



VISIONS OF HOPE

OR DUSTING OFF OUR FAMILIAR ASPIRATIONS

With the arrival of the New Year, we can honor it by 'revisiting' the basis or motive on which we build our "line of life's meditation".

Old traditions have made this a time for new resolutions – it's said that between Christmas and Easter the astral light of the earth is impressionable to our thought-wishes – so what should we hope for?

One way is by contemplation of the Sun as a symbol of hope & light; the Central Spiritual Sun.

We fix our aim on **this Sun** – a very beneficial practice at this time year – even though our first attempt may only reach **the moon**, because it's wise to err on the side of generosity when taking into account the possible trajectories¹ of our thought-impulses.

They should be unselfish and co-operative, based on the aspiration of the soul and the recognition of our *infinite possibilities*. This is working on the plane of spiritual intuition and not only through intellect and matter. Pure, well directed impulses on the plane of the eternal are, as was suggested in last month's article² on

¹ A recognition of the limitations that all beings, as immortal Egos, experience when living in matter.

² "Those who are acquainted with the laws of spiritual dynamics know that the work ... on the intellectual plane is in its turn immeasurably less than that produced by the same quantity of energy acting upon the plane of spirit." 'Qualifications for Chelaship', December AT, p 5.

chelaship, many times more powerful than the personal or even intellectual.

So practically speaking, what can we do?

If you search through this edition there are some examples of exercises that one can call on, which if you will, are **recreation for the soul!** These practices will refresh the divine being within and help it into bloom; these trustworthy writers – re-transmitters of the ancient's doctrines – have promised that they will bring the peace, insight and harmony of the higher life to those who persevere.

Have a Sunny New Year

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WHAT WILL THE 21st CENTURY BRING?

W.Q.Judge writes in The Closing Cycle that a “dark shadow... follows all innovations” unless a time for ASSIMILATION is given after each special effort to raise the manas and Buddhi of the race.

The karma of early half of the 20th century appeared to follow that pattern with many nations settling terrible accounts between themselves, as predicted in the Secret Doctrine. But, importantly, H.P.Blavatsky then goes on to say that the twenty-first century will be a paradise by comparison:

Consider all this, and then tell me whether I am too sanguine when I say **that if** the Theosophical Society survives and lives true to its mission, to its original impulses through the next hundred years – tell me, I say, if I go too far in asserting that earth will be a heaven in the twenty-first century in comparison with what it is now!
(Key, Conclusion)

... on the proviso that a group of united, determined and charitable students keep the original impulse alive:

then the Society will live on into and through the twentieth century. It will gradually leaven and permeate the great mass of thinking and intelligent people with its large-minded and noble ideas of Religion, Duty, and Philanthropy.

Slowly but surely it will burst asunder the iron fetters of creeds and dogmas, of social and caste prejudices¹; it will break down racial and national antipathies and barriers, and will open the way to the practical realisation of the Brotherhood of all men.

¹ In India a movement in the film business is reported to be exposing the injustices of the caste system, of racial or other discrimination and intolerance, in short carrying out the precepts of Brotherhood. The programme is available on 'Listen again' on BBC Radio 4, on 1st January 08 at 11:30 am. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/filmsforanewindia/pip/s1j5u/>

Through its teaching, through the philosophy which it has rendered accessible and intelligible to the modern mind, the West will learn to understand and appreciate the East at its true value.

Further, the development of the psychic powers and faculties, the premonitory symptoms of which are already visible in America, will proceed healthily and normally².

Mankind will be saved from the terrible dangers, both mental and bodily, which are inevitable when that unfolding takes place, as it threatens to do, in a hot-bed of selfishness and all evil passions.

Man's mental and psychic growth will proceed in harmony with his moral improvement, while his material surroundings will reflect the peace and fraternal good-will which will reign in his mind, instead of the discord and strife which is everywhere apparent around us to-day.

The feeling

So it appears that more than knowledge is needed: maybe it's something of a vision of how things can be and will be if we persevere, a stronger underlying message of **hope**, and belief in the possibilities of ourselves and all humanity.

To what extent we should cultivate this vision of a benevolent society and universe, as Plato did in his *Republic*, which inspired generations and generations, is for each one to work out.

And how attached to this vision should we become – is it sustainable in the darkest of hours which are before dawn, such as we see around us? Such a vision mustn't become a searching for results from it... it's never a dependence of 'how things may work out' that should determine a happy and optimistic frame of mind.

