



LETTERS TO THE EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

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OBJECTIVES:

To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

To encourage the Study of Comparative religion, Philosophy and Science.

To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.



INITIATION AND THE INITIATE'S MOTTO

In Theosophy, Initiation is a concept that there are nine levels of spiritual development that humans can progress through. As they re-incarnate, they can progress through the four basic levels, reaching Enlightenment when they have advanced to the fourth level. At that point there is no further need to re-incarnate, though it can still be a choice. At level five and beyond, souls can become members of the Spiritual Hierarchy of earth, and then continue to evolve into eternity.

C.W. Leadbeater saw Initiation as developing ourselves in order to have the power and knowledge to do the best work for humanity. Alice A. Bailey saw Initiation as the process of undergoing an expansion towards higher levels of consciousness. In Ascended Master teachings, Initiation is referred to as Ascension. It is based on major points in the life of Jesus.

It seems obvious that more souls on earth than ever before are on a path of Initiation/Ascension. Therefore, the Initiate Motto or Covenant warrants some discussion. Consciously knowing it and following it can ensure an easier path forward. Initiates, starting on their path, made covenants at inner levels. These covenants include the Motto:

To Know, To Do, To Dare, To Serve and To Be Silent

To Know: Initiates seek the highest Truth in all things. They are willing to give up cherished concepts to replace them with Truth and then higher Truth. They are always seeking more.

To Do: In their constant seeking, Initiates commit to their spiritual studies. They read, they pray, they decree, they meditate, they keep open minds. They seek teachers and their teachers appear as they are ready.

To Dare: Initiates dare to go forward in life as uncommon among others. They dare to follow their own inner guidance and inner impulses of a spiritual nature. They dare to be themselves. They assume responsibility for themselves. They release fear.

To Serve: Initiates seek to assist others in so many ways. They know that they must act in order to stay strong on the path. In serving, their inner light grows stronger. It can be a guide and comfort to others. New opportunities to serve on many levels present themselves. They step forward.

To Be Silent: This is a key part of the Motto. Here is where many initiates of old fell down or failed in their quest. Pearls of wisdom are given to initiates as they progress. These pearls are personal and must be held close to the heart. Speaking freely of them dissipates the energy that has been building. It's fine to say that you had a lovely or a powerful meditation, but it was for you, and the details are to be privately held.

Going forward in these times of transition or Great Awakening let your actions and your service speak to your growing inner light. Commune freely and constantly with your own inner radiant being.



THIS YEAR'S SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

My name is Lua Camargos. I am a first-year student studying Engineering at Queens University. Being able to go to Queens has been such a great experience. Studying engineering has been a big adjustment, not only did I have to learn new concepts and material, but I also had to learn more about time management and work-life balance. My first semester was a wonderful opportunity to learn so much about the engineering industry and how I might fit into it in the future, and I hope to explore this further in the coming years. One of the best parts of coming to queens has

been meeting many people with similar interests and goals as myself.

Starting a new semester online has been strange to adjust to after the first semester was almost entirely 'normal'. Especially since I am doing school in a different time zone, having lectures at 5:30 AM has not been entirely easy. However, I trust that this is just another obstacle on the path of my university education and experience. I am so thankful for the scholarship from the Theosophical Society of Canada for helping me to achieve this opportunity.





QUANTUM REALITY

By Carl E. Williams, Commander of Knights, North American Priory

Many attempts have been made to show parallels between quantum physics and eastern mysticism. Most are science fiction at its best, or worst, depending on your point of view. In this article I hope to give a brief overview of quantum theory, some of the things it can and cannot tell us, but without the use of mathematics.

The most popular formulation is the Schrodinger wave equation and the key component of this equation is the wave function. The wave function, actually the square of this function, gives one the probability, or the odds, of an event occurring. It does not and cannot tell us exactly when the event will happen.

A mathematical consequence of the wave equation is the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. It is a central feature, some say the central feature, of quantum theory. One of the things this principle tells us is that we cannot simultaneously know the values of certain complementary pairs of properties such as position and momentum or energy and time. For example, What this means is that we cannot know the present in detail. This has nothing to do with our ability to accurately make measurements, but in fact is a fundamental property of our universe.

One way of expressing the uncertainty principle is as follows; the change in energy multiplied by the change in time is greater than \hbar . Now the only thing you have to know about \hbar is that it is very, very, very small. Quantum theory permits the existence of logical constructs called virtual particles. Unlike real particles, virtual particles cannot be observed directly, but their indirect effect can be measured. These particles always occur in pairs. One of the pair being a particle, the other being its antiparticle. According to quantum theory, these pairs of particles can be created by borrowing energy from the universe. The duration this loan lasts is dictated by the uncertainty principle. The larger the amount of energy that is borrowed, the shorter the time these pairs of particles can exist. They appear together, move apart, then come back together and annihilate each other. All in a time span that would make the blink of an eye seem like an eternity. In this view, so-called empty space is full of these virtual particles. This brings back shades of the old concept of the aether.

An interesting result of virtual particles has to do with black holes. By definition nothing can be emitted from a black hole. But, if a virtual particle pair



came into existence at the edge of a black hole, while one of the pair may be pulled in, the may escape. To someone seeing this at a distance, it would look as if the one escaping was actually being emitted from the black hole. This has been found to happen, black holes are not as black as one might think.

Let us take a look at the following example. You observe an atom and find an electron at position or state A. A short time later you look and now find the electron at position B. What the wave equation truly tells us is the probability that if we look at an atom and get answer A, the next time we look at it we will get answer B. It does not, nor can it tell us how the electron got from A to B. In other words, we know nothing of what happens when we are not looking at the atom. Sometimes the electron is at A, sometimes it is at B and to ask how it gets from A to B is a meaningless question.

For most of us who live in the macroscopic world, this is a hard pill too swallow. We intuitively feel that we should be able to say how the electron got from A to B. But the one thing we must realize about quantum theory is that it is counter intuitive. We cannot use examples of how things behave in the macroscopic world to explain how things behave in a microscopic world. Any picture we can use is false. In fact, there is no example we can use to understand what goes on inside the atom. But people will still try and here is where

some of the parallels with eastern mysticism work their way in.

The most popular of these attempted explanations, the "official" one if you will, is called the "Copenhagen Interpretation". It has as its basis four ideas; uncertainty, complementarity, probability and the disturbance of the system being observed by the observer. I have already touched upon the first three, so let us see what ramifications the last idea brings to this discussion.

To show this we must look at the classic double slit experiment. All you need to do this experiment is a screen with two very small holes placed close together. On one side of this screen you have a gun that shoots electrons for bullets. On the other side of this screen you have a wall that is capable of detecting where the electron hits it. Now you are ready to do the experiment.

