

THE BEACON

A LITTLE PERIODICAL INTENDED FOR THEOSOPHISTS

Issued monthly from Room 1302, 135 Broadway, New York City
by the Beacon Committee.

FOSTER BAILEY, MANAGER

SUBSCRIPTION FIFTY CENTS A YEAR

SINGLE COPIES FIVE CENTS

OL. I. No. 2.

MAY, 1922.

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A CATECHISM.

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Note: These words used to be recited by the participants in some of the mysteries before they passed on into the Greater Mysteries.

What seest thou, Oh Pilgrim? Lift up thine eyes and tell what thou beholdest.

A. I see a ladder, mounting within the vault of blue, its feet lost sight of in the mists and fogs that circle round our planet.

Where standest thou, Oh, Pilgrim? On what are placed thy feet?

A. I stand upon a portion of the ladder, the fourth division well nigh mounted; its latter part stretches before me into the darkness of a stormy night. Beyond that sphere of utter gloom I see the ladder rise again, radiant and glowing in its fifth division.

What marks those portions which you thus describe as separated from another part? Do not all form but one completed ladder of clearly marked proportions?

A. Always a gap appeareth to the eye, which (when approached more closely) resolveth then itself into a Cross, by which one mounteth to the next division.

What causeth then the Cross? How mount you by its aid?

A. The Cross is formed by aspirations, instilled by God-like urge, which cut athwart the lower world desires, implanted by the life developed from below.

Explain more clearly what you mean, and how that Cross becomes the Way.

A. The arms that form the Cross become the great dividing line, placed twixt the lower and the higher. Upon those arms the hands are nailed,—the hands that grasp and hold, ministering to the lower needs, trained thus through many aeons. Lo, when the hands are helpless held, and cannot grasp and hold, the inner life slips from its sheath, mouting the limb upright. It passeth from the lower fourth, and the Cross doth bridge the gap.

- Q. Pass they with ease that mount that limb, and leave the fourth behind?
- A. They pass through tears, through clouds and mists; they suffer and they die. They bid adieu to all earth's friends; they mount the Way alone; they bridge the gap with loving deeds done in the pain of living; they lift one hand aloft to Him Who standeth just above; they lean one downward to the man who standeth next below. The hands, freed from the transverse arms, are freed but to be held,—held by the One Who standeth by, held by the one they lift. Only the empty nail-marked hands can keep the chain complete.
- Q. Where ends the ladder's length? What point of gloom is pierced by it and where projects its end?
- A. It cuts the crystallising sphere with all its myriad forms; it pierces through the watery plane, washed by the swirling tides; it passes through the nethermost hell, down into densest maya, and ends within the latent fire, the molten lake of fiercest burning, touching the denizens of fire, the Agnichaitans of the scarlet heat.
- Q. Where mounts the ladder's length? Where is its consummation?
- A. It mounteth through the radiant spheres, through all their six divisions. It riseth to the mighty Seat within the final fifth, and passeth from that mighty Seat to yet another greater.
- Q. Who sits upon that mighty Seat within the final fifth?
- A. He with the Name we mention not, save in utter adoration; the Youth of Endless Summers, the Light of Life itself, the Wondrous One, the Ancient One, Lord of Venusian Love, the great Kumara with the Flaming Sword, the Peace of all the Earth.
- Q. Sits He alone, this Wondrous One, upon His sapphire throne?
- A. He sits alone, yet close upon the rainbow steps there stand three other Lords, garnering the product of Their work and sacrificing all Their gain to aid the Lord of Love.
- Q. Are They assisted in Their work? Do other Ones of greater powers than ours stand too upon the ladder?
- A. These mighty Four, Action and Love, in wise co-operation work with Their Brothers of a lesser grade, the three Great Lords we know.
- Q. Who aid these mighty Lords? Who carry on Their lower work, linking the lower with the higher?
- A. The Brothers of Logoic Love in all Their many grades. They stay within the final fifth till it absorbeth all the fourth.
- Q. Where mounts the ladder then?
- A. To the greatest Lord of all, before Whom e'en that Ancient One bends in obeisance low; before Whose throne of effulgent light Angels of highest rank, Masters and Lords of uttermost compassion, prostrate Themselves and humbly bend, waiting the WORD to rise.
- Q. When sounds that WORD and what transpires when it echoes thro' the spheres?
- A. That WORD sounds not till all is done, until the Lord of endless love deemeth the work correct. He uttereth then a lesser Word that vibrateth through the scheme. The greater Lord of cosmic Love, hearing the circling sound, addeth completion to the chord, and breatheth forth the whole.

