

*True Theosophists are always
under the Master's Eye*



Esoteric Section Instruction No. III

Strictly private and confidential

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The following “Preliminary Explanations” were written by H.P. Blavatsky at the time of a grave crisis, or rather series of crises, through which the T.S. passed in 1889-90. Treachery within the E.S. itself and persistent and relentless attacks on the T.S. from without, especially in America, necessitated the striking of a fresh keynote and giving directions for the closing up of the ranks of the E.S. At the time of reprinting the Instructions in London in 1890-91, certain portions of these “Preliminary Explanations” dealing with the details of the matter were purposely omitted by those of H.P. Blavatsky’s pupils who were constituted the editors, these portions being deemed by them of too personal a character to remain. This was done when Blavatsky was too ill to supervise, without her sanction and, as she afterwards said, much against her wishes. The “Preliminary Explanations” are therefore now printed exactly as they originally stood, those portions previously omitted being now put between square brackets: [and, in this edition, highlighted in RGB 253-255-194. — ED. PHIL.]



Preliminary explanations

[BROTHERS and SISTERS in THEOSOPHY:

Many of you who, having joined the E.S., expected to receive their papers every two months, at least, but received only those for January–February, and March–April, must have felt disappointed, perhaps displeased. For this I am sincerely sorry, but owing to the present state of things in America, treachery from the first, and still worse treachery recently, the betrayal by one who joined the E.S. with the determined object of getting possession of its supposed secrets, in order to upset the Theosophical Society, and, by crushing me, crush the E.S. out of existence, has put an unavoidable stop to the teachings.

You have read in my “Open Letter to all Theosophists” the true and sad history of an ex-brother, who, whether from personal or other motives, consented to undertake the mission of a Judas. Though having failed in finding out what he so diligently sought by coming to London, he has nevertheless since then done us the greatest harm by substituting falsehoods and slander for facts, and even succeeded in turning several honourable men away from us. (Since I began writing this, two more prominent members of Boston have been upset by the joint efforts of our enemies’ “league,” and dropped out of the fold, labouring under the most false *suggested* impressions.) How, then, could I continue under such circumstances? Yet I had begun preparing No. III of the papers, which would have been sent to you long ago had not a third obstacle arisen.

A full reorganization was necessary, and our Brother W.Q. Judge, together with a few of the American Council of the E.S., kindly undertook it. But now the poisonous shafts of our persevering enemies are turned against him; and it is, as I know, partly owing to the same slanderous and underhand work that several of you have refused to comply with the new Rules issued by him in my name.

Of the chief reason, however, for stopping the teachings, few, except those in my immediate surroundings, know, and you have to learn it now.]

Of the fact that no such large and ever-growing body as the E.S. has now become could remain without its traitors, secret and open, I was aware from the beginning. I knew what I had to expect from the first day. I knew that the task I had undertaken would lead to more obloquy and misrepresentations for me than ever; that it was sure to create a large amount of bad feeling among the members of the main (exoteric) body of the T.S., which would be finally vented, in particular, if not solely, upon myself. And all came to pass as I knew it would. But if it is, in a great measure, owing to this that the delivery of instructions was delayed, it was not, as said, the sole reason. There came a more serious impediment — to me the bitterest of all. I received two letters and a reproof from the Masters. These reached me in no such way as to allow the hope that it was less serious than had at first appeared. That which I received both times, was a letter in plain language, sent by post and mailed quite prosaically at the Sikkim frontier, one in March, the other in August. The last of these

left me no ephemeral hope that I had misunderstood or even exaggerated the facts. In their first, our Masters were displeased, and in their last, which arrived just as the news of M.A. Lane's treachery came from New York, that displeasure became still more apparent.

It was at the end of August, and I was told to keep No. III of the Papers back, until further developments, and then to make those portions of the contents of the Masters' letter that related to the E.S. known to all its members of both continents, without even omitting to show them how mistaken and dangerous had been my policy in the E.S. from its beginning. I had been warned by the Council and my trusted friends, of the danger there was in admitting such a number of persons, scattered so widely over the world, who, it was added, knew me not, except on hearsay, and each of whom I had no other means, as they supposed, of studying than through their auras and photographs. I myself realized that danger, but had no means of averting it, since the "Book of the Discipline and Rules" states that:

No one shall be refused admission, or the chance of learning truth and thereby improving his life, only because someone, or even all his neighbours think ill of him.

Such is the rule. Therefore, the larger the number of applicants who *take* the pledge, the greater the possibility of helping the masses. A member of the T.S. may be utterly unfit for the higher sciences and never grasp the true teachings of occultism and esoteric philosophy; but yet, if he has the true spark and faith in the real presence of the HIGHER SELF in him, he will remain loyal to his pledge and will *try* to model his life in accordance with the rules of the E.S., and thereby become nobler and better in every case. Membership in the E.S., and "pledges" sent, accepted and signed, are no warrants for a high success, nor do these pledges aim at making of every student an adept or a magician. They are simply the seeds in which lurks the potentiality of every truth, the germ of that progress which will be the heirloom of only the seventh *perfect* Race. A handful of such seeds was entrusted to me by the keepers of these truths, and it is my duty to sow them there, where I perceive a possibility of growth. It is the parable of the Sower put once more into practice, and a fresh lesson to be derived from its new application. The seeds that fall into good ground will bring forth fruit an hundredfold, and thus repay in each case the waste of those seeds which will have fallen by the wayside, on stony hearts and among the thorns of human passions. It is the duty of the Sower to choose the best soil for the future crops. But he is held responsible only so far as that ability is directly connected with the failures, and that such are solely due to it; it is the Karma of the individuals who receive the seeds by asking for them, that will repay or punish those who fail in *their* duties to their HIGHER SELF. Nature is ever struggling even in its so-called inorganic and inanimate kingdoms towards progress and perfectibility by production; how much more the nature of conscious thinking man! Each of us, if his nature is not productive or deep enough *per se*, may borrow and derive material for soil from the seeds themselves which he receives; and everyone has the means to avoid the scorching sun, and to force the seeds to strike root, or prevent the thorns choking them, with a very little effort indeed. Therefore, my mistake did not lie in that I accepted too readily applications to join the E.S.

