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LETTER FROM H. P. B. TO THE AMERICAN CONVENTION OF 1888

The following is the first Letter of H. P. Blavatsky to the American Theosophists, and was sent to the second American Convention, held at Chicago, April 22nd and 23rd, 1888:

To WILLIAM Q. JUDGE, General Secretary of the American Section of the Theosophical Society:

My dearest brother and co-founder of the Theosophical Society:

In addressing to you this letter, which I request you to read to the convention summoned for April 22nd, I must first present my hearty congratulations and most cordial good wishes to the assembled Delegates and good Fellows of our Society, and to yourself—the heart and soul of that body in America. We were several to call it to life in 1875. Since then you have remained alone to preserve that life through good and evil report. It is to you chiefly, if not entirely, that the Theosophical Society owes its existence in 1888. Let me then thank you for it, for the first, and perhaps for the last time publicly and from the bottom of my heart, which beats only for the cause you represent so well and serve so faithfully. I ask you also to remember that, on this important occasion, my voice is but the feeble echo of other more sacred voices, and the transmitter of the approval of Those whose presence is alive in more than one true Theosophical heart, and lives, as I know, preeminently in yours. May the assembled Society feel the warm greeting as freely as it is given and may every Fellow present, who realizes that he has deserved it, profit by the Blessings sent.

Theosophy has lately taken a new start in America which marks the commencement of a new Cycle in the affairs of the Society in the West. And the policy you are now following is admirably adapted

to give scope for the widest expansion of the movement, and to establish on a firm basis an organization which, while promoting feelings of fraternal sympathy, social unity, and solidarity, will leave ample room for individual freedom and exertion in the common cause, that of helping mankind.

The multiplication of local centers should be a foremost consideration in your mind, and each man should strive to be a center of work in himself. When his inner development has reached a certain point, he will naturally draw those with whom he is in contact under the same influence; a nucleus will be formed, round which other people will gather, forming a center from which information and spiritual influence radiate, and towards which higher influences are directed.

But let no man set up a popery instead of Theosophy, as this would be suicidal and has ever ended most fatally. We are all fellow-students, more or less advanced; but no one belonging to the Theosophical Society ought to count himself as more than, at best, a pupil-teacher—one who has no right to dogmatize.

Since the Society was founded, a distinct change has come over the spirit of the age. Those who gave us commission to found the Society foresaw this now rapidly growing wave of transcendental influence following the other wave of mere phenomenalism. Even the journals of Spiritualism are gradually eliminating the phenomena and wonders, to replace them with philosophy. The Theosophical Society led the van of this movement; but, although Theosophical ideas have entered into every development or form which awakening spirituality has assumed, yet Theosophy pure and simple has still a severe battle to fight for recognition. The days of old are gone to return no more and many are the Theosophists who, taught by bitter experience, have pledged themselves to make of the Society a "miracle club" no longer. The faint-hearted have asked in all ages for signs and wonders, and when these failed to be granted, they refused to believe. Such are not those who will ever comprehend Theosophy pure and simple. But there are others among us who realize intuitively that the recognition of pure Theosophy—the philosophy of the rational explanation of things and not the tenets—is of the most vital importance in Society inasmuch as it alone can furnish the beacon-light needed to guide humanity on its true path.

This should never be forgotten, nor should the following fact be overlooked. On the day when Theosophy will have accomplished its most holy and most important mission—namely, to unite firmly a body of men of all nations in brotherly love and bent on a pure altruistic work, not on a labor with selfish motives—on that day only will Theosophy become higher than any nominal brotherhood of man. This will be a wonder and a miracle truly, for the realization of which Humanity is vainly waiting for the last 18 centuries, and which every association has hitherto failed to accomplish.

Orthodoxy in Theosophy is a thing neither possible nor desirable. It is diversity of opinion, within certain limits, that keeps the Theosophical Society a living and a healthy body, its many other ugly features notwith-

standing. Were it not, also, for the existence of a large amount of uncertainty in the minds of students of Theosophy, such healthy divergences would be impossible, and the Society would degenerate into a sect, in which a narrow and stereotyped creed would take the place of the living and breathing spirit of Truth and an ever-growing Knowledge.

