

*Meditation alone will not aid
true spiritual development.*



Concentration is devotion of an entire lifetime to a given end. Meditation implies the cessation of active external thought. For instruction in Practical Occultism it is necessary to have acquired power of concentration, and then to receive certain definite directions.

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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 to quicken the process of his evolution, and thus ascend in a comparatively short period of time to that apex of physical and spiritual perfection (a god on earth) towards which the ordinary man may take billions of years to reach. 37

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Foreword by a Philaletheian

IN THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT of the 20th century, meditation came to mean anything else but what the mystic term Dhyāna purports. Every day fools in their millions rush headlong to occult exercises that are not only of dubious efficacy but are fraught with unsuspected perils. Manly Hall¹ describes with clarity and precision the objectives, advantages, and pitfalls of the continuum of dhāraṇa-dhyāna-samādhi, or concentration-contemplation-ecstasy, and *inter alia* warns² that:

Under no condition should a person who is concentrating begin by making his mind a blank.

Hall gives no reason for this warning. H.P. Blavatsky did, when she alerted her own inner circle of the dangers of this practice:

Genuine concentration and meditation, *conscious and cautious*, upon one's lower self in the light of the inner divine man and the Pāramitās, is an excellent thing. But to "sit for Yoga," with only a superficial and often distorted knowledge of the real practice, is almost invariably fatal; for ten to one the student will either develop mediumistic powers in himself or lose time and get disgusted both with practice and theory. Before one rushes into such a dangerous experiment and seeks to go beyond a minute examination of one's lower self and *its* walk in life, or that which is called in our phraseology, "The Chela's Daily Life Ledger," he would do well to learn at least the difference between the two aspects of "Magic," the White or Divine, and the Black or Devilish, and assure himself that by "*sitting for Yoga*," with no experience, as well as with no guide to show him the dangers, he does not cross daily and hourly the boundaries of the Divine to fall into the Satanic. Nevertheless, the way to learn the difference is very easy; one has only to remember that *no esoteric truths entirely unveiled will ever be given in public print*, in book or magazine.³

This automatism of the Body — spoken of sometimes as habit — renders it possible for us to have both good and evil experiences in dreams. This is another reason why we should be careful of the impressions we make on the Body, especially as to impressions in which Kāma takes part. In sense dreams the Lower Manas is asleep; the animal consciousness, when a sensual tendency has been impressed on it by desire, is more easily impressed by Kāma with pictures from the Astral Light, and thus the tendency of such sense-dreams is al-

¹ See Manly Hall's defining essays "Concentration and Retrospection," pp. 59-66, and "The Practice of Meditation," pp. 103-9, in: Hall M.P. *The Phoenix: An Illustrated Review of Occultism and Philosophy*. (1st ed. 1931); Los Angeles: The Philosophical Research Society, Inc., 1975

² p. 64

³ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. II — IS THE PRACTICE OF CONCENTRATION BENEFICENT?) XII pp. 603-4

ways towards the animal. We should therefore train ourselves to awaken directly we begin a dream that tends in the sense direction; and the instantaneous rejection of impure thoughts during the period of waking consciousness will tend to set up a habit of rejection which will act automatically in sleep. In dreams, and also whenever we calmly sit for any sort of meditation, one of the first things to happen is that the Elementals begin to present to our inner eyes pictures of all sorts, and the kind of picture presented will be the result of the prior thoughts and also of the state we are in both mentally and physically. For if we are disturbed or harassed in any way in thought, the pictures will be more and more confused in fact, though sometimes having no appearance on the surface of being in confusion.

The student must therefore guard his thoughts, regarding them as the generators of action. *Five minutes' thought may undo the work of five years.* And although the five years' work may be run through more rapidly the second time than it was the first, yet time is lost.¹

The dangers of mediumship for the medium and those involved even indirectly with necromancy have been aired in many theosophical meetings. Eleven years before *The Secret Doctrine* was first published, H.P. Blavatsky had summed up the fundamentals of Oriental philosophy in *Isis Unveiled*,² so that “the principles of natural law involved in the several phenomena hereinafter described”³ could be comprehended. Here is what she had to say about mediumship in particular:

Mediumship is the opposite of adeptship; the medium is the passive instrument of foreign influences, the adept actively controls himself and all inferior potencies.⁴

The Masters of Wisdom behind the Theosophical Society and Blavatsky herself have been unforthcoming about of meditation as a subject, and as an occult method of training the mind. A diligent search of their extant writings will hardly fill couple of pages on the topic. Even the “Diagram of Meditation” that Blavatsky dictated to E.T. Sturdy was intended for a select group of students under the direction and supervision of Master M. and herself — not for ordinary members of the Society or other parties.⁵

Only those who are intellectually and morally fit can begin to engage into meditation proper, consciously and cautiously as Blavatsky advises and, even then, under the guidance of an authentic spiritual teacher — more difficult to find than the flower of the Vogay tree. Otherwise, they are likely to develop mediumistic tendencies and suffer inauspicious consequences, as well as adversely affecting those with whom they come into contact. One should always ignore promptings such as “empty your mind” and reject those who issue them as humbug. If one is not *au fait* with Practical Oc-

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. V) XII p. 693

² Vol. II, pp. 587-90

³ Cf. *Isis Unveiled*, II p. 587

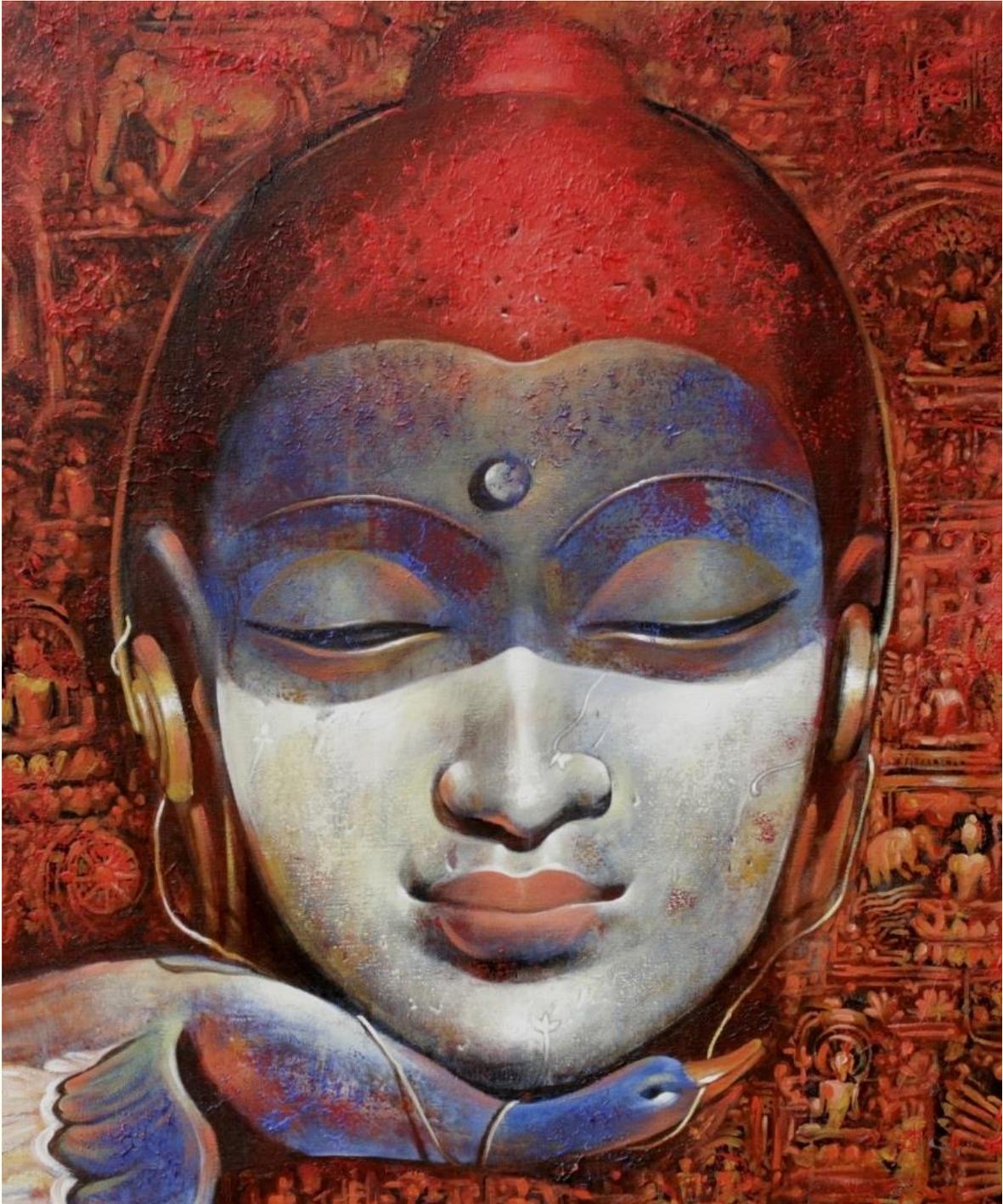
⁴ *ibid.*, p. 588; [6th of 10 Fundamental Laws of Occultism.]

⁵ Note that this diagram had not been incorporated in the Minutes of the Inner Group.

cultism,¹ karmaphalatyaga, *i.e.*, brotherhood in action² or putting the interest of others not only *above* self but *instead* of self, remains the only safe and effective means of *living* Theosophy and expanding consciousness within the remit of the Divine Plan.

C. A. B.

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¹ One can make a start by studying and assimilating PRACTICAL OCCULTISM in: *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol. IX pp. 155-62 & 285-86, and OCCULTISM VERSUS THE OCCULT ARTS, *ibid.*, pp. 249-61.

² Look up “Brotherhood ranks above meditation,” in the same series. — ED. PHIL.

The power of prolonged and uninterrupted Concentration

Creative, when energized by Spiritual Will.

By William Quan Judge

A paper read by William Quan Judge before the Aryan Theosophical Society of New York. First published in: *The Path*, Vol. III, July 1888, pp. 116-23; Vol. IV, February 1890, pp. 329-31. Republished in: Eklund D. (Comp.). *Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Quan Judge*. San Diego: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1975-1987. Vol. I (1975), pp. 64-73; second edition, Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 2009, pp. 70-80.

Part 1 of 2

The term most generally in use to express what is included under the above title is SELF CULTURE. Now it seems to well enough express, for a time at least, the practice referred to by those who desire to know the truth. But, in fact, it is inaccurate from a theosophic standpoint. For the self is held to be that designated in the Indian books as Īśvara, which is a portion of the eternal spirit enshrined in each human body. That this is the Indian view there is no doubt. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* in Ch. 15 says that an eternal portion of this spirit,

. . . having assumed life in this world of life, attracts the heart and the five senses which belong to nature. Whatever body Īśvara enters or quits, it is connected with it by snatching those senses from nature, even as the breeze snatches perfumes from their very bed. This spirit approaches the objects of sense by presiding over the ear, the eye, the touch, the taste, and the smell, and also over the heart;

And in an earlier chapter,

The Supreme spirit within this body is called the Spectator and admonisher, sustainer, enjoyer, great Lord, and also highest soul;

And again,

The Supreme eternal soul, even when existing within — or connected with — the body, is not polluted by the actions of the body.

Elsewhere in these books this same spirit is called the self, as in a celebrated sentence which in Sanskrit is “Ātmānam ātmanā, paśya,” meaning, “Raise the self by the self,” and all through the *Upanishads*, where the self is constantly spoken of as the same as the Īśvara of *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Max Müller thinks the word “self” expresses best in English the ideas of the *Upanishads* on this head.

It therefore follows that such a thing as culture of this self, which in its very nature is eternal, unchangeable, and unpollutable by any action, cannot be. It is only from

inadequacy of terms that students and writers using the English tongue are compelled to say “self culture,” while, when they say it, they admit that they know the self cannot be cultured.

What they wish to express is,

such culture or practice to be pursued by us as shall enable us, while on earth, to mirror forth the wisdom and fulfil the behests of the self within, which is all wise and all good.

As the use of this term “self culture” demands a constant explanation either outwardly declared or inwardly assented to, it is wise to discard it altogether and substitute that which will express the practice aimed at without raising a contradiction. For another reason also the term should be discarded. That is, that it assumes a certain degree of selfishness, for, if we use it as referring to something that we do only for our self, we separate at once between us and the rest of the human brotherhood. Only in one way can we use it without contradiction or without explanation, and that is by admitting we selfishly desire to cultivate ourselves, thus at once running against a prime rule in theosophic life and one so often and so strenuously insisted on, that the idea of personal self must be uprooted. Of course, as we will not negative this rule, we thus again have brought before us the necessity for a term that does not arouse contradictions. That new term should, as nearly as possible, shadow forth the three essential things in the action, that is, the instrument, the act, and the agent, as well as the incitement to action; or, knowledge itself, the thing to be known or done, and the person who knows.

This term is CONCENTRATION. In the Indian books it is called Yoga. This is translated also as Union, meaning a union with the Supreme Being, or, as it is otherwise put,

The object of spiritual knowledge is the Supreme Being.

There are two great divisions of Yoga found in the ancient books, and they are called Hatha-Yoga and Raj-Yoga.

Hatha-Yoga is a practical mortification of the body by means of which certain powers are developed. It consists in the assumption of certain postures that aid the work, and certain kinds of breathing that bring on changes in the system, together with other devices. It is referred to in the 4th chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* thus:

Some devotees sacrifice the sense of hearing and the other senses in the fires of restraint; some offer objects of sense, such as sound, in the fires of the senses. Some also sacrifice inspiration of breath in expiration, and expiration in inspiration, by blocking up the channels of inspiration and expiration, desirous of retaining their breath. Others, by abstaining from food, sacrifice life in their life.

In various treatises these methods are set forth in detail, and there is no doubt at all that by pursuing them one can gain possession of sundry abnormal powers. There is risk, however, especially in the case of people in the West where experienced gurus or teachers of these things are not found. These risks consist in this, that while an undirected person is doing according to the rules of Hatha-Yoga, he arouses about him influences that do him harm, and he also carries his natural functions to certain states now and then when he ought to stop for a while, but, having no knowledge of

the matter, may go on beyond that and produce injurious effects. Then, again, Hatha-Yoga is a difficult thing to pursue, and one that must be pushed to the point of mastery and success. Few of our Western people are by nature fitted for such continuous and difficult labour on the mental and astral planes. Thus, being attracted to Hatha-Yoga by the novelty of it, and by the apparent pay that it offers in visible physical results, they begin without knowledge of the difficulty, and stopping after a period of trial they bring down upon themselves consequences that are wholly undesirable.

The greatest objection to it, however, is that it pertains to the material and semi-material man — roughly speaking, to the body, and what is gained through it is lost at death.

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* refers to this and describes what happens in these words:

All of these, indeed, being versed in sacrifice, have their sins destroyed by these sacrifices. But he alone reaches union with the Supreme being who eats of the ambrosia left from a sacrifice.

This means that the Hatha-Yoga practice represents the mere sacrifice itself, whereas the other kind is the ambrosia arising from the sacrifice, or “the perfection of spiritual cultivation,” and that leads to Nirvāna. The means for attaining the “perfection of spiritual cultivation” are found in Rāja-Yoga, or, as we shall term it for the present, Culture of Concentration.

When concentration is perfected, we are in a position to use the knowledge that is ever within reach but which ordinarily eludes us continually. That which is usually called knowledge is only an intellectual comprehension of the outside, visible forms assumed by certain realities. Take what is called scientific knowledge of minerals and metals. This is merely a classification of material phenomena and an empirical acquisition. It knows what certain minerals and metals are useful for, and what some of their properties are. Gold is known to be pure, soft, yellow, and extremely ductile, and by a series of accidents it has been discovered to be useful in medicine and the arts. But even to this day there is a controversy, not wholly settled, as to whether gold is held mechanically or chemically in crude ore. Similarly with minerals. The crystalline forms are known and classified.

And yet a new theory has arisen, coming very near to the truth, that we do not know matter in reality in this way, but only apprehend certain phenomena presented to us by matter, and variously called, as the phenomena alter, gold, wood, iron, stone, and so on. But whether the minerals, metals, and vegetables have further properties that are only to be apprehended by still other and undeveloped senses, science will not admit. Passing from inanimate objects to the men and women about us, this ordinary intellectual knowledge aids us no more than before. We see bodies with different names and of different races, but below the outer phenomena our everyday intellect will not carry us. This man we suppose to have a certain character assigned to him after experience of his conduct, but it is still only provisional, for none of us is ready to say that we know him either in his good or his bad qualities. We know there is more to him than we can see or reason about, but what, we cannot tell. It eludes us

continually. And when we turn to contemplate ourselves, we are just as ignorant as we are about our fellow man. Out of this has arisen an old saying:

Every man knows what he is, but no one knows what he will be.

There must be in us a power of discernment, the cultivation of which will enable us to know whatever is desired to be known. That there is such a power is affirmed by teachers of occultism, and the way to acquire it is by cultivating concentration.

It is generally overlooked, or not believed, that the inner man who is the one to have these powers has to grow up to maturity, just as the body has to mature before its organs fulfil their functions fully. By inner man I do not mean the higher self—the Īsvara before spoken of, but that part of us which is called soul, or astral man, or vehicle, and so on. All these terms are subject to correction, and should not be held rigidly to the meanings given by various writers. Let us premise, first, the body now visible; second, the inner man — not the spirit; and third, the spirit itself.

Now while it is quite true that the second-or inner man — has latent all the powers and peculiarities ascribed to the astral body, it is equally true that those powers are, in the generality of persons, still latent or only very partially developed.

This inner being is, so to say, inextricably entangled in the body, cell for cell and fibre for fibre. He exists in the body somewhat in the way the fibre of the mango fruit exists in the mango. In that fruit we have the inside nut with thousands of fine fibres spreading out from it through the yellow pulp around. And as you eat it, there is great difficulty in distinguishing the pulp from the fibre. So that the inner being of which we are speaking cannot do much when away from his body, and is always influenced by it. It is not therefore easy to leave the body at will and roam about in the double. The stories we hear of this as being so easily done may be put down to strong imagination, vanity, or other causes. One great cause for error in respect to these doubles is that a clairvoyant is quite likely to mistake a mere picture of the person's thought for the person himself. In fact, among occultists who know the truth, the stepping out of the body at will and moving about the world is regarded as a most difficult feat, and for the reasons above hinted at. Inasmuch as the person is so interwoven with his body, it is absolutely necessary, before he can take his astral form about the country, for him to first carefully extract it, fibre by fibre, from the surrounding pulp of blood, bones, mucous, bile, skin, and flesh. Is this easy? It is neither easy nor quick of accomplishment, nor all done at one operation. It has to be the result of years of careful training and numerous experiments. And it cannot be consciously done until the inner man has developed and cohered into something more than irresponsible and quivering jelly. This development and coherence are gained by perfecting the power of concentration.

Nor is it true, as the matter has been presented to me by experiment and teaching, that even in our sleep we go rushing about the country seeing our friends and enemies or tasting earthly joys at distant points. In all cases where the man has acquired some amount of concentration, it is quite possible that the sleeping body is deserted altogether, but such cases are as yet not in the majority.

Most of us remain quite close to our slumbering forms. It is not necessary for us to go away in order to experience the different states of consciousness which is the priv-

ilege of every man, but we do not go away over miles of country until we are able, and we cannot be able until the necessary ethereal body has been acquired and has learned how to use its powers.

Now, this ethereal body has its own organs which are the essence or real basis of the senses described by men. The outer eye is only the instrument by which the real power of sight experiences that which relates to sight; the ear has its inner master — the power of hearing, and so on with every organ. These real powers within flow from the spirit to which we referred at the beginning of this paper. That spirit approaches the objects of sense by presiding over the different organs of sense. And whenever it withdraws itself the organs cannot be used. As when a sleep — walker moves about with open eyes which do not see anything, although objects are there and the different parts of the eye are perfectly normal and uninjured.

Ordinarily there is no demarcation to be observed between these inner organs and the outer; the inner ear is found to be too closely interknit with the outer to be distinguished apart. But when concentration has begun, the different inner organs begin to awake, as it were, and to separate themselves from the chains of their bodily counterparts. Thus the man begins to duplicate his powers. His bodily organs are not injured, but remain for use upon the plane to which they belong, and he is acquiring another set which he can use apart from the others in the plane of nature peculiarly theirs.

We find here and there cases where certain parts of this inner body have been by some means developed beyond the rest. Sometimes the inner head alone is developed, and we have one who can see or hear clairvoyantly or clairaudiently; again, only a hand is developed apart from the rest, all the other being nebulous and wavering. It may be a right hand, and it will enable the owner to have certain experiences that belong to the plane of nature to which the right hand belongs, say the positive side of touch and feeling.

But in these abnormal cases there are always wanting the results of concentration. They have merely protruded one portion, just as a lobster extrudes his eye on the end of the structure which carries it. Or take one who has thus curiously developed one of the inner eyes, say the left. This has a relation to a plane of nature quite different from that appertaining to the hand, and the results in experience are just as diverse. He will be a clairvoyant of a certain order, only able to recognize that which relates to his one-sided development, and completely ignorant of many other qualities inherent in the thing seen or felt, because the proper organs needed to perceive them have had no development. He will be like a two-dimensional being who cannot possibly know that which three-dimensional beings know, or like ourselves as compared with four-dimensional entities.

In the course of the growth of this ethereal body several things are to be observed.

It begins by having a cloudy, wavering appearance, with certain centres of energy caused by the incipiency of organs that correspond to the brain, heart, lungs, spleen, liver, and so on. It follows the same course of development as a solar system, and is, in fact, *governed and influenced by the very solar system to which the world belongs on which the being may be incarnate.* With us it is governed by our own solar orb.

