

*Eastern Light
Shines on Western Minds*



Abstract

Eastern Psychology has given the West a clue to certain mysteries previously baffling as, for example, in the departments of

- 1 Mesmerism and hypnotism.
- 2 The supposed posthumous relations of the disincarnate entity with the living.
- 3 The nature and relations of Force and Matter capable of practical verification by whomsoever may learn and follow out the experimental methods of the Oriental Schools of Occult science.

Eastern Occult Science and its complementary philosophy throws light upon some of the deepest problems of man and nature. But Occultism is colourless, cosmopolitan, unsectarian, sexless, unworldly, altruistic.



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All the performances of human heart at which we look with praise or wonder are instances of the resistless force of PERSEVERANCE. It is by this that the quarry becomes a pyramid, and that distant countries are united by canals . . . Operations incessantly continued, in time surmount the greatest difficulties, and mountains are levelled and oceans bounded by the slender force of human beings.

— JOHNSON

So it is, and must be always, my dear boys. If the Angel Gabriel were to come down from heaven and head a successful rise against the most abominable and unrighteous vested interest which the poor old world groans under, he would most certainly lose his character for many years, probably for centuries, not only with upholders of the said vested interest, but with the respectable mass of people he had delivered.

— HUGHES

*Post nubila Phoebus.*¹ — After the clouds, sunshine. With this, *Lucifer* enters upon its fifth volume; and having borne her share of the battle of personalities which has been raging throughout the last volume, the editor feels as though she has earned the right to a period of peace. In deciding to enjoy that, at all costs, hereafter, she is moved as much by a feeling of contempt for the narrow-mindedness, ignorance and bigotry of her adversaries as by a feeling of fatigue with such wearisome inanities. So far, then, as she can manage to control her indignation and not too placid temperament, she will henceforth treat with disdain the calumnious misrepresentations of which she seems to be the chronic victim.

The beginning of a volume is the fittest time for a retrospect; and to such we now invite the reader's attention.

If the outside public know Theosophy only as one half-sees a dim shape through the dust of battle, the members of our Society at least ought to keep in mind what it is doing on the lines of its declared objects. It is to be feared that they overlook this, amid the din of this sensational discussion of its principles, and the calumnies levelled at its officers. While the narrower-minded of the Secularists, Christians and Spiritualists vie with each other in attempts to cover with opprobrium one of the leaders of Theosophy, and to belittle its claims to public regard, the Theosophical Society is moving on in dignity towards the goal it set up for itself at the beginning.

Silently, but irresistibly, it is widening its circle of usefulness and endearing its name to various nations. While its traducers are busy at their ignoble work, it is creating the facts for its future historiographer. It is not in polemical pamphlets or sensational newspaper articles that its permanent record will be made, but in the visible realisation of its original scheme of making a nucleus of universal brotherhood, reviving Oriental literature and philosophies, and aiding in the study of occult problems in physical and psychological science. The Society is barely fourteen years old, yet how

¹ [Inspired by Aesop's fable, "The North Wind and the Sun."]

much has it not accomplished! And how much that involves work of the highest quality. Our opponents may not be inclined to do us justice, but our vindication is sure to come later on. Meanwhile, let the plain facts be put on record without varnish or exaggeration. Classifying them under the appropriate headings, they are as follows:

Sowing the seed from which, in time, will be garnered the full harvest of our evangel of brotherhood and mutual dependence.

When we arrived in India, in February 1879, there was no unity between the races and sects of the Peninsula, no sense of a common public interest, no disposition to find the mutual relation between the several sects of ancient Hinduism, or that between them and the creeds of Islam, Jainism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. Between the Brāhmanical Hindus of India and their kinsmen, the modern Sinhalese Buddhists, there had been no religious intercourse since some remote epoch. And again, between the several castes of the Sinhalese — for, true to their archaic Hindu parentage, the Sinhalese do still cling to caste despite the letter and spirit of their Buddhist religion — there was a complete disunity, no intermarriages, no spirit of patriotic homogeneity, but a rancorous sectarian and caste ill-feeling. As for any international reciprocity, in either social or religious affairs, between the Sinhalese and the Northern Buddhistic nations, such a thing had never existed. Each was absolutely ignorant of and indifferent about the other's views, wants or aspirations. Finally, between the races of Asia and those of Europe and America there was the most complete absence of sympathy as to religious and philosophical questions. The labours of the Orientalists from Sir William Jones and Burnouf down to Prof. Max Müller, had created among the learned a philosophical interest, but among the masses not even that. If to the above we add that all the Oriental religions, without exception, were being asphyxiated to death by the poisonous gas of Western official science, through the medium of the educational agencies of European administrations and Missionary propagandists, and that the Native graduates and undergraduates of India, Ceylon and Japan had largely turned agnostics and revilers of the old religions, it will be seen how difficult a task it must have been to bring something like harmony out of this chaos, and make a tolerant if not a friendly feeling spring up and banish these hatreds, evil suspicions, ill-feelings, and mutual ignorance.

