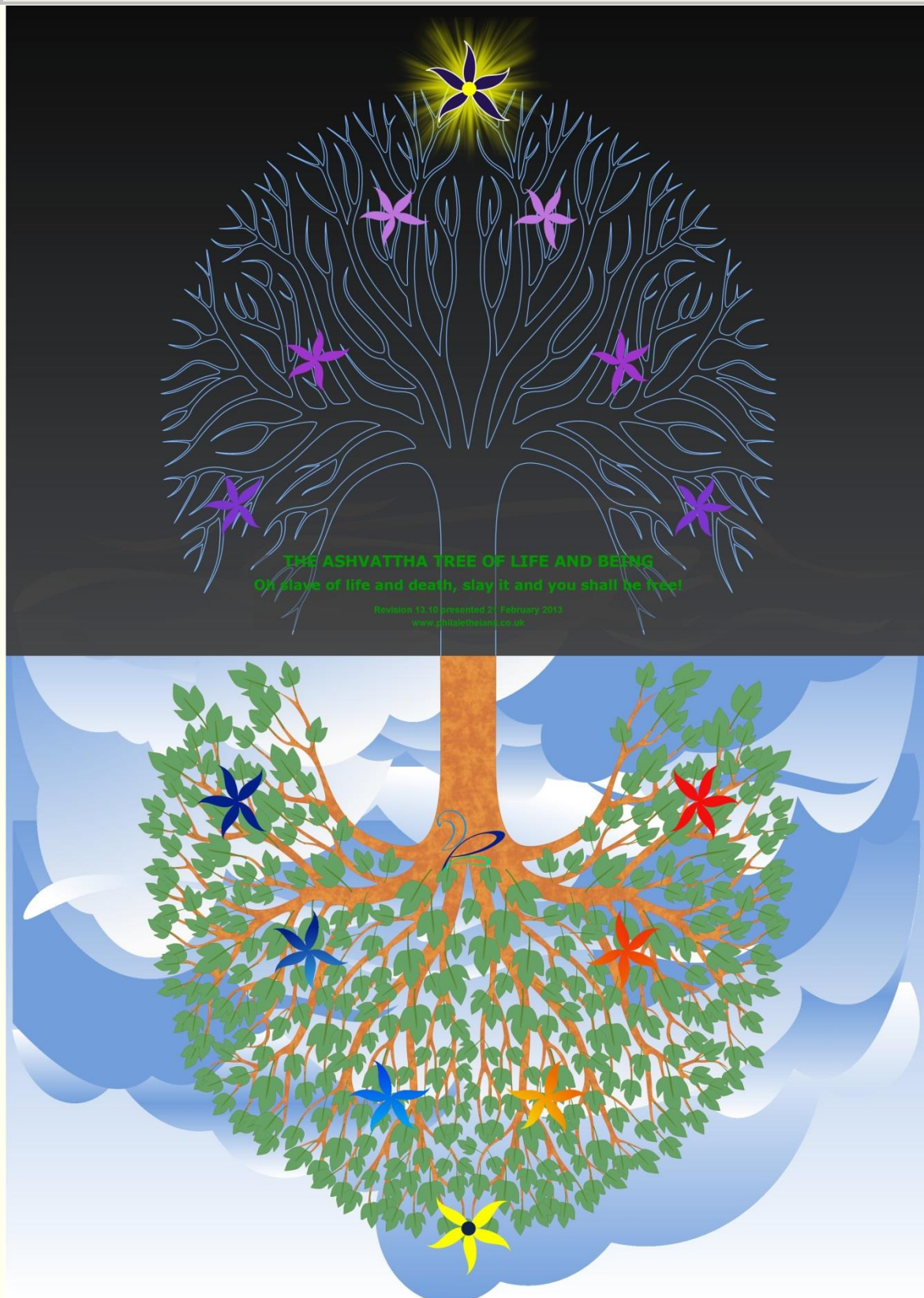


Theosophy and Theosophists



What exactly is Theosophy?

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THIS QUESTION has been so often asked, and misconception so widely prevails, that the editors of a journal devoted to an exposition of the world's Theosophy would be remiss were its first number issued without coming to a full understanding with their readers. But our heading involves two further queries: What is the Theosophical Society; and what are the Theosophists? To each an answer will be given.

According to lexicographers, the term *theosophia* is composed of two Greek words — *theos*, “god,” and *sophos*, “wise.” So far, correct. But the explanations that follow are far from giving a clear idea of Theosophy. Webster defines it most originally as

. . . a supposed intercourse with God and superior spirits, and consequent attainment of superhuman knowledge, by *physical processes*, as by the theurgic operations of some ancient Platonists, or by the *chemical processes* of the German fire-philosophers.

This, to say the least, is a poor and flippant explanation. To attribute such ideas to men like Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, Iamblichus, Porphyry, Proclus — shows either intentional misrepresentation, or Mr. Webster's ignorance of the philosophy and motives of the greatest geniuses of the later Alexandrian School. To impute to those whom their contemporaries as well as posterity styled “theodidaktoi,” god-taught — a purpose to develop their psychological, spiritual perceptions by “physical processes,” is to describe them as materialists. As to the concluding fling at the fire-philosophers, it rebounds from them to fall home among our most eminent modern men of science; those, in whose mouths the Rev. James Martineau places the following boast,

. . . matter is all we want; give us atoms alone, and we will explain the universe.

Vaughan offers a far better, more philosophical definition:

A Theosophist is one who gives you a theory of God or the works of God, which has not revelation, but an inspiration of his own for its basis.

In this view every great thinker and philosopher, especially every founder of a new religion, school of philosophy, or sect, is necessarily a Theosophist. Hence, Theosophy and Theosophists have existed ever since the first glimmering of nascent thought made man seek instinctively for the means of expressing his own independent opinions.

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. Diogenes Laërtius traces Theosophy to an epoch antedating the dynasty of the Ptolemies; 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. But history shows it revived by Ammonius Saccas, the founder of the Neo-Platonic School. He 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 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. Hence, the Buddhistic, Vedāntic 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; his chief object in order, as he believed, to achieve all others, 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.

Theosophy is, then, the archaic *Wisdom-Religion*, the esoteric doctrine once known in every ancient country having claims to civilization. This “Wisdom” all the old writings show us as an emanation 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, 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 of old Egypt, the Rishis of Āryāvarta, the Theodidaktoi of Greece, included all knowledge of things occult and essentially divine. The *Merkābāh* 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 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.

