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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF SAINT LOUIS - ADYAR
 JOINS THE THEOSOPHISTS OF THE WORLD IN THE CENTENNIAL MEMORIAL OF

HELENA PETROVA BLAVATSKY - 1891 - 1991



*Thou canst not travel on the Path
 before thou hast become that Path itself.*

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

*Let not the fierce Sun dry one tear
 of pain before thyself hast wiped it
 from the sufferer's eye.*

*But let each burning human tear
 drop on thy heart and there remain,
 nor ever brush it off, until the pain
 that caused it is removed.*

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE - HPB

THE GOLDEN STAIRS

Behold the truth before you:

*A clean life, an open mind,
 A pure heart, an eager intellect,
 An unveiled spiritual perception,
 A brotherliness for one's co-disciple,*

*A readiness to give and receive advice and instruction,
 A loyal sense of duty to the Teacher,
 A willing obedience to the behests of TRUTH,
 Once we have place our confidence in,
 And believe that Teacher to be in possession of it;*

*A courageous endurance of personal injustice,
 A brave declaration of principles,
 A valiant defence of those who are unjustly attacked,
 And a constant eye to the ideal of human progression
 And perfection which the Secret Science
 (Gupta Vidya) depicts ---*

*These are the golden stairs
 Up the steps of which
 The learner may climb
 To the Temple of Divine Wisdom.*

HPB



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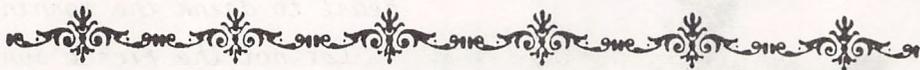
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"...HPB's teachings about cosmos and man, and her instructions for students on the Path to Perfection are all 'eye-openers'--not the outer eye of course, but the inner eye of intuition. She is a beacon light for the few who strive to rise above the coarser reflections of the lower mind that hold the mass of humanity in mayavic thrall, and learn to respond with a deeper sense of harmony to the play of life.

To her close disciples she made clear that 'growth in spiritual life comes from within...the attitude in which the teachings are to be received is that which shall tend to develop the faculty of intuition...(The Student) must endeavour as much as possible to free his mind, while studying or trying to carry out that which is given to him, from all the ideas which he may have derived by heredity, from education, from surroundings, or from other teachers...when a question arises it shall be deeply thought over from all its aspects to the end that he may find the answer himself... Otherwise his intuition will never be developed.' "

(the above taken in part from RADHA BURNIER, International President, Adyar, India, *Messenger for a New Era*, The Theosophist, May 1991)



"THE ESOTERIC SHE"

W. Q. Judge

Extracts from an article under the above name published in *The Sun*, New York, Sept. 26, 1892, and included in *Echoes of the Orient*, III, pp207-214, published by Point Loma Publications, Inc. and from *The Eclectic Theosophist*, May/June, 87.

The aim and object of her (H.P. Blavatsky's) life were to strike off the shackles forged by priestcraft for the mind of man. She wished all men to know that they are God in fact, and that as men they must bear the burden of their own sins, for no one else can do it. Hence she brought forward to the West the old Eastern doctrines of karma and reincarnation. Under the first, the law of justice, she said each must answer for himself, and under the second, make answer to the earth where all his acts were done. She also desired that science should be brought back to the true ground where life and intelligence are admitted to be within and acting on and through every atom in the universe. Hence her object was to make religion scientific and science religious, so that the dogmatism of each might disappear.

Her life since 1875 was spent in the unremitting endeavor to draw with the Theosophical Society those who could work unselfishly to propagate an ethics and philosophy tending to realize the brotherhood of man by showing the real unity and essential non-separateness of every being. And her books were written with the declared object of furnishing the material for intellectual and scientific progress on those lines. The theory of man's origin, powers, and destiny brought forward by her, drawn from ancient Indian sources, places up upon a higher pedestal than that given by either religion or science, for it gives to each the possibility of developing the godlike powers within and of at last becoming a co-worker with nature.

