

Theoretical and Practical Arcane Terms

**Theory versus Practice
Occultism versus Mysticism
Metaphysics versus Ethics**



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Atma-Vidya is the highest grade of Esoteric Knowledge

There are four (out of the many other) names of the various kinds of Esoteric Knowledge or Sciences given, even in the exoteric *Purānas*. There is

- (1) *Yajña-Vidya*, knowledge of the occult powers 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.

. . . 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.¹

. . . without in any way lowering down the Christ system, or even the *ideal* Christ, we can say what is but too easy of proof, that, properly speaking, there is no “Esoteric Christianity,” no more than there is Esoteric Hinduism, Buddhism or any other “ism.” We know of one Esoteric doctrine — “the universal secret Wisdom-Religion” of old. The latter embraces every one of the great creeds of the antiquity, while none of these can boast of having it in its entirety. Our mission is to gather all these scattered rays, bring them back to one focus, and thus help those who will come after us to unveil some day the glorious sun of Truth. Only humanity must be prepared for it — lest should be blinded by the unexpected splendour.²

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (OCCULTISM VERSUS THE OCCULT ARTS) IX pp. 251-52, 253

² *Ibid.* (EDITOR’S NOTE TO “DRAMA OF THE LATTER DAYS”) VI p. 183



Occultism is the Science of Life and Art of Living

Occultism is that branch of knowledge which shows (a) the universe in the form of an egg, and (b) that both Universe and Man are ruled by the same laws.

Occultism itself is impartial. But as man is dual, so is motivation. For, motive determines whether a given action will advance the common good or an individual's good at the expense of others.



National Hero by Charles Bragg

. . . The cell of science is a little copy of the egg of the universe. The law which govern the whole govern also every part of it. As man is a little copy of the universe — is the microcosm — he is governed by the same laws which rule the greater. Occultism teaches therefore of the secret laws and forces of the universe and man, those forces playing in the outer world and known in part only by the men of the day who admit no invisible real nature behind which is the model of the visible.³

Occultism is colorless, and only when used by man for the one side or the other is it good or bad. Bad Occultism, or that which is used for selfish ends, is not false, for it is the same as that which is for good ends. Nature is two-sided, negative and positive, good and bad, light and dark, hot and cold, spirit and matter. The Black magician is as powerful in the matter of phenomena as the White, but in the end all the trend of Nature will go to destroy the black and save the white. But what you should understand is that the false man and the true can both be occultists. The words of the Christian teacher Jesus will give the rule for judgment: “By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?” Occultism is the general, all-inclusive term, the differentiating terms are White and Black; the same forces are used by both, and similar laws, for there are no special laws in this universe for any special set of workers in Nature’s secrets. But the path of the untruthful and the wicked, while seemingly easy at first, is hard at last, for the black workers are the friends of no one, they are each against the other as soon as interest demands, and that may be any time. It is said that final annihilation of the personal soul awaits those who deal in the destructive side of Nature’s hall of experience. Within yourself is the light that lighteth every man who cometh here. The light of the Higher Self and of the Mahātma are not different from each other.⁴

³ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (CONVERSATIONS ON OCCULTISM) IX pp. 400 C-D

⁴ *Ibid.* IX p. 400 F



Occultism, however, is not Magic. It is the essence of Spiritualism.

Occultism is not magic, though magic is one of its tools.⁵

Occultism is the essence of Spiritualism, while modern or popular Spiritualism I cannot better characterize than as adulterated, unconscious magic.⁶

“Fear not, my Holly, I shall use no magic. Have I not told thee that there is no such thing as magic, though there is such a thing as understanding and applying the forces which are in Nature?”⁷

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.⁸

Though some thoughtful men believe that Occultism and Magic exist, many others confuse the Sun with the rush-lights.

