

*Theosophia*

# INNER WISDOM

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Integrative Theosophical Studies Online Series 1  
Eclectic Theosophy

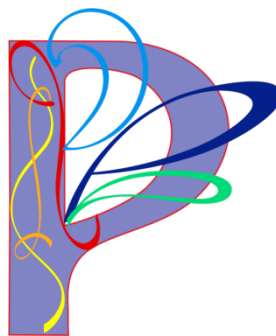
*Theosophia*

# INNER WISDOM

Origin, practical application, and ultimate destiny

**Compiled and edited by  
Dr C A Bartzokas, MD**

Revised, enlarged, and updated  
Version 97.67-2019



[www.philaletheians.co.uk](http://www.philaletheians.co.uk)

2009

First published in Great Britain 1996  
Philaletheians, Ty Ucha, Hafod Road, Gwernymynydd, Near Mold, CH7 5JS

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ISBN-10 0 9550400 3 5  
ISBN-13 978 0 9550400 3 0

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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## **Cover design**

Philaletheians GR.

## **Logotypes**

Three-leaf logo designed by John Burrows, MCSD; P-logo, by George Pappas.

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## Prefatory notes

This is a brief overview of the origin, practical application, and ultimate destiny of Theosophy from the writings of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891). It has been assembled as an offering to those who, having perceived that living for others is the only life worth living, aspire to apprehend the Truth of truths by studying, assimilating, modelling, and applying the Golden Precepts in everyday life. Madame Blavatsky is the leading exponent of the modern Theosophical Movement, great noetic radiance of our epoch, acclaimed philosopher and mystic, indefatigable servant of humanity.

This work first appeared in 1996, as study notes from *The Secret Doctrine*, and was shared with fellow Theosophists in the UK and overseas the following year. In 2000, it was published by the Theosophical Society in England under the title *Theosophy: the Truth Revealed*. In 2006, it was revised and released to the public at large under the auspices of <http://www.theosophy.gr>

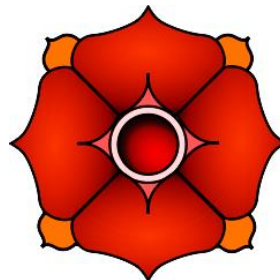
Further revised and typographically enhanced, it is now republished as part of our Integrative Theosophical Studies Online Series 1 – Eclectic Theosophy.<sup>1</sup> Titles of frequently quoted works are abridged as indicated in: *Compassion the Spirit of Truth* (2009). The Editor's Notes are common to all our publications and can be found in the same place.

References were omitted from the Diagram, on page 41, to avoid cluttering. Still, every aspect, epithet, and synonym of Theosophia can be readily followed through Dara Eklund's *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings Cumulative Index* (Vol. XV). Tracing excerpts back to the original source, so that they can be studied in full and in context, will allow a deeper appreciation of Theosophy's sanctuary of ideals and kindle the dying embers of spirituality in man's heart.<sup>2</sup>

Eighty-four studies, supplemental to this title, can be found in our Theosophy and Theosophists Series. These are listed on pages 42-44.

SERIES EDITOR

17<sup>th</sup> November 2009



<sup>1</sup> Theosophy has been Anglicised from the Greek term Θεσοσοφία, i.e., divine or inner wisdom. No orthography was imposed in this study except in the main title and the Diagram on page 41, where the correct transliteration is given. Find out why it was unlawful to change divine names in: *Compassion: the Spirit of Truth* (2009), p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FROM KESHUB BABU TO MAESTRO WAGNER) IV p. 334

## Abstract

### *The renaissance of ancient spiritualism.*

Theosophy is Archaic Wisdom-Religion, as taught by Masters and Magi, Sages and Hierophants, Prophets and Philosophers, to the Elect — undisguised by symbols. It is Spiritual Knowledge, reasoned out and corroborated by personal experience.

Diogenes Laërtius traces Theosophy to an epoch antedating the dynasty of the Ptolemies. But, in fact, Theosophy is much older: It is the parent stem of Archaic Wisdom. The term was revived in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD by Ammonius Saccas, the Alexandrian Socrates of Neo-Platonism, teacher of Plotinus, and founder of the Eclectic Theosophical System. Briefly, Eclectic Theosophy asserts that:

- Humanity is a periodic emanation from a single noetic essence and,
- When by exertion and merit, a mortal soul activates its latent faculties and potencies, it can be re-connected with its immortal noetic origin and source.

Hence, the Buddhistic, Vedāntic, and Magian or Zoroastrian systems were taught in the Eclectic Theosophical School along with all the philosophies of Greece.

It was Theosophy which prompted such men as Hegel, Fichte, and Spinoza, to take up the labours of the old Grecian philosophers and speculate upon the One Substance — the Deity, the Divine All, proceeding from Divine Wisdom. And it was Theosophy that made it possible for great thinkers such as Plotinus, Schelling, and Emerson, to reflect upon man's divine ancestry.

### *What Theosophy is and is not.*

By looking inwards at the noumenal worlds and causes, Theosophy is Esoteric Science, par excellence. Exact Science is only concerned with phenomenal worlds and effects. Esoteric Science corroborates Nature's metaphysics and Divine Laws; Exact Science, Its physics and natural laws.

In Its fruition, Theosophy is Inner Knowledge about the divinity of Cosmos and Man, and a noetic progression from the known and knowable, to the unknown and, otherwise, unknowable. And, as such, It lies at the root of every moral philosophy, religion, and science.

Theosophy is the world's tree of knowledge and sum total of all sciences. It is the accumulated wisdom of Divine Beings from the beginning of time, who have willingly accepted the harshness and drudgery of sentient life to help their toiling brothers.

Theosophy is not a religion. It is but an analytical science, the ally of every honest religion. Being the culmination and practical demonstration of the Truths underlying every creed, Theosophy is compatible with every religion. It believes in no miracle, whether divine or devilish, and cherishes no anthropomorphic concepts, whether gods or demons.

Theosophy discriminates between finite animal man, and Infinite Divine Man, and differs from the Vedāntin doctrines. It is not even "esoteric" religion! Every old religion is but a chapter or two of the entire volume of archaic primeval mysteries — Eastern Occultism alone being able to boast that it is in possession of the full secret,

with its seven keys. In other words, Theosophy is Religion itself! Loyalty to Truth is Its creed, Brotherhood of all beings, not just men, Its noble aim.

Theosophy is Inner Wisdom or Divine Knowledge. It is at the heart of all religions and philosophies from the earliest time to the present day, embracing all domains of mundane knowledge and human endeavour. Yet, It is a practical, and an ethical philosophy, ever transcending self-imposed boundaries to expand consciousness, and to dispel lingering doubts. In short, Theosophy is Supernal Philosophy, Wisdom's True Love, not mere verbiage. It is a philosophy to live by.

***Metaphysically, Theosophy is the accumulated testimony and wisdom of the ages.***

Theosophy is not knowledge of a "God," It is knowledge of gods, Celestial Knowledge: a shoreless ocean of Everlasting Truth, Love, and Impartiality, monistic through and through. By seeking the One Truth, its allied with the ideals of every seeker of Truth.

To fully define Theosophy, we must consider it under all its aspects. By means of Its Golden Precepts, those who are intellectually and ethically fit might gain insights of the inner world of being. There, mystics can see past, present, and future as in a mirror.

Theosophy wakes up and frees the Heavenly Man from the clutches of Its outer shadow, so that He can live for others, here on Earth, unconstrained by his earthly jailer, forgetting himself in the midst of the many selves, in the words of a Philaletheian.

***Ethically, Theosophy is unconditioned love for humanity and for all that lives.***

Theosophy is philanthropy, par excellence, unconditioned and unreserved love for our fellow human beings and for all that lives, in thought and deed. It alone can restore hope and instil responsibility in a world suffocating from ignorance and its own misdeeds, by mediating between egotism and altruism. Even the great Law of Harmony depends on altruism!

Theosophy's aim and noble mission is to establish a community of spiritual thinkers who, by studying Its precepts and enriching everyday life with Its exalted ethics, can bring about a peaceful realignment of mainstream thought, as a matter of urgency!

***Warnings to aspirants.***

Those who do not enter inner life in the Spirit of Brotherhood;

Those who try to degrade a noble philosophy into a den for immorality;

Those who are ignorant of the dangers of psychic powers;

And specially those who have already pledged to live for the World,

Beware! Only purity of deed and thought can raise you to the company of your Divine Self.



## The renaissance of ancient spiritualism

### Theosophy is Archaic Wisdom-Religion,



### As taught by Masters and Magi, Sages and Hierophants, Prophets and Philosophers, to the Elect, undisguised by symbols.

. . . the esoteric doctrine once known in every ancient country having claims to civilization. This “Wisdom” all the old writings show us as an emanation<sup>1</sup> of the divine Principle; and the clear comprehension of it is typified in such names as the Indian Budha, the Babylonian Nebo, the Thoth of Memphis, the Hermes of Greece; in the appellations,<sup>2</sup> also, of some goddesses — Metis, Neitha, Athena, the Gnostic *Sophia*, and finally — the *Vedas*, from the word “to know.” Under this designation, all the ancient philosophers of the East and West, the Hierophants<sup>3</sup> of old Egypt, the Rishis<sup>4</sup> of Āryāvarta, the Theodidaktoi<sup>5</sup> of Greece, included all knowledge of things occult and essentially divine. The *Merkābāh*<sup>6</sup> of the Hebrew Rabbis, the secular and popular series, were thus designated as only the vehicle, the outward shell which contained the higher esoteric knowledge. The Magi<sup>7</sup> of Zoroaster received instruction and were initiated in the caves and secret lodges of Bactria; the Egyptian and Grecian hierophants had their *aporrhēta*, or secret discourses, during which the *Mystēs* became an *Epoptēs* — a Seer.<sup>8</sup>

The title of *sages* — the high-priests of this worship of truth [Love of Wisdom] — was its first derivative. . . . It is to Pythagoras that we owe [the name Philosophy], as also that of *gnosis*, the system of *η γνωσις των οντων*, “the knowledge of things that are,” or of the essence that is hidden beneath the external appearances. Under that name, so noble and so correct in its definition, all masters of antiquity designated the aggregate of human and divine knowledge. The sages and Brāhmanas of India, the magi of Chaldea

<sup>1</sup> [A flowing out of a source, the universe being considered as *issuing from the essence of god*.]

<sup>2</sup> [That by which anything is called; name, especially one attached to a particular person.]

<sup>3</sup> [One who shows or reveals sacred things; a priest, an expounder.]

<sup>4</sup> [An adept, a sage, a poet; esoterically the highest are the “builders” of the universe, called Dhyāni-Chohans, devas, or gods.]

<sup>5</sup> [Taught by god; of persons; of inspired prophets; of souls enlightened by Christian faith.]

<sup>6</sup> [A chariot. The Kabbalists say that the supreme, after it had established the ten Sephīrōth, used them as a chariot or throne of glory, on which to descend upon the souls of men.]

<sup>7</sup> [*Pl.* of magus: ancient hereditary priests and adepts in Persia and elsewhere; a word derived from *mahā*, great, which became later *mog* or *mag*, a priest in Pehlevi; Porphyry describes them as “the learned men, who are engaged among the Persians in the service of the Deity.”]