- Q. What will be seen, Oh, Pilgrim on the Way, when sounds that final chord?
- A. The music of the endless spheres, the merging of the seven; the end of tears, of sin, of strife, the shattering of forms; the finish of the ladder, the blending in the All, completion of the circling spheres and their entry into peace.
- Q. What part, Oh, Pilgrim on the Way, play you within this scheme? How will you enter into peace? How stand before your Lord?
- A. I play my part with stern resolve, with earnest aspiration; I look above, I help below; I dream not, nor I rest; I toil; I serve; I reap; I pray; I am the Cross; I am the Way; I tread upon the work I do; I mount upon my slain self; I kill desire, and I strive, forgetting all reward. I forego peace; I forfeit rest, and in the stress of pain, I lose myself and find Myself and enter into peace.

PRACTICAL OCCULTISM

(Continued)

By F. Hartmann

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

What is man, but a centre around which organized substance has crystallized, and to which continually flow and from which radiate the invisible principles of the universe? He is continually subject to change and remains not for two moments of time exactly the same. Only that which is absorbed by and consolidated with his organism belongs to him and forms a part of his body while it remains with it; only those spiritual elements which are absorbed by his spirit and united with it will belong to his spiritual body and form a part of it in the future. Having attained spiritual substance and spiritual life, he will no more require a physical form, his power of perception will be incomparably more perfect than that of the physical senses; his consciousness will be far higher and penetrate to the centre of everything, he will not need to speculate with opinions, for he will possess real knowledge and he will be a Theosophist, because he will be one with Wisdom and Truth, and live in the Light. But there is still another and very important reason why this practice of practical occultism should be undertaken by those who desire spiritual progress. We are told that those who wish to become perfect and pure must get rid of all impurities, selfish desires, vices and passions. This is easier said than done; for how can we get rid of a desire for that which we desire? Man is a product of will and imagination, and he cannot change his will, imagination and desire, unless he has the will and desire to change it. There are two ways in which an evil inclination, evil desires and vices may be changed. The first way is to experience the suffering which they produce. An evil desire produces evil acts, and evil acts are productive of suffering and repentance. Some people follow this road. It is a long and dangerous road and often leads to perdition; for the gratification of sensual pleasures is followed by a remembrance of the pleasures experienced and causes a desire for their repetition, and it may not be before the close of our life that the suffering which must necessarily follow is experienced. There is another road more sure, nearer and safer; Nature suffers no vacuum; we cannot eradicate an evil unless we replace it by good. It will be useless to attempt to pump bad air out of a vessel, unless we can fill it

with better air; and if we fill it with water, the air will come out without any effort to expel it. Evil desires will exist as long as they are nourished by evil thoughts, and evil thoughts will exist in the mind as long as there are any evil inclinations to attract them. If we can send only good thoughts down to the centre of the soul, the evil desires will soon be starved and die. This is, however, extremely difficult to accomplish, as long as we are controlled by our thoughts and do not obtain the power of controlling them ourselves; nor can we obtain control over our thoughts as long as we allow them to flow into our minds in an irregular manner. Only the Adept thinks that which he chooses, the average man thinks that which comes into his mind. If any one doubts this, let him attempt to keep a single thought in his mind only for a few minutes, without allowing another thought to enter, and he will soon experience the difficulty. But in this practice of Yog the student receives a certain word or sentence, which exactly suits his condition, and if he seriously applies himself to his work, letting his thought continually dwell upon this word, unwelcome and inappropriate thoughts will soon cease to be attracted to him, the evil elements of his soul will die off, and if he attains the power of inner vision, he may even see the processes going on in the organization of his soul and witness the decomposition and putrefaction of its evil parts and excrescences, in the same manner as we may see a wart or a cancer on the physical body decay and drop off; until at least when all these evil parts have perished, there will be nothing left to attract such evil thoughts, which, like birds of prey, assemble where the odour of a carcass attracts them, and instead of animal elementals, the powers of light will surround the purified soul, in whose center rests eternal life, peace and happiness.

Motion lives in the circumference, but in the centre is rest. The surface is the realm of illusions, but in the depths of the soul exists knowledge. The periphery is surrounded by clouds and darkness, but in the centre is light. There the spirit breathes upon the soul, and there is the kingdom which is the inheritance of those who choose to be elect. From this centre comes the light and the life which pervades the soul and the physical body. The soul is the circle formed by thought around the spiritual centre; but the power producing and fixing thought radiates from that centre and in it are all powers united. In this centre is the sun of your spiritual world; its light is the Truth, its heat is the love for the good and the beautiful. The organ for light is Faith, based upon knowledge and experience; the organ for heat is the heart. Let them act together in harmony, and you will obtain life, consciousness and power by the process of spiritual regeneration. All that is of real value to know, rests in the depths of the soul. Learn to ask at the centre, and you will receive the true answer. In the average man the light burning in the sanctuary is not perceived, although its heat may be felt. The voice sounding from the interior is not distinctly understood, although it may be heard through the thick walls of the semimaterial soul like the ringing of bells at a great distance; but as the power of feeling, in the physical organism, formed the foundation for the development of the senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, etc., so likewise the power of intuition will, in the growing spiritual organism, develop the inner sight, hearing, smell and taste. These things will not be understood nor believed by those who reason merely from the material plane; neither are they written for the purpose of convincing such people; but to those who seriously desire to know the truth, the above hints may be useful, to lead them to a path, where they will find still more light.