(a) There are more well-educated and thoughtful men who believe in the existence of Occultism and Magic (the two differ 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.⁹

Not only Occult Science is the forebear of Modern Science,

Once Theosophy and its principles are known, it will be demonstrated that our philosophy is not only a “close relative of modern science,” but its forbear, though greatly transcending it in logic; and that its “metaphysics” is vaster, more beautiful and more powerful than any emanating from a dogmatic cult. It is the metaphysics of Nature in her chaste nakedness, both physical, moral and spiritual, alone capable of explaining the apparent miracle by means of natural and psychic laws, and of completing the mere physiological and pathological notions of Science, and of killing for ever the anthropomorphic Gods and the Devils of dualistic religions.¹⁰

⁵ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (APHORISMS) VIII p. 14

⁶ *Ibid.* (VIEWS OF THE THEOSOPHISTS) I p. 295; [“Is Occultism of truth or of falsehood; is it selfish or unselfish; or is it part one and part the other?”]

⁷ Rider Haggard H. *She* (1st ed. 1887); ch. 17, p. 218

⁸ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (OCCULTISM VERSUS THE OCCULT ARTS) IX p. 250

⁹ *Ibid.* IX p. 249; [two logical conclusions from “Practical Occultism,” *ibid.* pp. 155-62.]

¹⁰ *Ibid.* (MISCONCEPTIONS – H) VIII p. 76



Occult Science is Nature itself, though intimate knowledge of Its secrets does not allow Initiates the power to command them.

To a natural force, Modern Science opposes another natural force, more powerful, on the physical plane; Occult Science calls the latter Soul.

Modern Science considers Motion a blind, unreasoning force or law; Occult Science, traces Motion to its origin, identifies it with the Universal Deity, and calls it the “Great Breath.”

Occultism is the Great Power of God, Divine Wisdom, Power and Knowledge, or Theosophia. It is True Magic.

[Esoteric] Astrology is the mother of Astronomy, and Alchemy is the mother of Chemistry . . .

To say that occult sciences claim to command nature arbitrarily, is equivalent to saying that the sun commands the day-star to shine. Occult sciences are nature itself; intimate knowledge of their secrets does not give to the Initiates the power to command them. The truth of it is that this knowledge teaches the Adepts the manner in which to furnish certain conditions for the production of phenomena, *always due to natural causes*, and to the combination of forces analogous to those used by the scientists. The real difference between modern science and occult science consists in this: The first opposes to a natural force another natural force more powerful on the physical plane; the second opposes to a physical force, a spiritual or psychic force, in other words, *the soul of that same force*. Those who do not believe in the human soul nor in the immortal spirit cannot recognize *a fortiori* a vital and potential soul in every atom of matter. This soul, whether human, animal, vegetable, or mineral, is but a ray loaned by the Universal Soul to every manifested object during the active cycle or period of the Kosmos. Those who reject this doctrine are either materialists or sectarian bigots who dread the word “Pantheism” more than the devil of their unwholesome dreams.¹¹

Such are the teachings of physical Science, and such were in their roughest outlines those of Occultism, aeons and millenniums back. The difference, however, and most vital distinction between the two teachings, is this: official science sees in motion simply a blind, unreasoning force or law; Occultism, tracing motion to its origin, identifies it with the Universal Deity, and calls this eternal ceaseless motion — the “Great Breath.”¹²

Simon Magus was called “the Great Power of God” literally “the Potency of the Deity which is called Great.” That which was then termed Magic we now call *Theosophia*, or *Divine Wisdom, Power and Knowledge*.¹³

¹¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (MISCONCEPTIONS) VIII p. 79

¹² *Ibid.* (KOSMIC MIND) XII p. 139

¹³ *Ibid.* (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. II) XII p. 557