The central idea of the Eclectic Theosophy was that of a single Supreme Essence, Unknown and *Unknowable* — for “How could one know the knower?” as enquires *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad*. Their system was characterized by three distinct features: the theory of the above-named Essence; the doctrine of the human soul — an emanation from the latter, hence of the same nature; and its theurgy. 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.

As regards the Divine Essence and the nature of the soul and spirit, modern Theosophy believes now as ancient Theosophy did. The popular *Diu* of the Āryan nations was identical with the *Iaō* of the Chaldeans, and even with the Jupiter of the less learned and philosophical among the Romans; and it was just as identical with the *Jahve* of the Samaritans, the *Tiu* or “Tuisto” of the Northmen, the *Duw* of the Britons, and the Zeus of the Thracians. As to the Absolute Essence, the One and All — whether we accept the Greek Pythagorean, the Chaldean Kabbalistic, or the Āryan philosophy in regard to it, it will all lead to one and the same result. The Primeval Monad of the Pythagorean system, which retires into darkness and is itself Darkness (for human intellect) was made the basis of all things; and we can find the idea in all its integrity in the philosophical systems of Leibnitz and Spinoza. Therefore, whether a Theosophist agrees with the Kabbalah which, speaking of Ain-Soph, propounds the query:

Who, then, can comprehend It, since It is formless, and Non-Existent?

— or, remembering that magnificent hymn from the *Rig-Veda*,¹ enquires:

Who knows from whence this great creation sprang?

Whether his will created or was mute.

He knows it — or perchance *even He knows not*.

Or, again, accepts the Vedāntic conception of Brahma, who in the *Upanishads* is represented as “without life, without mind, pure,” *unconscious*, for — Brahma is “Absolute Consciousness.” Or, even finally, siding with the Svābhāvikas of Nepal, maintains that nothing exists but “Svabhāva” (substance or nature) which exists by *itself* without any creator — any one of the above conceptions can lead but to pure and absolute Theosophy. That 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 the 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

¹ Hymn 129th, Book 10th

to any of these religions, and yet remain strictly within the boundaries of Theosophy. 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 Āryans *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 soul¹ 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.

To fully define Theosophy, we must consider it under all its aspects. 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 Yogīns and the Srotriya 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. Says Porphyry:

To unite one’s soul to the Universal Soul 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.

¹ 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.]

And Swāmi Dayānanda Sarasvatī, who has read neither Porphyry nor other Greek authors, but who is a thorough Vedic scholar, says in his *Veda-Bhāshya*¹:

To obtain *Dīkshā* (highest initiations) and *Yog*, one has to practice according to the rules . . . The soul in human body can perform the greatest wonders by knowing the Universal Spirit (or God) and acquainting itself with the properties and qualities (occult) of all the things in the universe. A human being (a *Dīkshita* or initiate) can thus *acquire a power of seeing and hearing at great distances*.

Finally, Alfred R. Wallace, F.R.S., a spiritualist and yet a confessedly great naturalist, says, with brave candour:

It is “spirit” that alone feels, and perceives, and thinks — that acquires knowledge, and reasons and aspires . . . there not unfrequently occur individuals so constituted that the spirit can perceive independently of the corporeal organs of sense, or can, perhaps, wholly or partially, quit the body for a time and return to it again . . . the spirit . . . communicates with spirit easier than with matter.

We can now see how, after thousands of years have intervened between the age of the Gymnosophists² and our own highly civilized era, notwithstanding, or, perhaps, just because of, such an enlightenment which pours its radiant light upon the psychological as well as upon the physical realms of nature, over twenty millions of people today believe, under a different form, in those same spiritual powers that were believed in by the Yogīns and the Pythagoreans, nearly 3,000 years ago. Thus, while the Āryan mystic claimed for himself the power of solving all the problems of life and death, when he had once obtained the power of acting independently of his body, through the *Ātman* — “self,” or “soul”; and the old Greeks went in search of *Atmu* — the Hidden one, or the God-Soul of man, with the symbolical mirror of the Thesmo-phorian mysteries; — so the spiritualists of today believe in the faculty of the spirits, or the souls of the disembodied persons, to communicate visibly and tangibly with those they loved on earth. And all these, Āryan Yogīns, Greek philosophers, and modern spiritualists, affirm that possibility on the ground that the embodied soul and its never embodied spirit — the real *self* — are not separated from either the Universal Soul or other spirits by space, but merely by the differentiation of their qualities; as in the boundless expanse of the universe there can be no limitation. And that when this difference is once removed — according to the Greeks and Āryans by abstract contemplation, producing the temporary liberation of the imprisoned Soul; and according to Spiritualists, through mediumship — such an union between embodied and disembodied spirits becomes possible. Thus was it that Patañjali’s Yogīns and, following in their steps, Plotinus, Porphyry, and other Neo-Platonists, maintained that in their hours of ecstasy, they had been united to, or rather become as one with, God, several times during the course of their lives. This idea, erroneous as it may seem in its application to the Universal Spirit, was, and is, claimed by too

¹ Upāsana prakara ank, 9

² The reality of Yoga-powers was affirmed by many Greek and Roman writers, who call the Yogīns Indian Gymnosophists; by Strabo, Lucan, Plutarch, Cicero (*Tusculanæ Disputationes*), Pliny (*Natural History*, VII, ii, 22), etc.

many great philosophers to be put aside as entirely chimerical. In the case of the Theodidaktoi, the only controvertible point, the dark spot on this philosophy of extreme mysticism, was its claim to include that which is simply ecstatic illumination, under the head of sensuous perception. In the case of the Yogīns, who maintained their ability to see Īsvara “face to face,” this claim was successfully overthrown by the stern logic of Kapila. As to the similar assumption made for their Greek followers, for a long array of Christian ecstasies, and, finally, for the last two claimants to “God-seeing” within these last hundred years — Jacob Böhme and Swedenborg — this pretension would and *should* have been philosophically and logically questioned, if a few of our great men of science who are Spiritualists had had more interest in the philosophy than in the mere phenomenalism of Spiritualism.

The Alexandrian Theosophists were divided into neophytes, initiates, and masters, or hierophants; and their rules were copied from the ancient Mysteries of Orpheus, who, according to Herodotus, brought them from India. Ammonius obligated his disciples by oath not to divulge his *higher* doctrines, except to those who were proved thoroughly worthy and initiated, and who had learned to regard the gods, the angels, and the demons of other peoples, according to the esoteric *hyponoia*, or under-meaning. Says Epicurus:

The gods exist, but they are not what *hoi polloi*, the uneducated multitude, suppose them to be. He is not an atheist who denies the existence of the gods whom the multitude worship, but he is such who fastens on these gods the opinions of the multitude.

