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IN MEMORIUM WHITE LOTUS DAY, MAY 8, 1922.

THE DEATH OF H. P. BLAVATSKY.

A portion of the President-founder's address to the Sixteenth Convention of the Theosophical Society at Adyar December, 1891. Taken from the official report.

Colonel Olcott speaking:

The blackest sorrow of the year, or rather of all our years, was the sudden death of Madame H. P. Blavatsky, at London, on the 8th of May last. The awfulness of the shock was increased by its suddenness. She had been an invalid for years, it is true, but we had seen her more than once snatched back from the very brink of the grave and at the time of her demise she had laid plans for continued work in the near future. Some building was being done by her order at the London Headquarters, she had pending engagements unsettled, among them a most important one with myself. Her niece saw her on the previous day and made an appointment with her. In short, I do not believe she meant to die or knew she would die when she did. Generally, of course, she knew that she was liable to depart after certain work had been finished, but circumstances make me think she was surprised by a physical crisis, and died before she expected she would. If she had lived, she would have undoubtedly left her protest against her friends making a saint of her or a bible out of her magnificent, though not infallible writings. I helped to compile her "Isis Unveiled" while Mr. Keightley and several others did the same by the "Secret Doctrine." Surely we know how far from infallible are our portions of the books, to say nothing about hers. She did not discover, or invent Theosophy, nor was she the first or the ablest agent, scribe or messenger of the Hidden Teachers of the Snowy Mountains. The various scriptures of the ancient nations contain every idea now put forth, and in some cases possess far greater beauties and merits than any of her or our books. We need not fall into idolatry to signify our lasting reverence and love of her, the contemporary teacher, nor offend the literary world by pretending that she wrote it with the pen of inspiration. Nobody living was a more staunch and loyal friend of hers than I, nobody will cherish her memory more lovingly. I was true to her to the end of her life, and now I shall continue to be true to her memory. But I never worshipped her, never blinded my eyes to her faults, never dreamt that she was as perfect a channel for the transmission of occult teaching as some others in history had been, or as

the Masters would have been glad to have found. As her tried friend, then, as one who worked most intimately with her, and is most anxious that she be taken by posterity at her true high value; as her co-worker; as one long ago accepted, though humble, agent of the Masters; and finally, as the official head of the Society and guardian of the personal rights of its Fellows, I place on record my protest against all attempts to create an H. P. B. school, sect or cult, or to take her utterances as in the least degree above criticism. The importance of the subject must be my excuse for thus dwelling upon it at some length. I single out no individuals; mean to hurt nobody's feelings, I am not sure of being alive very many years longer, and what duty demands I must say while I can.

And now, brethren and friends, I come to a matter of the deepest, saddest interest. H. P. Blavatsky's body was cremated by her order, often reiterated and at long intervals. Before leaving India for Europe for the last time, she executed what proved to have been her last Will and Testament, and the original document is on file here as provided by law. Its date is the 31st January 1885. The witnesses were P. Sreenivasa Row, E. H. Morgan, T. Subba Row, and C. Ramiah. It contains a clause to the effect that she wishes her ashes to be buried within the compound of the Headquarters at Adyar; and another requesting that annually, on the anniversary of her death, some of her friends should assemble here and read a chapter of the "Light of Asia," and one of Bhagavat Gita. In compliance with her sacred wish, therefore, I have brought her ashes from London; across the Atlantic, across the American continent, across the Pacific, from Japan to Ceylon, and thence hither, that they may find the last resting-place she longed for, the holiest tomb that a servant of the Indian sages could have. Together we came, she and I—from New York to India over seas and lands, in the beginning of 1879, to relight the torch at the temple-door of Gynanam; together have we now come—I living, she a memory, and a handful of dust—again in 1891. Parted are we in body, yet united in heart and soul for our common cause, and knowing that we shall one day, in a future birth, again be comrades, co-disciples and colleagues. My private duty towards her is fulfilled; I now turn over to the Society the honorable custody of her ashes, and as President shall see that her last wishes are fulfilled so far as feasible.