- Occultism is the Science of Life, the Art of Living.**¹⁴ . . . the occult hygiene of mind and body, the unlearning of false beliefs and the acquisition of true habits of thought . . .¹⁵
- Not supernatural, but Life itself.** [Occultism] . . . rejects the very idea of there being anything *supernatural* (i.e., above, below, or outside of nature) in this infinite Universe — as a stupendous fallacy.¹⁶
- Occultism is not a power-driven philosophy. Powers are its servants. Sacrifice and renunciation, its modus vivendi.** Occultism is not the acquirement of powers, whether psychic or intellectual, though both are its servants. Neither is occultism the pursuit of happiness, as men understand the word; for the first step is sacrifice, the second, renunciation.¹⁷
- It is an accelerated process of spiritual and ethical expansion at the expense of unchecked intellectual development.** . . . the only difference between an ordinary man who works along with Nature during the course of cosmic evolution and an occultist, is that the latter, by his superior knowledge, adopts such methods of training and discipline as will hurry on that process of evolution, and he thus reaches in a comparatively very short time that apex to ascend to which the ordinary individual may take perhaps billions of years.¹⁸
- Occultism is not mere philosophy. It can be traced back to those Beings who, led by Karma, have informed animal man with Their Mind.** [The *Secret Doctrine* connects the ideas of antiquity with] the *primeval instructors* of primitive man and his three earlier races. The genesis of that WISDOM-RELIGION . . . dates from that period. So-called “Occultism,” or rather Esoteric Science, has to be traced in its origin to those Beings who, led by Karma, have incarnated in our humanity, and thus struck the key-note of that secret Science which countless generations of subsequent adepts have expanded since then in every age, while they checked its doctrines by personal observation and experience. The bulk of this knowledge — which no man is able to possess in its fulness — constitutes that which we now call Theosophy or “divine knowledge.” Beings from other and higher worlds may have it entire; we can have it only approximately.¹⁹
- And to countless of adepts who, having since reasoned its secret doctrines and corroborated them by observation and experience, they pass them down from generation to generation.**

¹⁴ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (APHORISMS) VIII p. 14

¹⁵ *Ibid.* (MISCELLANEOUS NOTES) X p. 242

¹⁶ *Ibid.* (PERT QUESTIONS AND PLAIN ANSWERS) IV p. 106

¹⁷ *Ibid.* (APHORISMS) VIII p. 14

¹⁸ *Ibid.* (IS THE DESIRE TO “LIVE” SELFISH?) VI pp. 244-45

¹⁹ *Ibid.* (IS THEOSOPHY A RELIGION?) X p. 166



Therefore, the doctrines promulgated by the Theosophical Society “are not *mental* or *spiritual* impressions from some ‘unknown, from above,’ but the fruit of teachings given to us by living men.”

This is how HP Blavatsky summed up her own beliefs of the Secret Doctrine’s origin, authenticity, and authority:

And though the esoteric doctrines which our Society has been and is expounding, are not *mental* or *spiritual* impressions from some “unknown, from above,” but the fruit of teachings given to us by living men, still, except that which was dictated and written out by those Masters of Wisdom themselves, these doctrines may be in many cases as incomplete and faulty as any of our foes would desire it. *The Secret Doctrine* — a work which gives out all that can be given out during this century, is an attempt to lay bare *in part* the common foundation and inheritance of all — great and small religious and philosophical schemes.²⁰

(1), the unbroken oral teachings revealed by living *divine* men during the infancy of mankind to the elect among men;

(2), that it has reached us *unaltered*; and

(3), that the MASTERS are thoroughly versed in the science based on such uninterrupted teaching.²¹



Occasional Loss of Identity by Rafal Olbinski

²⁰ Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (IS THEOSOPHY A RELIGION?) X p. 170

²¹ *Ibid.* (WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR OUR FELLOW-MEN?) XI pp. 466-67



An abyss separates Theoretical from Practical Occultism

An abyss separates Theoretical Occultism or Theosophy from Occult Science or Raja-Yoga.

It becomes necessary . . . 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.²²

And intellectual study of ancient scriptures, from mystic study.

The rule referred to does not prohibit the study of the Kabbalah or aught else, or joining classes for study of literature. What it prohibits is joining bodies for the purpose of *mystic* study or practical occultism, which is a very different thing from intellectual study of ancient scriptures or books. The rule is made because one order of training would conflict with the other, and as this school has especially in view the training of the Manas and the acquirement of knowledge of the Antahkarana, it follows that outside study of mysticism might easily lead one astray.²³

“One may study with profit the Occult Sciences without rushing into the higher Occultism.”²⁴

This degree of the Esoteric Section is probationary, and its general purpose is to prepare and fit the student for the study of practical occultism or Raj yoga. Therefore, in this degree, the student . . . will not be taught how to produce physical phenomena . . .²⁵

Occultism itself is colourless. When exercised for personal gain, motive colours actions Black; when applied in the opposite direction, White or Divine Work, Theurgy.

