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H. P. B.'s CHALLENGE

IVERSON L. HARRIS

This article, reprinted from *Theosophia*, Summer of 1964, is selected because of its appositeness to questions recently raised by Professor J. H. Dubbink referred to in the Editorial Memorandum immediately following it.—Eds.

“. . . tell me whether I am too sanguine when I say that if the Theosophical Society survives and lives true to its mission, to its original impulses through the next hundred years—tell me, I say, if I go too far in asserting that earth will be a heaven in the twenty-first century in comparison with what it is now!”

These words, with which H. P. Blavatsky closed *The Key to Theosophy* in 1889, not only bespeak her vision and her hope for the inhabitants of this earth: more especially they challenge all Theosophists as to the role they might play in bringing that vision and that hope to fulfillment. The challenge is emphasized in one small but very weighty word: *if*. As Shakespeare reminds us: “Much virtue in *i-f*.”

What are the prospects of the earth's becoming a heaven in the twenty-first century in comparison with what it was in 1889? Have Theosophists individually and collectively contributed to bringing about the betterment envisioned by H.P.B. and Those who sent her?

Yes, in some ways more perhaps than the world's discouraging aspects would warrant our assuming. As one London journalist declared thirty years ago, H.P.B.'s own accomplishment was “to change the whole current of European thought.” Moreover, it can never be truthfully said again of East and West, as Kipling did, that “never the twain shall meet.” Actually, East and West *have* met. Eastern philosophy and outlook and even vocabulary are no longer limited to a handful of learned Orientalists; they have become a part of Western culture and widely adopted in the Occident. A Buddhist is now the duly elected General Secretary of the United Nations: [1964] Would anyone have dreamed of such a change of *Weltanschauung* in the days when H.P.B., Col. Olcott, William Q. Judge and others founded the T.S., brought to the attention of the West the treasures of Hindû and Buddhist philosophy and at the same time reminded our Eastern brethren of their own magnificent cultural heritage?

Certainly, also, in the realms of scientific and religious thinking and discovery, the omniscient materialism and the narrow-minded church dogmatism, against both of which H.P.B. fought so heroically, no longer wield the unquestioned authority over Western thinking that they did in H.P.B.'s day. She literally “broke the molds of mind.” It is now commonplace for advanced scientific thinkers and researchers and liberal churchmen to accept and proclaim some of the scientific postulates and universal spiritual verities which H.P.B. promulgated more than three-quarters of a century ago, and for which she was ridiculed and persecuted.

But as the Twenty-First Century approaches, we ask ourselves again: Is the earth actually closer to becoming a

heaven than it was in 1889? Has the Theosophical Society survived in unity today as it was (at least in name) when H. P. Blavatsky wrote *The Key to Theosophy*? Has it lived true to its mission and to its original impulses?

Sixty-five years of active association with the Theosophical Movement, ever since 1899, forty-three years of which were spent at Point Loma, have brought me certain definite and I hope mature conclusions:

(1) It is not enough to accept the motto of the Theosophical Society, “There is no religion higher than truth,” on abstract and philosophical grounds alone. We must be ready also to face the truth regarding mundane facts, such as are demanded in a court of law.

(2) We must endeavor to think, not like prosecuting attorneys or counsel for the defense, but like honorable judges determined to arrive at a just verdict in view of *all* the facts.

(3) While loyal to the basic truths of the Wisdom-Religion and grateful to the teachers who have transmitted these to us and thereby molded our lives for the better, it is not necessarily incumbent upon us to support all the policies or actions of all the administrators of the different Theosophical groups, however well-intentioned or sincere or expedient these may have been.

(4) The use of the Masters' name in order to bolster individual claims or to support specific ventures is always perilous and can be downright blasphemous and disastrous. The final test: “By their fruits ye shall know them.”

(5) The attempt of any human being, however talented, and perhaps at times inspiring, to dominate his fellowmen and to force them into specific lines of thinking or conduct can lead to unhappy and at times tragic consequences.

(6) The folly, fanaticism, ignorance and/or credulity of members of almost every Theosophical group, have given the Movement a much-blurred image before the public and well-nigh defeated the Masters' declared purpose: “The *Chiefs* want a ‘Brotherhood of Humanity,’ a real Universal Fraternity started; an institution which would make itself known through the world and arrest the attention of the highest minds” (*The Mahatma Letters*, p. 24).

(7) The inherent truth and spiritual vitality of the message itself, as given to the world by the Masters, H.P.B. and those who have loyally followed them, is evidenced by the fact that the Theosophical Movement is still alive in the hearts and aspirations of hundreds of individuals, despite what so many of Theosophy's adherents have done—unwittingly for the most part—to kill it.

But the good name of Theosophy can be resurrected and the high purposes of the Movement can continue along the lines laid down by the Masters and H.P.B. This is surely the most important goal to work for. The spiritual life of humanity is inextricably involved in the success or failure of the effort.

PROFESSOR DUBBINK ON "A MODEL FOR A HISTORY OF THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT"

In *The Canadian Theosophist*, March-April 1973, appears an article by Professor Dubbink on the above quoted words. His opening paragraph reads: "The purpose of this article is to try to develop a 'model', a structure, which might perhaps enable a student of the Theosophical Movement to put his thoughts in order. Properly placed within such a structure, his observations might increasingly become functional parts of a great whole."