<sup>8</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?) II pp. 89-90

and Persia, the hierophants of Egypt and Arabia, the prophets of *nebíim* of Judaea and of Israel, as well as the philosophers of Greece and Rome, have always classified that special science in two divisions — the *esoteric*, or the true, and the *exoteric*, disguised by symbols.<sup>1</sup>

**It is Spiritual Knowledge,  
reasoned out and corroborated  
by personal experience.**



2

**Diogenes Laërtius traces Theosophy to an epoch antedating the dynasty of the Ptolemies.**

**But, in fact, Theosophy is much older: It is the parent stem of Archaic Wisdom.**

. . . The uninterrupted record covering thousands of generations of Seers, whose respective experiences were made to test and to verify the traditions passed orally by one early race to another, of the teachings of higher and exalted beings, who watched over the childhood of Humanity. . . . for long ages . . . “Wise men” . . . saved and rescued from the last cataclysm and shifting of continents, had passed their lives *in learning, not teaching* . . . by checking, testing, and verifying in every department of nature the traditions of old by the independent visions of great adepts. . . . No vision of one adept was accepted till it was checked and confirmed by the visions — so obtained as to stand as independent evidence — of other adepts, and by centuries of experience.<sup>3</sup> . . . There were Theosophists before the Christian era, notwithstanding that the Christian writers ascribe the development of the Eclectic theosophical system, to the early part of the third century of their Era.<sup>4</sup>

. . . and names as its founder an Egyptian Hierophant called Pot-Amun, the name being Coptic and signifying a priest consecrated to Amun, the god of Wisdom.<sup>5</sup>

Theosophy is synonymous with the *Jnana-Vidyā*, and the *Brahma-Vidyā*<sup>6</sup> of the Hindus, and again with the *Dzyan* of the trans-Himalayan adepts, the science of the *true* Raja-Yogis, who are much more accessible than one thinks. This science has many schools in the East, but its offshoots are more numerous, each one ultimately separating itself from the parent stem — the *Archaic Wisdom* — and modifying its form.

<sup>1</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE BEACON OF THE UNKNOWN – II) XI p. 256

<sup>2</sup> *Music of the Woods*, by Vladimir Kush.

<sup>3</sup> *Cf. Secret Doctrine*, I pp. 272-73

<sup>4</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?) II p. 88

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, II pp. 88-89; [based on Alexander Wilder’s *New Platonism and Alchemy*.]

<sup>6</sup> The meaning of the word *Vidyā* can only be rendered by the Greek term *gnosis*, the knowledge of hidden and spiritual things; or gains, the knowledge of *Brahmā*, that is to say, of the God that contains all the gods.

But while these forms varied, departing from the Light of Truth, more and more with each generation, the basis of initiatory truths remained always the same. The symbols used to express the same ideas may differ, but in their hidden sense they always express the same thoughts.<sup>1</sup>

**The term was revived in the third century AD by Ammonius Saccas, the Alexandrian Socrates of Neo-Platonism, teacher of Plotinus, and founder of the Eclectic Theosophical System.**

[Ammonius Saccas] and his disciples called themselves “Philaletheians” — lovers of the truth; while others termed them the “Analogists,” on account of their method of interpreting all sacred legends, symbolical myths and mysteries, by a rule of analogy or correspondence, so that events which had occurred in the external world were regarded as expressing operations and experiences of the human soul. It was the aim and purpose of Ammonius to reconcile all sects, peoples and nations under one common faith — a belief in one Supreme, Eternal, Unknown, and Unnamed Power, governing the Universe by immutable and eternal laws. His object was . . .<sup>2</sup>

To prove a primitive system of Theosophy, which at the beginning was essentially alike in all countries;

To induce all men to lay aside their strifes and quarrels, and unite in purpose and thought as the children of one common mother;

To purify the ancient religions, by degrees corrupted and obscured, from all dross of human element, by uniting and expounding them upon pure philosophical principles.<sup>3</sup>

**Eclectic Theosophy asserts:**

- 1. Humanity is a periodic emanation from a single Noetic Essence, and**
- 2. When by exertion and merit a mortal soul activates its latent faculties and potentials, it can be re-connected with its immortal noetic origin and source.**

The central idea of the Eclectic<sup>4</sup> Theosophy was that of a single Supreme Essence, Unknown and *Unknownable*, for:

“How could one know the knower?”

as enquires *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad*. Their system was characterised by three distinct features:

- [1] The theory of the above-named Essence;
- [2] The doctrine of the human soul — an emanation from the latter, hence of the same nature;
- [3] And its theurgy.

<sup>1</sup> Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (THE BEACON OF THE UNKNOWN - VI) XI pp. 271-72

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, XI p. 271

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, (WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?) II p. 89; [based on Alexander Wilder’s *New Platonism and Alchemy*.]

<sup>4</sup> [*Lit.* choosing the best out of everything; name applied to certain Greek thinkers in C2 & C3 BCE.]

It is this last science which has led the Neo-Platonists to be so misrepresented in our era of materialistic science. Theurgy being essentially the art of applying the divine powers of man to the subordination of the blind forces of nature, its votaries were first termed magicians — a corruption of the word “Magh,” signifying a wise, or learned man, and — derided. Sceptics of a century ago would have been as wide of the mark if they had laughed at the idea of a phonograph or a telegraph. The ridiculed and the “infidels” of one generation generally become the wise men and saints of the next.<sup>1</sup>

**Hence, the Buddhistic, Vedantic, and Magian or Zoroastrian systems were taught in the Eclectic Theosophical School along with all the philosophies of Greece.**

. . . Hence also, that pre-eminently Buddhistic and Indian feature among the ancient Theosophists of Alexandria,

Of due reverence for parents and aged persons;

A fraternal affection for the whole human race;

And a compassionate feeling for even the dumb animals.

While seeking to establish a system of moral discipline which enforced upon people the duty to live according to the laws of their respective countries;

To exalt their minds by the research and contemplation of the one Absolute Truth;<sup>2</sup> . . .

[Ammonius Saccas’ chief object] was to extract from the various religious teachings, as from a many-chorded instrument, one full and harmonious melody, which would find response in every truth-loving heart.<sup>3</sup>

**It was Theosophy which prompted such men as Hegel, Fichte, and Spinoza, to take up the labours of the old Grecian philosophers and speculate upon the One Substance, the Deity, the Divine All, proceeding from Divine Wisdom.**

. . . incomprehensible, unknown, and unnamed — by any ancient or modern religious philosophy, with the exception of Christianity and Mohammedanism. Every Theosophist, then, holding to a theory of the Deity “which has not revelation, but an inspiration of his own for its basis,” may accept any of the above definitions or belong to any of these religions, and yet remain strictly within the boundaries of Theoso-

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<sup>1</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?) II p. 90 [Magic: by the agency of good spirits; miraculous divine action; a communication with planetary spirits and angels, “the gods of light.” The first school of theurgy (*theurgia*) in the Christian period was founded by Iamblichus among other Alexandrian Platonists. Cf. *Isis Unveiled*, I p. xlii.]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 89; [based on Alexander Wilder’s *New Platonism and Alchemy*.]

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, (WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?) II p. 89]



phy. For the latter is belief in the Deity as the ALL, the source of all existence, the infinite that cannot be either comprehended or known, the universe alone revealing It, or, as some prefer it, Him, thus giving a sex to that, to anthropomorphize which is blasphemy. True, Theosophy shrinks from brutal materialization; it prefers believing that, from eternity retired within itself, the Spirit of the Deity neither wills nor creates; but that, from the infinite effulgency everywhere going forth from the Great Centre, that which produces all visible and invisible things is but a Ray containing in itself the generative and conceptive power, which, in its turn produces that which the Greeks called Macrocosm, the Kabbalists Tikkūn or Adam Kadmon — the archetypal man, and the Aryans Purusha, the manifested Brahm, or the Divine Male. Theosophy believes also in the Anastasis or continued existence, and in transmigration (evolution) or a series of changes in the soul<sup>1</sup> which can be defended and explained on strict philosophical principles; and only by making a distinction between Paramātma (transcendental, supreme soul) and Jivātma (animal, or conscious soul) of the Vedāntins.<sup>2</sup>

**And it was Theosophy that made it possible for great thinkers such as Plotinus, Schelling, and Emerson, o reflect upon man's divine ancestry.**

Plotinus, the pupil of the “God-taught” Ammonius, tells us, that the secret *gnosis* or the knowledge of Theosophy, has three degrees — opinion, science, and *illumination*. “The means or instrument:

Of [opinion] the first is sense, or perception;

Of [science] the second, dialectics;

Of [illumination] the third, intuition.

To the last, reason is subordinate; it is *absolute knowledge*, founded on the identification of the mind with the object known.” Theosophy is the exact science of psychology, so to say; it stands in relation to natural, uncultivated mediumship, as the knowledge of a Tyndall stands to that of a school-boy in physics. It develops in man a direct beholding; that which

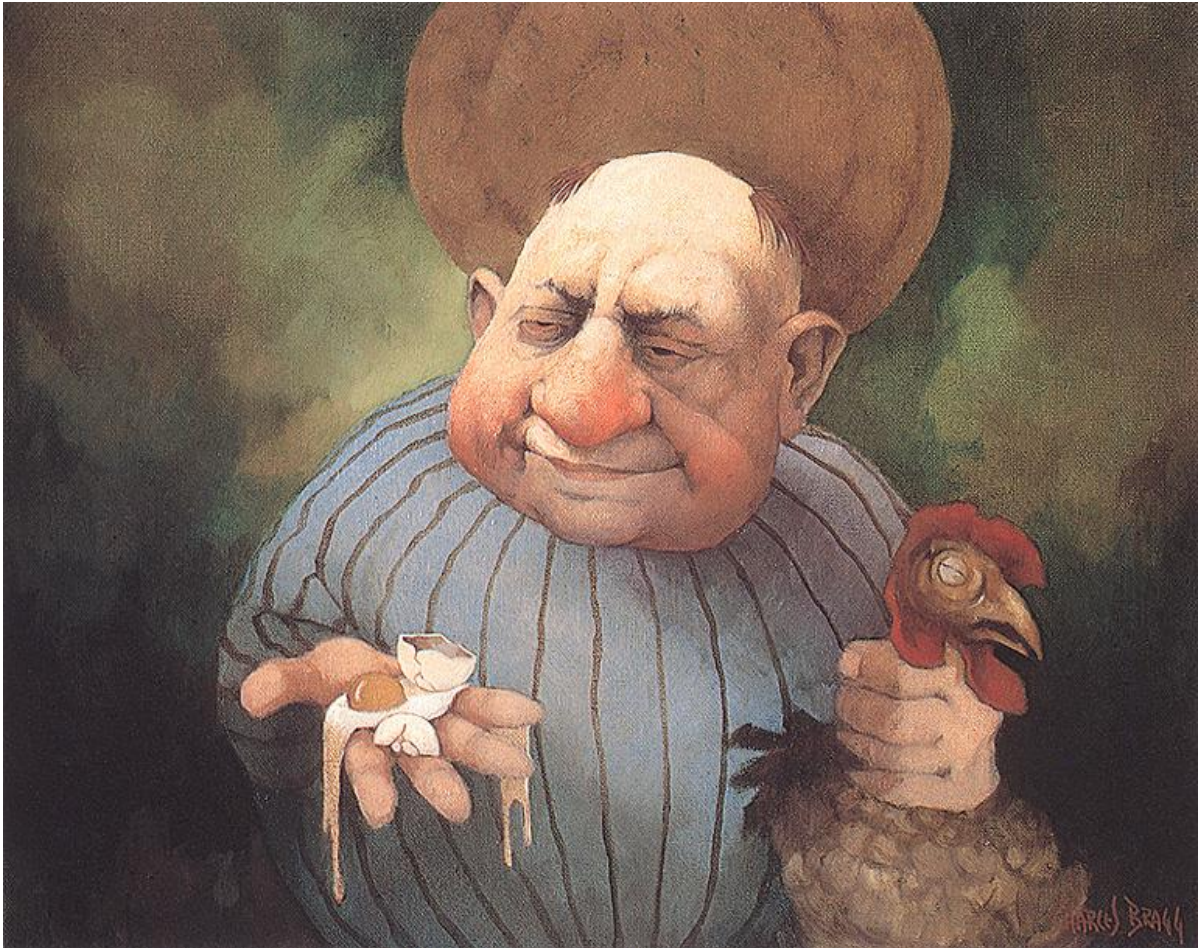
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<sup>1</sup> In a series of articles entitled “The World’s Great Theosophists,” we intend showing that from Pythagoras, who got his wisdom in India, down to our best known modern philosophers, and theosophists — David Hume, and Shelley, the English poet the Spiritists of France included — many believed and yet believe in metempsychosis or reincarnation of the soul; however unelaborated the system of the Spiritists may fairly be regarded.

[Such a series of articles was never written by H.P. Blavatsky, although some of the material in *The Theosophical Glossary*, published posthumously in 1892, has similarity to the general aim Blavatsky may have had in view. — Boris de Zirkoff.]