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.²⁶

²² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (PRACTICAL OCCULTISM) IX p. 155

²³ *Echoes of the Orient*, (ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENCE No. 2) III pp. 400-1; [On whether Rule 18 of the Eastern School of Theosophy, stating that no members shall belong to any other body or association for mystic study, prohibits one's studying works like the Kabbalah or forming classes for such study.]

²⁴ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (IS THERE NO HOPE?) IX p. 289

²⁵ *Ibid.* (E.S. INTRODUCTION) XII p. 488; [Preliminary Memorandum.]

²⁶ *Ibid.* (PRACTICAL OCCULTISM) IX p. 156



“It is impossible to employ *spiritual* forces if there is the slightest tinge of selfishness remaining in the operator.”

Theurgy or Raja-Yoga marks the end point of an Individual Soul poised to be re-united with the Universal Soul and activates latent spiritual powers.

Workers of the White Lodge give up their devachanic rest in order to maintain their presence here, on earth, where they can be of use to others.

. . . 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.²⁷

Now Iamblichus shows us how this union of our Higher Soul with the Universal Soul, with the Gods, is to be effected. He speaks of Manteia [μαντεία] which is Samādhi, the highest trance.²⁸ He speaks also of dream which is divine vision, when man re-becomes again a God. By Theurgy, or Rāja-Yoga, a man arrives at:

- (1) Prophetic Discernment through our God (the respective Higher Ego of each of us) revealing to us the truths of the plane on which we happen to be acting;
- (2) Ecstasy and Illumination;
- (3) Action in Spirit (in Astral Body or through Will);
- (4) and Domination over the minor, senseless Demons (Elementals) by the very nature of our purified Egos. But this demands the complete purification of the latter. And this is called by him Magic, through initiation into Theurgy.

But Theurgy has to be preceded by a training of our senses and the knowledge of the human Self in relation to the Divine SELF.²⁹

The chief aim of the occultist is therefore to so control himself as to be able to control his future states, and thereby gradually shorten the duration of his *Devachanic* states between his two incarnations. In his progress, there comes a time when, between one physical death and his next re-birth, there is no *Devachan* but a kind of spiritual sleep, the shock of death, having, so to say, stunned him into a state of unconsciousness from which he gradually recovers to find himself reborn, to continue his purpose.³⁰

²⁷ Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (PRACTICAL OCCULTISM) IX pp. 156-57

²⁸ *De Mysteriis*, p. 290, lines 15-18 *et seq.*, caps. V & VII

²⁹ Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. II) XII p. 560

³⁰ *Ibid.* (IS THE DESIRE TO “LIVE” SELFISH?) VI p. 245



They achieve this minor sacrifice by gradually shortening the repose between incarnations.

The period of this sleep may vary from twenty-five to two hundred years, depending upon the degree of his advancement. But even this period may be said to be a waste of time, and hence all his exertions are directed to shorten its duration so as to gradually come to a point where the passage from one state of existence into another is almost imperceptible. This is his last incarnation, as it were, for the shock of death no more stuns him. This is the idea the writer of the article on “The Elixir of Life” means to convey, when he says: —

By or about the time when the Death-limit of his race is passed, HE IS ACTUALLY DEAD, in the ordinary sense, that is to say, that he has relieved himself of all or nearly all such material particles as would have necessitated in disruption the agony of dying. He has been dying gradually during the whole period of his Initiation. The catastrophe cannot happen twice over. He has only spread over a number of years the mild process of dissolution which others endure from a brief moment to a few hours. The highest Adept is, in fact, dead to, and absolutely unconscious of, the world; — he is oblivious of its pleasures, careless of its miseries, in so far as sentimentalism goes, for the stern sense of DUTY never leaves him blind to its very existence . . . ³¹



³¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (IS THE DESIRE TO “LIVE” SELFISH?) VI pp. 245-46; [& quoting G. Mitford’s “Elixir of Life.” See *Five years of Theosophy*, pp. 1-32.]



