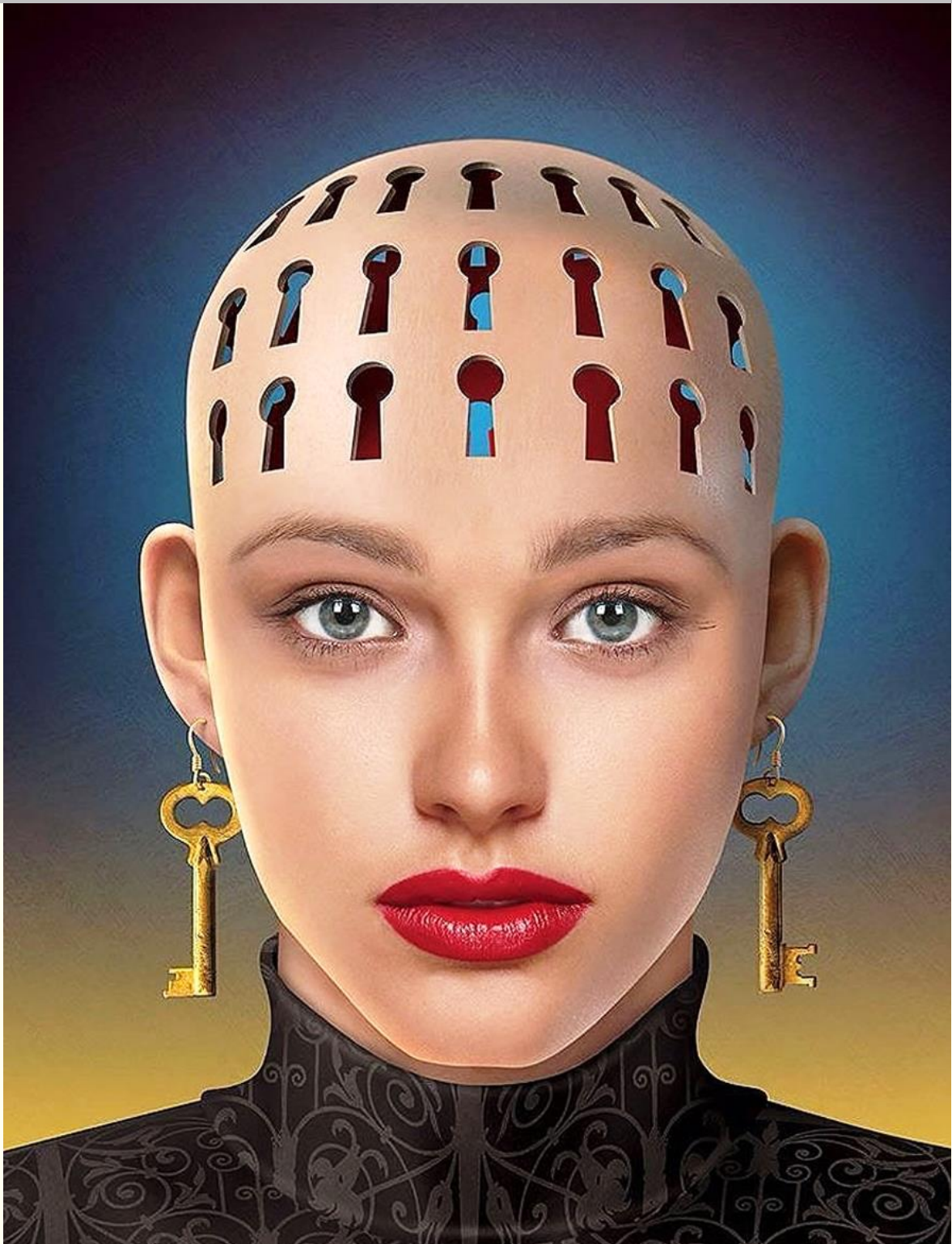


*The mighty potency and noble
aim of the progressive mind*



Abstract and train of thoughts¹

Every thought passes into the inner world.