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, (WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?) II pp. 91-92

Schelling denominates “a realization of the identity of subject and object in the individual”; so that under the influence and knowledge of *hyponoia*<sup>1</sup> man thinks divine thoughts, views all things as they really are, and, finally, “becomes recipient of the Soul of the World,” to use one of the finest expressions of Emerson. “I, the imperfect, adore my own Perfect” — he says in his superb Essay on *The Over-Soul*.<sup>2</sup>



The Riddle, by Charles Bragg

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<sup>1</sup> [Underlying meaning; deeper sense.]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?) II pp. 95-96

# What Theosophy is and is not

## 1. Is Theosophy a science?

**By looking inwards at the noumenal<sup>1</sup> worlds and causes, Theosophy is Esoteric Science, par excellence. Exact Science is only concerned with phenomenal worlds and effects.**

. . . the Esoteric Doctrine may well be called the “thread-doctrine,” since, like *Sutratman*, in the Vedanta philosophy, it passes through and strings together all the ancient philosophical religious systems, and reconciles and explains them all. We say now it does more. It not only reconciles the various and apparently conflicting systems, but it checks the discoveries of modern exact science, and shows some of them to be necessarily correct, since they are found corroborated in the ancient records.

Science is, undeniably, ultra-materialistic in our days; but it finds, in one sense, its justification. Nature behaving *in actu*<sup>2</sup> ever esoterically, and being, as the Kabbalists say, *in abscondito*,<sup>3</sup> can only be judged by the profane through her appearance, and that appearance is always deceitful on the physical plane. On the other hand, the naturalists refuse to blend physics with metaphysics, the body with its informing soul and spirit, which they prefer ignoring. This is a matter of choice with some, while the minority strive very sensibly to enlarge the domain of physical science by trespassing on the forbidden grounds of metaphysics, so distasteful to some materialists. These scientists are wise in their generation. For all their wonderful discoveries would go for nothing, and remain for ever *headless* bodies, unless they lift the veil of matter and strain their eyes to see *beyond*. Now that they have studied nature in . . . her physical frame, it is time [to search for] . . . the noumenon of evanescent matter.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Adjective of *noumenon*; contraction of νοούμενον, neuter of present participle, passive of *noein*: to think, to apprehend, to conceive – *noos* (*nous*), mind (*Gr.*). *Noumenon* was introduced by German philosopher Immanuel Kant, 1774–1804, to contrast *phenomenon*; pl. *phenomena*, neuter of present participle, passive of *phainein*: to show, to be seen, to appear), appearing, apparent to the senses and the mind. In Kant’s philosophy, *noumenon* is an object of purely intellectual intuition, devoid of all phenomenal attributes; a thing whose existence can be reasoned but never perceived. Cf. abstract thinking, a quality of the Higher Mind.]

<sup>2</sup> [Power manifested through action.]

<sup>3</sup> [Hidden away, or in its “privation” in the Aristotelian sense.]

<sup>4</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I p. 610

**Esoteric Science corroborates Nature's metaphysics and Divine Laws; Exact Science, Its physics and natural laws.**

Once Theosophy and its principles are known, it will be demonstrated that our philosophy is not only a “close relative of modern science,” but its forbear, though greatly transcending it in logic; and that its “metaphysics” is vaster, more beautiful and more powerful than any emanating from a dogmatic cult. It is the metaphysics of Nature in her chaste nakedness, both physical, moral and spiritual, alone capable of explaining the apparent miracle by means of natural and psychic laws, and of completing the mere physiological and pathological notions of Science, and of killing for ever the anthropomorphic Gods and the Devils of dualistic religions. No one believes more firmly in the Unity of the eternal laws than do the Theosophists.<sup>1</sup>

**In Its fruition, Theosophy is Inner Knowledge about the divinity of Cosmos and Man,**

Theosophy is an all-embracing Science; many are the ways leading to it, as numerous in fact as its definitions, which began by the sublime, during the day of Ammonius Saccas, and ended by the ridiculous — in Webster's *Dictionary*. There is no reason why our critics should claim the right for themselves alone to *know* what is theosophy and to define it. There were theosophists and Theosophical Schools for the last 2,000 years, from Plato down to the mediaeval Alchemists, who knew the value of the term, it may be supposed. Therefore, when we are told that “the question for consideration is not whether the Theosophical Society *is doing good*, but whether it is doing *that kind of good which is entitled to the name of Theosophy*” — we turn round and ask: “And who is to be the judge in this mooted question?” We have heard of one of the greatest Theosophists who ever lived, who assured his audience that whosoever *gave a cup of cold water to a little one* in his name, would have a greater reward than all the learned Scribes and Pharisees. “Woe to the world because of offences!”<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (MISCONCEPTIONS) VIII p. 76

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, (“ORIGINAL PROGRAMME” MANUSCRIPT) VII p. 169



**And a noetic progression from the known and knowable, to the unknown and, otherwise, unknowable.**

Yes; Theosophy is the science of all that is divine in man and nature. It is the study and the analysis, within the known and the knowable, of the unknown, and the otherwise UNKNOWABLE.<sup>1</sup>

**And, as such, It lies at the root of every moral philosophy, religion, and science.**

How long, O radiant gods of truth, how long shall this terrible mental cecity<sup>2</sup> of the nineteenth century *Philosophists* last? How much longer are they to be told that Theosophy is no national property, no religion, but only the universal code of science and the most transcendental<sup>3</sup> ethics that was ever known; that it lies at the root of every moral philosophy and religion.<sup>4</sup>

Practical Theosophy is not *one* Science, but embraces every science in life, moral and physical. It may, in short, be justly regarded as the universal “coach,” a tutor of world-wide knowledge and experience, and of an erudition which not only assists and guides his pupils toward a successful examination for every scientific or moral service in earthly life, but fits them for *the lives* to come, if those pupils will only study the universe and its mysteries *within themselves*, instead of studying them through the spectacles of orthodox science and religions.<sup>5</sup>

**Theosophy is the world’s tree of knowledge and sum total of all sciences. It is the accumulated wisdom of Divine Beings from the beginning of time, who have willingly accepted the harshness and drudgery of sentient life to help their toiling brothers.**

. . . Theosophy is a descendant in direct line of the great tree of universal GNOSIS, a tree, the luxuriant branches of which, spreading over the whole earth like a great canopy, overshadowed during the epoch — which Biblical chronology is pleased to call antediluvian — all the temples and all the nations of the earth. That Gnosis represents the aggregate of all the sciences, the accumulated *knowledge [savoir]* of all the gods and demi-gods incarnated in former times upon the earth. There are some who would like to see in these the fallen angels and the enemy of mankind; those sons of God who, seeing that the daughters of men were fair, took them for wives and imparted to them all the secrets of heaven and earth. . . . We believe in Avatāras and in divine dynasties, in an epoch when there were in fact “giants

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<sup>1</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (CHRISTIAN MINISTER AND THEOSOPHY) V p. 353

<sup>2</sup> [Blindness]

<sup>3</sup> [Super-eminent; concerned with what is beyond common experience; as applicable to *being*, relating to the absolute, transcending all limitations; as applicable to *knowledge*, pertaining to what transcends experience; beyond human knowledge; existing outside of or not in accordance with nature.]

<sup>4</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (PHILOSOPHERS AND PHILOSOPHICULES) XI p. 437

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, (IS THEOSOPHY A RELIGION?) X p. 165

upon the earth,” but we emphatically repudiate the idea of “fallen angels” and of Satan and his army.<sup>1</sup>



A Heavenly Snail?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings, (THE BEACON OF THE UNKNOWN – IV) XI p. 264*

<sup>2</sup> Re: *Secret Doctrine, I p. 103*. Look up “Proposition 1 - Diagram Notes,” to find out how the Heavenly Snails clothed themselves in the Fabric of Darkness.

## 2. Is Theosophy a religion?

**Theosophy is not a religion.  
It is but an analytical science,<sup>1</sup>  
the ally of every honest  
religion.<sup>2</sup>**

Yet there are, as everyone knows, certain beliefs, philosophical, religious and scientific, which have become so closely associated in recent years with the word “Theosophy” that they have come to be taken by the general public for theosophy itself. Moreover, we shall be told these beliefs have been put forward, explained and defended by these very Founders who have declared that Theosophy is *not* a Religion. . . .

The assertion that “Theosophy is not a Religion,” by no means excludes the fact that “Theosophy is Religion” itself. A Religion in the true and only correct sense, is a bond uniting men together — not a particular set of dogmas and beliefs. Now Religion, *per se*, in its widest meaning is that which binds not only *all* MEN, but also *all* BEINGS and all *things* in the entire Universe into one grand whole. This is our theosophical definition of religion;<sup>3</sup>

**Being the culmination and  
practical demonstration of the  
Truths underlying every creed,  
Theosophy is compatible with  
every religion.**

Instead of preaching our own religion, we implore everyone to first study his own and remain in it, whatever it is. Besides which, theosophy is compatible with every religion, the world over. There were thaumaturgists<sup>4</sup> in every creed, and mysticism has as much room in idolatrous as in monotheistic systems. Theosophy is the culmination and the practical demonstration of the *truths* underlying every creed. It requires but sincerity and a firm will in the application to the Essentials of any of them — whether they be Theism<sup>5</sup> or Advaitism<sup>6</sup> or even Atheism.<sup>7</sup> Theosophy is simply the informing life of creed and of every religion and goes to prove their *raison d'être*, instead of their negation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (BUDDHIST PRIESTS AND THE TITLE “REVEREND”) II p. 44

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (WHAT ARE THE THEOSOPHISTS?) II p. 103

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, (IS THEOSOPHY A RELIGION?) X p. 161

<sup>4</sup> [Pl. worker of miracles as applied to certain saints, magicians, etc.; Christ was accused of performing miracles like a magician.]

<sup>5</sup> [Belief in the existence of God with, or without, belief in a special revelation.]

<sup>6</sup> [Belief in the non-dualistic school of Vedāntic philosophy (Advaita), founded by Śaṅkarācārya, the greatest of the historical Brahmin sages. The two other Vedāntic schools are the Dvaita and the Viśiṣṭādvaita.]

<sup>7</sup> [Disbelief in the existence of a god.]

<sup>8</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE ESSENTIALS OF RELIGION) V p. 96



**It believes in no miracle,  
whether divine or devilish,**

[Theosophy] . . . recognises nothing as supernatural;

Believes only in facts and Science;

Studies the laws of Nature, both Occult and patent;

And gives attention particularly to the former, just because exact Science will have nothing to do with them.<sup>1</sup>

**And cherishes no anthropomorphic concepts, whether gods or demons.**

[Theosophy] . . . refuses to accept any of the gods of the so-called monotheistic<sup>2</sup> religions, gods created by man in his own image and likeness, a blasphemous and sorry caricature of the Ever-Unknowable.<sup>3</sup>

But though Theosophy means Divine Wisdom, it implies nothing resembling belief in a personal god. It is *not* “the wisdom of God,” but *divine* wisdom. The Theosophists of the Alexandrian Neo-Platonic School believed in “gods” and “demons” and in one *impersonal* ABSOLUTE DEITY.<sup>4</sup> . . . Plato having been initiated, could not believe in a personal god — a gigantic shadow of Man. His epithets of “Monarch and Law-giver of the Universe” bear an abstract meaning well understood by every Occultist, who, no less than any Christian, believes in the One Law that governs the Universe, recognising it at the same time as immutable.<sup>5</sup>

**Theosophy discriminates  
between finite animal man,  
and Infinite Divine Man.**

Theosophy fights every anthropomorphic<sup>6</sup> conception of the great UNKNOWABLE, and would impress upon the growing world, that its days of babyhood and even adolescence are over and gone by to return no more. Theosophy would teach its adherents that *animal* man, the finite, having been studied for ages and found wanting in everything but animalism<sup>7</sup> — he being the moral as well as physical synthesis of all the forms and beings through which he has evo-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (OCCULT PHENOMENA) II p. 490

<sup>2</sup> [Belief in a single god.]

