

Metaphysical Healing

Practical Occultism

Occultism versus Occult Arts

Metaphysical Healing
Part 2 of 2
Articles accompanying Circular Letter

By
WQ Judge and HP Blavatsky

Article A

Judge WQ. "Forum" Answers. Reprinted from *The Theosophical Forum* (1889-1896).
Los Angeles: Theosophy Co, 1982; pp. 33-39.

QUESTION 132

If it is wrong to cure disease by mesmerism or magnetism, — at least, if thereby the patient is controlled to any extent, how did Col. Olcott heal so many in India by such means?

W.Q.J. — There seems to be no necessary connection between the premise on this question and the query put. Even if it were "wrong to cure disease by mesmerism or magnetism," it would not therefore follow that one could not heal people thereby. But I have never heard from any source of weight that it is wrong to so cure people of their ailments. To relieve distress must be right in general. There is much dispute as to magnetism, but Col. Olcott seems to be of opinion that its cures are effected by actual virtue in magnetic fluid, and not by "control" of any patient. But in many of his cures there was a lack of permanence, due probably to lack of continuance of treatment, as he was constantly on the move. Questions of this sort ought to refer to some fact or publication in support of the assumption put in the question, as otherwise it is not possible to answer intelligently or adequately.



QUESTION 161

Has a mother a right to use her will power in throwing off disease and the painful result of accidents from herself and children? Please draw the line clearly between white and black magic in such work, occult work?

W.Q.J. — It is not clear from the question whether the querent means to ask about the use of the will pure and simple or about the practice of mind-cure, as it is called, or spiritual healing. In respect to the use of the will considered alone, the editor of *Forum* has replied sufficiently, I think, especially pointing out that the use of that power is not well understood; and it would seem that the questioner does not understand it.

There is a remarkable absence of treatment of the question of the will in such books as the *Yoga Aphorisms* and the like, the very books where one would expect to see something about it if it is a thing that can be treated of separately. But we may see the reason for this when we remember the old saying of the Kabalists, that “behind will stands desire.” And by considering men as we see them, this saying appears to be a true one, for in everyday life and in every act we perceive that the prime mover is desire, and that the question of weak will or strong will depends on that in nearly every case. The wicked are of strong will because they have strong desires, and the weak person will be found to act with the most powerful will when the desire is strong. Their appearance of being weak arises from the fact that they are pulled about every moment by contrary wishes, not being concentrated enough to have definite wishes of their own. And it is here that the distinction between White and Black Magic can be easily found, for if the desired object be a selfish one or against the general good, then the act performed will be of the nature of Black Magic. The will is only used as an agent to carry out the desire. So in the case of an actual adept of either school, will is at his disposition no matter what be his object.

Now if the question put is in view of the practices of the so-called metaphysical healing schools, then a very different set of questions arises of mixed nature, some including moral aspects and some not, but every one raising a doubt about the claims made of curative power, as also about the way in which any cures that do take place have been accomplished.

The editor has pointed out that a well-balanced and centered mind will conduce to health, as has been held for ages; even savages know this and act accordingly. And if one finds from actual experience that the fact of his or her being of a cheerful, happy, contented, charitable, loving, faithful, sunny disposition will always have the effect of giving health to those about in the family or elsewhere, then there can surely be nothing wrong or inexpedient in such a state. And that, in my opinion, is the right limit for the practice of metaphysical healing. For if one goes beyond that, and, following the rules of these schools, proceeds to send his thoughts out to another with the object of taking hold of that other's mind, then there is the greatest danger and also Black Magic. For no one has the right to take the mind of another, for any purpose, into his possession. If such be done, then the other ceases to be a free agent. And this is true as much in the case of one's child as in that of any other person. Moral wrong attaches here because one is acting on another. But in the event of act-



ing on oneself there can only be a question of expediency, and that is a very wide and important one, since momentous consequences may flow to us and to others from the tendencies we set up in ourselves.

Bodily ailments may be roughly divided for the purpose of the present into two classes, one being those that are acute or due to the imagination or the reaction of the imagination on the processes in the bodily economy; the other being those due to strong physical karma showing out in diseases in the mortal envelope, and being entirely beyond the reach of the imagination and not due to reactions from the mind of the sufferer. These last are of the greater number; we see them in small children as well as in adults, and also in savages and the semi-savages of our own civilization who compose what some people call a lower element in the social body.

In the first class the physical troubles from reaction will of course disappear so soon as the person trains himself to look at life cheerfully and to grow into a more independent frame of mind. The cures are not due to the causes assumed in the schools we refer to. They come about as a natural result of the new state of mind withdrawing from the nerves and fluids of the body the old strain and oppression. When those are removed the actual state of health at the bottom comes to the surface. And the result would be the same in the instance of the most degraded savage who might be induced by accident or by the words of his medicine man to fix his mind in another direction. Obviously there it would not be due to a system of philosophy. And additional proof of this is to be had in the very schools we speak of. In those we see widely different systems; one requires faith in the Bible and in Jesus, and the other does not, and yet each makes equal claim to success. H.P. Blavatsky says: "This is all the secret. Half, if not two-thirds of our ailings and diseases are the fruit of our imagination and fears. Destroy the latter and *give another bent to the former, and nature will do the rest.*"

In the second class of diseases it is quite true, as has been often said by the metaphysical healer, that the disease comes from thought, but the error is in supposing it to be present thought had in this body. The thoughts are those of a past life, and have passed altogether from the mind plane into the realm of causes for dynamic disturbance, or of tendency, that are quite beyond the reach of the present imagining power, but sure to result in the course of time in visible difficulty suddenly appearing, or resulting from our going into situations that bring to us the germs of disease. For Karma acts on us not only in inherited troubles but also in accord with the tendencies we have set up in ourselves in a previous life. Those latter impel us to go to places or to mix with such people as that the inevitable result will be to cause effects on our mind or body that otherwise would not be felt. As in the case of one who set up in a previous life a tendency to consort with good and cultured people; this will come out and lead to a similar line of action with very different results from the case of one whose tendencies were in the opposite direction.