The Dalai Lama is a living proof of that, having experienced great hardship, he is known for his almost *childlike* simplicity, humour and happiness. As the Voice says:

“The pupil must regain the child state he has lost `ere the first sound can fall upon his ear.”

The evidence of perfectibility of the great teachers of man – even if only for some now – is proof of **its possibility for all** who seek to unite and work for others.

² We hope and trust this is the case! See p 10.

THE VOW OF SILENCE

By B.P. Wadia

From 'Living The Life', pages 13-16

(This article expands on WQJ's Occult Philosophy notes on p 12 and is a valuable commentary on the exercise and preparation for meditation, a 'pearl of great price'.)

ONE, if not the greatest, of evils by which modern society is corrupted, is that of gossip. Injurious speech, or small talk ensouled by the spirit of competition, not only ruins other people's character, but also corrupts our own. This is not recognized. Small talk has become and is studied as an art, and the infamy of gossip has emerged as an institution of social amusement. Its infamous nature is forgotten, its dire effects fail to impart their lesson, and it has assumed for modern men and women the place of a necessity of life. Social avocations in cultured drawing rooms as also in abusive slums pursue the path of small talk and mean gossip.

The first requirement of the spiritual life is to learn the value of silence. The conservation of spiritual energy demands that the frittering away of soul-forces be stopped. There are few avenues through which man's divinity goes to waste as through sound and speech. The dirt and dregs of our kamic nature often find their outlet in useless or injurious speech.

There is a close connection and more than mere metaphorical analogy in the statement that refers to what is put in the mouth as food and what comes out of it as words. Through the process of eating, the assimilation of food and elimination of waste product take place. The health of the body improves or suffers with every morsel we take in. One of the main ways of determining the condition of the body is to examine the disposition of the process and

product of elimination. Our psychic nature has its own ways of assimilation and elimination, of sustaining itself in good or ill health. One of the modes of elimination relates to the power of speech.

In spiritual growth, learning and listening go together. They precede teaching and speaking. In ancient India, the moment the seeker of the peace of wisdom resolved to follow in the footsteps of the guru, the pupil gained the name of Shravaka, a listener. The ancient Greeks named him Akoustikos. He was not even permitted to ask questions; bija-sutras, seed-thoughts, were given him to ponder over and understand to the best of his ability. These thoughts were intended as purificatory food that, if adequately assimilated, would cleanse his kamic nature; not only remove the accumulated poisons of the past but reveal to the pupil the correct alchemical process of transforming within his own constitution passion into compassion, lust into love, and antipathy into sympathy. Once started on this highway, he was ready to become an exerciser, a positive doer, Shramana, the Asketos of the Greeks.

Our modern Theosophical student has not fully recognized the occult significance of silence. A vow of silence does not mean to become mute and not to speak at all. It consists in:

- (1) self-imposition of periodic silence;
- (2) not indulging at any time in injurious and untruthful speech;
- (3) not giving way to useless speech;
- (4) not asking questions on philosophy or practice till what has already been taught or is before us is fully scanned and thoroughly looked into from the point of view of our particular questions;
- (5) not indulging in ahankaric¹ speech, i.e., not making statements about the Divine Self or Ego in terms of our kamic or lower nature;

¹ From Ahankara, the "I" or feeling of one's personality, the "I-am-ness."

The Voice of the Silence, p 62, gives Ahankara as that which forfeits **the three prizes**, Dana, Shila and Kshanti, or love, harmony and patience. What a loss! Ed.

(6) not indulging in injurious speech regarding our lower nature, our own faults and weaknesses, lest by speaking of them we lend them the strength that ensues from the power of speech;

(7) not to speak even (of) that that is true unless at proper times, to proper people, and under proper circumstances.

While this sevenfold exercise is practiced, secrecy has to be observed about it. To refer to or speak about the exercise we have undertaken and are practicing is to vitiate it altogether and make it worse than useless. Such an indulgence gives birth to conceit and enhances it where it already exists. We need secrecy and silence. Contemplation on their kinship should precede the sevenfold exercise.

There is a general desire "to sit for meditation and to practice yoga," but this first rule, this primary regulation, is found irksome and its desirability questioned. No doubt, it is difficult, well nigh impossible, for the moderns to attain this control over speech; but if not fully and wholly at least partly and partially it can be and should be practiced.

Deliberate speech will be the first result. It will not be rooted in Kama-passion, but in Buddhi-compassion.

There are two types of criticism:

- one is faultfinding;
- the other is perception of virtue in meritorious expressions as also the perception of virtue behind vice, demerit, and weakness.