<sup>3</sup> *Secret Doctrine*, I p. xx; [Cf. Four-letter words have always been ascribed to anthropomorphic gods: “Every *anthropomorphic* god, in old nations, as Marcilio Ficino well observed, has his name written with four letters. Thus with the Egyptians, he was *Teut*; the Arabs, *Alla*; the Persians, *Sire*; the Magi, *Orsi*; the Mohammedans, *Abdi*; the Greeks, *Theos*; the ancient Turks, *Esar*; the Latins, *Deus*.” *Secret Doctrine*, II pp. 601-2

<sup>4</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY) X p. 73

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 554

<sup>6</sup> [Conception, or representation, of a god as having the form, personality, or attributes of man.]

<sup>7</sup> [Exercise or enjoyment of animal life, as distinct from intellectual; the state of being actuated by mere animal appetites; brutishness, sensuality; the theory that man is a mere animal being.]



luted, hence beyond correction and something that must be left to time and the work of evolution — it is more profitable to turn our attention to the spiritual or inner man, the infinite and the immortal. In its higher aspect, Theosophy pities and would help every living sentient creature, not man alone.<sup>1</sup>

For [Theosophy] is belief in the Deity as the ALL, the source of all existence, the infinite that cannot be either comprehended or known, the universe alone revealing *It*, or, as some prefer it, Him, thus giving a sex to that, to anthropomorphize which is *blasphemy*.<sup>2</sup>

**And differs from the Vedantin doctrines.**

For it says that, while Mūlaprakriti, the noumenon, is self-existing and without any origin — is, in short, parentless, Anupapādaka (as one with Brahman) — Prakriti, its phenomenon, is periodical and no better than a phantasm of the former; so Mahat — with the Occultists, the first-born of Jnana (or *gnosis*), knowledge, wisdom or the Logos — is a phantasm reflected from the Absolute NIRGUNA (Parabrahman, the one reality, “devoid of attributes and qualities”; see *Upanishads*); while with some Vedāntins Mahat is a manifestation of Prakriti, or Matter. . . . Therefore, the “last vibration of the Seventh Eternity” was “foreordained” — by no God in particular, but occurred in virtue of the eternal and changeless LAW which causes the great periods of Activity and Rest, called so graphically, and at the same time so poetically, the “Days and Nights of Brahmā.”<sup>3</sup>

**It is not even “esoteric” religion! Every old religion is but a chapter or two of the entire volume of archaic primeval mysteries, Eastern Occultism alone being able to boast that it is in possession of the full secret, with its seven keys.**<sup>4</sup>

. . . all religions divested of their man-made theologies and superlatively human ecclesiasticism<sup>5</sup> rest on one and the same foundation, converge towards one focus: an ineradicable, congenital belief in an *inner* Nature reflected in the *inner* man, its microcosm; on this our earth, we can *know* of but one Light — the one *we see*. The Divine Principle, the WHOLE can be manifested to our consciousness, but through Nature and its highest tabernacle — man, in the words of Jesus, the only “temple of God.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (CHRISTIAN MINISTER AND THEOSOPHY) V p. 355

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, (WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?) II p. 91

<sup>3</sup> *Cf. Secret Doctrine*, I p. 62; [Commentary on Stanza III.1.a-b.]

<sup>4</sup> *Cf. ibid.*, I p. 318

<sup>5</sup> [Attachment to church observances.]

<sup>6</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings* (CHRISTIAN MINISTER AND THEOSOPHY) V p. 355

**Theosophy is Religion itself!  
Loyalty to Truth is Its creed,**

[The Theosophical] . . . doctrines belong exclusively to no religion, and are confined to no society or time. They are the birthright of every human soul. Such a thing as orthodoxy must be wrought out by each individual according to his nature and his needs, and according to his varying experience. This may explain why those who have imagined Theosophy to be a new religion have hunted in vain for its creed and its ritual. Its creed is Loyalty to Truth, and its ritual “to honour every truth by use.”<sup>1</sup>

**Brotherhood of all beings,  
not just men, Its noble aim.**

Thus Theosophy is not a Religion, we say, but RELIGION itself, the one bond of unity, which is so universal and all-embracing that no man, as no speck — from gods and mortal down to animals, the blade of grass and atom — can be outside of its light. Therefore, any organization or body of that name must necessarily be a UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.



Were it otherwise, Theosophy would be but a word added to hundreds other such words as high-sounding as they are pretentious and empty. Viewed as a philosophy, Theosophy in its practical work is the alembic<sup>2</sup> of the Mediaeval alchemist.<sup>3</sup> It transmutes the apparently base metal of every ritualistic and dogmatic creed (Christianity included) into the gold of fact and truth, and thus truly produces a universal panacea for the ills of mankind. This is why, when applying for admission into the Theosophical Society, no one is asked what religion he belongs to, nor what his deistic views may be. These views are his own personal property and have nought to do with the Society. Because Theosophy can be practised by Christian or Heathen, Jew or Gentile, by Agnostic or Materialist, or even an Atheist, provided that none of these is a bigoted fanatic, who refuses to recognise as his brother any man or woman outside his own special creed or belief.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Key to Theosophy*, p. 18; [quoting J.D. Bucks' article on "Theosophy."]

<sup>2</sup> [Old distilling apparatus.]

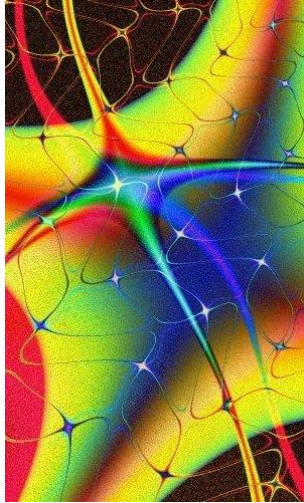
<sup>3</sup> [The Rosicrucians of the middle ages, such as Robertus de Fluctibus, Paracelsus, Thomas Vaughan, Van Helmont and others, who sought the hidden spirit in every "inorganic" matter; exoterically, alchemy is the transmutation of base metals into gold and the elixir of life, from *al* and *chemi*, fire; the god and patriarch *kham*; the name of Egypt. Cf. *Isis Unveiled*, I p. xxv.]

<sup>4</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (IS THEOSOPHY A RELIGION?) X p. 163

### 3. Is Theosophy spiritualism?

Abridged passage from *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 27-35, in the form of an interview of H.P. Blavatsky by an imaginary enquirer. The side-captions are *verbatim*.

**Do you believe in spiritualism?**



If by “Spiritualism”<sup>1</sup> you mean the explanation which Spiritualists give of some abnormal phenomena, then decidedly *we do not*. They maintain that these manifestations are produced by the “spirits” of departed mortals, generally their relatives, who return to earth, they say, to communicate with those they have loved or to whom they are attached. We deny this point blank. We assert that the spirits of the dead cannot return to earth — save in rare and exceptional cases, . . . nor do they communicate with men except by *entirely subjective means*. That which does appear objectively, is only the phantom<sup>2</sup> of the ex-physical man. But in *psychic*, and so to say, “Spiritual” Spiritualism, we do believe, most decidedly. [p. 27]

**Do you reject the phenomena also?**

Assuredly not — save cases of conscious fraud. [p. 28]

**How do you account for them?**

In many ways. The causes of such manifestations are by no means so simple as the Spiritualists would like to believe. Foremost of all, the *deus ex machina*<sup>3</sup> of the so-called “materialisations” is usually the astral body or “double”<sup>4</sup> of the medium, or of someone present. This *astral* body is also the producer or operating force in the manifestations of slate-writing, . . . and so on. [p. 28]

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<sup>1</sup> [In philosophy, the state or condition of mind opposed to materialism, or *material conception* of things. In Theosophy, a doctrine which teaches that all which exists is animated, or “informed” by the universal soul of Spirit, and that not an atom in the universe can *be* outside this omnipresent Principle — is *pure* spiritualism. As to the belief that goes under that name, namely, belief in the constant communication of the living with the dead, whether through the mediumistic powers of oneself, or through a so-called *medium* — it is no better than the materialisation of spirit, and the degradation of the human and divine souls. Believers in such communications are simply dishonouring the dead and performing constant sacrilege. It was called “necromancy” in days of old. But our modern Spiritualists take offence at being told this simple truth. Cf. *Theosophical Glossary*]

<sup>2</sup> [A deceitful appearance, illusive, unreal, imaginary, ghostly-looking.]

<sup>3</sup> [A god brought on the stage by a mechanical device; a contrived and inartistic solution of a difficulty in a plot.]

<sup>4</sup> [A shining body surrounding and penetrating the physical body of man, a subtle, “ethereal” counterpart, the “double” of the physical, a “shadow,” the *linga-śarīra* (*linga*, a characteristic model, or pattern; *śarīra*, that which easily moulders or dissolves); a model of the inner man, filled out by physical substance, *i.e.* the physical body, through which *prāna*, the life-principle, functions. The astral “body” should not be confused with the “astral soul” which is another name for the lower mind or *manas*.]

**You say “usually”; then what is it that produces the rest?**

That depends on the nature of the manifestations. Sometimes the astral remains, the *Kāmalokic*<sup>1</sup> “shells” of the vanished *personalities*<sup>2</sup> that were; at other times, Elementals.<sup>3</sup> “Spirit” is a word of manifold and wide significance. I really do not know what Spiritualists mean by the term; but what we understand them to claim, is that the physical phenomena are produced by the reincarnating *Ego*,<sup>4</sup> the *Spiritual* and immortal “individuality.”<sup>5</sup> And this hypothesis we entirely reject. The Conscious *Individuality* of the disembodied *cannot materialize*, nor can it return from its own mental Devachanic<sup>6</sup> sphere to the plane of terrestrial objectivity. [p. 28]

**But many of the communications received from “spirits” show not only intelligence, but a knowledge of facts not known to the medium, and sometimes even not consciously present to the mind of the investigator, or to the audience.**

This does not necessarily prove that the intelligence and knowledge you speak of belong to *spirits*, or emanate from *disembodied* souls. Somnambulist<sup>7</sup> have been known to compose music and poetry and to solve mathematical problems while in their trance state, without having ever learnt music or mathematics. Others, answered intelligently to questions put to them, and even, in several cases, spoke languages, such as Hebrew and Latin, of which they were entirely ignorant when awake —

<sup>1</sup> [After death, *kāma-manas*, a bundle of personal thoughts and desires, becomes a distinct “body,” *kāma rūpa*, which is the eidolon (phantom) of the former personality; it remains for a period in a subjective location (*kāma-loka*). Bereft of spirit, higher mind and physical senses, *kāma rūpa* gradually fades out and disintegrates completely. But, if forcibly drawn back into our objective world, whether by the passionate desires and appeals of the surviving friends, or by necromantic practices — one of the most pernicious of which is mediumship — the “spook” may prevail for a period greatly exceeding the span of the natural life of its former host. Once the *kāma rūpa* has learnt the way back into living human bodies, it becomes a “vampire,” feeding on the vitality of those who are so anxious for its company. In India these eidolons are called *piśāchas*, and are much dreaded. *Kāma loka* is the *hades* of the Greeks (the “meadows of *hades*” of Plutarch), the *Āmenti* of Egyptians. Cf. *Theosophical Glossary: Kāma-Rūpa*]

<sup>2</sup> [According to Theosophy, *personality* is the lower four states of consciousness or *false* individuality of the animal man, consisting of (1) rational, personal mind or *manas*; (2) desire for sentient life or *kāma*, which is differentiated endlessly as desire to-perpetuate-a-situation-if-pleasurable, or, to-escape-out-of-it-if-painful; (3) astral (etheric) double or *linga-śarīra*; (4) physical body or *sthūla-śarīra*.]

<sup>3</sup> [*Elementals* are the spirits of the elements, or forces of nature. *Elementaries*, however, are the *kāma-mānasic* remnants in *kāma-loka*, before the withdrawal of the immortal higher triad (*ātma-buddhi-manas*) to *devachan*. Severed from the influence of the higher principles, *Elementaries* tend to be drawn to earth irresistibly amidst *Elementals* congenial to their gross nature and, therefore, tend to accentuate the depraved aspects of a deceased’s personality.]

