

*The Masters of Wisdom
and Others on Ingratitude*



On Ingratitude¹

By Master KH

We never were yet ungrateful for services rendered.²

Ingratitude is not among our vices . . .³

But until that day of final triumph someone has to be sacrificed — though we accept but voluntary victims. The ungrateful task did lay her [H.P. Blavatsky] low and desolate in the ruins of misery, misapprehension, and isolation: but she will have her reward in the hereafter for we never were ungrateful.⁴

By Master M

Perish the Theosophical Society rather than be ungrateful to H.P.B.⁵

By Others⁶

Blow, blow, thou winter wind!
Thou art not so unkind as man's ingratitude.

— *William Shakespeare*⁷

Do you know what is more hard to bear than the reverses of fortune?
It is the baseness, the hideous ingratitude, of man.

— *Napoleon Bonaparte*⁸

¹ Frontispiece by Margot Lynn Gedert.

² Mahātma Letter 62 (126), p. 350; 3rd Combined ed.

³ *ibid.*, 2 (2), p. 9; 3rd Combined ed.

⁴ *ibid.*, (18), p. 51; 3rd Combined ed.

⁵ Master M. to H.S. Olcott, LMW2

⁶ From § “Charity is a debt of honour,” in: *Compassion the Spirit of Truth* (2009), Ch. 8, pp. 303-4

⁷ *As You Like It*, Act II, scene 7

⁸ *Recollections of Caulincourt, Duke of Vicenza* (1838), Vol. I, p. 98; tr. Eilleaux.

He that forgets his friend is ungrateful to him;
But he that forgets his Saviour is unmerciful to himself.

— *John Bunyan*¹

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child!

— *William Shakespeare*²

I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness.

— *William Shakespeare*³

Do not torment me. If there be a crime
Of deeper dye than all the guilty train
Of human vices, — 'tis ingratitude.

— *Henry Brooke*⁴

Ingratitude is always a kind of weakness.
I have never seen that clever men have been ungrateful.

If anyone meets us who owes us a debt of gratitude, it immediately crosses our mind.
How often can we meet someone to whom we owe gratitude, without thinking of it!

— *Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe*⁵

Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend!

— *William Shakespeare*⁶

Nothing more detestable does the earth produce than an ungrateful man.

— *Decimus Magnus Ausonius*⁷

We fancy we suffer from ingratitude, while in reality we suffer from self-love. Passion weeps while she says, "I did not deserve this from him"; Reason, while she says it, smoothens her brow at the clear fountain of the heart.

— *Walter Savage Landor*⁸

¹ *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1808), Pt. II, p. 37

² *King Lear*, Act I, scene 4

³ *ibid.*, Act III, scene 2

⁴ *The Earl of Warwick* (1792), Act IV, scene 1

⁵ *The Maxims and Reflections of Goethe*, "Life and Character," III #152, V #283; tr. Saunders. Full text in our Down to Earth Series.

⁶ *King Lear*, Act I, scene 4

⁷ *Epigrammata Ausonii De Diversis Rebus*, CXL

⁸ *Imaginary Conversations and Poems* (1824), "Epicurus, Leontion, and Ternissa"

You may rest upon this as Proposition of an eternal, unfailing Truth; that there neither is, nor never was, any person remarkably ungrateful, who was not also insufferably proud. . . . In a word, Ingratitude is too base to return a Kindness, too proud to regard it; much like the Tops of Mountains, barren indeed, but yet lofty; they produce nothing; they feed nobody; they clothe nobody; yet are high and stately, and look down upon the World about them.

— *Bishop Robert South*¹

You say well, my friend, . . . the unpardonable sin is ingratitude. . . . It is the curse of this age; for he who forgets or refuses to remember the kindness done to him by others sets himself apart, and worships his miserable self, and he makes an idol of himself, saying, “I am of more importance than my fellows in the world, and it is meet and right that they should give and that I should receive.” Ingratitude is selfishness, and selfishness is the worship of oneself, the setting of oneself higher than man and goodness and God.

— *Francis Marion Crawford*²



¹ *Twelve Sermons preached upon several occasions*, Vol. I (6th ed., 1727), Sermon preached at Christ-Church, Oxon, pp. 444, 445

² *Mr Isaacs: A Tale of Modern India*. London: MacMillan & Co., 1882; p. 144