As everyone must die at last, we will not say that her demise was a loss; but if she had not lived and done what she did humanity would not have had the impulse and the ideas toward the good which it was her mission to give and to proclaim. And there are today scores, nay, hundreds, of devout, earnest men and women intent on purifying their own lives and sweetening the lives of others, who trace their hopes and aspirations to the wisdom-religion revived in the West through her efforts, and who gratefully avow that their dearest possessions are the result of her toilsome and self-sacrificing life. If they, in turn, live aright and do good, they will be but illustrating the doctrine which she daily taught and hourly practiced.



Why are you unhappy?
Because 99.9 per cent
Of everything you think, and
Of everything you do,
Is for yourself;
AND THERE ISN'T ONE.

Wei Wu Wei

Happy the man who can say: The
self in me has vanished, and
Truth has taken its place.

In Unity there is no self and
no otherness. There is only
the One who reveals Himself
in incomparable modes.

N. Sri Ram

THE CALL TO THE HEIGHTS --- Guidance on the Pathway to Self-Illumination by Geoffrey Hodson, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Illinois, 1976
(continued from the last issue)

Chapter 26 - PRESENT-DAY INITIATION

If it should be asked, as well it may, whether the Mystery Tradition has been continued through the ages since the early dynasties of Egypt, for example, the answer is most definitely in the affirmative. The Wisdom Religion as taught in the Mystery Schools of the past and still taught in those of today (for they are kept alive on this planet by earth's superhuman beings) provides the answer to those who have proven their worthiness to receive it. That worthiness is less an acquired, virtuous condition of mind and mode of life than the result of the evolution of the human soul to a state at which virtue--in the fullest meaning of the word--has become the only possible manner of living.

Although the temples of old have largely fallen into ruins and remained silent and unvisited save by archeologists and tourists, temples of other kinds have continued to exist and valid rites to be performed in them. Even though in both ancient and modern days occult ceremonials have been performed in visible buildings, the real activity with which they were and are involved is far more superphysical than physical.

Among the world's public, semipublic, and private celebrations of the Lesser Mysteries are the sacraments of the Christian faith, which are performed with a considerable degree of ceremony. The seven named sacraments are: Baptism, Confirmation, the Holy Eucharist, Absolution, Holy Unction, Holy Matrimony, Holy Orders up to Consecration. The Holy Eucharist is regarded by some scholars as a direct remembrance and continuance of certain parts of the rituals of the ancient Mysteries. If this be so, then a direct and very wonderful legacy from the past is bestowed upon mankind every time the Holy Eucharist is celebrated. In olden days in Egypt, Greece, Assyria, and countries of the East and Far East, the original forms of certain ceremonies which are still enacted, were conceived, composed, and directed by Adepts. Perchance, it is to these great ones that St. Paul refers in his words "the just men made perfect." (Heb. 12:23) The great and profoundly impressive ceremonials both helped toward and recognized the initiate's progress toward human perfection or--quoting St. Paul, reputed to be himself an initiate--"The measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Eph. 4:13) The possibility of adeptic inspiration finds a recognized place in the liturgy of the Liberal Catholic Church, as for example in what is sometimes called "The First Ray Benediction" and named "An Invocation." In this very remarkable prayer, aid is invoked on behalf of all those present who aspire to pass through what in ancient days were known as the successive grades of which the Mysteries were composed.

Freemasonry is regarded as another survival in more modern times of the ancient Mysteries. Other ceremonies are performed in other faiths, particularly those which include the dedication of a person's life--whether in infancy or maturity--to the practice of spiritual ideals. Another example is the *Upanayanam* which is the Hindu ceremony of the investiture with the sacred thread, the initiation which is the "second birth" given by the *Acharya*, and which constitutes the boy a *Dvijah* or twice-born. The word *Upanayana* or *Upanayanam*, means bringing near to the preceptor who initiates the boy by giving him the sacred mantra called *Gayatri* which protects him who chants it. The whole ceremony represents spiritual birth, and all its parts are significant. As spirits are sexless, the boy symbolically becomes sexless, and being such is bound to lead a life of chastity or celibacy. The new garment represents the new body. The girdle is wound round thrice to show that the boy has to study the three branches of religious teaching--*Samhitas*, the *Brahmanas*, and the *Upanishats*. Also the sacrificial thread consists of three strands knotted together and signifies the various triads which exist in the universe, such as the triple nature of spirit, the triple nature of matter, mind, speech, and body, each again divided into three as regards action; and so on. He who wears the thread should exercise a triple control, over his mind, speech, and body.