The deceit of the dice is Sri Krishna, and the power to perceive that comes from the second type of criticism. The first is criticism by words of Kama (meaning here 'low' desire); the second is by words of understanding. The first is on the plane of words; the second on the plane of ideas. The first is of head learning; the second of soul-wisdom. The first praises or condemns the lower nature; the second imports into it the strength of the higher, causing readjustment. The first has behind it the superior spirit of teaching; the second the sublime spirit of learning and propagating that which is learnt.

How different would be the world if even in some measure the power of this practice went into the doings of our civilization!

Reviewers and critics would then not look for points to condemn, but for beauty, goodness, and worth in the books they review. In all affairs of thought, feeling, and action our tendency is to look for OUR thoughts repeated, OUR feelings reproduced, and OUR actions imitated.

We regard ourselves as the model for all examination. We are the pattern whereby right and wrong is to be determined. Such an attitude is not blatantly expressed, but veils itself in a subtle form of humility, which is mock modesty.

There are a hundred who plunge into the waters of the ocean for pleasure or profit to only one who dives for the pearl of great price.

The latter does his work in the **secrecy of silence**. His art in the ocean is of a different kind from that of the ordinary swimmer.

Those who are in search of the pearl of wisdom must acquire the strength of muscle, the control of breath, and the finesse of stroke necessary against the stormy billows of this ocean of Samsara.

These lie securely hidden in the Power of Silence. They must invoke that power, not by a pledge to some other being, but by a vow silently sung and silently registered in the sanctuary of the Heart. Thus, the path begins in silence and secrecy and ends in the hearing and the chanting of the Soundless Sound.¹

¹ "He who would hear the voice of Nada, the "Soundless Sound" and comprehend it, he has to learn the nature of Dharana." The Voice of the Silence p 1.

Nada (Sanskrit) is the Voice in the *Spiritual Sound*, or the voice of our Higher Self.

Dharana is perfect concentration, or *sustained attention*, an essential prerequisite for right meditation. At the start of Book 3 Patanjali outlines two important stages leading to meditation (Samadhi): Attention & Contemplation, or Dharana & Dhyana.

An occasional Editorial

IN starting off this year's edition we are struck by the necessity for maintaining the formation of a united, committed group of people who are dedicated to the amelioration of the suffering of others.

It's over 100 years ago that two of the key founders of the modern Theosophical Movement left the scene; since then there's been unprecedented change and progress in many parts of the world... some of it a spiritual readjustment after millennia of dogmatic churchanity, and especially the West and parts of Asia, great material progress.

Now, as before there is a loud call for some balancing spiritual re-development, especially in the richer countries, without which they can offer no hand of *effective* friendship to those whose peoples suffer so, nor more importantly, can worthwhile examples be set.

In the West we can even less make the excuse (always lame anyway) that our time and efforts are all spent in supporting ourselves – we now have the time and wealth¹ to help.

What we are lacking is knowledge and motive.

On page 10, the effect of collective positive thinking, of visions for humanity is rather (if too?) engagingly written up in contemporary terms. We follow it with the qualification that it's only through the devoted study of the ethics of the **Wisdom Religion** that we can safely access this knowledge... to purify the motive so as to

¹ Tolstoy suggests as much on p 4, that “**as long as he (man) has no more bread than he needs for his food, and then it is that he does not grudge to another his last morsel of bread.**”

We may benefit from this idea today, in more ways than one perhaps. One thinks of the rising wheat prices due to its use as *fuel*; the increasing greed of those many over-developed people (and nations!) who have too much materially; and the personal or national desires it engenders. Phew... when will the **human heart** change?

harness that great power of creative thought common to all humanity.

Teachers have said long ago, all that's required is just a little learning and a genuine feeling for our fellow man: strong enough to overcome personal prejudices; to put our physical comforts into second place; and to commit us to work in **UNITY** with our fellows.

It is by collective study² among students, by shared ideals and high thoughts, by mutual support (even if only in word, it may be plenty) that theosophy can make its beneficent presence felt throughout the world. **Theosophy rightly practiced is a friend to all peoples.**

If you are minded, try out these exercises to brighten and purify the mind: with some gentle asceticism of silence, by uniting with some other students in some joint study or other... and after some short months or years you may surprise yourself by finding your purest, sweetest resolutions for better things coming to pass, in actuality, before your eyes.

This is the age-old promise of the even *partially-unveiled* wisdom teachings throughout the world.