Nor have I sinned even in accepting men and women of whom I have not felt *quite* sure, though the opportunity of discerning their *inner natures* was possible and given to me in almost every instance. I have not sinned, in this, I say, as some think, because the rules teach again that the grand ethics taught in the secret Āryāsanga schools are not for the benefit or perfection of saints, but verily of sinners who need moral and intellectual help.

In what particular, then, have I failed to do my duty? Simply in this, as I am shown: I have begun to give out Eastern teachings to those who were unacquainted with the Eastern discipline; to Westerners, who, had they been thoroughly versed in the laws of that discipline so unfamiliar to cultured Christian-born people, would have thought twice before joining the E.S. Being taught to rely on their Saviour and scapegoat instead of themselves, they have never stopped to think that their salvation and future incarnation depend entirely on themselves, and that every transgression against the Holy Ghost (their Higher Self) will indeed become unpardoned in their present life — or *their next incarnation*: for Karma is there to watch their actions, and even thoughts. In short, I have begun to instruct them in *spelling* before I had taught them the *letters* of the Occult alphabet. Instead of solemnly warning those who signed their pledge that, by breaking it and becoming guilty of that which they had sworn to avoid, they incurred thereby the most dangerous responsibilities, entailing sooner or later the most terrible consequences, and proving this to them by living examples from their own and other people's lives, I left them to their own devices. Instead of such warning, I have given out to them the preliminary knowledge that leads to the most hidden secrets of nature and the old Wisdom-Religion — and which but very few can appreciate. I have, finally, neglecting *to prepare them* by first placing each and all on a twelve-month's or so *probation*, given them an opportunity of going quite easily, and in most cases, unconsciously to themselves, astray. It is in consequence of this that there has been such a number of members caring for nothing but *new* instructions to amuse them, and several backsliders who have already done the greatest harm to the Theosophical Society, let alone the E.S. This is the result and consequence of my neglect to conform with and enforce the rules; and I now confess it, in all humility, to all my friends who will read this.

How true are these words in Master's letter:

“Experience but too clearly proves that any departure from the time-honoured rules for the government and instructions of the disciple to suit Western custom and prejudices, is a fatal policy.”

“Before the pupil can be taught, he must learn how to conduct himself as regards the world, his teacher, the sacred science, and his INNER SELF,” the letter adds, quoting the Eastern aphorism that:

“The ruffled water-surface reflects naught but broken images”: the Master meaning that so long as the learners have not mastered their world-passions and remain ignorant of the *Truth*, their unprepared minds will perceive everything in the light of their *worldly*, not of their truly spiritual, esoteric judgment.

“How can they be expected, then” it asks, “to see aught but the broken truths, that such judgment is sure to suggest and distort the more? Violation of ancient usages is sure to result in evil.”

How true are these words is shown in our own case. For what have the violations of that time-honoured usage which prohibits to speak in public or before the ignorant masses of sacred things, of which we, the two Founders, have been guilty, brought upon the T.S. and individual aspirants, even before the E.S. had been established, but grief and scandal? In blind foolishness, without warrant and reflection, have we, Col. Olcott and I, chiefest of all, lifted some of the veils of Truth, given some flitting glimpses of the secret laws of Nature and of Being, to a blind, ignorant, sense-ruled public, and thus provoked the hatred, deepened the scepticism, and excited the malevolent activity of many opponents who, otherwise, would have left us alone. Ah, friends, it was a wise law and a prudent restriction that ancient rule that kept the sacred, but dangerous knowledge (dangerous, because it cuts both ways) confined to the few, and these few pledged by a vow, which, if broken, led them almost to perdition. And to this day it is these few who run the greater risk. Some of the Theosophists, yet quite recently almost adorers of the T.S., and especially of its Masters, have lost or are losing unconsciously to themselves their moral balance; some because of the venomous words spoken in their ears by traitors, while others are flinging aside to the four winds their good Karmic chances, and turning into bitter and unprincipled enemies. Of the rude public one should have expected this, but from friends, brothers, and associates!

Well, as it now appears, so far as the members of the E.S. are concerned, it is in a great measure, if not entirely, my fault; and it is a bitter draught that Karma compels me to drink out of her iron cup. Had I instead of showing such hopeful confidence and belief in the inviolability of people's *word of honour*, and almost a blind faith that the sacredness of their pledge would prove the surest guarantee of the good faith of any pledged member; had I instead of that, gone on the old occult lines of the Eastern discipline, such things as have taken place could never have happened. But I never permitted myself to even dream that a double pledge of such sanctity as the one taken in the name of the HIGHER SELF could ever be broken, however little one may make even of his “most *sacred word of honour*.” Even in the few cases when a dark and ominous aura around the face of a photograph plainly warned me, I still tried to hope against all hope. I could not bring myself to believe any man or woman capable of such deliberate treachery. I rejected as an evil, sinful thought, the idea that conscious depravity could ever remain on the best of terms with a man, after the signing of such a sacred promise; and, I have learned now for the first time the possibility of what has been truthfully dubbed by some Theosophists “only a *lip-pledge*.” Had I strictly enforced the rules, I would have, no doubt, lost the two-thirds of our pledged members — those who had signed it as they would any circular letter — but then at least, those few who will remain true to their vows to the bitter end, would have more profited than they have now. Having omitted, however, the usual precautions of the probationary period, I have but myself to thank; and therefore, it is but just that I should also be myself the first to suffer for it at the hands of the inexorable Karmic law. For this, ironclad as I have been made by daily and almost hourly unjust attacks, I would have cared but very little; but that which I deplore the most

— with a bitterness few of you will ever realize — is the fact that such a number of thoroughly earnest, good, and sincere men and women should be made to suffer for the guilt of the few. For, though but a fault of omission on my part, still that guilt, as I feel, is due to my neglect. Behold! my Karma appeared as a warning almost from the beginning of the E.S.