Neither the physical nor the metaphysical Science are of interest to the true philanthropist, except in the degree of their potentiality of moral results, and in proportion of their usefulness to mankind. 4

Cosmic energy is eternal and matter is indestructible: two axiomatic truths. 4

Nature works slowly but incessantly towards the evolution of conscious life out of inert material. 4

Every thought passes into the inner world and, by coalescing with an elemental, it becomes an active intelligence. Thus a good thought is perpetuated as an active beneficent power; an evil one, as a maleficent demon. 5

The Buddhist calls this impulse-seed his Skandha; the Hindu, his Karma; the Adept evolves these shapes consciously; other men throw them off unconsciously. 5

Every form of life is sustained by countless other lives.

If you offer nothing in return, you are like a thief. 5

The building ant, the busy bee, the nest-building bird accumulate, each in their own humble way, as much cosmic energy in its potential form as a Haydn, a Plato, or a ploughman turning his furrow. They thus rob nature instead of enriching her, and will all in the degree of their intelligence find themselves accountable. 5

Exact experimental Science has nothing to do with morality, virtue, or philanthropy. Her cold classification of facts outside man can only benefit the career of her professors. 6

The Initiated Adept is the efflorescence of his age.

Few ever appear in a single century. 7

The boisterousness of animal passions stifles spirituality. What else could one expect of men so nearly related to the lower kingdom, from which they evolved? 7

Modern education enthrones scepticism and imprisons spiritualism.

The era of blind faith is gone; that of enquiry is here. Enquiry that only unmasks error, without discovering anything upon which the soul can build, will but make iconoclasts. 9

¹ Title page illustration by Igor Morski.

The noble aim of the progressive mind is to furnish the building blocks for a universal religious philosophy.

A philosophy impregnable to scientific assault, because itself the finality of absolute science; and, a religion worthy of the name. 9

The main aim of the Theosophical Society is to root out superstition and scepticism, and to help man shape his future. 9

A parting thought.

The cis-Himalayan Mahatmas will not be thwarted in their philanthropic attempts to save humanity from itself until that day when the new continent of thought is firmly established. 10



From A.T. Barker (*Transc. & Comp.*), edited by C. Humphreys & E. Benjamin. *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett from the Mahatmas M. & K.H.* (1st ed. 1923). Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1962 (3rd ed.) Subsequently arranged in chronological sequence by V.H. Chin Jr. Quezon City: Theosophical Publishing House, 1993. Excerpt from the first letter of K.H. to A.O. Hume, dated 1st November 1880. In Appendix I, pp. 471-76.

Every thought passes into the inner world.

Neither the physical nor the metaphysical Science are of interest to the true philanthropist, except in the degree of their potentiality of moral results, and in proportion of their usefulness to mankind.

You say there are few branches of science with which you do not possess more or less acquaintance, and that you believe you are doing a certain amount of good, having acquired the position to do this by long years of study. Doubtless you do. But will you permit me to sketch for you still more clearly the difference between the modes of — physical called exact — often out of mere politeness — and metaphysical sciences? The latter, as you know, being incapable of verification before mixed audiences, is classed by Mr. Tyndall with the fictions of poetry. The realistic science of fact, on the other hand, is utterly prosaic. Now for us poor and unknown philanthropists, no fact of either of these sciences is interesting except in the degree of its potentiality of *moral* results, and in the ratio of its usefulness to mankind. And what, in its proud isolation, can be more utterly indifferent to everyone and everything, or more bound to nothing, but the selfish requisites for its advancement than this materialistic and realistic science of fact? May I not ask then without being taxed with a vain “display of science” what have the laws of Faraday, Tyndall, or others to do with philanthropy in their abstract relations with humanity viewed as an integral whole? What care they for MAN as an isolated atom of this great and harmonious Whole, even though they may sometimes be of practical use to him?

Cosmic energy is eternal and matter is indestructible: two axiomatic truths.

Nature works slowly but incessantly towards the evolution of conscious life out of inert material.

Cosmic energy is something eternal and incessant, matter is indestructible, and there stand the scientific *facts*. Doubt them and you are an ignoramus; deny them, a dangerous lunatic; a bigot; pretend to improve upon the theories — an impertinent charlatan. And yet even these scientific facts never suggested any proof to the world of experimenters, that nature consciously prefers that matter should be indestructible under organic rather than under inorganic forms; and that she works slowly but incessantly towards the realization of this object — the evolution of conscious life out of inert material. Hence their ignorance about:

- The scattering and concretion of cosmic energy in its metaphysical aspects;
- Their division about Darwin’s theories;
- Their uncertainty about the degree of conscious life in separate elements;

- And, as a necessity, the scornful rejection of every phenomenon outside their own stated conditions and the very idea of worlds of semi-intelligent if not intellectual forces at work in hidden corners of nature.

