

Occult laws and paradoxes

A little collection of stray thoughts

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The paradoxes of occultism must be lived, not uttered only. Herein lies a great danger, for it is only too easy to become lost in the intellectual contemplation of the path, and so to forget that the road can only be known by treading it.

— Helena Petrovna Blavatsky¹

Occult knowledge is not for sale

Theosophy is not to be bought. Hitherto, for the past 14 years, not a single working member has ever received pay or salary from either the Masters or the Society.²

Above all, let [our Theosophist brothers] bear in mind that true occult knowledge can never be bought. He who has anything to teach, unless like Peter to Simon he says to him who offers him money for his knowledge — “Thy money perish with thee, because thou has thought that the gift of (*our inner*) God may be purchased with money” — is either a black magician or an IMPOSTOR.³

Neither *The Theosophist* nor its Editor are likely to ever sell or prostitute their favours. The little they have to give, they give freely, expecting nothing but ingratitude in return, for they serve an idea, not individuals. True devotion to a cause is not to be bought or sold; and, for her money India might choose.⁴

The occult sciences, or rather the *key* which alone explains the jargon in which they are expressed, cannot be divulged. Like the Sphinx who dies the moment the enigma of its being is guessed by an Oedipus, they remain occult only as long as they are unknown to the uninitiated. Then again they can neither be bought nor sold. A Rosicrucian “*becomes, he is not made,*” says an old adage of the Hermetic philosophers, to which the Occultists add, “The science of the gods is mastered by violence; it must be conquered, and does not give itself.” This is exactly what the author of the *Acts of the Apostles* intended to convey when he gave the answer of Peter to Simon Magus: “Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money” [*Acts viii, 20*]. Occult knowledge should be used neither to make money, nor to attain any egotistical end, not even as a means to personal vanity.⁵

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE GREAT PARADOX) VIII p. 125

² *Key to Theosophy*, p. 286

³ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE YEAR IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE YEAR!) X p. 285; [quoting *Acts viii, 20*: “Πέτρος δε εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸ ἀργύριον σου σὺν σοὶ εἶη εἰς ἀπώλειαν ὅτι τὴν δωρεάν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνόμισας δια χρημάτων κτάσθαι.”]

⁴ *Ibid.* (THE KNIGHT WITHOUT REPROACH OR FEAR) III p. 389

⁵ *Ibid.* (ALCHEMY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY) XI p. 546



Thou shall not steal

Student. — What one of those rules [“binding on all, in white magic or good occultism”] in any way corresponds to “Thou shall not steal”?

Sage. — That one which was long ago expressed by the ancient sage in the words, “Do not covet the wealth of any creature.” This is better than “Thou shalt not steal,” for you cannot steal unless you covet. If you steal for hunger you may be forgiven, but you coveted the food for a purpose, just as another covets merely for the sake of possession. The wealth of others includes all their possessions, and does not mean mere money alone. Their ideas, their private thoughts, their mental forces, powers, and faculties, their psychic powers — all, indeed, on all planes that they own or have. While they in that realm are willing to give it all away, it must not be coveted by another.

You have no right, therefore, to enter into the mind of another who has not given the permission and take from him what is not yours. You become a burglar on the mental and psychic plane when you break this rule. You are forbidden taking anything for personal gain, profit, advantage, or use. But you may take what is for general good, if you are far enough advanced and good enough to be able to extricate the personal element from it.⁶

Exercise of White Occult powers arouses the Black

There is a law that if a White Magician uses his occult power an equal amount of power may be used by the Black one. Chemists invent powders for explosives and wicked men may use them. You force yourself into Master’s presence and you take the consequences of the immense forces around him playing on yourself. If you are weak in character anywhere, the Black ones will use the disturbance by directing the forces engendered to that spot and may compass your ruin. It is so always. Pass the boundary that hedges in the occult realm, and quick forces, new ones, dreadful ones, must be met. Then if you are not strong you may become a wreck for that life. This is the danger. This is one reason why Masters do not appear and do not act directly very often, but nearly always by intermediate degrees. What do you say — “the dual forces in nature”? Precisely, that’s just it; and Theosophists should remember it.⁷