<sup>4</sup> [The I, the “lower self,” that which is conscious and thinks “I am I.”]

<sup>5</sup> [According to Theosophy, *individuality* is the immortal upper triad in the sevenfold constitution of Man, the *true* individuality, the spiritual man or the incarnating ego which, periodically, focuses upon a temporary personality. It consists of (1) a ray of absoluteness, spirit or *atman*; (2) a vehicle for the above and unifying principle or *buddhi*; (3) abstract, impersonal, heaven-aspiring mind or *manas*.]

<sup>6</sup> [Note by Boris de Zirkoff: *Devachan* or *Devakhan* is not “the place consecrated to the Devas, i.e., a state of such bliss as Devas or Angels are supposed to enjoy.” This error occurs in more than one place and should be corrected. *Devachan* is a Tibetan word; when transliterated from Tibetan characters, it would be *bde-ba-chan*, meaning a sphere or realm or state of unalloyed happiness. It is a term analogous to the Sanskrit word *Sukhāvati*. The Sanskrit word *deva* does not enter into the composition of this Tibetan term. (*Blavatsky Collected Writings*, NOTES ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN - IV, XI p. 499 & fn.)]

<sup>7</sup> [From *somnus* (*Gr.* *hypnos*), the god of sleep; “sleep-walkers.”]



all this in a state of profound sleep. Will you, then, maintain that this was caused by “spirits”?

[pp. 28-29]

**But how you would explain it?**



We assert that the divine spark in man being one and identical in its essence with the Universal Spirit, our “spiritual Self” is practically omniscient, but that it cannot manifest its knowledge owing to the impediments of matter. Now the more these impediments are removed, in other words, the more the physical body is paralyzed, as to its own independent activity and consciousness, as in deep sleep or deep trance, or, again, in illness, the more fully can the *inner* Self manifest on this plane. This is our explanation of those truly wonderful phenomena of a higher order, in which undeniable intelligence and knowledge are exhibited. As to the lower order of manifestations, such as physical phenomena and the platitudes and common talk of the general “spirit,” to explain even the most important of the teachings we hold upon the subject would take up more space and time than can be allotted to it at present. We have no desire to interfere with the belief of the Spiritualists any more than with any other belief. The *onus probandi*<sup>1</sup> must fall on the believers in “spirits.” And at the present moment, while still convinced that the higher sort of manifestations occur through the disembodied souls, . . . [they] confess that not *all* the phenomena are produced by spirits. Gradually they will come to recognise the whole truth; but meanwhile we have no right nor desire to proselytize them to our views. The less so, as in the cases of purely *psychic and spiritual manifestations* we believe in the intercommunication of the spirit of the living man with that of disembodied personalities. [pp. 29-30]

**This means that you reject  
the philosophy of Spiritualism  
in toto?**

. . . they have no philosophy, in truth. Their best, their most intellectual and earnest defenders say so. Their fundamental and only unimpeachable truth, namely, that phenomena occur through mediums controlled by invisible forces and intelligences — no one, except a blind materialist . . . will or *can*, deny. [p. 31]

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<sup>1</sup> [Burden of proving, responsibility for proof.]

**I was told that the Theosophical Society was originally founded to crush Spiritualism and belief in the survival of the individuality in man.**

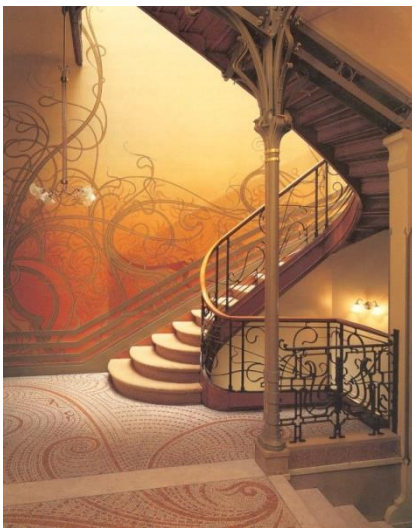
You are misinformed. Our beliefs are all founded on that immortal individuality. But then, like so many others, you confuse *personality* with individuality. Your Western psychologists do not seem to have established any clear distinction between the two. Yet it is precisely that difference which gives the key-note to the understanding of Eastern philosophy, and which lies at the root of the divergence between the Theosophical and Spiritualistic teachings. And though it may draw upon us still more the hostility of some Spiritualists, yet I must state here that it is Theosophy which is the *true* and unalloyed Spiritualism, while the modern scheme of that name is, as now practised by the masses, simply transcendental<sup>1</sup> materialism.

[pp. 32-33]

**Please explain your idea more clearly.**

What I mean is that though our teachings insist upon the identity of spirit and matter, and though we say that spirit is *potential* matter, and matter simply crystallized spirit (*e.g.*, as ice is solidified steam), yet since the original and eternal condition of *all* is not spirit but *meta-spirit*,<sup>2</sup> so to speak, (visible and solid matter being simply its periodical manifestation,) we maintain that the term spirit can only be applied to the *true* individuality. [p. 33]

**But what is the distinction between this “true individuality” and the “I,” or Ego, of which we are all conscious?**



We distinguish between the simple fact of self-consciousness, the simple feeling that “I am I,” and the complex thought that “I am Mr. Smith” or “Mrs. Brown.” Believing as we do in a series of births for the same Ego, or re-incarnation, this distinction is the fundamental pivot of the whole idea. You see “Mr. Smith” really means a long series of daily experiences strung together by the thread of memory, and forming what Mr. Smith calls “himself.” But none of these “experiences” are really the “I” or the Ego, nor do they give “Mr. Smith” the feeling that he is himself, for he forgets the greater part of his daily experiences, and they produce the feeling of *Egoity*<sup>3</sup> in him only while they last. We Theosophists, therefore, distinguish between this bundle of “experiences,” which we call the *false* (because so finite and evanescent) *personality*, and that ele-

<sup>1</sup> [To rise above; to pass, or lie, beyond the limits of. (*L.*) transcendere, from *scandere*, to climb.]

<sup>2</sup> [Beyond, above spirit.]

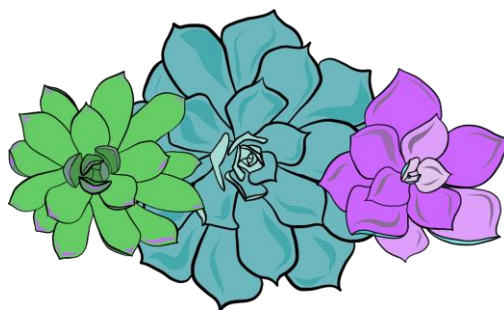
<sup>3</sup> [The essential element of the ego. Illustration above: Stairway, by Victor Horta, Hotel Tassel]

ment in man to which the feeling of “I am I” is due. It is this “I am I” which we call the *true* individuality; and we say that this “Ego” or individuality plays, like an actor, many parts on the stage of life. (*Vide infra*, “On Individuality and Personality”) Let us call every new life on earth of the same *Ego* a *night* on the stage of a theatre. One night the actor, or “Ego,” appears as “Macbeth,” the next as “Shylock,” the third as “Romeo,” the fourth as “Hamlet” or “King Lear,” and so on, until he has run through the whole cycle of incarnations. The Ego begins his life-pilgrimage as a sprite, an “Ariel,” or a “Puck”; he plays the part of a *super*, is a soldier, a servant, one of the chorus; rises then to “speaking parts,” plays leading *roles*, interspersed with insignificant parts, till he finally retires from the stage as “Prospero,” the *magician*. [pp. 33-34]

**I understand. You say, then, that this true Ego cannot return to earth after death. But surely the actor is at liberty, if he has preserved the sense of his individuality, to return if he likes to the scene of his former actions?**

We say not, simply because such a return to earth would be incompatible with any state of *unalloyed* bliss after death, as I am prepared to prove. We say that man suffers so much unmerited misery during his life, through the fault of others with whom he is associated, or because of his environment, that he is surely entitled to perfect rest and quiet, if not bliss, before taking up again the burden of life.

[pp. 34-35]



## 4. Is Theosophy a philosophy?

### Theosophy is Inner Wisdom or Divine Knowledge.

. . . Esoteric philosophy is alone calculated to withstand, in this age of crass and illogical materialism, the repeated attacks on all and everything man holds most dear and sacred, in his inner spiritual life. The true philosopher, the student of the Esoteric Wisdom, entirely loses sight of personalities, dogmatic beliefs and special religions. Moreover, Esoteric philosophy reconciles all religions, strips every one of its outward, human garments, and shows the root of each to be identical with that of every other great religion. It proves the necessity of an absolute Divine Principle in nature. It denies Deity no more than it does the Sun. Esoteric philosophy has never rejected God in Nature, nor Deity as the absolute and abstract *Ens*.<sup>1</sup> It only refuses to accept any of the gods of the so-called monotheistic religions, gods created by man in his own image and likeness, a blasphemous and sorry caricature of the Ever-Unknowable.<sup>2</sup>

### It is at the heart of all religions and philosophies from the earliest time to the present day,

. . . Theosophy is neither Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, nor any other *ism*:<sup>3</sup> it is the *esoteric synthesis* of the known religions and philosophies.<sup>4</sup> . . . although Theosophical ideas have entered into every development or form which awakening spirituality has assumed, yet Theosophy pure and simple has still a severe battle to fight for recognition. . . . The faint-hearted have asked in all ages for signs and wonders, and when these failed to be granted, they refused to believe. . . . But there are others among us who realize intuitively that the recognition of pure Theosophy — the philosophy of the rational explanation of things and not the tenets — is of the most vital importance in the Society, inasmuch as it alone can furnish the beacon-light needed to guide humanity on its true path.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Entity.]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Secret Doctrine*, I p. xx

<sup>3</sup> [*i.e.*, suffixes forming abstract nouns signify condition or system, *e.g.* ego-*ism*, de-*ism*, rac-*ism*, etc.]

<sup>4</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (REPLY TO THE MISTAKEN CONCEPTIONS) IX p. 218

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, (LETTER TO SECOND AMERICAN CONVENTION) IX p. 243



**Embracing all domains  
of mundane knowledge and  
human endeavour.**

For, above all human sects stands Theosophy in its abstract sense; Theosophy which is too wide for any of them to contain but which easily contains them.<sup>1</sup>

**Yet, It is a practical, and an  
ethical philosophy, ever trans-  
cending self-imposed bounda-  
ries to expand consciousness,**

. . . Theosophy is the perfect harmonising of the divine within the human in man, the adjustment of his god-like qualities and aspirations, and their sway over the terrestrial or animal passions in him. Kindness, absence of every ill feeling or selfishness, charity, good-will to all beings, and perfect justice to others as to one's self, are its chief features. He who teaches Theosophy preaches the gospel of good-will; and the converse of this is true also — he who preaches the gospel of good-will, teaches Theosophy.<sup>2</sup>

Yes; Theosophy is the science of all that is divine in man and nature. It is the study and the analysis, within the known and the knowable, of the unknown, and the otherwise UNKNOWABLE.

“In its practical application it certainly means — freedom (of thought), self-trust and self-control, courage and independence.”<sup>3</sup>

The Ethics of Theosophy are even more necessary to mankind than the scientific aspects of the psychic facts of nature and man.<sup>4</sup>

**And to dispel lingering doubts.**

Remembering the two wise aphorisms by Bacon, the modern-day materialist is thus condemned out of the mouth of the Founder of his own inductive method, as contrasted with the deductive philosophy of Plato, accepted in Theosophy. For does not Bacon tell us that “Philosophy *when superficially studied* excites doubt; when thoroughly explored it dispels it”; and again, “a *little* philosophy *inclineth man's mind to atheism*; but depth of philosophy bringeth man's mind about to religion”? . . . The logical deduction of the above is, undeniably, that none of our present Darwinians and materialists and their admirers, our critics, could have studied philosophy otherwise than very “superficially.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (WHAT ARE THE THEOSOPHISTS?) II p. 105

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, (LETTER TO SECOND AMERICAN CONVENTION) IX p. 245

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, (CHRISTIAN MINISTER AND THEOSOPHY) V p. 353; [quoting Rev C.H.A. Dall.]