With best wishes to our readers for 2008,

The Editors

**Having knowledge may not be
really knowing**

**“... those who have
not overcome themselves,
who are devoid of discrim-
ination, *see it not* even though
they strive thereafter.”**

Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 15

² i.e. the study of “the Three Fundamental propositions”...

HOW A DEVIL'S IMP REDEEMED HIS LOAF

OR THE FIRST DISTILLER

selections from Count L. N. Tolstoy's tales,
translated by H.P.Blavatsky.

(reprinted from Lucifer, Vol. V, No. 27, November,
1889. pp. 195-98)

**A poor peasant went out early to plough;
and as he was leaving home without breaking
his fast, he carried along with him a loaf of
bread.**

Once in the field he turned over his plough, adjusted the ploughtail, put the ropes under a bush, and over them his loaf of black bread, and covered the whole with his *caftan*. At last, the horse got tired and the *moojik* felt hungry. Then he stopped his plough in the furrow, unhitched his horse, and leaving it to graze, moved toward his *caftan* for his meal.

But when he had lifted it up—lo, no loaf was to be seen. Our *moojik* searched for it here, and he searched for it there he shook his garment and turned it hither and thither—no loaf! He felt surprised. Marvellous doings! No one around, and yet the loaf is carried away by someone. That someone, in truth, was an Imp, who, while the peasant was ploughing, had stolen his loaf and was now hiding behind a bush, preparing to note down the man's profanity, when he would begin to swear and take the devil's name. The peasant felt a little sore. "But, after all," said he, "this won't starve me; and he who carried away my bread, perchance needed it. Let him eat it then, and good luck to him."

So, going to the well he drank some water, rested a bit, then catching his horse, he hitched it again to the plough and returned quietly to his work. The Imp felt considerably troubled at such a failure in tempting man to sin and forthwith proceeding home to hell, he narrated to his Elder—the Chief Devil—how he had robbed the

moojik of his loaf, who instead of cursing, had only said "to his good luck!" Satan felt very angry at this. "If," he argued, "the *moojik* had the best of thee, in this business, then it must be thine own fault; thou didst not know how to bring the thing about¹. It would be a bad job for us," he added, "if the peasants, and after them their women, were to take such tricks: no life would become possible for us after this, and such an event cannot be left disregarded. "Go," continued Satan, "and make up for the failure of the loaf. And if at the end of three years thou shalt not have the best of that man, I will bathe thee in holy water."

The Imp got terribly frightened at this threat, and running up to earth again, he set himself to thinking how to atone for his guilt. Thus he thought, thought still, and thought more, and went on thinking until he had found what he had to do. Assuming the appearance of a good fellow, he offered himself as a labourer to the poor peasant; and as it happened to be a drought, he advised him to sow his seed in a swamp. Hence, while the fields of all the other peasants were parched, and their harvests burnt by the sun, the crop of the poor peasant grew high and thick, full and grainy. His household had bread to their heart's content up to the next harvest, and the surplus proved considerable. The following year, the summer being wet, the imp taught the peasant to sow his seed on the mountains. While his neighbours' corn was blasted, fell down and got rotten, the peasant's field on the hills brought forth the richest harvest. The *moojik* stored still more of the corn; **and did not know²** what to do with it.

Then his labouring man taught him to press the corn and distill it into spirit. Having distilled plenty of it, the *moojik* took to drinking and making others drink thereof. One day the Imp returned to the Elder boasting that he had redeemed his loaf. The Chief went up to see for himself.

Then came the Elder to the *moojik*, and found that having invited the richest and

¹ The Imp perhaps here represents the lower mind concerned with its self-preservation, and the Devil the powerful thoughts of men in the Astral Light?

² Patanjali notes: "When abstinence of theft, in mind and act, is complete in the Yogee, he has the power to obtain all material wealth." Yoga Aphorisms, Book 2. The story relates the effects of ignorance all too clearly!

wealthiest of his neighbours, he was entertaining them with whiskey. There was the mistress carrying the glasses to her guests. Hardly had she begun her round when stumbling over the table, she upset the drink. Out at her flew the *moojik* abusing his wife to his fill.

"Behold," he cried, "the *devil's fool*. Takest thou good drink for slops? Thou, heavy-handed stupid, to spill on the earth such treasure!"

Here the Imp poked the Elder in the ribs, "Observe," said he, "and see, if he won't grudge a loaf *now*."