The Eclectic editors do not propose to analyze Dr. Dubbink's article but suggest that such a frank exposition at this be taken as an opportunity by all Theosophists for searching review in the nature of dialectic. The German philosopher Hegel used this term to describe "the true method of the development of thought—from a *thesis* (or positive position) to the *antithesis* (or negative view) contradictory of the starting point, then finally to the *synthesis* or reconciliation of the two opposing views. By this method one gains a picture of reality." (See definition in *Encyclopedia Americana*.)

Matters concerning the Theosophical Movement, its beginnings and its upheavals since 1875, call for clear and wise thinking. Professor Dubbink's article is unquestionably an effort of this nature. He admits what he states is an "all too meagre result," and he adds open-mindedly, "for the time being I remain sure of my views, though prepared and willing to accept all corrections." What he evidently desires is for *all* students to face and study the problem constructively and to come up with their own individual conclusions. As said, this is not an analysis of the article in question. We urge every reader to give it the serious study it deserves in an effort to arrive at something of "reality." We conclude this brief mention by quoting Professor Dubbink's last paragraph which carries its own weight.

"If permitted, I would like to close with some personal remarks. In a certain way I feel myself to be in the same position as Mrs. Cleather. She felt that she had not lived up to the true Theosophical ideals during the last years of H.P.B.'s life, so she was to some degree responsible for the 'failure'. In an analogous way I feel myself responsible for many years devoted to the pseudo-Theosophical activities of the Liberal Catholic Church, in which I served as priest and bishop from 1941 to 1969. If, therefore, the reader thinks I am unduly belittling Mr. Leadbeater and his activities, I ask him to take into consideration that my personal feelings of being 'responsible' for many things I now look upon as rubbish perhaps make the way I express my views as being somewhat too sharp. But at the same time I happen to know from personal experience how deep was the abyss between the world of the 'initiates' of Mr. Leadbeater and the spirit of the life depicted in *The Voice of the Silence*."

—THE EDITORS.

Education means a leading out; and to lead out the spirit of man, through the wise liberating self-discipline of learning and wonder, has been the glory of great teachers and of great universities since civilization began to flower.—Charles Morgan

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE "DOCTRINE OF THE HEART"?

ELSIE BENJAMIN

The Heart Doctrine has nothing to do with any sort of sentimentality, or with 'love' in its ordinary sense. In fact, trying to interpret any of the theosophical teachings by applying sentimentality, is a sure way of obscuring a teaching and can even lead a student to accept a so-called 'teacher' with the sole recommendation: "He is so kind!" But it has much to do with Compassion and the work of the Hierarchy of Compassion. And remember that Compassion, in the words of *The Voice of the Silence*, "is no attribute. It is the LAW of Laws—eternal Harmony, Alaya's SELF; a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting Right, and fitness of all things, the law of love eternal"—and implicit in it is Wisdom.

The Heart Doctrine has clear technical significances in Theosophy. In *The Voice of the Silence* H.P.B. discusses the Dharma of the 'Eye,' the embodiment of the external and the non-existing, as contrasted with the Dharma of the 'Heart,' the embodiment of Bodhi, the Permanent and Everlasting, and says: "The Doctrine of the Eye is for the crowd, the Doctrine of the Heart for the elect. The first repeat in pride: 'Behold, I know,' and the last, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess, 'thus have I heard.'" (p. 27).

A study of *The Voice* will make this distinction clear. Also helpful is a compilation of some of W. Q. Judge's articles under the title *The Heart Doctrine* (issued by the United Lodge of Theosophists), and his writings generally. This doctrine is implicit in the lives and teachings of those belonging to the Hierarchy of Compassion, whose head is The Silent Watcher, the Great Sacrifice, as beautifully described by H.P.B. in *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 208. This, we think, is the essence of the Heart Doctrine.

Now what about the Heart *per se*? We turn to Dr. de Purucker's *Dialogues*, III, 370, where in answering questions about the Heart he discusses the subject in conjunction with H.P.B.'s Esoteric School Instruction No. V; but he reminds us that unlike her Instructions I-III, Numbers IV and V were given orally to her Inner Group and were published after her death, so she had no chance to revise or check. Dr. de Purucker develops his theme on the esoteric level:

"... the heart is the focal or central organ of individual man, of the Reincarnating Ego. This of course includes the working of this ego through all parts of the body outside the heart, therefore including the brain also.

"Nevertheless the brain, the atoms of which are bathed in âkâsa and remain so bathed throughout the lifetime of the body, is also the vehicle of the individual Mânasapûtra which overshadows the human being as an inspiring influence. . ."

He quotes H.P.B.: "The Heart is the center of Spiritual Consciousness, as the Brain is the center of Intellectual Consciousness . . . The Heart is the abode of the Spiritual

Man, whereas the Psycho-Intellectual Man dwells in the Head with its seven gateways.”

Then Dr. de Purucker explains the three parallel lines of evolution working continuously together for the human being: the Divine-Spiritual, the Psycho-Mental, and the Vital-Astral-Physical. Of these three lines of evolution, the physical human body has the heart functioning as the focus of the Divine-Spiritual because the heart is the physical focus of the Auric Egg, which encloses the Cosmic Jīva, and this Cosmic Jīva passes through the heart as the various prānas.

