



unavoidable losses, and to get gradually rid of his several unnecessary attachments. These often constitute a major source of pain in one's life.

The student does not need to "renounce" things, therefore. Things can "renounce" him in the first place. Non-essentials in life will lose their attractiveness as soon as one awakens to the theosophical path. The Jnaneshvari explains:

"The dispassionate man cannot be entangled in physical existence or the conditions of worldly life, as the wind cannot be caught in a net. His desire grows weak, as when a fruit is ripe, stem and fruit part from each other."

And, a few lines later:

"Then every desire for worldly or heavenly enjoyment come to an end, as smoke vanishes when a fire is extinguished with ashes. With the mind under control, desire dies away and he reaches the condition of self-restraint. As a result of this, false knowledge disappears and the Self gains the power of true perception." [1]

Sunrise and sunset are actually simultaneous. They occur at the same time in different places, and the same simultaneity of different events takes place in the two occult hemispheres of human consciousness. The sunset of one's lower self is the sunrise of the higher self, and of wisdom. While renouncing or "being renounced" by things and situations, one gets ready to acquire an impersonal strength which does not "belong" to one's higher self, but is natural to that level of life where the higher self exists. By learning detachment - the lesson taught by Autumn - one gets access to Winter, the season which presides over the culmination of Nivritti Marga, the path of decreasing materiality inaugurated by Autumn. Winter teaches humbleness, resolve, perseverance, transcendence. And it is the father of Springtime.

With Spring comes the art of renewing oneself and being born again, through right action. Then Summer emerges to teach us strength, and self-confidence. To the wise, however, the Summer also teaches modesty and selflessness, for they can see the whole cycle and know that soon Summer will invite Autumn to test once more our resolve and determination.

Possessions belong to the world of fear and suffering, while Renunciation leads to the prosperity of one's spiritual soul. French thinker Ernest Renan, who adopted the classical ideal of poverty lived by Francis of Assisi, wrote this in the 19th century:

"I crossed the world in the same way as the patriarch of Assisi, without getting strongly attached to the world and - I dare say - as a simple tenant. Both of us, though having no possessions, are rich. Divinity gave us usufruct rights over the universe, and we are content to enjoy it without ownership." [2]

This is the path of theosophy, and each one must decide for himself as to the rhythm of the progress to be made along the road.

## NOTES:

[1] The UNESCO edition of the Jnaneshvari, according to its fragment published as an article entitled "Jnaneshvar on Finding the Guru", by Dinshaw Buxey, "The Theosophist", Adyar, India, March 1981, p. 237.

[2] “Nouvelles Études D’Histoire Religieuse”. Ernest Renan, 1884, Calmann-Lévy, Editeurs; 533 pp., see pp. III-IV.

## When Life is a Laboratory Research and Sharing in Theosophy

It is an axiom in theosophy that all life is about learning. In the theosophical field, therefore, both research and sharing must be seen as essential matters and carefully examined.

In the Mahatma Letters, as in H.P. Blavatsky’s writings, the pedagogical process of theosophy is open for everyone to see and to discuss, and to accept or not. Wherever there is an absence of actual research in the theosophical movement, one must examine whether its leaders are deluding themselves with the idea that “everything is known by now” and “all has been taught already”.

The true teaching is in life itself and not in any written literature. H.P.B.’s works are but hints and **keys** to the awakening of Buddhi-Manas. The original theosophical teaching, in its written form, is essential. Yet it was not meant for memorization only. Its relations to life are infinite and dynamic, and they must be the object of an individual research, which must be shared.

The theosophical movement is in the making. Every true search is about old and new things. It questions present-day “knowledge”. It interrupts routine. It provides people with creative ways to share the common teaching as a living factor in everyone’s existence. In this process, a much wider popularization of theosophical knowledge becomes possible.

### A Commentary on the Agenda of Reformers: A Lever to Change the World

It seems it is always easier, in the short term, to interact with what we think is wrong about others and wrong about the world.