According as people are prepared to receive it, so will new Theosophical teaching be given. But no more will be given than the world, on its present level of spirituality, can profit by. It depends on the spread of Theosophy—the assimilation of what has been already given—how much more will be revealed, *and how soon.*

It must be remembered that the Society was not founded as a nursery for forcing a supply of Occultists—as a factory for the manufacture of Adepts. It was intended to stem the current of materialism, and also that of spiritualistic phenomenalism and the worship of the Dead. It had to guide the spiritual awakening that has now begun, and not to pander to psychic cravings which are but another form of materialism. For by “materialism” is meant not only an anti-philosophical negation of pure spirit, and, even more, materialism in conduct and action,—brutality, hypocrisy, and above all, selfishness—but also the fruits of a disbelief in all but material things, a disbelief which has increased enormously during the last century, and which has led many, after a denial of all existence other than that in matter, into a blind belief in the materialization of Spirit.

The tendency of modern civilization is a reaction towards a development of those qualities which conduce to the success in life of man as an animal in the struggle for animal existence. Theosophy seeks to develop the human nature in man in addition to the animal, and at the sacrifice of the superfluous animality which modern life and materialistic teachings have developed to a degree which is abnormal for the human being at this stage of his progress.

Men cannot all be Occultists, but they can all be Theosophists. Many who have never heard of the Society are Theosophists without knowing it themselves; for the essence of Theosophy is the perfect harmonizing of the divine with the human in man, the adjustment of his god-like qualities and aspirations, and their sway over the terrestrial or animal passions in him. Kindness, absence of every ill feeling or selfishness, charity, good-will to all beings, and perfect justice to others as to one's self, are its chief features. He who teaches Theosophy preaches the gospel of good-will; and the converse of this is true also—he who preaches the gospel of good-will, teaches Theosophy.

* * * * *

I am confident that, when the real nature of Theosophy is understood, the prejudice against it, now so unfortunately prevalent, will die out. Theosophists are of necessity the friends of all movements in the world, whether intellectual or simply practical, for the amelioration of the condition of mankind. We are the friends of all those who fight against drunkenness, against cruelty to animals, against

injustice to women, against corruption in Society or in government, although we do not meddle in politics. We are the friends of those who exercise practical charity, who seek to lift a little of the tremendous weight of misery that is crushing down the poor. But, in our quality of Theosophists, we cannot engage in any one of these great works in particular. As individuals we may do so, but as Theosophists we have a larger, more important, and much more difficult work to do. People say that Theosophists should show what is in them, that "the tree is known by its fruits." Let them build dwellings for the poor, it is said, let them open "soup-kitchens," etc., etc., and the world will believe that there is something in Theosophy. These good people forget that Theosophists, as such, are poor, and that the founders themselves are poorer than any, and that one of them, at any rate, the humble writer of these lines, has no property of her own, and has to work hard for her daily bread whenever she finds time from her Theosophical duties. The function of Theosophists is to open men's hearts and understandings to charity, justice, and generosity, attributes which belong specifically to the human kingdom and are natural to man when he has developed the qualities of a human being. Theosophy teaches the animal-man to be a human-man; and when people have learnt to think and feel as truly human beings should feel and think, they will act humanely, and works of charity, justice, and generosity will be done spontaneously by all.

Now with regard to the Secret Doctrine, the publication of which some of you urged so kindly upon me, and in such cordial terms, a while ago. I am very grateful for the hearty support promised and for the manner in which it was expressed. The MS of the first three volumes is now ready for the press and its publication is only delayed by the difficulty which is experienced in finding the necessary funds. Though I have not written it with an eye to money, yet, having left Adyar, I must live and pay my way in the world so long as I remain in it. Moreover, the Theosophical Society urgently needs money for many purposes, and I feel that I should not be justified in dealing with the Secret Doctrine as I dealt with Isis Unveiled. From my former work I have received personally in all only a few hundred dollars, although nine editions have been issued. Under these circumstances I am endeavoring to find means of securing the publication of the Secret Doctrine on better terms this time, and here I am offered next to nothing. So, my dearest Brothers and Co-workers in the trans-Atlantic lands, you must forgive me the delay, and not blame me for it but the unfortunate conditions I am surrounded with.