“The Psycho-Mental line of evolution,” he says, “has its organ or focus in the physical body in and through the brain, or rather the human skull containing the brain and other less important physical attachments. The third or Vital-Astral-Physical line of evolution has its representative foci in the body, first in the liver which is the vehicle of Kāma, or rather Kāma-Manas, and second, in its lieutenant the spleen, which is the seat of the Liṅga-śarīra or Astral Model Body . . .

“. . . it is from the heart, the spiritual ‘King of the Body’ that flows forth the individual’s divine-spiritual efflux into his brain; and when this happens in the case of highly evolved human beings, then the brain, through the Pineal Gland—the special organ for this purpose—becomes the ‘organ of Divine Thought.’

“In brief and in substance, when man unites his brain to his heart, then the brain becomes illuminated from the heart with the spiritual fluid from the god within, or what is the same thing, from the Higher Triad of the Spiritual Monad, Ātma-Buddi-Manas. Then we have that noblest product of evolution, a human god, such as a Buddha, or one of the High Mahātmās.”

THE SACRED FIRE AND THE ESOTERIC TRADITION

JAN H. VENEMA

(Translated from *Mededelingenblad* [Newsletter],
March 1973)

AGNI (Fire) is one of the most ancient and principal gods, according to the Veda. He appears in three phases: in heaven as the sun, in mid-air as lightning, on earth as ordinary fire. He is considered as the mediator between men and gods, as protector of men and their homes, and as a witness of their actions.

Happy are those who can interpret this symbol of “the sacred fire” in the esoteric meaning, for the interpretation has a close connection with the deeper insight into the Esoteric Philosophy or Theosophy and the endeavor to make its teachings a living power in life. There will then always be the ‘fire’ of well-controlled enthusiasm. The Esoteric Philosophy or Theosophy, a late Greek word which means divine wisdom, and which unfortunately by incorrect interpretations and all sorts of ‘additions’ often has lost the original meaning for some, will always evoke in the sincere

student that sacred fire, AGNI, in its many aspects. And the gladness which this fire brings, in spite of the also destructive aspect that it may have, will ever inspire him who feels it. It reminds us of the most sublime experience of Arjuna when listening to Krishna’s words described in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. This fire radiates and works as a catching enthusiasm; it burns calmly and steadily, without flickering, without ‘blackened wicks’; it is recognized at once as sacred and yet very human.

Little by little, but steadily, it is evidently realized in philosophical and theosophical circles that the Wisdom Religion of the ages is the bearer of AGNI, the sacred fire, and its splendor—misrepresentations found in certain magazines, rises above all limitations and misrepresentations obscuring books, and in the writings of some groups. It rises above all superficial opinions and purely intellectual interpretations so often found, even if the writers or speakers may be called well-meaning. To call it “a system of thought,” for instance, or “a sort of denomination” is definitely wrong and shows lack of serious study. For it concerns a real *philosophy of life*, which is based on the age-old teachings of the structure of the universe and its “laws” and which, therefore, may be called all-embracing. If this philosophy of life, after serious study and endeavor to ‘test’ it, does not light the sacred fire in us, we are not connected with that all-embracing philosophy. The connection leads to a path along which lie the pearls of true brotherhood and impersonal love. As H. P. Blavatsky said: “these doctrines belong exclusively to no religion, and are confined to no society or time. They are the birthright of every human soul.” (*The Key to Theosophy*). And in *Isis Unveiled* (Preface) she emphasizes that “Truth is alone eternal and supreme.”

It will be clear that the serious student of the teachings will exercise utmost caution in interpreting the depths of “the ocean of knowledge” indicated by the words The Esoteric Tradition. He will realize that the intellectual fire is insufficient and that it is possible to light only the lower aspects of AGNI, the cold, lower mānasic aspects, which obscure the higher (Buddhic) light. He will be careful and try to give the right and verifiable truths of the age-old teachings, stating the *sources*, pointing continually to the *universality*, in accordance with “*Iti mayā śrutam*” (thus have I heard). He will welcome with joy the presentations in which this universality is shown, rejecting inexact representations and sometimes even fantastic personal considerations, and trace the causes of them, however difficult it may be to remove long-established delusions. In this world the channels and vehicles are needed to spread the knowledge of the genuine philosophy. However, when the times are changing and the exoteric truths have penetrated everywhere in the world (we are thinking of present scientific, philosophic and religious extension of insight), the channels and vehicles have to be revised, even lose the right to exist, unless they change their work in such a way that the old *esoteric tradition* is maintained, in which case it is possible to reach the individual human being in the first place, owing to the more esoteric aspects. In this way much more can be done for the spreading of the genuine philosophy of life in this world. In this time it is useful to read once more the Preface of 1888 to *The Secret Doctrine* and important parts of the

Introduction. Let us also refer to Gottfried de Purucker's words in *The Esoteric Tradition*, II, 889, in which the writer points out that a popularization of the teachings (leading to sectarianism and superficial knowledge) is simply impossible:

"Here once more, and with extreme reluctance, one feels the need of stating that there is a good deal of the teaching of the Esoteric Philosophy which simply cannot be openly stated in a published book, because such teaching belongs to the highly recondite and extremely difficult thought of the esoteric studies reserved for the few. The author of the present work desires to state once for all, and with all the emphasis at his command, that neither this declaration of certain esoteric teachings which are too sacred to be given to the public, nor other similar declarations made in the course of the present work, are in any sense of the word to be considered or looked upon as 'claims' made by him to possessing 'superior' or wonderful knowledge. The author absolutely disavows not only any such intention of 'claiming' anything, but must point out that merely stating that the Esoteric Philosophy contains wide ranges of teaching or doctrine which are incommunicable to the public is making no 'claims' whatsoever, but is the simple statement of something that ought to be known to every student of the Archaic Wisdom . . ."