"...The staff, like the triple wand of the *Sannyasi* or mendicant monk, represents the control that a student should exercise over thoughts, words, and actions.

"...The one who exercises this triple rod in respect to all creatures, controlling desire and anger, attains perfection."

Another example was brought to my notice while staying in Salisbury in Southern Rhodesia. I was informed that there was a Bantu practitioner of the Balsunga tribe who would be willing to demonstrate his skills. He was regarded as a healer of good reputation, and the title of *witch doctor* was not applicable to him. He told me that when he could not readily diagnose an illness he linked himself with the ancestral

spirits of the tribe by means of meditations taught at his initiation. These beings, generally referred to as ancestors, then informed him of the nature of the disease and the best method of treatment.

I asked the medicine man to say something about his initiation insofar as reference to it was permissible. He replied that, of course, it was private. I had, however, caught glimpses of it and asked him whether he retreated into the forest with a few specially chosen people, and during the ceremony was he not made to lose consciousness and pass through certain experiences? Admitting that this was true, the medicine man proceeded to describe parts of the rite. The initiatory ceremony, he said, was performed by another medicine man who was assisted by a woman who sang sacred chants during part of it. The final rite, which was highly secret, took place deep in the jungle.

He had commenced his training when he was eleven years old. At that age it was prophesied that he would become a great medicine man and prophet, the ability having been transferred to him from both the medicine man initiate and his own grandmother in a special ceremony which was performed before she died. She had become famous chiefly as a rain-maker through the help which she also had received from the ancestral spirits. In answer to a question, he revealed that among these Central African people a woman can become a medicine man by means of the same training received by a man, and some do so.

Asked further about the ceremonies of initiation, he said that a few candidates suffer considerable pain, although others are able to make themselves immune to it. The candidate is first dressed as a medicine man and then seated before the officiants, who thereupon invoke the aid of the ancestral spirits by reciting very ancient formulas. They then successively place their hands upon the head of the candidate in order to convey the initiatory power to him, after which he is presented with a circlet of fur and shell, this constituting part of the insignia of his office. During the ceremony the candidate loses physical consciousness for some two hours, and on waking he possesses the powers of a medicine man and the capacity to serve as a vehicle for the knowledge and influence of the ancestral spirits of his people. These spirits are regarded by them as the highest of beings, and the tradition of communion with them and of magical works performed by their aid is extremely old. The major ceremony of initiation lasts all day and all night, after which the consecrated medicine man is empowered to initiate others who must be of good moral character and "hold all men in respect without exception."

A further very interesting example of the survival of the Ancient Mystery Tradition came to my notice when I accepted an invitation to deliver a course of lectures on Theosophy to a group of artists in Santa Fe, New Mexico, a cultural center close to the Pueblo Indian areas in the Rio Grande Valley where I was allowed intimate glimpses into American Indian life. Over each Pueblo village and tribe there is a kind of priest leader called a *Cacique*. I questioned the local one concerning his early training, and in response he recounted some of the procedures used to select and teach a youth to become a *Cacique*. Part of the training is concerned with the arousing of *Kundalini* (*The Serpent Fire, a psychospiritual force taught of in Hinduism and Theosophy, which in spiritual illumination rises up the spine to the crown of the head*), although this may be only from the base of the spine to the solar plexus, so far as I could judge. It appeared to me that the clairvoyance of the *Cacique* was mostly on the astral and lower mental levels, and mainly confined to the solar plexus chakram (one of seven superphysical force centers located within the body). This type of practice was probably a carry-over from the procedures of the old Atlantean race, the members of which were accustomed to use that chakram for clairvoyant purposes, whereas the Aryan occultist is ordered never to use any chakram below the heart because of the dangers associated with the arousing of the lower centers.