I had started well. Several of those whom I knew to be entirely unfitted to take the pledge have been refused from the first; but I proved unable to withstand their prayers when certain of them declared to me that it was their “last chance in life.” The “pledge fever” made short work of their promises. One broke her vows only four days after signing her pledge, becoming guilty of the blackest treachery and disloyalty to her HIGHER SELF. And when I could no longer keep in the E.S. either herself or her friend, the two convulsed the whole Society with their calumnies and falsehoods. Then it was that the old wondering query,

How is it that “poor H.P.B.,” notwithstanding the Masters at her back, and her own insight, is *so evidently unable* to know her friends from her foes?

— ran once more the round of theosophical circles, both here and in America.

Brothers, if you *will* judge from appearances, and from the worldly standpoint, you are right; but if you take the trouble of looking into the inner causes producing outward results, you will find that you are decidedly in the wrong. That you should no longer do me injustice, let me explain what I mean.

Take for an instant for granted (you, who still doubt at moments in your hearts), that I am doing the work of a real, living Master. And if I am, then surely I would not have been entrusted with such a mission unless I had pledged myself irrevocably to the laws of the Ethics, Sciences, and Philosophy THEY teach. Come whatever may, I *have to* abide by these laws and rules even in the face of condemnation to death. Now, if the law, in common legislature even, holds that no person should be condemned before his guilt is proven, or becomes manifest, how much more strict must this law be in our Occult Code? Have I the right — in special cases when I see that a person has in him the germs of, or even a decided proclivity toward, evil doing, deception, ingratitude, or revenge, that, in short, he is not a reliable man or woman; but that, on the other hand, he is earnest and sincere, for the time being, in his interest and sympathy for Theosophy and Occultism; have I the right, I ask, to deny him the chance of becoming a better man, merely out of fear that he may one day turn round? I will say more. Knowing, as I do, that *no earthly forces combined can destroy the T.S. and its truths*, even if they can and *do*, in each case, hurt more or less my outward and miserable *personality*, that shell that I am solemnly pledged to use as a *buffer* of the cause I serve, have I the right, think you, out of mere personal cowardice and in self-defence, to refuse anyone the chance of profiting by the truths I can teach him, and of thereby becoming better? That many are called, but few chosen, is something I knew from the beginning; that he who speaks the truth is turned out of nine cities, is an old saying; and that the man (and especially the woman) who preaches new truths, whether in religion or science, is stoned and made a martyr by those to whom they are unwelcome — all this is what I have bargained for, and no more. Let me give you an illustration out of real life. When the notorious Madame Coulomb came to me

in Bombay, with her husband, to ask for bread and shelter, though I had met her in Cairo, and knew her to be a treacherous, wicked, and lying woman, nevertheless I gave her all she needed, because such was my duty. But when, in course of time, I saw she hated me, envied my position and influence, and slandered me to my friends while flattering me to my face, my human nature revolted. We were very poor then, poorer even in fact than we are now, both the Society and ourselves, and to keep two enemies at our expense seemed hard. Then I applied to my Guru and Master, who was then at three days' distance from Bombay, and submitted to his decision whether it was right and theosophical to keep *two such Serpents* in the house; for she, at any rate, if not her husband, threatened the whole Society. Would you know the answer I received? These are the words *verbatim*, the reply beginning with an aphorism from the Book of Precepts:

If thou findest a hungry Serpent creeping into thy house, seeking for food, and, out of fear it should bite thee, instead of offering it milk thou turnest it out to suffer and starve, thou turnest away from the Path of Compassion. Thus acteth the fainthearted and the selfish.

Went on the message:

You know that you are PERSONALLY threatened; you have still to learn that SO LONG AS THERE ARE THREE MEN WORTHY OF OUR LORD'S BLESSING IN THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY — IT CAN NEVER BE DESTROYED. . . . Your two Karmas [hers and mine] run in two opposite directions. Shall you, out of abject fear of that which may come, blend the two [Karmas] and become as she is? . . . They are homeless and hungry; shelter and feed them, then, if you would not become participant in her Karma.