First you cover over one of the holes and shoot the electrons one at a time so one electron hits the detector wall before the next one is fired. When you look at the detecting wall, what you see is essentially one spot, say at point C. This makes sense. The electron went through the uncovered hole in the screen and hit the wall. Next you uncover the first hole, cover over the second hole and repeat the experiment. To no one's surprise, you get the same result as you did the first time except that now the spot on the detector wall is at a different point, say D. You now repeat the experiment a third



time, but this time both holes are left uncovered. Common sense would lead you to believe that the electron must go through one hole or the other. This would result in you seeing two spots on the detector wall, one at point C and the other at point D. But, unfortunately for common sense, this is not the result you see. Instead you get a spread out pattern which is called a diffraction pattern and this type of pattern can only come from interference. But you are only shooting one electron at a time at the screen, so what can be causing the interference? What's more, every time you repeat this series of experiments you get the same results.

If we try to trick the electron by opening or closing the other holes after the electron has left the gun but before it reaches the screen, the result is always the "correct" one for the configuration of the holes for the moment the electron went through. It is as if the electron "knows" whether or not the other hole is open or closed before it gets there. Now, let's leave both holes open but try peeking in to "see" which hole the electron goes through. The result is truly bizarre. Only one spot appears on the detector wall indicating that the electron went through one and only one hole. It seems that not only does the electron "know" whether or not both holes are open, it also seems to "know" whether or not we are watching it and then behaves accordingly. This has led those science fiction writers I mentioned at the beginning to wrongly conclude that because the electron "knows"

it therefore has consciousness.

Richard Feynman, considered by other physicists to be one of the foremost authorities on quantum theory, called this experiment the basis mystery of quantum mechanics because it is impossible, plains these results as follows: When the electron leaves the gun and is out of sight, it vanishes and is replaced by an array of "ghost" electrons. These ghost electrons each follow a different path to the detector wall and can interfere with one another when we are not looking at them. However, when we look at them, all the ghost electrons vanish except one and it solidifies as the real electron. In terms of the Schrodinger equation, each ghost corresponds to a wave function. This vanishing of the ghost electron is therefore known as the "collapse of the wave function" and this collapse is caused by us, a conscious observer, looking in and trying to see what's going on. As bizarre as this may be, this is not the end of it, for as soon as we stop looking at the electron, it immediately splits into a new array of ghosts. In short, according to the Copenhagen Interpretation, nothing is real unless we are looking at it and it ceases to be real as soon as we stop looking at it. Too some the ultimate observer is God. I think you can follow that line of thought too it conclusion.

We must always bear in mind that the Copenhagen Interpretation is just an attempt to explain the results in macroscopic, common sense terms and not to describe what is truly happening.



Think of this in terms of a Rosicrucian distinction between reality and actuality. That which is real to man is that which we can perceive, regardless of what is truly may be i.e., its actuality. Thus a reality may or may not be the actuality. In fact, since a reality depends on the five senses, it is more than likely not an accurate description of the actuality. The Copenhagen Interpretation, depends on the five senses and instruments which are not more than extensions of these senses.

As there is more than one way to skin a cat as they say, so there are other ways of attempting to explain these results. One such way is called the "Many Worlds Interpretation." Basically it is the same as the Copenhagen Interpretation except that instead of there being ghost electrons, it postulates that all the possibilities are real. Instead of the observer "collapsing the wave function", that observer selects one of the possibilities for our reality. In other words, there is a separate universe, all existing at the same time, for each possibility, hence the name Many Worlds. In short, everything is real. This is not a very popular interpretation. I suspect that this may be due, in part, to humanity's need to feel it occupies a special place in the grand scheme of things. As with the Copenhagen Interpretation, a conscious observer is needed to make a choice.

A third interpretation is called the "Transactional Interpretation." The interesting thing about this interpretation is

that there is no need for an observer, but to understand this I have to make a slight detour and discuss the concept of time. In the everyday, macroscopic world in which we live, time moves from past to future. This is called the arrow of time. Reality Theory informs us that as an object approaches the speed of light, time slows down and at the speed of light, time stops. So for anything traveling at the speed of light, time would have no meaning. The only thing we know of in this universe that travels at the speed of light is electromagnetic radiation, of which light is the visible portion. As an additional note, it is a common misconception Relativity Theory states that nothing can travel faster than the speed of light. What the equation truly say is that an object currently traveling slower than the speed of light can never reach the speed of light as it would take an infinite amount of energy to do so. But, the equations do not rule out the possibility that there are objects that are currently traveling faster than the speed of light. In fact they have been given the name tachyon. So far none have been found. The interesting thing too note is that at faster than light speeds, time would go backwards. Anyway, back to the Transactional Interpretation.

Looking at the double slit experiment from a point of view that is outside of time, the Transactional Interpretation explains the seeming "collapse of the wave function" in the following way. The electron leaving the gun emits waves,



called "offer" waves, that travel forwards in time. Remember emitted waves go out in all spatial directions. The electrons that hit the detector wall emits waves, called "conformation" waves, that travel backwards in time. These waves, the "offer" waves and the "conformation" waves cancel each other out everywhere in the universe except in the direct path between two electrons where they reinforce each other to produce a "transaction". Since these waves travel at the speed of light, time does not exist for them and the process happens instantaneously. What this interpretation has done is to remove the need for an observer. This in no way negates God. It just means that she, or any other observer, is not needed to explain the results.

All three of the interpretations that I have discussed make the same predictions from a practical point of view. They differ only in their moore philosophical approach in attempting to explain what is going on when we are not looking. Whichever one you are most comfortable with: nothing is real until a conscious observer intervenes, the Copenhagen Interpretation; everything is real but a conscious observer chooses the one we know about, the Many Worlds Interpretation; or the universe functions on its own without a conscious

observer intervening, the Transaction Interpretation; is up to you. Just remember, the microscopic world does not behave like the microscopic world so in that sense all pictures are wrong.

What I have tried to show is that there is nothing inherent in what quantum theory can truly tell us that parallels with mysticism of any kind. It is only when we try to explain quantum theory in macroscopic terms that more direct parallels appear. As students of the OMCE tradition, we should know the value of looking from all possible perspectives. Quantum theory deals with the mundane, physical world. In Rosicrucian terms it only deals with the reality. So far science does not have a theory capable of explaining the actuality. It is possible that in the future, if a Grand Unified Theory is found, this may change. If and when that time comes, as Stephen W. Hawking so aptly put it, "Then we shall all, philosophers, scientists, and just ordinary people, be able to take part in the discussion of the question of why we and the universe exist. If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason- for then we would know the mind of God".