These examples demonstrate the continuance throughout long periods, of practices which may legitimately be classified as of the Lesser Mysteries. Whenever their effect includes an interior illumination and the bestowal of supernormal and hitherto unpossessed powers, then the threshold to the Greater Mysteries begins to be crossed. The latter are almost entirely concerned with expansions of consciousness which lead to deepening realization of what might perhaps be named "God-Selfhood." Both comprehension and realization begin to dawn of the interrelationships between the divine *within* man and the Divinity immanent within and transcendent beyond the universe. As the greatly privileged admissions to, and passages through, the degrees or grades in the Greater Mysteries are granted, corresponding increases of comprehension and realization are brought about.

In the Lesser Mysteries of olden days and their modern survivals, interior illumination is "initiated" by means of allegorical ceremonial actions that are proclaimed to be founded upon historical events. Unfortunately, the tendency continues

to exist to regard the whole procedure as allegorical alone, the dramatic enactment of a parable, as it were. The accents are placed upon externally visible symbology, bodily preparations, successive regalias, titles and offices during those periods when the temples are "open." Even so, since the Lesser and the Greater Mysteries are very intimately interrelated, flashes and even prolonged spiritual experiences from the Greater may be passed through during the performance of the rites of the Lesser, especially those in which initiations are directly conferred. Consecration of the bread and wine by a fully ordained Priest during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, and the mystical effects of their administration to members of congregations, are examples of this possibility and of the fact that in essence, the two forms of the Mysteries are at one. These ceremonies may correctly be referred to as initiations, for in those who are able to respond, the beginnings of spiritual understanding and realization are, as it were, initiated within reincarnating Ego, mind and brain.

Throughout all time, millions of people have passed through these preliminary rites in one form or another, from the purely primitive to the highly developed ritual initiations. In certain cases, the ceremonial coronation of sovereigns has the same meaning; for in this--as also in "dubbing" (ceremony of Knighting)--the Mystery Tradition is preserved. Indeed, in these and other ways--including the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation when fully ceremonial--the Lesser and the Greater Mysteries have never wholly been closed.

One of the most potent of all actions in spiritual ceremonials such as those mentioned, consists of the touch by the performing official upon parts of the head, whether by sword or, more directly, a part of the hand. At such times a certain degree of germination and resultant development always occurs within the initiate, whether or not realized in consciousness. In the ritual-act when the crown of the head is more especially concentrated upon, the recipient is most greatly blessed, occultly and spiritually awakened, and linked with his own inner Self. The making of the sign of the Cross with the thumb of the right hand on the crown of the head can be similarly effective, particularly when oil which has been ceremonially blessed is applied at the same time. From the Baptism of an infant up to the Crowning of a candidate, as in certain ceremonial actions and orders, the personal nature--particularly the brain-mind--is rendered increasingly responsive to impulses from the reincarnating spiritual Self. In these various ways, the Mysteries termed *ancient* have been perpetuated and maintained in their ceremonial functions, right down through the centuries to modern days. For this benediction--as for so many others visible and invisible--humanity owes the most profound gratitude to the adept hierophants and their fully initiated disciples.

(to be continued)

FROM VISION TO ACTION

Joy Mills

The following taken in part from a talk given at the 1987 Summer School at Lake Geneva. This passage is referring to text in THE Bhagavad Gita.