Since then I have acted more than ever on this principle of trying to help everyone irrespective of what I personally may have to suffer for it. It is not, therefore, the utter incapacity for right discrimination in me, but something quite different that compelled me to lay aside all thought of possible consequences in this case of selection of fit members of the E.S. No; I sinned on a different plane. Neglecting to profit by my personal experience, I allowed myself in this instance to be more prompted by an easily understood delicacy and regard for Western feeling than by my duty. In one word, I was loath to apply to Western students the rigorous rules and discipline of the Eastern school; afraid of seeing any demand on my part of strict submission to the rules, misinterpreted into a desire of claiming papal and despotic authority.¹ *Read your pledges and the Preliminary Memoranda*, and study them; and then, finding the amount of authority you have yourselves conferred on me by signing the pledge — say honestly which of you, if any, can come and complain, not only that I

¹ [And just because I have ever avoided to exercise my legitimate authority in the E.S., and sinned thereby, I am now punished at the hands of an earnest and sincere member of the E.S. who has just resigned, and is now denouncing in print, over his signature, those whom he is pleased to call my "personal worshippers" for "hero worship," and of calling out to the T.S. on my behalf, "Behold your god . . . bow and worship!!" This is supremely unjust, and I hope in no case whatever *true*. The protest originated in the sudden unwillingness of this member, whose fine and sensitive nature has been worked upon in that direction by our enemies, to submit to the rules worked out by the Council of the American E.S. — rules absolutely obligatory with the *pledged* members, and which have to be followed or I will have to give up the Esoteric instructions altogether. Now, I ask, if a member once signed his pledge without protest, why should he object to repeat it once more to his lodge, the members of which have to be pledged to each other for common and mutual security? *Karmic work all round*, I say. "Pledge fever" is raging.]

have ever abused, but even *used* that authority over any probationer? In one case only — that of a friend who could hardly misinterpret my action — I have insisted that he should leave for a certain time America. And to emphasize this the more, no sooner have I heard from several of those members in whom I have the greatest confidence that the pledge, as now worded, was open to a dead-letter construction, than I have immediately altered it, of which I now notify you. The 2nd and 3rd clauses now stand:

*2 I pledge myself to support before the world, the Theosophical movement, and those of its leaders and members, in whom I place full confidence; and in particular to obey, without cavil or delay, the orders given through the Head of the Section in all that concerns my theosophical duties and esoteric work, so far as my pledge to my Higher Self and my conscience sanction.*¹

*3 I pledge myself never to listen, without protest, to any evil thing spoken falsely or yet unproven, against a brother Theosophist, and to abstain from condemning others.*²

I have done this because I think it right to explain the true spirit of the pledge. But it is precisely that unwillingness in me to ever guide any one of you more than is strictly necessary that is now shown as having been productive of evil, and as that wherein my fault lies. As the same letter says, addressing me:

You have spoken to them before their ear was trained to listen, and begun showing things, before the eye of the learner was prepared to see. And just for this reason, hearing but indistinctly and seeing each in his own way, more than one [member of the E.S.] has turned round and tried to rend you [me] for your pains.

[And now I sincerely hope that you will — some of you, at least — learn a lesson from my weakness, and show your appreciation of this by not judging me too unkindly if I now change somewhat my policy. For I have to either do so, or to drop the Esoteric teachings altogether, for those at any rate, who will disagree with this arrangement. To avoid repeating the mistake, this is what I propose doing. Each Paper will be sent as it was hitherto, only it will appear as a *Supplement* to the Ethics and teachings which will impart the rules of Discipline and the laws of Discipleship, as in the case of all Probationers.]

Those who accept the new arrangement will have to study the latter, or they cannot receive any more teachings from me. For, as saith the *Book of Discipline* in the Schools of Dzian: →

¹ As this qualification may possibly be abused, the decision shall rest with seven members of the E.S. as arbitrators, four of whom shall be chosen by the Probationer and three by the Head of the Section. The above rule will be incorporated in the *Preliminary Memorandum*.

² The second and third clauses of the original Pledge ran as follows:

2 I pledge myself to support, before the world, the Theosophical movement, its leaders and its members, and in particular to obey, without cavil or delay, the orders of the Head of the Esoteric Section in all that concerns my relation with the Theosophical movement.

3 I pledge myself never to listen, without protest, to any evil thing spoken of a brother Theosophist, and to abstain from condemning others.

Speak not the mysteries to the common vulgar, nor to the casual friend, or new disciple. With prudent eye to the possible consequences, keep locked within your breast the teachings received, until you find a listener who will understand your words and sympathize with your aspirations.

This does not mean that you are at liberty to repeat what you have learned to anyone whom you believe to answer that description, but that you can exchange views with your co-disciples who are pledged as you are yourself.

I can do no better, I believe, than give at once some of the oral and written precepts from the same book above mentioned, and as pointed out by the Master.

- 1 To the earnest Disciple his Teacher takes the place of Father and Mother. For, whereas they give him his body and its faculties, its life and casual form, the Teacher shows him how to develop the inner faculties to the acquisition of the Eternal Wisdom.
- 2 To the Disciple each Fellow-Disciple becomes a Brother and Sister, a portion of himself.¹ For his interests and aspirations are theirs his progress helped or hindered by their intelligence, morality, and behaviour through the intimacy brought about by their co-discipleship.
- 3 A co-disciple cannot backslide or fall out of the line without affecting those who stand firm through the sympathetic tie between themselves and the psychical currents between them and their Teacher.
- 4 Woe to the deserter, woe also to all who help to bring his soul to the point where desertion first presents itself before his mind's eye as the lesser of two evils. Gold in the crucible is he who stands the melting heat of trial, and lets only the dross be burnt out of his heart; accursed by Karmic action will find himself he, who throws dross into the melting-pot of discipleship for the debasement of his fellow-pupil. As the members to the body, so are the disciples to each other, and to the Head and Heart which teach and nourish them with the life stream of Truth.
- 5 As the limbs defend the head and heart of the body they belong to, so have the disciples to defend the head and the heart of the body they belong to [in this case Theosophy] from injury.