In his turn, Aristotle declares that of the

Divine Essence pervading the whole world of nature, what are styled the *gods* are simply the first principles.¹

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 the first is sense, or perception; of the second, dialectics; of 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 Schelling denominates “a realization of the identity of subject and object in the individual”; so that under the influence and knowledge of *hyponoia* 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*. Besides this psychological, or soul-state, Theosophy cultivated every branch of sciences and arts. It was thoroughly fa-

¹ [See Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives*, X, 123, where the Greek word *asevēs* means impious, irreverent, ungodly, rather than “atheist”; and Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Bk. XII, viii, p. 1074b. — Boris de Zirkoff.]

miliar 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.

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.

Entirely speculative, and founding no schools, they have still exercised a silent influence upon philosophy; and, no doubt, when the time arrives, many ideas thus silently propounded may yet give new directions to human thought . . .

— remarks Mr. Kenneth R.H. Mackenzie IX^o . . . himself a mystic and a Theosophist, in his large and valuable work, *The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia*.¹ Since the days of the fire-philosophers, they had never formed themselves into societies, for, tracked like wild beasts by the Christian clergy, to be known as a Theosophist often amounted, hardly a century ago, to a death warrant. The statistics show that, during a period of 150 years, no less than 90,000 men and women were burned in Europe for alleged witchcraft. In Great Britain only, from A.D. 1640 to 1660, but twenty years, 3,000 persons were put to death for compact with the “Devil.” It was but late in the present century — in 1875 — that some progressed mystics and spiritualists, unsatisfied with the theories and explanations of Spiritualism, started by its votaries, and finding that they were far from covering the whole ground of the wide range of phenomena, formed at New York, America, an association which is now widely known as the Theosophical Society. And now, having explained what is Theosophy, we will, in a separate article, explain what is the nature of our society, which is also called the “Universal Brotherhood of Humanity.”²

¹ Articles “Theosophical Society of New York” and “Theosophy,” p. 731. *The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia of History, Rites, Symbolism and Biography*. Edited by Kenneth R.H. Mackenzie IX^o (Cryptonymous), Hon. Member of the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge, No. 2, Scotland. New York, J.W. Bouton, 706 Broadway, 1877.

² *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?) II pp. 87-97.

Addendum

First published in *La Revue Spirite*, Paris, November 1880. Translation of the foregoing original French text, by Boris de Zirkoff, republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, II pp. 500-7.

**To Monsieur Charles Fauvety
President of the Society for Psychological Studies, Paris**

Bombay, August 5th, 1880

Very Honoured Sir and President,

Your esteemed letter of June 25 is so serious and important that after mature deliberation, the Supreme Council of the Theosophical Society has directed me to answer you equally seriously, and upon all the points.

You tell us that the reason compelling you to decline the honour of joining us — with several other persons of your learned society — is “*Esotericism* set up as a principle” in our statutes?

Allow me to say that you are making a mistake.

It is true that a *wholly esoteric* section exists in our Society; but it is only a section, a very tiny part of the society which would perhaps be best defined if I call it at the outset — not only the trunk of the Theosophical tree or its seed — because it is to that section that our whole Society owes its origin — but the vivifying sap that makes it live and flourish. Without this section, composed solely of Oriental adepts, the Theosophical Society, whose ramifications are beginning to cover the five regions of the globe, would be nothing but a dead and sterile body, a corpse without a soul. And yet the Theosophists who have been admitted therein up to this time could be reckoned on the fingers of one hand. Admission is not by asking. As for the rest of the Theosophists, with the exception of the passwords and signs that are changed at every expulsion of a bad and false brother, there are no secrets to preserve and nothing to conceal.

The following is what the *Rules* say on this subject:

XI. The Society includes three sections. The first is exclusively composed of initiates in occult sciences or esoteric philosophy. Taking a profound interest in the business of the administration of our society, they are constantly in touch with the President-Founder, but — they remain unknown to the mass of the members. It is only those they themselves choose who receive the right to know them and to communicate with them.¹

(g) *But none of these members* (thus favoured) *shall have the right to divulge the secrets of Occult Science which may be communicated to them.* And before one can be put in touch, direct or indirect, with the adepts of the first section, he must take a most solemn pledge never to reveal what he shall learn or see; or employ his knowledge for personal and selfish motives, or even to refer to it, unless he receives permission to that effect from his Master himself.

¹ Up to the present there are only *five* members or *Fellows* of the Third Section who have seen them or spoken with any of them; and no more than two who have received advice and some instruction in occult sciences; and we are 45,000! You may judge how easy it is to know or approach our “Brothers” of the First Section!

All the rest is open to the day. But it is indeed true that our members have more privileges than persons who do not belong to our society. Every Branch of the society (and there are fifty-three) has its library containing books more or less rare, unpublished manuscripts, to which the public has no access. They hold weekly meetings and do not publish their business by shouting it from the house tops. But in this they do not show any greater feeling of exclusiveness or mystery than any other scientific society — in which scientific discussions are held or experiments made. If we do not admit visitors to our weekly assemblies, it is not because we have anything to hide, but simply in order not to be disturbed in our labours, and also to avoid the foolish talk and the premature comments of the sceptics. Every time we have made an experiment and have succeeded in making a discovery in the occult forces, the fact is published, and more than once you will have read, in *The Theosophist*, the account of such or another phenomenon that we can reproduce at will, whether in physical, physiological, or psychological science.

Aside from that special branch of esoteric studies, our society, as its name indicates, is nothing but the “Universal Brotherhood; the *Brotherhood of Humanity!*”

Our Society accomplishes what the Masonic societies promise, but never perform. All *Brothers, without distinction of social position, race, or colour*, offer the hand of friendship to one another. The nobly born, proud, and wealthy Lord who, if he were not a Theosophist, would hardly permit a poor Hindu or Chinese to pass the threshold of his antechamber, treats his poor and more humble brother as his equal.

Day and night, we work in common for the spiritual regeneration of morally blind individuals, as well as for the elevation of the fallen nations.