If the practice of concentration be kept up, this cloudy mass begins to gain coherence and to shape itself into a body with different organs. As they grow they must be used. Essays are to be made with them, trials, experiments. In fact, just as a child must creep before it can walk, and must learn walking before it can run, so this ethereal man must do the same. But as the child can see and hear much farther than it can creep or walk, so this being usually begins to see and to hear before it can leave the vicinity of the body on any lengthy journey.

Certain hindrances then begin to manifest themselves which, when properly understood by us, will give us good substantial reasons for the practicing of the several virtues enjoined in holy books and naturally included under the term of Universal Brotherhood.

One is that sometimes it is seen that this nebulous forming body is violently shaken, or pulled apart, or burst into fragments that at once have a tendency to fly back into the body and take on the same entanglement that we spoke of at first. *This is caused by anger*, and this is why the sages all dwell upon the need of calmness. When the student allows anger to arise, the influence of it is at once felt by the ethereal body, and manifests itself in an uncontrollable trembling which begins at the centre and violently pulls apart the hitherto coherent particles. If allowed to go on it will disintegrate the whole mass, which will then reassume its natural place in the body. The effect following this is, that a long time has to elapse before the ethereal body can be again created. And each time this happens the result is the same. Nor does it make any difference what the cause for the anger may be. There is no such thing as having what is called "righteous anger" in this study and escaping these inevitable consequences. Whether your "rights" have been unjustly and flagrantly invaded or not does not matter. The anger is a force that will work itself out in its appointed way. Therefore anger must be strictly avoided, and it cannot be avoided unless charity and love- absolute toleration-are cultivated.

But anger may be absent and yet still another thing happen. The ethereal form may have assumed quite a coherence and definiteness. But it is observed that, instead of being pure and clear and fresh, it begins to take on a cloudy and disagreeable colour, the precursor of putrefaction, which invades every part and by its effects precludes any further progress, and at last reacts upon the student so that anger again manifests itself. This is the effect of envy. Envy is not a mere trifle that produces no physical result. It has a powerful action, as strong in its own field as that of anger. It not only hinders the further development, but attracts to the student's vicinity thousands of malevolent beings of all classes that precipitate themselves upon him and wake up or bring on every evil passion. Envy, therefore, must be extirpated, and it cannot be got rid of as long as the personal idea is allowed to remain in us.

Another effect is produced on this ethereal body by vanity. Vanity represents the great illusion of nature. It brings up before the soul all sorts of erroneous or evil pictures, or both, and drags the judgment so away that once more anger or envy will enter, or such course be pursued that violent destruction by outside causes falls upon the being. As in one case related to me. The man had made considerable progress, but at last allowed vanity to rule. This was followed by the presentation to his inner sight of most extraordinary images and ideas, which in their turn so affected him

that he attracted to his sphere hordes of elementals seldom known to students and quite indescribable in English. These at last, as is their nature, laid siege to him, and one day produced all about the plane of his astral body an effect similar in some respects to that which follows an explosion of the most powerful explosive known to science. The consequence was, his ethereal form was so suddenly fractured that by repercussion the whole nature of the man was altered, and he soon died in a mad-house after having committed the most awful excesses.

And vanity cannot be avoided except by studiously cultivating that selflessness and poverty of heart advised as well by Jesus of Nazareth as by Buddha.

Another hindrance is fear. This is not, however, the worst of all, and is one that will disappear by means of knowledge, for fear is always the son of ignorance. Its effect on the ethereal form is to shrivel it up, or coagulate and contract it. But as knowledge increases, that contraction abates, permitting the person to expand. Fear is the same thing as frigidity on the earth, and always proceeds by the process of freezing.

In my next [below] the subject will be further developed.



Part 2 of 2

It is now over one year since I sent in Part 1 to the Editor of *The Path*. Since then I have heard that some students expressed a desire to read Part 2, forgetting to observe, perhaps, that the first paper was complete in itself, and, if studied, with earnest practice to follow, would have led to beneficial results. It has not been necessary before to write No. II; and to the various students who so soon after reading the first have asked for the second I plainly say that you have been led away because a sequel was indicated and you cannot have studied the first; furthermore I much doubt if you will be benefited by this anymore than by the other.

Success in the culture of concentration is not for him who sporadically attempts it. It is a thing that flows from "a firm position assumed with regard to the end in view, and unremittingly kept up." Nineteenth Century students are too apt to think that success in occultism can be reached as one attains success in school or college, by reading and learning *printed words*. A complete knowledge of all that was ever written upon concentration will confer no power in the practice of that about which I treat. Mere book knowledge is derided in this school as much as it is by the clodhopper; not that I think book knowledge is to be avoided, but that sort of acquisition without the concentration is as useless as faith without works. It is called in some places, I believe, "mere eye-knowledge." Such indeed it is; and such is the sort of culture most respected in these degenerate times.

In starting these papers the true practice was called Raj-Yoga. It discards those physical motions, postures, and recipes relating solely to the present personality, and directs the student to virtue and altruism as the bases from which to start. This is more often rejected than accepted. So much has been said during the last 1800 years about Rosicrucians, Egyptian Adepts, Secret Masters, Kabballah, and wonder-

ful magical books, that students without a guide, attracted to these subjects, ask for information and seek in vain for the entrance to the temple of the learning they crave, because they say that virtue's rules are meant for babes and Sunday-schools, but not for them. And, in consequence, we find hundreds of books in all the languages of Europe dealing with rites, ceremonies, invocations, and other obscurities that will lead to nothing but loss of time and money. But few of these authors had anything save "mere eye-knowledge." 'Tis true they have sometimes a reputation, but it is only that accorded to an ignoramus by those who are more ignorant. The so-called great man, knowing how fatal to reputation it would be to tell how really small is his practical knowledge, prates about "projections and elementals," "philosopher's stone and elixir," but discreetly keeps from his readers the paucity of his acquirements and the insecurity of his own mental state. Let the seeker know, once for all, that the virtues cannot be discarded nor ignored; they must be made a part of our life, and their philosophical basis must be understood.

But it may be asked, if in the culture of concentration we will succeed alone by the practice of virtue. The answer is No, not in this life, but perhaps one day in a later life. The life of virtue accumulates much merit; that merit will at some time cause one to be born in a wise family where the real practice of concentration may perchance begin; or it may cause one to be born in a family of devotees or those far advanced on the Path, as said in *Bhagavad-Gītā*. But such a birth as this, says Krishna, is difficult to obtain; hence the virtues alone will not always lead in short space to our object.

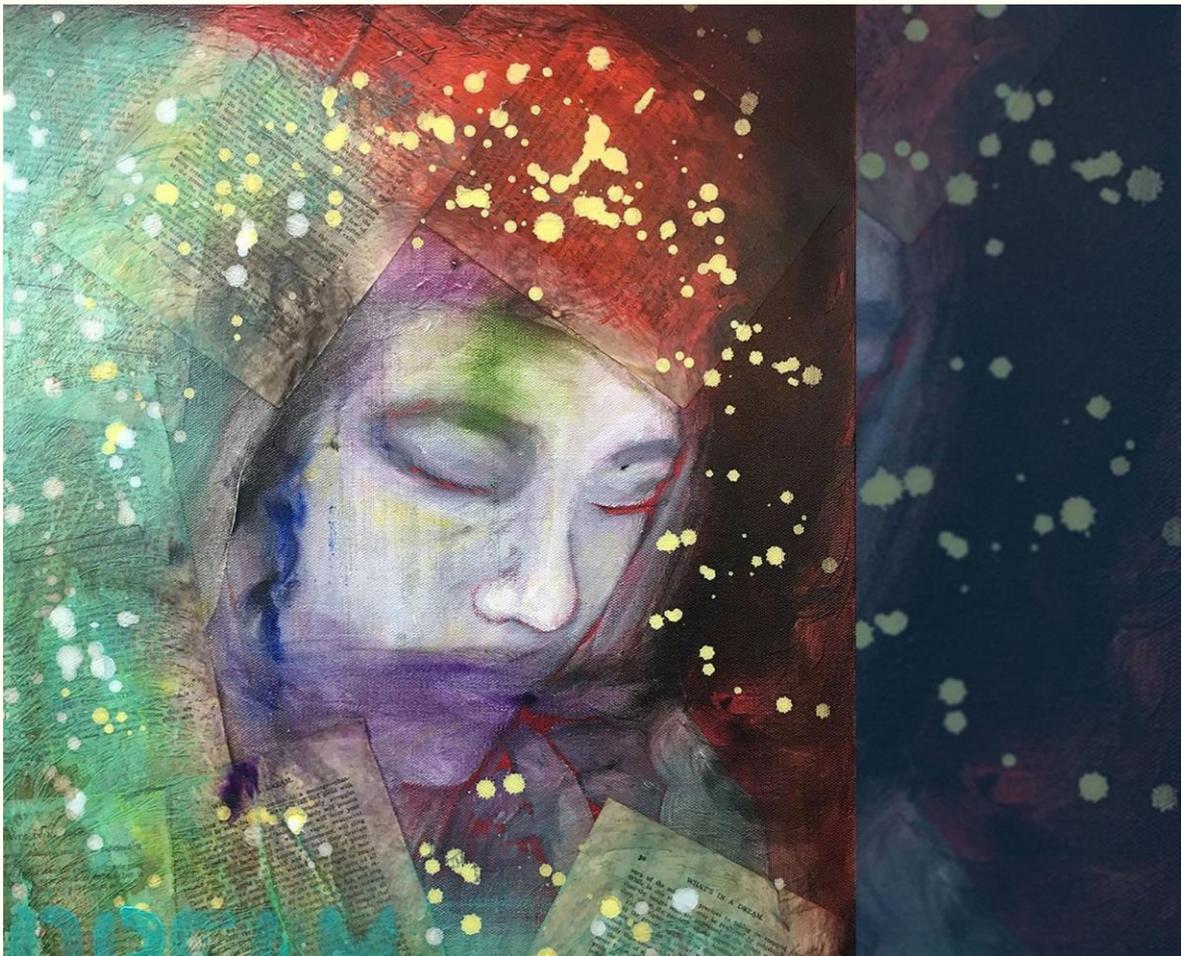
We must make up our minds to a life of constant work upon this line. The lazy ones or they who ask for pleasure may as well give it up at the threshold and be content with the pleasant paths marked out for those who "fear God and honour the King." Immense fields of investigation and experiment have to be traversed; dangers unthought of and forces unknown are to be met; and all must be overcome, for in this battle *there is no quarter asked or given*. Great stores of knowledge must be found and seized. The kingdom of heaven is not to be had for the asking; it must be taken by violence. And the only way in which we can gain the will and the power to thus seize and hold is by acquiring the virtues on the one hand, and minutely understanding ourselves on the other. Some day we will begin to see why not one passing thought may be ignored, not one flitting impression missed. This we can perceive is no simple task. It is a gigantic work. Did you ever reflect that the mere passing sight of a picture, or a single word instantly lost in the rush of the world, may be basis for a dream that will poison the night and react upon the brain next day. Each one must be examined. If you have not noticed it, then when you awake next day you have to go back in memory over every word and circumstance of the preceding day, seeking, like the astronomer through space, for the lost one. And, similarly, without such a special reason, you must learn to be able to go thus backward into your days so as to go over carefully and in detail all that happened, all that you permitted to pass through the brain. Is this an easy matter?

But let us for a moment return to the sham adepts, the reputed Masters, whether they were well-intentioned or the reverse. Take Éliphas Lévi, who wrote so many good things, and whose books contain such masses of mysterious hints. Out of his own

DOWN TO EARTH SERIES
THE POWER OF CONCENTRATION

mouth he convicts himself. With great show he tells of the raising of the shade of Apollonius. Weeks beforehand all sorts of preparations had to be made, and on the momentous night absurd necromantic performances were gone through. What was the result? Why only that the so-called shade appeared for a few moments, and Levi says they never attempted it again. Any good medium of these days could call up the shade of Apollonius without preparation, and if Levi were an Adept he could have seen the dead quite as easily as he turned to his picture in a book. By these sporadic attempts and outside preparations, nothing is really gained but harm to those who thus indulge. And the foolish dabbling by American theosophists with practices of the Yogis of India that are not one-eighth understood and which in themselves are inadequate, will lead to much worse results than the apocryphal attempt recorded by Éliphas Lévi.

As we have to deal with the Western mind now ours, all unused as it is to these things and over-burdened with false training and falser logic, we must begin where we are, we must examine our present possessions and grow to know our own present powers and mental machinery. This done, we may proceed to see ourselves in the way that shall bring about the best result.



“Sitting for Yoga” is invariably fatal

By Helena Petrovna Blavatsky

Esoteric Section Instruction No. III

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (ESOTERIC SECTION INSTRUCTION No. III) XII pp. 603-6.

Such is another question asked by members of the E.S.T. I answer: Genuine concentration and meditation, *conscious and cautious*, upon one’s lower self in the light of the inner divine man and the Pāramitās, is an excellent thing. But to “sit for Yoga,” with only a superficial and [604] often distorted knowledge of the real practice, is almost invariably fatal; for ten to one the student will either develop mediumistic powers in himself or lose time and get disgusted both with practice and theory. Before one rushes into such a dangerous experiment and seeks to go beyond a minute examination of one’s lower self and *its* walk in life, or that which is called in our phraseology, “The Chela’s Daily Life Ledger,” he would do well to learn at least the difference between the two aspects of “Magic,” the White or Divine, and the Black or Devilish, and assure himself that by “*sitting for Yoga*,” with no experience, as well as with no guide to show him the dangers, he does not cross daily and hourly the boundaries of the Divine to fall into the Satanic. Nevertheless, the way to learn the difference is very easy; one has only to remember that *no esoteric truths entirely unveiled will ever be given in public print*, in book or magazine.

In the *Book of Rules* I advise students to get certain works, as I shall have to refer to and quote from them repeatedly. I reiterate the advice and ask them to turn to *The Theosophist* of November 1887.¹ On page 98 they will find the beginning of an excellent article by Mr. Rāma Prasad on “Nature’s Finer Forces.”² The value of this work is not so much in its literary merit, though it gained its author the gold medal of *The Theosophist* — as in its exposition of tenets hitherto concealed in a rare and ancient Sanskrit work on Occultism. But Mr. Rāma Prasad is not an Occultist, only an excellent Sanskrit scholar, a university graduate and a man of remarkable intelligence. His Essays are almost entirely based on Tāntra works, which, if read indiscriminately by a tyro in Occultism, will lead to the practice of most unmitigated Black Magic.

¹ Vol. IX

² The references to “Nature’s Finer Forces” which follow have respect to the eight articles which appeared in the pages of *The Theosophist* [Vol. IX, November, 1887; February, May, June, August, 1888; Vol. X, October, November, 1888; March, 1889], and not to the fifteen essays and the translation of a chapter of the *Saivāgama*, which are contained in the book called *Nature’s Finer Forces*. The *Saivāgama* in its details is purely Tāntric, and nothing but harm can result from any practical following of its precepts. I would most strongly dissuade a member of the E.S. from attempting any of these Hatha-Yoga practices, for he will either ruin himself entirely, or throw himself so far back that it will be almost impossible to regain the lost ground in this incarnation. The translation referred to has been considerably expurgated, and even now is hardly fit for publication. It recommends Black Magic of the worst kind, and is the very antipodes of spiritual Rāja-Yoga. Beware, I say.

Now, since the difference of primary importance between Black and White Magic is simply the object with which it is practised, and that of secondary importance, the nature of the agents and ingredients used for the production of phenomenal results, the line of demarcation between the two is very, *very* thin. The danger is lessened only by the fact that every *occult* book, so called, is [605] occult only in a certain sense; that is, the text is occult merely by reason of its blinks. The symbolism has to be thoroughly understood before the reader can get at the correct sense of the teaching. Moreover, it is never complete, its several portions each being under a different title and each containing a portion of some other work; so that without a key to these no such work divulges the whole truth. Even the famous *Śaivāgama*, on which “Nature’s Finer Forces” is based, “is nowhere to be found in complete form,” as the author tells us. Thus, like all others, it treats of only five Tattvas instead of the seven in esoteric teachings.

Now, the Tattvas being simply the substratum of the seven forces of nature, how can this be? There are seven forms of Prakriti, as Kapila’s *Sāṅkhya*, [the] *Vishnu-Purāna* and other works teach. Prakriti is nature, matter (primordial and elemental); therefore logic demands that the Tattvas should be also seven. For, whether Tattvas mean, as Occultism teaches, “forces of nature” or, as the learned Rāma Prasad explains, “the substance out of which the universe is formed” and “the power by which it is sustained,” it is all the same; they are *force* and *matter*, Prakriti. And if the *forms*, or rather planes, of the latter are seven, then its forces must be seven also; that is, the degrees of the solidity of matter and the degrees of the power that ensouls it must go hand in hand. “The Universe is made out of the Tattva, it is sustained by the Tattva, and it disappears into the Tattva,” says Śiva, as quoted from the *Śaivāgama* in “Nature’s Finer Forces.” This settles the question; if Prakriti is septenary, then the Tattvas must be seven, for, as said, they are both substance and force, or atomic matter and the spirit that ensouls it.

This is explained here to enable the student to read between the lines of the so-called occult articles on Sanskrit philosophy, by which they must not be misled. Every Esotericist who reads *The Theosophist* must remember how bitterly Subba Row, a learned Vedāntin Brahman, arose against the septenary principles in man. He knew well I *had no right to* and *dared not to explain in The Theosophist*, a public magazine, the real numeration, and simply took advantage of my enforced silence. The doctrine of the seven Tattvas (the principles of the universe as in man) was held in great sacredness, and therefore secrecy, by the Brahmans in days of old, by whom now the teaching is almost forgotten. Yet it is taught to this day in the schools beyond the Himālayan Range, but it is now hardly remembered or heard of in India except through rare Initiates. The policy has been changed gradually; Chelas began to be taught the broad outlines of it, and at the advent of the T.S. in India, in 1879, I was ordered to teach it in its *exoteric* [606] form to one or two, and obeyed. To you who are pledged, I give it out esoterically.

Knowing that some of the members of the E.S.T. try to follow a system of Yoga in their own fashion, guided in this only by the rare hints they find in Theosophical books and magazines, which must naturally be incomplete, I chose one of the best

expositions ever written upon ancient occult works, “Nature’s Finer Forces,” in order to point out how very easily one can be misled by their blinds.

The author seems to have been himself deceived. The Tāntras read esoterically are as full of wisdom as the noblest occult works. Studied without a guide and applied to practice, they may lead to the production of various phenomenal results, on the moral and physiological planes. But let anyone accept their dead-letter rules and practices, let him try with some selfish motive in view to carry out the rites prescribed therein, and — he is lost. Followed with pure heart and unselfish devotion merely for the sake of the latter, either no results will follow, or such as can only throw back the performer. Woe, then, to the selfish man who seeks to develop occult powers only to attain earthly benefits or revenge, or to satisfy his ambition; the separation of the Higher from the Lower Principles and the severing of Buddhi-Manas from the Tāntrist’s *Personality* will speedily follow, the terrible Karmic results of the *dabbler* in Magic.

In the East, in India and China, *soulless* men and women are as frequently met with as in the West, though vice is, in truth, far less developed than it is here.

It is *Black Magic* and oblivion of their ancestral wisdom that leads them thereunto. But of this I will speak later, now merely adding — you have to be warned and know the danger.

Meanwhile, in view of what follows, the real occult division of the Principles in their correspondences with the Tattvas and other minor forces has to be well studied.



Esoteric Section Instruction No. V

From Blavatsky Collected Writings, XII pp. 691-94.

The study of Consciousness has further to be pursued. We must therefore learn to understand more fully the Septenary Constitution of Man, and the workings of consciousness in every part thereof.

The student will, in this *Instruction*, address himself to the understanding of the Lower Quaternary, as defined in Diagram V, and to the workings of consciousness as manifested through that Lower Quaternary. The study of the Higher Triad pertains to further Instructions, and for the understanding of the Higher Triad it is needful that the Lower Quaternary shall be in some measure understood. And first let the student clearly realize that he cannot see things spiritual with the eyes of the flesh, and that in studying even the Body he must use the eyes of the Spiritual Intelligence, else will he fail and his study will be fruitless. For growth is from within outwards, and always the inner remains the more perfect. Even the development of a physical sense is always preceded by a mental feeling, which proceeds to evolve a physical sense. As said¹ all senses are but differentiations of the one sense-consciousness, and become

¹ p. 672

so differentiated on the Astral plane, where perceptive life proper begins;¹ from that the differentiation is continued on to the lowest sub-plane of the Prākritic plane, to which the physical molecules of our Bodies belong. For instance, fishes living in dark subterranean waters are blind; but if they are taken and put into a pond, in a few generations they will develop eyes. Nevertheless, in their original state, though they had no organs of physical vision, they were yet endowed with a sense of sight. Otherwise, how could they, in the darkness, have found their prey and have avoided obstacles and dangers?

The fewer the coverings over the sense-consciousness, the clearer the vision, for each envelope adds something of illusion. Only when the true discerning or discriminating power is set free is illusion overcome, and the setting free of that power is the union of Manas with Buddhi — the attainment of Adeptship. That is why in Devachan the being is still under illusion, for there the mind is the mind of one who, while in the body, had not made the union so as to complete the Trinity. It [692] is only when the union is completed in the living human being that delusion is at an end. Meanwhile, with each descent to a lower plane illusion is increased.