Discussing what is not right around ourselves provides us with a sense that **we** are right, and that we are powerful and clever. It takes aside that uncomfortable perception that perhaps we are not doing everything we can to live correctly. It is as if we had an alibi to postpone self-reform.

We say to ourselves:

“The world, or this, or that situation, is in such a bad condition that I have to reform the world first, or change this or that situation; then I will be able to reform myself.”

Yet my self is precisely that part of the universe which - being connected with every other part - is my duty to take care of, and if necessary, reform. It usually is necessary.

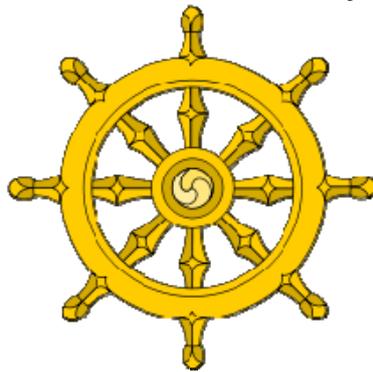
The purpose of identifying treason, disloyalty and fraud within the theosophical movement is but to prevent ourselves and others from unnecessarily imitating Error.

There certainly is compassion and self-sacrifice in changing and reforming the outer world. Yet the question is not so much about compassion. It is about intelligence, and energy conservation. It is about changing that which makes the difference, and which depends on us to change; and that is, above all, our own lives. If we want or need “a lever to change the world”, well, the lever is - ourselves.

It is useful, and vital, to criticize wrong things in a context of good-will and confidence in the good Law. It is equally important to give a clear direction to each day in our own lives, and teach by example.

## A Point in the Boundless Circle A Lesson From an Eastern Occult Catechism

Helena P. Blavatsky



The Occult Catechism contains the following questions and answers:

*“What is it that ever is?” “Space, the eternal Anupadaka.” “What is it that ever was?”*

*“The Germ in the Root.” “What is it that is ever coming and going?” “The Great Breath.”  
“Then, there are three Eternals?” “No, the three are one. That which ever is, is one, that which ever was is one, that which is ever being and becoming is also one: and this is Space.”*

*“Explain, oh Lanoo (disciple).”*

*“The One is an unbroken Circle (ring) with no circumference, for it is nowhere and everywhere; the One is the boundless plane of the Circle, manifesting a diameter only during the manvantaric periods; the One is the indivisible point found nowhere, perceived everywhere during those periods; [...]. It proceeds from without inwardly, when it is everywhere, and from within outwardly, when it is nowhere [...].*

[Reproduced from “**The Secret Doctrine**”, H. P. B., Theosophy Co., Volume I, p. 11.]



goals and evaluations, the independent and fundamental definitions regarding goals and values remain beyond science's reach.

As regards religion, on the other hand, one is generally agreed that it deals with goals and evaluations and, in general, with the emotional foundation of human thinking and acting, as far as these are not predetermined by the inalterable hereditary disposition of the human species. Religion is concerned with man's attitude toward nature at large, with the establishing of ideals for the individual and communal life, and with mutual human relationship. These ideals religion attempts to attain by exerting an educational influence on tradition and through the development and promulgation of certain easily accessible thoughts and narratives (epics and myths) which are apt to influence evaluation and action along the lines of the accepted ideals.

It is this mythical, or rather this symbolic, content of the religious traditions which is likely to come into conflict with science. This occurs whenever this religious stock of ideas contains dogmatically fixed statements on subjects which belong in the domain of science. Thus, it is of vital importance for the preservation of true religion that such conflicts be avoided when they arise from subjects which, in fact, are not really essential for the pursuance of the religious aims.

When we consider the various existing religions as to their essential substance, that is, divested of their myths, they do not seem to me to differ as basically from each other as the proponents of the "relativistic" or conventional theory wish us to believe. And this is by no means surprising. For the moral attitudes of a people that is supported by religion need always aim at preserving and promoting the sanity and vitality of the community and its individuals, since otherwise this community is bound to perish. A people that were to honor falsehood, defamation, fraud, and murder would be unable, indeed, to subsist for very long.