Those who think about and understand these words will try to avoid giving superficial explanations of 'rebirth' and after-death states in their writings and lectures; they will indeed try to find the *way* by which one can belong to 'the few' and evoke the higher aspects of AGNI, the Buddhic light, which is not for ourselves only and which connects us with 'the heart of the universe.'

STUDY COURSE BASED ON "THE MAHATMA LETTERS TO A. P. SINNETT"

In line with the rising interest in that collection of letters known as *The Mahatma Letters*, now, as noted in our last issue, translated into French, Spanish, and a German translation in preparation, note should be taken of a Study Course based on these Letters devised by Mrs. Olive Dutta and Adam Warcup of the Theosophical Society in England (50 Gloucester Place, London W1H 3HJ). We give here the first part of Paper One: Introduction. The second part of the Paper, which we omit, gives points connected with the study papers themselves. References are to the second edition of the M.L. Those wishing information about the Course should write to one or the other of the authors at the above address.—Eds.

This introduction should be read closely before proceeding to the individual study papers. This first paper contains information on how to use the course papers and makes some general comments on the Mahatma Letters.

First to be considered are such questions as: Who wrote the letters? What do we know of them? How can we think of them?

The authors are Initiates (Mahatmas) and so ideas outlined in these letters cannot be discounted or dismissed. Students, of course, are entitled to their views. The two Mahatmas, Morya and Koot Hoomi, were the real instigators

of the Theosophical Movement, and a study of their words will reveal great mental and spiritual heights. These Adepts represent the forefront of humanity. The fault would lie in ourselves if we were to make light of or dismiss what they say.

The Mahatmas would be the first to advocate reading and studying with discrimination. Whilst we do not wish to present them as authorities who have made final, irrevocable and complete statements of truth, it is suggested that these statements be respected, as they claim that they *know* what they have written about.

Question and examine what they say as deeply as you can and are capable of but have in mind that these letters must contain significant material.

But what of the Mahatmas themselves? What do we really know about them? Sentimentality and hero worship apart, we probably know extremely little and now is our chance to learn more.

As you read, reflect now and then on what can be learnt about them. There are hints and suggestions scattered throughout the book which throw light on them as individuals, their brotherhood, their laws, their duties and responsibilities. There is also important information on the conditions to be fulfilled by any one who would aspire to know them 'face to face'. Do not be deceived by their easy mode of expression. Bear in mind to whom they were writing and the times in which these letters were written.

The study of these letters is no light or merely time-passing task. These great men set us an example and are as we aspire, or perhaps should aspire, to be. It would be as well to see as clearly as possible just what they are like, as human beings as well as Mahatmas, so that we are under as few misapprehensions as possible.

Consider the recipient, Mr. A. P. Sinnett, because he must have determined, by his nature and his particular questions, largely how the letters were phrased and their content. There were limitations on his side. The Mahatmas could only explain as much as he was capable of understanding. Equally what they had to explain in *his* terms, since he could not be expected to understand theirs. To this extent we must appreciate Sinnett and his idiosyncrasies.

He was in India in the 1880's. He was very much a man of the times, Victorian to the core. His background was very different from ours. We must see how difficult the Mahatmas' liberal racial and social ideas must have seemed to him and how strange, how different from any philosophical teaching expounded so far their ideas were. He was editor of *The Pioneer*, a very influential periodical. He was a pillar of local society, an 'honorable man', and a 'gentleman', with all the limitations that this must have imposed upon him in terms of respectability and conventionality. We, in our way, may be equally, if differently, conditioned and limited.

We suggest that you read as much as you can of A. P. Sinnett's background and the Society in general. He was a distinguished editor and writer and for many years an active and influential member of the Society. Read HPB's letters to Sinnett, and see how she regards him. Read Sin-

nett's *The Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism* to see how he interpreted what he had been taught. We must acknowledge that those two books, especially the latter, are magnificent and have been reprinted many times up to today. To have extracted and collated the teachings from the letters and to have correlated and set down clearly and logically the material they contain, was a considerable achievement.

As to the letters themselves, the originals are in the British Museum, where they can be examined. We recommend this. One can then appreciate, for instance, the immense task it must have been just to decipher and transcribe them. The handwriting is often not at all clear.

One of the most fascinating aspects of those letters is that they were written by precipitation. This process is explained, as much as it ever can be, in one or two of the letters themselves. Yet it really remains a mystery. The paper on which most of them are written is very thin. The ink is actually *in* the paper, not on it, the characters appear to be made up of innumerable fine lines, as if the paper itself were cross hatched, but in fact this is not the case; the paper is smooth.