For those who wish to learn more I recommend the books listed below

- (1) In search of Schrodinger's Cat, John Gribbon, 1984, Bantam Books
- (2) A Brief History of Time, Stephen W. Hawking, 1988, Bantam Books
- (3) The Good Particle, Leon Lederman, 1993, Dell Publishing
- (4) Schrodinger's Kittens and the Search for reality, John Gribbon, 1995 Little Brown and Company
- (5) Alice in Quantumland, Robert Gilmore, 1995 Copernicus (Springer- Verlag)



PART II THE PLACE OF PHENOMENA IN THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

I have taken for these four lectures, confined to members of the Theosophical Society, four subjects of great interest to ourselves, and in dealing with them I propose to ask you to look at them from a wide standpoint rather than a narrow one, and to consider the Theosophical Movement and the Theosophical Society, not as an isolated movement or Society, not as a separate thing, but rather as one of a series of spiritual impulses, like to its predecessors in its nature, interested in the same questions, and subject to the same conditions as those that preceded it in time.

We find, looking back over the history of the past, that great spiritual impulses occur from time to time, and each of these in the past has founded a new religion, or stamped some marked change in a religion already existing. The spiritual impulse that brought to birth the Theosophical Society is to be thought of as of the same nature as those which founded one religion in the world after another. And if we regard it in this way we can sometimes, looking at the whole succession of such movements, recognise certain definite principles working in all of them, and then apply those principles to the movement of our own time. And this seems to me to be a wiser and saner way of regarding the Theosophical Society than look-

ing upon it as unique and isolated. Certainly it is more easy to see our way in the solution of difficult problems of our own time, if we regard these problems as similar in nature to the problems that have been presented to our predecessors. Because always, in dealing with the problems of our own time, we are apt to be confused and bewildered by secondary issues that rise up around them, complicating them, perhaps largely clouding them, when we try to understand; whereas if we can catch sight of the underlying principle and study it apart from any difficulties of our own time, we are then able to apply that same principle, as discovered apart from the circumstances of the moment, and in that way there is a hope of applying it more justly amid the more exciting incidents of our own day. And it is that which I want to do in these lectures—to take our movement as a part of a world series, to study the principles that underlie the whole of that series, to trace out the working of these principles amongst the societies that have preceded us in the spiritual world, and then, having grasped them, to apply them to the solution of the problems of our own time. For there is a tendency in the Theosophical Society to narrow itself down to its time, instead of trying to widen out the thought of its time. It is a tendency which we see affecting every



religion, every church, every great society, and it is useless to recognise this fact in the history of others unless we apply the fact for instruction in our own. Now in all the religions of the past, so far as we have any knowledge of them in history or from what are called the "occult records," there is one thing we see in their early days—the presence of happenings regarded as abnormal. I have used the word "phenomena," but it is a very stupid word. One uses it because it is generally used; there is no justification in using that particular word in relation to some outer manifestations rather than to all. Properly speaking, "phenomena," of course, will cover the whole of the objects in the world, in the Not-Self, everything outside the Self; but the word has been narrowed down, especially in our own time, to those occurrences in the world around us, in the Not-Self, which are unusual, which seem to be abnormal, which are the results of laws which are not familiar, and therefore which are regarded by some people as supernatural, by others, speaking more carefully, simply as superphysical. And we lose much by separating off what we call "abnormal" happenings, the so-called "phenomena," from the normal everyday happenings of life. For there is no fundamental difference between them. All planes are equally within the realm of law; all worlds, denser or grosser in material organisation, are equally worlds moving by order and law. There is nothing really abnormal in Nature.

Some things happen more seldom than others—are unusual; but the very idea of abnormal seems to me in many respects mischievous and harmful. It is better to look on the whole world-system—universe, call it what you will—as a part of a definite order in which all the things that happen, happen by law, in which there no gaps, no abnormalities, but only limitations of our own knowledge at a certain time. All the gaps in Nature are gaps in the knowledge of the observers of Nature. There is nothing miraculous or supernatural, but everything is the orderly product of Nature working along definite lines and guided by definite intelligence.

And one reason why it is so important to recognise this is in order to clear away the atmosphere of wonder, of marvel, of awe, of reverence, that is apt, very much to the detriment of the observers, to enshroud everything unusual, every manifestation of a force with which we are not familiar, everything that in the old days was called "miraculous." And one thing I want strongly to impress upon you is, that in everything that can be called a "phenomenon," you ought to deal with it according to the same laws, according to the same canons of observation, as you deal with the phenomena with which you are most familiar on the physical plane. You should not regard an unusual phenomenon as one which is necessarily to be regarded with reverence in any way. You should not necessarily talk in whispers, when speaking about what we call "phenom-



ena." It is better to talk in your natural voice, and apply your ordinary common sense and the laws of sane judgment in every case. If you do that instead of getting alarmed or astonished, if you will stand on your feet instead of falling on your knees, your study of the other worlds will be more profitable, and the dangers you are likely to meet will be very much diminished. To come back to the point of the beginnings of all religious movements, we find that all begin in the atmosphere of "phenomena." The divine Man who founds the religion, and those who immediately surround Him, are always people who have a knowledge of more worlds than one. And because they are possessors of that first-hand knowledge, they are able to speak with authority. Now, the authority that should be recognised in all these matters is simply the authority of knowledge.

Another of the difficulties we want to clear away in studying phenomena is the idea that the happening of a certain thing by a law that we do not understand in the realm of matter gives any sort of authority on questions of spiritual knowledge, or gives a person a right to speak with authority on things not concerned with the particular laws under which that phenomena takes place. The mischief of the old idea of miracle was that it was supposed to be a proof, not of knowledge of another world or other forces, but of the title of the miracle-worker to speak with authority on religious and moral questions; while, as a matter of fact, the

knowledge of what occurs on the astral plane, the knowledge of what occurs on the mental plane, or the power to utilise the forces of these planes in the production of certain happenings here which are not usual, these things by no means give a man any authority to speak on moral problems or to decide on spiritual questions. That is a matter of the utmost importance, for knowledge of the astral and mental worlds is the same in kind as knowledge of the physical world; and it no more follows that a clairvoyant or clairaudent, or a man who can use any of the powers of subtler planes down here, has more authority on religious and moral questions than a good mathematician, a good electrician, or a good chemist. You are not likely, on the physical plane, to fall into the blunder of thinking that because a man is a good chemist he has authority on moral problems: you will at once see the absurdity. But many of you do not see that the same is true when you deal with good chemists or electricians belonging to the astral or mental planes. They have no more authority, their knowledge of these planes than the chemist. I often wish that in the Theosophical Society the old fable of the Jewish Rabbis was better remembered and applied. Two Rabbis were arguing, and one of them, to support his side of the argument, made a wall fall down; whereupon the other Rabbi sensibly remarked: "Since when have walls had a voice in our discussions?" That spirit is of enormous importance, and does not in any sense touch the