When confronted with a specific case, however, it is no easy task to determine clearly what is desirable and what should be eschewed, just as we find it difficult to decide what exactly it is that makes good painting or good music. It is something that may be felt intuitively more easily than rationally comprehended. Likewise, the great moral teachers of humanity were, in a way, artistic geniuses in the art of living. In addition to the most elementary precepts directly motivated by the preservation of life and the sparing of unnecessary suffering, there are others to which, although they are apparently not quite commensurable to the basic precepts, we nevertheless attach considerable importance. Should truth, for instance, be sought unconditionally even where its attainment and its accessibility to all would entail heavy sacrifices in toil and happiness? There are many such questions which, from a rational vantage point, cannot easily be answered or cannot be answered at all. Yet, I do not think that the so-called "relativistic" viewpoint is correct, not even when dealing with the more subtle moral decisions.

When considering the actual living conditions of present-day civilized humanity from the standpoint of even the most elementary religious commands, one is bound to experience a feeling of deep and painful disappointment at what one sees. For while religion prescribes brotherly love in the relations among the individuals and groups, the actual spectacle more resembles a battlefield than an orchestra. Everywhere, in economic as well as in political life, the guiding principle is one of ruthless striving for success at the expense of one's fellowmen. This competitive spirit prevails even in school and, destroying all feelings of human fraternity

and cooperation, conceives of achievement not as derived from the love for productive and thoughtful work, but as springing from personal ambition and fear of rejection.

There are pessimists who hold that such a state of affairs is necessarily inherent in human nature; it is those who propound such views that are the enemies of true religion, for they imply thereby that religious teachings are utopian ideals and unsuited to afford guidance in human affairs. The study of the social patterns in certain so-called primitive cultures, however, seems to have made it sufficiently evident that such a defeatist view is wholly unwarranted. Whoever is concerned with this problem, a crucial one in the study of religion as such, is advised to read the description of the Pueblo Indians in Ruth Benedict's book, *Patterns of Culture*. Under the hardest living conditions, this tribe has apparently accomplished the difficult task of delivering its people from the scourge of competitive spirit and of fostering in it a temperate, cooperative conduct of life, free of external pressure and without any curtailment of happiness.

The interpretation of religion, as here advanced, implies a dependence of science on the religious attitude, a relation which, in our predominantly materialistic age, is only too easily overlooked. While it is true that scientific results are entirely independent from religious or moral considerations, those individuals to whom we owe the great creative achievements of science were all of them imbued with the truly religious conviction that this universe of ours is something perfect and susceptible to the rational striving for knowledge. If this conviction had not been a strongly emotional one and if those searching for knowledge had not been inspired by Spinoza's *Amor Dei Intellectualis*, they would hardly have been capable of that untiring devotion which alone enables man to attain his greatest achievements.

## Spreading the Teachings A Decisive Task for Every Theosophist



[ We reproduce this article from the magazine "*The Theosophical Forum*", of the Point Loma Theosophical Society, August, 1948 edition, pp. 495-496. It was first published in *Sektionsbrev* No. 3, the Bulletin of the Scandinavian Section of that Society, then edited by President Peter Flach.]

**O**ur most important task as members of the T.S. is to spread the teachings. We do this best by "living the life" - that is, through good example. But we must also be able to expound and make clear the teachings as well, not only intellectually, but even more, from the heart. In

order to be able to do this it is necessary to have knowledge and to make the teachings a living power in our lives - to “see” the teachings in life and in nature around us. Then we can give out the teachings in a living manner. How can we give to others a living knowledge if we do not possess it ourselves? Therefore, study Theosophy, make it a living power in your life, observe, reflect, *give* from the heart!

The reward is great, for by doing this the higher self is given the upper hand in our lives.

Each member ought to work out his own technique, his own way (according to his own *swabhâva*) to talk Theosophy and spread its teachings. We can often get better results through personal conversation in small groups than at official public lectures (which naturally in no way detracts from the value of these lectures). In the practice and development of this technique some general viewpoints may be helpful and significant.