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, (SECOND LETTER OF H.P. BLAVATSKY) XI p. 162

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, (PHILOSOPHERS AND PHILOSOPHICULES) XI p. 439

**In short, Theosophy is  
Supernal Philosophy, Wisdom's  
True Love, not mere verbiage.**



. . . the modern etymology of the word “philosophy,” which is interpreted “love of wisdom,” . . . is nothing of the kind. The philosophers were scientists, and philosophy was a real science — not simply verbiage, as it is in our day. The term is composed of two Greek words whose meaning is intended to convey its secret sense, and ought to be interpreted as “wisdom of love.” Now it is in the last word, “love,” that lies hidden the esoteric significance: for “love” does not stand here as a noun, nor does it mean “affection” or “fondness,” but is the term used for Eros, that primordial principle in divine creation, synonymous with *ποθος*, the abstract desire<sup>1</sup> in Nature for procreation, resulting in an everlasting series of phenomena. It means “divine love,” that universal element of divine omnipresence spread throughout Nature and which is at once the chief cause and effect.<sup>2</sup> The “wisdom of love” (or “philosophy”) meant attraction to and love of everything hidden beneath objective phenomena and the knowledge thereof. Philosophy meant the highest Adeptship — love of and assimilation with Deity. In his modesty Pythagoras even refused to be called a Philosopher (or one who knows every hidden thing in things visible; cause and effect, or absolute truth), and called himself simply a Sage, an aspirant to philosophy, or to Wisdom of Love — love in its exoteric meaning being as degraded by men then as it is now by its purely terrestrial application.<sup>3</sup>

**It is a philosophy to live by.**

“Theosophy must not represent merely a collection of moral verities, a bundle of metaphysical Ethics epitomized in theoretical dissertations. Theosophy must be made practical, and has, therefore, to be disencumbered of useless discussion . . . It has to find objective expression in an all-embracing code of life thoroughly impregnated with its spirit — the spirit of mutual tolerance, charity and love.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [*Ποθος* (pothos) is a deep yearning.] Cf. “For Kama [Desire], again, is in the *Rig-Veda* the personification of that feeling which leads and propels to creation. He was the *first movement* that stirred the ONE, after its manifestation from the purely abstract principle, to create, ‘Desire first arose in It, which was the *primal germ of mind*; and which sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered to be the bond which connects Entity with Non-Entity.” *Secret Doctrine*, II p. 176

<sup>2</sup> Cf. “When tears to man Dame Nature did impart, | It was to prove she’d given a feeling heart; | It is our noblest gift.” (Mollissima corda | Humano generi dare se natura fatetur, | Quæ lachrymas dedid: hæc nostri pars optima sensus.) Juvenal 15, 131. — *King’s Quotations*

<sup>3</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE ORIGIN OF THE MYSTERIES) XIV p. 255 fn.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, (“ORIGINAL PROGRAMME” MANUSCRIPT) VII pp. 169-70; [quoting a Master of Wisdom’s Letter.]

## Metaphysically, Theosophy is the accumulated testimony and wisdom of the ages

**Theosophy is not knowledge of a “God,”**

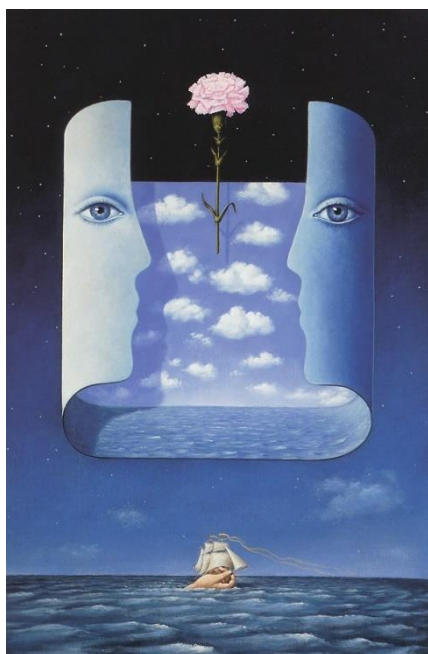
. . . *theosophia* properly means *not* a knowledge of “God” but of gods, *i.e.*, *divine*, that is superhuman knowledge. . . . [It] teaches a far stricter and more far-reaching *Monism* than does Secularism. . . . We therefore conceive of spirit and matter *as one in essence* and not as separate and distinct antitheses.<sup>1</sup>

**It is knowledge of gods, Celestial Knowledge.**

Theosophy is divine knowledge, and knowledge is truth; every true fact, every sincere word are thus part and parcel of Theosophy.<sup>2</sup>

**A shoreless ocean of Everlasting Truth, Love, and Impartiality,**

Theosophy, if meaning anything, means truth; and truth has to deal indiscriminately and in the same spirit of impartiality with vessels of honour and of dishonour alike.<sup>3</sup> . . . The [Theosophical] Society can be regarded as the embodiment of Theosophy only in its abstract motives; it can never presume to call itself its concrete vehicle so long as human imperfections and weaknesses are all represented in its body; . . . Theosophy is the shoreless ocean of universal truth, love, and wisdom, reflecting its radiance on the earth, while the Theosophical Society is only a visible bubble on that reflection Theosophy is divine nature, visible and invisible, and its Society human nature trying to ascend to its divine parent. Theosophy, finally, is the fixed eternal sun, and its Society the evanescent comet trying to settle in an orbit to become a planet, ever revolving within the attraction of the sun of truth. It was formed to assist in showing to men that such a thing as Theosophy exists, and to help them to ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities.<sup>4</sup> . . . it has existed eternally throughout the endless cycles upon cycles of the Past, so it will ever exist throughout the infinitudes of the Future, because Theosophy is synonymous with EVERLASTING TRUTH.<sup>5</sup>



Carnation, by Rafal Olbinski

<sup>1</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FORCE OF PREJUDICE) XI pp. 335, 336

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, (“WHAT IS TRUTH?”) IX p. 38

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, (“TO THE READERS OF LUCIFER”) IX p. 9

<sup>4</sup> *Key to Theosophy*, p. 57

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p. 304; [on expectations for Theosophy in future.]

**Theosophy is monistic through  
and through. By seeking  
the One Truth,**

**It is allied with the ideals  
of every seeker of Truth.**

**To fully define Theosophy,  
we must consider it under  
all its aspects.**



**By means of Its Golden  
Precepts, those who are  
intellectually and ethically fit,  
might gain insights of the  
inner world of being.**

. . . in all religions, in all science, in all experience, as in every system of thought. What aim can be nobler, more universal, more all-embracing?<sup>1</sup>

With every man that is earnestly searching in his own way after a knowledge of the Divine Principle, of man's relations to it, and nature's manifestations of it, Theosophy is allied.<sup>2</sup> . . . [It] advocates the development and the resources of MAN'S own nature as the grandest ideal we can strive for.<sup>3</sup>

. . . The interior world has not been hidden from all by impenetrable darkness. By that higher intuition acquired by *Theosophia* — or God-knowledge, which carries the mind from the world of form into that of formless spirit, man has been sometimes enabled in every age and every country to perceive things in the interior or invisible world. Hence, the “Samadhi,” or *Dyan Yog Samadhi*, of the Hindu ascetics; the “Daïmonion-photi,” or spiritual illumination, of the Neo-Platonists; the “Sidereal confabulation of souls,” of the Rosicrucians or Fire-philosophers; and, even the ecstatic trance of mystics and of the modern mesmerists and spiritualists, are identical in nature, though various as to manifestation. The search after man's diviner “self,” so often and so erroneously interpreted as individual communion with a personal God, was the object of every mystic, and belief in its possibility seems to have been coëval with the genesis of humanity — each people giving it another name. Thus Plato and Plotinus call “Noëtic work” that which the Yogis and the Śrotriya term *Vidyā*. “By reflection, self-knowledge and intellectual discipline, the soul can be raised to the vision of eternal truth, goodness, and beauty — that is, to the *Vision of God* — this is the *epopteia*,” said the Greeks. “To unite one's soul to the Universal Soul,” says Porphyry, “requires but a perfectly pure mind. Through self-contemplation, perfect chastity, and purity of body, we may approach nearer to It, and receive, in that state, true knowledge and wonderful insight.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FORCE OF PREJUDICE) XI p. 339

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, (WHAT ARE THE THEOSOPHISTS?) II p. 103

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, (MODERN PHILOSOPHY) VI p. 173

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, (WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?) II pp. 92-93



**There, mystics can see past,  
present, and future  
as in a mirror.**

Real Theosophy is, for the mystics, that state which Apollonius of Tyana was made to describe thus:

“I can see the present and the future as in a clear mirror. The sage need not wait for the vapours of the earth and the corruption of the air to foresee events. . . . The *theoi*, or gods, see the future; common men the present; sages that which is about to take place.”<sup>1</sup>

**Theosophy wakes up and frees  
the Heavenly Man from the  
clutches of Its outer shadow,**

[The doctrines of Theosophy] if seriously studied, call forth, by stimulating one’s reasoning powers and awakening the *inner* in the animal man, every hitherto dormant power for good in us, and also the perception of the true and the real, as opposed to the false and the unreal. Tearing off with no uncertain hand the thick veil of dead-letter with which every old religious scripture was cloaked, scientific Theosophy, learned in the cunning symbolism of the ages, reveals to the scoffer at old wisdom the origin of the world’s faiths and sciences. It opens new vistas beyond the old horizons of crystallized, motionless and despotic faiths; and turning blind belief into a reasoned knowledge founded on mathematical laws — the only *exact* science — it demonstrates to him under profounder and more philosophical aspects the existence of that which, repelled by the grossness of its dead-letter form, he had long since abandoned as a nursery tale. It gives a clear and well-defined object, an ideal to live for, to every sincere man or woman belonging to whatever station in Society and of whatever culture and degree of intellect. Practical Theosophy is not *one* Science, but embraces every science in life, moral and physical. It may, in short, be justly regarded as the universal “coach,” a tutor of world-wide knowledge and experience, and of an erudition which not only assists and guides his pupils toward a successful examination for every scientific or moral service in earthly life, but fits them for *the lives* to come, if those pupils will only study the universe and its mysteries *within themselves*, instead of studying them through the spectacles of orthodox science and religions.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Key to Theosophy*, p. 11 *fn.*; [quoting Alexander Wilder’s *Eclectic Philosophy*.]

<sup>2</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (IS THEOSOPHY A RELIGION?) X pp. 164-65

**So that He can live for others,  
here on Earth, unconstrained  
by his earthly jailer,**

[The objectives of Theosophy] are several; but the most important of all are those which are likely to lead to the relief of human suffering under any or every form, moral as well as physical. And we believe the former to be far more important than the latter. Theosophy has to inculcate ethics;<sup>1</sup> it has to purify the soul, if it would relieve the physical body, whose ailments, save cases of accidents, are all hereditary. It is not by studying Occultism for selfish ends, for the gratification of one's personal ambition, pride, or vanity, that one can ever reach the true goal: that of helping suffering mankind. Nor is it by studying one single branch of the esoteric philosophy that a man becomes an Occultist, but by studying, if not mastering, them all.<sup>2</sup>



While the heart is full of thoughts for a little group of *selves*, near and dear to us, how shall the rest of mankind fare in our souls?

What percentage of love and care will there remain to bestow on the “great orphan”?

And how shall the “still small voice” make itself heard in a soul entirely occupied with its own privileged tenants?

What room is there left for the needs of Humanity *en bloc* to impress themselves upon, or even receive a speedy response?

And yet, he who would profit by the wisdom of the universal mind, has to reach it through *the whole of Humanity* without distinction of race, complexion, religion or social status. It is *altruism*,<sup>3</sup> not *ego-ism* even in its most legal and noble conception, that can lead the unit to merge its little Self in the Universal Selves. It is to *these* needs and to this work that the true disciple of true Occultism has to devote himself, if he would obtain *Theo-sophy*, divine Wisdom and Knowledge. . . . [he] has to choose absolutely between the life of the world and the life of Occultism. It is useless and vain to endeavour to unite the two, for no one can serve two masters and satisfy both.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [The science of morals, the philosophy of character and conduct, a system of. In *Gr.* ethos is custom; character and morals are synonymous terms.]