(Col. Olcott here removed a silken covering, and exposed a closed, handsomely engraved Benares vase, in which were the ashes of Madame Blavatsky. All present rose to their feet and stood in solemn silence until the mortuary urn was re-covered. The president then continued his address.)

PRACTICAL OCCULTISM.

By F. Hartmann

(Reprinted from the "Theosophist" of November, 1886)

Much has been said and written about practical occultism, and yet there are few who have more than a very vague idea of the meaning of this expression. By "practical work," we mean neither the reading of books, nor the study of science, nor the exercise of charity, nor the promulgation of doctrines, nor the ennobling of character, nor the practice of virtue, but the

binding of thought. All the former practices are extremely useful and absolutely necessary to arrive at the fountain from which springs the Elixir of Life; but they do not put that elixir into our bodies; we must not merely arrive at the fountain, but drink of it, if we desire the immortal life. All our speaking and writing, and speculating about the laws of the spirit may be very useful, and render us more capable of attracting the spirit at some future period of our existence; but unless we unite ourselves with the spirit, the latter will pass away as it came, leaving empty the house in which it had no permanent dwelling. To unite the lower with the higher, to fix the spirit and to give it form within ourselves, is the great work of which the Alchemists speak, and of which the majority of mankind has no knowledge, and in the possibility of which the superficial reasoner does not believe. In Sanskrit this great work is called Yog, which means "to bind," let us now examine briefly what it is that we wish to bind.

Man lives in an all-surrounding ocean of air and cannot live without it. He breathes the air into his lungs, and in doing so a part of the oxygen of that air is bound up in his body by combining with the particles of his venous blood; oxidizing it and transforming it into arterial blood, while at the same time the blood draws its supply from the chyle, and the chyle is supplied by the food that enters the organs of alimentation and digestion. But simultaneously with the process of assimilation a process of dissolution takes place; the oxygen, absorbed and bound up for a while in the blood, is used up and thrown out of the organism in various ways; if we could retain the power we have gained by breathing and prevent its loss, our bodies would last for ever.

But besides the ocean of material air which surrounds the world, there is another ocean, still more refined and ethereal, and still more impalpable than the air, the ocean of the living spirit, and as the lungs of man breathe the material air, so the heart of man breathes the spirit. Deep in the "heart" of man is the mysterious centre, the miniature counterpart of the great spiritual sun or "God," sleeping in the vast majority of mankind in an unconscious or semi-conscious state, attracting to itself the spiritual air which it needs for its life, and thereby inducing the movements of the material heart and the physiological process of breathing. The "heart" breaths spirit, as the lungs breath air, and as parts of the all-surrounding ocean of air pass in and out of the physical body of man and help to build up the physical organism of the latter, so also parts of the all-surrounding ocean of spirit penetrate down to the spiritual centre of man, where they may awaken the sleeping germ to life and consciousness, develop the spiritual foetus, and finally produce the full grown regenerated man by the assistance of the nutriment furnished by the refined elements of the human soul. As the physical existence of man depends upon his practice of the art of breathing,—an art instinctively practised by every living being; so the spiritual life of man as an individual or person, depends on his acquiring the art of breathing the spirit, to consolidate it and retain it, and to render within himself that which is volatile and transient, fixed and permanent. If the spiritual centre in man becomes united to a certain extent with that which flows to it from the universal ocean of spirit, it will begin to awaken to spiritual consciousness and to see the light of the latter; it will become illuminated with wisdom and attain a real knowledge of the truth, independent of opinion and intellectual speculation; it will be like a

sun illuminating the soul, giving light to the "moon" of the intellect, but knowing spiritual truths independently of the latter.