Having abused his wife, the *moojik* began offering the drink himself. Just then a poor labourer returning from work happened to drop in, unasked, and wishing a merry day to all, he took a seat. Seeing the company drinking, he too, craved to have a drop after his hard day's work. There he sat, smacking his lips time after time, but the host would offer him nought, only keeping on grumbling: "Who can afford to furnish with whiskey all of you!"

This pleased the chief Devil immensely; as to the Imp, he boasted more than ever: "You wait and see what will come next!" he whispered.

Thus drank the rich peasants, thus drank the host, pandering to each other, and flattering each other, with sweet words, making honeyed and false speeches. Listened the Elder to these, and praised the Imp for this, also. "Without all peradventure," said he, "this drink making them turn into such foxes, they will take to cheating each other next; and at this rate they will soon fall, everyone of them, into our hands."

"Wait and see," said the Imp, "what will come next, when each has one glass more. Now they are only like unto cunning foxes; given time, and they will get transformed into ferocious wolves."

The peasants had each one glass more, and forthwith their talk became louder and more brutal. Instead of honeyed speeches, they proceeded to abuse each other, and turning gradually fiercer, they ended by getting into a free fight and damaging each other's noses badly. Then the host took also a turn and got soundly thrashed.

As the Elder looked on, he felt much pleased with this too. "'Tis good," saith he, "very, very good."

"Wait and see," said the Imp, "something still better is in store, as soon as they will have emptied their third glass. Now they are fighting like hungry wolves, at the third glass they will have become like swine."

The peasants had their third round, and quite lost their reason. Grumbling and hiccupping, shouting at each other, and knowing not what they said, they rushed out, some alone, some in couples, and some in triplets, and scattered in the streets. The host trying to see his guests off, fell with his nose in a mud-puddle, rolled in it and unable to rise, lay there grunting like a hog . . . This pleased the Elder Devil most of all.

"Well," saith he, "thou hast invented a fine drink, indeed, and redeemed thy loaf! Tell me," he added, "how hast thou managed to compound it? Surely thou must have fermented it first, with the blood of the fox; thence the craft of the drunken peasant, who becomes forthwith a fox himself. Then thou hast distilled it with wolf's blood, which makes him as wicked as a wolf? Finally, thou hast mixed the whole with the blood of the swine; therefore has the peasant become like a hog."

"Not so," quoth the Imp. "I only helped him to get some extra cereals. **The wild beast's blood is ever present in man, but it remains latent and finds no issue so long as he has no more bread than he needs for his food, and then it is that he does not grudge to another his last morsel of bread. But no sooner did man get more corn than he needed, than he took to inventing things wherewith to gratify his passions.** Then it was that I taught him the enjoyment—of intoxicating drink. And no sooner had he commenced to distill the gift of God into spirit, for his gratification, than his original foxish, wolfish and swinish blood arose in him. Let him now only go on drinking wine and liquor, and he will remain for ever a beast."

For which invention the Elder Devil freely praised his Devil's Imp, forgave him his failure with the stolen loaf, and promoted him in Hell.

(AT Ed.: while outwardly about the curses of drink, real enough at this time of year, this article contains many profound truths expressed in a simple and humorous prose. Not for nothing was Tolstoy so highly regarded.

The following notes from the 'Collected Works of H.P.Blavatsky' (Philippines CD) accompanied this article, and are reproduced here, with thanks.)

(CW Ed.: It has been thought advisable to include in the present Series this translation by H.P.B. of one of the well-known tales of Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy, for reasons given in her own introductory note. However, contrary to her statement, no other stories have been found in the succeeding issues of *Lucifer*.)

Since the West has shown such due appreciation of the writings of the greatest novelist and mystic of Russia of today, his best works have all been translated.

The Russian, however, recognizes in none of these translations that popular national spirit which pervades the original tales and stories. Pregnant as these are with popular mysticism and the spirit of theosophical altruism, some of them are charming but most difficult to render into a foreign language. Yet, one may try. One thing is certain: no foreign translator, however able, unless born and bred in Russia and acquainted with Russian *peasant* life, will be able to do them justice, or even to convey to the reader their full meaning, owing to their absolutely national idiomatic language.

If the genius of the Russian literary language is so *sui generis* as to be most difficult to render in translation, the Russian of the lower classes—the speech of small tradesmen, peasants and labourers, is ten times more so. Difficult as it may seem to a foreigner, yet a born Russian may attempt it, perhaps, with a little more success. At all events, as said, one may try.

Selecting therefore, from such popular tracts,—allegories and moral stories in the form of popular tales—we have translated some for the readers of *Lucifer*. The Christmas Numbers, December, January and February, will contain charming little stories, well worthy of a new translation.