This is a program which you will perhaps hardly believe without reluctance, and will be inclined to consider purely Utopian, yet the proofs are there. Read *The Theosophist* and the Reports of the Society and you will find many a letter written by Hindus, Ceylonese (or Singhalese), and Mohammedans to thank us for our efforts and to give us news of results obtained. A young Englishman, a magistrate, who is at present in the Central Provinces, R. Scott, Esq., admits to us that since he became a member of our Society, he listens to the pleadings of the *natives* with much more attention than he had done till then. He no longer thinks, as formerly for some years, that, in every case or dispute between a European and a Hindu *it is always the Hindu who must be wrong*; he is delighted to find so much education and intelligence among the natives. He regards them now as men, as “Brothers,” while before they were merely *dogs* or *niggers* in his eyes. The wife of a general, Mrs. Murray, who has lived in India for eighteen years, after her initiation, began to converse amiably with some educated Brāhmanas of our Society and shook hands on leaving. “It was the first time in her life,” she said, “that she had touched any Hindus or exchanged a word with them”!!! She had never spoken to a man of that race during the eighteen years she had passed in those surroundings; she was delighted to find so many highly cultured persons among these people! That is one of the fruits of Theosophy as “Universal Brotherhood.” We include many English people among us, all of them employed by the Government. Do you think, Monsieur, that in a dozen years the effects of our Theosophical principles will not have brought some good to this people, hitherto so unjustly despised, suppressed, and ignored? Believe me, the Theosophical So-

ciety is a harp with more than one string; and there is not one of them that will not finish by vibrating sympathetically in response to our constant efforts. We have a place for everyone and for every aspiration. All depends on what you want to do. Are you Christian, Buddhist Brahman, Jew, or Zoroastrian? You have only to affiliate with the Branch composed of the followers of the religion you profess. Are you a Spiritualist? Join the Spiritualistic branch. Freethinker? Become a member of the Lankā Theosophical Society, etc. Are you none of these, but only a thinker, a labourer in search of Truth, and nothing but the Truth; a historian, an ethnologist, a savant devoted to the physical sciences, an archaeologist, a philologist, an antiquary? You will find among us most learned, most illustrious names. You will not work alone or isolated any longer. If a member of an Academy, of one of the Royal Societies recognized as “learned,” you will have no further need to tremble in bringing to it any of your discoveries in the ridiculed sciences which are regarded as emanating from dreams and impossible hallucinations, because you will no longer need to appeal to it in order to prove that discovery. Where one “Royal Society” would show you the door, or make you look like a fool or a charlatan (as in the Crookes’ case), you would find a dozen colleagues and true scientists who would support and help you, because they are members of the Theosophical Society like yourself, and have sworn to mutually help and teach one another. (Compare your *Religion laïque*; is it not extinguished under the conspiracy of silence?)

To conclude this subject, our Society is entirely the opposite of every other society that exists. We do not permit in it the shadow of dogmatism, whether of religion or of science. Each in his own particular branch does and acts as it seems good to him, but no one thinks of imposing his ideas on others in our general meetings. A member who would say to his “Brother,” of another religion: “Believe as I do or you will be damned,” or who would try to make him believe that he alone possessed truth, or who should insult his beliefs, would be immediately expelled from the Society. The Parent Society protects every belief, every private opinion, as it would protect the purse of one of its members. No one has the right to touch the sacred or private property of one of his Brothers, except with respect and with the authorization of the latter. This is why our Society works in harmony, and why, even quite recently, a delegation of nine members of whom two are Buddhists, two Freethinkers, one Christian, two Sun-worshippers (Parsīs), and two Brāhmanas, has been sent on a mission to Ceylon to defend the rights of the Buddhists (hitherto their implacable bitter enemies, mutually hating one another) to establish Buddhist Theosophical Societies, and to hold meetings and give addresses in favour of the religion of the latter.

I am sending you *The Theosophist*, from its first issues, and we will send it to you regularly, requesting you and your society to accept it with our sincere and fraternal compliments. Read, I beg you, in the August number¹ an article or two which I have marked. You will see therein what the *Ceylon Examiner*, a Christian paper, says of our Society, of its plans, and of the practical good it has done in the world. We are all human and can easily make mistakes, and we have our opinions and our preferences as well as our tastes and different ways of seeing things. Let us then help each other mutually with the light we may have, and never dogmatize about anything, at

¹ Please see numbers 9, 10, and 11 of *The Theosophist*. The articles to read are marked in red pencil.

least until a hypothesis has become an undeniable fact to the whole universe — such as the existence of the sun or the oceans. Why should we worry about the personal opinions of our members on the question of religion? Provided that a person is in sympathy with us, in general, on the principal points of the rules of our *Brotherhood*, that he is honest, pure, sincere, and ready to help his neighbour, what is it to us whether that person does it in the name of *Christ* or of *Buddha*? You have merely to re-read the fine saying of Spinoza that you quote in *Religion laïque* to understand that mutual tolerance, that indifference to secondary *names* and objects:

It is not at all necessary to know Christ . . . [we will add — nor Buddha, nor Zoroaster, nor Parabrahman] according to the flesh, but rather the *ideal* Christ, that is to say the eternal son of God, *that Divine Wisdom which manifests itself in everything* . . . because it is that alone which can carry us to the perfect state, by teaching us what is true and false, good or bad.

The Theosophical Society, then, does not derive its name from the Greek word *Theosophia*, composed of the two words “God” and “wisdom” taken in the dead letter, but rather in the spiritual sense of the term. It is the Society for searching into *Divine Wisdom*, occult or spiritual wisdom which, while hardly yielding itself either to the crucible of an entirely physical science, or to the investigation of the materialist, lies, however, at the foundation of everything, material or immaterial, because it is the *omega* or last word of creation, or rather of the evolution of every form, of every idea, even the most abstract.

This *Divine Wisdom* has been discovered by Mr. Edison, the Theosophist, in the eternity of sound, which never disappears, not even when its organ, the sheet of lead, disappears; and Robert Fludd, the great Rosicrucian, intercepted and interrogated it in the flame, in the fire, of which neither the essence nor the origin are yet known to official science, and which will never be known, at least unless it condescends to walk in the way traced by the Fire-Philosophers of the Middle Ages, those “dreamers” and those “idiots,” according to Mr. Littré. But is not that *Divine Wisdom* also found in the *harmony* of the spheres as well as in the harmony of races and men? As members of the great *Universal Fraternity*, the fraternity of sciences, religions, and ideas, we *have nothing to hide*: we do everything in the open, because harmony can never become harmful, and it cannot be abused.

The few favoured persons among us who have or could have crossed the threshold of the occult sciences (that double-edged sword which *saves*, but also *kills*), have no right to expose these truths in open day nor to betray the great secret. That secret is not for us, Monsieur, it does not belong to our century; it is the heritage of the martyrs, of the philosophers and the saints of the great *Past*. If for one reason or another, the custodians of those secrets, who alone possess them, find it right that they should be well protected and never exposed to the risk of falling into the hands of the profane, the people who indulge themselves in discord and who despise every idea of harmony between the so-called “superior” races and those they treat as “inferior,” to us belongs the choice of rejecting their conditions, or accepting them and defending those secrets “with our life.”