Before I proceed, let me explain, for fear of being misunderstood again, that by "Teacher" I neither mean myself — as I am but the humble mouthpiece of the true Teacher — nor do I write the above in order to stimulate any one to defend or stand by my own *personality*, but verily to make it clear, once for all, that to defend the E.S. and Theosophy (the *heart* and the *soul* of the T.S., its visible body) is the duty of every good Theosophist, of the E.S. especially. So is it his "bounden duty" to protect from attack and defend every fellow-brother, if he knows him to be innocent, and try and help him morally, if he thinks he is guilty. Nor is verse 5 intended to convey the idea that aggressiveness is the best course to take, for it is not: passive resistance and a firm refusal to listen to any slanderous reports about one another, in the case

¹ "So shalt thou be in full accord with all that lives, bear love to men as though they were thy brother-pupils, disciples of one Teacher, the sons of one sweet mother." (See Fragment III in *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 49.)

of a member as well as of a stranger or an ex-Fellow, is all that would be necessary in some cases to defeat entirely conspiracy and malevolence.

And now hoping that no misunderstanding is any longer possible, I resume in this hope the *Rules*, quoting a few more remarks upon them from the said letter. They come as a comment on art. 5, and I quote them *verbatim*.

. . . And if the limbs have to defend the head and heart of their body, then why not so, also, the Disciples their Teachers as representing the SCIENCE of Theosophy which contains and includes the "head" of their privilege, the "heart" of their spiritual growth? Saith the Scripture:

He who wipeth not away the filth with which the parent's body may have been defiled by an enemy, neither loves the parent nor honours himself. He who defendeth not the persecuted and the helpless, who giveth not of his food to the starving, nor draweth water from his well for the thirsty, hath been born too soon in human shape.

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. Say this to those who have volunteered to be taught by you.

These are the words of great Teachers, and I but do the bidding of one of these in repeating them to you. What is found in the letter, I, H.P.B., now say to you in the authentic words, which are:

THINK; and thinking, TRY: the goal is indeed worth all the possible effort.

Much of what the *Book of Discipline* contains you may find in the fragments just translated by me from *The Book of the Golden Precepts*, and published for the benefit of the "Few." These rules are as old as the world. And it is these, as I now see, that I was expected to impress upon the minds of all those who applied to me for instruction. This duty I knew well, and yet omitted doing it. I will not excuse myself by saying that I forgot to do so, for this would not be the truth, but I say and confess that I skipped it, out of an idiotic regard to Western prejudices and habits of thought. I knew that a code of preliminary ethics such as is obligatory with, and enforced upon, Eastern disciples would grate upon, even offend, the feelings of many American and European probationers. Ever misunderstood, judged by appearances, vilified, slandered and persecuted, I feared to hurt the Society by forcing several, if not many, of our members to sever their connection with it, if they found that I made the rules too exacting. For the first time in my life, I acted like a coward in my own sight, and almost a traitor to my duties by such compromise with my conscience. Therefore,

though the first punished, I do not complain, and only hope that no one else will suffer through my weakness.

It is of the second and last letter in relation to the E.S. that I speak. The first was to the effect that those who desired to receive Eastern teaching had to conform to Eastern rules, and that I had better suspend my instructions until I had notified them of that; reminding them also of Rule 3 of their *Pledge*, which, *if I had not the courage to enforce I had better change, as it only caused the members to become untrue to their vows*. This was repeated by me to the Council of the E.S., and it led to their sending that joint advice to the Esotericists, which was surreptitiously handed over to the R.P.J. [*Religio-Philosophical Journal*] office and published.

Behold, all of you, the work of never failing, prompt Karma! Had I not departed from the old Rules of the *Book of Discipline*, such a sad case would not have happened, for there would have been no need of such a document as framed by the Council. For the Rule says, to the *Chela*:

If thou canst not fulfil thy pledge, refuse to take it, but once thou hast bound thyself to any promise, carry it out, even if thou hast to die for it.

And to the Teacher:

Thou shalt not remind the Disciple who shows himself whether willingly or inadvertently disloyal to the letter and spirit of any law — more than TWICE: at the third time thou shalt separate him from the Body,

— *i.e.*, ask him to resign or expel him.

But as unfortunately in general, though very fortunately in this case, every handful of mud thrown at the T.S. reaches only myself, and that the members of the E.S. had no opportunity of defending anyone but myself, I was loath to enforce this rule. I felt a great unwillingness to even pass a message in which I was *personally* concerned. But after the second letter I could no longer remain silent; it is the law and I have but to obey, taking now this opportunity to implore every pledged member of the E.S. who feels incapable of allowing himself to be subjected to such a discipline, to resign. Knowing, indeed, as I do, the free American and the free Briton, how can I come and tell either of them, for instance:

*The office of Teacher was always considered as a very solemn and responsible one among our Asiatic ancestors, and the pupil was always enjoined to obedience and loyalty. This is what you have to tell them, advising them to study Manu.*¹

And how could I hope to make them understand that by Teacher it was the Master who was meant and not myself, when I knew that many, many of them while knowing of me, and luckily not having any reason to doubt *my* existence, still doubted that of the Mahātmas, with the exception of the very few? Such is my only excuse. Unable to transfuse my certain knowledge of the reality of the Masters as men, into the consciousness of the Theosophists and even of pledged members, for the last fourteen years, I have ever avoided pressing this truth upon them. Yet unwilling to

¹ From the Letter

play the part of the crow in peacock's feathers, I *had to assert* the existence of Teachers who had taught me all I know.

And yet the rules of Discipleship being so very strict upon the subject of the personal and other relations between the Teachers and the pupils, I have no choice. A *Guru* was ever considered as the chela's benefactor, because he imparted that which was more precious than worldly wealth or honours, that which money could not buy and which concerned the welfare of the pupil's soul and future weal or woe. Yet the Guru is not the only one pointed out to the chela's consideration, but also all those who help a disciple one way or the other to pursue and progress in his studies.