Every thought passes into the inner world and, by coalescing with an elemental, it becomes an active intelligence. Thus a good thought is perpetuated as an active beneficent power; an evil one, as a maleficent demon.

The Buddhist calls this impulse-seed his Skandha; the Hindu, his Karma; the Adept evolves these shapes consciously; other men throw them off unconsciously.

To give you another practical illustration. We see a vast difference between the qualities of two equal amounts of energy expended by two men, of whom one, let us suppose, is on his way to his daily quiet work, and another on his way to denounce a fellow creature at the police station, while the men of science see none. And we — not they — see a specific difference between the energy in the motion of the wind and that of a revolving wheel. And why? Because every thought of man upon being evolved passes into the inner world and becomes an active entity by associating itself — coalescing, we might term it — with an elemental; that is to say with one of the semi-intelligent forces of the kingdoms. It survives as an active intelligence, a creature of the mind's begetting, for a longer or shorter period proportionate with the original intensity of the cerebral action which generated it. Thus, a good thought is perpetuated as an active beneficent power; an evil one as a maleficent demon. And so man is continually peopling his current in space with a world of his own, crowded with the offspring of his fancies, desires, impulses, and passions, a current which reacts upon any sensitive or nervous organization which comes in contact with it in proportion to its dynamic intensity. The Buddhist calls this his "Skandha," the Hindu gives it the name of "Karma"; the Adept evolves these shapes consciously, other men throw them off unconsciously.

Every form of life is sustained by countless other lives.

If you offer nothing in return, you are like a thief.¹

The building ant, the busy bee, the nest-building bird accumulate, each in their own humble way, as much cosmic energy in its potential form as a Haydn, a Plato, or a ploughman turning his furrow. They thus rob nature instead of enriching her, and will all in the degree of their intelligence find themselves accountable.

The adept to be successful and preserve his power must dwell in solitude and more or less within his own soul. Still less does exact science perceive that while the building ant, the busy bee, the nidifacient² bird accumulate, each in their own humble way as much cosmic energy in its potential form as a Haydn, a Plato, or a plough-

¹ Cf. *Bhagavad-Gita* 3 vs. 12

² [nest building]

man turning his furrow, in theirs; the hunter who kills game for his pleasure or profit, or the positivist who applies his intellect to proving that $+x + = -$, are wasting and scattering energy no less than the tiger which springs upon its prey. They all rob nature instead of enriching her, and will all in the degree of their intelligence find themselves accountable.

Exact experimental Science has nothing to do with morality, virtue, or philanthropy. Her cold classification of facts outside man can only benefit the career of her professors.

Exact experimental Science has nothing to do with morality, virtue, philanthropy, therefore can make no claim upon our help, until it blends itself with the metaphysics. Being but a cold classification of facts outside man, and existing before and after him, her domain of usefulness ceases for us at the outer boundary of these facts; and whatever the inferences and results for humanity from the materials acquired by her methods, she little cares. Therefore as our sphere lies entirely outside hers — as far as the path of *Uranus* is outside the earth's — we distinctly refuse to be broken on any wheel of her construction. Heat is but a mode of motion to her, and motion developer heat; but why the mechanical motion of the revolving wheel should be metaphysically of a higher value than the heat into which it is gradually transformed — she has yet to discover. The philosophical but transcendental (hence absurd)¹ notion of the medieval theosophists that the final progress of human labour aided by the incessant discoveries of man, must one day culminate in a process, which in imitation of the sun's energy — in its capacity of a direct motor — shall result in the evolution of nutritious food out of inorganic matter — is unthinkable for men of science. Were the sun, the great nourishing father of our planetary System, to hatch granite chickens out of a boulder “under test conditions” tomorrow, they (the men of Science) would accept it as a scientific fact, without wasting a regret that the fowls were not alive so as to feed the hungry and the starving. But let a *Shaberon*² cross the Himalayas in a time of famine, and multiply sacks of rice for the perishing multitudes — as he could — and your magistrates and collectors would probably lodge him in jail, to make him confess what granary he had robbed. This is exact science and your realistic world. And though as you say you are impressed by the vast extent of the world's ignorance on every subject, which you pertinently designate as “a few palpable facts collected and roughly generalized and a technical jargon invented to hide man's ignorance of all that lies behind these facts”; and though you speak of your faith in the infinite possibilities of nature — yet you are content to spend your life in a work which aids only that same exact science. You cause a waste of cosmic energy by tons, to accumulate hardly a few ounces in your volumes — to speak figuratively. And despite your intuitive perceptions of the boundless reaches of nature, you take up the position that unless a proficient in arcane knowledge will waste upon your embryonic Society an energy which without moving from his place he can usefully distribute among millions, you, with your great natural powers will refuse to