The only power by which this process may be accomplished is the power of thought, and thought only becomes active, powerful, and manifest, if it is expressed through the word. The whole of the universe with all its forms, the form of man included, is—according to the assertions of all the sages and illuminated seers—a product of the thought (or "active Imagination") of the Great First and Supreme Cause, having found expression through His Word (or active Will), through the action of which it became manifest or revealed. If the counterpart of the Universal Supreme Cause, resting within the centre of the soul of man, awakens to a consciousness of its own existence and powers, it will begin its immortal career as a self-conscious entity, all-powerful and all-wise, whose final destiny is far beyond the limits of our intellectual speculation. It must, however, be remembered that mortal man with all his power of thought, cannot at his pleasure, awaken the divine spiritual germ to consciousness, unless that germ chooses to awaken; the finite cannot control the infinite and cause it to obey its commands; it can only prepare the conditions under which the Eternal One may act; it can only prepare the temple for the residence of the god; it rests with the god, whether or not he chooses to enter.

Practical occultism or Yog consists therefore in the sinking of one's own thoughts down to the centre of the heart, excluding all other thoughts, which do not serve the purpose in view, and giving it there expression in a word, a letter or a sign. Gradually such a sign, letter or word may become alive within ourselves, we shall hear it with our interior ear, see it with the interior eye, and perceive it by the interior sense of feeling. Other interior senses will be opened and certain manifestations of an interior power will take place, of which it would not be wise to speak; and the reason why they should not be mentioned is, not that we wish to appear mysterious or to withhold any knowledge from others; but because an untimely knowledge of such effects would act injuriously upon the imagination of those who desire to obtain their results; they might fancy they possessed them, and their fancy would distract their attention and thereby prevent the accomplishment of their object.

And now we come to one of the most important points regarding this subject. The power of the "Word," if it attains spiritual life, is only comprehended by few, and it is not at all immaterial what thought, sign or word we choose; for by the action of the living word those elements in the human constitution which correspond to its meaning become endowed with life, and if they are such as ought to be kept in subjection, they may become rebellious and destroy reason as well as the health of the body. No man's constitution is exactly like that of another, and an exercise which may be good and useful for one, may be evil and injurious for another. The beginner therefore requires the guidance of a spiritual instructor, an illuminated practical occultist, or in other words an Adept, to instruct him and give him the pass word and sign, until he has his own interior senses opened, and when he may receive further instructions by his own spiritual ego or "Master."

In India the common word used for the practice of Yog is Aum. How far this word may be useful for all beginners, I am unable to state. In Europe the letters J.A.O. and afterwards the other vowels and consonants are some-

times practised for the same purpose, until they are seen, felt and heard. They then form the key-word to other mysteries, but I do not know whether or not any one has ever succeeded in attaining a high degree of development by following such general rules and without having any guide to give him special instructions.

There are few who can see the necessity of such instruction, few whose Karma affords them an opportunity to obtain it, and fewer still, who having obtained such instructions, have the energy and determination to carry them out to the end. And yet without this practical work how little can we accomplish. Only those can enjoy eternal life, who have come into possession of it by the process of spiritual regeneration. The spiritual life belongs to the spirit alone and is independent of the life which acts in the body. With the first divine and interior thought, penetrating the whole of the interior "I" and rendering us able to feel the truth, even as from afar, the germ is deposited for the future regenerated spiritual man. If this germ is continually supplied with appropriate food by a continuous flow of thought and good-will, it may become self-conscious and develop. "Then the new man may grow and the old one die; for the new one has seen the light and begins to love it." Without this regeneration we shall, at the time when the soul separates itself from the body, again enter the state of the formless, to begin the struggle for self-consciousness and individuality in some future incarnation; ennobled perhaps by merits acquired during the past or weighted by new evil Karma; while those who have attained spiritual self-consciousness and self-knowledge will be free from the bonds of matter.

(To be concluded)

THE PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT.

"Enq. But if you have such wise and good men to guide the Society how is it that so many mistakes have been made?"