Two of them, *Wherein is Love, Therein is God; God is in Right, and not in Might*, and some others are stamped with the spirit of truly religious

mysticism. Each deserves to be read by the admirers of this great Russian author. For this number, however, we have selected one of a less mystical but more satirical spirit; a cap calculated to fit the head of any drinking Christian nation *ad libitum*, and we only hope its title, translated *verbatim et literatim*, will not shock still more the susceptibilities of the opponents of the title of this magazine. Russia is afflicted with the demon of drink, as much as, though *not more* than, England or any other country; yet it is not so much the Karma of the nation, as that of their respective governments, whose Karmic burden is growing heavier and more terrible with every year. This curse and universal incubus, drink, is the direct and legitimate progeny of the Rulers; it is begotten by their greed for money, and FORCED by them on the unfortunate masses. Why, in Karma's name, should the latter be made to suffer here, and hereafter?

(If we can locate e-versions of "Wherein is Love, Therein is God" or "God is in Right, and not in Might", we will follow up this article with them in the February and March editions. Ed.)

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL! This seems easy enough to say, and everyone *expects* some such greeting. Yet, whether the wish, though it may proceed from a sincere heart, is likely to be realized even in the case of the few – *is more difficult to decide*.

According to our theosophical tenets, every man or woman is endowed, more or less, with a magnetic potentiality, which when helped by a sincere, and especially by an intense and indomitable will--is the most effective of magic levers placed by Nature in human hands--for woe as for weal.

Let us then, Theosophists, use that will to send a sincere greeting and a wish of good luck for the New Year to every living creature under

the sun--enemies and relentless traducers included. Let us try and feel especially kindly and forgiving to our foes and persecutors, honest or dishonest . . .

the number eight

...the number 8 (...) postulates the equality of all men. Out of eternal *unity* and the mysterious number *seven*, out of Heaven and the seven planets and the sphere of the fixed stars, in the philosophy of arithmetic, was born the *ogdoad*.

It was *the first cube of the even numbers*, and hence held sacred. In Eastern philosophy number eight symbolises equality of units, order and symmetry in heaven, transformed into inequality and confusion on earth, by selfishness, the great rebel against Nature's decrees. "The figure 8 indicates the perpetual and regular motion of the Universe," says Ragon. But if perfect as a cosmic number it is likewise the symbol of the lower *Self*, the animal nature of man. (HPB)

<http://www.blavatsky.net/blavatsky/arts/OnTheNewYearsMorrow.htm>

the courageous and resolute

... instead of wishing our readers a happy or prosperous New Year, we feel more in the vein to pray them to make it one worthy of its brilliant herald. This can be effected by those who are courageous and resolute.

Thoreau pointed out that there are artists in life, persons who can change the colour of a day and make it beautiful to those with whom they come in contact.

We claim that there are adepts, masters in life who make it divine, as in all other arts. Is it not the greatest art of all, this which affects the very atmosphere in which we live? That it is the most important is seen at once, when we remember that every person who draws the breath of life affects the mental and moral atmosphere of the world, and helps to colour the day for those about him. Those who do not help to elevate the thoughts and lives of others must of necessity either paralyse them by indifference, or actively drag them down.

Neither happiness nor prosperity are always the best of bedfellows for such undeveloped mortals as most of us are; they

seldom bring with them peace, which is the only permanent joy.

the American Transcendentalists

discovered that life could be made a sublime thing without any assistance from circumstances or outside sources of pleasure and prosperity.

Of course this had been discovered many times before, and Emerson only took up again the cry raised by Epictetus. But every man has to discover this fact freshly for himself, and when once he realised it he knows that he would be a wretch if he did not endeavour to make the possibility a reality in his own life.

The stoic became sublime because he recognised his own absolute responsibility and did not try to evade it; the Transcendentalist was even more, because he had faith in the unknown and untried possibilities which lay within himself. The occultist fully recognises the responsibility and claims his title by having both tried and acquired knowledge of his own possibilities.

fact, not religious sentiment

Why then should not (2008?) be a year of greater spiritual development than any we have lived through? It depends on ourselves to make it so. This is an actual fact, not a religious sentiment.

In a garden of sunflowers every flower turns towards the light. Why not so with us?

And let no one imagine that it is a mere fancy, the attaching of importance to the birth of the year. The earth passes through its definite phases and man with it; and as a day can be coloured so can a year.

The astral life of the earth is young and strong between Christmas and Easter. Those who form their wishes now will have added strength to fulfil them consistently.