fact that you find the great Founders of religions and the illuminated men who surrounded them were men who had power to produce phenomena of various kinds, to heal the sick, to make the lame to walk, and so on, and that phenomena always accompanied the great religious Teacher in the past. These things did not give Him His religious authority: they were simply the outcome of His knowledge of natural laws; for a man who is thoroughly spiritual has matter subject to him on every plane in Nature. But it by no means follows that the man who can manipulate matter on the lower planes is therefore able to speak with authority on the higher. The fact that the spiritual man is always a great psychic, always has power to utilise higher forces for controlling physical matter, that fact, while true, does not prove the truth of the opposite idea, that the man who has power over matter is necessarily highly unfolded as regards the spirit. It is true, of course, that the founders of religion were men surrounded with clouds of phenomena, and the reason for that is the one I have just stated: that to the truly spiritual man matter is an obedient servant; to use a quotation from an Indian book: "The truly spiritual man all the siddhis stand ready to serve." Now it was necessary for the founding of religions and for the teaching of many of the doctrines of religions which had to do with worlds invisible to the physical eye, that the man who first promulgated these doctrines should be a

man who had a first-hand acquaintance with the conditions they described. For you must remember that in every religion there are two sides to its teaching: the side of the spiritual truths known only to the unfolded divine consciousness; the side of the existence of other worlds than this, and of the conditions existing in those worlds—important to men, as they have to pass into those worlds after death, important to men also, as much as symbolism, the rites and ceremonies, are connected with what we may roughly call occult science. As the Buddha said when speaking of worlds beyond the physical: "If you want to know your way to a village and particulars about the village, you ask a man who lives there and who has gone along the roads leading to it: and so you do right to come to me when you want to know the way thereto." So that looking back to these great spiritual Teachers and Revealers of the unseen, we find they are always men of first-hand knowledge. That first-hand knowledge was shared by Their immediate followers, who carried on the teaching of the system after the Teacher had withdrawn. And it matters not what religion you take, living or dead, you will find it equally true, that phenomena were common in the earlier days of the teaching of that religion.

Now let me take two typical religions, one Eastern and one Western, with regard to the continuance of the phenomena of earlier days – the Hindu religion in the East for the Eastern exam-



ple, and the Roman Catholic Church in the West for the Western example. In both these great religious movements we find a continuance of phenomena; neither Hinduism as typical of Eastern teaching, nor Roman Catholicism as the most widespread form of Christianity in the West, has ever taken up the position that the life which showed itself through the earlier teachers was cut off and no longer irrigated the fields of the religion, on the contrary, you find both these typical religions claiming continuity of life and of knowledge amongst the Hindu's it is a commonplace to assert the possibilities of yoga, that a man can now, as much as in the days of the Manu or of the great Rishis, do what they did, can free himself from physical body, can travel into other worlds of the systems, can acquaint himself with the forces and objects of those worlds, and carry on as definite a study of the Not-Self in those worlds, as anyone who wishes to do so may carry on a definite study of the Not-Self in the physical world. The claim has never been given up; the practice never wholly disappeared. So also with the Roman Catholic communion. There has been there a succession of saints and of seers who have always claimed to be in direct touch with other worlds, and who have claimed and exercised the powers of those worlds manifestly on the physical plane. Today in the Roman Catholic Church similar phenomena are said to occur, and certainly the evidence offered for these phenomena is far more easily verified than the evi-

dence offered for such phenomena in earlier centuries of the Christian story. So also among the Hindu's it is more easy to prove nowadays the powers possessed by a Yogi than it is to prove the possession of those powers thousands of years ago in the obscurity of the earlier days of Hinduism. Consequently you find amongst Roman Catholic's and Hindu's a definite belief that these things are still possible: and only things that either will say with regard to their happening is that the greater descent of people as a whole into materiality has made the possession of these powers a far rarer qualification of a believer in one or other of the religions, than was the case in the early days of enthusiasm, and of a greater outpouring of spiritual life. There is no doubt, so far as Christianity is concerned, that the sacred books of the Christians entirely support the Roman Catholic contention. I am not going into the question of the authenticity of particular phrases; I simply take the New Testament, as it is admitted to be a sacred book. There you have placed in the mouth of Jesus the distinct declaration that those who believe on Him should do greater works than He did; and in one passage—rejected, I know, as not in the original manuscripts by many scholars, but still coming down from a great Christian antiquity—you have the distinct statement that they shall be able to drink poison, and so on. So it is clearly a part of the definite Christian teaching and tradition, that these so-called abnormal



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powers are within the reach of believers in Christianity and also with regards to Hinduism. Now another thing is to be observed in this connection: that as the religion has gone on generation after generation, century after century, there has been a diminution of the powers, and a much less frequent happening of these so-called miracles. Side by side with the weakening of these powers and the lessening in number of the phenomena has been also the gradual lessening of the power of the religion over the minds and lives of men. The inroads of other forms of thought, the slackening of the grasp of the believer on the realities of the unseen worlds, have diminished religion authority, and the power of those unseen realities has weakened as time has gone on. So if we take the case of Hinduism or Christianity we find them giving back before the inroads of a more materialistic philosophy, before the inroads of a self-assertive science. We find among cultured and thoughtful people in the East and the West there has been a great slacking of hold on the teachings of religion, and that the power exercised over the lives of believers has become much less real than in earlier days. That is inevitable, the result of the efflux of time, and the need for the recurrence of spiritual impulse lies in the fact, which is ever repeating itself, just in the same way in which we read Bhagavad-Gita that by the efflux of time this yoga disappears, and then some teacher comes in order to restore viv-

idness to the life, so it is over and over again in the case of every great spiritual movement.