To render active the inner vision the student must purify his whole nature, moral, mental and physical. Purity of Mind is of greater importance than purity of Body. If the Upādhi² be not perfectly pure, it cannot preserve recollections coming from a higher state. An act may be performed to which little or no attention is paid, and it is of comparatively small importance. But if thought of, dwelt on in the Mind, the effect is a thousand times greater. Therefore it is above all things of importance that the thoughts should be kept pure. Remember that you have, so to speak, to enclose the Square within the Triangle; in other words, you must so purify the Lower Quaternary that it shall vibrate in unison with the Upper Triad.

And this is no easy task. The flesh, the Body, the human being in his material part, is, on this plane, the most difficult thing to subject. The highest Adept, put into a new Body, has to struggle against and subdue it, and finds its subjugation difficult. But this is from the automatism of the Body; the original impulses have come from thought. What we call the desires of the Body have their origin in thought. Thought arises before desire. The thought acts on the Brain, the Lower Manas being the agent; the brain acts on the bodily organs, and then desire awakens. It is not the outer stimulus that arouses the bodily organs, but the Brain, impressed by a thought. Wrong thought must therefore be slain, ere desire can be extinguished. Desire is the outcome of separateness, aiming at the satisfaction of self in Matter. Now the flesh is a thing of habit; it will repeat mechanically a good impulse or a bad one, according to the impression made on it, and will continue to repeat it. It is thus not the flesh which is the original tempter, although it may repeat automatically motions imparted to it, and so bring back temptations; in nine cases out of ten it is the Lower Manas which, by its images, leads the flesh into temptations. Then the Body auto-

¹ p. 660

² Upādhi means that through which a force acts. The word “vehicle” is sometimes used to convey the same idea. If “force” be regarded as acting, “matter” is the upādhi through which it acts. Thus the Lower Manas is the upādhi through which the Higher can work; the Linga-Śarīra is the upādhi through which Prāna can work. The Sthūla Śarīra is the upādhi for all the principles acting on the physical plane.

matically sets up repetitions. That is why it is not true that a man steeped in evil can, by sudden conversion, become as powerful for good as he was before for evil. His vehicle is too defiled, and he can at best but neutralize the evil, balancing up the bad Karmic causes he has set in motion, at any rate for that incarnation. You cannot take a herring-barrel [693] and use it for attar of roses; the wood is too soaked through with the herring-drippings. When evil tendencies and impulses have been thoroughly impressed on the physical nature, they cannot at once be reversed. The molecules of the Body have been set in a Kāmic direction, and — though they have sufficient intelligence to discern between things on their own plane, *i.e.*, to avoid things harmful to themselves — they cannot understand a change of direction, the impulse to which comes from a higher plane. If they are too suddenly and too violently forced into a reverse action, disease, madness or death will result.

The student will find in what follows a variety of classifications and septenary divisions. He must bear in mind that every Principle in man has its seven aspects, and every cell and organ its seven components. A Principle may have an organ in the Body specially related to it, as the Spleen to the Linga-Śarīra; none the less will the Linga-Śarīra have its correspondence in every cell in the Body, as also in other great organs. Thus the Brain has its seven divisions, each corresponding to a Principle, though it corresponds as a whole to the Psycho-Intellectual Man. In this there is no contradiction, as the elementary student at first imagines, when he finds different correspondences [694] given for the same Principle, but only an exemplification of the great truth that every molecule is a mirror of the universe, every microcosm the mirror of a macrocosm.

Man's Physical Body has its seven aspects, each aspect representing a Principle; then each of these has its seven sub-divisions, each subdivision in its turn representing a Principle; and we have the "forty-nine fires" as seen in the Sthūla-Śarīra. It is because of this intricate correspondence, carried out in every detail, that man will ultimately be able to come into contact with every realm of being in the Universe. This, and this alone, makes Rāja-Yoga possible.



Three key articles on Meditation and Contemplation

WE HERE PRESENT THREE ARTICLES:
THE “ELIXIR OF LIFE” from a Chela’s diary by G. Mitford
IS THE DESIRE TO “LIVE” SELFISH? by H.P. Blavatsky

CONTEMPLATION, three articles by D.K. Māvalankar

This Part covers *inter alia* meditation proper, the pitfalls of “sitting for yoga,” the constitution of a Mahatma’s physical body, and practical advice on contemplation.

The first article, originally published in: *The Theosophist*, was excerpted from *Five Years of Theosophy: Mystical, Philosophical, Historical and Scientific Essays selected from “The Theosophist.”* London: Reeves & Turner, 1885; reprinted Los Angeles, The Theosophy Co, 1980; pp. 1-32.

The second, first published in: *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, No. 10 (58), July 1884, pp. 242-43, has been republished in: *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, VI pp. 241-48.

D.K. Māvalankar’s articles, first published in: *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, No. 5, February 1884, pp. 112-14; No. 7, April 1884, pp. 170-71; and No. 11, August 1884, pp. 267-68, have been republished in: S. Eek. (*Comp. & Annot.*). *Dāmodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965; pp. 388-400.

JULIA KORRES
Series Editor



1. The Elixir of Life

By Godolphin Mitford

And Enoch walked with the Elohim,
and the Elohim took him.

— Genesis

*From a Chela's*¹ *Diary*, by G * * * M * * * ,² F.T.S.

[The curious information — for whatsoever else the world may think of it, it will doubtless be acknowledged to be that — contained in the article that follows, merits a few words of introduction. The details given in it on the subject of what has always been considered as one of the darkest and most strictly guarded of the mysteries of the initiation into occultism — from the days of the Rishis until those of the Theosophical Society — came to the knowledge of the author in a way that would seem to the ordinary run of Europeans strange and supernatural. He himself, however, we may assure the reader, is a most thorough disbeliever in the *Supernatural*, though he has learned too much to limit the capabilities of the *natural* as some do. Further, he has to make the following confession of his own belief. It will be apparent, from a careful perusal of the facts, that if the matter be really as stated therein, the author cannot himself be an adept of high grade, as the article in such a case *would never have been written*. Nor does he pretend to be one. He is, or rather was, for a few years a humble *Chela*. Hence, the converse must consequently be also true, that as regards the higher stages of the mystery he can have no personal experience, but speaks of it only as a close observer left to his own surmises — and no more. He may, therefore, boldly state that during, and notwithstanding, his unfortunately rather too short stay with some adepts, he has by actual experiment and observation verified some of the less transcendental or incipient parts of the “*Course*.” And, though it will be impossible for him to give positive testimony as to what lies beyond, he may yet mention that all his own course of study, training and experience, long, severe and dangerous as it has often been, leads him to the conviction that everything is really as stated, save some details *purposely veiled*. For causes which cannot be explained to the public, he himself may be unable or unwilling to use the secret he has gained access to. Still he is permitted by one to whom all his reverential affection and gratitude are due — his last *guru* — to divulge for the benefit of Science and Man, and specially for the good of those who are courageous enough to personally make the experiment, the following astounding particulars of the occult methods for prolonging life to a period far beyond the common — G.M.]

Probably one of the first considerations which move the worldly-minded at present to solicit initiation into Theosophy is the belief, or hope, that, immediately on joining, some extraordinary advantage over the rest of mankind will be conferred upon the candidate. Some even think that the ultimate result of their initiation will perhaps be exemption from that dissolution which is called the common lot of mankind. The traditions of the “Elixir of Life,” said to be in the possession of Kabbalists and Alchemists, are still cherished by students of Medieval Occultism — in Europe. The allegory of the *Ab-è Hyat* or *Water of Life*, is still credited as a fact by the degraded rem-

¹ A *Chela* is the pupil and disciple of an initiated *Guru* or *Master*. — ED. THEOS.

² [Godolphin Mitford — *Boris de Zirkoff*.] “The Elixir of Life’ was written by its author under direct dictation, or inspection, in his own house, in a faraway country, in which I had never been till two years later.” *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (RE-CLASSIFICATION OF PRINCIPLES) VII p. 350 [Consult long footnote on pp. 242-43 of Volume VI in the present Series (pp. 18ff in this document), for Col. Olcott’s account of the writing of “The Elixir of Life,” which does not seem to tally with the above statement. The student is invited to figure out for himself the possible reason for this discrepancy. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

nants of the Asiatic esoteric sects ignorant of the real GREAT SECRET. The “pungent and fiery Essence,” by which Zanonni renewed his existence, still fires the imagination of modern visionaries as a possible scientific discovery of the future.¹

Theosophically, though the fact is distinctly declared to be true, the above-named conceptions of the mode of procedure leading to the realization of the fact, are *known* to be false. The reader may or may not believe it; but as a matter of fact, Theosophical Occultists claim to have communication with (living) Intelligences possessing an infinitely wider range of observation than is contemplated even by the loftiest aspirations of modern science, all the present “Adepts” of Europe and America — dabblers in the Kabala — notwithstanding. But far even as those superior Intelligences have investigated (or, if preferred, are alleged to have investigated), and remotely as they may have searched by the help of inference and analogy, even *They* have failed to discover in the Infinity anything permanent but — SPACE. ALL IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. Reflection, therefore, will easily suggest to the reader the further logical inference that in a Universe which is essentially impermanent in its conditions, nothing can confer permanency. Therefore, no possible substance, even if drawn from the depths of Infinity; no imaginable combination of drugs, whether of our earth or any other, though compounded by even the Highest Intelligence; no system of life or discipline though directed by the sternest determination and skill, could possibly produce Immutability. For in the universe of solar systems, wherever and however investigated, Immutability necessitates “Non-Being” in the physical sense given it by the Theists — Non-Being which is *nothing* in the narrow conceptions of *Western* Religionists — a *reductio ad absurdum*. This is a gratuitous insult even when applied to the *pseudo-Christian* or ecclesiastical Jehovite idea of God.

Consequently, it will be seen that the common ideal conception of “Immortality” is not only essentially wrong, but a physical and metaphysical impossibility. The idea, whether cherished by Theosophists or non-Theosophists, by Christians or Spiritualists, by Materialists or Idealists, is a chimerical illusion. But the actual prolongation of human life is possible for a time so long as to appear miraculous and incredible to those who regard our span of existence as necessarily limited to at most a couple of hundred years. We may break, as it were, the shock of Death, and instead of dying, change a sudden plunge into darkness to a transition into a brighter light. And this may be made so gradual that the passage from one state of existence to another shall have its friction minimised, so as to be practically imperceptible. This is a very different matter, and quite within the reach of Occult Science. In this, as in all other cases, means properly directed will gain their ends, and causes produce effects. Of course, the only question is, what are these causes, and how, in their turn, are they to be produced. To lift, as far as may be allowed, the veil from this aspect of Occultism, is the object of the present paper.

¹ [See “Zanonni by Bulwer-Lytton,” in our Buddhas and Initiates Series. — ED. PHIL.]

We must premise by reminding the reader of two Theosophic doctrines, constantly inculcated in *Isis* and in other mystic works — namely,

- 1 That ultimately the Kosmos is *One* — one under infinite variations and manifestations, and
- 2 That the so-called *man* is a “compound being” — composite not only in the exoteric scientific sense of being a congeries of living so-called material Units, but also in the esoteric sense of being a succession of seven forms or parts of itself, interblended with each other.

To put it more clearly we might say that the more ethereal forms are but duplicates of the same aspect — each finer one lying within the inter-atomic spaces of the next grosser. We would have the reader understand that these are no subtleties, no “spiritualities” at all in the Christo-Spiritualistic sense. In the actual man reflected in your mirror are really several men, or several parts of one composite man; each the exact counterpart of the other, but the “atomic conditions” (for want of a better word) of each of which are so arranged that its atoms interpenetrate those of the next “grosser” form. It does not, for our present purpose, matter how the Theosophists, Spiritualists, Buddhists, Kabbalists, or Vedāntists, count, separate, classify, arrange or name these, as that war of terms may be postponed to another occasion. Neither does it matter what relation each of these men has to the various “elements” of the Kosmos of which he forms a part. This knowledge, though of vital importance in other respects, need not be explained or discussed now. Nor does it much more concern us that the Scientists deny the existence of such an arrangement, because their instruments are inadequate to make their senses perceive it. We will simply reply — “get better instruments and keener senses, and *eventually* you will.”

All we have to say is that if you are anxious to drink of the “Elixir of Life,” and live a thousand years or so, you must take our word for the matter at present, and proceed on the assumption. For esoteric science does not give the faintest possible hope that the desired end will ever be attained by any other way; while modern, or so-called exact science — laughs at it.

So, then, we have arrived at the point where we have determined — literally, *not* metaphorically — to crack the outer shell known as the mortal coil or body, and hatch out of it, clothed in our next. This “next” is not spiritual, but only a more ethereal form. Having by a long training and preparation adapted it for a life in this atmosphere, during which time we have gradually made the outward shell to die off through a certain process (hints of which will be found further on) we have to prepare for this physiological transformation.

How are we to do it? In the first place we have the actual, visible, material body — Man, so called; though, in fact, but his outer shell — to deal with. Let us bear in mind that science teaches us that in about every seven years we *change skin* as effectually as any serpent; and this so gradually and imperceptibly that, had not science after years of unremitting study and observation assured us of it, no one would have had the slightest suspicion of the fact.

We see, moreover, that in process of time any cut or lesion upon the body, however deep, has a tendency to repair the loss and reunite; a piece of lost skin is very soon

replaced by another. Hence, if a man, partially flayed alive, may sometimes survive and be covered with a new skin, so our astral, vital body — the fourth of the *seven* (having attracted and assimilated to itself the second) and which is so much more ethereal than the physical one — may be made to harden its particles to the atmospheric changes. The whole secret is to succeed in evolving it out, and separating it from the visible; and while its generally invisible atoms proceed to concrete themselves into a compact mass, to gradually get rid of the old particles of our visible frame so as to make them die and disappear before the new set has had time to evolve and replace them. . . . We can say no more. The Magdalene is not the only one who could be accused of having “*seven spirits*” in her, though men who have a lesser number of spirits (what a misnomer that word!) in them, are not few or exceptional; they are the frequent failures of nature — the incomplete men and women.¹

Each of these has in turn to survive the preceding and more dense one, and then *die*. The exception is the sixth when absorbed into and blended with the *seventh*. The “Dhātu”² of the old Hindu physiologist had a dual meaning, the esoteric side of which corresponds with the Tibetan “Zung” (seven principles of the body).

We Asiatics, have a proverb, probably handed down to us, and by the Hindus repeated ignorantly as to its esoteric meaning. It has been known ever since the old Rishis mingled familiarly with the simple and noble people they taught and led on. The Devas had whispered into every man’s ear — *Thou only* — if thou wilt — art “immortal.” Combine with this the saying of a Western author that if any man could just realize for an instant, that he had to die someday, he would die that instant. The *Illuminated* will perceive that between these two sayings, rightly understood, stands revealed the whole secret of Longevity. We only die when our will ceases to be strong enough to make us live. In the majority of cases, death comes when the torture and vital exhaustion accompanying a rapid change in our physical conditions becomes so intense as to weaken, for one single instant, our “clutch on life,” or the tenacity of the will to exist. Till then, however severe may be the disease, however sharp the pang, we are only sick or wounded, as the case may be. This explains the cases of sudden deaths from joy, fright, pain, grief or such other causes. The sense of a life-task consummated, of the worthlessness of one’s existence, *if strongly realized*, produced death as surely as poison or a rifle-bullet. On the other hand, a stern determination to continue to live, has, in fact, carried many through the crises of the most severe diseases, in perfect safety.

¹ This is not to be taken as meaning that such persons are thoroughly destitute of some one or several of the seven principles a man born without an arm has still its ethereal counterpart; but that they are so latent that they cannot be developed, and consequently are to be considered as non-existing. — ED. THEOS.

² Dhātu — the seven principal substances of the human body — chyle, flesh, blood, fat, bones, marrow, semen.

First, then, must be the determination — the Will — the conviction of certainty, to survive and continue.¹ Without that, all else is useless. And to be efficient for the purpose, it must be, not only a passing resolution of the moment, a single fierce desire of short duration, but *a settled and continued strain, as nearly as can be continued and concentrated without one single moment's relaxation*. In a word, the would-be “Immortal” must be on his watch night and day, guarding self against — himself. To live — to live — to live — must be his unswerving resolve. He must as little as possible allow himself to be turned aside from it. It may be said that this is the most concentrated form of selfishness — that it is utterly opposed to our Theosophic professions of benevolence, and disinterestedness, and regard for the good of humanity. Well, viewed in a short-sighted way, it is so. But to do good, as in everything else, a man *must have* time and materials to work with, and this is a necessary means to the acquirement of powers by which infinitely more good can be done than without them. When these are once mastered, the opportunities to use them will arrive, for there comes a moment when further watch and exertion are no longer needed: — the moment when the turning-point is safely passed. For the present as we deal with aspirants and not with advanced *chelas*, in the first stage a determined, dogged resolution, and an enlightened concentration of self on self, are all that is absolutely necessary. It must not, however, be considered that the candidate is required to be unhuman or brutal in his negligence of others. Such a recklessly selfish course would be as injurious to him as the contrary one of expending his vital energy on the gratification of his physical desires. All that is required from him is a purely negative attitude. Until the turning-point is reached, he must not “lay out” his energy in lavish or fiery devotion to any cause, however noble, however “good,” however elevated.² Such, we can solemnly assure the reader, would bring its reward in many ways — perhaps in another life, perhaps in this world, but it would tend to shorten the existence it is desired to preserve, as surely as self-indulgence and profligacy. That is why very few of the truly great men of the world (of course, the unprincipled adventurers who have applied great powers to bad uses are out of the question) — the martyrs, the heroes,

¹ Col. Olcott has epigrammatically explained the creative or rather the re-creative power of the Will, in his “Buddhist Catechism.” He there shows — of course, speaking on behalf of the Southern Buddhists — that this Will to live, if not extinguished in the present life, leaps over the chasm of bodily death, and recombines the *Skandhas*, or groups of qualities that made up the individual into a new personality. Man is, therefore, reborn as the result of his own unsatisfied yearning for objective existence. Col. Olcott puts it in this way:

Q. 123. What is that, in man, which gives him the impression of having a permanent individuality?

Tanhā, or the unsatisfied desire for existence. The being having done that for which he must be rewarded or punished in future, and having *Tanhā*, will have a rebirth through the influence of *Karma*.

Q. 124. What is it that is reborn?

A new aggregation of *Skandhas*, or individuality, caused by the last earning of the dying person.

Q. 128. To what cause must we attribute the differences in the combination of the Five *Skandhas* which makes every individual different from every other individual?

To the *Karma* of the individual in the next preceding birth.

Q. 129. What is the force or energy that is at work, under the, guidance of *Karma*, to produce the new being?

Tanhā — the “Will to Live.”

² On page 151 of Mr. Sinnett’s “Occult World,” the author’s much abused, and still more doubted correspondent assures him that none yet of his “degree are like the stern hero of Bulwer’s” *Zanoni* . . . “the heartless morally dried up mummies some would fancy us to be” and adds that few of them “would care to play the part in life of a desiccated pansy between the leaves of a volume of solemn poetry.” But our adept omits saying that *one or two degrees higher*, and he will have to submit for a period of years to such a mummifying process unless, indeed, he would voluntarily give up a life-long labour and — Die. — ED. THEOS.

the founders of religions, the liberators of nations, the leaders of reforms — ever became members of the long-lived “Brotherhood of Adepts” who were by some and for long years accused of *selfishness*. (And that is also why the Yogis, and the Fakirs of modern India — most of whom are acting now but on the *dead-letter* tradition, are required if they would be considered living up to the principles of their profession — to appear *entirely dead* to every inward feeling or emotion.) Notwithstanding the purity of their hearts, the greatness of their aspirations, the disinterestedness of their self-sacrifice, they *could not live for they had missed the hour*. They may at times have exercised powers which the world called miraculous; they may have electrified man and subdued Nature by fiery and self-devoted Will; they may have been possessed of a so-called superhuman intelligence; they may have even had knowledge of, and communion with, members of our own occult Brotherhood; but, having deliberately resolved to devote their vital energy to the welfare of others, rather than to themselves, they have surrendered life; and, when perishing on the cross or the scaffold, or falling, sword in hand, upon the battle-field, or sinking exhausted after a successful consummation of the life-object, on death-beds in their chambers, they have all alike had to cry out at last: “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!”

So far so good. But, given the will to live, however powerful, we have seen that, in the ordinary course of mundane life, the throes of dissolution cannot be checked. The desperate, and again and again renewed struggle of the Kosmic elements to proceed with a career of change despite the will that is checking them, like a pair of runaway horses struggling against the determined driver holding them in, are so cumulatively powerful, that the utmost efforts of the *untrained* human will acting within an *unprepared* body become ultimately useless. The highest intrepidity of the bravest soldier; the interest desire of the yearning lover; the hungry greed of the unsatisfied miser; the most undoubting faith of the sternest fanatic; the practised insensibility to pain of the hardest red Indian brave or half-trained Hindu Yogi; the most deliberate philosophy of the calmest thinker — all alike fail at last. Indeed, sceptics will allege in opposition to the verities of this article that, as a matter of experience, it is often observed that the mildest and most irresolute of minds and the weakest of physical frames are often seen to resist “Death” longer than the powerful will of the high-spirited and obstinately-egotistic man, and the iron frame of the labourer, the warrior and the athlete. In reality, however, the key to the secret of these apparently contradictory phenomena is the true conception of the very thing we have already said. If the physical development of the gross “outer shell” proceeds on parallel lines and at an equal rate with that of the will, it stands to reason that no advantage *for the purpose of overcoming it*, is attained by the latter. The acquisition of improved breech-loaders by one modern army confers no absolute superiority if the enemy also becomes possessed of them. Consequently it will be at once apparent, to those who think on the subject, that much of the training by which what is known as “a powerful and determined nature,” perfects itself for its own purpose on the stage of the visible world, necessitating and *being useless* without a parallel development of the “gross” and so-called animal frame, is, in short, neutralized, for the purpose at present treated of, by the fact that its own action has armed the enemy with weapons equal to its own. The *force* of the impulse to dissolution is rendered equal to the will to oppose it; and being cumulative, subdues the will-power and triumphs at last. On

the other hand, it may happen that an apparently weak and vacillating will-power residing in a weak and undeveloped physical frame, may be so *reinforced* by some unsatisfied desire — the *Ichcha (wish)* — as it is called by the Indian Occultists (for instance, a mother’s heart-yearning to remain and support her fatherless children) — as to keep down and vanquish, for a short time, the physical throes of a body to which it has become temporarily superior.