--H. P. BLAVATSKY *Lucifer*, January, 1888

<http://www.blavatsky.net/blavatsky/arts/1888.htm>

the motive

...it is the motive, and the motive alone, which makes any exercise of power become black, malignant, or white, beneficent Magic. It is impossible to employ spiritual forces if there is

the slightest tinge of selfishness remaining in the operator. For, unless the intention is entirely unalloyed, the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the astral plane, and dire results may be produced by it.

The powers and forces of animal nature can equally be used by the selfish and revengeful, as by the unselfish and the all-forgiving; **the powers and forces of spirit lend themselves only to the perfectly pure in heart -- and this is DIVINE MAGIC.** (HPB)

http://www.blavatsky.net/newsletters/practical_occultism.htm

Our thanks to Odin T for these very relevant selections. Ed.

CORRESPONDENCE

Living The Field E-news 95, December 21, 2007

THOUGHTS RINGING 'ROUND THE WORLD AT CHRISTMAS

With this Christmas e-news, I'd like to share one simple thought with you.

It has been an extraordinary year for The Intention Experiment. We started out with a tiny leaf and demonstrated that we could alter a basic physiological process - just by sending one simple thought.

With just one thought, we made a tiny leaf glow - and glow.

We discovered we could use our thoughts to make plants grow.

No matter where it was sent in the world, no matter how few or how many, just one thought was able to make seeds sprout and flourish.

When combined with hundreds of thousands of others, your solitary voice, seemingly one barely audible note, transmuted into a thunderous symphony. We found we could even quantify the power of love. When participants from 80 countries around the world

got together, one moment's worth of love could transform water.

So think about it. If we can change leaves and seeds and water with a 10-minute intention, imagine what one thought can do to change the world.

We'll be finding out next year, with our new experiments. We're at work on a number of Intention Experiments to test whether we can expand our supply of biofuels, lower global warming, boost grade point averages in poor districts of America and lower violence in the world.

During this holiday season, please take a moment from all your year-end activities to send a positive thought to change the vast catalogue of suffering on this planet.

In 2008, let's find out together whether one good thought is all it takes to change the world.

Warmest wishes to you and yours from all of us at Living the Field for a happy, healthy, blessed holiday and abundant New Year.

Lynne McTaggart

(With all respect to the accomplishments that Lynne McTaggart and her team have made in the face of the prejudiced materialism and denial of man's too-well known psychic powers (in some quarters, at least) we are warned plainly enough that it is only the dark side of man's character that wants to free these powers without the corresponding elevation of his inner nature.

Otherwise, we ask fairly enough, what precautions are being taken to prevent their abuse? In fact, looking beneath the surface of society's turbulent waters, isn't it the case that many of the more gifted, the more sensitive and more *aware* are now as we speak taking full advantage over their lessor endowed brothers?

One of the themes throughout the whole of the 'Harry Potter' series of books, is that the Muggles (the ordinary folk of J.K.Rowling's mammoth drama) are consistently the ones on the receiving end of the bias and exploitation by the selfish, more powerful ones.

It is only a small group of those who believe in the Universality of man's brotherhood, those adepts of the right hand path, there represented by Dumbledore the Sage, that curb the activities of their less forgiving brothers! Ed)

A word on defending our teachers

those who denigrate HPB may be good enough in themselves in the conventional sense, but too weak to attempt the goal offered them – thus to reduce her in their eyes obviates the need for their having to make a change to rise to the opportunity presented.

a curse or insult thrown – but not caught, and calmly side-stepped – is not one that sticks to the intended recipient. it's a well know law of occultism that such failures rebound on the thrower!

this may present us with another aspect on how we can *best defend* the name of our teachers.

thanks for these inspired ideas, Ed.

An invitation to Athens – May 2008

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to announce you that theosophical annual meetings will be held for **three consecutive days in Athens** – Greece, in May.

The intention of the gatherings is on the one hand to study original Theosophy as given by H.P. Blavatsky and her Masters and on the other to give a chance to old and new Theosophists as well as researchers to meet on a European territory.

We wish this initiative will give the opportunity to as many Theosophists as possible to share time and thoughts together. The study-group will be conducted in English.

The key point in these meetings will be a thorough study of a single subject each time, i.e. karma and reincarnation, cycles, after death states, occult history of mankind, theosophy and science, etc. Active participation through questions and answers will be encouraged throughout the three days meeting.

We believe that Athens is a suitable place especially in spring time as participants can take advantage of the nice weather to visit various places of interest both in the mainland and the islands.