These causes for disease then being in the mind plane from the last life, and having become mechanical causes in this, are now *on their way out* of the system in the proper channel, and that channel is a physical, mechanical one. They are leaving us by the way of the body, are on the way down, and should not be stopped and sent back to the mind plane again. They should be treated by the ordinary methods of hy-



giene, of medicine, of surgery, of food. Hygiene and food furnish the right conditions for adjustment, and make no new present cause for trouble; medicine helps nature in her mechanical acts of purging and alteration; and surgery replaces dislocations, removes dead tissues, or puts bones that are broken into position for proper joining. No one would be so foolish as to say that thinking will remove from the brain the pressure of a fractured bone that is making the patient mad, or that imagination will set a dislocated shoulder. And if rotting food in the stomach is affecting the head and the whole system, it is certainly wiser to get rid of the offending substance as quickly as possible, supplying the body with good food in its place, than to let the evil stay to be absorbed as evil into the tissues while one busies himself by calling on the higher powers of mind to make him think he is not disturbed while nature is going on with her cure. In many cases this latter is all that happens, for any strong-minded person can resolve to endure great pain during the process of rectification of internal trouble by ordinary change of tissue and of fluids. So a disciple of the schools in question may be so full of the notion that mind, or God, or Christ is curing him that he endures until the *vis medicatrix naturae* has done its work.

Granting that these causes are on their way down and out, the effect of calling with a powerful will on the same plane of power is that the cause may be sent back to the inner mind and disappear from the body. But this is no cure: it is something like one's cutting off his hair because the flies walk in it, it is planting once more in our deathless body disease that will surely come out again in another life as disease, or as madness in that one or presently in this. And in the life of many a practitioner nowadays this has happened. For wherever one is very sensitive the practices enjoined create abnormal states that have resulted in dementia.

But a still more pressing danger lies in the half-truth of the practices. They are, divested of all pretention to systematic and right philosophy, partially correct yoga practices.

As soon as they are begun they set up in the astral currents in the practitioner definite changes that at once begin to react on the humors and fluids in the body and are strong enough to bring about definite alteration in the physical envelope. This has been known for ages and has been treated of by the older Hindus. But they have always been careful to say that they ought not to be gone on with in the absence of a guide who is competent to know every symptom, to note every effect, and to give the right corrective.

These correctives were not purely mental either, for many of them have to be physical, since the rapidity of the changes and the effects of the practices far outrun any application of mental correction in many instances. And this knowledge did not mean a mere following of a definite rule, but included an ability to see the peculiarities of each person as he proceeded. For as each is under a different set of laws peculiar to himself, the strict following of a general rule would lead to the greatest danger.

But what do the "metaphysical healers" know of this?

Nothing but the vague rule of the doctors that one must watch the patient and know, if possible, something of his medical record. Outside of that they are at sea with no pilot. They are inviting the explosion of forces they know nothing about, and when



the difficulty arises they are powerless. From actual experiment I know the facts to be as stated. The pulse may be lowered or increased, or the first symptoms of paralysis produced, or fainting brought on, singing in the ears and mist before the eyes made to show themselves; but where is the corrective? Unknown, for the simple reason that when we are dealing with such forces as these we are out of the realm of general rules for correction and must be able to at once see the exact inner state of the person and to select unerringly out of the vast range of possible cures the right one so that it shall work without any mistake.

What, then, shall the querent do for herself and her children, as she asks? Use her best judgment, follow the best rules for the cure of diseases, train her children to be self-reliant and careful so that they shall have few accidents, teach them to avoid evil and danger and keep their minds and bodies in right condition, and karma, and will take care of the rest. And if they are hurt or really sick, then send for a good physician.

QUESTION 161a

Is it unwise or wrong to say mentally to a person "You are well," or "You are virtuous, Your higher nature can control your lower"? Is that kind of mental treatment a wrong use of power if the motive is pure and unselfish?

W.Q.J. — Buddha and Jesus — two great teachers — performed cures. Not by assertion and denial but by scientific use of power. To the wicked whom they cured they said "sin no more." Both taught that the cause of sorrow was evil thought leading to evil act, but neither said that that existed not which was plain before one's eyes. They recognized the existence of fact, of law, of reason. In some cases they could not cure. Why? Because the causes working on the sufferer were too strong for them. Mere optimism which says all is good is of a kind that grows out of sentiment unsupported by reason. We ought to do all the good we can, but that does not mean we should blind our minds to the reality which is necessary for cognition.



Article B

PRACTICAL OCCULTISM

IMPORTANT TO STUDENTS

[*Lucifer*, Vol. II, No. 8, April, 1888, pp. 150-54]

Blavatsky Collected Writings, (PRACTICAL OCCULTISM) IX, pp. 155-62 & 285-86.

As some of the letters in the CORRESPONDENCE of this month show, there are many people who are looking for practical instruction in Occultism. It becomes necessary therefore, to state once for all: —

(a) The essential difference between theoretical and practical Occultism; or what is generally known as Theosophy on the one hand, and Occult science on the other, and: —

(b) The nature of the difficulties involved in the study of the latter.

It is easy to become a Theosophist. Any person of average intellectual capacities, and a leaning toward the meta-physical; of pure, unselfish life, who finds more joy in helping his neighbour than in receiving help himself; one who is ever ready to sacrifice his own pleasures for the sake of other people; and who loves Truth, Goodness and Wisdom for their own sake, not for the benefit they may confer — is a Theosophist.

But it is quite another matter to put oneself upon the path which leads to the knowledge of what is good to do, as to the right discrimination of good from evil; a path which also leads a man to that power through which he can do the good he desires, often without even apparently lifting a finger.