You see clearly, then, that Esotericism is “erected as a principle” among us only for the purpose of gaining admission as neophytes in the Branch of the Yogīns, the Sannyāsins.

As I have had the honour of informing you, that Branch only reckons *five* members. Their names even are unknown to the rest of the Theosophists, who, with the exception of the signs and passwords, have nothing to hide, nothing to reveal, which may not be made public in our magazine.

And now, Monsieur, begging to be excused for my long letter, as well as for my bad French, a language that I am completely forgetting here — I have finished. I have explained everything to you, and I will request you to explain everything in your turn to your esteemed members, and to do with this letter whatever you wish. Accept, Monsieur le Président, the expression of my respectful compliments.

H.P. BLAVATSKY

Corresponding Secretary of the New York Theosophical Society



Theosophy is the Essence of Philosophy and Science.

[The original of the following fragment is in the Adyar Archives, namely, four odd sheets in H.P. Blavatsky's handwriting; the above title was written by her on the back of the last sheet. The last paragraph gives an approximate clue to the date of this piece of writing, sometime in 1879. — *Boris de Zirkoff.*]

TO OBTAIN A GLIMPSE of the first *Theosophists*, we will have to retrace the footsteps of hundreds of generations. To return for a moment to the dim traditions of “our abysmal past” as Mr. Tyndall would eloquently say — and name the four primitive Rishis — Agni, Vāyu, Āditya and Angiras, who, under the inspiration of the Omnipresent Spirit (Sarva Vipayas) gave utterance [to] the four *Vedas*.¹ It is such men as these who knew of no other Deity but that which dwelt in them as they felt themselves inseparable from It, that Emerson must have had in his mind when writing his *Essay on the Oversoul*.

Alone Emerson, one of the most transcendental idealists of our century, in his *Essay on the Oversoul* gives in a few words the most superb definition of the psychological states above referred to. Speaking of the commingling of the individual with the Universal Soul, he describes it by saying: “I, the imperfect, adore *my own* Perfect.”

Among those who come right under Vaughan's definition of *Theosophists*, Emerson stands conspicuous. His writings, remarks a pious critic, would have been at once welcomed, “had it not been for some startling paradoxes and audacious statements, which, while they were in direct conflict with the theological beliefs of the people, were supported neither by facts nor arguments, but *rested on the simple testimony of the author's individual consciousness.*”

Rapidly passing by the uninterrupted series of subsequent mystics and Seers, we will stop to record but the founders of the six great schools of Indian Philosophy; then noting down Śamkarāchārya, Kabir and a few others, pass onward to return to our starting point. And here, in the present century, we will find ourselves face to face with, and recognize as Brother Theosophists, such original thinkers as Swaminarayan, Ram Mohan Roy, Brahmachāri Bāwā, Keshub Chandra Sen, and finally, last, though by far not least on our catalogue — Swami Dayānanda Sarasvatī, the learned Pandit, eminent Vedic scholar and elocutionist, and the founder of the Āryan Reformation.

We could now retrace our steps once more, and begin a new nomenclature with the earliest Theosophists of the Āryan Greece. Whether the separation of the nations took place after the final establishment of the Āryan tribes who migrating southward possessed themselves of the “Seven Rivers,” or earlier, at that time, when the ances-

¹ See Swāmi Dayānanda Saraswatī's *Veda-Bhāshya*.

tors of the modern nationalities were all living together in more northern regions, it matters little; we still find in the oldest theosophies of the emigrants who now form the principal nations of North-western Asia and Europe the same metaphysical conceptions, hopes and aspirations — less dreamy, perhaps, but in some cases carried out as far as the speculations of the Indian Āryans. Professor Max Müller assigning to the migration of the latter, across the Himalayas, a period which he terms “the first dawn of traditional history,”¹ it is but fair to leave the question an open one, until further and stronger proofs are adduced to contradict the chronology of the ancient as well as of some modern Hindu scholars. It is sufficient for us to know, that all these nations had once lived together, thought together, and struggled in their attempts to solve the eternal problems, perceive the Unseen, and fathom the Incomprehensible. And as, according to the same great philologist, “. . . there never was a nation believing so firmly in another world, and so little concerned about this . . . and, nowhere have religious and metaphysical ideas struck root so deep in the mind of a nation as in India.

Such ideas must have . . . [break in the MS.] . . . great flood of oblivion bits and scraps of the earliest records of contemporaneous writers to see that thus it ever was, and thus it ever must be. That each age furnishes the one and same characteristic in humanity, showing that, as nature itself — whether in its abstract or concrete sense — has its opposite poles, so Societies must ever be composed of two conflicting elements, subdivided into an infinity of smaller ones, which yet for that very law of opposite polarity, attract each other, thus equilibrizing and helping its onward and progressive motion. And that thus, men — especially philosophers — seem to be born only to disagree. As far back as history can reach, gods were constantly created and worshipped by one part, while pulled down and desecrated by the other. And, though Satire is more cruel than Medusa and as blind as blindfolded Themis, yet it has never proved its self-sufficiency as an argument, any more than a blow from a stronger hand has proved its right to stand to reason. Both, unless they kill on the spot, have to recoil some day before logic and reason. At Lucian’s *Sale of Philosophers*,² the great Pythagoras is made to elbow the cynical Diogenes in his rags; and though one fetches ten minæ and the other but two oboloi,³ yet both — the immortal philosopher and the filthy Athenian mountebank are made to serve as the same target for the arrows of the iconoclastic Syrian humourist. Nevertheless, some historians, if not history, have dealt impartially with both and given in subsequent ages each its due. Often those, who have grappled the most fiercely with the superstitions and bigotry of their own age, find themselves reviled by a more fortunate successor in the following. Socrates was called for generations an infidel; Suidas, for pulling down the popular gods and endeavouring to unmask the pseudo-prophet of Paphlagonia, calls Lucian a “Blasphemer” . . .

¹ See “The Vedas,” in *Chips from a German Workshop*.

² [Look up “Lucian’s Philosophers for Sale,” in our Hellenic and Hellenistic Papers. — ED. PHIL.]

³ [In ancient Greece, one mina was equal to 100 drachmai. One obolos was one sixth of a drachma.]

“Union is strength” says the Wisdom of the ages. Having such a variety of enemies to contend with, a few scattered mystics and independent thinkers have joined four years ago into a small body. At the end of the year they had become a small army and their ranks are ever and continually increasing.¹



¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THEOSOPHY — THE ESSENCE OF PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE) II pp. 208-11

Who are the Theosophists?