Now when we apply these manifest principles and facts to the latest spiritual movement, that which gave birth to the Theosophical Society, we find that we are running through, in a very short time, the same series of facts as characterised the religions of the past. Here also, as with them, a great outburst of phenomena in the earlier days; H.P.B. living in a cloud of phenomena and those who came in touch with her bathed in phenomena of all kinds. You can see the result of that early training in our late President, Colonel Olcott, to whom phenomena in connection with the Theosophical Society were the most natural things in the world. He had no hesitation in talking of them, was always bubbling over with his experiences of them in the past. You must remember, when he was over here, how much he thought about them, the pleasure he took in recalling his earlier experiences, and of showing the material articles produced phenomenally in those earlier days; and you cannot take up Old Diary Leaves without finding yourself face to face with every-day happenings of phenomena. Life then seemed to be made up of the abnormal, in the sense in which that word is used. The normal for the time being had disappeared. If a duster had to be hemmed, an elemental did it. If pencils were needed, a hand was put forward, twisted the pencils about, and there were twelve in place



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of the one, and so on. Much greater people than H.P.B. were concerned in producing these phenomena. Colonel Olcott tells us how H.P.B. on one occasion drank some lukewarm water which a Master drew from a water-skin on a camel, and magnetised, and made her believe it to be coffee. On his removing the magnetism before she had finished drinking, she found to her disgust that she had been drinking this lukewarm water. The present-day Theosophist would probably have objected to such playfulness, but such things were continually happening in the early days. When Colonel Olcott came into the Society he came straight from the investigation of spiritualistic phenomena—a thoroughly well-trained observer, beginning with a good deal of scepticism, and beaten out of it by his own observations in innumerable spiritualistic séances. So that when he came in touch with H.P.B. he was no credulous, unobservant person, overborne by a number of wonderful happenings, but a thoroughly equipped and cold-blooded and well-trained observer of the super-physical, and he naturally brought his powers of observation to bear on these wonderful happenings. He has left on record the full stories of these earlier days. You may find similar stories, not to the same extent indeed, in Mr. Sinnett's book, *The Occult World*. There we find similar instances, similar marvels worked by H.P.B. in order to arouse his attention, and to prove to him the existence of certain laws; which

otherwise would have remained, so to speak, in the air. So there were also there a large number of unusual happenings—letters in pillow-cases, letters on branches of trees, and so on. You would all do well to re-read the *Old Diary Leaves* or *The Occult World*. Each one of you should deliberately ask himself: "Why do I believe these things to be true?" Because it seems to me that most members of the Theosophical Society are rather slipping into the position of the modern Christian, that in order that a miracle may be true it must be old, and if it happens nowadays it must immediately be discredited. That is not rational. But it is a perfectly rational position to take up with all phenomena to say: "I shall not accept one of them unless thoroughly satisfied with the evidence on which it rests"; that is a perfectly reasonable attitude; but what seems to me a little less reasonable is to swallow wholesale the phenomena of the early days, and to look very much askance at anything that happens now; to glance back proudly to the past, and to regard anything which might happen now as wrong, as undesirable. Because if that is the right position, then it ought to be applied all round; it ought to be applied to the early phenomena of the Society as much as to anything that may occur now; and the same rigid demand for evidence should be made as is made at the present time. But, on the other hand, if the evidence be as full and as satisfactory now as that which supported the earlier phenomena, then



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it does not seem quite reasonable to accept the earlier and deny the later.

Let us for a moment see how far the Society has been going along the same line as that along which the other religions have gone—the gradual disappearance of phenomena and the substitution for them of teaching appealing to the reason only, and not to the senses, claiming its authority on grounds which appeal to the consciousness in man, as far as is practicable divorced from matter, or to that consciousness working through comparatively thick and gross veils of matter. After the Coulomb difficulty there was a cessation almost entirely of these phenomena in the Theosophical Society. Two reasons led up to that: first, the utter disinclination of H.P.B. herself to continue to expose herself to the attacks of people with regard to her good faith. She was so maligned and slandered, so many friends turned against her and spoke of the power she possessed as fraudulent and ass tricks, that when her Master raised her from the bed that might have been her death bed, she made the condition that she should not be forced to produce phenomena in the way she had been forced before; that she should be allowed to put that aside. The consent was given. Lion-hearted as she was, she shrank from the storm of slander that broke on her. The other reason was that people belonging to the Society took fright. The pressure of public reprobation was so strong, the force of unbelief so crushing, that the

members of the Society itself shrank back and were afraid to face public opinion, ignorant and persecuting as it was; and it is pathetic and interesting to read the letters she wrote in the years immediately succeeding the Coulomb difficulty, in which she pointed out that those to whom she had brought the light were ashamed to stand beside her under the conditions to which she was then exposed. She complained that the writings in the Society were changing their character; that they were no longer occult and full of teaching of the unseen, but had become purely philosophical and metaphysical; that her own journal had turned aside from its earlier occultism, and confined itself to articles addressed only to the intellect; and she says in one of these letters: "Say what you may, it was my phenomena on which the Theosophical Society was founded. It is my phenomena by which that Society has been built up." It was a natural feeling of half resentment against the policy of the time, that had left her in the lurch, and put the Society upon a different footing. It was in connection with that terrible time, in the turmoil and whirl of conflicting opinions, that those words recorded of her Master, spoken to herself, in one of the records left to the Society, occurred, in which He said: "The Society has liberated itself from our grasp and influence ... it is no longer ... a body over the face of which broods the Spirit from beyond the Great Range." Along those newer lines the Society went, and there



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are many who will say: "They are better lines. It is better that these abnormal happenings should fall into the background, that they should not be presented to a scornful and sceptical world, that we should rely on the literature that we have, without desiring to increase it by new knowledge, in which much can only be gained by abnormal means. Better to rest on what we have, and not try to add to it." Very many of our members take that view, and it is a perfectly reasonable view to take, a view which ought to have its place in the Theosophical Society, a view which is useful as correcting the tendency to undue credulity, which otherwise might hold on its way unchecked. For the life of the Society depends on the fact that it should include a vast variety of opinions⁸⁶ on all the questions on which difference of opinion is possible; and it is not desirable that there should be only one school of thought in the Society. There should be many schools of thought, as many schools as there are different thinkers who can formulate their thought, and each standing with an equal right to speak and of claiming a respectful hearing. None of them has a right to say: "There is no place for you in the Theosophical Society." Neither must the person who is strong on the subject of phenomena try to silence those who meet phenomena with disbelief, or who think them dangerous; nor should a person who stands only on philosophy and metaphysics say to the Theosophical acceptor of the phenomena:

"Your views are wrong and dangerous." Perfect freedom of thought is the law and life of the Society; and if we are not fit for that, if we have not reached the position where we can understand that the more we can enrich the Society with differences of opinion and different standpoints, the more likely is it to do its work and live for centuries to come, when other new avenues of knowledge unfold before it, we are not ready to be members of the Theosophical Society at all.