¹ [Hence seemingly absurd]

² [Incarnation of Buddha-spirit]

give a helping hand to humanity by beginning the work single handed, and trusting to time and the great Law to reward your labour.¹

Of your several questions we will first discuss, if you please, the one relating to the presumed failure of the “Fraternity” to “leave any mark upon the history of the world.” They ought, you think, to have been able with their extraordinary advantages to have “gathered into their schools a considerable portion of the more enlightened minds of every race.” How do you know they have made no such mark? Are you acquainted with their efforts, successes, and failures? Have you any dock upon which to arraign them? How could your world collect proofs of the doings of men who have sedulously kept closed every possible door of approach by which the inquisitive could spy upon them. The prime condition of their success was, that they should never be supervised or obstructed. What they have done they know; all those outside their circle could perceive was results, the causes of which were masked from view. To account for these results, men have in different ages invented theories of the interposition of “Gods,” special providences, fates, and the benign or hostile influences of the stars. There never was a time within or before the so-called historical period when our predecessors were not moulding events and “making history,” the facts of which were subsequently and invariably distorted by “historians” to suit contemporary prejudices. Are you quite sure that the visible heroic figures in the successive dramas were not often but their puppets? We never pretended to be able to draw nations in the mass to this or that crisis in spite of the general drift of the world’s cosmic relations.

The Initiated Adept is the efflorescence of his age.

Few ever appear in a single century.

The cycles must run their rounds. Periods of mental and moral light and darkness succeed each other, as day does night. The major and minor yugas must be accomplished according to the established order of things. And we, borne along on the mighty tide, can only modify and direct some of its minor currents. If we had the powers of the imaginary Personal God, and the universal and immutable laws were but toys to play with, then indeed might we have created conditions that would have turned this earth into an Arcadia for lofty souls. But having to deal with an immutable Law, being ourselves its creatures, we have had to do what we could and rest thankful.

The boisterousness of animal passions stifles spirituality. What else could one expect of men so nearly related to the lower kingdom, from which they evolved?

There have been times when “a considerable portion of enlightened minds” were taught in our schools. Such times there were in India, Persia, Egypt, Greece and Rome. But, as I remarked in a letter to Mr. Sinnett, the adept is the efflorescence of

¹ [The last three lines were omitted in *The Occult World*.]

his age, and comparatively few ever appear in a single century. Earth is the battle ground of moral no less than of physical forces; and the boisterousness of animal passions under the stimulus of the rude energies of the lower group of etheric agents, always tends to quench spirituality.

What else could one expect of men so nearly related to the lower kingdom from which they evolved? True also, our numbers are just now diminishing but this is because, as I have said, we are of the human race, subject to its cyclic impulse and powerless to turn that back upon itself. Can you turn the Gunga or the Brahmaputra back to its sources; can you even dam it so that its piled up waters will not overflow the banks? No, but you may draw the stream partly into canals and utilize its hydraulic power for the good of mankind. So we, who cannot stop the world from going in its destined direction, are yet able to divert some part of its energy into useful channels. Think of us as demi-gods and my explanation will not satisfy you; view us as simple men — perhaps a little wiser as the result of special study — and it ought to answer your objection.