<sup>2</sup> *Cf. Key to Theosophy*, p. 24

<sup>3</sup> [The principle of living and acting for the interest of others; unselfish devotion to the welfare of others.]

<sup>4</sup> *Cf. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (OCCULTISM VERSUS THE OCCULT ARTS) IX p. 258

**Forgetting himself in the midst  
of the many selves,**

**. . . in the words  
of a Philaletheian . . .**

A true Theosophist ought “to deal justly and walk humbly.” . . . the one self has to forget itself for the many selves . . .

“What every man needs first is to find himself, and then take an honest inventory of his subjective possessions, and, bad or bankrupt as it may be, it is not beyond redemption if we set about it in earnest.” But how many do? All are willing to work for their own development and progress; very few for those of others. To quote the same writer again: “Men have been deceived and deluded long enough; they must break their idols, put away their shams, and go to work for themselves — nay, there is one little word too much or too many, for he who works for himself had better not work at all; rather let him work himself for others, for all. For every flower of love and charity he plants in his neighbour’s garden, a loathsome weed will disappear from his own, and so this garden of the gods — Humanity — shall blossom as a rose. In all Bibles, all religions, this is plainly set forth — but designing men have at first misinterpreted and finally emasculated, materialised, besotted them. It does not require a new revelation. Let every man be a revelation unto himself. Let once man’s immortal spirit take possession of the temple of his body, drive out the money-changers and every unclean thing, and his own divine humanity will redeem him, for when he is thus at one with himself he will know the ‘builder of the Temple.’”<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> *Key to Theosophy*, pp. 52-53; [on self-improvement & quoting a F.T.S.]

## Ethically, Theosophy is unconditioned love for humanity and for all that lives

**Theosophy is philanthropy, par excellence.**

The function of Theosophists is to open men's hearts and understandings to charity, justice, and generosity, attributes which belong specifically to the human kingdom and are natural to man when he has developed the qualities of a human being. Theosophy teaches the animal-man to be a human-man; and when people have learnt to think and feel as truly human beings should feel and think, they will act humanely, and works of charity, justice, and generosity will be done spontaneously by all.<sup>1</sup>

Many who have never heard of the Society are Theosophists without knowing it themselves; for the essence of Theosophy is the perfect harmonizing of the divine with the human in man, the adjustment of his godlike qualities and aspirations, and their sway over the terrestrial or animal passions in him. Kindness, absence of every ill feeling or selfishness, charity, good-will to all beings, and perfect justice to others as to one's self, are its chief features.<sup>2</sup>

**Unconditioned, and unreserved love for our fellow human beings and for all that lives, in thought and deed.**

“Theosophy teaches *self-culture* and not control,” we are told. Theosophy teaches *mutual-culture* before *self-culture* to *begin* with. Union is strength. It is by gathering many theosophists of the same way of thinking into one or more groups, and making them closely united by the same magnetic bond of fraternal unity and sympathy that the objects of *mutual* development and progress in Theosophical thought may be best achieved. “Self-culture” is for isolated *Hatha Yogis*, independent of any Society and having to avoid association with human beings; and this is a *triple distilled* SELFISHNESS. For real moral advancement — there “where two or three are gathered” in the name of the SPIRIT OF TRUTH — there that Spirit of Theosophy *will be in the midst of them*.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (LETTER TO THE SECOND AMERICAN CONVENTION) IX pp. 246-47

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 244-45

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, (“ORIGINAL PROGRAMME” MANUSCRIPT) VII pp. 160-61; [quoting *Matthew* xviii, 20.]



**It alone can restore hope and instil responsibility in a world suffocating from ignorance and its own misdeeds,**

If Theosophy prevailing in the struggle, its all-embracing philosophy strikes deep root into the minds and hearts of men, if its doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma, in other words, of Hope and Responsibility, find a home in the lives of the new generations, then, indeed, will dawn the day of joy and gladness for all who now suffer and are outcast. For real Theosophy IS ALTRUISM, and we cannot repeat it too often. It is brotherly love, mutual help, unswerving devotion to Truth. If once men do but realize that in these alone can true happiness be found, and never in wealth, possessions, or any selfish gratification, then the dark clouds will roll away, and a new humanity will be born upon earth. Then, the GOLDEN AGE will be there, indeed.<sup>1</sup>

**By mediating between egotism and altruism.**

“It is *esoteric philosophy alone*, the spiritual and psychic blending of man with Nature that, by revealing fundamental truths, can bring that much desired mediate state between the two extremes of human Egotism and divine Altruism and finally lead to the alleviation of human suffering. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

**Even the great Law of Harmony depends on altruism!**

Karma is a word of many meanings, and has a special term for almost every one of its aspects. It means, as a synonym of sin, the performance of some action for the attainment of an object of *worldly*, hence *selfish*, desire, which cannot fail to be hurtful to somebody else. Karman is action, the Cause: and Karma again is “the law of ethical causation”; the *effect* of an act produced egotistically, when the great law of harmony depends on altruism.<sup>3</sup>

**Theosophy’s aim and noble mission,**

. . . is the working out of clear unequivocal conceptions of ethic ideas and duties, such as shall best and most fully satisfy the right and altruistic feelings in men; and, second, the modelling of these conceptions for their adaptation into such forms of daily life, as shall offer a field where they may be applied with most equitableness.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (OUR CYCLE AND THE NEXT) XI p. 202

<sup>2</sup> *Cf. ibid.* (“ORIGINAL PROGRAMME” MANUSCRIPT) VII p. 148 *fn. et seq.* [Quoting a Master of Wisdom.]

<sup>3</sup> *Cf. Secret Doctrine*, II p. 302 *fn.*

<sup>4</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (“ORIGINAL PROGRAMME” MANUSCRIPT) VII p. 175; [quoting “Some Words on Daily Life,” by a Master of Wisdom.]

**Is to establish a community of spiritual thinkers,**

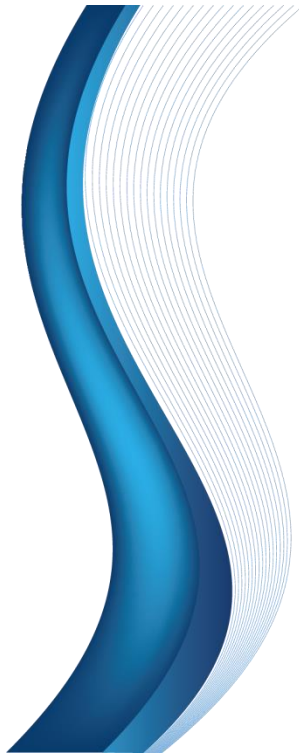
On the day when Theosophy will have accomplished its most holy and most important mission — namely, to unite firmly a body of men of all nations in brotherly love and bent on a pure altruistic work, not on a labour with selfish motives — on that day only will Theosophy become higher than any nominal brotherhood of man. This will be a wonder and a miracle truly, for the realisation of which Humanity is vainly waiting for the last 18 centuries, and which every association has hitherto failed to accomplish.<sup>1</sup>

**Who, by studying Its precepts and enriching everyday life with Its exalted ethics,**

Theosophy must not represent merely a collection of moral verities, a bundle of metaphysical Ethics epitomized in theoretical dissertations. Theosophy must be made practical, and has, therefore, to be disencumbered of useless discussion . . . It has to find objective expression in an all-embracing code of life thoroughly impregnated with its spirit — the spirit of mutual tolerance, charity and love.<sup>2</sup>

**Can bring about a peaceful realignment of mainstream thought,**

I repeat: it is only Theosophy, well understood, that can save the world from despair, by re-enacting the social and religious reform once before in history accomplished by Gautama the Buddha; a peaceful reform, without one drop of spilt blood, permitting everyone to remain in the faith of his fathers if he so choose. To do this, one would have only to reject the parasitic plants of human fabrication which at the present moment are choking all religions and cults in the world.



Let him accept but the essence, which is the same in all; namely, the spirit which gives life to man in whom it resides, and renders him immortal.

Let every man inclined to good find his ideal — a star before him to guide him.

Let him follow it without ever deviating from his path, and he is almost certain to reach the “beacon-light” of life — TRUTH; no matter whether he seeks for and finds it at the bottom of a cradle or of a well.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (LETTER TO SECOND AMERICAN CONVENTION) IX p. 243

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, (“ORIGINAL PROGRAMME” MANUSCRIPT) VII pp. 169-70; [quoting from a Master of Wisdom’s Letter.]

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, (THE BEACON OF THE UNKNOWN – III) XI p. 262



**As a matter of urgency!** [Because if Theosophy does not strike] . . . deep root into the minds and hearts of men . . . then the storm will burst, and our boasted western civilization and enlightenment will sink in such a sea of horror that its parallel History has never yet recorded.<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, (OUR CYCLE AND THE NEXT) XI p. 202

## Theosophists described<sup>1</sup>

### Metaphysically

He who would be an occultist must not separate either himself or anything else from the rest of creation or *non-creation*. For, the moment he distinguishes himself from even a vessel of dishonour, he will not be able to join himself to any vessel of honour. He must think of himself as an infinitesimal something, not even as an individual atom, but as a part of the world-atoms as a whole, or become an illusion, a nobody, and vanish like a breath, leaving no trace behind. As illusions, we are separate distinct bodies, living in masks furnished by Maya. Can we claim one single atom in our body as distinctly our own? Everything, from spirit to the tiniest particle, is part of the whole, at best a link. Break a single link and all passes into annihilation; but this is impossible. There is a series of vehicles becoming more and more gross, from spirit to the densest matter, so that with each step downward and outward we get more and more the sense of separateness developed in us. Yet this is illusory, for if there were a real and complete separation between any two human beings, they could not communicate with, or understand each other in any way.<sup>2</sup>

### Ethically

He who does not practise altruism;

He who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or a poorer than himself;

He who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation, or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery;

He who hears an innocent person slandered, whether a brother Theosophist or not, and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own;

[He] is no Theosophist.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>1</sup> From *Compassion: the Spirit of Truth* (2009), Appendix A, p. 337.

<sup>2</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE) X p. 395. [Commentary on Stanza IV.1: LISTEN, YE SONS OF THE EARTH, TO YOUR INSTRUCTORS — THE SONS OF THE FIRE. LEARN, THERE IS NEITHER FIRST NOR LAST; FOR ALL IS ONE NUMBER, ISSUED FROM NO-NUMBER.]

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, (THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY) X p. 69; [quoting Émile Burnouf from an editorial in: *Lucifer*, Vol. I, November 1887, p. 169.]



## Warnings to aspirants

**Those who do not enter inner life in the Spirit of Brotherhood,** Theosophy is essentially unsectarian, and work for it forms the entrance to the Inner life. But none can enter there save the man himself in the highest and truest spirit of Brotherhood, and any other attempt at entrance will either be futile or he will lie blasted at the threshold.<sup>1</sup>

**Those who try to degrade a noble philosophy into a den for immorality,** It is a noticeable fact that neither Zoroaster, Buddha, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Confucius, Socrates, nor Ammonius Saccas, committed anything to writing. The reason for it is obvious. Theosophy is a double-edged weapon and unfit for the ignorant or the selfish. Like every ancient philosophy it has its votaries among the moderns; but, until late in our own days, its disciples were few in numbers, and of the most various sects and opinions. . . .<sup>2</sup>

Woe to those who try to convert a noble philosophy into a den for disgusting immorality, greediness for selfish power, and money-making under the cloak of Theosophy. Karma reaches them when least expected.<sup>3</sup>

**Those who are ignorant of the dangers of psychic powers,** *Siddhis*<sup>4</sup> (or the Arhat powers) are only for those who are able to “lead the life,” to comply with the terrible sacrifices required for such a training, and to comply with them *to the very letter*. Let them know at once and remember always, that *true Occultism or Theosophy* is the “Great Renunciation of SELF,” unconditionally and absolutely, in thought as in action. It is ALTRUISM, and it throws him who practises it out of calculation of the ranks of the living altogether. “Not for himself, but for the world, he lives,” as soon as he has pledged himself to the work. Much is forgiven during the first years of probation. But, no sooner is he “accepted” than his personality must disappear, and he has to become *a mere beneficent force in Nature*.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (SECOND LETTER OF H.P. BLAVATSKY) XI p. 166

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, (WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?) II p. 96

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, (SECOND LETTER OF H.P. BLAVATSKY) XI p. 165

<sup>4</sup> [Cf. *iddhis*, in: *Voice of the Silence*, frag. I, vs. 1 p. 1 & glos.]