First published in: *The Theosophist*, Vol. I, No. 1, October 1879, pp. 5-7.

Republished in: *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (WHAT ARE THEOSOPHISTS?) II pp. 98-106.

aRE THEY WHAT THEY CLAIM TO BE — students of natural law, of ancient and modern philosophy, and even of exact science? Are they Deists, Atheists, Socialists, Materialists, or Idealists; or are they but a schism of modern Spiritualism — mere visionaries? Are they entitled to any consideration, as capable of discussing philosophy and promoting real science; or should they be treated with the compassionate toleration which one gives to “harmless enthusiasts”? The Theosophical Society has been variously charged with a belief in “miracles,” and “miracle-working”; with a secret political object — like the Carbonari; with being spies of an autocratic Czar; with preaching socialistic and nihilistic doctrines; and, *mirabile dictu*, with having a covert understanding with the French Jesuits, to disrupt modern Spiritualism for a pecuniary consideration! With equal violence they have been denounced as dreamers, by the American Positivists; as fetish-worshippers, by some of the New York press; as revivalists of “mouldy superstitions,” by the Spiritualists; as infidel emissaries of Satan, by the Christian Church; as the very types of “*gobemouche*,”¹ by Professor W.B. Carpenter, F.R.S.; and finally, and most absurdly, some Hindu opponents, with a view to lessening their influence, have flatly charged them with the employment of *demons* to perform certain phenomena. Out of all this potter of opinions, one fact stands conspicuous — the Society, its members, and their views, are deemed of enough importance to be discussed and denounced: *Men slander only those whom they hate — or fear.*

But, if the Society has had its enemies and traducers, it has also had its friends and advocates. For every word of censure, there has been a word of praise. Beginning with a party of about a dozen earnest men and women, a month later its numbers had so increased as to necessitate the hiring of a public hall for its meetings; within two years, it had working branches in European countries. Still later, it found itself in alliance with the Indian Ārya Samāj, headed by the learned Pandit Dayānanda Sarasvatī Swāmi, and the Ceylonese Buddhists, under the erudite H. Sumangala, High Priest of Adam’s Peak and President of the Widyodaya College, Colombo.

He who would seriously attempt to fathom the psychological sciences, must come to the sacred land of ancient Āryāvarta. None is older than she in esoteric wisdom and civilization, however fallen may be her poor shadow — modern India. Holding this country, as we do, for the fruitful hot-bed whence proceeded all subsequent philosophical systems, to this source of all psychology and philosophy a portion of our Society has come to learn its ancient wisdom and ask for the impartation of its weird secrets. Philology has made too much progress to require at this late day a demon-

¹ [a credulous person]

stration of this fact of the primogenitive nationality of Āryāvarta. The unproved and prejudiced hypothesis of modern Chronology is not worthy of a moment's thought, and it will vanish in time like so many other unproved hypotheses. The line of philosophical heredity, from Kapila through Epicurus to James Mill; from Patañjali through Plotinus to Jacob Böhme, can be traced like the course of a river through a landscape. One of the objects of the Society's organization was to examine the too transcendent views of the Spiritualists in regard to the powers of disembodied spirits; and, having told them what, in our opinion at least, a portion of their phenomena are *not*, it will become incumbent upon us now to show what they are. So apparent is it that it is in the East, and especially in India, that the key to the alleged "supernatural" phenomena of the Spiritualists must be sought, that it has recently been conceded in the Allahabad *Pioneer*,¹ an Anglo-Indian daily journal which has not the reputation of saying what it does not mean. Blaming the men of science who "intent upon physical discovery, for some generations have been too prone to neglect super-physical investigation," it mentions "the new wave of doubt" (Spiritualism) which has "latterly disturbed this conviction." To a large number of persons, including many of high culture and intelligence, it adds, "the supernatural has again asserted itself as a fit subject of inquiry and research. And there are plausible hypotheses in favour of the idea that among the 'sages' of the East . . . there may be found in a higher degree than among the more modernized inhabitants of the West traces of those personal peculiarities, whatever they may be, which are required as a condition precedent to the occurrence of supernatural phenomena." And then, unaware that the cause he pleads is one of the chief aims and objects of our Society, the editorial writer remarks that it is "the only direction in which, it seems to us, the efforts of the Theosophists in India might possibly be useful. The leading members of the Theosophical Society in India are known to be very advanced students of occult phenomena, already, and we cannot but hope that their professions of interest in Oriental philosophy . . . may cover a reserved intention of carrying out explorations of the kind we indicate."

While, as observed, one of our objects, it yet is but one of many; the most important of which is to revive the work of Ammonius Saccas, and make various nations remember that they are the children "of one mother." As to the transcendental side of the ancient Theosophy, it is also high time that the Theosophical Society should explain. With how much, then, of this nature-searching, God-seeking science of the ancient Āryan and Greek mystics, and of the powers of modern spiritual mediumship, does the Society agree? Our answer is: — with it all. But if asked what it believes in, the reply will be: — "*as a body* — Nothing." The Society, as a body, has no creed, as creeds are but the shells around spiritual knowledge; and Theosophy in its fruition is spiritual knowledge itself — the very essence of philosophical and theistic enquiry. Visible representative of Universal Theosophy, it can be no more sectarian than a Geographical Society, which represents universal geographical exploration without caring whether the explorers be of one creed or another. The religion of the Society is an algebraical equation, in which so long as the sign = of equality is not omitted, each member is allowed to substitute quantities of his own, which better accord with climatic and other exigencies of his native land, with the idiosyncrasies

¹ August 11th, 1879

of his people, or even with his own. Having no accepted creed, our Society is very ready to give and take, to learn and teach, by practical experimentation, as opposed to mere passive and credulous acceptance of enforced dogma. It is willing to accept every result claimed by any of the foregoing schools or systems, that can be logically and experimentally demonstrated. Conversely, it can take nothing on mere faith, no matter by whom the demand may be made.