“What good,” say you, “is to be attained for my fellows and myself (the two are inseparable) by these occult sciences?” When the natives see that an interest is taken by the English and even by some high officials in India in their ancestral science and philosophies, they will themselves take openly to their study. And when they come to realise that the old “divine” phenomena were not *miracles*, but scientific effects, *superstition* will abate. Thus the greatest evil that now oppresses and retards the revival of Indian civilization will in time disappear. The present tendency of education is to make them materialistic and root out spirituality. With a proper understanding of what their ancestors meant by their writings and teachings, education would become a blessing whereas now it is often a curse. At present the non-educated as much as the learned natives regard the English as too prejudiced, because of their Christian religion and modern science, to care to understand them or their traditions. They mutually hate and mistrust each other. This changed attitude toward the older philosophy would influence the native Princess and wealthy men to endow normal schools for the education of pundits; and old MSS. hitherto buried out of the reach of the Europeans would again come to light, and with them the key to much of that which was hidden for ages from the popular understanding; for which your sceptical Sanskritists do not care, which your religious missionaries do not *dare*, to understand. Science would gain much — humanity everything. Under the stimulus of the Anglo Indian Theosophical Society, we might in time see another golden age of Sanskrit literature. Such a movement would have the entire approbation of the Home Government as it would act as a preventive against discontent; and the sympathy of European Sanskritists who, in their divisions of opinion need the help of native pundits, now beyond their reach in the present state of mutual misunderstanding. They are even now bidding for such help. At this moment two educated Hindus of Bombay are assisting Max Müller; and a young Pundit of Guzerat a Fellow of the T.S. is aiding Prof. Monier Williams at Oxford and living in his house. The first two are materialists

and do harm; the latter single handed can do little, because the man whom he is serving is a prejudiced Christian.¹

If we look to Ceylon we shall see the most scholarly priests combining under the lead of the Theos. Society in a new exegesis of Buddhistic philosophy and — at Galle on the 15th of September, a secular Theosophical school for the teaching of Singhalese youth opened, with an attendance of over 300 scholars: an example about to be imitated at three other points in that island. If the T.S. “as at present constituted,” has indeed no “real vitality” and yet in its modest way has done so much of practical good, how much greater results might not be anticipated from a body organized upon the better plan you could suggest!

Modern education enthrones scepticism and imprisons spiritualism.

The era of blind faith is gone; that of enquiry is here. Enquiry that only unmask error, without discovering anything upon which the soul can build, will but make iconoclasts.

The same causes that are materializing the Hindu mind are equally affecting all Western thought. Education enthrones scepticism but imprisons spiritualism. You can do immense good by helping to give the Western nations a secure basis upon which to reconstruct their crumbling faith. What they need is the evidence that Asiatic psychology alone supplies. Give this and you will confer happiness of mind on thousands. The era of blind faith is gone; that of enquiry is here. Enquiry that only unmask error, without discovering anything upon which the soul can build, will but make iconoclasts. Iconoclasm from its very destructiveness can give nothing, it can only raze. But man cannot rest satisfied with bare negation. Agnosticism is but a temporary halt.

The noble aim of the progressive mind is to furnish the building blocks for a universal religious philosophy.

A philosophy impregnable to scientific assault, because itself the finality of absolute science; and, a religion worthy of the name.

The main aim of the Theosophical Society is to root out superstition and scepticism, and to help man shape his future.

This is the moment to guide the recurrent impulse which must soon come, and which will push the age toward extreme atheism, or drag it back to extreme sacerdotalism, if it is not led to the primitive and soul-satisfying philosophy of the Āryans. He who observes what is going on today, on the one hand among the Catholics, who are breeding miracles as fast as the white ants do their young, on the other, among the free thinkers, who are converting by masses into agnostics — will see the drift of

¹ [The last eleven lines were also omitted in *The Occult World*.]

things. The age is revelling at a debauch of phenomena. The same marvels that the spiritualists quote in opposition to the dogmas of eternal perdition and atonement, the Catholics swarm to witness as the strongest proof of their faith in miracles. The sceptics make game of both. All are blind and there is no one to lead them! You and your colleagues may help furnish the materials for a needed universal religious philosophy; one impregnable to scientific assault because itself the finality of absolute science; and, a religion, that is indeed worthy of the name, since it includes the relations of man physical to man psychical, and of the two to all that is above and below them. Is not this worth a slight sacrifice? And if after reflection you should decide to enter this new career, let it be known that your Society is no miracle-mongering or banqueting club, nor specially given to the study of phenomenalism. Its chief aim is to extirpate current superstitions and scepticism, and, from long sealed ancient fountains to draw the proof that man may shape his own future destiny, and know for a certainty that he can live hereafter, if he only wills; and that all “phenomena” are but manifestations of natural law, to try to comprehend which is the duty of every intelligent being.¹ You have personally devoted many years to a labour benevolently conceived and conscientiously carried out. Give to your fellow creatures half the attention you have bestowed on your “little birds,”² and you will round off a useful life with a grand and noble work.