<sup>5</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (OCCULTISM VERSUS THE OCCULT ARTS) IX p. 254

**And specially those who have  
already pledged to live  
for the World,**

There are two poles for him after that, two paths, and no midward place of rest. He has either to ascend laboriously, step by step, often through numerous incarnations and *no Devachanic break*, the golden ladder leading to Mahatmaship (the *Arhat* or *Bodhisattva* condition), or — he will let himself slide down the ladder at the first false step, and roll down into *Dugpaship*. . . .<sup>1</sup>

**Beware!**

**Only purity of deed and  
thought can raise you to the  
company of your Divine Self.**

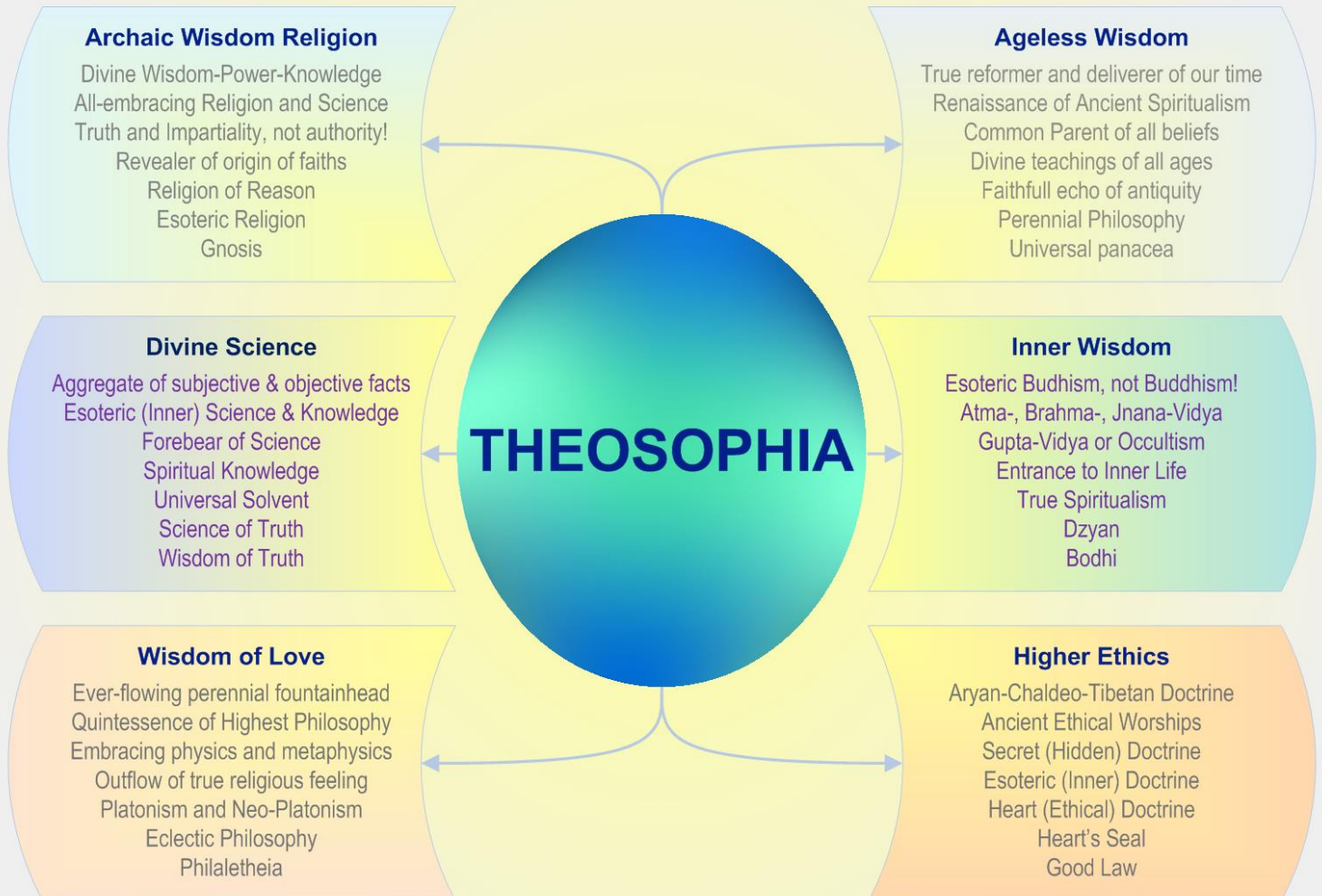
Besides this psychological, or soul-state, Theosophy cultivated every branch of sciences and arts. It was thoroughly familiar with what is now commonly known as mesmerism. Practical theurgy or “ceremonial magic,” so often resorted to in their exorcisms by the Roman Catholic clergy — was discarded by the Theosophists. It is but Iamblichus alone who, transcending the other Eclectics, added to Theosophy the doctrine of Theurgy. When ignorant of the true meaning of the esoteric divine symbols of nature, man is apt to miscalculate the powers of his soul, and, instead of communing spiritually and mentally with the higher, celestial beings, the good spirits (the gods of the theurgists of the Platonic school), he will unconsciously call forth the evil, dark powers which lurk around humanity — the undying, grim creations of human crimes and vices — and thus fall from *theurgia* (white magic) into *goëtia* (or black magic, sorcery). Yet, neither white, nor black magic are what popular superstition understands by the terms. The possibility of “raising spirits” according to the key of Solomon, is the height of superstition and ignorance. Purity of deed and thought can alone raise us to an intercourse “with the gods” and attain for us the goal we desire. Alchemy, believed by so many to have been a spiritual philosophy as well as a physical science, belonged to the teachings of the theosophical school.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (OCCULTISM VERSUS THE OCCULT ARTS) IX p. 254

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, (WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?) II p. 96

*Irrigated by Compassion and Charity Immortal, there is a constant outpouring of Spiritual Knowledge, Love, and Guidance for the Great Orphan. It emanates from the Highest Noëtic Realms of the Universe, from Regents of Rounds and Races, Higher and Lower Avatars, Gautama Buddha and his Incarnations, Rishis and Mahatmas.*



*Practical Theosophia is far more important than Esoteric Knowledge.*

BEHOLD THE TRUTH BEFORE YOU: A CLEAN LIFE, AN OPEN MIND, A PURE HEART, AN EAGER INTELLECT, AN UNVEILED SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION, A BROTHERLINESS FOR ONE'S CO-DISCIPLE, A READINESS TO GIVE AND RECEIVE ADVICE AND INSTRUCTION, A LOYAL SENSE OF DUTY TO THE TEACHER, A WILLING OBEDIENCE TO THE BEHESTS OF TRUTH, ONCE WE HAVE PLACED OUR CONFIDENCE IN, AND BELIEVE THAT TEACHER TO BE IN POSSESSION OF IT; A COURAGEOUS ENDURANCE OF PERSONAL INJUSTICE, A BRAVE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, A VALIANT DEFENCE OF THOSE WHO ARE UNJUSTLY ATTACKED, AND A CONSTANT EYE TO THE IDEAL OF HUMAN PROGRESSION AND PERFECTION WHICH THE SECRET SCIENCE (GUPTA-VIDYĀ) DEPICTS — THESE ARE THE GOLDEN STAIRS UP THE STEPS OF WHICH THE LEARNER MAY CLIMB TO THE TEMPLE OF DIVINE WISDOM.

Blavatsky Collected Writings XII, (E.S. INTRODUCTION) p. 503; [quoting from a Master of Wisdom's Letter.]



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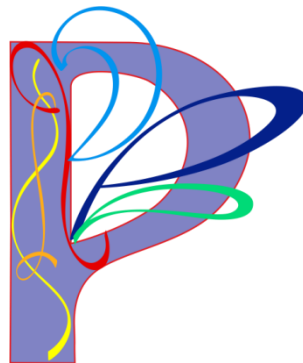


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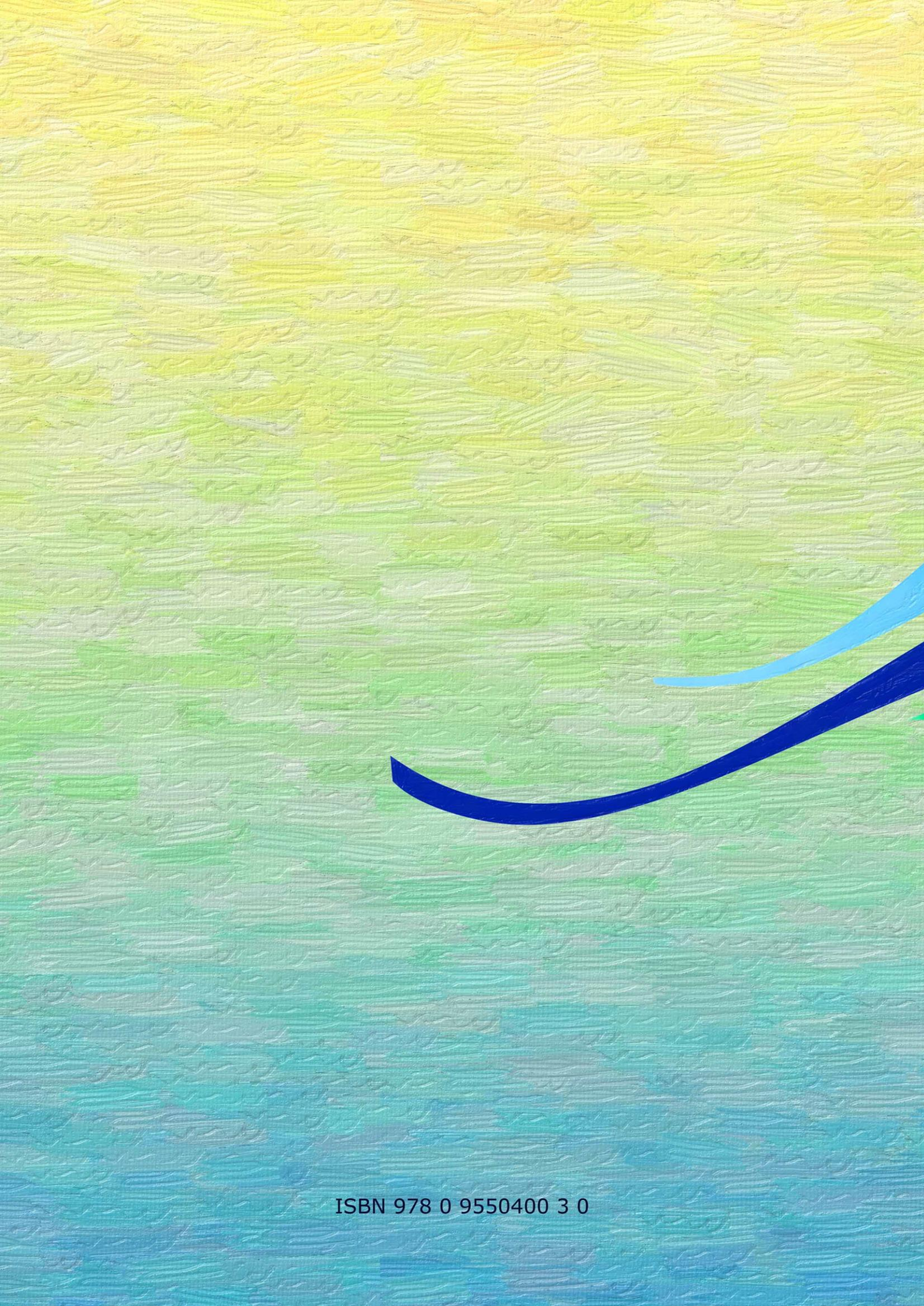
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ISBN 978 0 9550400 3 0