But, when we come to consider ourselves individually, it is quite another thing. The Society's members represent the most varied nationalities and races, and were born and educated in the most dissimilar creeds and social conditions. Some of them believe in one thing, others in another. Some incline toward the ancient *magic*, or secret wisdom that was taught in the sanctuaries, which was the very opposite of supernaturalism or diabolism; others in modern spiritualism, or intercourse with the spirits of the dead; still others in mesmerism or animal magnetism, or only an occult dynamic force in nature. A certain number have scarcely yet acquired any definite belief, but are in a state of attentive expectancy; and there are even those who call themselves materialists, in a certain sense. Of atheists and bigoted sectarians of any religion, there are none in the Society; for the very fact of a man's joining it proves that he is in search of the final truth as to the ultimate essence of things. If there be such a thing as a speculative atheist, which philosophers may deny, he would have to reject both cause and effect, whether in this world of matter, or in that of spirit. There may be members who, like the poet Shelley, have let their imagination soar from cause to prior cause *ad infinitum*, as each in its turn became logically transformed into a result necessitating a prior cause, until they have thinned the Eternal into a mere mist. But even they are not atheists in the speculative sense, whether they identify the material forces of the universe with the functions with which the theists endow their God, or otherwise; for once that they cannot free themselves from the conception of the abstract ideal of power, cause, necessity, and effect, they can be considered as atheists only in respect to a personal God, and not to the Universal Soul of the Pantheist. On the other hand, the bigoted sectarian, fenced in, as he is, with a creed upon every paling of which is written the warning "No Thoroughfare," can neither come out of his enclosure to join the Theosophical Society, nor, if he could, has it room for one whose very religion forbids examination. The very root idea of the Society is free and fearless investigation.

As a body, the Theosophical Society holds that all original thinkers and investigators of the hidden side of nature whether materialists those who find matter "the promise and potency of all terrestrial life," or spiritualists — that is, those who discover in spirit the source of all energy and of matter as well, were and are, properly, Theosophists. For to be one, one need not necessarily recognize the existence of any special God or a deity. One need but worship the spirit of living nature, and try to identify oneself with it. To revere that *Presence*, the invisible Cause, which is yet ever manifesting itself in its incessant results; the intangible, omnipotent, and omnipresent Proteus: indivisible in its Essence, and eluding form, yet appearing under all and every form; who is here and there, and everywhere and nowhere; is ALL, and NOTHING; ubiquitous yet one; the Essence filling, binding, bounding, containing everything; contained in all. It will, we think, be seen now, that whether classed as Theists, Pantheists or Atheists, such men are near kinsmen to the rest. Be what he may,

once that a student abandons the old and trodden highway of routine, and enters upon the solitary path of independent thought — Godward — he is a Theosophist; an original thinker, a seeker after the eternal truth with “an inspiration of his own” to solve the universal problems.

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. It is likewise the ally of honest science, as distinguished from much that passes for *exact*, physical science, so long as the latter does not poach on the domains of psychology and metaphysics.

And it is also the ally of every honest religion — to wit: a religion willing to be judged by the same tests as it applies to the others. Those books, which contain the most self-evident truth, are to it inspired (not revealed). But all books it regards, on account of the human element contained in them, as inferior to the Book of Nature; to read which and comprehend it correctly, the innate powers of the soul must be highly developed. Ideal laws can be perceived by the intuitive faculty alone; they are beyond the domain of argument and dialectics, and no one can understand or rightly appreciate them through the explanations of another mind, though even this mind be claiming a direct revelation. And, as this Society which allows the widest sweep in the realms of the pure ideal, is no less firm in the sphere of facts, its deference to modern science and its just representatives is sincere. Despite all their lack of a higher spiritual intuition, the world’s debt to the representatives of modern physical science is immense; hence, the Society endorses heartily the noble and indignant protest of that gifted and eloquent preacher, the Rev. O.B. Frothingham, against those who try to undervalue the services of our great naturalists. “Talk of Science as being irreligious, atheistic,” he exclaimed in a recent lecture, delivered at New York, “Science is creating a new idea of God. It is due to Science that we have any conception at all of a *living* God. If we do not become atheists one of these days under the maddening effect of Protestantism, it will be due to Science, because it is disabusing us of hideous illusions that tease and embarrass us, and putting us in the way of knowing how to reason about the things we see . . . ”

And it is also due to the unremitting labours of such Orientalists as Sir W. Jones, Max Müller, Burnouf, Colebrooke, Haug, de Saint-Hilaire, and so many others, that the Society, as a body, feels equal respect and veneration for Vedic, Buddhist, Zoroastrian, and other old religions of the world; and, a like brotherly feeling towards its Hindu, Sinhalese, Parsī, Jain, Hebrew, and Christian members as individual students of “self,” of nature, and of the divine in nature.

Born in the United States of America, the Society was constituted on the model of its Motherland. The latter omitting the name of God from its Constitution lest it should afford a pretext one day to make a state religion, gives absolute equality to all religions in its laws. All support and each is in turn protected by the State. The Society, modelled upon this Constitution, may fairly be termed a “Republic of Conscience.”

We have now, we think, made clear why our members, as individuals, are free to stay outside or inside any creed they please, provided they do not pretend that none but themselves shall enjoy the privilege of conscience, and try to force their opinions up-

on the others. In this respect the Rules of the Society are very strict. It tries to act upon the wisdom of the old Buddhistic axiom, "Honour thine own faith, and do not slander that of others"; echoed back in our present century, in the "Declaration of Principles" of the Brahma Samāj, which so nobly states that: "no sect shall be vilified, ridiculed, or hated." In Section VI of the Revised Rules of the Theosophical Society, recently adopted in General Council, at Bombay, is this mandate: "It is not lawful for any officer of the Parent Society to express, by word or act, any hostility to, or preference for, any one section (sectarian division, or group within the Society) more than another. All must be regarded and treated as equally the objects of the Society's solicitude and exertions. All have an equal right to have the essential features of their religious belief laid before the tribunal of an impartial world."

In their individual capacity, members may, when attacked, occasionally break this Rule, but, nevertheless, as officers they are restrained, and the Rule is strictly enforced during the meetings. 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.

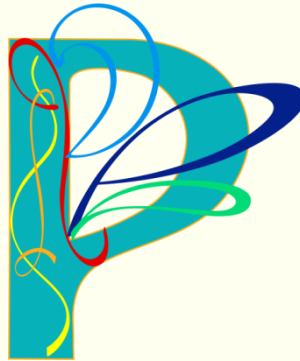
In conclusion, we may state that, broader and far more universal in its views than any existing mere scientific Society, it has *plus* science its belief in every possibility, and determined will to penetrate into those unknown spiritual regions which exact science pretends that its votaries have no business to explore. And, it has one quality more than any religion in that it makes no difference between Gentile, Jew, or Christian. It is in this spirit that the Society has been established upon the footing of a Universal Brotherhood.