Now the Society has gone along those lines, along which every religion has gone, from the time of the Coulomb trial. What has been the effect of that on religions? A weakening power. We have to beware that the same thing does not take place with us that has taken place with the different religions of the past; we should take care especially in an era wherein ordinary science on the physical plane is pressing onwards into the higher realms of the physical plane, and on to the very threshold of the astral plane, and bids fair to cross that threshold and demonstrate its teaching there—lest we, who claim to be in the forefront of this great movement, do not fall into the background, and become unworthy of carrying on the standard of knowledge. Therefore I would claim for the Society its place as a seeker after new knowledge, investigation by what we call clairvoyance, the definite and regular carrying out of the third object, which has been far too much neglected of late years; practi-



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cally, where many years ago the Society was leading the way in the investigation of the hidden laws in Nature and the hidden powers in man, it now has to take a back seat with regard to the contributions it is making under that particular object for which amongst others it was founded. For more work has been done of late years by the Psychical Research and similar Societies than by the Theosophical Society, and that is neither right or wise—not right, because as long as we keep such research as one of our objects we ought to live up to it; not wise, because the lessons we have learnt, the various theories we have studied, are better guides to investigation than anything which the other Societies have, who have not yet been able to formulate theories but are simply in the state of collecting phenomena. For that reason it seems to me that the Society can do work here which the others cannot. They collect and verify with patient care masses of most interesting and valuable phenomena. The work done by the late Mr. Gurney and Mr. Myers, and a large number of their coworkers, is invaluable work from the standpoint of the Theosophical student. But there is no order in it; there is no reason in it. It is a mere chaos of facts, and they cannot explain or correlate them. They cannot classify or place them in order. They have no world-embracing knowledge which enables them to place each fact in its own place, and to show the relation of one set of facts to the other. There are

splendid observations, but no co-ordination and building of them into a science; and it seems to me that it is a duty of the Theosophical Society, not only to deal with the facts that others have verified, but to carry on researches by properly qualified persons among its own members; to utilise its magnificent theories, its knowledge—for they are more than theories—for the explanation of new phenomena, for the gradual evolution of new powers among greater numbers of its members; and I do not believe that in that there is so much danger as some people fear. I do not believe that the study of the hidden side of Nature is so perilous a study as some think. All researches at first hand in the early days of a science have some danger: chemistry, electricity, had dangers for their pioneers, but not dangers from which wise people and brave should shrink; and I fear for the future of the Theosophical Society if it follows the track of many of the religions and lets go its hold of knowledge of the other worlds, and comes to depend on hearsay, tradition, belief in the experience of others, and the avoidance of the reverification of experience. For it must be remembered that in giving a vast mass of knowledge to the world, H.P.B. distinctly stated that these are facts which can be reverified by every generation of observers; she did not give a body of teaching to be swallowed, to be taken on authority, to be accepted by what is called faith; but a body of verifiable teachings, facts to be examined



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over again, facts to be experimented on, to be carefully studied, as the scientific man studies the part of the world he knows. Unless we can do that, I fear we shall tend only to become another religion among the religions of the world; that we also shall lose our power over the thought of our generation, and to that which has been done so splendidly in past years—the spreading of these ideas so that they are becoming commonplace now among cultured and intellectual people—pause will be given, and the spreading influence will be checked, because we have left part of our work undone, part of our message unsaid. And I would urge on you in relation to this that which I said in a sentence at the beginning of my address, that there is one condition of research into these matters common to ordinary science and to the science of the higher worlds, and that is a balanced judgment, acute and accurate observation, and a constant readiness to reverify and recast earlier observations in the light of the later ones that are made. All science grows by modification as more and more facts are collected by the scientific observers, and no scientific man would make any progress in his science, if he were always in the reverential attitude of the devotee before a spiritual truth when he is working out experiments in his laboratory. You may show reverence to great beings like the Masters, there the posture of reverence is the right one; but when you are dealing with the phenomena of the astral plane

there is no more need to show reverence than with phenomena of the physical plane. It is out of place, and if you make that atmosphere round it, you will always be at the mercy of misconception and error of all kinds. You must try, in all psychical research, in all weighing of observation of phenomena, to cultivate the purely scientific spirit, indifferent save to the truth and the accuracy of the results, looking on every matter with a clear eye, without bias and without prejudice; not seeking for facts to verify a doctrine already believed in, but seeking for facts in order to draw conclusions from them as to the laws and truths of the unseen world. There is no other safe way of investigation, no other reasonable condition of mind in face of the objective world; and if it be possible amongst us to break down this wall between the physical, astral and mental, to see all objects in all worlds as simply part of the Not-Self which we are studying, dealing with them in the same way, interpreting them in the same spirit, then we are likely to add largely to our knowledge without risking the loss of our judgment or becoming mere enthusiasts, carried away by marvels and unable either to observe accurately or judge correctly. The place of phenomena in the Theosophical Society seems to me to be a constant place. They must be recognised as fit objects for the study of the Theosophist. We must recognise frankly that our future literature depends on the development of these powers which can be utilised in the



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worlds beyond the physical; that we are not satisfied to be only receivers, but also desire to be investigators and students; that while we will check the observations of to-day by the observations of the past, and hold our conclusions lightly until they have been repeatedly verified, we will not be frightened back from investigation by the idea that psychism is a thing to be disliked, to be shrunk from, to be afraid of. Some of you think that I have laid too much stress, when speaking of observations in the other worlds, on the probability of mistake. Some have blamed me from time to time because I have guarded myself so much by saying: "It is likely that mistakes have come into these observations." But it is only by keeping that frame of mind, that reiterated observation can correct the blunders which we inevitably fall into in our earlier investigations. There is no scientific man in the world who, when making experiments in a new branch of science, is not well aware that he may blunder, is likely to make mistakes, likely to have to correct himself, to find out that wider knowledge alters the proportion between his facts. And I have tried to lay stress on the fact that these things are true as regards the astral plane as much as they are true of the physical; that it is not a question of revelation by some highly evolved being, but a question of observation by gradually developing beings—a very, very different thing. And unless you are prepared to take up that reasonable position, unless

you will allow the investigator to make mistakes and to correct them, without calling out too loudly against them, or abusing them for not being perfect and invariable, you will build a wall against the gaining of further knowledge, and cramp the Society, and give it only tradition instead of ever fresh knowledge, ever widening information.