For further information please visit:

<http://www.blavatsky.gr/index.php?id=91&L=1>

"Blavatsky Studies" Study-group focuses on H.P. Blavatsky's writings. Visit also: www.blavatsky.gr and www.ultathens.gr

Miscellany

On teaching the *apparently unwilling* (cont'd)

Those who were knocking on stray doors here and there "in darkness and ignorance", pursuing a genuine search, who are only being met with a too-worldly secularism and the usual modern tendency in philosophy of 'speculative doubt' – couldn't theosophy "show them the door"?

Maybe... maybe not!! These searchers may find alternative, sustainable ways of living and organising their work, which is a rejection of the selfishness of the large global conglomerate... but do they have the intention of *working for the dissemination of Truth* (ie to serve IT), rather than just to discover it, which is only *half its value*?

This singly, is a most important point; is it one that we should consider more frequently at ULT meetings? Referring to efforts in sustainable living and working, in the long term, these radical-ideal 'isms' often loose their way, perhaps because their ethical roots didn't go deep enough into the eternal, being born out of dissatisfaction with the material status quo, instead of for the love of *truth, beauty and harmony*?

There is a need for a greater study of this inner Heart Doctrine *with* the practice of the essentials, the ethics of non-violence, right living, right thinking... the eight fold path in short.

How else can we relate to our fellow man?

¹ Krishna in the Gita **says that anyone who listens to his words will receive great benefit.** The sole limitation made by him is... that these things must not be taught to those who do not want to listen.

This is just the same direction as that given by Jesus of Nazareth when he said, "cast not your pearls before swine." (Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita, p7)

WISDOM IN ACTION

Occult Philosophy is Altruism

(These hints of WQJ's are a superb practical psychology & valued by those whose wish to free themselves from the narrow confines of the too personal self.

They are based on the time-honoured system in use all over the world. Pythagoras, an Eastern initiate, recommended five years of silence for probationers! See also 'The Vow of Silence', p 3.)

Begin by trying to conquer the habit, almost universal, of pushing yourself forward. This arises from personality.

Do not monopolize the conversation. Keep in the background.

If some one begins to tell you about himself and his doings, do not take first chance to tell him about yourself, but listen to him and talk solely to bring him out.

And when he has finished, suppress in yourself the desire to tell about yourself, your opinions and experiences.

Do not ask a question unless you intend to listen to the answer and inquire into its value.

Try to recollect that you are a very small affair in the world, and that the people around do not value you at all and grieve not when you are absent.

Your only true greatness lies in your inner true self and it is not desirous of obtaining the applause of others.

If you will follow these directions for one week you will find they will take considerable effort, and you will begin to discover a part of the meaning of the saying, "Man, know thyself."

It is not necessary to be conscious of the progress one has made. Nor is the date in any sense an extinguisher, as some have styled it. In these days we are too prone to wish to know everything all at once, especially in relation to

ourselves. It may be desirable and encouraging to be thus conscious, but it is not necessary.

We make a good deal of progress in our inner, hidden life of which we are not at all conscious. We do not know of it until some later life. So, in this case, many may be quite beyond the obstacles and not be conscious of it. It is best to go on with duty, and to refrain from this trying to take stock and measuring of progress.

All of our progress is in the inner nature, and not in the physical where lives the brain, and from which the present question comes. The apparent physical progress is evanescent. It is ended when the body dies, at which time, if the inner man has not been allowed to guide us, the natural record against us will be a cipher, or failure."

Now, as the great Adepts live in the plane of our inner nature, it must follow that they might be actively helping every one of us after the date referred to, and we, as physical brain men, not be conscious of it on this plane.

. . . I strongly advise you to give up all yoga practices, which in almost all cases have disastrous results unless guided by a competent teacher. The concussions and explosions in your head are evidences that you are in no fit condition to try yoga practices, for these effects result from lesions of the brain, i.e., from the bursting of the very minute brain cells. I am glad you have written to me upon this matter, that I may have an opportunity of warning you. **Also, I advise you to discontinue concentration on the vital centres**, which again may prove dangerous unless under the guidance of a teacher. You have learnt, to a certain degree, the power of concentration, and the greatest help will now come to you from concentration upon the Higher Self, and aspiration toward the Higher Self. Also, if you will take some subject or sentence from the *Bhagavad Gîtâ*, and concentrate your mind upon that and meditate upon it, you will find much good result from it, and there is no danger in such concentration.

Next month:

'the astral body, and thoughts on the Supreme'