Ten years have passed and what do we see? Taking the points *seriatim* we find — that throughout India unity and brotherhood have replaced the old disunity, one hundred and twenty-five Branches of our Society have sprung up in India alone, each a nucleus of our idea of fraternity, a centre of religious and social unity. Their membership embraces representatives of all the better castes and all Hindu sects, and a majority are of that class of hereditary savants and philosophers, the Brahmins, to pervert whom to Christianity has been the futile struggle of the Missionary and the self-appointed task of that high-class forlorn hope, the Oxford and Cambridge Missions. The President of our Society, Col. Olcott, has traversed the whole of India several times, upon invitation, addressing vast crowds upon theosophical themes and sowing the seed from which, in time, will be garnered the full harvest of our evangel of brotherhood and mutual dependence. The growth of this kindly feeling has been proven in a variety of ways: first, in the unprecedented gathering of races,

castes and sects in the annual conventions of the Theosophical Society, second, in the rapid growth of a theosophical literature advocating our altruistic views, in the founding of various journals and magazines in several languages, and in the rapid cessation of sectarian controversies; third, in the sudden birth and phenomenally rapid growth of the patriotic movement which is centralized in the organisation called the Indian National Congress This remarkable political body was planned by certain of our Anglo-Indian and Hindu members after the model and on the lines of the Theosophical Society, and has from the first been directed by our own colleagues, men among the most influential in the Indian Empire. At the same time, there is no connection whatever, barring that through the personalities of individuals, between the Congress and its mother-body, our Society. It would never have come into existence, in all probability, if Col. Olcott had suffered himself to be tempted into the side paths of human brotherhood, politics, social reforms, *etc.*, as many have wanted him to do. We aroused the dormant spirit and warmed the Āryan blood of the Hindus, and one vent the new life made for itself was this Congress. All this is simple history and passes unchallenged.

Crossing over to Ceylon, behold the miracles our Society has wrought, upon the evidence of many addresses, reports and other official documents heretofore brought under the notice of our readers and the general public. The caste-men affiliating; the sectarian ill-feeling almost obliterated; sixteen Branches of the Society formed in the Island, the entire Sinhalese community, one may almost say, looking to us for counsel, example and leadership; a committee of Buddhists going over to India with Col. Olcott to plant a cocoanut — ancient symbol of affection and good-will — in the compound of the Hindu Temple in Tinnevely, and Kandyan nobles, until now holding aloof from the low-country people with the haughty disdain of their feudal traditions, becoming Presidents of our Branches, and even travelling as Buddhist lecturers.

Ceylon was the *foyer* from which the religion of Gautama streamed out to Cambodia, Siam and Burma; what then, could be more appropriate than that there should be borne from this Holy Land a message of Brotherhood to Japan! How this message was taken, how delivered by our President, and with what magnificent results, is too well known to the whole Western World to need reiteration of the story in the present connection. Suffice it to say, it ranks among the most dramatic events in history, and is the all sufficient, unanswerable and crowning proof of the vital reality of our scheme to beget the feeling of Universal Brotherhood among all peoples, races, kindreds, castes and colours.

Buddha's aura has inspired the creation of the Buddhist Flag.