Be sure that you understand me right about the Black side. I mean this: when men work along a good while, and really raise themselves up by that, they get the attention of the Black if they are of sufficient importance for it. I have their attention, and it makes a trouble now and then. What we all want to have, then, is the best armour for such a fight, and that is patience. Patience is a great thing, and will work in more ways than one, not only in personal life, but in wider concerns.⁸

⁶ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (CONVERSATIONS ON OCCULTISM – ADDITIONAL MATERIAL) IX p. 400-O

⁷ *Ibid.* (CONVERSATIONS ON OCCULTISM WITH H.P.B.) X p. 270

⁸ *Judge Letters*, II (EXTRACTS ON OCCULT PHILOSOPHY) p. 118



Compendium of paradoxes

Angels, Guardian

The Occultists do not accept the doctrine of “guardian angels,” for reasons heretofore fully explained, in these pages. They do, however, believe most firmly in the personal, *divine* spirit in man, the source of his inspiration and his all-sufficient “angel” and “guardian.”⁹

Anger

To Show Anger. — No “*Cultured*” man or woman will ever show anger in Society. To check and restrain every sign of annoyance shows good manners, certainly, but also considerable achievement in hypocrisy and dissimulation. There is an occult side to this rule of good breeding expressed in an Eastern proverb: “Trust not the face which never shows signs of anger, nor the dog that never barks.” Cold-blooded animals are the most venomous.¹⁰

Applying Divine Knowledge here and now is far more important than contemplating it

Paradox would seem to be the natural language of occultism. Nay more, it would seem to penetrate deep into the heart of things, and thus to be inseparable from any attempt to put into words the truth, the reality which underlies the outward shows of life.

And the paradox is one not in words only, but in action, in the very conduct of life. The paradoxes of occultism must be lived, not uttered only. Herein lies a great danger, for it is only too easy to become lost in the intellectual contemplation of the path, and so to forget that the road can only be known by treading it.¹¹

Astrology is mere superstition without a deep appreciation of the Law of Sympathy

A man must be a psychologist and a philosopher before he can become a perfect astrologer, and understand correctly the great Law of *Universal Sympathy*. Not only astrology but magnetism, theosophy and every occult science, especially that of attraction and repulsion, depend upon this law for their existence. Without having thoroughly studied the latter, astrology becomes a *superstition*.¹²

Brave as a Lion — The highest compliment — in appearance — paid to one’s courage; a comparison with a bad-smelling wild-beast — in reality. The recognition, also, of the superiority of animal over human bravery, considered as a virtue.¹³

Civilized Life — Crowded, noisy and full of vital power, is modern Society to the eye of matter; but there is no more still and silent, empty and dreary desert than that same

⁹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE TEACHINGS OF ALLAN KARDEC) V p. 106

¹⁰ *Ibid.* (FROM THE NOTE BOOK OF AN UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER — THE ESOTERIC VALUE OF CERTAIN WORDS AND DEEDS IN SOCIAL LIFE) VIII p. 137

¹¹ *Ibid.* (THE GREAT PARADOX) VIII p. 125

¹² *Ibid.* (NATIVE ASTROLOGERS) III p. 192

¹³ *Ibid.* (FROM THE NOTE BOOK OF AN UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER — THE ESOTERIC VALUE OF CERTAIN WORDS AND DEEDS IN SOCIAL LIFE) VIII p. 138



Society to the spiritual eye of the Seer. Its right hand freely and lavishly bestows ephemeral but costly pleasures, while the left grasps greedily the leavings and often grudges the necessities of show. All our social life is the result and consequence of that unseen, yet ever present autocrat and despot, called *Selfishness* and *Egotism*. The strongest will becomes impotent before the voice and authority of *Self*.¹⁴

Consciousness ascent to its divine abode causes friction

The true Adept, the developed man, must, we are always told, become — he cannot be made. The process is therefore one of growth through evolution, and this must necessarily involve a certain amount of pain.¹⁵

Discipleship's first rules

I suspect, however, that it is precisely the intelligent and rich classes which would abuse occult powers for their one benefit and profit, much more than the ignorant and poor ones. The first law of the Sacred Science is never to use one's knowledge for one's own interest, but to work with and for others. But how many people could one find in Europe-America ready to sacrifice themselves for their fellowmen? An Adept who is sick has no right to use his magnetic force to lessen his personal suffering as long as there is, to his knowledge, a single creature that suffers and whose physical or mental pain he can lessen, if not heal. It is so to speak the exaltation of the suffering one one's self, for the benefit of the health and happiness of others. A Theosophist, if he contemplates Adeptship, must not revenge himself. He must suffer in silence rather than excite in someone else evil passions or the desire to revenge himself in his turn. Non-resistance to evil, forgiveness and charity, are the first rules of discipleship.¹⁶