The only reason for secrecy is to shield fools and the wicked from their folly and proclivity to self-destruction

Occultists dare, will, achieve, but remain silent.

We are accused of mystery, and we are reproached with making a secret of the higher Theosophy. We confess that the doctrine which we call *gupta-vidyā* (secret science) is only for the few. But who were the masters in ancient times who did not keep their teachings secret, for fear that they would be profaned? . . . the disciple must gain the confidence of the master before receiving from him the supreme and final word.³²

TO DARE, TO WILL, TO ACHIEVE AND KEEP SILENT is the motto of the true Occultist, from the first adept of our fifth Race down to the last Rosecroix. True Occultism, *i.e.*, genuine *Raj-Yoga* powers, are not pompously boasted of . . .³³

Those who are Occultists work on certain lines that *they dare not trespass*. Their mouth is closed; their explanations and demonstrations are limited.³⁴

And Sphinx-like they do not divulge occult keys to the profane.

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.³⁵

³² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE BEACON OF THE UNKNOWN – II) XI p. 256

³³ *Ibid.* (THE YEAR IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE YEAR!) X p. 285

³⁴ *Ibid.* (OCCULT OR EXACT SCIENCE?) VII p. 78

³⁵ *Ibid.* (ALCHEMY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY) XI p. 546



The only reason for secrecy is to shield fools and the wicked from been tempted to commit worse crimes against Man and Nature.

Some of the discoveries of certain sciences — such as chemistry and physical science — ought to have been kept “occult” at any rate. It is very questionable whether the secrets of gunpowder, nitroglycerine, dynamite and the like, have more benefited than wronged humanity; at least they ought to have been withheld from the knowledge of the ignorant and unprincipled portions of mankind. Such, at least, was the opinion of Faraday, and some other great men of science. And this may explain, perhaps, why occultists *will not* give out their even more perilous secrets promiscuously.³⁶



³⁶ *Blavatsky Collected Writings, (FROM THEOSOPHY TO SHAKESPEARE) IV p. 601 fn.*



There is no essential difference between mystics and Eastern Occultists, except in degrees of cognition and ability to teach

Mystics belong to the Silent Brotherhood of the Elect of Thought.

The enormous and ever-growing numbers of mystics at the present time³⁷ show better than anything else the undeniably occult working of the cycle. Thousands of men and women who belong to no church, sect, or society, who are neither Theosophists nor Spiritualists, are yet virtually members of that Silent Brotherhood, the units of which often do not know each other, belonging as they do to nations far and wide apart, yet each of whom carries on his brow the mark of the mysterious Karmic seal — the seal that makes of him or her a member of the Brotherhood of the Elect of Thought.³⁸

There is no essential difference between Mystics, Theosophists-Esotericists and Eastern Occultists, except in degrees of cognition and ability to teach.

. . . One, who while “yearning to be delivered from all selfishness” directs at the same time all his energies only to that portion of humanity which is of his own way of thinking, shows himself not only very *selfish* but guilty of prejudice and partiality.³⁹

If mystic philosophy is grains of gold downstream, Occult Philosophy is the parent deposits upstream.

The Eastern occult philosophy is the great block of solid truth from which the quaint, exoteric mysticism of the outer world has been casually thrown off from time to time, in veiled and symbolical shapes. These hints and suggestions of mystic philosophy may be likened to the grains of gold in rivers, which early explorers used to think betokened somewhere in the mountains from which the rivers sprang, vast beds of the precious metal. The occult philosophy with which some people in India are privileged to be in contact, may be likened to the parent deposits. Students will be altogether on a wrong track as long as they check the statements of Eastern philosophy by reference to the teachings and conceptions of any other systems. In saying this we are not imitating the various religionists who claim that salvation can only be had within the pale of their own small church.⁴⁰

³⁷ [1890]

³⁸ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE CYCLE MOVETH) XII p. 125

³⁹ *Ibid.* (WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR OUR FELLOW-MEN?) XI pp. 465-66

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* (EDITOR'S NOTE TO "THE THEOSOPHISTS") III p. 382



“Eastern philosophy is the main stream of knowledge concerning things spiritual and eternal, which has come down in an unbroken flood through all the life of the world.”