Moreover, there is one important fact with which the student should be made acquainted. Namely, the enormous, almost limitless, responsibility assumed by the teacher for the sake of the pupil. From the Gurus of the East who teach openly or secretly, down to the few Kabalists in Western lands who undertake to teach the rudiments of the Sacred Science to their disciples — those western Hierophants being often themselves ignorant of the danger they incur — one and all of these “Teachers” [156] are subject to the same inviolable law. From the moment they begin *really* to teach, from the instant they confer *any* power — whether psychic, mental or physical — on their pupils, they take upon themselves *all* the sins of that pupil, in connection with the Occult Sciences, whether of omission or commission, until the moment when initiation makes the pupil a Master and responsible in his turn. There is a weird and mystic religious law, greatly revered and acted upon in the Greek, half-forgotten in the Roman Catholic, and absolutely extinct in the Protestant Church. It dates from the earliest days of Christianity and has its basis in the law just stated, of which it was a symbol and an expression. This is the dogma of the absolute sacredness of the relation between the god-parents who stand sponsors for a child.¹ These

¹ So holy is the connection thus formed deemed in the Greek Church, that a marriage between god-parents of



tacitly take upon themselves all the sins of the newly baptised child — (anointed, as at the initiation, a mystery truly!) — until the day when the child becomes a responsible unit, knowing good and evil. Thus it is clear why the “Teachers” are so reticent, and why “Chelas” are required to serve a seven years probation to prove their fitness, and develop the qualities necessary to the security of both Master and pupil.

Occultism is not magic. It is *comparatively* easy to learn the trick of spells and the methods of using the subtler, but still material, forces of physical nature; the powers of the animal soul in man are soon awakened; the forces which his love, his hate, his passion, can call into operation, are readily developed. But this is Black Magic — *Sorcery*. For 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 [157] 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.

What are then the conditions required to become a student of the “Divina Sapientia”? For let it be known that no such instruction can possibly be given unless these certain conditions are complied with, and rigorously carried out during the years of study. This is a *sine qua non*. No man can swim unless he enters deep water. No bird can fly unless its wings are grown, and it has space before it and courage to trust itself to the air. A man who will wield a two-edged sword, must be a thorough master of the blunt weapon, if he would not injure himself — or what is worse — others, at the first attempt.

To give an approximate idea of the conditions under which alone the study of Divine Wisdom can be pursued with safety, that is without danger that Divine will give place to Black Magic, a page is given from the “private rules,” with which every instructor in the East is furnished. The few passages which follow are chosen from a great number and explained in brackets.

1. The place selected for receiving instruction must be a spot calculated not to distract the mind, and filled with “influence-evolving” (magnetic) objects. The five sacred colours gathered in a circle must be there among other things. The place must be free from any malignant influences hanging about in the air.

[The place must be set apart, and used for no other purpose. The five “sacred colours” are the prismatic hues arranged in a certain way, as these colours are very magnetic. By “malignant influences” are meant any disturbances through strifes, quarrels, bad feelings, etc., as these are said to impress themselves immediately on the astral light, *i.e.*, in the atmosphere of the place, and to hang “about in the air.” [158] This first condition seems easy enough to accomplish, yet — on further consideration, it is one of the most difficult ones to obtain.]

the same child is regarded as the worst kind of incest, is considered illegal and is dissolved by law; and this absolute prohibition extends even to the children of one of the sponsors as regards those of the other.



2. Before the disciple shall be permitted to study “face to face,” he has to acquire preliminary understanding in a select company of other lay *upasakas* (disciples), the number of whom must be odd.

[“Face to face,” means in this instance a study independent or apart from others, when the disciple gets his instruction *face to face* either with himself (his higher, Divine Self) or — his guru. It is then only that each receives *his due* of information, according to the use he has made of his knowledge. This can happen only toward the end of the cycle of instruction.]

3. Before thou (the teacher) shalt impart to thy *Lanoo* (disciple) the good (holy) words of LAMRIN, or shall permit him “to make ready” for *Dubjed*, thou shalt take care that his mind is thoroughly purified and at peace with all, especially *with his other Selves*. Otherwise the words of Wisdom and of the good Law, shall scatter and be picked up by the winds.

[*Lamrin* is a work of practical instructions, by Tson-kha-pa, in two portions, one for ecclesiastical and exoteric purposes, the other for esoteric use.² “To make ready” for *Dubjed*, is to prepare the vessels used for seership such as mirrors and crystals. The “other selves,” refers to the fellow students. Unless the greatest harmony reigns among the learners, *no* success is possible. It is the teacher who makes the selections according to the magnetic and electric natures of the students, bringing together and adjusting most carefully the positive and the negative elements.]

4. The *upasaka* while studying must take care to be united as the fingers on one hand. Thou shalt impress upon their minds that whatever hurts one should hurt the others, and if the rejoicing of one finds no echo in the breasts of the others, then the required conditions are absent, and it is useless to proceed. [159]

[This can hardly happen if the preliminary choice made was consistent with the magnetic requirements. It is known that chelas otherwise promising and fit for the reception of truth, had to wait for years on account of their temper and the impossibility they felt to put themselves *in tune* with their companions. For —]

5. The co-disciples must be tuned by the guru as the strings of a lute (*vina*) each different from the others, yet each emitting sounds in harmony with all. Collectively they must form a keyboard answering in all its parts to thy lightest touch (the touch of the Master). Thus their minds shall open for the harmonies of Wisdom, to vibrate as knowledge through each and all, resulting in effects pleasing to the presiding gods (tutelary or patron-angels) and useful to the *Lanoo*. So shall Wisdom be impressed for ever on their hearts and the harmony of the law shall never be broken.

6. Those who desire to acquire the knowledge leading to the *Siddhis* (occult powers) have to renounce all the vanities of life and of the world (here follows enumeration of the *Siddhis*).

7. None can feel the difference between himself and his fellow-students, such as “I am the wisest,” “I am more holy and pleasing to the teacher, or in my community, than my brother,” etc. — and remain an *upasaka*. His thoughts must be predominantly fixed upon his heart, chasing therefrom every hostile thought to any living being. It (the heart) must be full of the feeling of its non-separateness from the rest of beings as from all in Nature; otherwise no success can follow.

² [Vide Bio-Bibliographical Index, s.v. *Lamrin*, for further data. — Boris de Zirkoff.]