Some of those who have examined the letters say there is a presence or atmosphere about some of them which they have retained to this day. Something remains of the power, they say, by which they were transmitted, and it is still palpable if one handles them.

It is often argued that all that is said about the people and events in the letters is not relevant to the teachings, and in a sense this is true. The teachings must stand or fall by their own inherent validity. If they are wrong the phenomenal nature of the production of the letters will not make them right. Yet you may miss something worthwhile if you choose to ignore the social and other circumstances into which the teachings were sent.

The following is a short summary of Mr. Trevor Barker's Introduction to the first edition of the Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett:

These letters, he tells us, were 'written' by two of the Tibetan Masters, Morya and Koot Hoomi, sometimes called 'The Brothers', 'The Masters of the Wisdom'. HPB referred to Morya just as 'Master'. The circumstances as to how, why and when these letters came to be is told in *The Occult World* by A. P. Sinnett*. The letters were published at a time when there was much controversy about what were, and what were not, the original teachings of the Masters. There were many views and teachings which have been accepted by many members of the Society as Theosophical doctrines, which are clearly shown to be incorrect when compared with information given in the letters. This, we are reminded, could confuse the student and put him off track.

Mr. Barker seemed to feel that there had been an increasing tendency to turn to ceremonial, churches, creeds and spiritualism (Letter II). Belief in these was inhibit-

ing freedom of thought and individual effort which had been so insisted upon in the early days of the Movement.

Mr. Barker also points out that, in many later controversial and personal matters, HPB is more than justified in the letters. In spite of the denigrations and reviling she suffered, not only from outside but from inside the Society by those who knew her intimately, one only has to read the letters, in particular Letter LIV from the Master K.H., to see how highly they esteemed her.

So much was happening at that time which seemed to rock the Society to its very foundations, that the last paragraph of Mr. Barker's introduction from "out of the wreck" to "the truth they have seen" should be well noted.

Against the background of these introductory remarks consider now two questions:—

1) Why should we as Theosophical students study at all? Frequently we hear people ask what is the use or value of studying metaphysical subjects? Is it not sufficient, they ask, to 'lead the life'? We offer here two replies, but you will be able to think of others.

In the first instance metaphysical ideas and concepts are more 'real' than any others with which we are normally concerned. It is axiomatic that man is, in essence, a spiritual and not only a physical being. It is insufficient to acquire only an intellectual appreciation of these ideas, although it is very necessary to do so initially. The ultimate aim is to perceive truths directly. As soon as these truths begin to become apparent, they will become part of the individual. Such an understanding must then manifest itself in action.

A second reason is that in the very process of studying, we awaken in ourselves faculties that would otherwise remain dormant. In considering metaphysical ideas we must use, or try to use, the higher aspects of our minds. We are here concerned with abstract thought and with concepts beyond those associated with the normal data received from our five senses. Let us remember that each 'principle' in the human constitution must be developed in turn and that at this stage of our evolution the emphasis is on our learning to use our minds to the full.

2) If study is worth while, why study *The Mahatma Letters* in particular? We suggest one good reason: there are many others. These letters should be studied principally because those who wrote them are the initiate originators of the Theosophical Movement. They were advanced, evolved beings. We understand the giving out of the information contained in the letters represented only a fraction of their efforts on behalf of humanity. It should also be noted that it was the first time the information given in the letters had ever been made available to the lay public.

These Mahatmas selected HPB as being the best available agent for their purposes after a long search. They trained her for many years for her task of enlightening the West with some of their knowledge. It was they who, in conjunction with and through her, gave us *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, and to whom can be traced every real Theosophical teaching given out in recent times. It is for reasons such as these that a study of these letters of the

*With reference to the above special attention should be paid to Letter 53.

Mahâtmas should be considered as essential for the serious student.

Many members of the T.S. may not think of the Mahâtmas in this way; many may hold views in direct opposition to some of the teachings contained in these letters from K.H. and M. Your views on, and your attitude towards, the Mahâtmas and their teachings are of prime importance in determining how much value you will derive from a study of these letters.

SEND IN YOUR QUESTIONS

QUESTION: 6—*Since the U.S. Supreme Court recently (1972) declared the death penalty unconstitutional, the State of Florida has restored it and voters in the State of California have also indicated two to one that they are in favor of its restoration. What is the Theosophical attitude toward capital punishment?*

(The Editors feel that in addition to the article 'Theosophy and Capital Punishment' by W. Q. Judge published in the *Eclectic*, March 1972, no more succinct answer to this question has been given than by Mr. Judge in *The Theosophical Forum*, New Series, No. 1, May 1895. It is Question No. 1 in that periodical.)

W. Q. JUDGE—My view is that capital punishment is both useless and injurious. It is as great an injustice to the world of beings left unexecuted as to the one so violently sent out of life. They used to kill men in England for stealing a ten-penny nail or a loaf of bread, but thieves and thieving did not lessen. Murders have not decreased. In the country districts executions are means for brutalizing the people, who make a hanging an occasion for a gala gathering in order to see a man legally killed. But theosophically it is far worse. The fact that the sudden killing is legal makes no difference with the laws of nature. The man is suddenly cut off from his body, and, just like a suicide, is condemned to be a 'spook'. He is dead so far as the body is concerned, but is astrally alive. Worse than a suicide he is filled with hate and revenge which he must wreak on some one. At first he is not able to do much, but soon he finds that there are sensitive persons on the earth who can be filled with his vicious and raging passions. These poor souls are then influenced to commit crimes; being filled mentally—from the inner planes—with the ideas and passions of the criminal, they are at last moved to do what their mind is filled with. The executed criminal does not have to know what is going on, for his raging passions, untouched by the executioner, excite and influence of themselves whoever is sensitive to them. That is why many a crime is suddenly committed by weak persons who appear to be carried away by an outside force. It seems hardly possible that anyone could believe in theosophical and occult doctrines and at the same time commend capital punishment.