[Here, I have to say a few words with regard to these. And now again it is not myself who is concerned, but I speak of other "helpers." In the worst case, *I can always take care of myself personally*, and really need no one's defence, though I shall feel always thankful to those who have offered it. But I mean by "helpers" such as William Q. Judge; and I now call upon all those who will remain true to their pledges to do their duty by both, *when the time comes*, and especially by their American brother. Both¹ are threatened and both are hated by certain persons as unjustly as I am by some unprincipled enemies who would still call themselves Theosophists.

Ingratitude *is a crime in Occultism*, and I shall illustrate the point by citing the case of W.Q. Judge. He is one of the three founders of the Theosophical Society, the only three who have remained as true as rock to the Cause. While others have all turned deserters or enemies, he has ever remained faithful to his original pledge. If one wants to know how the Masters would feel towards him, let him read what one of them writes about the fidelity of Colonel Olcott and their appreciation of it, in a letter published in *The Occult World*. Though strong pressure was used to displace him *and his associates* (Judge along with them) in favour of another — a newcomer — and all manner of boons were promised for the T.S., Mahātma "K.H." flatly refused, saying that ingratitude had never been one of their vices. Now that which Colonel Olcott has accomplished in India and Asia, W.Q. Judge has done in America. He is the Resuscitator of Theosophy in the United States, and is working to the best of his means and ability, and at a great sacrifice, for the spread of the movement; and he is now being infamously attacked and schemed against for this by one who has never done a thing for the T.S., but is now trying to crush it out of existence.² From the first this enemy of the cause, though he has never believed in any Mahātmās, their powers, or even existence, has worked for an object; hence he boasted for over two years of his own marvellous powers and intercourse with our Masters. It is he who published the shameful forgery under the Master K.H.'s name in the *Chicago Tribune*; he who made all those who would, believe that he was in regular communication with the "Adepts." And now, when his object — to rule despotically over the whole American Section — has been defeated; when the flat denial by one of the Masters (K.H.) of having written a single line to any one in England or America for the last five years has shown him a

¹ [W.Q. Judge and H.S. Olcott]

² [An excerpt from a letter of H.P. Blavatsky's, regarding which we have no further information, was published in Vol. II of *Letters That Have Helped Me* (Radlett, Herts, 1905), pp. 110-11; in it Madame Blavatsky says:

" . . . Let them read Master's letter in the preliminary. All that which I said about W.Q.J. was from HIS words in HIS letter to me . . . Do with this letter what you like . . ." — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

deceiver, and that neither Mr. Judge nor myself would help him to deceive the public, or join him in a conspiracy of still worse deception with regard to Theosophists, he now turns round, repudiates Masters and Mahātmās, and tries to substitute for them some bogus adepts in the Rocky Mountains, and thus ruin the Cause. Having vainly tried to crush me, and finding me unmalleable, he now fastens his poison fangs on Brother Judge. He has cunning, indomitable energy, never relaxing vindictiveness, and a great command of money. These are grave charges, and may appear “untheosophical” to many, as they would undoubtedly be were there only danger for some units in the Society. But it is the Society itself, our CAUSE, so dear and so sacred to many of us, which is threatened — nay, attacked; and to save it I for one would not hesitate one moment to be regarded as untheosophical twenty times over, by the whole world. For, understand well; unless we unite all our forces against this enemy, we cannot win the day, or even have one hour of full peace and security for, or in, the Society. He is wealthy and we are poor; he is unscrupulous, and we feel bound by our pledges and theosophical duty. He lies with an ease worthy of the admiration of the Sons of Loyola; and we Theosophists hold that, whosoever lies, even to conquer an enemy, or save himself from a condemnation, is not worthy to call himself one. He attacks us by every available means and foul play; we can only be on our defensive, and defeat him by truth and *nothing but the truth*. Yet that truth must not be withheld, if, owing to his unrelenting hatred and *alliance with every enemy who has hitherto attacked us, openly or secretly* (I speak on knowledge), we would not now have the very name of Theosophy and its Society become very soon a public household word of opprobrium.

Brother Judge refuses to defend himself, even more than I have refused to defend myself after the Coulomb conspiracy. No man who knows himself innocent ever will. But is that a reason why *we* should let him go undefended? It is our bounden duty to support him, in every way, with our sympathy and influence, energetically, not in a half-hearted, timid way. Let our protest be on merely defensive lines, and not of an aggressive character. For, if the spirit of true Theosophy does not permit of aggressiveness being used, yet it does demand in some cases active defence, and it does impose on everyone of us the duty of taking an active interest in the welfare of a brother, especially of a persecuted brother, as Mr. Judge is now. Is it the part of a “Brother-Fellow” to remain indifferent and inactive when one who has done so much for the noble and sacred CAUSE is vilified for its sake, hence, for that of every Theosophist; when he is selected by the enemy as the mark of all the lying and damaging attacks of those who wish to destroy the Society in order to build on its ruins another, a *bogus* Body of the same name, and to enshrine therein an idol with feet of clay and a heart full of selfishness and evil, for the admiration and worship of credulous fools? Can we allow them to achieve this object when they seek to ensure success by ruining the character of this most unselfish champion of our T.S.? Put yourselves in the victim’s place, and then act as you think your Brothers should act towards you under similar circumstances. Let us protest, I say, all of us; protest by word and deed. Let everyone who can hold the pen expose every lie said about our friend and Brother, in every case we know it to be a lie.