THE TESTING TIME.

These are days wherein quietness and confidence must be our strength and wherein the only safeguard lies in a close searching of underlying motive. For the disciple, action must be the fruit of meditation rather than the result of emotional reaction or personality allegiance.

As seen by us, the struggle consists of a striving for apparently diverse ideals. As seen on the inner side, the contest leads to a testing of motive and through this testing is made apparent to the watching Guides, who (in every group) are capable of clear thinking, accurate discrimination, patient endurance and able to proceed along the probationary Path towards the portal untroubled and disturbed in their inner life by the surface turmoil. To be conscious of this inner calm and yet not led thereby into inaction or acquiescence in the conditions which have produced the turmoil and necessitated an adjustment period requires a clear mind and an emotional body well under control. Could we but see it, the unrest everywhere is producing good far outweighing the seeming evil. Souls are finding themselves and learning dependence upon the Inner Ruler. When all outward props fail and all apparent authorities differ then the soul is forced to seek within. This inner search unflinching produces results, for it brings contact with the Higher Self in gradually increasing degrees and leads to that self-reliance and inward calm which is based on the rule of the God Within, and which makes a man an instrument for service in the world.

Several things are apparent at this juncture to the careful student of men and motives and the conditions which obtain must be pondered from the wider point of view if a true perspective of the importance of the problems of our group is to be found.

Even the Great Ones Themselves have, as has been told before, to lay Their plans largely, thus allowing for the lack of perception of those on the physical plane among the workers and servers of all grades. The aim They have in view is not primarily the reconstruction of the T. S. in America. This is the work of all of us in all parties remembering that sincere servants exist in every group and that we must find the way together. The work They have in view is far larger even than the Theosophical Society for the T. S. is but an organization among many others that They seek to use. The whole difficulty lies in the point of evolution reached by the mass of men in the occident,—a point indicative of the success of the evolutionary process and not of its failure. This point might be expressed as the swinging from a rank materialism into a profound realization of the unseen without the balance that comes from knowledge. We are apt to forget that forces have been set in motion by the numerous groups of thinkers everywhere—such as the Spiritualists, the Christian Scientists, the New Thought workers, and the religious thinkers and experimental scientists in every occidental country—which are gradually working on the subtler bodies of men and bringing them to a point where they realize three things; the reality of the unseen; the terrific power of thought; and the need of scientific knowledge of these matters. In the meantime these forces have been brought into action, and the result in the interim between the concept and the realization is apparent chaos. Yet all this is encouraging if we will but lift our eyes from the present detail in our immediate foreground and fix them on the underlying causes.

Another apparent feature of the present world period is the forced training process now going on, a process peculiarly noticeable to us within our own Society. The Guides of the race are taking the opportunity to train the sons of men in self-reliance with two main objects in view.

First, this training will enable them to exist through the storm of an occult nature that has descended on the race, so that by their survival of the cataclysm they may demonstrate their ability to take part in certain plans of the Manu. In the work of segregation in the past the disasters that occurred tried the depths of the natures of the then existent men, and persisted for a long time. First, in Lemurian days, the endurance of the physical was tried as never before; then in Atlantean days came the testing of those who psychically could discriminate. In the first case, the test lay in the survival of those whose emotional bodies were alive enough to carry their owners through the test because they realized the endlessness of life, and therefore the nothingness of the physical form. In Atlantis the test consisted in the trying out of the mental development of those who then lived in order to see if their discriminative mind would guide them through the psychic chaos of their time. Today the test shifts one spiral higher, and those will survive and form the dependable nucleus who can command sufficient intuition to guide them in the mental chaos everywhere to be seen. In these thoughts lies much of comfort for they convey opportunity to all and give the clue to the underlying need for the present strife.

Therefore as America is to be the home of the new race the test assumes proportions here that might cause consternation if the reasons were not known. The conflicting situations, the charges and counter charges, the statements, official, semi-official and otherwise have given all the opportunity to find liberation solely through the exercise of their own inner discernment apart from the outer help that might have been given. An authoritative statement as to the side on which the Masters stood (if indeed They ever take sides) would deprive us all of our birthright, the opportunity now offered for the cultivation of this intuitive faculty and its application in the field of action. It is the inner development of the units which is watched, the political aspect and decisions being of comparatively small import. Let us therefore seek the inner vision which is not blinded by the outer fog.