...Above all, we discover, as did Arjuna, a genuine freedom in action. No one can predict what the future will bring, but one's attitude toward the open horizons of tomorrow, one's view of the possibilities of every new day, limited or limitless, allows one to move freely without fear of the past or anxiety about the future. The freedom which was realized by Arjuna, as a result of the vision granted him, was not a freedom from performing action. Rather it consisted of a staggering responsibility. We too have been granted a vision, the theosophical worldview; at the same time that it has freed us from the bondage of despair and doubt, the enslavement to a dualistic and separative concept of existence, it has given us the wider freedom to act responsibly, compassionately, for the benefit of all, for we are one with all others and nowhere, in all the worlds, is there any other. Our vision of tomorrow will govern our action of today. Our action today will inevitable bear fruit tomorrow. The society's future is our mutual responsibility: let us together accept the challenge and together grasp the opportunity for shaping that future in accordance with the vision we have been granted.

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The Theosophic Life must be a life of service. Unless we are serving, we have no right to live.

The Theosophic Life, Annie Besant

THE SIMPLICITY OF LEARNING*Baden Offord*

Since our culture, our society, the very structure of our lives are all the outcome of our learning it is worth our while to look at the latter critically and carefully. What do we mean by learning? And what is the basis of knowledge?

A verse in the *Tao Teh King* by Lao-tzu says:

Those who know are not learned,
Those who are learned do not know.

Chinese philosophers distinguished between learning and knowledge. As they saw it, the essential difference was that learning was a faculty of the intellect and knowing was a faculty of the intuition. Learning is used in this sense to refer to the accumulation of facts; knowledge is an apprehension of truth via a faculty not of the mind. We might learn all the facts about a friend's life and become so familiar with its details and characteristics that we might feel justified in saying that we know him well. But a simple glance into his eyes will give more insight and understanding, and make the accumulation of facts unnecessary. The Chinese compared learning to the daylight because it was an activity of the mind. Knowledge, perception or intuition was like the starlight which enlightened the mind with truths and realizations gathered from the depths of the universe.

When you look into your friend's eyes and really see the life-process, it is the meeting of another in the present. When you think you know your friend because of the past things he or she did or said, that is second-hand knowledge and cannot be actual or true or within the life-process.

Knowledge in the sense used here is synonymous with wisdom with its direct perception and the grasping of noumenal truths. Learning, on the other hand, is, according to the Taoist philosophy, merely the gathering of the external material that is the basis of most human activity. Although knowledge is used in the *Tao Teh King* to refer to intuition, most of us use it to mean what we have acquired as a result of our cerebral processes--the information that we have accumulated over the years from our parents, our schools, our careers and our interests. We usually think of a knowledgeable person as being well informed, as having a good many external facts gathered into his brain and stored in his memory. In other words, we equate knowledge with memory.

If we know that life is a wholeness, we also know that it is sacred. It is not a fragmented thing but a homogeneous whole. Everything from a grain of sand to the highest mountain is interrelated. Life in its wholeness (which means in its purity) is beyond the limits of the intellect and the boundary of memory. The truly religious person is the one who grasps the wholeness of life and who perceives the close relationship of the individual with the totality. To be whole means having all the senses completely awakened and alive. In this lies freedom. One who is awake within and without is whole, and life becomes significant and precious at every moment. There is also order in the integrated life and everything is in its proper place. When a person is living in an awakened state, his life is one of total clarity for it mirrors the inner order.

The 'song of life' is one of wholeness and purity. The religious person is able to perceive the wholeness in the particular and to fathom the essence of the thing.

We usually think of knowledge as associated with thought and activity of the mind. We use various terms and words to express the wholeness of life. But what we can see intellectually is not, in reality, going to transform us. Knowledge is not sufficient for transformation because it has to do with comparison, with weighing the pros and cons and measuring with yardsticks. All this movement of thought is based on memory. Knowledge can never meet the present for it is sterile; it cannot transform us because it is based on the embedded conditionings of the past that have engraved their patterns on the physical, the neurological and the chemical systems. Of course, we may modify ourselves in any number of ways but these modifications lie only on the surface of our consciousness. Real transformation must take place on every level from the subtle to the gross. Transformation is not, therefore, the same as modification which is partial and limited. Transformation must involve the definite ending of one thing and the beginning of another.

