

## Articles by H. P. Blavatsky

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## Madame Blavatsky

### Her Experience — Her Opinion of American Spiritualism and American Society.

[*Spiritual Scientist*, Boston, Vol. I, December 3, 1874, pp. 148-9]

From a letter received from Mme. Blavatsky last week we make the following extracts, want of space alone preventing us from publishing it entire. It is written in her usual lively and entertaining style, and her opinions expressed are worthy of careful study, many of them being fully consistent with the true state of affairs. She says:

As it is, I have only done my duty: first, towards Spiritualism, that I have defended as well as I could from the attacks of imposture under its too transparent mask of science; then, towards two helpless, slandered "mediums" — the last word becoming fast in our days the synonym of "martyr"; secondly, I have contributed my mite in opening the eyes of an indifferent public to the real, intrinsic value of such a man as Dr. Beard. But I am obliged to confess that I really do not believe in having done any good — at least, any practical good — to Spiritualism itself; and I never hope to perform such a feat as that were I to keep on bombarding for an eternity all the newspapers of America with my challenges and refutations of the lies told by the so-called "scientific exposers."

It is with a profound sadness in my heart that I acknowledge this fact, for I begin to think there is no help for it. For over fifteen years have I fought my battle for the blessed truth; I have travelled and preached it — though I never was born for a lecturer — from the snow-covered tops of the Caucasian Mountains, as well as from the sandy valleys of the Nile. I have

proved the truth of it practically and by persuasion. For the sake of Spiritualism I have left my home, an easy life amongst a civilized society, and have become a wanderer upon the face of this earth. I had already seen my hopes realized, beyond the most sanguinary [*sic*] expectations, when, in my restless desire for more knowledge, my unlucky star brought me to America.

Knowing this country to be the cradle of modern Spiritualism, I came over here from France with feelings not unlike those of a Mohammedan approaching the birthplace of his prophet. I had forgotten that "no prophet is without honor save in his own country." In the less than fourteen months that I am here, sad experience has but too well sustained the never-dying evidence of this immortal truth!

What little I have done towards defending my belief, I am ever ready to do it over and over again, as long as I have a breath of life left in me. But what good will it ever do? We have a popular and wise Russian saying that "one Cossack on the battlefield is no warrior." Such is my case, together with many other poor, struggling wretches, every one of whom, like a solitary watch, sent far ahead in advance of the army, has to fight his own battle, and defend the entrusted post, unaided by no one but himself. There is no union between Spiritualists, no "*entente cordiale*," as the French say. Judge Edmonds said, some years ago, that they numbered in their ranks over eleven million in this country alone; and I believe it to be true, in which case it is but to be the more deplored. When one man — as Dr. Beard did and will do it yet — dares to defy such a formidable body as that, there must be some cause for it. His insults, gross and vulgar as they are, are too fearless to leave one particle of doubt that if he does it, it is but because he knows too well that he can do so with impunity and perfect ease. Year after year the American Spiritualists have allowed themselves to be ridiculed and slighted by everyone who

had a mind to do so, protesting so feebly as to give their opponents the most erroneous idea of their weakness. Am I wrong, then, in saying that our Spiritualists are more to be blamed than Dr. Beard himself in all this ridiculous polemic? Moral cowardice breeds more contempt than the "familiarity" of the old motto. How can we expect such a scientific sleight-of-hand as he is to respect a body that does not respect itself? We ourselves brought upon our heads that shower of abuse lavished by his hand with the dexterity and ability of a drunken London cockney.

My humble opinion is, that the majority of our Spiritualists are *too much* afraid for their "respectability" when called upon to confess and acknowledge their "belief." Will you agree with me, if I say that the dread of the social Areopagus is so deeply rooted in the hearts of your American people, that to endeavour to tear it out of them would be undertaking to shake the whole system of society from top to bottom? "Respectability" and "fashion" have brought more than one utter materialist to select (for mere show) the Episcopalian and other wealthy churches. But Spiritualism is not "fashionable," as yet, and that's where the trouble is.

Notwithstanding its immense and daily increasing numbers, it has not won, till now, the right of citizenship. Its chief leaders are *not* clothed in gold and purple and fine raiments; for not unlike Christianity in the beginning of its era, Spiritualism numbers in its ranks more of the humble and afflicted ones, than of the powerful and wealthy of this earth. Spiritualists belonging to the latter class will seldom dare to step out on the arena of publicity and boldly proclaim their belief in the face of the whole world; that hybridous monster, called "public opinion," is too much for them; and what does a Dr. Beard care for the opinion of the poor and the humble ones? He knows but too well, that his insulting terms of "fools" and "weak-minded idiots," as his accusations for

credulousness, will never be applied to themselves by any of the proud castes of modern "Pharisees"; Spiritualists, as they know themselves to be, and have perhaps been for years, if they deign to notice the insult at all, it will be but to answer him as the cowardly apostle did before them, "Man, I tell thee, I know him not!"