"Theo. The Masters do NOT guide the Society, nor even the Founders; and no one has ever asserted that they did: they only watch over and protect it. This is amply proved by the fact that no mistakes have been able to cripple it, and no scandals from within, or the most damaging attacks from without, have been able to overthrow it. The Masters look at the future, not at the present, and every mistake is so much more accumulated wisdom for the days to come. That other "Master" who sent the man with the five talents did not tell him how to double them, nor did he prevent the foolish servant from burying his one talent in the earth."

H. P. B.

We all recognize the unity of life which lies behind that expression of Brotherhood to which every Theosophist has subscribed. We cannot begin to live Brotherhood until we have recognized and felt "Group consciousness." Co-operation is the beginning of Brotherhood, it is learning to work in group formation, it is the Key Note of the New Race.

It is possible to be a Theosophist without being a member of a Theosophical Society, but under the Law of Brotherhood which works toward unity and group consciousness, once having joined this Brotherhood Organization we have the opportunity to work with our brother members for the common cause; a cause, by the way, which is not the building of a great Society, or the establishing of a Theosophical system of thought, as such, but the presenting of the Ageless Wisdom to our fellow men in whatever aspect and degree is most needed for the helping of the Race. To aid the group to help the world that is the true objective, of the individual member.

To refuse longer to work in group formation because we dislike certain prominent ones, or our immediate co-workers, or because we are disgusted with things as we find them within the group, is failure. It means inability to discriminate between the essential and the less essential and must bring the hard karma of delay in the plan and of failure to use opportunity earned.

The great mass of humanity works out its karma under the Law generally quite unaided by individual help. The Masters work primarily with groups and a disciple's usefulness and progress is measured not alone by his prominence, brilliance or virtue but by his increasing ability to raise the rate of vibration of ever larger groups.

The Disciple, however, because he has recognized the Law of Sacrifice and is pledged to Service, is given special aid and protection. This aid very largely takes the form of opportunity to balance his karma as he goes along, and to work off old karma as fast as is consistent with the work in hand. One of the main lessons of the Initiate is to learn to balance his own karma, for it is because the Master automatically and immediately balances his karma that he can work in the three worlds and yet remain free. Because the Disciple and the Initiate have elected consciously to submit to a forcing process in their own evolution in order that they may the better serve, they necessarily make more mistakes than those not subjected to so great a strain and the resulting karma would render them quite useless for long periods of time if the Master did not help them to adjust it at frequent intervals.

As there is individual karma so also there is group karma and a wise comprehension of the present situation in the T. S. requires some understanding of this factor.

The Theosophical Society is a group which has consciously chosen to accept this forcing process in order to be an instrument for the Masters in world service. It is therefore in somewhat the same relation to the group of Masters as the Disciple is to his own Guru and it may therefore expect the same increased number of mistakes, the same resulting karmic crises and the same kind of adjusting help. This help it receives for, "No mistakes have been able to cripple it and no scandels have been able to overthrow it."

One thing which the Society does in a most peculiar and interesting and often in a most uncomfortable way, is to take an apparently indiscriminate lot of ordinary humanity and begin at once to make occultists of them. Very naturally this motley crowd, of which you and I are parts, makes quite a mess of it and gets all stirred up every once and a while and this very business of being all stirred up saves its life. The usefulness of the Theosophical group would, as in the case of the Disciple, be very quickly destroyed, if its karma were not apportioned in time, adjusted in intensity and arranged for the further teaching of those who participate therein. This is the protection given

our Society. This the Masters do for us, using the mistakes of the leaders and members to create situations whereby the individuals may be stirred to that independent thought and action which produces the needed balancing and adjustment and liberates force and energy for larger constructive usefulness.

This is what is going on at the present time within the Theosophical Society. The period of adjustment is the period during which the unit is forced to consider the condition and the welfare of his group. The period which follows of peace and growth and work is the period wherein the unit having made the necessary adjustment can work with renewed vigor and effectiveness through his group for the helping of his fellow men.