Secondly, the watching Guides are taking this opportunity to train certain individuals in every country who, through karma and effort, are ready for a momentous step forward, a step which will make them available for fuller service (always the goal of the disciple) when the Great Lord comes in the course of time. What this step is lies with each aspirant to find out, and he will find it not in fervid search for spiritual achievement for himself but along the line of self abnegation, of service and of steady adherence to the work to be done in the reaching and the raising of the mass of men. The value of the individual consists, as we have been taught, in his ability to work with many and to impress for good, groups more than individuals. In all lands such people exist and in all organizations. Not only in the Theosophical Society are they to be found but in all parties, political, religious, educational, scientific and speculative, and pains are being taken with them at this time to develop their spiritual perception and their ability to intuit, the aim in view being to subject them to a further push forward so as to increase their usefulness and to increase the number of those available for big work in the coming centuries.

FROM THE WATCH-TOWER EDITORIALS IN LUCIFER
FOR APRIL, 1892

The American Convention will feel a sore blank when the representative of Europe, G. R. S. Mead, rises, and no greetings † falls from his lips. Mine was the honourable duty of carrying her message last year, and well do I remember the densely crowded room, and upturned rows of eager expectant faces, to which I delivered that message—her last in her latest incarnation. As sentence after sentence fell on the listening ears through deepest silence, how the faces changed with the changing tones of the address; respect and love welling forth to the Teacher, inspiration caught from the message—the dullest could not but have felt how much she was honoured, how deeply revered. People wonder at the hold exercised by H. P. B. on the hearts and brains of those whom she taught, at the singular sway of her fascination. There is the fact: let folk explain it as they may. Apart from her position in Occultism as Teacher, and the unique post she thus occupied alone and unchallenged in the Theosophical Society, some explanation of her influence may be found by those who contrast large-hearted generosity with the narrow carpings of mediocre men and women, her courage with their timidity, her boldness in being herself with the conventionalities of their fashionable hypocrisies. She was essentially great, while most of us are essentially petty, and that is part of the explanation of the puzzle.

Some may have seen in the report of the Convention of Adyar a fear expressed by the president lest love and reverence for H. P. B. should run into idolatry, and so her very success should jeopardize her lifework. * It is well always to be on our guard against a danger that has wrought much evil in the past, and not to feel too sure that we are beyond the perils which beset our neighbours. Idolatry is a weakness, to whomsoever offered, and H. P. B. was always swift to check any tendency in that direction. We could do her memory no worse disservice than to veil it in idolatrous fumes. On the other hand, hearty and loving recognition of a great soul, uncarping readiness to admire and to reverence the life of whole-hearted devotion to a noble ideal, tend to "purify the emotions" and to rouse ourselves to imitation, and these we need not be ashamed or afraid to give to Helen Petrovna Blavatsky. There are some—and I gladly and thankfully place myself among them—who owe her more than life, to whom she showed the Light and opened the gateway to the Path. No gratitude can be too deep to give in return for this priceless gift, and if this gratitude takes the form of serving the Society she founded, and of spreading the truths for which she sacrificed her life, I do not think that even she, much as she shrank from personal homage, would have refused it. None the less let us all remember that it is our duty to the Society—our duty as well as that of the President—to guard its freedom from any and all fetters, so that we may not let our love for the Founder lead us into narrowing the Society whose basis she made so broad.

ANNIE BESANT.

† The annual message from Madam Blavatsky.

* This address was printed in the April number of the Beacon.

EIGHTEEN OUTLINE LESSONS ON
THE BHAGAVAD GITA.

PREPARED BY
Alice A. Bailey.

LESSON II.

Teachings on Discrimination

The second Discourse:

Arjuna's thought: "I desire not victory . . . for how, killing our kinsmen, may we be happy?"—I.32-37.

1. Discrimination as to reality:
 - a. The Dweller in the body, and the body.....I.12,13
I.18,23,30
 - b. The Self and the not-self.....I.61,64
 - c. The Real and the unreal.....I.16,17
2. Discrimination as to method:
 - a. Pleasure and pain.....I.14,15,38,56
 - b. Reason and mind.....I.41,44,49,53
 - c. Attachment and non-attachment.....I.55,62,64
 - d. The pairs of opposites.....I.45,48
3. Discrimination as to time:
 - a. The path to be trodden and the goal.....I.69
 - b. Evolution and pralaya.....I.28

Topic for Meditation:

The Blessed Lord said: "The disciplined Self, moving among sense—objects with senses free from attraction and repulsion, mastered by the Self, goeth to Peace."—II.64.

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

Lack of space prevents the printing of the detailed outline of Lesson I as promised in the April Beacon. Those specially interested can secure type-written copies for twenty-five cents by applying to the manager of the Beacon. This four-page detail outline of Lesson I will serve as a useful example for those students who wish to seriously study and enlarge upon each lesson as it appears.

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