The whole *rationale* then, of the first condition of continued existence in this world, is

- 1 The development of a Will so powerful as to overcome the hereditary (in a Darwinian sense) tendencies of the atoms composing the “gross” and palpable animal frame, to hurry on at a particular period in a certain course of Kosmic change; and
- 2 To so weaken the concrete action of that animal frame as to make it more amenable to the power of the Will. To defeat an army, *you must demoralize and throw it into disorder.*

To do this then, is the real object of all the rites, ceremonies, fasts, “prayers,” meditations, initiations and procedures of self-discipline enjoined by various esoteric Eastern sects, from that course of pure and elevated aspiration which leads to the higher phases of Adeptism Real, down to the fearful and disgusting ordeals which the adherent of the “Left-hand-Road” has to pass through, all the time maintaining his equilibrium. The procedures have their merits and their demerits, their separate uses and abuses, their essential and non-essential parts, their various veils, mummeries, and labyrinths. But in all, the result aimed at is reached, if by different processes. The Will is strengthened, encouraged and directed, and the elements opposing its action are *demoralized*. Now, to anyone who has thought out and connected the various evolution theories, as taken, not from any occult source, but from the ordinary scientific manual accessible to all — from the hypothesis of the latest variation in the habits of species — say, the acquisition of carnivorous habits by the New Zealand parrot, for instance — to the farthest glimpses backwards into Space and Eternity afforded by the “*Fire Mist*” doctrine, it will be apparent that they all rest on one basis. That basis is, that the impulse once given to a hypothetical Unit has a tendency to continue; and consequently, that anything “done” by something at a certain time and certain place tends to repeat itself at other times and places.

Such is the admitted *rationale* of heredity and atavism. That the same things apply to our ordinary conduct is apparent from the notorious ease with which “habits” — bad or good, as the case may be — are acquired, and it will not be questioned that this applies, as a rule, as much to the moral and intellectual, as to the physical world.

Furthermore, History and Science teach us plainly that certain physical habits conduce to certain moral and intellectual results. There never yet was a conquering nation of vegetarians. Even in the old Aryan times, we do not learn that the very Rishis, from whose lore and practice we gain the knowledge of Occultism, ever interdicted the *Kshatriya* (military) caste from hunting or a carnivorous diet. Filling, as they did, a certain place in the body politic in the actual condition of the world, the Rishis as

little thought of interfering with them, as of restraining the tigers of the jungle from their habits. That did not affect what the Rishis did themselves.

The aspirant to longevity then must be on his guard against *two dangers*. He must beware especially of impure and animal¹ thoughts. For Science shows that thought is dynamic, and the thought-force evolved by nervous action expanding outwardly, must affect the molecular relations of the physical man. The *inner men*,² however sublimated their organism may be, are still composed of actual, *not hypothetical*, particles, and are still subject to the law that an “action” has a tendency to repeat itself; a tendency to set up analogous action in the grosser “shell” they are in contact with, and concealed within.

And, on the other hand, certain actions have a tendency to produce actual physical conditions unfavourable to pure thoughts, hence to the state required for developing the supremacy of the inner man.

To return to the practical process. A normally healthy mind, in a normally healthy body, is a good starting-point. Though exceptionally powerful and self-devoted natures may sometimes recover the ground lost by mental degradation or physical misuse, by employing proper means, under the direction of unswerving resolution, yet often things may have gone so far that there is no longer stamina enough to sustain the conflict sufficiently long to perpetuate this life; though what in Eastern parlance is called the “merit” of the effort will help to ameliorate conditions and improve matters in another.

However this may be, the prescribed course of self-discipline commences here. It may be stated briefly that its essence is a course of moral, mental, and physical development, carried on in parallel lines — one being useless without the other. The physical man must be rendered more ethereal and sensitive; the mental man more penetrating and profound; the moral man more self-denying and philosophical. And it may be mentioned that all sense of restraint — even if self-imposed — is useless. Not only is all “goodness” that results from the compulsion of physical force, threats, or bribes (whether of a physical or so-called “spiritual” nature) absolutely useless to the person who exhibits it, its hypocrisy tending to poison the moral atmosphere of the world, but the desire to be “good” or “pure,” to be efficacious must be spontaneous. It must be a self-impulse from within, a real preference for something higher, not an abstention from vice because of fear of the law: not a chastity enforced by the dread of Public Opinion; not a benevolence exercised through love of praise or dread of consequences in a hypothetical Future Life.³

It will be seen now in connection with the doctrine of the tendency to the renewal of action, before discussed, that the course of self-discipline recommended as the only road to Longevity by Occultism is *not* a “visionary” theory dealing with vague “ideas,” but actually a scientifically devised system of drill. It is a system by which each par-

¹ In other words, the thought tends to provoke the deed. — G.M.

² We use the word in the plural, reminding the reader that, according to our doctrine, man is septenary. — G.M.

³ Col. Olcott clearly and succinctly explains the Buddhist doctrine of Merit or *Karma*, in his “Buddhist Catechism” (Question 83). — G.M.

ticle of the several men composing the septenary individual receives an impulse, and a habit of doing what is necessary for certain purposes of its own free-will and with “pleasure.” Everyone must be practised and perfect in a thing to do it with pleasure. This rule especially applies to the case of the development of Man. “Virtue” may be very good in its way — it may lead to the grandest results. But to become efficacious it has to be practised cheerfully not with reluctance or pain. As a consequence of the above consideration the candidate for Longevity at the commencement of his career must begin to eschew his physical desires, not from any sentimental theory of right or wrong, but for the following good reason. As, according to a well-known and now established scientific theory, his visible material frame is always renewing its particles; he will, while abstaining from the gratification of his desires, reach the end of a certain *period* during which those particles which composed the man of vice, and which were given a bad predisposition, will have departed. At the same time, the disuse of such functions will tend to obstruct the entry, in place of the old particles, of new particles having a tendency to repeat the said acts. And while this is the *particular* result as regards certain “vices,” the general result of an abstention from “gross” acts will be (by a modification of the well-known Darwinian law of atrophy by non-usage) to diminish what we may call the “relative” density and coherence of the outer shell (as a result of its less-used molecules); while the diminution in the quantity of its actual constituents will be “made up” (if tried by scales and weights) by the increased admission of more ethereal particles.

What physical desires are to be abandoned and in what order? First and foremost, he must give up alcohol in all forms; for while it supplies no nourishment, nor any direct pleasure (beyond such sweetness or fragrance as may be gained in the taste of wine, &c., to which alcohol, in itself, is non-essential) to even the grossest elements of the “physical” frame, it induces a violence of action, a rush so to speak, of life, the stress of which can only be sustained by very dull, gross, and dense elements, and which, by the operation of the well-known law of Re-action (in commercial phrase, “supply and demand”) tends to summon them from the surrounding universe, and therefore directly counteracts the object we have in view.

Next comes meat-eating, and for the very same reason, in a minor degree. It increases the rapidity of life, the energy of action, the violence of passions. It may be good for a hero who has to fight and die, but not for a would-be sage who has to exist and . . .

Next in order come the sexual desires; for these, in addition to the great diversion of energy (vital force) into other channels, in many different ways, beyond the primary one (as, for instance, the waste of energy in expectation, jealousy, &c.), are direct attractions to a certain gross quality of the original matter of the Universe, simply because the most pleasurable physical sensations are only possible at that stage of density. Alongside with and extending beyond all these and other gratifications of the senses (which include not only those things usually known as “vicious,” but all those which, though ordinarily regarded as “innocent,” have yet the disqualification of ministering to the pleasures of the body — the most harmless to others and the least “gross” being the criterion for those to be last abandoned in each case) — must be carried on the moral purification.

Nor must it be imagined that “austerities” as commonly understood can, in the majority of cases, avail much to hasten the “etherealizing” process. That is the rock on which many of the Eastern esoteric sects have foundered, and the reason why they have degenerated into degrading superstitions. The Western monks and the Eastern Yogīs, who think they will reach the apex of powers by concentrating their thought on their navel, or by standing on one leg, are practising exercises which serve no other purpose than to strengthen the willpower, which is sometimes applied to the basest purposes. These are examples of this one-sided and dwarf development. It is no use to fast *as long as you require food*. The ceasing of desire for food without impairment of health is the sign which indicates that it should be taken in lesser and ever decreasing quantities until the extreme limit compatible with life is reached. A stage will be finally attained where only water will be required.

Nor is it of any use for this particular purpose of longevity to abstain from immorality so long as you are craving for it in your heart; and so on with all other unsatisfied inward cravings. To get rid of the inward desire is the essential thing, and to mimic the real thing without it is barefaced hypocrisy and useless slavery.

So it must be with the moral purification of the heart. The “basest” inclinations must go first — then the others. First avarice, then fear, then envy, worldly pride, uncharitableness, hatred; last of all ambition and curiosity must be abandoned successively. The strengthening of the more ethereal and so-called “spiritual” parts of the man must go on at the same time. Reasoning from the known to the unknown, meditation must be practised and encouraged. Meditation is the inexpressible yearning of the inner Man to “go out towards the infinite,” which in the olden time was the real meaning of adoration, but which has now no synonym in the European languages, because the thing no longer exists in the West, and its name has been vulgarized to the make-believe shams known as prayer, glorification, and repentance. Through all stages of training the equilibrium of the consciousness — the assurance that all *must* be right in the Kosmos, and therefore with *you* a portion of it — must be retained. The process of life must not be hurried but retarded, if possible; to do otherwise may do good to others — perhaps even to yourself in other spheres, but it will hasten your dissolution in this.

Nor must the externals be neglected in this first stage. Remember that an adept, though “existing” so as to convey to ordinary minds the idea of his being immortal, is not also invulnerable to agencies from without. The training to prolong life does not, in itself, secure one from accidents. As far as any physical preparation goes, the sword may still cut, the disease enter, the poison disarrange. This case is very clearly and beautifully put in *Zanoni*, and it is correctly put and must be so, unless all “adeptism” is a baseless lie. The adept may be more secure from ordinary dangers than the common mortal, but he is so by virtue of the superior knowledge, calmness, coolness and penetration which his lengthened existence and its necessary concomitants have enabled him to acquire; not by virtue of any preservative power in the process itself. He is secure as a man armed with a rifle is more secure than a naked baboon; not secure in the sense in which the deva (god) was supposed to be securer than a man.

If this is so in the case of the high adept, how much more necessary is it that the neophyte should be not only protected but that he himself should use all possible means to ensure for himself the necessary duration of life to complete the process of mastering the phenomena we call death! It may be said, why do not the higher adepts protect him? Perhaps they *do* to some extent, but the child must learn to walk alone; to make him independent of his own efforts in respect to safety, would be destroying one element necessary to his development — the sense of responsibility. What courage or conduct would be called for in a man sent to fight when armed with irresistible weapons and clothed in impenetrable armour? Hence the neophyte should endeavour, as far as possible, to fulfil every true canon of sanitary law as laid down by modern scientists. Pure air, pure water, pure food, gentle exercise, regular hours, pleasant occupations and surroundings, are all, if not indispensable, at least serviceable to his progress. It is to secure these, at least as much as silence and solitude, that the Gods, Sages, Occultists of all ages have retired as much as possible to the quiet of the country, the cool cave, the depths of the forest, the expanse of the desert, or the heights of the mountains. Is it not suggestive that the Gods have always loved the “high places”; and that in the present day the highest section of the Occult Brotherhood on earth inhabits the highest mountain plateaux of the earth?¹

Nor must the beginner disdain the assistance of medicine and good medical regimen. He is still an ordinary mortal, and he requires the aid of an ordinary mortal.

“Suppose, however, all the conditions required, or which will be understood as required (for the details and varieties of treatment requisite, are too numerous to be detailed here), are fulfilled, what is the next step?” the reader will ask. Well if there have been no backslidings or remissness in the procedure indicated, the following physical results will follow:

First the neophyte will take more pleasure in things spiritual and pure. Gradually gross and material occupations will become not only uncraved for or forbidden, but simply and literally repulsive to him. He will take more pleasure in the simple sensations of Nature — the sort of feeling one can remember to have experienced as a child. He will feel more light-hearted, confident, happy. Let him take care the sensation of renewed youth does not mislead, or he will yet risk a fall into his old baser life and even lower depths. “Action and Re-action are equal.”

Now the desire for food will begin to cease. Let it be left off gradually — no fasting is required. Take what you feel you require. The food craved for will be the most innocent and simple. Fruit and milk will usually be the best. Then as till now, you have been simplifying the quality of your food, gradually — very gradually — as you feel capable of it diminish the quantity. You will ask: “Can a man exist without food?” No, but before you mock, consider the character of the process alluded to. It is a notorious fact that many of the lowest and simplest organisms have no excretions. The common guinea-worm is a very good instance. It has rather a complicated organism,

¹ The stern prohibition to the Jews to serve “their gods upon the high mountains and upon the hills” is traced back to the unwillingness of their ancient elders to allow people in most cases unfit for adeptship to choose a life of celibacy and asceticism, or in other words, to pursue adeptship. This prohibition had an esoteric meaning before it became the prohibition, incomprehensible in its dead-letter sense: for it is not India alone whose sons accorded divine honours to the WISE ONES, but all nations regarded their adepts and initiates as divine. — G.M.

but it has no ejaculatory duct. All it consumes — the poorest essences of the human body — is applied to its growth and propagation. Living as it does in human tissue, it passes no digested food away. The human neophyte, at a certain stage of his development, is in a somewhat analogous condition, with this difference or differences, that he *does* excrete, but it is through the pores of his skin, and by those too enter other etherealized particles of matter to contribute towards his support.¹ Otherwise, all the food and drink is sufficient only to keep in equilibrium those “gross” parts of his physical body which still remain to repair their cuticle-waste through the medium of the blood. Later on, the process of cell-development in his frame will undergo a change; a change for the better, the opposite of that in disease for the worse — he will become *all* living and sensitive, and will derive nourishment from the Ether (Akas). But that epoch for our neophyte is yet far distant.

Probably, long before that period has arrived, other results, no less surprising than incredible to the uninitiated will have ensued to give our neophyte courage and consolation in his difficult task. It would be but a truism to repeat what has been again alleged (in ignorance of its real *rationale*) by hundreds and hundreds of writers as to the happiness and content conferred by a life of innocence and purity. But often at the very commencement of the process some real physical result, unexpected and unthought of by the neophyte, occurs. Some lingering disease, hitherto deemed hopeless, may take a favourable turn; or he may develop healing mesmeric powers himself; or some hitherto unknown sharpening of his senses may delight him. The *rationale* of these things is, as we have said, neither miraculous nor difficult of comprehension. In the first place, the sudden change in the direction of the vital energy (which, whatever view we take of it and its origin, is acknowledged by all schools of philosophy as most recondite, and as the motive power) must produce results of some kind. In the second, Theosophy shows, as we said before, that a man consists of several men pervading each other, and on this view (although it is very difficult to express the idea in language) it is but natural that the progressive etherealization of the densest and most gross of all should leave the others literally more at liberty. A troop of horses may be blocked by a mob and have much difficulty in fighting its way through; but if every one of the mob could be changed suddenly into a ghost, there would be little to retard it. And as each interior entity is more rare, active, and volatile than the outer and as each has relation with different elements, spaces, and properties of the Kosmos which are treated of in other articles on Occultism, the mind of the reader may conceive — though the pen of the writer could not express it in a dozen volumes — the magnificent possibilities gradually unfolded to the neophyte.

Many of the opportunities thus suggested may be taken advantage of by the neophyte for his own safety, amusement, and the good of those around him; *but the way in which* he does this is one adapted to his fitness — a part of the ordeal he has to pass through, and misuse of these powers will certainly entail the loss of them as a natural result. The *Itchcha* (or desire) evoked anew by the vistas they open up will retard or throw back his progress.

¹ He is in a state similar to the physical state of a foetus before birth into the world. — G.M.

But there is another portion of the Great Secret to which we must allude, and which is *now*, for the first, in a long series of ages, allowed to be given out to the world, as the hour for it is come.

The educated reader need not be reminded again that one of the great discoveries which has immortalized the name of Darwin is the law that an organism has always a tendency to repeat, at an analogous period in its life, the action of its progenitors, the more surely and completely in proportion to their proximity in the scale of life. One result of this is, that, in general, organized beings usually die at a period (on an average) the same as that of their progenitors. It is true that there is a great difference between the *actual* ages at which individuals of any species die. Disease, accidents and famine are the main agents in causing this. But there is, in each species, a well-known limit within which the Race-life lies, and none are known to survive beyond it. This applies to the human species as well as any other. Now, supposing that every possible sanitary condition had been complied with, and every accident and disease avoided by a man of ordinary frame, in some particular case there would still, as is known to medical men, come a time when the particles of the body would feel the hereditary tendency to do that which leads inevitably to dissolution, *and would obey it*. It must be obvious to any reflecting man that, if by *any procedure* this critical climacteric could be once thoroughly passed over, the subsequent danger of "Death" would be proportionally less as the years progressed. Now this, which no ordinary and unprepared mind and body can do, is possible sometimes for the will and the frame of one who has been specially prepared. There are fewer of the grosser particles present to feel the hereditary bias — there is the assistance of the reinforced "interior men" (whose normal duration is always greater even in natural death) to the visible outer shell, and there is the drilled and indomitable Will to direct and wield the whole.¹

From that time forward the course of the aspirant is clearer. He has conquered "the Dweller of the Threshold" — the hereditary enemy of his race, and, though still exposed to ever-new dangers in his progress towards Nirvana, he is flushed with victory, and with new confidence and new powers to second it, can press onwards to perfection.

For, it must be remembered, that nature everywhere acts by Law, and that the process of purification we have been describing in the visible material body, also takes place in those which are interior, and not visible to the scientist by modifications of the same process. All is on the change, and the metamorphoses of the more ethereal bodies imitate, though in successively multiplied duration, the career of the grosser, gaining an increasing wider range of relations with the surrounding kosmos, till in Nirvana the most rarefied Individuality is merged at last into the INFINITE TOTALITY.

¹ In this connection we may as well show what modern science, and especially *physiology* has to say as to the power of the human will. "The force of will is a potent element in determining longevity. This single point must be granted without argument, that of two men every way alike and similarly circumstanced, the one who has the greater courage and grit will be longer-lived. One does not need to practise medicine long to learn that men die who might just as well live if they resolved to live, and that myriads who are invalids could become strong if they had the native or acquired will to vow they would do so. Those who have no other quality favourable to life, whose bodily organs are nearly all diseased, to whom each day is a day of pain, who are beset by life-shortening influences, yet do live by will alone." — *Dr. George M. Beard*.

From the above description of the process, it will be inferred why it is that “Adepts” are so seldom seen in ordinary life; for, *pari passu*, with the etherealization of their bodies and the development of their power, grows an increasing distaste, and a so-to-speak, “contempt” for the things of our ordinary mundane existence. Like the fugitive who successively casts away in his flight those articles which incommode his progress, beginning with the heaviest, so the aspirant eluding “Death” abandons all on which the latter can take hold. In the progress of Negation everything got rid of is a help. As we said before, the adept does not become “immortal” as the word is ordinarily understood. 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, 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. For the new ethereal senses opening to wider spheres are to ours much in the relation of ours to the Infinitely Little. New desires and enjoyments, new dangers and new hindrances arise, with new sensations and new perceptions; and far away down in the mist — both literally and metaphorically — is our dirty little earth left below by those who have virtually “gone to join the gods.”

And from this account too, it will be perceptible how foolish it is for people to ask the Theosophist to “procure for them communication with the highest Adepts.” It is with the utmost difficulty that one or two can be induced, even by the throes of a world, to injure their own progress by meddling with mundane affairs. The ordinary reader will say: “This is not *god-like*. This is the acme of selfishness.” . . . But let him realize that a very high Adept, undertaking to reform the world, would necessarily have to once more submit to Incarnation. And is the result of all that have gone before in that line sufficiently encouraging to prompt a renewal of the attempt?

A deep consideration of all that we have written, will also give the Theosophists an idea of what they demand when they ask to be put in the way of gaining *practically* “higher powers.” Well, there, as plainly as words can put it, is the PATH. . . . Can they tread it?