QUESTION 7—*The word OCCULTISM and ideas about occultism are sweeping over the world these days. Is occultism*

a kind of Theosophy? I have been asked this question and also "how would you reconcile Occultism with Theosophy?", but would be interested in your answer.

L. GORDON PLUMMER—It would not be correct to say that Occultism is a kind of Theosophy, nor do the two need to be reconciled, because the heart or essence of Theosophy is Occultism *per se*. Strictly speaking, occultism is the science of things hidden. An occultist is therefore one who is skilled in the science of the laws of spiritual nature which underly the physical universe. Moreover, he lives the type of life that is conducive to further growth along spiritual lines.

H. P. Blavatsky said in substance that it is easy to become a Theosophist, but extremely difficult to become a genuine occultist. However, the one leads into the other through persistent study and the practice of a life of discipline and self-forgetfulness.

As the questioner observes, ideas about occultism are sweeping the world at the present time, but it would appear that to seek to become an occultist before undertaking the preliminary disciplines imbodyed in the study of Theosophy is like putting the cart before the horse. Occultism is not for the favored few; it is for everyone who can qualify, but the qualifications are so difficult of achievement that only a few succeed in attaining the high plateau of spiritual discernment and power which is genuine occultism.

Any so-called system of occult training that offers one immediate power without the effort of work and discipline is to be viewed with grave suspicion.

QUESTION 8—*What does a Theosophist have to say about cremation?*

(The Editors give here an answer from G. de Purucker in talking to a group of students at Point Loma some forty years ago).

G. DE P.—It is a great help to the excarnating entity to have its decomposing physical body dissipated into its component atoms. Cremation is a help: it is a quick freeing of otherwise very strongly magnetic attractions to the living body that was. You see, the excarnating entity for a short time after death is almost physical, and all the lower part of the intermediate constitution still is in the atmosphere of the Earth. It is true that the spirit has already joined its parent-sun. It is true that the Reincarnating Ego is very soon to be withdrawn into the bosom of the parent-Monad. But the lower intermediate part, the human soul-part, still is in the atmosphere of the Earth, joined to the Kâma-rûpa; and if the physical body is allowed to decay, or if it is mummified as the Egyptians did it, there is a strong psychomagnetic attraction to that dead body.

It was part of the being you know, part of its life, a deposit of its own essence; and, as I tell you, the attraction is tremendous. Therefore cremation, outside of what you have pointed out, has the added advantage of more quickly freeing the excarnating entity from earthly attractions; nor does the place where the ashes are buried or scattered have any consequence whatever, none at all.

(Editorial note: See also G. de P.'s *The Esoteric Tradition*, II, 791: "The fact that the physical body is sometimes after death destroyed by fire, by cremation, has no effect on the life-atoms. Fire has no hold on the life-atoms, not even on the chemical atoms, as we know. Fire sets the chemical atoms free. Fire destroys the molecules composed of atoms, but the atoms themselves are untouched by fire. Fire is an electrical phenomenon. Its influence is usually disruptive, but it is also the great constructive builder of the Universe. This is why some of the ancients worshiped fire. It is in fact a manifestation on the lower planes of prânic electricity, or what we may more commonly call vital electricity.")

And again: *E.T.*, II, 181: "It might be added here that one of the strongest arguments in favor of cremation of the physical cadaver or corpse of the human being lies in the fact that it aids the dissolution of the model-body, which thus is no longer attracted magnetically to the decaying corpse, and its dissolution is correspondingly hastened. Furthermore, the 'shade' or 'shell' likewise undergoes more speedy dissolution when there is no decaying physical corpse with which it can exchange life-atoms.")

READER'S NOTEBOOK

One thing that seems ever to bother me is the abstract Now, that notion which Western Buddhism and Eastern Zen, expressed in their traditional lore (the *Śruti*, the *Smṛiti*, etc.), are so concerned about and which is found so gloriously in Mahâyâna literature.

But, after all, have not true mystics of all time and climate tried to detach themselves from the slavery of clock-time for the felicity of being able to float in the Void? Take, for instance, Bernhard of Clairvaux of the Eleventh Century. For him and for other such saints the price would not have been too high for attaining that boundless felicity, that Ânanda, Samâdhi, Nirvâna (in Christian terms called Unio-Mystical).

Could then (and this is what really puzzles me) all this that we may call Revelations, Philosophies, Sciences, Ancient and Sacred Lore, and so on, yes the entire *Samsâra*, be a hindrance to attaining conscious 'Beingness' in the mystic's way?

I admit my query is absurd in the extreme. But it came to me after having read (for what uncounted time) G. de P.'s lucid essay 'Time and Duration', (*Wind of the Spirit*), where he speaks of the possibility of "Eternal Now" being with me *now*—the Now of Infinite Space and endless, frontierless Duration?