So that I declare thus the place of phenomena in the Theosophical Society: I declare that it was founded with them, built up by them, nourished by them, and that they ought to continue to be a department of our work, a proper subject for our investigation. Only, do not get confused by bringing faith into the region of phenomena. There is only one thing to which the word faith ought really to be applied; and that is the conviction of Deity within us. That is the real faith, the faith in the Self within, an unconquerable, imperial conviction of the Divinity which is the root of our nature. That faith is truly above reason; that conviction transcends all proofs and all intellect; but nothing in the object world is an object of faith; all are objects of knowledge. If you can keep that distinction clear in your mind; if you can remember that the only warranted conviction above reason is that conviction of your eternity, then you may go safely into the region of phenomena, into the manifestations and happenings of the objective world, with clear judgment, clear sight, unbiased mind; and knowledge shall reward you in your researches into Nature, for Nature



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always has a reward for the seeker into her secrets. Spiritual and Temporal Authority

I am to speak to-night, as you know, on "Spiritual and Temporal Authority," and I have chosen this, with the other subjects, as bearing on questions of immediate interest to the Theosophical Society. But in dealing with each of these, as on the first occasion, I want, if I can, to lift you above any controversy of the moment, and to put before you broad outlines rather than mere details, and to lead you to look at all these questions from the wider standpoint of the experience of the past, trying to apply that experience as far as you can to the questions, the difficulties, of the present. And this question that I have

chosen for the subject of our thought to-night is one which carries us back into the very beginnings of human history on our globe, which we may trace downwards through civilisation after civilisation, and we can then study, as it were by contrast, many of our modern civilisations. And out of all this it may be that we shall learn some lesson for our own small affairs of the moment. For local affairs are only really interesting as we see them as manifestations of the great principles which work out in the history of humanity; and we can only rightly, I think, understand the power of the Theosophical.



SYMBOLS: THEIR NATURE AND FUNCTION

Natural symbols are principally the result of suggestion. There is something about the form of the sign which resembles an element or elements of some previous group of ideas in our experience. By association, the symbol continually makes us aware of these other ideas. A dark cloud, for example, is a natural symbol. It suggests all of that which is associated with a storm. Such natural symbols are obviously quite generally accepted by mankind, because they are related to common human experience.

On the other hand, there are artificial symbols which man or group of men may create to represent notions of their own. Such artificial symbols or devices will be related to their own particular experiences and may mean nothing to any other group of persons. For example, we have the signs which are used by physicists and electrical engineers to depict instruments in an electrical circuit.

The mountain and tree which will be discussed later are both natural symbols. The garden, on the other hand, is both natural and artificial. It consists of natural elements which are artificially grown and arranged. The cross is an artificial symbol, but it is based on natural phenomena, and probably represents such natural elements originally. It is derived, at least in part, from the earth and the four directions, which are man's conception of a kind of order. The rose on

the Rosy Cross is, of course, a natural symbol, so that the Rosy Cross is also a combination of the natural and artificial.

Symbols may also be classified as communicative, artistic and ritualistic. Communicative symbols are what the name implies, those which are used specifically to communicate knowledge and information. All symbols communicate of course. What we mean by this category are those which are intended primarily to convey concepts, ideas, emotions, etc. The language used in a textbook is a system of signs and symbols which convey knowledge or information to the reader. Mystical symbols are sometimes used to instruct the student in certain principles. The symbol then is both mystical and communicative.

Artistic symbols are those which are used in art forms for esthetic purposes. The quality of their art is not a criterion for deciding whether a symbol is artistic. If the symbol is used in painting, sculpture, architecture or literature, it is an artistic symbol. A symbol may be communicative in one usage and artistic in another, or it may be a combination of both. When the student is told that the Rosy Cross represents the soul-personality and the trials of life, that is using it as a communicative symbol. But the Rosy cross may be used in a poem or a painting, and then it is an artistic symbol.



Ritualistic symbols are those which are used either in a ritual itself or to evoke a ritual in the mind of the initiate. Rituals and fraternal orders use symbols as do religious, political and social rituals. These include the objects used during the ceremony as well as the perambulations and other gestures, and verbal symbols. Usually a ritual is also a collective or cultural symbol but not necessarily. It may be a personal symbol, or a symbol with a personal meaning.

The psychological and mystical nature of symbolizing has not often been explained. We have said that a symbol is an object, idea, emotion, or action which stands for another object, idea, etc., and that these are related by association, suggestion or correspondence. When we see an object, we have a perceptual image of it in our minds. This percept is associated with ideas, emotions, concepts, etc., already part of the consciousness. The percept and the ideas, emotions, and concepts are related as has been explained by association, suggestion or correspondence. The percept is related to the form; the ideas, emotion and concepts are related to the meaning. The common elements in the two factors become the basis of the symbol, and they are united subconsciously. This union becomes the expressed or objectified symbol which may be words, a painting, drama, the dance, dreams and the like.

The process may begin with or be stimulated by either factor or polarity, the

form of the meaning. In other words, the initial stage may be either objective or subconscious function. A perceived object or a geometrical form can stimulate the projection of their meaning

Which we had not previously associated with that form. This is sometimes true with when the student begins to understand mystical philosophy. Forms, whether they have been previously known or not, suddenly acquire meaning.

Stimulus-Percept-Objectification

Stimulus-Percept-Reaction-Symbolic Response

The process can begin or be stimulated by the mental processes themselves. This is a case what might be called a meaning in search of a form, but we are often unconscious of the process. The need to represent the meaning produces a mental image much like a perceptual image. If the individual becomes aware of this sufficiently, he or she will clarify the image and create the symbol either in his or her mind or objectively in words, a drawing or the like.

Meaning-Mental Image-Objectification

The second type of symbolizing is the more common of the two, and it may arise from intuition, telepathy, attunement, psychic experiences, or memory. The first type will more easily become a sign or signal, but both kinds consist of the form too which the meaning is projected.



In both processes the percept is not the object, and the symbol is not the percept or the object. They are all part of a single process and are a unit. If this is put in different terms, the form is not the meaning. The form is the object element which is perceived by the mind. Neither the actual form nor its perceptual image is the meaning, and the meaning is not the form. The form and meaning are associated or connected, but they are not identical, and they result from different mental functions and levels of consciousness.

The object and the form are material, negative elements. The ideas, emotions, and concepts which constitute the meaning are the subconscious, positive elements. The symbol consists of both elements

The form is no more than a signal for an emotional or conceptual reaction. Then the form predominates. If it degenerates so that the meaning predominates, the emotion or concept is an automatic trigger for the objective form. In either

case, half of the polarity is dead and not functioning properly. When the meaning of the symbol has lost its form, the meaning itself becomes objectified in a sense; the meaning is no longer functioning in the subconscious levels. Cosmically, the form and meaning are one, and meditation on the symbol will help to keep the union of the polarity functioning in harmony. It is important to understand the personal, cultural, and archetypal elements in symbols. It is suggested, therefore, that you choose a common symbol such as light and outline the elements which are derived from a group and understand by the members of that group. Then ask what it means to you personally. Finally, does it have an archetypal factor too? This symbol which appears in many forms such as the sun, the moon, a lamp, a torch. Thus, both the form and the meaning may be any one or all of the three types.