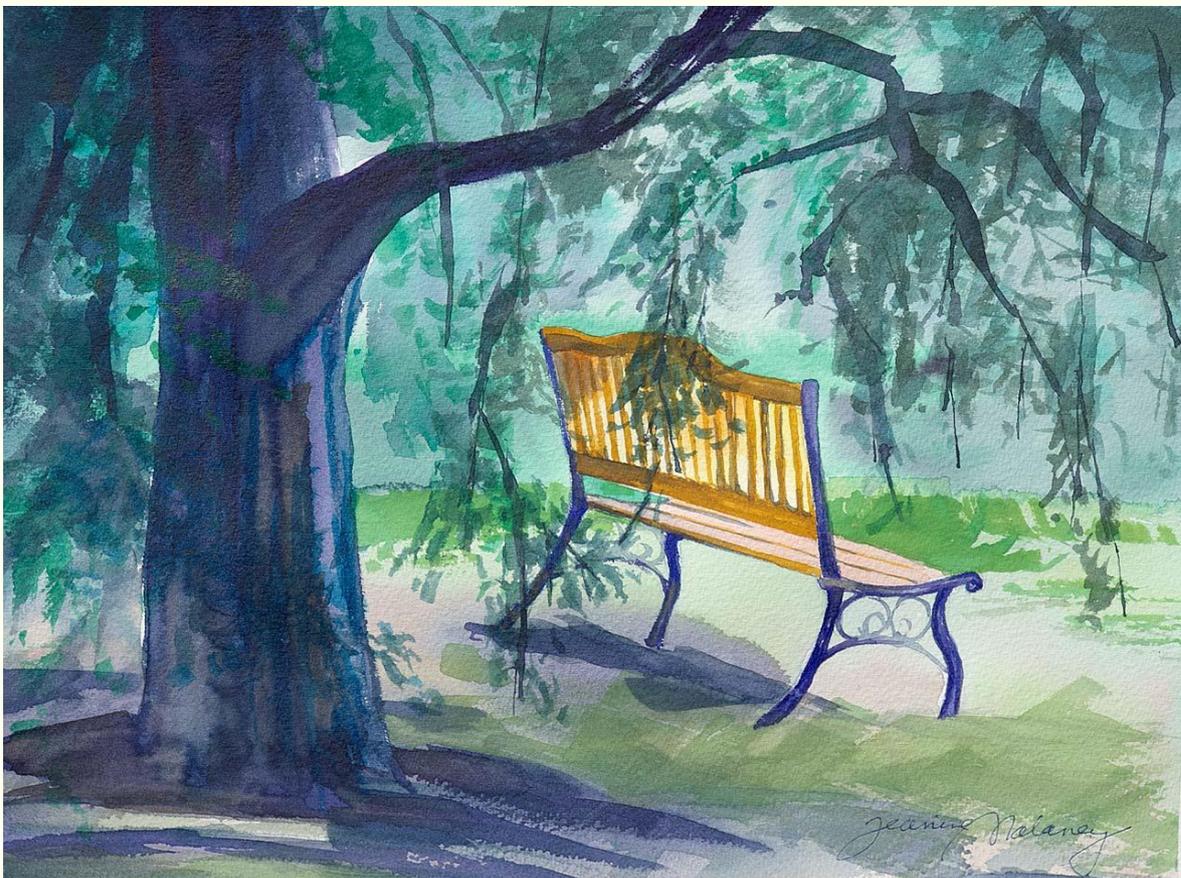
Nor must it be disguised that what to the ordinary mortal are unexpected dangers, temptations and enemies also beset the way of the neophyte. And that for no fanciful cause, but the simple reason that he is, in fact, acquiring new senses, has yet no practice in their use, and has never before seen the things he sees. A man born blind suddenly endowed with vision would not at once master the meaning of perspective, but would, like a baby, imagine in one case, the moon to be within his reach, and, in the other, grasp a live coal with the most reckless confidence.

And what, it may be asked, is to recompense this abnegation of all the pleasures of life, this cold surrender of all mundane interests, this stretching forward to an unknown goal which seems ever more unattainable? For, unlike some of the anthropomorphic creeds, Occultism offers to its votaries no eternally permanent heaven of

material pleasure, to be gained at once by one quick dash through the grave. As has, in fact, often been the case many would be prepared willingly to die *now* for the sake of the paradise hereafter. But Occultism gives no such prospect of cheaply and immediately gained infinitude of pleasure, wisdom and existence. It only promises extensions of these, stretching in successive arches obscured by successive veils, in an unbroken series up the long vista which leads to NIRVANA. And this too, qualified by the necessity that new powers entail new responsibilities, and that the capacity of increased pleasure entails the capacity of increased sensibility to pain. To this, the only answer that can be given is two-fold:

- 1 The consciousness of Power is itself the most exquisite of pleasures, and is unceasingly gratified in the progress onwards with new means for its exercise and
- 2 As has been already said — THIS is the only road by which there is the faintest scientific likelihood that “Death” can be avoided, perpetual memory secured, infinite wisdom attained, and hence an immense helping of mankind made possible, once that the adept has safely crossed the turning-point.

Physical as well as metaphysical logic requires and endorses the fact that only by gradual absorption into infinity can the Part become acquainted with the Whole, and that that which is *now something* can only feel, know, and enjoy EVERYTHING when lost in Absolute Totality in the vortex of that *Unalterable Circle* wherein our Knowledge becomes Ignorance, and the Everything itself is identified with the NOTHING.



2. Is the desire to “live” selfish?

By Helena Petrovna Blavatsky

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 to quicken the process of his evolution, and thus ascend in a comparatively short period of time to that apex of physical and spiritual perfection (a god on earth) towards which the ordinary man may take billions of years to reach.

First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, No. 10 (58), July 1884, pp. 242-43.
Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (IS THE DESIRE TO “LIVE” SELFISH?) VI pp. 241-48.

The passage “to Live, to *live*, TO LIVE must be his unswerving resolve,” occurring in the article “The Elixir of Life,” published in the March and April [1882] Numbers of Vol. III of *The Theosophist* — is often quoted, by superficial readers unsympathetic with the Theosophical Society, as an argument that the above teaching of occultism is the most concentrated form of selfishness.¹ In order to determine whether the crit-

¹ [This remarkable article was written by Mirza Murad Ali Beg. This was an *alias* for Godolphin Mitford, a scion of the old Hampshire family of the Mitfords. His father had served with the East India Company. He was born at Madras and was a very eccentric and peculiar character. He had dabbled in black magic with a selfish motive in view, and had thereby provoked the action of certain elemental entities which played havoc with his consciousness. He was a Mohammedan at the time he came to H.P. Blavatsky and Col. Olcott at their residence in Bombay, on January 20th, 1881. His life had been full of wild adventures. Col. Henry S. Olcott writes of him as follows (*Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II, pp. 289-91):

. . . when we met him, [he] was in the military employ of the Maharajah of Bhaunagar as ‘Chief Cavalry Officer’ — practically a sinecure. His had been a wild, adventurous life, more full of misery than the opposite. He had dabbled in Black Magic, among other things, and told me that all the sufferings he had passed through within the preceding few years were directly traceable to the malign persecutions of certain evil powers which he had summoned to help him get into his power a virtuous lady whom he coveted . . . he himself fell under the power of the bad spirits whom he had not the moral strength to dominate after having accepted their compulsory service. Certainly he was a distressful person to be with. Nervous, excitable, fixed on nothing, the slave of his caprices, seeing the higher possibilities of man’s nature, yet unable to reach them, he came to us as to a refuge, and shortly after took up his residence in our house for a few weeks. A strange-looking creature for an Englishman he was. His dress was that of a Muslim throughout, save that he had his long light-brown hair tied up in a Grecian knot behind his head, like a woman. His complexion was fair and his eyes light blue. In my Diary I say that he looked more like an actor made up for a part than anything else. The writing of the *Elixir of Life* occurred some-time later, but I may as well tell the story while he is under my mind’s eye.

From the time that he came to us he seemed to be engaged in a strong mental and moral conflict within himself. He complained of being dragged hither and thither, first by good, then by bad influences. He had a fine mind, and had done a good deal of reading; he wanted to join our Society, but, as I had no confidence in his moral stamina, I refused him. H.P. Blavatsky, however, offering to become responsible for him, I relented and let her take him in. He repaid her nicely, some months later, by snatching a sword from a sepoy at Wadhwan station, and trying to kill her, crying out that she and her Mahatmas were all devils! In short, he went mad. But to return. While with us he wrote some articles which were printed in *The Theosophist*, and one evening after a talk with us, sat himself down to write on the power of the will to affect longevity. H.P. Blavatsky and I remained in the room, and when he began his writing she went and stood behind him, just as she had in New York when Harisse was making his sketch of one of the Masters, under her thought-transference. The article of Mirza Saheb attracted deserved attention on its appearance (see *The Theosophist*, Vol. III, March & April 1882, pp. 140-42, 168-71), and has

ics are right or wrong, the meaning of the word “selfishness” must first be ascertained.

According to an established authority, selfishness is that “exclusive regard to one’s own interest or happiness; that supreme self-love or self-preference which leads a person to direct his purposes to the advancement of his own interest, power, or happiness, without regarding those of others.”

In short, an absolutely selfish individual is one who cares for himself and none else, or, in other words, one who is so strongly imbued with a sense of importance of his own personality that to him it is the acme of all his thoughts, desires and aspirations and beyond that all is a perfect blank. Now, can an occultist be then said to be “selfish” when he desires *to live* in the sense in which that word is used by the writer of the article on “The Elixir of Life”? It has been said over and over again that the ultimate end of every aspirant after occult knowledge is *Nirvana* or *Mukti*, when the individual, freed from all *Māyāvic Upādhi*, becomes one with *Paramātma*, or the Son identifies himself with the Father in Christian phraseology. For that purpose, every veil of illusion which creates a sense of personal isolation, a feeling of separateness from THE ALL, must be torn asunder, or, in other words, the aspirant must gradually discard all sense of selfishness with which we are all more or less affected. A study of the Law of Cosmic Evolution teaches us that the higher the evolution, the more does it tend towards Unity. In fact, Unity is the ultimate possibility of Nature, and those who through vanity and selfishness go against her purposes, cannot but incur the punishment of total annihilation. The Occultist thus recognises that unselfishness and a feeling of universal philanthropy are the inherent law of our being, and all he does is to attempt to destroy the chains of selfishness forged upon us all by *Māyā*. The struggle then between Good and Evil, God and Satan, *Suras and Asuras, Devas and Daityas*, which is mentioned in the sacred books of all the nations and races, symbolizes the battle between unselfish and the selfish impulses, which takes place in a man, who tries to follow the higher purposes of Nature, until the lower animal tendencies, created by selfishness, are completely conquered, and the enemy thor-

ever since ranked as one of the most suggestive and valuable pamphlets in our Theosophical literature. He was doing well, and there was a good chance for him to retrieve much of his lost spirituality if he would only stop with us; but after giving his promise to do so, he obeyed an irresistible impulse and rushed back to Wadhwan and to destruction. His mind did not recover its equilibrium; he turned Roman Catholic, then recanted back into Islam, and finally died, and was buried at Junagadh, where I have seen his humble tomb. His case has always seemed to me a dreadful instance of the danger one runs in dabbling with occult science while the animal passions are rampant.

Regarding this extraordinary personage, two passages occur in H.P. Blavatsky’s *Secret Doctrine*. They are as follows:

. . . an Englishman whose erratic genius killed him. The son of a Protestant clergyman, he became a Mahomedan, then a rabid atheist, and after meeting with a *master*, a Guru, he became a mystic; then a theosophist who doubted, despaired; threw up *white* for *black* magic, went insane and joined the Roman Church. Then again turning round, anathematized her, re-became an atheist, and died cursing humanity, knowledge, and God, in whom he had ceased to believe. Furnished with all the esoteric data to write his ‘War in Heaven,’ he made a semi-political article out of it, mixing Malthus with Satan, and Darwin with the astral light. Peace be to his — *Shell*. He is a warning to the chelas who fail. His forgotten tomb may now be seen in the Mussulman burial ground of the Junagadh, Kathiawar, in India. (Vol. II, pp. 244-45, *fn.*)

. . . he was a most extraordinary Mystic, of a great learning and remarkable intelligence. But he left the Right Path and forthwith fell under Karmic retribution . . . (Vol. II, p. 541, *fn.*)

Nevertheless, H.P. Blavatsky recommends in several places his remarkable essay on the “War in Heaven” (*The Theosophist*, Vol. III, Nos. 1-3, October, November, December, 1881, pp. 24-25, 36-38, 67-70, respectively) and quotes several passages from it in *The Secret Doctrine*. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

oughly routed and annihilated. It has also been often put forth in various theosophical and other occult writings that 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. In short, in a few thousand years he approaches that form of evolution which ordinary humanity will attain to perhaps in the sixth or the seventh round during the process of *Manvantara*, i.e., cyclic progression. It is evident that average man cannot become a MAHATMA in one life, or rather in one incarnation. Now those, who have studied the occult teachings concerning *Devachan* and our after-states, will remember that between two incarnations there is a considerable period of subjective existence. The greater the number of such *Devachanic* periods, the greater is the number of years over which this evolution is extended. 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. 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 when 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 . . .

The process of the emission and attraction of atoms, which the occultist controls, has been discussed at length in that article and in other writings. It is by these means that he gets rid gradually of all the old gross particles of his body, substituting for them finer and more ethereal ones, till at last the former *sthūla śarīra* is completely dead and disintegrated and he lives in a body entirely of his own creation, suited to his work. That body is essential for his purposes, for, as the “Elixir of Life” says: →

But to do good, as in everything else, a man *must* have time and materials to work with, and this is a necessary means to the acquirement of powers by which infinitely more good can be done than without them. When these are once mastered, the opportunities to use them will arrive. . .

In another place, in giving the practical instructions for that purpose, the same article says:

The physical man must be rendered more ethereal and sensitive; the mental man more penetrating and profound; the moral man more self-denying and philosophical.

The above important considerations are lost sight of by those who snatch away from the context the following passage in the same article:

And from this account too, it will be perceptible how foolish it is for people to ask the Theosophist "to procure for them communication with the highest Adepts." It is with the utmost difficulty that one or two can be induced, even by the throes of a world, to injure their own progress by meddling with mundane affairs. The ordinary reader will say: "This is not *god-like*. This is the acme of selfishness" . . . But let him realise that a very high Adept, undertaking to reform the world, would necessarily have to once more submit to Incarnation. And is the result of all that has . . . gone before in that line sufficiently encouraging to prompt a renewal of the attempt?

Now, in condemning the above passage as inculcating selfishness, superficial readers and thinkers lose sight of various important considerations. In the first place, they forget the other extracts already quoted which impose *self-denial* as a necessary condition of success, and which say that, with progress, new senses and new powers are acquired with which infinitely more good can be done than without them. The more spiritual the Adept becomes, the less can he meddle with *mundane, gross* affairs and the more he has to confine himself to a spiritual work. It has been repeated, time out of number, that the work on a spiritual plane is as superior to the work on an intellectual plane as the one on the latter plane is superior to that on a physical plane. The very *high* Adepts, therefore, do help humanity, *but only spiritually*: they are constitutionally incapable of meddling with *worldly* affairs. But this applies only to very high Adepts. There are various degrees of Adeptship, and those of each degree work for humanity on the planes to which they may have risen. It is only the *chelas* that can live in the world, until they rise to a certain degree. And it is because the *Adepts do* care for the world that they make their *chelas* live in and work for it, as many of those who study the subject are aware. Each cycle produces its own occultists who will be able to work for the humanity of those times on all the different planes; but when the Adepts foresee that at a particular period the then humanity will be incapable of producing occultists for work on particular planes, for such occasions they do provide by either giving up voluntarily their further progress and waiting in those particular degrees until humanity reaches that period, or by refusing to enter into *Nirvana* and submitting to re-incarnation in time to reach those degrees when humanity will require their assistance at that stage. And although the world may not be aware of the fact, yet there are even now certain Adepts who have pre-

ferred to remain *status quo* and refuse to take the higher degrees, for the benefit of the future generations of humanity. In short, as the Adepts work harmoniously, since unity is the fundamental law of their being, they have as it were made a division of labour, according to which each works on the plane at the time allotted to him, for the spiritual elevation of us all — and the process of longevity mentioned in “The Elixir of Life” is only the means to the end which, far from being selfish, is the most unselfish purpose for which a human being can labour.



By bridging the known with the unknown, a pure and focused mind may catch a glimpse of the Truth of truths.

As a person having seen one in a dream, recognizes him afterwards; so does one who has achieved proper concentration of mind perceive the Self.

— *Gems from the East*¹

Concentration is devotion of an entire lifetime to a given end. Meditation implies “the cessation of active, external thought.”

Spiritual culture is attained through concentration. It must be continued daily and every moment to be of use. The “Elixir of Life”² gives us some of the reasons for this truth. Meditation has been defined as “the cessation of active, external thought.” Concentration is the entire life-tendency to a given end. For example, a devoted mother is one who consults the interests of her children and all branches of their interests in and before all things; not one who sits down to think fixedly about one branch of their interests all the day. Life is the great teacher; it is the great manifestation of Soul, and Soul manifests the Supreme. Hence all methods are good, and all are but parts of the great aim, which is Devotion. “Devotion is success in actions,” says the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. We must use higher and lower faculties alike, and beyond those of mind are those of the Spirit, unknown but discoverable. The psychic powers, as they come, must also be used, for they reveal laws. But their value must not be exaggerated, nor must their danger be ignored. They are more subtle intoxicants than the gross physical energies. He who relies upon them is like a man who gives way to pride and triumph because he has reached the first wayside station on the peaks he has set out to climb.³

Psychic powers are far more subtle intoxicants than the gross physical energies.

“For instruction in Practical Occultism it is necessary to have acquired power of concentration, and then to receive certain definite directions.”

. . . This power should be cultivated and trained in the Lower Degrees, and it is to this end that the Rule ordering daily meditation was laid down. There is no other way of attaining the power of concentration, and without this power, largely developed, no progress can be made in Practical Occultism, no beginning even of it being possible.⁴

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (GEMS FROM THE EAST) XII p. 447; [21st May; special edition in our Blavatsky Speaks Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² In: *Five Years of Theosophy*

³ *Judge Letters*, I (x) p. 31

⁴ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. V) XII pp. 702-3; [on the Spinal Column.]

Nature strives to contain Spirit and detain it here on earth, but Spirit ever strives to be freed from its earthly prison and return to its divine abode.

Like despondency, like doubt, like fear, like vanity, pride, and self-satisfaction, these [psychic] powers too are used by Nature as traps to detain us. Every occurrence, every object, every energy may be used for or against the great end: in each, Nature strives to contain Spirit, and Spirit strives to be free. Shall the substance paralyze the motion, or shall the motion control the substance? The interrelation of these two is manifestation. The ratio of activity governs spiritual development; when the great Force has gained its full momentum, It carries us to the borders of the Unknown. It is a Force intelligent, self-conscious, and spiritual: its lower forms, or vehicles, or correlates may be evoked by us, but Itself comes only of Its own volition. We can only prepare a vehicle for It, in which, as Behmen says, “the Holy Ghost may ride in Its own chariot.”¹

Only True philosophy, i.e., the Wisdom of Love, can help remove the weeds of dogma and correct the errors of human fancy. She is Penelope-Sophia, the loyal wife waiting for Odysseus-Christos’ return.

For the path to which his meditation is confined, and upon which his contemplation travels, is too narrow, too thickly covered with the weeds of dogmatic beliefs — the fruits of human fancy and error — to permit the pure ray of any Universal truth to shine upon it. His is a blind faith, and when his eyes open he has to give it up and cease being a “Christian” in the theological sense. The instance is not a good one. It is like pointing to a man immersed in “holy” water in a bathtub and asking why he has not learned to swim in it, since he is sitting in such holy fluid. Moreover, “unfading *enthusiasm*” and “*emotional prayer*” are not exactly the conditions required for the achievement of true theosophic and spiritual development. These means can at best help to *psychic* development. If our correspondent is anxious to learn the difference between *Spiritual* and *Psychic* wisdom, between *Sophia* and *Psyche*, let him turn to the Greek text (the English translation is garbled) in the *Epistle of James* iii 15-16,² and he will know that one is *divine* and the other terrestrial, “sensual, devilish.”³

¹ *Judge Letters*, I (x) p. 31

² [Cf. (15) Η σοφία αὐτὴ δὲν εἶναι ἀνωθεν καταβαίνουσα, ἀλλ’ εἶναι ἐπιγίγνεται, ζωώδης, δαιμονιώδης (16) διότι ὅπου εἶναι φθόνος καὶ φιλονεικία, ἐκεῖ ἀκαταστασία, καὶ παν ἀχρεῖον πρᾶγμα. (17) Η ἀνωθεν ὅμως σοφία, πρῶτον μὲν εἶναι καθαρὰ, ἐπειτα εἰρηνικὴ, ἐπιεικὴς, εὐπειθὴς, πλήρης ἐλέους καὶ καλῶν καρπῶν, ἀμερόληπτος καὶ ἀνυπόκριτος. — ED. PHIL.]

³ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (CORRESPONDENCE) IX pp. 170-71

The correct apprehension of Philosophy can help devotees to Duty and Truth to distinguish between Spiritual and Psychic wisdom.

Nowhere in the theosophic teachings was it stated that a life of entire devotion to one's duty alone, or "a contemplative life," graced even by "fine unselfishness" was sufficient in itself to awaken dormant faculties and lead man to the apprehension of final truths, let alone spiritual powers. To lead such life is an excellent and meritorious thing, under any circumstances, whether one be a Christian or a Muslim, a Jew, Buddhist or Brahmin, and according to Eastern philosophy it must and will benefit a person, if not in his present, then in his future existence on earth, or what we call *rebirth*. But to expect that leading the best of lives helps one — without the help of philosophy and esoteric wisdom — to perceive "the soul of things" and develops in him "a physical command of the forces of nature," *i.e.*, endows him with abnormal or adept powers — is really too sanguine. Less than by anyone else can such results be achieved by a sectarian of whatever exoteric creed.¹

Meditation proper is Spiritual Seership. It leads to conscious realisation of the Truths that underpin and sustain Cosmos and Man, Ideas and Forms.