One evidence of the practical good sense shown in our management is the creation of the "Buddhist Flag" as a conventional symbol of the religion apart from all sectarian questions. Until now the Buddhists have had no such symbol as the cross affords to the Christians, and consequently have lacked that essential sign of their common relation to each other, which is the crystallizing point, so to say, of the fraternal force our Society is trying to evoke. The Buddhist flag effectually supplies this want. It is made in the usual proportions of national ensigns, as to length and width, and composed of six vertical bars of colours in the following order: Sapphire blue, golden yellow, crimson, white, scarlet and a bar combining all the other colours. This is no ar-

bitrary selection of hues, but the application to this present purpose of the tints described in the old Pali and Sanskrit works as visible in the *psychosphere* or aura, around Buddha's person and conventionally depicted as chromatic vibrations around his images in Ceylon and other countries. *Esoterically*, they are very suggestive in their combination. The new flag was first hoisted on our Colombo Headquarters, then adopted with acclaim throughout Ceylon; and being introduced by Col. Olcott into Japan, spread throughout that Empire even within the brief term of his recent visit.

Calumny cannot obliterate or even belittle the least of these facts. They have passed through the fog of today's hatred into the sunshine which lights up all events for the eye of the historian.

Through its various literary and corporate agencies, the Theosophical Society has disseminated through the whole world a knowledge of and taste for Aryan Philosophy.

No one unacquainted with India and the Hindus can form a conception of the state of feeling among the younger generation of college and school-bred Hindus towards their ancestral religion, that prevailed at the time of our advent there, ten years ago. The materialistic and agnostic attitude of mind towards religion in the abstract, which prevails in Western Universities, had been conveyed to the Indian colleges and schools by their graduates, the European Professors who occupied the several chairs in the latter institutions of learning. The text books fed this spirit, and the educated Hindus, as a class, were thoroughly sceptical in religious matters, and only followed the rites and observances of the national cult from considerations of social necessity. As for the Missionary Colleges and schools, their effect was only to create doubt and prejudice against Hinduism and all religions, without in the least winning regard for Christianity or making converts. The cure for all this was, of course, to attack the citadel of scepticism, scientific Sciolism, and prove the scientific basis of religion in general and of Hinduism in particular. This task was undertaken from the first and pursued to the point of victory; a result evident to every traveller who enquires into the present state of Indian opinion. The change has been noted by Sir Richard Temple, Sir Edwin Arnold, Mrs. W.S. Caine, M.P., Lady Jersey, Sir Monier-Williams, the Primate of India, the Bishops and Archdeacons of all the Presidencies, the organs of the several Missionary societies, the Principals and Professors of their colleges, the correspondents of European journals, a host of Indian authors and editors, congresses of Sanskrit pandits, and has been admitted in terms of fervent gratitude in multitudes of addresses read to Col. Olcott in the course of his extended journeys. Without exaggeration or danger of contradiction, it may be affirmed that the labours of the Theosophical Society in India have infused a fresh and vigorous life into Hindu Philosophy; revived the Hindu Religion; won back the allegiance of the graduate class to the ancestral beliefs; created an enthusiasm for Sanskrit Literature that shows itself in the republication of old Encyclopaedias, scriptures and commentaries, the foundation of many Sanskrit schools, the patronage of Sanskrit by Native Princes, and in other ways. Moreover, through its various literary and corporate agencies, the Society has disseminated through the whole world a knowledge of and taste for Aryan Philosophy.

The reflex action of this work is seen in the popular demand for theosophical literature, and novels and magazine tales embodying Oriental ideas. Another important effect is the modification by Eastern Philosophy of the views of the Spiritualists, which has fairly begun, with respect to the source of some of the intelligence behind mediumistic phenomena. Still another is the adhesion of Mrs. Annie Besant — brought about by the study of Esoteric Doctrine — from the Secularist party, an event fraught with most important consequences, both to our Society, to Secularism and the general public. Sanskrit names never previously heard in the West have become familiar to the reading public, and works like the *Bhagavad-Gita* are now to be found in the bookshops of Europe, America and Australasia.

Ceylon has seen a revival of Buddhism, the circulation of religious books by tens of thousands, the translation of the *Buddhist Catechism* into many languages of the East, West and North, the founding of theosophical High Schools at Colombo, Kandy and Ratnapura, the opening of nearly fifty schools for Buddhist children under the supervision of our Society, the granting of a national Buddhist Holiday by the Government, and of other important privileges, the establishment of a vernacular semi-weekly Buddhist journal in Colombo, and one in English, both composed, printed and published from the Society's own printing-office. And it has also seen us bring from Japan seven clever young Buddhist priests to learn Pali under the venerated High Priest Sumangala, so as to be able to expound to their own countrymen the Buddhistic canon as it exists in the Southern Church twenty-five centuries after the nirvana of Buddha.