RANDOM THOUGHTS FOR A MYSTIC

It has been said on many occasions that mystics are generally walking question marks. I suppose as human beings we must ask questions in order to grasp a certain understanding of our own nature and our surroundings. There are times that one that the thoughts and impressions that go through our minds may not be ours alone but could be thoughts of others as well. Furthermore, these thoughts and impressions seems to have been with us throughout many incarnations and these ideas are nothing new to us but are merely previous realities that emerge into our present consciousness.

Sometimes one has to wonder if we actually do have our own thoughts on things, or is this whole idea of intellectual understanding we call knowledge simply a collectivity of divine wisdom that we tap into through an inquiring mind. It may be through providence that we realize certain things about ourselves and the world we live in.

Our thought processes on this note may be constructed as complex equations like ones we might see in the scientific community. Just for an analogy, consider the chemical equation and structure of our DNA. Each molecule and atom may represent a specific reality which in turn could generate a multitude of thoughts and ideas. Where does man then begin to investigate his own being and purpose when one considers such an infinite amount of options available to him. This could be quite the task, but as mystics we shall certainly

endeavor to ascertain our nature and purpose in life. In time, our inquiring questions will be answered.

Our corporal bodies are hosts too our Soul Personalities. In order to evolve we must experience life with its trials and tribulations throughout many lifetimes. We come and go and we learn, and as we leave the world we take with us valuable lessons and information so that we may continue on in another life to attain the necessary conditions that will enable us to progress to the ultimate goal of achieving Christ Consciousness so that we become one with our creator.

This does appear to be quite a feat, but it is within our grasp and as mystics it is something that we all look forward too. This is basically what we are striving for and most likely the reason we are put on this earth. From the fall of man to the ascension to heaven. We all know that there are many mansions in the creator's house but its just a matter of when and how one gets there.

There is a Divine spark within us all. Divine light is radiated within us when we petition the cosmic in good faith. Our most noble attributes will manifest when we commune with our creator. Our purpose then in life is to develop our Soul Personality through the better understanding of ourselves. By absorbing this inner light we then are given the opportunity to share this light with all mankind. Lord knows the world needs it. We only have to circumspect the globe to understand the karmic rami-



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fications of the human arrogance and ignorance that plaques us all. We as mystics truly have our work cut out for us.

We should not hoard this sacred light amongst us. We must as conscientious mystics radiate this light to all humanity. Whether we like it or not all mankind is part of the whole scheme of things. We cannot help some and ignore others. We are not independent of mankind but from an altruistic point of view, mankind is dependent upon us if the world is to be healed of all its follies.

It stands to reason as developing mystics we have an unlimited resource that we can tap into. This resource being the cosmic contains all that is, was and ever will be. All thoughts of human endeavor is at our disposal and we merely access this through meditation to further our personal development. But as a humanitarian gesture we can send out messages to the mundane world in hopes of germinating sacred light that will bring about change. We must assume a positive attitude to our fellow man in order to create a global egregore that will eventually help mankind to attain spiritual development as opposed to material concerns that people are generally enslaved too. For what good is wealth when you have no health? Is it not better to be rich with love and friendship rather than riches and be alone? We can ask Midas that one. A man can only profit by sharing the things he has with others. Mystics are generous and not selfish.

Noble thoughts lead to noble deeds. If a man is true to his heart then he

can be true to the people around him. Compassion teaches us to tolerate all worldly injustices and allow us to seriously come to the aide of man whenever the need arises. What other way could we as mystics help to build a better world? When we reflect upon all the material and mundane things that we call our personal possessions we should also consider its source. All things that we have and endeavor to possess come to us from Divine intervention. Our creator has provided us with everything. Ask yourself who's it really is? This quaint thought reminds us of Jacob Boehme's simple conviction that in knowing the source of our blessings we should radially consent to the fact that all we have belongs to our Lord Good the creator of all things. We should as mystics contemplate on this issue once in a while only if its to nurture our Soul so to speak.

AS a mystic on the path we tend not to be judgemental, nor do we exhibit malice toward our fellow man. We do not embrace human weakness such as jealousy, envy, anger or selfishness. We prefer to show compassion, understanding, tolerance and most importantly a profound love for mankind and all living things on this God given planet that we call Earth. On a final note, let us forge ahead for we leave a noble legacy for future generations. Who knows, we may even become past master's who words and actions might inspire future mystics.

Peace Profound. Light. And Love
Bohdan



BOOK REVIEW BY LOIS BRISBOIS

THE SECRET DOCTRINE: Abridged and Annotated by Michael Gomes

In presenting her Magnum Opus to the world in 1888, Madame H. P. Blavatsky offered the following analogy:

When a tourist, coming from well explored country, suddenly reaches a borderland of a terra incognita, hedged in and shut out from view by a formidable barrier of impassable rocks, he may still refuse to acknowledge himself baffled in his exploratory plans. Ingress beyond is forbidden. But, if he cannot view the mysterious region personally, he may still find a means of examining it from as short a distance as can be arrived at. Helped by his knowledge of landscapes left behind him, he can get a general and pretty correct idea of the transmural view, if he will only climb to the loftiest summit of the altitudes in front of him. Once there he can gaze at it, at his leisure, comparing that which he dimly perceives with that which he has just left below, now that he is, thanks to his efforts, beyond the line of the mists and the cloud-capped cliffs. (from *The Secret Doctrine*, original)

Michael Gomes abridgment offers the means to such a vantage point where a glimpse of that unexplored country can be experienced firsthand. Gomes is a historian and Theosophical Scholar. In his single volume edition, he places the ideas and the key sections of *The Secret Doctrine* within reach of all those who are curious. When first published in 1888, the book generated a groundswell of interest in esoteric philosophies around the world. However, the

expensive and hefty two volume edition eluded many who might have wanted to have copies. Gomes meticulously scales down the book's most important writings to their essentials. He provides a critical sounding of the book's famous stanzas on the genesis of life and the cosmos. Blavatsky says that these originated from a primeval source. The stanzas speak of existence as an emanation or differentiation of the one life.

His Introduction alone is an education, casting new light on some of the book's sources and on the career of the brilliant, controversial and enigmatic author of *The Secret Doctrine*. H. brings unprecedented accessibility to this esoteric classic of the modern era. Director of the Emily Sellon Memorial Library in New York, Michael Gomes is one of today's most respected writers on esoteric movements. He expects that this volume will inspire some searchers to want more. These ones can seek out the various editions of the unabridged, fifteen hundred page, two volume original. (Information from the abridged version).

His Abridged and Annotated version of *The Secret Doctrine* is readily available at Amazon. I discovered it while searching for a copy of *The Secret Doctrine* for one of our members. Having studied the original over many years, it was wonderful to find this volume. I hope our member is as pleased with it as I am.



THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

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