The aim of meditation stated in the most general terms is to realize the reality or truth which is hidden behind any form, idea or ideal conceived only on the plane of the intellect. Its essential nature consists, therefore, in going behind outer appearances and knowing things as they are in truth and reality. Meditation has, therefore, to deal with two things. First, with the outer form which represents or embodies an inner reality, and second, the inner reality itself which though indicated by the outer form is hidden behind this form and can be known only by transcending the form. There are other minor purposes or aims of meditation such as training the mind, or building up required traits in one's character but these are all secondary and are meant merely to prepare the ground for and sub serve the main and essential purpose.²

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (CORRESPONDENCE) IX p. 170; [responding to a question submitted to the Editors of *Lucifer*: "Most of us know Christians who . . . fail to rise out of Christianity into Theosophy; they remain for ever limited to, and satisfied with the narrow space they move in. . . . (1) . . . there do exist . . . men, and particularly women, leading lives both of spiritual meditation and of unselfishness, to whom nevertheless is not vouchsafed a clearer view of the great universe, a larger apprehension of Theosophic truth, nor any increased physical command of nature."]

² Taimni I.K. *Gāyatrī*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1978 (3rd ed.); pp. 176-77

It is reasoning from the known to the unknown.

. . . let us now see what kind of contemplation (or meditation) the *Elixir of Life* recommends for the aspirants after occult knowledge. It says:

Reasoning from the known to the unknown meditation must be practised and encouraged.

That is to say, a *chela's* meditation should constitute the “reasoning from the known to the unknown.” The “known” is the phenomenal world, cognisable by our five senses. And all that we see in this manifested world are the effects, the causes of which are to be sought after in the noumenal, the unmanifested, the “unknown world”: this is to be accomplished by meditation, *i.e.*, continued attention to the subject.¹

Contemplation bridges “the known” or phenomenon, with “the unknown” or noumenon, and instructs inwardly focused minds to identify with All, work with Nature, and live for All.

In short, contemplation, in its true sense, is to recognise the truth of Éliphas Lévi's saying:

To believe without knowing is weakness; to believe, because one knows, is power.

Or, in other words, to see that “KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.” The *Elixir of Life* not only gives the preliminary steps in the ladder of *contemplation* but also tells the reader how to *realise* the higher conceptions. It traces, by the process of contemplation as it were, the relation of man, “the known,” the manifested, the phenomenon, to “the unknown,” the unmanifested, the noumenon. It shows to the student what ideal he should contemplate and how to rise up to it. It places before him the nature of the inner capacities of man and how to developed them. To a superficial reader, this may, perhaps, appear as the acme of selfishness. Reflection or contemplation will, however, show the contrary to be the case. For it teaches the student that to comprehend the noumenal, he must identify himself with Nature. Instead of looking upon himself as an isolated being, he must learn to look upon himself as a part of the INTEGRAL WHOLE. For, in the unmanifested world, it can be clearly perceived that all is controlled by the “Law of Affinity,” the attraction of one to the other. There, all is Infinite Love, understood in its true sense.²

¹ Eek S. “CONTEMPLATION III.” In: *Dāmodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965; pp. 398-99

² Eek, *op. cit.*, pp. 399-400

**The aim of Contemplation is
Theurgy or White Magic:
Iamblichus' Manteia,
Apollonius' and Plotinus'
"Union to the Deity,"**

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.¹ 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:

**Contemplation is Theosophy's
Raja-Yoga, the Ishvara of the
ancient Yogin, the Samadhi
of the modern.**

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.²

**Meditation is silent
and unuttered prayer, or,
as Plato expressed it, "the
ardent turning of the soul
towards the divine;**

. . . not to ask any particular good (as in the common meaning of prayer), but for good itself — for the universal Supreme Good" of which we are a part on earth, and out of the essence of which we have all emerged.³

**"To whom am I to pray?
I do not, for I am myself
Parabrahm. I only contem-
plate. Contemplation
is a state of mind."**⁴

Prayer and contemplation added to asceticism are the best means of discipline in order to become a Theurgist, where there is no regular initiation. For intense prayer for the accomplishment of some object is only intense *will* and desire, resulting in unconscious Magic.⁵

**Contemplation uplifts lower
minds to higher realms of
pure consciousness . . .**

Samādhi is a state of abstract contemplation, defined in Sanskrit terms each of which requires a complete sentence to explain it. It is a mental, or, rather, spiritual state, which is not dependent upon any perceptible object and during which the *subject*, absorbed in the region of pure spirit, lives *in the Divinity*.⁶

¹ *De Mysteriis*, p. 290, lines 15-18 *et seq.*, caps. V & VII

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. II) XII p. 560

³ *Key to Theosophy*, p. 10

⁴ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (PARABRAHM, DEFINED BY VEDANTINS) IV p. 450; [a Chela of a Vedantīn Sannyāsi of Benares addressing Ramji Mall Pandit on God.]

⁵ *ibid.*, (SIMON AND HIS BIOGRAPHER HIPPOLYTUS) XIV p. 116

⁶ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE BEACON OF THE UNKNOWN) XI p. 250 *fn.*

. . . by catalepsy of the physical body. Then, by suspending the brain's mechanical action, the Adept can see as clearly as Truth Itself.

But despite of the name, clairvoyant vision is nothing but clear.

When the body is in the state of *dhāranā* — a total catalepsy of the physical frame — the soul of the clairvoyant may liberate itself, and perceive things subjectively. And yet, as the sentient principle of the brain is alive and active, these pictures of the past, present, and future will be tintured with the terrestrial perceptions of the objective world; the physical *memory* and *fancy* will be in the way of clear vision. But the seer-adept knows how to suspend the mechanical action of the brain. His visions will be as clear as truth itself, uncoloured and undistorted, whereas, the clairvoyant, unable to control the vibrations of the astral waves, will perceive but more or less broken images through the medium of the brain. The seer can never take flickering shadows for realities, for his memory being as completely subjected to his will as the rest of the body, he receives impressions directly from his spirit. Between his subjective and objective selves there are no obstructive mediums. This is the real spiritual seership, in which, according to an expression of Plato, soul is raised above all inferior good. When we reach “that which is supreme, which is *simple, pure, and unchangeable, without form, colour, or human qualities: the God — our Nous.*” . . . This is the state which such seers as Plotinus and Apollonius termed the “Union to the Deity”; which the ancient Yogīns called *Īśvara*,¹ and the modern call *Samādhi*; but this state is as far above modern clairvoyance as the stars above glow-worms. Plotinus, as is well known, was a clairvoyant-seer during his whole and daily life; and yet, *he had been united to his God* but four times during the sixty-six years of his existence, as he himself confessed to Porphyry.²

“Inactivity of the physical body (sthula-sharira) does not indicate a condition of inactivity.”

. . . either on the astral or the spiritual plane of action. The human spirit is in its highest state of activity in *samādhi*, and not, as is generally supposed, in a dormant quiescent condition.³

¹ In its general sense, *Īśvara* means “Lord”; but the *Īśvara* of the mystic philosophers of India was understood precisely as the union and communion of men with the Deity of the Greek mystics. *Īśvara-Prasāda* means literally, in Sanskrit, *grace*. Both of the *Mīmāṃsās*, treating of the most abstruse questions, explain *Karma* as merit, or the *efficacy of works*; *Īśvara-Prasāda*, as *grace*; and *Śrāddha*, as *faith*. . . .

² *Isis Unveiled*, II p. 591; [*dhāranā*'s meaning here is somewhat different from that in the *Voice of the Silence*. — ED. PHIL.]

³ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (MORALITY AND PANTHEISM) V p. 338; [on “the physical inactivity of the Yogi or the Mahatma.”]

Such a deliberate withdrawal of consciousness is a magical skill.

One phase of magical skill is the voluntary and conscious withdrawal of the inner man (astral form) from the outer man (physical body). In the cases of some mediums withdrawal occurs, but it is unconscious and involuntary. With the latter the body is more or less cataleptic at such times; but with the Adept the absence of the astral form would not be noticed, for the physical senses are alert, and the individual appears only as though in a fit of abstraction — “a brown study,” as some call it.¹

“And leads to the contemplation of celestial powers,” in the words of a Hellenised Jewish Philosopher.

Magic was considered a divine science which led to a participation in the attributes of Divinity itself. “It unveils the operations of nature,” says Philo Judæus, “and leads to the contemplation of celestial powers.”²

Now, “Withdraw into yourself and look.”

. . . And if you do not find yourself beautiful yet, act as does the creator of a statue that is to be made beautiful: he cuts away here, he smooths there, he makes this line lighter, this other purer, until a lovely face has grown upon his work. So do you also: cut away all that is excessive, straighten all that is crooked, bring light to all that is overcast, labour to make all one glow of beauty and never cease chiselling your statue, until there shall shine out on you from it the godlike splendour of virtue, until you shall see the perfect goodness surely established in the stainless shrine. . . . When you know that you have become this perfect work, when you are self-gathered in the purity of your being, nothing now remaining that can shatter that inner unity, nothing from without clinging to the authentic man, when you find yourself wholly true to your essential nature, wholly that only veritable Light which is not measured by space, not narrowed to any circumscribed form nor again diffused as a thing void of term, but ever unmeasurable as something greater than all measure and more than all quantity — when you perceive that you have grown to this, you are now become [that] very vision: now call up all your confidence, strike forward yet a step — you need a guide no longer — strain, and see.³

¹ *Isis Unveiled*, II p. 588; [summarising the Principles of Magic.]

² *ibid.*, I p. 25; [& quoting Philo Judæus’ *De specialibus legibus*, 4]

³ Plotinus: *Ennead* I, vi, “Beauty” ¶ 9 (tr. MacKenna & Page; full text in our Hellenic and Hellenistic Papers Series. — ED. PHIL.)

3. What is Contemplation?

By Damodar Mavalankar

Part 1

Dāmodar K. Māvalankar, “Contemplation,” Part 1 of 3. First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. V (5), February 1884, pp. 112-14. Republished in Sven Eek (*Comp. & Annot.*) *Dāmodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965; pp. 388-94.

[Dāmodar’s thoughts on Contemplation show maturity well beyond his years. His frequent references to “The Elixir of Life,” by Mirza Murad Ali Beg who, at the time the following article was written, had already alienated himself from the companionship of the Theosophists, show the powerful influence this brilliant man still exercised upon his quondam friends.

Concentration could possibly be substituted for Contemplation which practice is described in *The Yoga Aphorism* of Patañjali. Readers of Theosophical Literature have often expressed concern regarding apparent contradictions in its philosophy. One of the reasons for such contradictions lies in the fact that there are many gradations of spiritual development. The beginner has to content himself with the work of the beginner, while the man who has purified his heart and strengthened his will can undertake tasks of greater magnitude. — S.E.]

A general misunderstanding of this term seems to prevail. The popular idea appears to be to confine oneself for half an hour — or at the utmost two hours — in a private room, and passively gaze at one’s nose, a spot on the wall, or, perhaps, a crystal. This is supposed to be the true form of contemplation enjoined by *Raj Yoga*. It fails to realize that true occultism requires “physical, mental, moral and spiritual” development to run on parallel lines. Were the narrow conception extended to all these lines, the necessity for the present article would not have been so urgently felt. This paper is specially meant for the benefit of those who seem to have failed to grasp the real meaning of Dhyan, and by their erroneous practices to have brought, and to be bringing, pain and misery upon themselves. A few instances may be mentioned here with advantage, as a warning to our too zealous students.

At Bareilly the writer met a certain Theosophist from Farrukhabad, who narrated his experiences and shed bitter tears of repentance for his past follies — as he termed them. It would appear from his account that the gentleman, having read *Bhagavad-Gītā* about fifteen or twenty years ago and not comprehending the esoteric meaning of the contemplation therein enjoined, undertook nevertheless the practice and carried it on for several years. At first he experienced a sense of pleasure, but simultaneously he found he was gradually losing self-control; until after a few years he discovered, to his great bewilderment and sorrow, that *he was no longer his own master*. He felt his heart actually growing heavy, as though a load had been placed on it. He had no control over his sensations; in fact the communication between the brain

and the heart had become as though interrupted. As matters grew worse, in disgust he discontinued his “contemplation.” This happened as long as seven years ago; and, although since then he has not felt worse, yet he could never regain his original normal and healthy state of mind and body.

Another case came under the writer’s observation at Jubbulpore. The gentleman concerned, after reading Patañjali and such other works, began to sit for “contemplation.” After a short time he commenced seeing abnormal sights and hearing musical bells, but neither over these phenomena nor over his own sensations could he exercise any control. He could not produce these results at will, nor could he stop them when they were occurring. Numerous such examples may be multiplied. While penning these lines, the writer has on his table two letters upon this subject, one from Moradabad and the other from Trichinopoly. In short, all this mischief is due to a misunderstanding of the significance of contemplation as enjoined upon students by all the schools of Occult Philosophy. With a view to afford a glimpse of the Reality through the dense veil that enshrouds the mysteries of this Science of Sciences, an article, “The Elixir of Life,” was written. Unfortunately, in too many instances, the seed seems to have fallen upon barren ground. Some of its readers only catch hold of the following clause in the said paper:

Reasoning from the known to the unknown meditation must be practised and encouraged.

But, alas! their preconceptions have prevented them from comprehending what is meant by meditation. They forget that it “is the inexpressible yearning of the inner Man to ‘go out towards the infinite,’ which in the olden time was the real meaning of adoration” — as the next sentence shows. A good deal of light will be thrown upon this subject if the reader were to turn to the preceding portion of the same paper, and peruse attentively the following paragraphs on page 141 of the *Theosophist* for March, 1882:¹

So, then, we have arrived at the point where we have determined — literally, *not* metaphorically — to crack the outer shell known as the mortal coil, or body, and hatch out of it, clothed in our next. This ‘next’ is not a spiritual, but only a more ethereal form. Having by a long training and preparation adapted it for a life in this atmosphere, during which time we have gradually made the outward shell to die off through a certain process . . . we have to prepare for this physiological transformation.

How are we to do it? In the first place we have the actual, visible, material body — man, so called, though, in fact, but his outer shell — to deal with. Let us bear in mind that science teaches us that in about every seven years we *change skin* as effectually as any serpent; and this so gradually and imperceptibly that, had not science after years of unremitting study and observation assured us of it, no one would have had the slightest suspicion of the fact. . . . Hence, if a man partially flayed alive, may sometimes survive and be covered with a new skin — so our astral, vital body . . . may be made to harden its particles to the

¹ Vol. III, No. 6

atmospheric changes. The whole secret is to succeed in evolving it out, and separating it from the visible; and while its generally invisible atoms proceed to concrete themselves into a compact mass, to gradually get rid of the old particles of our visible frame so as to make them die and disappear before the new set has had time to evolve and replace them. . . . We can say no more.

A correct comprehension of the above scientific process will give a clue to the esoteric meaning of meditation or contemplation. Science teaches us that man changes his physical body continually, and this change is so gradual that it is almost imperceptible. Why then should the case be otherwise with the *inner man*? The latter too is constantly developing and changing atoms at every moment. And the attraction of these new sets of atoms depends upon the Law of Affinity — the desires of the man drawing to their bodily tenement only such particles as are *en rapport* with them or rather giving them their own tendency and colouring.

. . . For science shows that thought is dynamic, and the thought-force evolved by nervous action expanding itself outwardly, must affect the molecular relations of the physical man. The *inner men*, however sublimated their organism may be, are still composed of actual, *not hypothetical*, particles, and are still subject to the law that an 'action' has a tendency to repeat itself; a tendency to set up analogous action in the grosser 'shell' they are in contact with and concealed within.¹

What is it the aspirant of *Yog Vidyā* strives after if not to gain *Mukti* by transferring himself gradually from the grosser to the next more ethereal body, until all the veils of *Maya* being successively removed his *Ātma* becomes one with *Paramātmā*? Does he suppose that this grand result can be achieved by a two or four hours' contemplation? For the remaining twenty or twenty-two hours that the devotee does not shut himself up in his room for meditation — is the process of the emission of atoms and their replacement by others stopped? If not, then how does he mean to attract all this time — only those suited to his end? From the above remarks it is evident that just as the physical body requires incessant attention to prevent the entrance of a disease, so also the *inner man* requires an unremitting watch, so that no conscious or unconscious thought may attract atoms unsuited to its progress. This is the real meaning of contemplation. The prime factor in the guidance of the thought is WILL.²

. . . Without that, all else is useless. And, to be efficient for the purpose, it must be, not only a passing resolution of the moment, a single fierce desire of short duration, but *a settled and continued strain, as nearly as can be continued and concentrated without one single moment's relaxation.*

The student would do well to take note of the italicized clause in the above quotation. He should also have it indelibly impressed upon his mind that

It is no use to fast *as long as one requires* food. . . . To get rid of the inward desire is the essential thing, and to mimic the real thing without it is barefaced hypocrisy and useless slavery.

¹ *The Elixir of Life*

² [Consult "The Voice of the Will is the Atomic Point," in our Constitution of Man Series. — ED. PHIL.]

Without realizing the significance of this most important fact, anyone who for a moment finds cause of disagreement with any one of his family, or has his vanity wounded, or for a sentimental flash of the moment, or for a selfish desire to utilize the divine power for gross purposes — at once rushes in for contemplation and dashes himself to pieces on the rock dividing the known from the unknown. Wallowing in the mire of exotericism, he knows not what it is to live in the world and yet be not of the world; in other words to guard *self* against *self* is an incomprehensible axiom for nearly every profane. The Hindu ought at least to realize it by remembering the life of Janaka, who, although a reigning monarch, was yet styled *Rajāmsi* and is said to have attained *Nirvana*. Hearing of his widespread fame, a few sectarian bigots went to his Court to test his *Yoga*-power. As soon as they entered the court-room, the king having read their thought — a power which every *chela* attains at a certain stage — gave secret instructions to his officials to have a particular street in the city lined on both sides by dancing girls who were ordered to sing the most voluptuous songs. He then had some *gharas* (pots) filled with water up to the brim so that the least shake would be likely to spill their contents. The wiseacres, each with a full *ghara* (pot) on his head, were ordered to pass along the street, surrounded by soldiers with drawn swords to be used against them if even so much as a drop of water were allowed to run over. The poor fellows having returned to the palace after successfully passing the test, were asked by the King-Adept what they had met with in the street they were made to go through. With great indignation they replied that the threat of being cut to pieces had so much worked upon their minds that they thought of nothing but the water on their heads, and the intensity of their attention did not permit them to take cognizance of what was going on around them. Then Janaka told them that on the same principle they could easily understand that, although being outwardly engaged in managing the affairs of his state, he could at the same time be an Occultist. He too, while *in* the world, was not *of* the world.¹ In other words, his inward aspirations had been leading him on continually to the goal in which his whole inner self was concentrated.

Raj Yoga encourages no sham, requires no physical postures. It has to deal with the inner man whose sphere lies in the world of thought. To have the highest ideal placed before oneself and strive incessantly to rise up to it, is the only true concentration recognized by Esoteric Philosophy which deals with the inner world of *noumena*, not the outer shell of *phenomena*.

The first requisite for it is thorough purity of heart. Well might the student of Occultism say, with Zoroaster, that purity of thought, purity of word, and purity of deed — these are the essentials of one who would rise above the ordinary level and join the “gods.” A cultivation of the feeling of unselfish philanthropy is the path which has to be traversed for that purpose. For it is that alone which will lead to Universal Love, the realization of which constitutes the progress towards deliverance from the chains

¹ [“In the world but not of the world” . . . happens to be a convenient para-scripture (we have quite a few of them today), invented by a third-century Sophist (Diognetos), to the great satisfaction of the church members, who were rapidly becoming very worldly. The passage as it appears in the scriptures says quite the opposite: “For [whatsoever] that is in the world . . . is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John ii, 16). See also “Hermes & John on the Father of things in the World” in our Mystic Verse and Insights Series. — ED. PHIL.]

forged by Maya around the Ego. No student will attain this at once, but as our VENERATED MAHATMA says in the *Occult World*:

The greater the progress towards deliverance, the less this will be the case, until, to crown all, human and purely individual personal feelings, blood-ties and friendship, patriotism and race predilection, will all give way to become blended into one universal feeling, the only true and holy, the only unselfish and eternal one, Love, an Immense Love for Humanity as a whole.¹

In short, the individual is blended with the ALL.

Of course, contemplation, as usually understood, is not without its minor advantages. It develops one set of physical faculties as gymnastics does the muscles. For the purposes of physical mesmerism, it is good enough; but it can in no way help the development of the psychological faculties as the thoughtful reader will perceive. At the same time, even for ordinary purposes, the practice can never be too well guarded. If, as some suppose, they have to be entirely passive and lose themselves in the object before them, they should remember that by thus encouraging passivity, they, in fact, allow the development of mediumistic faculties in themselves. As was repeatedly stated — the Adept and the Medium are the two Poles: while the former is intensely active and thus able to control the elemental forces, the latter is intensely passive, and thus incurs the risk of falling a prey to the caprice and malice of mischievous embryos of human beings, and — the Elementaries.



Part 2

Dāmodar K. Māvalankar, "Contemplation," Part 2 of 3. First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. V (7), April 1884, pp. 170-71. Republished in Sven Eek (*Comp. & Annot.*) *Dāmodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965; p. 394-97. Comment by F.T.S., i.e., Fellow of the Theosophical Society, and a Note by D.K.M, i.e., Dāmodar K. Māvalankar.²

In the article on the above subject in the February *Theosophist* occurs the following:

1. Without realizing the significance of this most important fact, anyone who for a moment finds cause of disagreement with any one of his family, or has his vanity wounded, or for a sentimental flash of the moment, or for a selfish desire to utilize the divine power for gross purposes — at once rushes in for contemplation and dashes himself to pieces on the rock dividing the known from the unknown.