8. A *Lanoo* (disciple) has to dread external living influence alone (magnetic emanations from living creatures). For this reason while at one with all, in his *inner nature*, he must take care to separate his outer (external) body from every foreign influence: none must drink out of, or eat in his cup but himself. He must avoid bodily contact (*i.e.*, being touched or touch) with human, as with animal being.

[No pet animals are permitted and it is forbidden even to touch certain trees and plants. A disciple has to live, so to say, in his own atmosphere in order to individualize it for occult purposes.] [160]

9. The mind must remain blunt to all but the universal truths in nature, lest the "Doctrine of the Heart" should become only the "Doctrine of the Eye" (*i.e.*, empty exoteric ritualism).

10. No animal food of whatever kind, nothing that has life in it, should be taken by the disciple. No wine, no spirits, or opium should be used; for these are like the *Lhamayin* (evil spirits), who fasten upon the unwary, they devour the understanding.

[Wine and Spirits are supposed to contain and preserve the bad magnetism of all the men who helped in their fabrication; the meat of each animal, to preserve the psychic characteristics of its kind.]

11. Meditation, abstinence in all, the observation of moral duties, gentle thoughts, good deeds and kind words, as good will to all and entire oblivion of Self, are the most efficacious means of obtaining knowledge and preparing for the reception of higher wisdom.

12. It is only by virtue of a strict observance of the foregoing rules that a *Lanoo* can hope to acquire in good time the Siddhis of the Arhats, the growth which makes him become gradually One with the UNIVERSAL ALL.

These 12 extracts are taken from among some 73 rules, to enumerate which would be useless as they would be meaningless in Europe. But even these few are enough to show the immensity of the difficulties which beset the path of the would-be "Upasaka," who has been born and bred in Western lands.³

All western, and especially English, education is instinct with the principle of emulation and strife; each boy is urged to learn more quickly, to outstrip his companions, [161] and to surpass them in every possible way. What is miscalled "friendly rivalry" is assiduously cultivated and the same spirit is fostered and strengthened in every detail of life.

With such ideas "educated into" him from his childhood, how can a Westerner bring himself to feel towards his co-students "as the fingers on one hand"? Those co-students, too, are not of his *own selection*, or chosen by himself from personal sympathy and appreciation. They are chosen by his teacher on far other grounds, and he who would be a student must *first* be strong enough to kill out in his heart all feel-

³ Be it remembered that *all* "Chelas," even lay disciples, are called Upasaka until after their first initiation, when they become *lanoo*-Upasaka. To that day, even those who belong to Lamaseries and are *set apart*, are considered as "laymen."



ings of dislike and antipathy to others. How many Westerners are ready even to attempt this in earnest?

And then the details of daily life, the command not to touch even the hand of one's nearest and dearest. How contrary to Western notions of affection and good feeling! How cold and hard it seems. Egotistical too, people would say, to abstain from giving pleasure to others for the sake of one's own development. Well, let those who think so defer till another lifetime the attempt to enter the path in real earnest. But let them not glory in their own fancied unselfishness. For, in reality, it is only the seeming appearances which they allow to deceive them, the conventional notions, based on emotionalism and gush, or so-called courtesy, things of the unreal life, not the dictates of Truth.

But even putting aside these difficulties, which may be considered "external," though their importance is none the less great, how are students in the West to "attune themselves" to harmony as here required of them? So strong has personality grown in Europe and America that there is no school of artists even whose members do not hate and are not jealous of each other. "Professional" hatred and envy have become proverbial; men seek each to benefit himself at all costs, and even the so-called courtesies of life are but a hollow mask covering these demons of hatred and jealousy.

In the East the spirit of "non-separateness" is inculcated as steadily from childhood up, as in the West the [162] spirit of rivalry. Personal ambition, personal feelings and desires, are not encouraged to grow so rampant there. When the soil is naturally good, it is cultivated in the right way, and the child grows into a man in whom the habit of subordination of one's lower to one's higher Self is strong and powerful. In the West men think that their own likes and dislikes of other men and things are guiding principles for them to act upon, even when they do not make of them the law of their lives and seek to impose them upon others.

Let those who complain that they have learned little in the Theosophical Society lay to heart the words written in an article in *The Path* for last February: — "The key in each degree is the *aspirant himself*."⁴ It is not "the fear of God" which is "the beginning of Wisdom," but the knowledge of SELF which is WISDOM ITSELF.

How grand and true appears, thus, to the student of Occultism who has commenced to realize some of the foregoing truths, the answer given by the Delphic Oracle to all who came seeking after Occult Wisdom — words repeated and enforced again and again by the wise Socrates — MAN KNOW THYSELF. . . .

⁴ [*The Path*, Vol. II, No. 11, February, 1888, p. 330, where William Quan Judge, writing under the pseudonym of William Brehon, analyses the Second Chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Speaking of the original school of initiation upon this earth, he says: "It is secret, because, founded in nature and having only real Hierophants at the head, its privacy cannot be invaded without the real key. And that key, in each degree, is the *aspirant himself*. Until that aspirant has become in fact the sign and the key, he cannot enter the degree above him. As a whole then, and in each degree, it is self-protective." — Boris de Zirkoff.]



Editor's Reply

PRACTICAL OCCULTISM

[*Lucifer*, Vol. II, No. 9, May, 1888, pp. 257-58]

Blavatsky Collected Writings, (PRACTICAL OCCULTISM) IX, pp. 285-86.

In a very interesting article in last month's number entitled "Practical Occultism" it is stated that from the moment a "Master" begins to teach a "chela" he takes on himself all the sins of that chela in connection with the occult sciences until the moment when initiation makes the chela a master and responsible in his turn.

For the Western mind, steeped as it has been for generations in "Individualism," it is very difficult to recognise the justice and consequently the truth of this statement, and it is very much to be desired that some further explanation should be given for a fact which some few may feel intuitively but for which they are quite unable to give any logical reason.

S.E.