Thus, it is not to be doubted or denied that, within its first fourteen years of existence, the Theosophical Society has succeeded to an extent beyond all expectation in realising the first two of its three declared objects. It has proved that neither race, nor creed, neither colour, nor old antipathies are irremovable obstacles to the spread of the idea of altruism and human brotherhood, Utopian dream as it may have been considered by theorists who view man as a mere physical problem, ignoring the inner, greater, higher self.

Occultism is colourless, cosmopolitan, unsectarian, sexless, unworldly, altruistic.

Though but a minority of our members are mystically inclined, yet, in point of fact, the key to all our successes as above enumerated is in our recognition of the fact of the Higher Self — colourless, cosmopolitan, unsectarian, sexless, unworldly, altruistic — and the doing of our work on that basis. To the Secularist, the Agnostic, the Sciolistic Scientist, such results would have been unattainable, nay, would have been unthinkable. Peace Societies are Utopian, because no amount of argument based upon exoteric considerations of social morals or expediency, can turn the hearts of the rulers of nations away from selfish war and schemes of conquest.

Social differentiations, the result of physical evolutions and material environment, breed race hatreds and sectarian and social antipathies that are insurmountable if attacked from the outside. But, since human nature is ever identical, all men are alike open to influences which centre upon the human "heart," and appeal to the human intuition; and as there is but one Absolute Truth, and this is the soul and life of all human creeds, it is possible to effect a reciprocal alliance for the research of

and dissemination of that basic Truth. We know that a comprehensive term for that Eternal Verity is the “Secret Doctrine”; we have preached it, have won a hearing, have, to some extent, swept away the old barriers, formed our fraternal nucleus, and, by reviving the Āryan Literature, caused its precious religious, philosophical and scientific teachings to spread among the most distant nations.

If we have not opened regular schools of adeptship in the Society, we have at least brought forward a certain body of proof that adepts exist and that adeptship is a logical necessity in the natural order of human development. We have thus helped the West to a worthier ideal of man’s potentialities than it before possessed. The study of Eastern psychology has given the West a clue to certain mysteries previously baffling as, for example, in the department of mesmerism and hypnotism, and in that of the supposed posthumous relations of the disincarnate entity with the living. It has also furnished a theory of the nature and relations of Force and Matter capable of practical verification by whomsoever may learn and follow out the experimental methods of the Oriental schools of Occult science. Our own experience leads us to say that this science and its complementary philosophy throw light upon some of the deepest problems of man and nature; in science, bridging the “Impassable Chasm,” in philosophy, making it possible to formulate a consistent theory of the origin and destiny of the heavenly orbs and their progeny of kingdoms and various planes. Where Mr. Crookes stops in his quest after the meta-elements, and finds himself at a loss to trace the missing atoms in his hypothetical series of seven, Advaita Philosophy steps in with its perfected theory of the evolution of differentiated out of undifferentiated matter, Prakriti out of Mūlaprakriti — the “rootless root.”

With the present publication of *The Key to Theosophy*, a new work that explains clearly and in plain language what our Esoteric Theosophy believes in and what it disbelieves and *positively rejects*, there will remain no more pretexts for flinging at our heads fantastic accusations. Now the “correspondents” of Spiritualistic and other *Weeklies*, as well as those who afflict respectable daily papers with denunciations of the *alleged* “dogmas of the Theosophists” that never had any existence outside our traducers’ heads, will have to prove what they father upon us, by showing chapter and verse for it in our Theosophical publications, and especially in *The Key to Theosophy*.¹

They can plead ignorance no longer; and if they would still denounce, they must do so on the authority of what is stated therein, as everyone has now an easy opportunity offered him of learning our philosophy.

To close, our Society has done more within its fourteen years of life to familiarize Western thinkers with great Āryan thought and discovery than any other agency within the past nineteen centuries. What it is likely to do in the future cannot be forecast; but experience warrants the hope that it may be very much, and that it will enlarge its already wide field of useful activity.



¹ By H.P. Blavatsky. The Theosophical Publishing Company Limited, 7 Duke Street, Adelphi, W.C. Price 5s.