I should like to revisit America, and shall perhaps do so one day, should my health permit. I have received pressing invitations to take up my abode in your great country which I love so much for its noble freedom. Colonel Olcott, too, urges upon me very strongly to return to India, where he is fighting almost single-handed the great and hard fight in the cause of Truth; but I feel that, for the present, my duty lies in England and with the Western Theosophists, where for the moment the hardest fight against prejudice and ignorance has

to be fought. But whether I be in England or in India, a large part of my heart and much of my hope for Theosophy lie with you in the United States, where the Theosophical Society was founded, and of which country I myself am proud of being a citizen. But you must remember that, although there must be local Branches of the Theosophical Society, there can be no local Theosophists; and just as you all belong to the Society, so do I belong to you all.

I shall leave my dear Friend and Colleague, Colonel Olcott, to tell you all about the condition of affairs in India, where everything looks favorable, as I am informed, for I have no doubt that he also will have sent his good wishes and congratulations to your Convention.

Meanwhile, my far-away and dear Brother, accept the warmest and sincerest wishes for the welfare of your Societies and of yourself personally, and, while conveying to all your colleagues the expression of my fraternal regards, assure them that, at the moment when you will be reading to them the present lines, I shall—if alive—be in Spirit, Soul, and Thought amidst you all.

Yours ever, in the truth of the Great Cause we are all working for.
London, April 3, 1888.

(Seal) H. P. Blavatsky.

INITIATION, HUMAN AND SOLAR

Extracts from Mrs. Alice A. Bailey's latest book

Published by Lucifer Publishing Co.

To return to the subject of human initiation, and these Rods of Power. At the time of the Initiation ceremony, after the two great revelations there comes a moment of utter silence, and in the interim the initiate realises within himself the meaning of "*Peace*". He stands, as it were, in a void, or in a vacuum, wherein naught seemingly can reach him; he stands twixt earth and heaven for a brief second, conscious of naught but the meaning of things as they are, realising his own essential divinity, and the part which he must play when he again returns to earth service from the Council Chamber of Heaven. He is conscious of no anxiety, fear or doubt. He has contacted the divine "*Presence*", and has seen the vision. He knows what he has to do and how he must do it, and peace and joy unutterable fill his heart. This is an interlude of stillness before a period of renewed activity, which begins at the moment that the Rod is applied. Whilst he has been thus withdrawn within himself, with all his forces centred in his heart, the attendant Lodge of Masters have been performing certain ceremonies and chanting certain words, preparatory to the appearance of the Initiator upon the throne, and the wielding of the Rod. The Hierophant has hitherto been present, but the work has been handled by the Lodge and the sponsors. He now ascends to the place of power, and the Rod is brought to Him by its legitimate custodians.

It is not possible here to publish the details of the next stage, beyond using the description as embodied in the words "fire descends from heaven." Through the utterance of certain words and phrases, which are one of the secrets of initiation, and which vary with each initiation, the electrical force to be employed descends upon the Rod, passing through the heart and the hand of the Initiator to the *Three* Who stand in triangular relation to the throne of office. They receive it in turn, and circulate it by act of will through Their hearts, thus passing it to the sponsors. They again, by an act of will, prepare to transmit it to that centre in the body of the Initiate which is (according to the initiation) to receive stimulation. Then succeeds an interesting interlude, wherein the united wills of the Hierarchy are blended in order to transmit that force which the Rod has put into circulation. The Hierophant utters the Word, and the force is literally thrown into the initiate's bodies and centres, passing down through the centres on the mental plane, via the astral centres, to the centres on etheric levels, which finally absorb it. This is the stupendous moment for the initiate, and brings to him a realisation of the literal absolute truth of the phrase that "God is a consuming fire." He knows, past all gainsaying that fiery energy and electric force constitute the sum-total of all that is. He is literally bathed in the fires of purification; he sees fire on all sides, pouring out through the Rod, circulating around the Triangle, and passing through the bodies of the two sponsoring adepts. For a brief second, the entire Lodge of Masters and initiates, standing in their ceremonial places without the Triangle, are hidden from view by a wall of pure fire. The initiate sees no one, save the Hierophant, and is aware of nothing but a fiery blaze of pure, blue-white flame, which burns, but destroys not, which intensifies the activity of every atom in his body without disintegrating, and which purifies his entire nature. The fire tries his work, of what sort it is, and he passes through the Flame.