EDITOR'S REPLY. — The best logical reason for it is the fact that even in common daily life, parents, nurses, tutors and instructors are generally held responsible for the habits and future ethics of a child. The little unfortunate wretch who is trained by his parents to pick pockets in the streets is not responsible for the sin, but the effects of it fall heavily on those who have impressed on his mind that it was the right thing to do. Let us hope that the Western Mind, although being "steeped in Individualism," has not become so dulled thereby as not to perceive that there would be neither logic nor justice were it otherwise. And if the moulders of the plastic mind of the yet unreasoning child must be held responsible, in this world of effects for his sins of omission and commission during his childhood and for effects produced by their early training in after-life, how much more the "Spiritual Guru"? The latter taking the student by the hand leads him into, and [286] introduces him to a world entirely unknown to the pupil. For this world is that of the invisible but ever-potent CAUSALITY, the subtle, yet never-breaking thread that is the action, agent and power of Karma, and Karma itself in the field of divine mind. Once acquainted with this no adept can any longer plead ignorance in the event of even an action, good and meritorious in its *motive*, producing evil as its result; since acquaintance with this mysterious realm gives the means to the Occultist of foreseeing the two paths opening before every premeditated as unpremeditated action, and thus puts him in a position to know with certainty what will be the results in one or the other case. So long then, as the pupil acts upon this principle, but is too ignorant to be sure of his vision and powers of discrimination, is it not natural that it is the *guide* who should be responsible for the sins of him whom he has led into those dangerous regions?



Article C

OCCULTISM VERSUS THE OCCULT ARTS

[*Lucifer*, Vol. II, No. 9, May, 1888, pp. 173-81]

Blavatsky Collected Writings, (OCCULTISM VERSUS THE OCCULT ARTS) IX, pp. 249-61.

"I oft have heard, but ne'er believed till now,
There are who can by potent magic spells
Bend to their crooked purpose Nature's laws."
— MILTON.

In this month's "Correspondence" several letters testify to the strong impression produced on some minds by our last month's article "Practical Occultism." Such letters go far to prove and strengthen two logical conclusions.

(a) There are more well-educated and thoughtful men who believe in the existence of Occultism and Magic (the two differing vastly) than the modern materialist dreams of; and —

(b) That most of the believers (comprising many theosophists) have no definite idea of the nature of Occultism and confuse it with the Occult sciences in general, the "Black art" included.

Their representations of the powers it confers upon man, and of the means to be used to acquire them are as varied as they are fanciful. Some imagine that a master in the art, to show the way, is all that is needed to become a Zanoni. Others, that one has but to cross the Canal of Suez and go to India to bloom forth as a Roger Bacon or even a Count de St. Germain. Many take for their ideal Margrave with his ever-renewing youth, and care little for the soul as the price paid for it. Not a few, mistaking "Witch-of-Endorism" pure and simple, for Occultism — "through the yawning Earth from Stygian gloom, call up the meagre ghost to walks of light," and want, on the strength of this feat, to be regarded as full-blown Adepts. "Ceremonial Magic" according to the rules mockingly laid down by Éliphas Lévi, is another imagined *alter-ego* of the philosophy of the Arhats of old. In short, the prisms through which Occultism appears, to those innocent of the philosophy, are as multicoloured and varied as human fancy can make them. [250]

Will these candidates to Wisdom and Power feel very indignant if told the plain truth? It is not only useful, but it has now become *necessary* to disabuse most of them and before it is too late. This truth may be said in a few words: There are not in the West half-a-dozen among the fervent hundreds who call themselves "Occultists," who have even an approximately correct ideal of the nature of the Science they seek to master. With a few exceptions, they are all on the highway to Sorcery. Let them restore some order in the chaos that reigns in their minds, before they protest against this statement. Let them first learn the true relation in which the Occult Sciences stand to Occultism, and the difference between the two, and then feel wrathful if they still think themselves right. Meanwhile, let them learn that Occultism differs from Magic and other secret Sciences as the glorious sun does from a rush-light, as the immutable



and immortal Spirit of Man — the reflection of the absolute, causeless and unknowable ALL — differs from the mortal clay — the human body.

In our highly civilized West, where modern languages have been formed, and words coined, in the wake of ideas and thoughts — as happened with every tongue — the more the latter became materialized in the cold atmosphere of Western selfishness and its incessant chase after the goods of this world, the less was there any need felt for the production of new terms to express that which was tacitly regarded as absolute and exploded “superstition.” Such words could answer only to ideas which a cultured man was scarcely supposed to harbour in his mind. “Magic,” a synonym for jugglery; “Sorcery,” an equivalent for crass ignorance; and “Occultism,” the sorry relic of crack-brained, mediaeval Fire-philosophers, of the Jacob Böhmes and the Saint-Martins, are expressions believed more than amply sufficient to cover the whole field of “thimble-rigging.” They are terms of contempt, and used generally only in reference to the dross and residues of the dark ages and its preceding aeons of paganism. Therefore have we no terms in the English tongue to define and shade the difference between such abnormal powers, or the sciences that lead to the [251] acquisition of them, with the nicety possible in the Eastern languages — pre-eminently the Sanskrit. What do the words “miracle” and “enchantment” (words identical in meaning after all, as both express the idea of producing wonderful things by *breaking the laws of nature* (!!)) as explained by the accepted authorities) convey to the minds of those who hear, or who pronounce them? A Christian — *breaking* “of the laws of nature,” notwithstanding — while believing firmly in the *miracles*, because said to have been produced by God through Moses, will either scout the enchantments performed by Pharaoh’s magicians, or attribute them to the devil. It is the latter whom our pious enemies connect with Occultism, while their impious foes, the infidels, laugh at Moses, Magicians, and Occultists, and would blush to give one serious thought to such “superstitions.” This, because there is no term in existence to show the difference; no words to express the lights and shadows and draw the line of demarcation between the sublime and the true, the absurd and the ridiculous. The latter are the theological interpretations which teach the “breaking of the laws of Nature” by man, God, or devil; the former — the *scientific* “miracles” and enchantments of Moses and the Magicians *in accordance with natural laws*, both having been learned in all the Wisdom of the Sanctuaries, which were the “Royal Societies” of those days — and in true OCCULTISM. This last word is certainly misleading, translated as it stands from the compound word *Gupta-Vidya*, “Secret Knowledge.” But the knowledge of what? Some of the Sanskrit terms may help us.