I cannot understand how an ordinary man, who has, on one hand, the above-mentioned defects in his nature, (which he generally tries to control, though sometimes with questionable success); and who, on the other hand, tries also to practise contemplation as explained in the article, runs the danger of being ruined. What are the dangers? Can they be named, and the particular causes which give rise to them?

¹ [p. 152 in the American edition. — S.E.]

² [Comment by "F.T.S." with Damodar's Note appended thereto. See previous article on the same subject — S.E.]

2. To have the highest ideal placed before oneself and strive incessantly to rise up to it, is the only true concentration recognized by Esoteric Philosophy.

This passage is too learned for an ordinary man. Can an example of “the highest ideal” be given? How is the ordinary man of the world to strive after it?

Suppose an ordinary man of the world rises in the calm hours of the morning after a moderate rest, what is he to do? What kind of ideas should he fill his mind with? How is he to sit? How is he to carry on the contemplation so as to steer clear of all shoals and rocks in the sea of occultism? The greatest aim of the man in question is to spiritualize himself as much as could be done *safely*, so that if he cannot eventually be accepted as a chela, in this life — he may at least have the *assurance* to lead the life of an ascetic in the next birth.

An F. T. S.

Note. — I regret the whole article is totally misunderstood. All I meant to say was that temporary estrangement, from family or friends, does not constitute an essential qualification for advancement in occultism. This ought to be plain to one who weighs carefully my illustration of Janaka. Although *in* the world, to be not *of* it. Failing to realise the meaning of this important teaching, many a people rush in from a sentimental disgust of worldliness, arising probably out of some worldly disappointment — and begin practising what they consider to be a true form of *contemplation*. The very fact that the *motive* which leads them to go in for this practice, is as is described in the quotation given by my correspondent — this fact itself is a sufficient indication that the candidate does not know the “contemplation” of a *Raja Yogi*. It is thus impossible in the nature of things that he can follow the right method; and the physical practice, which he necessarily undertakes, leads him to the disastrous results adverted to in the article.

Any reader, who has intuition enough to be a practical student of occultism, will at once see that to work up to perfection is the highest ideal that a man can have before him. That is not the work of a day nor of a few years. “The Adept *becomes*; he is NOT MADE” — is a teaching which the student must first realise. The aspirant works up to his goal through a series of lives. Col. Olcott says in his *Buddhist Catechism*:

. . . Countless generations are required to developed man into a Buddha, and
the iron will to become one runs throughout all the successive births.

That “*iron will*” to become *perfect* must be *incessantly* operating, without a single moment’s relaxation, as will be apparent to one who reads *carefully the article as a whole*. When it is distinctly said that during the time that this contemplation is not practised, *i.e.*, the iron will is not exerting, the process of the emission and attraction of atoms is not stopped, and that the desires, instinctive or otherwise, must be so regulated as to attract only such atoms as may be suited to his progress — I cannot understand my correspondent when he asks me what he should do at a particular hour in the morning. He should cultivate only such thoughts as would not be incompatible with the highest ideal he has to work up to. By perfection, which should be

his highest ideal, (I must add) I mean that *divine* manhood which the Occult Philosophy contemplates the seventh race of the seventh Round will attain to. This, as every tyro knows, depends largely upon a cultivation of the feeling of Universal Love, and hence an earnest desire to do some practical philanthropic work is the first requisite. Even this state, I admit, is not *absolute perfection*: but that maximum limit of ultimate Spiritual perfection is beyond our comprehension at present. That condition can only be intellectually realized as a practical ideal by those *divine men* — Dhyāni-Chohans. To be identified with THE ALL, we must live in and feel through it. How can this be done without the realisation of the feeling of Universal Love? Of course Adeptship is not within the easy reach of all. On the other hand, occultism does not fix any unpleasant place or locality for those who do not accept its dogmas. It only recognises higher and higher evolution according to the chain of causation working under the impulse of Nature's immutable law. The article on "Occult Study"¹ in the last number gives the necessary explanation on this point.

It is painful for me to find that the very thing I attempted to point out in that article to be mischievous in its results, is again put forward as a desirable attribute or adjunct of true contemplation. I would ask my correspondent to read again the same article, with these additional remarks, before thinking of the necessity of any peculiar or particular posture for the purpose of *contemplation*. I, at any rate, am unable to prescribe any specific posture for the kind of *incessant contemplation* that I recommend.



Part 3

Dāmodar K. Māvalankar, "Contemplation," Part 3 of 3. First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. V (11), August 1884, pp. 267-68. Republished in Sven Eek (*Comp. & Annot.*) *Dāmodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965; pp. 397-400.²

Notwithstanding the article on the above subject in the February *Theosophist*, many of its readers still seem to imagine that "contemplation" is a particular form of gazing or staring at something, which process, when undergone a set number of hours every day, will give psychological powers. This misunderstanding is apparently due to the fact that the main point discussed has been lost sight of. Instead of realising that there is but one chief idea meant to be conveyed by that article by arguing it through many of its phases, it seems to be imagined that almost every sentence expresses quite a distinct idea. It may not therefore be uninteresting or unprofitable to revert to the subject and put forward the same idea from another stand-point and, if possible, in a clearer light. It must first be borne in mind that the writer of the article did not at all mean to imply the act of gazing by the word "contemplation." The former word would have been made use of, were that the idea. *The Imperial Dictionary of the English Language* (1883) — defines the word contemplation thus:

- 1 The act of the mind in considering with attention; meditation; study; continued attention of the mind to a particular subject.

¹ [Republished in *Five Years of Theosophy*, pp. 221-29. — S.E.]

² [This is a separate article, independent of the previous item under the same title. — S.E.]

2 Specifically, Holy meditation; attention to sacred things.

Webster's Dictionary thoroughly revised — also gives the same meaning.

Thus we find that contemplation is the “continued attention of the mind to a particular subject,” and, religiously, it is the “attention to sacred things.” It is therefore difficult to imagine how the idea of gazing or staring came to be associated with the word contemplation, unless it be due to the fact that generally it so happens that when any one is deeply absorbed in thought, he apparently seems to be gazing or staring at something in blank space. But this gazing is the effect of the act of contemplation. And, as usually happens, here too the effect seems to be confounded with the cause. Because the gazing attitude follows the act of contemplation, it is at once assumed that gazing is the cause which produces contemplation! Bearing this well in mind, let us now see what kind of contemplation (or meditation) “The Elixir of Life” recommends for the aspirants after occult knowledge. It says:

Reasoning from the known to the unknown meditation must be practised and encouraged.

That is to say, a *chela's* meditation should constitute the “reasoning from the known to the unknown.” The “known” is the phenomenal world, cognisable by our five senses. And all that we see in this manifested world are the effects, the causes of which are to be sought after in the noumenal, the unmanifested, the “unknown world”: this is to be accomplished by meditation, *i.e.*, continued attention to the subject. Occultism does not depend upon one method, but employs both the deductive and the inductive. The student must first learn the general axioms. For the time being, he will of course have to take them as assumptions, if he prefers to call them so. Or as “The Elixir of Life” puts it:

All we have to say is that if you are anxious to drink of the *Elixir of Life* and live a thousand years or so, you must take our word for the matter, at present, and proceed on the assumption. For esoteric science does not give the faintest possible hope that the desired end will ever be attained by any other way; while modern, or the so-called exact science laughs at it.

These axioms have sufficiently been laid out in the articles on “The Elixir of Life” and various others treating on occultism, in the different numbers of *The Theosophist*. What the student has first to do is to *comprehend* these axioms and, by employing the deductive method, to proceed from universals to particulars. He has then to reason from the “known to the unknown,” and see if the inductive method of proceeding from particulars to universals supports those axioms. This process forms the primary stage of true contemplation. The student must first grasp the subject intellectually before he can hope to realise his aspirations. When this is accomplished, then comes the next stage of meditation which is “the inexpressible yearning of the inner man to ‘go out towards the infinite.’” Before any such yearning can be properly directed, the goal, to which it is to be its aim to run, must be determined by the preliminary stages. The higher stage, in fact, consists in realising practically what the first steps have placed within one's comprehension. In short, contemplation, in its true sense, is to recognise the truth of Éliphas Lévi's saying: →

To believe without knowing is weakness; to believe, because one knows, is power.

Or, in other words, to see that “KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.” The “Elixir of Life” not only gives the preliminary steps in the ladder of *contemplation* but also tells the reader how to *realise* the higher conceptions. It traces, by the process of contemplation as it were, the relation of man, “the known,” the manifested, the phenomenon, to “the unknown,” the unmanifested, the noumenon. It shows to the student what ideal he should contemplate and how to rise up to it. It places before him the nature of the inner capacities of man and how to developed them. To a superficial reader, this may, perhaps, appear as the acme of selfishness. Reflection or contemplation will, however, show the contrary to be the case. For it teaches the student that to comprehend the noumenal, he must identify himself with Nature. Instead of looking upon himself as an isolated being, he must learn to look upon himself as a part of the INTEGRAL WHOLE. For, in the unmanifested world, it can be clearly perceived that all is controlled by the “Law of Affinity,” the attraction of one to the other. There, all is Infinite Love, understood in its true sense.

It may now be not out of place to recapitulate what has already been said. The first thing to be done is to study the axioms of Occultism and work upon them by the deductive and inductive methods, which is real contemplation. To turn this to a useful purpose, what is theoretically comprehended must be practically realised. It is to be hoped that this explanation may make the meaning of the former article on this subject clearer.

DAMODAR K. MAVALANKAR



Meditation Dangers and Pitfalls

[The Path of *Bhakti*] is far superior to Karman [Path of Action], Jnana [Path of Knowledge], and Yoga [of Patañjali or Path of Mystical Contemplation]. — NARADA

The contemplation of celestial things will make man both speak and think more sublimely and magnificently when he descends to human affairs. — CICERO

A Master of Wisdom advises Concentration upon the Higher Self within the Heart.

The Eastern Secret School knows each minute portion of the Heart, and has a name for each portion. It calls them by the names of the Gods, as Brahmā's Hall, Vishnu's Hall, and so on. Each of these corresponds with a part of the Brain. The student will now begin to understand why so much stress is laid on the Heart in connection with meditation, and why so many allusions are made in old Hindu literature to the Purusha in the Heart. And so with regard to concentration the Blessed Master Koot Hoomi writes:

Your best method is to concentrate on the Master as a Living Man within you. Make His image in your heart, and a focus of concentration, so as to lose all sense of bodily existence in the one thought.

So again He says:

The great difficulty to be overcome is the registration of the knowledge of the Higher Self on the physical plane. To accomplish this, the physical Brain must be made an entire blank to all but the Higher Consciousness.

When the Brain is thus rendered a blank, an impression from the Heart may reach it and be retained; and this is what is spoken of on p. 618, with regard to the Chela, who is able to hold only parts of the knowledge gained. The above-quoted letter says:

In acquiring the power of concentration the first step is one of blankness. Then follows by degrees consciousness, and finally the passage between the two states becomes so rapid and easy as to be almost unnoticed. →

He who can do this at will has become an Adept, and can “store the knowledge he thus gains in his physical memory.”¹

Place your love, trust, and confidence in your heart, and retire there “when the battle grows fierce.”

In his hours of silent meditation the student will find that there is one space of silence within him where he can find refuge from thoughts and desires, from the turmoil of the senses and the delusions of the mind. By sinking his consciousness deep into his heart he can reach this place — at first only when he is alone in silence and darkness. But when the need for the silence has grown great enough, he will turn to seek it even in the midst of the struggle with self, and he will find it. Only he must not let go of his outer self, or his body; he must learn to retire into this citadel when the battle grows fierce, but to do so without losing sight of the battle; without allowing himself to fancy that by so doing he has won the victory. That victory is won only when all is silence without as within the inner citadel.²

You may begin by setting a fixed time in a private place for reflection upon the study text of the day, self-examination, and self-study.

Each member [of the E.S.] is expected to set apart a certain time of the day or night, or not less than half an hour’s duration, for meditation upon the instructions received, for self-examination and self-study. If possible, the place selected for this should be used by no other person, nor for any other purpose;³

But unless your mind is calm and unruffled, Elementals will billow up and cloud insight.

In dreams, and also whenever we calmly sit for any sort of meditation, one of the first things to happen is that the Elementals begin to present to our inner eyes pictures of all sorts, and the kind of picture presented will be the result of the prior thoughts and also of the state we are in both mentally and physically. For if we are disturbed or harassed in any way in thought, the pictures will be more and more confused in fact, though sometimes having no appearance on the surface of being in confusion. →

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. V) XII pp. 696-97; [on the Heart]

² *ibid.*, (THE GREAT PARADOX) VIII pp. 127-28

³ *ibid.*, (E.S. INTRODUCTION) XII p. 496; [Rule 16]

The student must therefore guard his thoughts, regarding them as the generators of action. *Five minute's thought may undo the work of five years.* And although the five year's work may run through more rapidly the second time than it was the first, yet time is lost.¹

“Practise the habit of careful and constant concentration of mind upon every duty and act in life.”

In order, also, that the student may receive as much benefit as possible, it is absolutely essential that the superficial and inattentive habits of thought, engendered by Western civilization, shall be given up, and the mind concentrated upon the instructions as a whole as well upon every word in them. To this end students are required to practise the habit of careful and constant concentration of mind upon every duty and act in life they may have to do, and not to reserve their efforts in that direction for the consideration of these teachings only. The student must make all his desires lean to, and centre upon, the acquirement of spiritual knowledge, so that the natural tendency of his thought may be in that direction. He must, therefore, in every moment of leisure revert to these subjects, as well as have a special time set apart for their consideration.²

And one day you might be able to kindle the Sacred Fire.

By concentration on Idā and Pingalā is generated the “sacred Fire,” and these are the “sentries on either side,”³ by the action of which alone the Sushumnic current can be roused into activity. [But this concentration cannot be done without details not yet given.]⁴

But unless you are capable of unremitting devotion to truth and virtue, and of guarding Self against self, you are more likely to lose your way in the forest of shadows than to see any real light or gain insight.

. . . just as the physical body requires incessant attention to prevent the entrance of a disease, so also the *inner man* requires an unremitting watch, so that no conscious or unconscious thought may attract atoms unsuited to its progress. This is the real meaning of contemplation. The prime factor in the guidance of the thought is WILL.

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. V) XII p. 693; [on the “automatism” of the Body] Cf. “In sense dreams the Lower Manas is asleep; the animal consciousness, when a sensual tendency has been impressed on it by desire, is more easily impressed by Kāma with pictures from the Astral Light, and thus the tendency of such sense-dreams is always towards the animal. We should therefore train ourselves to awaken directly we begin a dream that tends in the sense direction; and the instantaneous rejection of impure thoughts during the period of waking consciousness will tend to set up a habit of rejection which will act automatically in sleep.” *ibid.*

² *ibid.*, (E.S. INTRODUCTION) XII p. 493

³ p. 606

⁴ *ibid.*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. V) XII p. 702; [on the Spinal Column]

. . . Without that, all else is useless. And, to be efficient for the purpose, it must be, not only a passing resolution of the moment, a single fierce desire of short duration, but *a settled and continued strain, as nearly as can be continued and concentrated without one single moment's relaxation.*

The student would do well to take note of the italicized clause in the above quotation. He should also have it indelibly impressed upon his mind that:

It is no use to fast *as long as one requires* food. . . . To get rid of the inward desire is the essential thing, and to mimic the real thing without it is barefaced hypocrisy and useless slavery.¹

Those who wallow in the mire of exotericism know not what it is to live in the world and yet be not of the world.²

Without realizing the significance of this most important fact, anyone who for a moment finds cause of disagreement with any one of his family, or has his vanity wounded, or for a sentimental flash of the moment, or for a selfish desire to utilize the divine power for gross purposes — at once rushes in for contemplation and dashes himself to pieces on the rock dividing the known from the unknown. Wallowing in the mire of exotericism, he knows not what it is to live in the world and yet be not of the world; in other words to guard *self* against *self* is an incomprehensible axiom for nearly every profane.³

Which, then, of the Two Paths wilt thou choose, O Lanoo?

Which wilt thou choose, O thou of dauntless heart? The Samtan of “eye Doctrine,” four-fold Dhyāna, or thread thy way through Pāramitās, six in number, noble gates of virtue leading to Bodhi and to Prajñā, seventh step of Wisdom?⁴



¹ Eek S. “CONTEMPLATION I.” In: *Dāmodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965; p. 391; [quoting from “The Elixir of Life.”]

² See “Hermes & John on the Father of things in the World” in our Mystic Verse and Insights Series. — ED. PHIL.

³ Eek, *op. cit.*, p. 392

⁴ *Voice of the Silence*, frag. III vs. 98, p. 45

Dangers of “sitting for yoga.”

What you seek at Ulubræ you'll find,
If to the quest you bring a balanced mind.
— QUINTUS HORATIUS FLACCUS¹

**Beware, O Lanoo! Read
“Nature’s Finer Forces.”**

Knowing that some of the members of the E.S.T. try to follow a system of Yoga in their own fashion, guided in this only by the rare hints they find in Theosophical books and magazines, which must naturally be incomplete, I chose of the best expositions ever written upon ancient occult works, “Nature’s Finer Forces,” in order to point out how very easily one can be misled by their blinds.²

**There are no extant works on
effective and safe practice
and those purporting to be
are full of blinds.**

Now, what I have to say here is addressed especially to those members who are anxious to develop powers by “sitting for Yoga.” You see, from what has been already said, that in the development of Rāja-Yoga, no extant works made public are of the least good; they can at best give inklings of Hatha-Yoga, something that may develop mediumship at best, and in the worst case — consumption. If those who practice “meditation,” and try to learn the “Science of Breath,” will read attentively “Nature’s Finer Forces,” they will find that it is by utilizing the five Tattvas only that this dangerous science is acquired. [. . .] the two higher Tattvas and their correspondences are ignored and excluded; and — as they are the chief factors in Rāja-Yoga — no spiritual or intellectual phenomena of highest nature can take place;³

**“I strongly advise you to give
up all yoga practices, which
in almost all cases have disastrous
results unless guided
by a competent teacher.”**

. . . The concussions and explosions in your head are evidences that you are in no fit condition to try yoga practices, for these effects result from lesions of the brain, *i.e.*, from the bursting of the very minute brain cells. I am glad you have written to me upon this matter, that I may have an opportunity of warning you. Also, I advise you to discontinue concentration on the vital centres, which again may prove dangerous unless under the guidance of a teacher. You have learnt, to a certain degree, the power of

¹ Horace: *Epistolæ* 1, 11, 28; (Quod petis hic est, est Ulubris, animus si te non deficit æquus) — *King’s quotation* 4780

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. III) XII p. 606

³ *ibid.*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. III) XII pp. 612-13

concentration, and the greatest help will now come to you from concentration upon the Higher Self, and aspiration toward the Higher Self. Also, if you will take some subject or sentence from the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and concentrate your mind upon that and meditate upon it, you will find much good result from it, and there is no danger in such concentration.¹

For the uninitiated, “sitting for yoga” is invariably fatal.

Genuine concentration and meditation, *conscious* and *cautious*, upon one’s lower self in the light of the inner divine man and the Pāramitās, is an excellent thing. But to “sit for Yoga,” with only a superficial and often distorted knowledge of the real practice, is almost invariably fatal: for ten to one the student will either develop mediumistic powers in himself or lose time and get disgusted both with practice and theory. Before one rushes into such a dangerous experiment and seeks to go beyond a minute examination of one’s lower self and *its* walk in life, or that which is called in our phraseology, “The Chela’s Daily Life Ledger,” he would do well to learn at least the difference between the two aspects of “Magic,” the White or Divine, and the Black or Devilish, and assure himself that by “*sitting for Yoga*,” with no experience, as well as with no guide to show him the dangers, he does not cross daily and hourly the boundaries of the Divine to fall into the Satanic.²

It encourages mental passivity which, in turn, aids the development of mediumistic states where one can readily fall prey to the “caprice and malice of mischievous embryos of human beings.”

Of course, contemplation, as usually understood, is not without its minor advantages. It develops one set of physical faculties as gymnastics does the muscles. For the purposes of physical mesmerism, it is good enough; but it can in no way help the development of the psychological faculties as the thoughtful reader will perceive. At the same time, even for ordinary purposes, the practice can never be too well guarded. If, as some suppose, they have to be entirely passive and lose themselves in the object before them, they should remember that by thus encouraging passivity, they, in fact, allow the development of mediumistic faculties in themselves. As was repeatedly stated — the Adept and the Medium are the two Poles: while the former is intensely active and thus able to control the elemental forces, the latter is in-

¹ *Judge Letters*, II (ON OCCULT PHILOSOPHY) p. 115

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. III) XII pp. 603-4; [on whether concentration is beneficial]

DOWN TO EARTH SERIES
DANGERS OF "SITTING FOR YOGA"

tensely passive, and thus incurs the risk of falling a prey to the caprice and malice of mischievous embryos of human beings, and — the Elementaries.¹



¹ Eek S. "CONTEMPLATION I." In: *Dāmodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965; pp. 393-94

Meditation Practice and Practicalities

By William Quan Judge

The best and most important teacher is one's own Seventh Principle centred in the Sixth. The more unselfishly one works for his fellow men and divests himself of the illusionary sense of personal isolation, the more he is free from *Māyā* and the nearer he approaches Divinity.

— K. H.¹

Meditation.

First published in: *Subsidiary Papers* (No. B), issued in the Western Division, Council for Eastern Division, January 1895, (EASTERN SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY: SUGGESTIONS AND AIDS).