You all profess the wish to acquire esoteric knowledge, and some of you — those who believe in the blessed Masters — to win the regards of our Teachers. Know then, Brothers, that they have regard for only such as square their behaviour with the rules hinted at, with our Master's permission, by me in *The Voice of the Silence* in the Second and Third Treatises. The reputation of the Theosophical Society is in the keeping of each one of you, and as you regard or neglect it, so will it prosper. But you have to remember that the life of the E.S. too depends on that of the body. The moment the T.S. falls in America (it cannot die in India, or even Europe, so long as the Colonel or I are alive) through your apathy or carelessness, every member of the E.S. who has not done his duty will go down with it. From that day there will be no more hope of acquiring true Eastern secret knowledge till the end of the XXth century.

If I am asked, What kind of protest on defensive lines would I have? and reminded that neither Brother Judge consents to make of his *Path* the field of controversy, nor do the majority of the daily and weekly papers consent to insert such letters from Theosophists — I answer plainly and sincerely: — There are means to do so, but there is neither the willingness nor the energy to accomplish that which is required for this among the American members of the E.S., and Theosophists who refuse to even support *The Path* as it ought to be supported. And yet look around you, my brothers and sisters. Not a sect, not a guild, or Society, however insignificant and useless, and far smaller than our Theosophical body, but has its recognized organ. Adventists, Christian Scientists, mind curers, Swedenborgians, tradesmen, and who not, have their *dailies*, *weeklies*, and *monthlies*. One weekly or even monthly sheet of only four pages is better than none; and if we had not an absolute and immediate necessity for such a defensive organ now, it would serve at all times for the dissemination of our theosophical teachings, the *popularization* of Theosophy and Eastern Ethics suited for the intelligence of the masses. Neither *The Path* nor *Lucifer* — least of all *The Theosophist*, are for the masses. To understand them requires educated readers, and, in most cases, high metaphysicians; and, therefore, none of these magazines can ever become popular. What you American Theosophists require, indeed, are extracts and a *weekly* paper as cheap as you can make them. Have an organ wherein to defend the Cause from insidious attacks, from misrepresentation and lies, and teach people the truth, and very soon the enemy will have no hold upon us. Teach the common labourer the truths he fails to find in the churches, and you will soon have saved half of the mankind of civilized countries, for the PATH is easier to the poor and the single of heart, than to the cultured and the rich.]



Writes the Master:

Observe that the first of the steps of gold which mount towards the Temple of Truth is — A CLEAN LIFE. This means a purity of body, and a still greater purity of mind, heart, and spirit.

And the latter are found more in the poor country-classes than among the cultured and the rich. That the Master's eye is upon you, Theosophists, is evidenced by the following lines from the same pen:

How many of them [you] violate one or more of these conditions [of the right Path], and yet expect to be freely taught the highest Wisdom and Sciences, the Wisdom of the gods. As pure water poured into the scavenger's bucket is befouled and unfit for use, so is divine Truth when poured into the consciousness of a sensualist, of one of selfish heart and a mind indifferent and inaccessible to justice and compassion. . . . There is a very, VERY ancient maxim, far older than the time of the Romans or the Greeks, more ancient than the Egyptians or Chaldeans. It is a maxim all of them [Theosophists] ought to remember and live accordingly. And it is that a sound and pure mind requires a sound and pure body. Bodily purity every adept takes precautions to keep. . . . Most of you [Theosophists] know this.¹

And yet, knowing it, how few live up to this! I had rather not say whether the letter includes in this reproof Theosophists generally, or only Esotericists. It means a few, but this is for my own private information; meanwhile, these are the words addressed to all.

. . . But though they have been repeatedly told of this sine qua non rule on the Path of Theosophy and chelaship, how few of them have given attention to it. Behold, how many of them are sluggards in the morning and time-wasters at night; GLUTTONS, eating and drinking for the sensual pleasure they give; indolent in business; selfish as to the keeping of their neighbours' [brothers'] interests in view; borrowing from brother-Theosophists, making money out of the loan and failing to return it; lazy in study and waiting for others to think for and teach them; denying themselves nothing, EVEN OF LUXURIES, for the sake of helping poorer brothers; forgetting the Cause in general and its volunteer, hard workers — and even debauchees, GUILTY OF SECRET IMMORALITY in more than one form. And yet all call themselves Theosophists; all talk with outsiders about "Theosophical ethics" and things, with a puffed up, vain conceit in their hearts. . . .

Alas! if these words apply to the Theosophical Society in general, to the selfish coldness and supreme indifference of most members to the future of the cause they belong to but will not go out of their way to serve, do not most of the cases cited apply also to some Esotericists, if not to all? Do not we find among them envy and hatred for their colleagues, suspicion and slanderous talk? Who of you who read this, is prepared to say that not one out of the above enumerated faults concerns you?

¹ [Cf. Juvenal's "Mens sana in corpore sano," *Satire* X, line 356 — *Kings Quotation* 3724. Also cf. "Νοῦς υγιεὺς ἐν σωματι υγιεῖ" of the Greeks, i.e., "a healthy mind in a healthy body." The phrase has been taken from a longer sentence, "orandum est ut sit mens sana in corpore sano," i.e., "we should pray for a sound mind in a sound body," which is entirely different from the common misinterpretation that "a healthy body can produce or sustain a healthy mind." It is the other way around! — ED. PHIL.]

Ah, friends, brothers, and many of you beloved co-workers, indeed, *indeed* little do you know of the eternal, unchangeable conditions of soul-development, and chiefly of the inexorable occult laws! Believe the Teacher from whose letter I quote, if you will not believe me, that:

Though such a person with any of the faults as above declared should fill the world with his charities, and make his name known throughout every nation, he would make no advancement in the practical occult sciences, but be continually slipping backward. The "six and ten transcendental virtues," the Pāramitās, are not for full-grown yogis and priests alone, but for all those who would enter the "Path."