Try to reach the higher self of the person with whom you speak, and this can only be done if you yourself speak from your own heart, impersonally and unselfishly.

Try to understand the person you speak to, adapt your conversation to him, try to see with his eyes, to understand his difficulties in immediately grasping your meaning.

Never be dogmatic. Use your reason and give analogies from life and nature. Show that Theosophy is life itself and not theoretical speculations. Talk simply and objectively.

In your presentation give expression to the joy and warmth and humor which result from a harmonious life. (You cannot sell an unfailing remedy for falling hair if you yourself are bald!)

Avoid speaking about things that you do not understand yourself. If you can't answer a question, acknowledge the fact. Answer the questions that have been asked, and not something else. Never rant. If possible give a short answer. (If I ask for a glass of water, I don't want a whole barrelful thrown over me!) Try to be as clear as possible, and be sure that the person you speak to really understands you and can follow you. A person very often judges Theosophy by what he does *not* understand, strangely enough.

Give carefully and with discretion to people who have never come in contact with Theosophy before. (A hungry person ought to be fed with care.)

What has been said here is nothing strange, but just some experiences and a little common sense.

“But I have neither the knowledge nor the ability to spread Theosophy,” perhaps you will say. That does not need to stop you, if you have the will. Knowledge you can acquire; everything lies there waiting for you. The ability will come through practice and practice. The time has come to give and to give plentifully. Try and don't be afraid!

Remember what “The Voice of the Silence” says:

“The path that leadeth on is lighted by one fire - the light of daring, burning in the heart. The more one dares, the more he shall obtain.”

# How to Develop Occult Powers

## A Practical Approach to One of the Main Goals of the Modern Theosophical Effort



The Sacred Sanskrit Word AUM

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

(The third declared object  
of the theosophical movement)

**H.** P. Blavatsky opened a new page in human history by showing and teaching about the latent powers in human consciousness.

But shadow is doomed to imitate Light, and Karma Law never ceases to work. The abuse of imaginary mystical powers which followed such a sacred teaching soon created painful problems for the theosophical movement.

The challenge started during H. P. B.'s lifetime, when A. P. Sinnett decided to promote mediumnistic séances in London in 1887-88.

This was a means for him to talk to imaginary Mahatmas, for the real ones had stopped writing letters to him. After H.P.B.'s death, it took only three years for Ms. Annie Besant to ask to be admitted in those séances, and Sinnett honestly reports the facts in his revealing Autobiography.

Several years before that, C.W. Leadbeater had come back to London from Asia and become a key element in those séances. Though living in the same city as H.P.B., Leadbeater of

course never joined the Esoteric School as long as HPB lived. He had failed in ethics and discipleship soon after having a chance to become a probationary chela, in 1884-1885.

From the 1890s on and up to the first decades in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, no one can complain about a shortage of charlatans talking to Masters, being clairvoyant, developing personal friendship with Maitreya, Sanat Kumara and the Manu, being high Initiates, channeling “St. Germain” or receiving visitors from other galaxies. Being a smart politician, Ms. Besant succeeded in opening the doors of the theosophical movement to all sorts of nonsense regarding “mystical powers”.

## **Learning from Karma**

What about the future? By remembering that Justice is Inevitable, we can easily see that a practical approach to the challenge of latent powers in human consciousness must lead us to get collectively rid of the old Besantian trap.

The best karmic possibilities of the movement can only be awakened after we remove the grossest part of the accumulated dross of disrespect for truth, and for the real teachers.

One of the main mystical powers we must develop, then, is that of Viveka, or Discernment. And for this step to be taken we need Vairagya, Detachment, especially with regard to our “personal views” and favourite ideas. The Law establishes that before the awakening of any Powers which we do not have yet, we must develop the ability to properly use the Powers we already possess. Only thus one can enable oneself to take the next step ahead.