Republished in: Eklund D. (Comp.). *Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Quan Judge*. San Diego: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1975-1987. Vol. III, 1987, (Section V); pp. 465-70; second edition, Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 2010, pp. 453-58.

The Instructions and the Book of Rules enjoin daily meditation. No matter how busy a person is he can always get some time for distinct effort at meditation. If very busy then take a short time, if only five minutes; if less busy then longer. And be sure that you do not shorten the time merely for your personal comfort, but because obligatory duty compels you to. The various directions in the Rule Book will give much in this line of thought to those who carefully read them.

In London there was issued since 1891, a paper entitled, "On Meditation," which was circulated in Europe but not in America. That paper cannot be recommended for students now because its general tendency is misleading in too many particulars. A watch was by it suggested for consideration and concentration in the period of meditation. Many good things were in the paper, but I wish now to say that I cannot countenance it because its general effect is to draw the attention of students to personal psychic development. The dwelling upon the idea of a watch is also too small for those who really wish to gain spiritual power and light. Such petty and unworthy objects should not be selected: for the mind, if concentrated on these, will not go any farther than the range of the object. Hence by selecting a watch or other similar limited matter, the range of meditation is limited from the beginning. The widest range, the highest aim, should be taken for the mind's use, even though we know beforehand that it cannot be fully reached.

¹ Cf. "Some years ago the Master K.H. . . wrote the following for an American Theosophist who permits its use here, taken from the original." — WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE. [Eklund D. *Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Quan Judge*. San Diego: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1975-1987. Vol. III: publ. 1987, p. 464; second edition, Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 2010, p. 452]

Therefore, for your set period of meditation, select from such subjects as *Aum, the Self, Ātman, Masters, the Lodge, Unity*, and come down, if you have time, to the School in general and the Theosophical movement. If the first above subjects are too difficult, then select some *great and good person*, which will be next as to ease of use. Do not select living persons¹ because their failings may be too great. Next, in order of ease or limit, take, *Instructions received of a lofty nature*, whether from another, from a book or from a dream. Hold one or all of these in the mind as much as you can and at the end think of the School and its members, and desire benefit and progress for all.

But all should try, if ever so little, to concentrate and meditate upon the Self as all in all, as being all, as being the person meditating.

If circumstances really prevent your having a set time, then:

(a) On going to bed, and before sleeping, try to have these ideas as your last waking thoughts.

(b) Try upon waking each day to make your thoughts dwell on the same ideas before rising or speaking to anyone. Do not let the first thoughts be of business; foolish, or troubled. Make a habit of having as *first thoughts* these high ones above mentioned.

(c) Each night before sleep, and each morning after the few moments of high thought, forgive your enemies mentally and with your heart.

Daily Practice.

Those who can do so should follow this rule: When you have dressed, and before eating, take fifteen or twenty minutes for meditation. If you are hungry, all the better, for then it will be better discipline. If this can be done, then slowly but surely it will affect the whole nature. Do not do this after eating or when you have made all easy, but the first thing in the day.

The reason for doing this as a day's beginning and before eating, is that it thus disciplines the system gently. If you try to make all your surroundings and your stomach very comfortable and "just to the taste," you give up nothing. If you fill your stomach first you become full of the fumes of food, which rise through the bottom of the brain-pan at the root of the nose.

The power of these meditations is not always to be seen fully in one life. One life is too short for the entire work, but these thoughts, vows, and practices surely effect the whole nature and last through the centuries. They bring us further and further along the road to the final perfection of this cycle and draw us to the time when we will have the power.

¹ [Cf. "With the dead there is no rivalry. In the dead there is no change. Plato is never sullen. Cervantes is never petulant. Demosthenes never comes unseasonably. Dante never stays too long. No difference of political opinion can alienate Cicero. No heresy can excite the horror of Bossuet. . . ." Thomas Babington Macaulay: *Essays Contributed to the Edinburgh Review*, 1837, "On Lord Bacon" — ED. PHIL.]

The Present Age.

This age is known to the Adepts as that of *transition*. Everyone is affected by this, since the parts of a whole must be subject to the general law governing the whole. That law affects each one in his meditations.

Meditation, The Word, and Colours.¹

Concentration must exist in meditation, but the latter is the true name for the bringing together or focusing of thought. The Upanishads, and the Master, say (in Master's words): "A lifetime's meditation is the sum-total of a lifetime's thoughts, which constitute the subtle bond that binds us to rebirth. For meditation, both special as to hour, and general as to daily aspiration, the selection as to a high idea, person, or matter should be made." *The Word* should be made the subject of our constant thought. We should see and hear the Word as in all. It is *Aum*, but that means nothing unless we assimilate the idea and see it as the *Self*, existing everywhere, sounding everywhere, creating, sustaining, and destroying all.

It is true that H.P. Blavatsky, in replying to a question as to what to concentrate upon, once said: "Oh, a watch or an ink-bottle." But she was not then teaching the general subject: she was only illustrating the general idea of concentration *per se*. Similarly she once said, in 1875: "A talisman? Why, you can make a talisman of this paper-cutter." That does not mean we are to take paper-cutters as talismans, but that with him who trains himself within, the meanest object may be of use. If we go the other way and begin by devoting ourselves to such little objects we will never get beyond them. And for the Western world this is especially true. We must select the Word, as containing all, for our constant meditation in our "life-time thoughts." Now refer to Instruction III, in the Appendix.² It says:

The colour and number of not only the planets but also the zodiacal constellations corresponding to every letter of the alphabet, are necessary to make any special syllable, and even letter, *operative*. Therefore if a student would make *Buddhi* operative, for instance, he would have to intone the first words of the Mantra on the note *mi*. But he would have still further to accentuate the *mi*, and produce mentally the yellow colour . . . on every letter *m* . . . because it is seventh and fourth. . . . As *Buddhi* it is second; as *Buddhi-Manas* it is second and third combined.

The same subject was also referred to in Instruction I, when speaking of the diagram. Illustration was made of the power of the yellow line produced from or by *Buddhi* to cure a pain. H.P. Blavatsky made these references with a purpose and intentionally omitted further "practical" details.

Among colours and sounds lie the keys to the objective results from the occult processes of thought. Not only is it by these that direct effects are produced, but also, by their use alone (either consciously or unconsciously) can the elemental powers of Nature be mastered and guided by the will. H.P. Blavatsky did not give out much on

¹ [Consult Hieronymus von Mansfeld (*Comp. & Ed.*). *The True Colours of Man*, Gwernynnydd: Philaletheians UK, 2015; v. 17.15.2022. This is our fifth Major Work. — ED. PHIL.]

² [*Blavatsky Collected Writings*, XII pp. 642-43]

this because it is, in its detail, reserved for those who have so far progressed as to be trusted without danger to themselves and others. But she gave two broad hints of such a nature as to result, if used, in good alone. In Instruction No. 1¹ she speaks, illustratively, of a line of *yellow* for the cure of a pain; and in the above quotation she shows you that yellow, as the colour of *Buddhi*, may be used with the Word on the tone *mi*. This will tend in a degree, as your life and thoughts correspond, to make the connection with your sixth principle more close. Refer here to the message from K.H. given in paper A, last page, as to “centring in the sixth” (Buddhi).²

By using this colour yellow with the Word, you will have benefit. But do not experiment with other colours. “Using this colour” means, to make it with your mental eye, as much as you can, seem to exist in what is called the imagination. I have some cases where *red* and *green* were used, experimentally and without due thought. The result was that the red and green aroused, through the power of the Word, the corresponding departments of the desires and egotism. This caused irritation in the person and his immediate fellows, bringing on disturbances for which there was no need. It probably will be that many on reading this will say they cannot make this yellow colour, that is, cannot see it. But that makes no difference save in degree. The colour and its vibration will be aroused — seen or not — and will have some effect.

There is an immense quantity of practical information withheld on this subject — and very properly — because H.P. Blavatsky knew, as anyone can see by looking abroad in the T.S., that neither the School nor the T.S. is ready for such dangerous secrets, easily used for selfish purposes.

And I wish to impress on the School the actual present need of using the Word, and meditation, with the colour yellow, so that Buddhi may be more aroused. The contrary has been the case. Green of ambition and egotism with red of desire and passion have begun to grow, and have been fanned by dark powers behind the scenes. It is necessary that those in the School who really care for the true progress of all, should begin to try and arouse this colour with its corresponding ideas to the end that the others may be counteracted.

The lower passional elements have been aroused too much because it is easier to excite the lower group than the higher. H.P. Blavatsky hoped the yellow would be tried. But it has been neglected because it is not so easy to satisfy oneself with the results, inasmuch as the action of this will at first be subtle and hard to see, but still it will operate. Let us then try to arouse and use this power of the Word, leaving the others alone. This is allowed and suggested because it cannot do harm even with the foolish, while the other colours can become a source of danger.

Beware!

Beware at this time of psychic practices other than the above. The whole T.S. mirrors the state of the world. It is disturbed, and in many places — in spots — it is rotten. Psychic practices now will lead to grave dangers. Wait — until later, until the disturbed currents raging in the lower group of forces are calmed down.

¹ [Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, XII pp. 527-28]

² [v.s. opening quotation, p. 1]

Beware of hypocrisy and self-righteousness. We stand in danger on these two points. In too many parts of our body are there those who, under the guise of proclaiming truth, are merely picking holes in the garments of others, their brothers and sisters. I am not striking at attacks aimed at me, for I do not mind these in fact, but those, while very public, are but the outer illustration of much of the same kind that is still not public. If one offends, if one is not what you think he or she should be, then turn to *your* work and *your* duty and leave all these things to time, for maybe — probably always actually — you, each one who reads this, are no better than the other whom you are turning to condemn. We shall-both as E.S.T. and T.S. — be a miserable and sorry failure if the scenes of the past year, full of accusations and much attempting to prove another at fault, are repeated or continued much longer. And I say, on Master's word and from Him, that the actual inner condition of the E.S.T. and T.S. in regard to brotherly love, charity and altruism is what has confined progress, has prevented more elaborate and more special teachings being promulgated save to the very few.

Special aids.

Special aids may, be adopted for assisting the mind about the colour yellow. That is, for instance, a yellow strip on the wall, or a yellow space, or yellow ribbons might be taken out and looked at from time to time. But do not gaze at them over long, because a certain peculiar reaction will be thus brought on in the retina. If any bad reaction is thus aroused, then look at green grass or trees for a short time, or at the blue sky. Discard these aids as soon as you can. Observe that for some years, (with H.P. Blavatsky's direct consent) I have used yellow paper in all my E.S.T. correspondence. This was purposely done so as to some extent generally to arouse the subconscious impression about yellow. Caution is also needed here in this; do not run to the other extreme and begin using yellow on any and all occasions. If you do, you will begin to cling to outward appearances and wholly lose the inner spirit.



Two Invocations to Meditation

A deeply devotional invocation by Clara Codd.

Composed by an unknown source, it is “unexampled in its crystal purity of thought and depth of devotion.” In: Clara M. Codd. *Meditation: its practice and results*. Adyar, The Theosophical Publishing House, 1978. (1st ed. 1952)



GRACIOUS LORD, I enter Thy Radiance, and approach Thy Presence, bearing with me the service done in Thy Name, and for Thee. I seek to become a more efficient server, and I open my heart and my mind to the power of Thy Love, and Thy Joy, and Thy Peace.

In Thy Presence, Thy Love floods my being — Thy Love which is gentleness, kindness, helpfulness. I must therefore be loving, kind, and helpful to all men.

In Thy Presence, Thy Joy pervades me — Joy which is light, radiance, eternal youth. I must therefore bear Thy Joy to those who are sad and depressed.

In Thy Presence Thy Peace unfolds me, and fills me with contentment, certainty, rest, stillness. Thy Peace, which passeth all understanding. I must therefore be a centre of love, joy, and peace in the world.

I place my hand in Thine with all love, and trust, and confidence, for Thou art indeed my Lord. From the unreal lead me to the Real. From darkness lead me to the light; from death to life eternal.

At Thy Feet, and in the Light of Thy Holy Presence, I strive to realise what I am.

I am not this body, which belongs to the world of shadows.

I am not the desires, which affect it.

I am not the thoughts, which fill my mind.

I am not the mind itself.

I am the Divine Flame within my heart, eternal, immortal, ancient, without beginning, without end. More radiant than the sun in all his noonday glory, purer than the snow, untouched, unsullied by the hand of matter, more subtle than the ether is the Spirit within my heart.

I and my Father are One. I worship Thee, I adore Thee, Thou art my life, my breath, my being, my all. I am in Thee and Thou art in me. Lead me, O Gracious Lord, to union with Thee, and the Heart of Eternal Love.

In Thy Love I rest for evermore.



A highly philosophical invocation by Proclus Lycaeus.

PROCLUS HAD EVIDENTLY THIS BEAUTIFUL PASSAGE IN VIEW,¹ when, in his second book *On the Theology of Plato*,² he celebrates the ineffable principles of things, with the following matchless magnificence of diction:

“Let us now, if ever, remove from ourselves multiform knowledge, exterminate all the variety of life, and in perfect quiet approach near to the cause of all things. For this purpose, let not only opinion and phantasy be at rest, nor the passions alone which impede our anagogic impulse to *the first* be at peace; but let the air be still, and the universe itself be still. And let all things extend us with a tranquil power to communion with the ineffable. Let us also, standing there, having transcended the intelligible (if we contain anything of this kind), and with nearly closed eyes adoring as it were the rising sun since it is not lawful for any being whatever intently to behold him — let us survey the sun whence the light of the intelligible gods proceeds, emerging, as the poets say, from the bosom of the ocean; and again, from this divine tranquillity descending into intellect, and from intellect, employing the reasonings of the soul, let us relate to ourselves what the natures are, from which, in this progression, we shall consider the first god as exempt. And let us as it were celebrate him, not as establishing the earth and the heavens, nor as giving subsistence to souls, and the generations of all animals; for he produced these indeed, but among the last of things. But prior to these, let us celebrate him as unfolding into light the whole intelligible and intellectual genus of gods, together with all the supermundane and mundane divinities — as the god of all gods, the unity of all unities, and beyond the first adyta — as more ineffable than all silence, and more unknown than all essence — as holy among the holies, and concealed in the intelligible gods.”³



¹ [v.s. *Ennead* V, i ¶ 2, on letting “. . . a certain other soul whose dignity in contemplating is not small, being liberated from deception, and the allurements which fascinate other souls, be established in a quiet condition and survey a mighty soul.” *et seq.* Full text of the *Enneads* in our Hellenic and Hellenistic Papers Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² Vol. II, 11 [Thomas Taylor Series, Vol. VIII, p. 166]

³ Taylor T. (*Tr. & Annot.*). *Collected Writings of Plotinus*. (Vol. III of The Thomas Taylor Series) Frome: The Prometheus Trust, 2000; [*Ennead* V, i ¶ 2, p. 300 *fn. et seq.*]

Occult terms for Meditation proper

- **Ardent turning of the soul towards the divine** of Plato.
- **Book of Dzyan** or knowledge through meditation.
- **Dan**, now become in modern Chinese and Tibetan phonetics *ch'an*, is the general term for the esoteric schools, and their literature. In the old books, the word *Janna* is defined as “to reform one’s self by meditation and knowledge,” a second *inner* birth. Hence *Dzan*, *Djan* phonetically, the “Book of *Dzyan*.” (*Secret Doctrine*)
- **Dharana**, is the intense and perfect concentration of the mind upon someone interior object, accompanied by complete abstraction from everything pertaining to the external Universe, or the world of the senses. (*Voice of the Silence*)
- **Dhyana** or contemplation. In Buddhism one of the six Pāramitās of perfection, a state of abstraction (of which there are four degrees), which carries the ascetic practicing it far above this plane of sensuous perception and out of the world of matter.
- **Ecstasy** of the Philaletheians.
- **Epopteia**, or personal view, the perfect contemplation of Plato.
- **Ishvara** of ancient Yogīns.
- **Karuna-Bhawana**, meditation of pity and compassion in Yoga.
- **Manas Sanyama** or perfect concentration of the mind, and control over it, during Yoga practices.
- **Manteia** of Iamblichus.
- **Naljor-ngonsum** or “meditation by self-perception.”
- **Nimitta**, interior illumination developed by the practice of meditation.
- **Patanjali’s Yoga** minus the physical practices is akin to Raja Yoga or Theurgy.
- **Raja-Yoga** or Theosophy’s Royal Union.
- **Samadhi** or ecstatic contemplation of modern Yogīns.
- **Samadhindriya**, the organ of ecstatic meditation in Rāj-yoga practices. “The root of concentration”; the fourth of the five roots called Pañcha Indriyāni, which are said in esoteric philosophy to be the agents in producing a highly moral life, leading to sanctity and liberation; when these are reached, the two *spiritual roots* lying latent in the body (Ātma and Buddhi) will send out shoots and blossom. (*Theosophical Glossary*)

- **Samatha-vipashyana** or religious abstract meditation.
- **Samtan** or Dhyāna, the state of meditation, of which there are four degrees. (*Voice of the Silence*)
- **Silent and unuttered prayer.** (*Key to Theosophy*)
- **Soul-contemplation**, frequent intercommunication with the Atman.
- **Tapas** or abstraction, meditation.
- **Tchung-kwan** or self-contemplation.
- **Theurgy** of Iamblichus.
- **Union to the Deity** of Plotinus and Apollonius.
- **Vijnana** or internal knowledge.
- **White Magic** or Theurgy.
- **Yoga** or mystic meditation.
- **Zhine-lhag thong** or religious, abstract meditation.



Other terms related to meditation and contemplation.

There are subtle differences between meditation and contemplation but, in practice, these terms are often used interchangeably to suggest *prolonged, focused, and effortful abstract thinking*.

Consideration Gr. θεωρησις | L. considerare, perhaps originally a term of augury, from con- and sidus, sideris, star. | The process of giving careful thought to something. *Chambers English Dictionary & World Web*

Contemplation Gr. διαλογισμός, balancing of accounts, calculation, consideration, debate, argument, discussion. *Liddell & Scott* | L. contemplari, -atus, to mark out carefully a templum or place for auguries, from con-, signifying completeness, and templum. *Chambers English Dictionary* | 1. A long and thoughtful observation. 2. A calm, lengthy intent, consideration. *World Web*

Meditation Gr. διαλογισμός (v.s.) | Gr. στοχασμός, aiming at, endeavouring after, guessing. *Liddell & Scott* | L. meditari, probably cognate with mederi, to heal. *Chambers English Dictionary* | 1. Continuous and profound contemplation or musing on a subject or series of subjects of a deep or abstruse nature *i.e.*, “the habit of meditation is the basis for all real knowledge.” 2. Contemplation of spiritual matters, usually on religious or philosophical subjects. *World Web*

Musing | Fr. muser to loiter, in oFr. to muse; perhaps originally to hold the muzzle in the air, as a dog that has lost the scent; perhaps influenced by Muse. A calm, lengthy, intent consideration, to reflect in silence, to be mentally abstracted or absorbed in thought, contemplation. *Chambers English Dictionary & World Web*

DOWN TO EARTH SERIES
OCCULT TERMS FOR MEDITATION

Recollectness Gr. περισυλλογή, αναπόλησις | [L. recolligere, to gather again or gather up, from colligere. To recall to memory. *Chambers English Dictionary*

Reflection Gr. συλλογισμός, αντανάκλασις | L. reflectere, reflexum, from flectare, to bend. A calm, lengthy, intent consideration. *Chambers English Dictionary & World Web*

Syllogism Gr. συλλογισμός | Metaphorically, collectedness or presence of mind. Contemplation, calculation, reasoning, & Aristotle's deductive argument in three propositions: two premises and a conclusion. *Liddell & Scott*





- 1 Manly Hall's defining essays on "Concentration and Retrospection," pp. 59-66, and on "The Practice of Meditation," pp. 103-9, in: Hall M.P. *The Phoenix: An Illustrated Review of Occultism and Philosophy*. (1st ed. 1931); Los Angeles: The Philosophical Research Society, Inc., 1975. (Lending copy available upon request.)
- 2 Selections from E.S. INSTRUCTIONS NO. III AND V in: *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, XII pp. 603-6 & 691-94. They are presented in the same Series under the title "Meditation Dangers and Pitfalls."
- 3 THE "ELIXIR OF LIFE" from a Chela's diary by G. Mitford.
- 4 IS THE DESIRE TO "LIVE" SELFISH? by H.P. Blavatsky.
- 5 CONTEMPLATION, a three-part article by D.K. Māvalankar.

Papers 3 to 5 above cover inter alia meditation proper, the pitfalls of "sitting for yoga," the constitution of a Mahatma's physical body, and practical advice on contemplation. They are presented in the same series under the title "Meditation Dangers and Pitfalls."

The first article, originally published in: *The Theosophist*, was excerpted from *Five Years of Theosophy: Mystical, Philosophical, Historical and Scientific Essays selected from The Theosophist*. London: Reeves & Turner, 1885; reprinted Los Angeles, The Theosophy Co, 1980; pp. 1-32.

The second, first published in: *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, No. 10 (58), July 1884, pp. 242-43, has been republished in: *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, VI pp. 241-48.

D.K. Māvalankar's articles, first published in: *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, No. 5, February 1884, pp. 112-14; No. 7, April 1884, pp. 170-71; and No. 11, August 1884, pp. 267-68, have been republished in: Eek S. (Comp. & Annot.). *Dāmodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965; pp. 388-400.

- 6 Rāma Prasād's *Nature's Finer Forces*, first published in 1889, was republished by Samata Books, Chennai in 1998. (Lending copy available upon request.)

Suggested reading for students.



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