There are four (out of the many other) names of the various kinds of Esoteric Knowledge or Sciences given, even in the exoteric *Puranas* There is (1) *Yajña-Vidya*,⁵ knowl-

⁵ The *Yajña*, say the Brahmins, exists from eternity, for it proceeded forth from the Supreme One . . . in whom it lay dormant from “no beginning.” It is the key to the TRIVIDYA, the thrice sacred science contained in the Rig verses, which teaches the Yajus or sacrificial mysteries. “The Yajña exists as an invisible thing at all times, it is like the latent power of electricity in an electrifying machine, requiring only the operation of a suitable apparatus in order to be elicited. It is supposed to extend when unrolled, from the *Ahavanīya* or sacrificial fire into which all oblations are thrown, to heaven, forming thus a bridge or ladder, by means of which the sacrificer can communicate with the world of gods and spirits, and even ascend when alive to their abodes.” — Martin Haug, *The Aitareya-Brahmanam*, Introd., pp. 73-74.

“This Yajna is again one of the forms of the Akāsa, and the mystic word calling it into existence and pronounced



edge of the occult powers [252] awakened in Nature by the performance of certain religious ceremonies and rites. (2) *Mahavidya*, the “great knowledge,” the magic of the Kabalists and of the *Tantrika* worship, often Sorcery of the worst description. (3) *Guhya-Vidya*, knowledge of the mystic powers residing in Sound (Ether), hence in the Mantras (chanted prayers or incantations) and depending on the rhythm and melody used; in other words a magical performance based on Knowledge of the Forces of Nature and their correlation; and (4) ATMA-VIDYA, a term which is translated simply “knowledge of the Soul,” *true Wisdom* by the Orientalists, but which means far more.

This last is the only kind of Occultism that any theosophist who admires *Light on the Path*, and who would be wise and unselfish, ought to strive after. All the rest is some branch of the “Occult Sciences,” *i.e.*, arts based on the knowledge of the ultimate essence of all things in the Kingdoms of Nature — such as minerals, plants and animals — hence of things pertaining to the realm of *material* nature, however invisible that essence may be, and howsoever much it has hitherto eluded the grasp of Science. Alchemy, Astrology, Occult Physiology, Chiromancy, exist in Nature and the *exact* Sciences — perhaps so called, because they are found in this age of paradoxical philosophies the reverse — have already discovered not a few of the secrets of the above *arts*. But clairvoyance, symbolised in India as the “Eye of Siva,” called in Japan, “Infinite Vision,” is *not* Hypnotism, the illegitimate son of Mesmerism, and is not to be acquired by such arts. All the [253] others may be mastered and results obtained, whether good, bad, or indifferent; but *Atma-Vidya* sets small value on them. It includes them all and may even use them occasionally, but it does so after purifying them of their dross, for beneficent purposes, and taking care to deprive them of every element of selfish motive. Let us explain: any man or woman can set himself or herself to study one or all of the above specified “Occult Arts” without any great previous preparation, and even without adopting any too restraining mode of life. One could even dispense with any lofty standard of morality. In the last case, of course, ten to one the student would blossom into a very decent kind of sorcerer, and tumble down headlong into black magic. But what can this matter? The *Voodoos* and the *Dugpas* eat, drink and are merry over hecatombs of victims of their infernal arts. And so do the amiable gentlemen vivisectionists and the *diploma-ed* “Hypnotizers” of the Faculties of Medicine; the only difference between the two classes being that the *Voodoos* and *Dugpas* are *conscious*, and the Charcot-Richet crew *unconscious*, Sorcerers. Thus, since both have to reap the fruits of their labours and achievements in the black art, the Western practitioners should not have the punishment and reputation without the profits and enjoyments they may get therefrom. For we say it again, *hypnotism* and *vivisection* as practised in such schools, are *Sorcery* pure and simple, *minus* a knowledge that the *Voodoos* and *Dugpas* enjoy, and which no Charcot-Richet can procure for himself in fifty years of hard study and experimental observation. Let then those who will dabble in magic, whether they understand its nature or not, but who find the rules imposed upon students too hard, and who, therefore, lay *Atma-Vidya* or Occultism aside — go without it. Let them become magicians by all

mentally by the initiated Priest is the *Lost Word* receiving impulse through WILLPOWER. — *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. I, p. xliiv.



means, even though they do become *Voodoos* and *Duggpas* for the next ten incarnations.

But the interest of our readers will probably centre on those who are invincibly attracted towards the "Occult," yet who neither realise the true nature of what they aspire towards, nor have they become passion-proof, far less truly unselfish.[254]

How about these unfortunates, we shall be asked, who are thus rent in twain by conflicting forces? For it has been said too often to need repetition, and the fact itself is patent to any observer, that when once the desire for Occultism has really awakened in a man's heart, there remains for him no hope of peace, no place of rest and comfort in all the world. He is driven out into wild and desolate spaces of life by an evergnawing unrest he cannot quell. His heart is too full of passion and selfish desire to permit him to pass the Golden Gate; he cannot find rest or peace in ordinary life. Must he then inevitably fall into sorcery and black magic, and through many incarnations heap up for himself a terrible Karma? Is there no other road for him?