The effect of the application of the Rod.

A. *Upon the Initiate's bodies:* This effect is four-fold and lasting, but varies according to the initiation taken. The action of the Rod is most carefully and scientifically regulated, and at each succeeding initiation the voltage is increased, and the activity of the resulting fire and its heat intensified. By the application of the Rod the initiate finds:

1. That the activity of each individual atom in his various bodies is increased, resulting in a greater degree of nervous energy and an elasticity and resistance which will serve him in good stead in the strenuous life of service ahead.
2. That matter of an undesirable type in his bodies is shaken loose, and the atomic wall somewhat destroyed, making the atoms radio-active—if it might be so expressed—and, therefore, more easily eliminated.
3. The fires of the body are stimulated, and the total energy of the three-fold lower man is co-ordinated, so that there is

less waste of energy and a greater coherence and uniformity in action.

4. The aligning of the various bodies in connection with the causal, or egoic, body is aided, and thus continuity of consciousness, and receptivity to the behests of the Ego, become possible.

The initiate will find, when he returns from the ceremony, and takes up his work in the world, that the stimulation received while being about in his bodies a period of great activity, and also of strife. His strife, persisted in even to the point of victory, will result in his kicking out of his body undesirable matter, and building in new and better material; he will find that his powers for service are enormously increased, and his nervous energy intensified, so that he can draw upon reserves of force in service hitherto unsuspected. He will find, too, that the response of the physical brain to the voice of the Higher Self, and its receptivity to the higher and subtler impressions, is greatly furthered. Eventually, through the work accomplished, he will succeed in eliminating all matter of a sub-atomic character, and will then build bodies of substance of the highest subplane on each plane; he will become aware that all his energies can be consciously and constructively controlled, that he knows the real meaning of continuity of consciousness, and can function simultaneously on the three planes with full inner realisation.....

Each of the great initiations is but the synthesis of the smaller ones, and only as man seeks ever to expand his consciousness in the affairs of daily life can he expect to achieve those later stages which are but culminations of the many earlier. Students must get rid of the idea that if they are "very good and altruistic" suddenly some day they will stand before the Great Lord. They are putting effect before cause. Goodness and altruism grow out of realisation, and service, and holiness of character is the outcome of those expansions of consciousness which a man brings about within himself through strenuous effort and endeavour. Therefore, it is here and now that man can prepare himself for initiation, and this he does, not by dwelling upon the ceremonial aspect, as so many do in excited anticipation, but by working systematically and enduringly at the steady development of the mental body, by the strenuous and arduous process of controlling the astral body so that it becomes responsive to three vibrations:—

- a. That from the Ego.
- b. That from the Master.
- c. Those from his brothers everywhere around him.

He becomes *sensitive* to the voice of his higher self, thus working off karma under the intelligent guidance of his own Ego. He becomes conscious, via the Ego, of the vibration emanating from his Master; he learns to *feel* it ever more and more, and to respond to it ever more fully; finally, he becomes increasingly sensitive to the joys and pains and sorrows of those he daily contacts; he feels them to be his joys and pains and sorrows, and yet he is not incapacitated thereby.....

EIGHTEEN OUTLINE LESSONS ON THE BHAGAVAD GITA

Prepared by Alice A. Bailey

LESSION VI

Teachings of the Forms indwelt by Spirit

The eleventh Discourse:—

Arjuna's thought: "O Supreme Lord, even as Thou describest Thyself, O best of beings, I desire to see Thy Form omnipotent.

If Thou thinkest that by me It can be seen, O Lord, Lord of Yoga, then show me Thine Imperishable Self."

- 1. The beauty of the Form... XI. 5-
2. The diversity of the Form... XI.14-
3. The value of the Form... XI.36-
a. It reveals.
b. It teaches and modifies.
c. It makes possible the vision of God.
d. It teaches man his place.
4. The unity of the Form.

Topic for Meditation:—

The Blessed Lord said: "This Form of Mine beholden by thee is very hard to see....."

By devotion to Me alone I may thus be perceived, Arjuna, and known and seen in essence and entered...."—XI.52—5.

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