The world is divided and torn apart. Nation is at enmity with nation; there is violence and immense suffering. The human race, at present, is a poor example of the wholeness of life. The world is fragmented because we have made knowledge more important in our lives than any other factor. We have been conditioned by religion, culture, politics and economic considerations. There is no space in this conditioning because it is full of content. That content is our pain, hopes, suffering, desires

and other kinds of psychological complexities. Life is like a vast field and we have become little blades of grass in a corner. So we have a limited appreciation and understanding; we do not see the whole field.

We are caught up in this web because we worship results and phenomena. In a world where authority rules in nearly every sphere we simply put up with whatever is placed before us. We are taught that if we concentrate on something the results will be guaranteed. We are told that to be successful we must follow a career, and to do that it is necessary to be unscrupulous, aggressive and competitive. We want to achieve fame, fortune, security, a good marriage, and we want authority to keep everything in order. These are all factors of our conditioning and education--what most of us would call our learning.

Of course, concentration is a useful thing; it sharpens the intellect and strengthens the memory and we must give our mind to the work in hand. But when it spills over into other parts of our life, then there is an imbalance. The 'I' is the concentration of the ego--the name, the form and the description of ourselves. Some teachers of meditation ask us to concentrate but this does not take us out of our corner of the field. Rather, it holds us there more firmly and makes it appear rich and desirable.

There are two parts to life--motion and motionlessness. Motion is activity (what the Chinese call 'the daylight') and is the area in which we use our conditioned faculties, such as speech, which come from thought. The motionlessness part of our lives is 'the starlight' where there is deep silence; it is the non-action of the mind. Deep dreamless sleep is motionlessness because there is an absence of activity. True meditation is silence--a state of being when one grows naturally--not an activity of the physical or psychological bodies.

Thus, motion refers to the gathering of the kind of knowledge that is of the mind, that helps us to write, to calculate and to work with technical ability. The brain has an immense capacity for storing memories, methods and information. Most people think that this kind of learning is the only aid to living and the only source of security.

Yet we can observe that this kind of learning brings about competition, prejudiced intellectualism and immoral scientific platitudes all of which have brought the world to its present crisis. Knowledge from a conditioned source cannot heal the suffering of humanity. It will always be mere modification and a limited and temporary solution.

The motionlessness part of our lives is the state where the unconditioned comes into play. Our lives are imbalanced; the daylight of activity goes on all the time at the expense of depth, sensitivity and wholeness. Unconditioned silence is more or less absent, yet it is fundamental to our sanity. It fails to attract us because it is not 'stimulating' or glamorous or self-gratifying and it is not something to acquire or to store. In fact, it is the dispersal of all that has been collected and the dissolution of accumulations. The rubbish we gather in the daylight is dissolved by the silence which comes from the quiet mind. The field which is the immensity of space and life is unconditioned; we have stayed too long in that tiny corner which we know as the self. We think that our nook is safe and secure, but in reality it is not. At some point that illusion will be swept away. It is through meditation, observation, and listening that we shall be introduced to that other part of our lives.

All of us can concentrate and we have acquired some skill in using the brain, but very few of us have the vital quality of a quiet mind. At present most of us are lop-sided human beings, caught up in the busyness of our small world. There must be a radical inner change from this corruption of human life. It has to begin with the individual.

How can we learn about life without using the faculty of concentration and the methods of measurement, judgement, and so forth? First of all, we must not imagine that some method or technique will bring us to a state of silence or tranquillity. Meditation cannot be learned like a school subject. It is a state of life, not a static way of being. It is a life-process and, unlike conditioned learning which is second-hand, it is face to face with the present.

Simplicity of learning occurs through observation. There are four areas to consider when we speak of observation--the relationship, mental states, religious action and spontaneous observation.

Relationship exists in everything. We are in constant relationship with the external world through the senses and through the innumerable challenges that occur in life. There are also the relationships with internal thoughts and emotions, as well as with physical needs and desires and with all the chemical and neurological movements. Even though there is this constant flow of relationship we are usually reserved about having full and total contact. For instance, we are happy to have