Indeed there is, we answer. Let him aspire to no higher than he feels able to accomplish. Let him not take a burden upon himself too heavy for him to carry. Without ever becoming a "Mahatma," a Buddha or a Great Saint, let him study the philosophy and the "Science of Soul," and he can become one of the modest benefactors of humanity, without any "superhuman" powers. *Siddhis* (or the Arhat powers) are only for those who are able to "lead the life," to comply with the terrible sacrifices required for such a training, and to comply with them *to the very letter*. Let them know at once and remember always, that *true Occultism or Theosophy* is the "Great Renunciation of SELF," unconditionally and absolutely, in thought as in action. It is ALTRUISM, and it throws him who practises it out of calculation of the ranks of the living altogether. "Not for himself, but for the world, he lives," as soon as he has pledged himself to the work. Much is forgiven during the first years of probation. But, no sooner is he "accepted" than his personality must disappear, and he has to become *a mere beneficent force in Nature*. There are two poles for him after that, two paths, and no midward place of rest. He has either to ascend laboriously, step by step, often through numerous incarnations and *no Devachanic break*, the golden ladder leading to Mahatmaship (the *Arhat* or *Bodhisattva* condition), or — he will let himself slide down the ladder at the first false step, and roll down into *Dugpaship*. . . . [255]

All this is either unknown or left out of sight altogether. Indeed, one who is able to follow the silent evolution of the preliminary aspirations of the candidates, often finds strange ideas quietly taking possession of their minds. There are those whose reasoning powers have been so distorted by foreign influences that they imagine that animal passions can be so sublimated and elevated that their fury, force, and fire can, so to speak, be turned inwards; that they can be stored and shut up in one's breast, until their energy is, not expanded, but turned toward higher and more holy purposes: namely, *until their collective and unexpanded strength enables their possessor to enter the true Sanctuary of the Soul* and stand therein in the presence of the *Master* — the HIGHER SELF! For this purpose they will not struggle with their passions nor slay them. They will simply, by a strong effort of will put down the fierce flames and keep them at bay within their natures, allowing the fire to smoulder under a thin layer of ashes. They submit joyfully to the torture of the Spartan boy who



allowed the fox to devour his entrails rather than part with it. Oh, poor blind visionaries!

As well hope that a band of drunken chimney-sweeps, hot and greasy from their work, may be shut up in a Sanctuary hung with pure white linen, and that instead of soiling and turning it by their presence into a heap of dirty shreds, they will become masters in and of the sacred recess, and finally emerge from it as immaculate as that recess. Why not imagine that a dozen of skunks imprisoned in the pure atmosphere of a *Dgon-pa* (a monastery) can issue out of it impregnated with all the perfumes of the incenses used? Strange aberration of the human mind. Can it be so? Let us argue.

The “Master” in the Sanctuary of our souls is “the Higher Self” — the divine spirit whose consciousness is based upon and derived solely (at any rate during the mortal life of the man in whom it is captive) from the Mind, which we have agreed to call the *Human Soul* (the “Spiritual Soul” being the vehicle of the Spirit). In its turn the former (the *personal* or human soul) is a compound in its highest form, of spiritual aspirations, volitions, and [256] divine love; and in its lower aspect, of animal desires and terrestrial passions imparted to it by its associations with its vehicle, the seat of all these. It thus stands as a link and a medium between the animal nature of man which its higher reason seeks to subdue, and his divine spiritual nature to which it gravitates, whenever it has the upper hand in its struggle with the *inner animal*. The latter is the instinctual “animal Soul” and is the hotbed of those passions, which, as just shown, are lulled instead of being killed, and locked up in their breasts by some imprudent enthusiasts. Do they still hope to turn thereby the muddy stream of the animal sewer into the crystalline waters of life? And where, on what neutral ground can they be imprisoned so as not to affect man? The fierce passions of love and lust are still alive and they are allowed to still remain in the place of their birth — *that same animal soul*; for both the higher and the lower portions of the “Human Soul” or Mind reject such inmates, though they cannot avoid being tainted with them as neighbours. The “Higher Self” or Spirit is as unable to assimilate such feelings as water to get mixed with oil or unclean liquid tallow. It is thus the mind alone, the sole link and medium between the man of earth and the Higher Self — that is the only sufferer, and which is in the incessant danger of being dragged down by those passions that may be re-awakened at any moment, and perish in the abyss of matter. And how can it ever attune itself to the divine harmony of the highest Principle, when that harmony is destroyed by the mere presence, within the Sanctuary in preparation, of such animal passions? How can harmony prevail and conquer, when the soul is stained and distracted with the turmoil of passions and the terrestrial desires of the bodily senses, or even of the “Astral man”?

For this “Astral” — the shadowy “double” (in the animal as in man) is not the companion of the *divine Ego* but of the *earthly body*. It is the link between the personal SELF, the lower consciousness of *Manas* and the Body, and is the vehicle of *transitory, not of immortal life*. Like the shadow projected by man, it follows his movements and impulses slavishly and mechanically, and leans therefore to [257] matter without ever ascending to Spirit. It is only when the power of the passions is dead altogether, and when they have been crushed and annihilated in the retort of an unflinching



will; when not only all the lusts and longings of the flesh are dead, but also the recognition of the personal Self is killed out and the “astral” has been reduced in consequence to a cipher, that the Union with the “Higher Self” can take place. Then when the “Astral” reflects only the conquered man, the still living but no more the longing, selfish personality, then the brilliant *Augoeides*, the divine SELF, can vibrate in conscious harmony with both the poles of the human Entity — the man of matter purified, and the ever pure Spiritual Soul — and stand in the presence of the MASTER SELF, the Christos of the mystic Gnostic, blended, merged into, and one with IT for ever.⁶

How then can it be thought possible for a man to enter the “straight gate” of occultism when his daily and hourly thoughts are bound up with worldly things, desires of possession and power, with lust, ambition and duties, which, however honourable, are still of the earth earthy? Even the love for wife and family — the purest as the most unselfish of human affections — is a barrier to *real* occultism. For whether we take as an example the holy love of a mother for her child, or that of a husband for his wife, even in these feelings, when analyzed to the very bottom, and thoroughly sifted, there is still *selfishness* in the first, and an *égoïsme à deux* in the second instance. What mother would not sacrifice without a moment’s hesitation hundreds and thousands of lives for that of the child of her heart? and what lover or true husband would not break the happiness of every other man and woman around him to [258] satisfy the desire of one whom he loves? This is but natural, we shall be told. Quite so; in the light of the code of human affections; less so, in that of divine universal love. For, while the heart is full of thoughts for a little group of *selves*, near and dear to us, how shall the rest of mankind fare in our souls? What percentage of love and care will there remain to bestow on the “great orphan”? And how shall the “still small voice” make itself heard in a soul entirely occupied with its own privileged tenants? What room is there left for the needs of Humanity *en bloc* to impress themselves upon, or even receive a speedy response? And yet, he who would profit by the wisdom of the universal mind, has to reach it through *the whole of Humanity* without distinction of race, complexion, religion or social status. It is *altruism*, not *ego-ism* even in its most legal and noble conception, that can lead the unit to merge its little Self in the Universal Selves. It is to *these* needs and to this work that the true disciple of true Occultism has to devote himself, if he would obtain Theosophy, divine Wisdom and Knowledge.