A parting thought.

The cis-Himalayan Mahatmas will not be thwarted in their philanthropic attempts to save humanity from itself until that day when the new continent of thought is firmly established.

From *Mahatma Letter 9* (18) p. 51; 3rd Combined ed.

It is our mission to plunge and bring the pearls of Truth to the surface; theirs³ — to clean and set them into scientific jewels. And, if they refuse to touch the ill-shapen oyster-shell, insisting that there is [not], nor *cannot* be any precious pearl inside it, then shall we once more wash our hands of any responsibility before human-kind. For countless generations hath the adept builded⁴ a fane of imperishable rocks, a giant’s Tower of INFINITE THOUGHT, wherein the Titan dwelt, and will yet, if need be, dwell alone, emerging from it but at the end of every cycle, to invite the elect of mankind to co-operate with him and help in his turn enlighten superstitious man. And we will go on in that periodical work of ours; we will not allow ourselves to be baffled in our philanthropic attempts until that day when the foundations of a new continent of thought are so firmly built that no amount of opposition and ignorant malice guided by the Brethren of the Shadow will be found to prevail.

¹ [In *The Occult World*, the letter end here.]

² [Reference to A.O. Hume’s interest in ornithology.]

³ [*i e.*, the men of Science.]

⁴ [Archaic form of built.]

But until that day of final triumph someone has to be sacrificed — though we accept but voluntary victims. The ungrateful task did lay her¹ 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. As regards the Adept — not *one of my kind*, good friend, but far higher — you might have closed your book² with those lines of Tennyson’s “Wakeful Dreamer” — you knew him not —

How could ye know him? Ye were yet within
The narrower circle; he had well-nigh reached
The last, which with a region of white flame,
Pure without heat, into a larger air
Up-burning, and an ether of black blue,
Investeth and ingirds all other lives. . . .

From C.A. Bartzokas (*Comp. & Ed.*). *Compassion: The Spirit of Truth*, version 05.85-2019. Gwernymynydd: Philaletheians UK, 2009; p. 271.

These lines are indeed Tennyson’s; however, they were published under a different title, *The Mystic*.³ Whether *The Wakeful Dreamer* was an earlier title, or perhaps a more fitting description by a Master of Wisdom, it is not known. One thing is certain though, that the Mahatmas or Great Souls portrayed in this poem *are* wakeful dreamers. They are the Idealists who renounced worldly life and nirvānic rest to save humanity from itself. As Lord Tennyson remarked elsewhere, loss of personal existence is “no extinction but the only true life.”⁴ *Light on the Path* dispels the erroneous and ghastly associations of sacrifice with death and annihilation:

[The Adept] serves humanity and identifies Himself with the whole world: He is ready to make vicarious sacrifice for it at any moment — *by living, not by dying for it*.⁵



¹ [H.P. Blavatsky]

² [Esoteric Buddhism “Budhism would be more correct. . . . ‘Budhism’ has preceded *Buddhism* by long ages and is pre-Vedic.” *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (A PUZZLE IN ESOTERIC BUDDHISM) IX p. 282 & fn. et. seq. See “Budhism and Buddhism,” in our Confusing Words Series.]

³ *The Mystic* was first published in 1830 but, together with many other poems, was suppressed by its author and did not appear in most subsequent editions. On 19 November 2004, *The Suppressed Poems of Alfred Lord Tennyson 1830-1868* (Ed. J.C. Thomson) were released by Gutenberg Project, e-Book 14094.

⁴ Alfred Lord Tennyson: *Memoirs* ii, 473

⁵ *Light on the Path*, com. IV pp. 81-82



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