St. Peter was the only one of the remaining eleven that denied his Christ thrice before the Pharisees; that is just the reason why, of all the apostles, he is the most revered by the Catholics, and has been selected to rule over the most wealthy as the most proud, greedy and hypocritical of all the churches in Christendom! And so, half Christians and half believers in the new dispensation, the majority of those eleven millions of Spiritualists stand with one foot on the threshold of Spiritualism, pressing firmly with the other one the steps leading to the altars of their "fashionable" places of worship, ever ready to leap over under the protection of the latter in hours of danger. They know that under the cover of such immense "respectability" they are perfectly safe. Who would presume or dare to accuse of "credulous stupidity" a member belonging to certain "fashionable congregations"? Under the powerful and holy shade of any of those "pillars of truth" every heinous crime is liable to become immediately transformed into but a slight and petty deviation from strict Christian virtue. Jupiter, for all his numberless "Don Juan"-like frolics, was not the less considered for it by his worshippers as the "Father of Gods"!

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## A Few Questions to "Hiraf\*\*\*\*"

Author of the Article "Rosicrucianism"

By Madame H. P. Blavatsky

[*Spiritual Scientist*, Boston, July 15 and 22, 1875, pp. 217-18, 224, 236-7]

Among the numerous sciences pursued by the well-disciplined army of earnest students of the present century, none has had less honors or more scoffing than the oldest of them — the science of sciences, the venerable mother-parent of all our modern pigmies. Anxious, in their petty vanity, to throw the veil of oblivion over their undoubted origin, the self-styled, positive scientists, ever on the alert, present to the courageous scholar who tries to deviate from the beaten highway traced out for him by his dogmatic predecessors, a formidable range of serious obstacles.

As a rule, Occultism is a dangerous, double-edged weapon for one to handle, who is unprepared to devote his whole life to it. The theory of it, unaided by serious practice, will ever remain in the eyes of those prejudiced against such an unpopular cause, an idle, crazy speculation, fit only to charm the ears of ignorant old women. When we cast a look behind us, and see how, for the last thirty years, modern Spiritualism has been dealt with, notwithstanding the occurrence of daily, hourly proofs which speak to all our senses, stare us in the eyes, and utter their voices from "beyond the great gulf," how can we hope that Occultism, or Magic, which stands in relation to Spiritualism as the Infinite to the Finite, as the cause to the effect, or as unity to multifariousness, how can we hope, I say, that it will easily gain ground where Spiritualism is scoffed at? One who rejects *a priori*,

or even doubts, the immortality of man's soul can never believe in its Creator, and blind to what is heterogeneous in his eyes, will remain still more blind to the proceeding of the latter from Homogeneity. In relation to the Cabala, or the compound mystic textbook of all the great secrets of Nature, we do not know of anyone in the present century who could have commanded a sufficient dose of that moral courage which fires the heart of the true adept with the sacred flame of propagandism — to force him into defying public opinion, by displaying familiarity with that sublime work. Ridicule is the deadliest weapon of the age, and while we read in the records of history of thousands of martyrs who joyfully braved flames and faggots in support of their mystic doctrines in the past centuries, we would scarcely be likely to find one individual in the present times, who would be brave enough even to defy ridicule by seriously undertaking to prove the great truths embraced in the traditions of the Past.

As an instance of the above, I will mention the article on Rosicrucianism, signed "Hiraf." This ably-written essay, notwithstanding some fundamental errors, which, though they are such would be hardly noticed except by those who had devoted their lives to the study of Occultism in its various branches of practical teaching, indicates with certainty to the practical reader that, for theoretical knowledge, at least, the author need fear few rivals, still less superiors. His modesty, which I cannot too much appreciate in his case — though he is safe enough behind the mask of his fancy pseudonym — need not give him any apprehensions. There are few critics in this country of Positivism who would willingly risk themselves in an encounter with such a powerful disputant, on his own ground. The weapons he seems to hold in reserve, in the arsenal of his wonderful memory, his learning, and his readiness to give any further information that enquirers may wish for, will



undoubtedly scare off every theorist, unless he is perfectly sure of himself, which few are. But book learning — and here I refer only to the subject of Occultism — vast as it may be, will always prove insufficient even to the analytical mind, the most accustomed to extract the quintessence of truth, disseminated throughout thousands of contradictory statements, unless supported by personal experience and practice. Hence, Hiraf can only expect an encounter with some one who may hope to find a chance to refute some of his bold assertions on the plea of having just such a slight *practical* experience. Still, it must not be understood that these present lines are intended to criticize our too modest essayist. Far from poor, ignorant me be such a presumptuous thought. My desire is simply to help him in his scientific but, as I said before, rather hypothetical researches, by telling a little of the little I picked up in my long travels throughout the length and breadth of the East — that cradle of Occultism — in the hope of correcting certain erroneous notions he seems to be labouring under, and which are calculated to confuse uninitiated sincere enquirers, who might desire to drink at his own source of knowledge.