The aspirant has to choose absolutely between the life of the world and the life of Occultism. It is useless and vain to endeavour to unite the two, for no one can serve two masters and satisfy both. No one can serve his body and the higher Soul, and do his family duty and his universal duty, without depriving either one or the other of its rights; for he will either lend his ear to the “still small voice” and fail to hear the cries of his little ones, or, he will listen but to the wants of the latter and remain deaf to the voice of Humanity. It would be a ceaseless, a maddening struggle for almost any

⁶ Those who would feel inclined to see three *Egos* in one man will show themselves unable to perceive the metaphysical meaning. Man is a trinity composed of Body, Soul and Spirit; but *man* is nevertheless *one* and is surely not his body. It is the latter which is the property, the transitory clothing of the man. The three “Egos” are MAN in his three aspects on the astral, intellectual or psychic, and the Spiritual planes, or states.



married man, who would pursue true practical Occultism, instead of its *theoretical* philosophy. For he would find himself ever hesitating between the voice of the impersonal divine love of Humanity, and that of the personal, terrestrial love. And this could only lead him to fail in one or the other, or perhaps in both his duties. Worse than this. For, *whoever indulges after having pledged himself to OCCULTISM in the gratification of a terrestrial love or lust*, must feel an almost immediate result; that of being irresistibly dragged from the impersonal divine state [259] down to the lower plane of matter. Sensual, or even mental self-gratification, involves the immediate loss of the powers of spiritual discernment; the voice of the MASTER can no longer be distinguished from that of one's passions *or even that of a Dugpa*; the right from wrong; sound morality from mere casuistry. The Dead Sea fruit assumes the most glorious mystic appearance, only to turn to ashes on the lips, and to gall in the heart resulting in: —

“Depth ever deepening, darkness darkening still;
Folly for wisdom, guilt for innocence;
Anguish for rapture, and for hope despair.”

And once being mistaken and having acted on their mistakes, most men shrink from realising their error, and thus descend deeper and deeper into the mire. And, although it is the intention that decides primarily whether *white* or *black* magic is exercised, yet the results even of involuntary, unconscious sorcery cannot fail to be productive of bad Karma. Enough has been said to show that *sorcery is any kind of evil influence exercised upon other persons, who suffer, or make other persons suffer, in consequence*. Karma is a heavy stone splashed in the quiet waters of Life; and it must produce ever widening circles of ripples, carried wider and wider, almost *ad infinitum*. Such causes produced have to call forth effects, and these are evidenced in the just laws of Retribution.

Much of this may be avoided if people will only abstain from rushing into practices neither the nature nor importance of which they understand. No one is expected to carry a burden beyond his strength and powers. There are “natural-born magicians”; Mystics and Occultists by birth, and by right of direct inheritance from a series of incarnations and aeons of suffering and failures. These are passion-proof, so to say. No fires of earthly origin can fan into a flame any of their senses or desires; no human voice can find response in their souls, except the great cry of Humanity. These only may be certain of [260] success. But they can be met only far and wide, and they pass through the narrow gates of Occultism because they carry no personal luggage of human transitory sentiments along with them. They have got rid of the feeling of the lower personality, paralyzed thereby the “astral” animal, and the golden, but narrow gate is thrown open before them. Not so with those who have to carry yet for several incarnations the burden of sins committed in previous lives, and even in their present existence. For such, unless they proceed with great caution, the golden gate of Wisdom may get transformed into the wide gate and the broad way “that leadeth unto destruction,” and therefore “many be they that enter in thereby.” This is the Gate of the Occult arts, practised for selfish motives and in the absence of the restraining and beneficent influence of ATMA-VIDYA. We are in the Kali Yuga and its fatal influence is a thousand-fold more powerful in the West than it is in the East;



hence the easy preys made by the Powers of the Age of Darkness in this cyclic struggle, and the many delusions under which the world is now labouring. One of these is the relative facility with which men fancy they can get at the “Gate” and cross the threshold of Occultism without any great sacrifice. It is the dream of most Theosophists, one inspired by desire for Power and personal selfishness, and it is not such feelings that can ever lead them to the coveted goal. For, as well said by one believed to have sacrificed himself for Humanity — “narrow is the gate and straight the way that leadeth unto life” eternal, and therefore “few be they that find it.” So straight indeed, that at the bare mention of some of the preliminary difficulties the affrighted Western candidates turn back and retreat with a shudder.

Let them stop here and attempt no more in their great weakness. For if, while turning their backs on the narrow gate, they are dragged by their desire for the Occult one step in the direction of the broad and more inviting Gates of that golden mystery which glitters in the light of illusion, woe to them! It can lead only to Dugpa-ship, and they will be sure to find themselves very soon landed on that [261] *Via Fatale* of the *Inferno*, over whose portal Dante read the words:

*“Per me si va nella città dolente,
Per me si va nell’eterno dolore,
Per me si va tra la perduta gente. . . .”*⁷



⁷ [*Divine Commedia*, Canto II, 1, *Inferno*:

This way for the sorrowful city,
This way for eternal suffering,
This way to join the lost people.
All hope abandon, ye who enter here!

— ED. PHIL.]