Forgive and Forget

"We should freely forgive, but forget rarely," says Colton.¹⁷ "I will not be revenged, and this I owe to my enemy; but I will *remember*, and this I owe to myself." This is real practical wisdom. It stands between the ferocious "Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth" of the Mosaic Law, and the command to turn the left cheek to the enemy when he has smitten you on the right. Is not the latter a direct encouraging of sin?¹⁸

Honour, The Code of

In France — to seduce a wife and kill her husband. There, offended honour can feel satisfied only with blood; here a wound inflicted upon the offender's pocket suffices.¹⁹

¹⁴ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FROM THE NOTE BOOK OF AN UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER — THE ESOTERIC VALUE OF CERTAIN WORDS AND DEEDS IN SOCIAL LIFE) VIII p. 139

¹⁵ *Ibid.* (SPIRITUAL PROGRESS) VI p. 331

¹⁶ *Ibid.* (MISCONCEPTIONS) VIII p. 81

¹⁷ [Charles Caleb Colton, 1780–1832, English clergy.]

¹⁸ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FROM THE NOTE BOOK OF AN UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER — THE ESOTERIC VALUE OF CERTAIN WORDS AND DEEDS IN SOCIAL LIFE) VIII p. 138

¹⁹ *Ibid.* VIII p. 138



The Duel as a Point of Honour. — The duel being an institution of Christendom and civilization, neither the old Spartans, nor yet the Greeks or Romans knew of it, as they were only uncivilized heathens. — (See Schopenhauer.)²⁰

International Brotherhood — When a Mussulman and a Christian swear mutual friendship, and pledge themselves to be brothers, their two formulas differ somewhat. The Moslem says: “Thy mother shall be my mother, my father thy father, my sister thy hand maid, and thou shall be my brother.” To which the Christian answers: “Thy mother and sister shall be my hand-maidens, thy wife shall be my wife, and my wife shall be thy dear sister.” — *Amen.*²¹

Love Thy Neighbour

When a parson has preached upon this subject, his pious congregation accepts it as tacit permission to slander and vilify their friends and acquaintances in neighbouring pews.²²

Moral taint is just as transmissible as physical

Another step in advance will be to realize the magical creative power of the human mind, and the fact that moral taint is just as transmissible as physical. The “influence” of bad companions will then be understood to imply a degrading personal magnetism, more subtle than the impressions conveyed to the eye or the ear by the sights and sounds of a vicious company. The latter may be repelled by resolutely avoiding to see or hear what is bad; but the former enwraps the sensitive and penetrates his very being if he but stop where the moral poison is floating in the air.²³

Noëtic Force acts from within without

Impulses of Psychic Force act from without within

Indeed, every organ in our body *has its own memory*. For if it is endowed with a consciousness “of its own kind,” every cell must of necessity have also a memory of its own kind, as likewise its own *psychic* and *noëtic* action. Responding to the touch of both a physical and a *metaphysical* Force, the impulse given by the *psychic* (or psycho-molecular) Force will act from *without within*; while that of the *noëtic* (shall we call it Spiritual-dynamical?) Force works *from within without*. For, as our body is the covering of the inner “principles,” soul, mind, life, etc., so the molecule or the cell is the body in which dwell its “principles,” the (to our senses and comprehension) immaterial atoms which compose that cell. The cell’s activity and behavior are determined by its being propelled either inwardly or outwardly, by the noëtic or the psychic Force, the former having no relation to the *physical* cells proper. Therefore, while the latter act under the unavoidable law of the conservation and correlation of physical energy, the atoms — being psycho-spiritual, *not physical units* — *act under laws of their own*, just as Professor Ladd’s “Unit-Being,” which is our “Mind-Ego,” does, in

²⁰ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FROM THE NOTE BOOK OF AN UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER — THE ESOTERIC VALUE OF CERTAIN WORDS AND DEEDS IN SOCIAL LIFE) VIII p. 138