If, explaining this, I add that gentle kindness to all beings, strict honesty (not according to the world-code, but that of Karmic action), virtuous habits, strict truthfulness, and temperance in all things; that these alone are the keys that unlock the doors of earthly happiness and blissful peace of mind, and that fit the man of flesh to evolve into the perfect Spirit-Ego — many of you will feel inclined, I fear, to mock me for saying this. You may think that I am carrying coals to Newcastle, and that each of you knows this, at least, as well as I do. You may remark, perhaps, that I am taking my *rôle* of "teacher" on a too high tone altogether, regarding and treating you, grown up, intelligent men and women, as I would little school-boys and girls. And some of you may indulge in the thought that it is useless for me to be teaching you to be "goody-goody" instead of going on with my Instructions and give you explanations about "that occult jumble of colour and sound, and their respective relations to the human principles," as some *have* already complained. But I say again, if you are ignorant of the real occult value of even such trite truths as are contained in my "grandmother's sermon," how can you hope to understand the science which you are studying? Can an electrician, however well familiarized with the electric fluid and its variable currents, apply them to himself, or the body of any living man unless he knows human anatomy and is a good physician at the same time, without risking to kill his patient or himself? What is the good of knowing all about the occult relations between the forces of nature and the human principles if, by remaining deliberately ignorant of SELF, we remain thereby as ignorant of what does or what does *not* affect each distinct principle? Are you aware that by starving, so to speak, one principle or even centre, at the expense of another principle or centre, we may lose the former and injure hopelessly the latter? That by forcing our Higher *Ego* (not Self, mind you) to remain inactive and silent, which is easily achieved by overfeeding the lower *Manas* ever gravitating down to *Kāma-rūpa*, we risk utter annihilation of our present personality?

As this may be questioned by some members who are not very strong even in the *exoteric* Theosophical doctrines, in order to make my meaning more clear, I will supplement the present *explanation*, which had become unavoidable, by incorporating a paper on this subject in the next Instructions, which explains the case in hand. Let the dreadful possibility of losing *one's* "soul," not a rare occurrence, and vouchsafed, moreover, by the experience of a long series of seers and clairvoyant teachers, be-

come known to all.¹ This dogma of the *inner* schools has been often hinted at in our literature, yet never till now explained. It can be done *only* to the few who are pledged not to make the details of it known.

Those who still desire to remain working members of the E.S. will henceforth receive their Instructions as regularly as this can be done. No. III is ready, and being multiplied: it will be sent very shortly.

And now I must close. For some of you, I have little doubt, this will turn out to be a “parting” *farewell* letter. Such I may as well thank now for the confidence they have shown, and with which they have honoured me, if even for a few months; and so I wish them “God speed” in some other Science made less heavy by discipline and rules. But those, whom no hardships, providing they lead them to the eternal TRUTH, can ever discourage, I address in the words of the great American poet, whose lips are now cold and mute:

Up and onward for evermore!

Let this be the motto of the E.S., applied to *Death* of Selfishness and Sin through the bright dawn of the resurrection of the Divine Science now known as THEOSOPHY.

H. P. B. . . .



¹ [See “Woe for the living Dead,” in our Constitution of Man Series. — ED. PHIL.]

Suggested reading for students.



From our Theosophy and Theosophists Series.

- A DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO LORD LYTTON
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- A LAY CHELA ON THE SECRET DOCTRINE
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- ALETHEIA IS OUR GOD AND DOGMA
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- ARCHAIC THEOSOPHY IS PRE-BUDDHIST WISDOM-RELIGION
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- BLAVATSKY DEFENDS THE KEY TO THEOSOPHY
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- CONDUCT AND DUTIES OF A TRUE THEOSOPHIST
- CORY'S ANCIENT FRAGMENTS (1832)
- COSMOPOLITANISM IS FAR HOLIER AND NOBLER THAN GRASPING GREEDINESS CLOAKED IN PATRIOTISM
- DE ZIRKOFF ON CHARLES JOHNSTON
- DE ZIRKOFF ON EDWARD DOUGLAS FAWCETT
- DE ZIRKOFF ON FRANZ HARTMANN
- DE ZIRKOFF ON GERALD MASSEY

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- DE ZIRKOFF ON SUBBA ROW
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE COUNTESS OF CAITHNESS
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE DREAM THAT NEVER DIES
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE SIBYLLINE ORACLES
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THE THIRD VOLUME OF THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- DE ZIRKOFF ON THREE EMINENT THEOSOPHISTS
- DE ZIRKOFF ON WILHELM HÜBBE-SCHLEIDEN
- DE ZIRKOFF RECALLS HIS FORMATIVE YEARS IN RUSSIA
- EASTERN LIGHT SHINES ON WESTERN MINDS
- EASTERN THEOSOPHY IS NEITHER A CREED, NOR A RELIGIOUS BODY
- ESSENTIAL THEOSOPHICAL DOCTRINES
- HARTMANN ON HOW TO ENTER THE PATH TO INFINITE LIFE
- HARTMANN ON THE HARMONICAL SOCIETY
- HOW THEOSOPHY REKINDLED TRUE BROTHERHOOD IN INDIA
- HUMANITY SEEMS TO PROGRESS BY INVENTING ONE DISCOVERY AFTER THE OTHER
- IMPORT AND POTENCY OF NUMBERS AS SYMBOLS
- IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT
- ISIS UNVEILED IS THE MAJESTY OF TRUTH UNVEILED
- JUDGE AND DE ZIRKOFF ON GEORGE MEAD
- 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

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- 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 AND THEOSOPHISTS
- 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

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- 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

