. The words uttered by Krishnamurti may not be likened to mantras by the majority of his listeners, but they certainly are considered to be authoritative and powerful enough to serve as vehicles of transformation. As a result, I would not expect this book to destroy the impact of Krishnamurti's teachings. It is becoming clear that the teachings will take on a life of their own, divorced from the personality of the teacher in much the same way that most listeners are appreciative and attracted to the music of Wagner without associating it with the unpardonable qualities of the composer's character.¹⁴

¹⁴ An overview of the mantra is presented in Harold Coward's and David Goa's *Mantra: Hearing the Divine in India* (Chambersburg, PA: Anima Books, 1991).