We are not saying that Eastern philosophy is right and everybody else is wrong, but that Eastern philosophy is the main stream of knowledge concerning things spiritual and eternal, which has come down in an unbroken flood through all the life of the world. That is the demonstrable position which we, occultists of the Theosophical Society, have firmly taken up, and all archaeological and literary research in matters connected with the earliest religions and philosophies of historical ages helps to fortify it. The casual growths of mystic knowledge in this or that country and period, may or may not be *faithful* reflections of the actual, central doctrines; but, whenever they seem to bear some resemblance to these, it may be safely conjectured that at least they are reflections, which owe what merit they possess to the original light from which they derive their own.⁴¹



⁴¹ Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (EDITOR'S NOTE TO "THE THEOSOPHISTS") III p. 382



Metaphysics and ethics are different tongues for the same process

In True Occultism, it is unselfish love and charity in action that counts: *acting* instead of talking, *teaching* instead of preaching.

Intuition can help to tell apart unselfish from selfish thoughts, truth from falsehoods.

Metaphysics and ethics are different tongues for the same process.⁴⁴

. . . two active altruists full of unselfish love and charity and ready to work for all that suffers and needs help — are decidedly worth ten thousand Mystics and other *Theosophers*, whether German or English, who talk instead of acting and sermonize instead of teaching.⁴²

Student. — How is one to know when he gets real occult information from the Self within?

Sage. — Intuition must be developed and the matter judged from the true philosophical basis, for if it is contrary to true general rules it is wrong. It has to be known from a deep and profound analysis by which we find out what is from egotism alone and what is not; if it is due to egotism, then it is not from the Spirit and is untrue. The power to know does not come from book-study nor from mere philosophy, but mostly from the actual practice of altruism in deed, word, and thought; for that practice purifies the covers of the soul and permits that light to shine down into the brain-mind. As the brain-mind is the receiver in the waking state, it has to be purified from sense-perception, and the truest way to do this is by combining philosophy with the highest outward and inward virtue.

. . . We must not only be unselfish, but must do all the duties that Karma has given us, and thus intuition will point out the road of duty and the true path of life.⁴³

For *outside* of metaphysics no occult philosophy, no esotericism is possible. It is like trying to explain the aspirations and affections, the love and hatred, the most private and sacred workings in the soul and mind of the living man, by an anatomical description of the chest and brain of his dead body.⁴⁵

⁴² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR OUR FELLOW-MEN?) XI p. 478

⁴³ *Ibid.* (CONVERSATIONS ON OCCULTISM) IX pp. 400G, 400H

⁴⁴ For the benefit of those who may think that ethics somehow differ from metaphysics, BP Wadia highlighted two passages from the writings of HP Blavatsky, where “the same identical truth” of altruism is put across in an ethical and in a metaphysical presentation. See *Compassion the Spirit of Truth* (2009), Appendix A, p. 337 — ED.

⁴⁵ *Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 169-70



“Therefore, the only God whom we should serve is Humanity, and our only cult should be the love of our fellow man. Doing evil towards him, we wound God and make him suffer. When we deny our brotherly duties and refuse to consider a pagan as well as a European as our brother, we deny God. This is our religion and our dogmas.”