Or is the mystic's way at the end of the trail, where he has the choice to remain as a Pratyeka or a Bodhisattva? Was it not in fact Hamlet's dilemma "to be or not to be"? Or remains just one tremendous 'leitmotif': Time as Duration?

—Maja Synge, Helsingborg, Sweden

EVOLUTION AND THE INNER SOUL OF THE PHYSICAL CELL

The following is reprinted from *Mind of the Time*, Newsletter Vol. II, No. 5, October 1972, issued by the United Lodge of Theosophists, Ottawa, Canada.—Eds.

"Dr. Ernst Mayr (Harvard) told the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (Dec. 28, 1971) that the Darwinian Revolution was perhaps the most fundamental of all intellectual revolutions in the history of mankind. It caused a greater upheaval in man's thinking than any other scientific advance since the rebirth of science in the Renaissance. Publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859 was the midpoint rather than the beginning of the revolution. Evolutionary thinking preceded the publication of *Origin* by more than 100 years. The 1859 breakthrough was the climax in a long procession of erosion not fully completed until 1883 when Weismann rejected the possibility of an inheritance of acquired characters . . . The complex nature of the Darwinian revolution centered about several elements, chief of which was *The Age of the Earth*. The revolution began when it became obvious that the earth was very ancient rather than having been created only 6,000 years ago. This finding was the snowball that started the whole avalanche." — *Science*, June 2, 1972.

"We have one thing in common with the Darwinian school: It is the LAW OF GRADUAL AND EXTREMELY SLOW EVOLUTION, embracing many million years. The chief quarrel, it appears, is with regard to the nature of the primitive 'ancestor' . . . The Darwinian theory of the transmission of acquired faculties is neither taught nor accepted in Occultism. Evolution in it proceeds on quite other lines; the physical, according to esoteric teaching evolving gradually from the spiritual, mental and psychic. This inner soul of the physical cell, this 'spiritual plasm' that dominates the germinal plasm, is the key that must open one day the gates of the terra incognita of the biologist now called the dark mystery of embryology."—*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 669; I, 219.

The Faithful Few

This is indeed the Kali Yuga. The teacher ought to be the most respected member of the community, and is so regarded during periods of history when values are not inverted and devotion to the good of others is acknowledged to be the highest social ideal. The spirit of the Golden Age is embodied in the Theosophical philosophy, and when that system of ideas and ideals once again becomes the foundation of thought, teachers will have the respect they deserve. Meanwhile, the teachers who remain true to the noble meaning of their calling are surely the greatest human treasures that a society can possess.

—*Theosophy*, March 1973 (For a further discussion of the role of teachers in this fast changing world, readers are referred to "On the Lookout", pp. 159-60, in the same issue. Publishers are The Theosophy Company, 245 West 33rd St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90007.

—Eds.)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Mrs. Benjamin Visits Point Loma

Members of the Board of Point Loma Publications, Inc. and other friends in the San Diego area recently had the great pleasure of a visit from Mrs. Harry Benjamin of Worthing, England. It was a rare treat to walk over the former grounds of the Theosophical Headquarters (now occupied by United States International University), to have a cup of coffee and lunch in its new cafeteria in the same spot where our old Refectory and Diningrooms used to be, recalling old times, re-picturing old scenes indelibly printed on our minds, as we looked out westward on the rolling foam-frothed waves of the Pacific. Elsie was on a visit mainly to see her sister Helen Todd, one of *The Eclectic* editors, who is currently in a Nursing and Convalescent Home in San Diego recovering from a serious accident in late January when a car in San Clemente knocked her down as she was crossing a street. She suffered multiple fractures of both legs, which were broken just below the knees. Expenses of Mrs. Benjamin's trip were covered by contributions made to her by European friends and T.S. members, particularly in Holland and Germany. Point Loma Publications took the occasion to appoint her an Honorary member of the Board with the office of Hon. Corresponding Secretary. Before flying home Mrs. Benjamin also had several days in the Los Angeles area, visiting with Boris de Zirkoff and old friends there.

Another recent visitor to Point Loma from England was Mrs. John R. Cummins (Patricia Ponsonby) of Sevenoaks, Kent, who had flown over to spend several weeks with her mother, Mrs. Irene R. Ponsonby of Los Angeles, an active Point Loma T.S. member and worker for many years. Mrs. Cummins was educated at Lomaland School of the Point Loma Theosophical Headquarters and is now a member of the Corresponding Fellows Lodge of Theosophists, of which Mrs. Duncan-Miller is President and Mrs. Benjamin Corresponding Secretary and Editor of its monthly *Bulletin*.

Mr. and Mrs. Harris on Tour

On April 26th Mr. and Mrs. Iverson L. Harris left San Diego to spend two months visiting friends and Theosophical associates in the U.S.A., Canada, England, Monaco, France, Holland, Sweden, Finland, and Germany. On May 10th, on invitation of Mrs. Erica Lauber, Mr. Harris will address the Blavatsky Lodge in London at 50 Gloucester Place, Headquarters of the Theosophical Society in England (Adyar), on "Forty Years at Headquarters (T.S. Point Loma)". At The Hague, Holland, on May 20th, he will address the Annual Meeting of the School for the Study and Promulgation of the Esoteric Philosophy, under the chairmanship of Mr. Jan H. Venema. Thereafter, their hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Jan Mollijn, have arranged personal Theosophical conferences for Mr. and Mrs. Harris with Mr. Arien Smit and heads of other groups in Holland. On May 28th they will attend a Theosophical fraternization meeting in Helsinki, Finland, sponsored by Mrs. Sylvi Kohva.