Unconcerned about politics; hostile to the insane dreams of Socialism and of Communism, which it abhors — as both are but disguised conspiracies of brutal force and sluggishness against honest labour; the Society cares but little about the outward human management of the material world. The whole of its aspirations are directed toward the occult truths of the visible and invisible worlds. Whether the physical man be under the rule of an empire or a republic, concerns only the man of matter. His body may be enslaved; as to his Soul, he has the right to give to his rulers the proud answer of Socrates to his Judges. They have no sway over the *inner* man.

Such is, then, the Theosophical Society, and such its principles, its multifarious aims, and its objects. Need we wonder at the past misconceptions of the general public, and the easy hold the enemy has been able to find to lower it in the public estimation? The true student has ever been a recluse, a man of silence and meditation. With the busy world his habits and tastes are so little in common that, while he is studying, his enemies and slanderers have undisturbed opportunities. But time cures all and lies are but ephemera. Truth alone is eternal.

About a few of the Fellows of the Society who have made great scientific discoveries, and some others to whom the psychologist and the biologist are indebted for the new light thrown upon the darker problems of the inner man, we will speak later on. Our object now was but to prove to the reader that Theosophy is neither "a new-fangled doctrine," a political cabal, nor one of those societies of enthusiasts which are born

today but to die tomorrow. That not all of its members can think alike, is proved by the Society having organized into two great Divisions — the Eastern and the Western — and the latter being divided into numerous sections, according to races and religious views. One man's thought, infinitely various as are its manifestations, is not all-embracing. Denied ubiquity, it must necessarily speculate but in one direction; and once transcending the boundaries of exact human knowledge, it has to err and wander, for the ramifications of the one Central and Absolute Truth are infinite. Hence, we occasionally find even the greater philosophers losing themselves in the labyrinths of speculations, thereby provoking the criticism of posterity. But as all work for one and the same object, namely, the disenthralment of human thought, the elimination of superstitions, and the discovery of truth, all are equally welcome. The attainment of these objects, all agree, can best be secured by convincing the reason and warming the enthusiasm of the generation of fresh young minds, that are just ripening into maturity, and making ready to take the place of their prejudiced and conservative fathers. And, as each — the great ones as well as small — have trodden the royal road to knowledge, we listen to all, and take both small and great into our fellowship. For no honest searcher comes back empty-handed, and even he who has enjoyed the least share of popular favour can lay at least his mite upon the one altar of Truth.¹



¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings, (WHAT ARE THEOSOPHISTS?) II pp. 98-106*

Suggested reading for students.



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- JUDGE ON THE HEART DOCTRINE
- JUDGE ON THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT
- JUDGE ON THE TRUE THEOSOPHIST'S PATH
- JUDGE ON THEOSOPHICAL STUDY AND WORK
- KEYS TO THE MYSTERY LANGUAGE
- LET THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY PERISH, THAN FORSAKE THE CAUSE OF TRUTH
- MYSTERY IS NOT UNREVEALED KNOWLEDGE
- OCCULT TRUTH IS NATURE WITHOUT THE ILLUSORY VEIL OF THE SENSES
- OUR GOD IS HUMANITY AND OUR CULT THE LOVE OF OUR FELLOW-MAN
- OUR ONLY DELIVERER AND SAVIOUR
- PLEDGED STUDENTS' PRESCRIBED GUIDE FOR CONDUCT
- PREREQUISITES TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- SPURNED THE SUBSTANCE AND CLUTCHED THE SHADOW
- STUDENTS HAVE A CHOICE OF TWO PATHS
- SUBBA ROW DEFENDS ESOTERIC BUDDHISM
- SUBBA ROW'S ESOTERIC WRITINGS (1895)
- THAT WHICH IS FALSE CAN ONLY BE KNOWN BY TRUTH
- THE AIMS AND MISSION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY FULFILLED
- THE CHALDEAN ORACLES OF ZOROASTER
- THE CROWN JEWELS OF THEOSOPHY (PHOTO ALBUM)
- THE POWER OF THE TRINITY OF KOSMOS MANIFESTS THROUGH THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF MAN
- THE REVIVAL OF EASTERN OCCULT PHILOSOPHY
- THE SUN OF TRUTH FEARS NO LIGHT AND NEEDS NO LIES
- THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IS NOT A NURSERY FOR BUDDING ADEPTS
- THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ARCANE TERMS
- THEOSOPHIA - FOUNTAIN, PERSPECTIVES, PRACTICE (DRAWING)
- THEOSOPHIA: INNER WISDOM
- THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, THE GREAT MORAL BUT SILENT FORCE
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - ESOTERIC SECTION (LETTERHEAD)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - MISSION AND FUTURE
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - MONOGRAM 1 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - MONOGRAM 2 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - OBJECTS AND EARLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - SEAL 1 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - SEAL 2 (LOGOTYPE)
- THEOSOPHICAL SYMBOLS (TRUE TYPE FONT)
- THEOSOPHIST IS WHO THEOSOPHY DOES
- THEOSOPHISTS DEFINED ATTITUDINALLY, ETHICALLY, PHILOSOPHICALLY (DRAWING)
- THEOSOPHY BRINGS THE WISDOM OF LOVE BEFORE THE EYE OF THE SOUL
- THEOSOPHY IS DEEPER MONISM THAN SECULARISM, AND MORE PHILOSOPHICAL
- THEOSOPHY IS RELIGION ITSELF AND SUBLIME CODE OF ETHICS
- THEOSOPHY IS THE SCIENCE OF TRUTH AND THE RELIGION OF JUSTICE
- TRIBUTES TO WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE
- TRUE THEOSOPHISTS ARE ALWAYS UNDER THE MASTER'S EYE

THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHISTS SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- TRUTH IS ALWAYS MIXED WITH ERROR AND HINDERED BY TECHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE
- TWO JOURNALS DEVOTED TO THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN
- VERNAL BLOOMS BY WILLIAM QUAN JUDGE
- VISTAS OF VIRTUE AND TRUTH
- WADIA'S RESIGNATION FROM THE TS
- WHAT SORT OF MAN THE REAL PHILOSOPHER SHOULD BE?
- WHEN PURE LOVE IS PERVERTED, HUMANITY QUIVERS
- WHO CAN MEND THE BROKEN SOCIETY?
- WHO CAN READ THE RIDDLE OF THE SERPENT?
- WHO SHOULD BE INVITED TO THEOSOPHICAL MEETINGS?
- WHY A BRAHMIN ABANDONED HIS CASTE
- WHY PAGAN SYMBOLISM IS INDESTRUCTIBLE?
- WILDER ON THE WISDOM RELIGION OF ZOROASTER