As a result, one of the best approaches to the third object of the movement - as long as it refers to investigating occult powers - is an endeavour to develop the powers of consciousness as indicated by the Noble Eightfold Path of Lord Buddha. While only the Wise and Perfected Men have a full possession of those sacred Powers, every honest student can look for, and gradually develop in himself, the abilities and talents taught in that Eightfold Lesson.

And they are:

- 1) The power of right understanding;
- 2) The power of right thinking;
- 3) The power of right speaking;
- 4) The power of right action;
- 5) The power of right livelihood;
- 6) The power of right mental effort;
- 7) The power of full attention and right vigilance; and, last but not least,
- 8) The power of right concentration.

These and other forms of higher awakening must take place on the basis of Common Sense. The search for truth has to be placed far above every other consideration, and one would do well in remembering that in real Buddhism, as in true theosophy, Ethics comes first. It is a high siddhi indeed, for it comes from the higher self and changes all of life and karma. It regenerates the whole world, starting from oneself.

We do not need to materialize letters. A telefax machine does that. The Siddhi we must develop now is the ability to give up “spiritual selfishness”, and every aspirant to discipleship

must aim at it. It is true that an honest life dedicated to the Cause of mankind unfailingly produces a gradual expansion in the student's ability to understand himself and the universe. As to some other aspects of one's awakening, however, an iron rule has been set ages ago, and it is well expressed in Lao-Tzu's "Tao-te-Ching", the Chinese work on classical theosophy [1].

It says:

"He who knows does not speak.  
He who speaks does not know."

#### NOTE:

[1] "**The Way of Lao-Tzu, Tao-te Ching**", translated and with notes by Wing-Tsit Chan, Prentice Hall / Library of Liberal Arts, copyright 1963, NJ, USA, 285 pp. See the opening of Chapter 56, at p. 199. See also the French language version of this ancient book from which H.P. Blavatsky quotes in "The Secret Doctrine" (Vol. I, p. xxv); "**Le Tao Te King**", Lao-Tseu, by Stanislas Julien, 1842, L'Imprimerie Royale, Paris, 304 pp.

## Universal Brotherhood Still a Puzzle

And There's No Need to  
Pretend We Know All About It



**The term 'Universal Brotherhood' is no idle phrase. (...) It is the only secure foundation for universal morality. If it be a dream, it is at least a noble one for mankind and it is the aspiration of the *true adept*." ("Mahatma Letters", T.U.P., Pasadena, Letter IV, p. 17.)**



# The Original Movement in Italy

## A Rebirth of Classical Theosophy in Europe



Helena Blavatsky and John Garrigues

From Rome, Marco Bufarini sent to “The Aquarian” a report on the Adyar theosophical movement in Italy.

While generally known as “**Biblioteca Nazionale Teosofica**” (“National Theosophical Library”), the Rome lodge of the Adyar Society in Italy has no specific or formal name.

It presently serves as a meeting point for four study groups, and each of them has its president. One group is called “Saint Martin”, whose members are Martinists. Another group gathers students of the books written by Roberto Assaggioli. There is an Anthroposophical study group; and “Lumen H.P.B.” is the group of Blavatsky students.

The first theosophical lodge in Rome was founded in 1897. The place now used by theosophists was donated in the 1920s by Ms. Clio Monetti. Asked about the recent past of the Lodge in Rome, Marco says that in this department “there is a little cellar full of karma”. He prefers “not to describe it with clear words”. But that is past. There is by now “a sprouting germ of a regenerated and truthful seed: the original foundations of the Theosophical Movement”.

Nominal members in Rome are approximately one hundred, including the various groups. Some thirty of them are active right now in the four study groups.

Next yearly cycle of activity in the “Lumen HPB” group will begin on the 6th of October with a round-table on the “Theosophical Principles and their Application in Daily Life”.

November will bring “The Theosophical Path”, an introductory and in-depth study of “The Key to Theosophy”, by H. P. Blavatsky.

The group will also continue to study “The Ocean of Theosophy”, by W.J. Judge. An Italian