At the invitation of Mrs. Irmgard Scheithauer, Mr. Harris will address gatherings in West Berlin on June 5th and 7th, on the subjects respectively of "The Golden Stairs — Theosophic Light on Daily Living" and "The Mysteries of Sleep and Death." The Harris will then attend the annual Convention of Theosophists at Büdingen, Germany, June 9-11, organized by Emmi Haerter and Mary Linné of Theosophischer Arbeitskreis of Unterlengenhardt, and speak on "Theosophy and Education."

On their return to this continent Mr. and Mrs. Harris will attend the U.L.T. Meeting at Ottawa on June 13th, and of the T.S. in Canada (Adyar) at Toronto on June 17th; and on the following day Mr. Harris will address the Buffalo Lodge of the T.S. in America. On both their East- and West-bound journeys the Harris will visit Olcott, Headquarters of the T.S. in America.

The Passing of President N. Sri Ram
(Copy of Letter Sent April 15, 1973)

Point Loma Publications, Inc., extends to the Officers and Members of the Theosophical Society with International Headquarters at Adyar, sincere and fraternal sympathy at the passing into peace of your distinguished President, N. Sri Ram. His gentle and helpful spirit was a pervasive influence throughout the whole Theosophical Movement.

May the enlightened teachings of the Masters and their Messenger, H. P. Blavatsky, infill and dominate the minds and hearts of students and aspirants to the Theosophical life throughout the Movement as we approach the 1975 Centenary.

Yours in Theosophic brotherhood,
POINT LOMA PUBLICATIONS
by: Iverson L. Harris, President

FROM LETTERS RECEIVED

Cecilia Rothman, San Francisco, Calif.—(Reminiscing on her stay at Point Loma Headquarters many years ago as a youngster): I have often felt like I am in exile since those faraway years, and yet I too have felt the strong binding force of having been a part of Lomaland. It is a quality of being that *is*, and is with me and always will be. It is something that causes one to always want to be sharing that treasure with others. I know when I do have the feeling of being in exile it is wrong and a negative feeling, for it is a privilege that never ceases to be. It can't be easily put in words, but it is a privilege to live up to and certainly makes my day-to-day every-day life richer for having been born to Theosophy and been in Lomaland and known so many wonderful people who also are still part of that grand Family. It is certainly my good fortune!

BOOKS RECEIVED

Die Esoterische Tradition—Einleitung (Introduction) by Gottfried von Purucker, translated by Emmi Haerter and Mary Linné. Theosophischer Arbeitskreis, Unterlengenhardt, Bad Liebenzell, West Germany, 1972.

Der Mensch in Kosmos: Ursprung, Entwicklung und Ziel, (Origin, Evolution, and Destiny) by Gottfried von Purucker. Translation of *Man in Evolution* by Dr. Norbert Lauppert. Adyar-Verlag, Graz, Austria, 1972.

Man and His Seven Principles by Arthur Robson. Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India. 1973.

Sacred Mysteries Among the Maya and the Quiches 11,500 Years Ago. Their Relation to the Sacred Mysteries of Egypt, Greece, Chaldea and India. Free Masonry in Times Anterior to the Temple of Solomon. (Secret Doctrine Reference Series). Wizard's Bookshelf, Box 66, Savage, Minn. 55378.

Reviews of these books, it is planned, will appear in future Newsletters.—Eds.

Point Loma Publications:

Clothed With the Sun: The Mystery-Tale of Jesus the Avatara, by G. de Purucker
Paperback, 45 pp. \$1.00

The Mahatmas and Genuine Occultism
by G. de Purucker
Paperback, 73 pp. \$1.50

Wind of the Spirit, by G. de Purucker
Paperback, 282 pp. \$3.25.

Golden Precepts: A Guide to Enlightened Living
by G. de Purucker
Hardcase, 192 pp. \$5.00; Paperback, \$3.00

Glossary of Sanskrit Terms: and a Key to Their Correct Pronunciation, by Geoffrey A. Barborika
Paperback, 76 pp. \$1.25

Mme. Blavatsky Defended, by Iverson L. Harris
Paperback, 174 pp. \$3.00.

Theosophy Under Fire, by Iverson L. Harris
Paperback, 88 pp. \$3.00.

The Wisdom of Laoise, by Iverson L. Harris
Paperback, 36 pp. \$0.75

The Wisdom of Confucius, by Iverson L. Harris
Paperback, 45 pp. \$0.75

The Golden Stairs, by Iverson L. Harris
Paperback, 24 pp. \$.25

Does Chance or Justice Rule our Lives?
by Nils Amneus,
Paperback, 98 pp. \$2.00

Esoteric Keys to the Christian Scriptures; and The Universal Mystery-Language of Myth and Symbol
by Henry T. Edge
Paperback, 96 pp. \$2.50

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