²¹ *Ibid.* VIII p. 138

²² *Ibid.* VIII pp. 137-38

²³ *Ibid.* (A CASE OF OBSESSION) II p. 398



his very philosophical and scientific hypothesis. Every human organ and each cell in the latter has a keyboard of its own, like that of a piano, only that it registers and emits sensations instead of sounds.²⁴

Non-resistance to Evil — To brag of it is to invite all evil-doers to sit upon you. To practise it openly is to lead people into the temptation of regarding you as a coward. Not to resist the evil you have never created nor merited, to eschew it yourself, and help others quietly to get out of its way, is the only wise course open to the lover of wisdom.²⁵

Nothing new under the Sun

. . . an old axiom of esoteric philosophy: “*nothing of that which does not exist somewhere, whether in the visible or invisible kosmos, can be reproduced artificially, or even in human thought.*”²⁶

Sermon of the Mount’s admonitions impractical

The Sermon of the Mount, which is the very embodiment of Christ’s teachings — Christianity in a nut-shell, so to say — is a code of preeminently *practical* as also impracticable rules of life, of daily observances, yet all on the plane of matter-of-fact earth-life. When you are told to turn your left cheek to him who smites you on the right, you are not commanded to *deny* the blow, but on the contrary to assert it by meekly bearing the offence; and in order not to *resist evil*, to turn (whether metaphorically or otherwise) your other cheek — *i.e.*, to invite your offender to repeat the action.²⁷

Sheep

A weak, silly fellow, figuratively, an insulting, contemptuous epithet among laymen; but one quite flattering among churchmen, who apply it to “the people of God” and the members of their congregations, comparing them to *sheep* under the guidance of the lamb.²⁸

Sleeping passions aroused

Now there is a terrible law operative in nature, one which cannot be altered, and whose operation clears up the apparent mystery of the selection of certain “Chelas” who have turned out sorry specimens of morality, these few years past. Does the reader recall the old proverb: “Let sleeping dogs lie?” There is a world of occult meaning in it. No man or woman knows his or her moral strength until it is *tried*. Thou-

²⁴ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (PSYCHIC AND NOËTIC ACTION) XII p. 368

²⁵ *Ibid.* (FROM THE NOTE BOOK OF AN UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER — THE ESOTERIC VALUE OF CERTAIN WORDS AND DEEDS IN SOCIAL LIFE) VIII p. 137. Cf. “Socrates neither looked out for anybody to plead for him when he was accused, nor begged any favour from his judges, but maintained a manly freedom, which was the effect not of pride, but of the true greatness of his soul; and on the last day of his life he held a long discourse on this subject; and a few days before, when he might have been easily freed from his confinement, he refused to be so; and when he had almost actually hold of that deadly cup, he spoke with the air of a man not forced to die, but ascending into heaven.” Cicero: *Tusculan Disputations* I, xxix; (tr. Yonge)

²⁶ *Ibid.* (OCCULT OR EXACT SCIENCE?) VII p. 80

²⁷ *Ibid.* (CHRISTIAN SCIENCE) X p. 37

²⁸ *Ibid.* (FROM THE NOTE BOOK OF AN UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER — THE ESOTERIC VALUE OF CERTAIN WORDS AND DEEDS IN SOCIAL LIFE) VIII p. 138



sands go through life very respectably because they were never put to the pinch. This is a truism doubtless, but it is most pertinent to the present case. One who undertakes to try for Chelaship by that very act rouses and lashes to desperation every sleeping passion of his animal nature. For this is the commencement of a struggle for the mastery in which quarter is neither to be given nor taken. It is, once for all: “To be, or Not to be”; to conquer, means ADEPTSHIP; to fail, an ignoble Martyrdom; for to fall victim to lust, pride, avarice, vanity, selfishness, cowardice, or any other of the lower propensities, is indeed ignoble, if measured by the standard of true manhood.²⁹

Wisdom, Practical

On the tree of silence hangs the fruit of peace. The secret thou wouldst not tell to thine enemy, tell it not to thy friend. — (*Arabic.*)³⁰



[Earth's Breakfast] by Jacek Yerka

²⁹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (CHELAS AND LAY CHELAS) IV pp. 611-12

³⁰ *Ibid.* (FROM THE NOTE BOOK OF AN UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER — THE ESOTERIC VALUE OF CERTAIN WORDS AND DEEDS IN SOCIAL LIFE) VIII p. 138