If this is so we are getting ready for bigger and grander and more important times and effectiveness. It is often said that after each shaking the Society goes on with renewed life to better things. It has been so in the past; it will be so this time. This we can say for our comfort. The power of the period of peace and growth must be proportional to the intensity of the adjustment struggle; the effectiveness of the work of the days to come will match the effectiveness of the adjustment achieved. We could almost be eager to be shaken yet a little more if we could only get our eyes off of the ugliness of the immediate foreground on to the beauty of the possibilities on the horizon. . .

Surely then, we will not get disgusted or tired or self righteous, or allow ourselves to be shaken out of the Society either singly or in little group fragments, thus weakening the body of the whole and creating individual bad karma for ourselves. Better to remain where we are striving sincerely, dispassionately and disinterestedly to understand the lessons which the turmoil of the hour must inevitably hold for us and for our group.

The fundamental purpose back of all the varying situations and incidents in the different Sections is the forcing of the members to think for themselves and to realize and take up the responsibilities which are their own. Let us therefore study the principles and the laws of right Theosophical group activity and organization, realizing ourselves as conscious participants in the business of the whole, in order that we may wisely take advantage of the present period and pass on to that happier endeavor which is waiting for us on the threshold of tomorrow.

F. B.

OUTLINE LESSONS ON THE BHAGAVAD GITA.

Alice A. Bailey.

SYNOPSIS.

1. The Battlefield Discourse I.
2. Teachings on Discrimination Discourse II.
3. Teachings on the Self..... Discourse VIII.
4. Teachings on the higher and lower Self Discourse XVI.
5. Teachings on the Knower and the Known..... Discourse XIII.
6. Teachings on the Forms indwelt by God..... Discourse XI.
7. Teachings on the Qualities of Matter..... Discourse XIV.
8. Teachings on the knowledge of the Self..... Discourse VII.

9. Teachings on the three grades of men.....Discourse XVII.
10. Teachings on actionDiscourse III.
11. Teachings on Wisdom, the result of knowledge and ac-
tionDiscourse IV.
12. Teachings on renunciation of action.....Discourse V.
13. Teachings on Self-disciplineDiscourse VI.
14. Teachings on DevotionDiscourse XII.
15. Teachings on Unity, or the Secret Science.....Discourse IX.
16. Teachings on Sovereignty, or Will-power.....Discourse X.
17. Teachings on AttainmentDiscourse XV.
18. Teachings on Liberation by renunciationDiscourse XVIII.

LESSON I.

The Battlefield

The First Discourse:

Arjuna's thought: "Arjuna sank down . . . his mind overborne by grief."

1. The Personalities involved:
 - a. Arjuna, the warrior.....I.21-23,47
 - b. Arjuna's Master.....I.2
 - c. Arjuna's relatives, friends, teachers and associates.I.26,27,33,34
2. The Purpose in view:
 - a. The carrying out of duty.....II.31-33
 - b. The liberation of ArjunaII.37
 - c. The attainment of dispassionII.48
3. The Problem of Arjuna:
 - a. Should he fight that which he loves.....I.31
 - b. Would kingship in the three worlds adequately re-
wardI.35
 - c. Is it not a sin to fightI.36,39,45
 - d. How can one know one's dutyII.7
 - e. How can one know that one is right.....II.54

Topic for meditation:

The Blessed Lord said: "Whence hath this dejection befaller thee in this perilous straight, ignoble, heaven-closing, infamous, O Arjuna?"

Yield not to impotence . . . it doth not befit thee. Shake off this paltry faint-heartedness! Stand up, O conqueror of foes."

Note: The numbers in Roman numerals denote the discourse, the ordinary numerals denote the verse.

A detail outline study of Lesson I will appear next month, Outlines of the succeeding lessons will follow.