If there is a still greater absurdity than to speak of a cruel God: it is to admit that God, the *Great, Absolute Whole*, could ever interfere in terrestrial or human affairs. The infinite cannot associate with the finite; the unconditioned ignores the conditioned and the limited. The absolute “Intelligence-Wisdom” cannot act in the restricted space of a small globe. It is omnipresent and latent in the Kosmos, infinite as itself. We find its only truly active manifestation in *humanity as a whole*, composed as it is of stray sparks, finite in their objective duration, eternal in their essence, issuing from that Hearth without beginning or end. Therefore, the only God whom we should serve is Humanity, and our only cult should be the love of our fellow man. Doing evil towards him, we wound God and make him suffer. When we deny our brotherly duties and refuse to consider a pagan as well as a European as our brother, we deny God. This is our religion and our dogmas.⁴⁶



⁴⁶ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (MISCONCEPTIONS) VIII p. 88



Parting thoughts to mystics

Yes, it must be so and it cannot be otherwise, when the artificial and chilly flame of modern materialism is extinguished for lack of fuel. Those who cannot become used to the idea of a spiritual Ego, a living soul and an eternal Spirit within their material shell (which owes its illusory existence to those *principles*); those for whom the great hope of an existence beyond the grave is a vexation, merely the symbol of an unknown quantity, or else the subject of a belief *sui generis*, the result of theological and mediumistic hallucinations — these will do well to prepare for the worst disappointment the future could possibly have in store for them. For from the depths of the dark, muddy waters of materiality which, on every side, hide from them the horizons of the great Beyond, a mystic force is rising during these last years of the century. At most it is but the first gentle rustling, but it is a *superhuman* rustling — “supernatural” only for the superstitious and the ignorant. The spirit of truth is passing now over the face of the dark waters, and in parting them, is compelling them to disgorge their spiritual treasures. This spirit is a force that can neither be hindered nor stopped. Those who recognize it and feel that this is the supreme moment of their salvation will be uplifted by it and carried beyond the illusions of the great astral serpent. The joy they will experience will be so poignant and intense, that if they were not mentally isolated from their bodies of flesh, the beatitude would pierce them like sharp steel. It is not pleasure that they will experience, but a bliss which is a foretaste of the knowledge of the gods, the knowledge of good and evil, and of the fruits of the tree of life.

But although the man of today may be a fanatic, a skeptic, or a mystic, he must become thoroughly convinced that it is useless for him to struggle against the two moral forces today unleashed and in supreme contest. He is at the mercy of these two adversaries, and no intermediary force is capable of protecting him. It is but a question of choice, whether to let himself be carried along without a struggle on the wave of mystical evolution, or to writhe against the reaction of moral and psychic evolution, and so find himself engulfed in the Maelström of the new tide. At the present time, the whole world, with its centers of high intelligence and human culture, its focal points of political, artistic, literary, and commercial life, is in a turmoil; everything is shaking and crumbling in its movement towards reform. It is useless to remain blind, it is useless to hope that anyone can remain neutral between the two contending forces; one has to choose either the one or the other, or be crushed between them. The man who imagines that he has chosen freedom, but who, nevertheless, remains submerged in that boiling caldron, foaming with foul matter called social life, most terribly betrays his own divine Self, a betrayal which will blind that Self in the course of a long series of future incarnations. All of you who hesitate on the path of Theosophy and the occult sciences, who are trembling on the golden threshold of truth — the only one within your grasp, for all the others have failed you, one after another — squarely face the great Reality which is offered you. It is to mystics only that these words are addressed, for them alone have they any importance; for those who have already made their choice they are vain and useless. But you,



Occultists, Kabbalists and Theosophists, you well know that a Word, old as the world, though new to you, has been sounded at the beginning of this cycle, and the potentiality of which, unperceived by others, lies hidden in the sum of the digits of the years 1 8 8 9; you well know that a note has just been struck which has never been heard by mankind of this era; and that a New Idea is revealed, ripened by the forces of evolution. This Idea differs from everything that has been produced in the nineteenth century; it is identical, however, with the thought that has been the dominant tone and the keynote of every century, especially the last — absolute freedom of thought for humanity.⁴⁷



Unsettled tendency to see the world as it is by Rafal Olbinski

Further reading

- OCCULT OR EXACT SCIENCE?, in: *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, VII pp. 55-90
- PRACTICAL OCCULTISM, *ibid.*, IX pp. 155-62

⁴⁷ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE NEW CYCLE) XI pp. 131-33