In the first place, Hiraf doubts whether there are in existence, in England or elsewhere, what we term regular colleges for the neophytes of this Secret Science. I will say from personal knowledge that such places there are in the East — in India, Asia Minor, and other countries. As in the primitive days of Socrates and other sages of antiquity, so now, those who are willing to learn the Great Truth will find *the chance* if they only "try" to meet someone to lead them to the door of one "who knows *when* and *how*." If Hiraf is right about the seventh rule of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross which says that "the Rose-cruz *becomes* and is not made," he may err as to the exceptions which have ever existed among other Brotherhoods devoted to the

pursuit of the same secret knowledge. Then again, when he asserts, as he does, that Rosicrucianism is almost forgotten, we may answer him that we do not wonder at it, and add, by way of parenthesis, that, strictly speaking, the Rosicrucians do not now even exist, the last of that Fraternity having departed in the person of Cagliostro.\*

\*Knowing but little about Occultism in Europe I may be mistaken; if so, any one who knows to the contrary will oblige me by correcting my error.

Hiraf ought to add to the word Rosicrucianism "that particular sect," at least, for it was but a sect after all, one of many branches of the same tree.

By forgetting to specify that particular denomination, and by including under the name of Rosicrucians all those who, devoting their lives to Occultism, congregated together in Brotherhoods Hiraf commits an error by which he may unwittingly lead people to believe that the Rosicrucians having disappeared, there are no more Cabalists practicing Occultism on the face of the earth. He also becomes thereby guilty of an anachronism,\* attributing to the Rosicrucians the building of the Pyramids and other majestic monuments, which indelibly exhibit in their architecture the symbols of the grand religions of the Past. For it is not so. If the main object in view was and still is alike with all the great family of the ancient and modern Cabalists, the dogmas and formulae of certain sects differ greatly. Springing one after the other from the great Oriental mother-root, they scattered broadcast all over the world, and each of them desiring to outrival the other by plunging deeper and deeper into the secrets jealously guarded by Nature, some of them became guilty of the greatest heresies against the primitive Oriental Cabala.

\*The same mistake pervades the whole of that able book, *The*

*Rosicrucians*, by Hargrave Jennings.

While the first followers of the secret sciences, taught to the Chaldaeans by nations whose very name was never breathed in history, remained stationary in their studies having arrived at the maximum, the Omega of the knowledge permitted to man, many of the subsequent sects separated from them, and, in their uncontrollable thirst for more knowledge, trespassed the boundaries of truth, and fell into fictions. In consequence of Pythagoras — so says Iamblichus — having by sheer force of energy and daring penetrated into the mysteries of the Temple of Thebes, and obtained therein his initiation, and afterwards studied the sacred sciences in Egypt for twenty-two years, many foreigners were subsequently admitted to share the knowledge of the wise men of the East, who, as a consequence, had many of their secrets divulged. Later still, unable to preserve them in their purity, these mysteries were so mixed up with fictions and fables of the Grecian mythology that truth was wholly distorted.

As the primitive Christian religion divided, in course of time, into numerous sects, so the science of Occultism gave birth to a variety of doctrines and various brotherhoods. So the Egyptian Ophites became the Christian Gnostics, shooting forth the Basilideans of the second century, and the original Rosicrucians created subsequently the Paracelsists, or Fire-Philosophers, the European Alchemists, and other physical branches of their sect. (See Hargrave Jennings' *The Rosicrucians*.) To call indifferently every Cabalist a Rosicrucian, is to commit the same error as if we were to call every Christian a Baptist on the ground that the latter are also Christians.

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross was not founded until the middle of the thirteenth century, and notwithstanding the assertions of the learned Mosheim, it derives its name, neither

from the Latin word *Ros* (dew), nor from a cross, the symbol of Lux. The origin of the Brotherhood can be ascertained by any earnest, *genuine* student of Occultism, who happens to travel in Asia Minor, if he chooses to fall in with some of the Brotherhood, and if he is willing to devote himself to the head-tiring work of deciphering a Rosicrucian manuscript — the hardest thing in the world, for it is carefully preserved in the archives of the very Lodge which was founded by the first Cabalist of that name, but which now goes by another name. The founder of it, a German Reuter [Knight], by the name of Rosencranz, was a man who, after acquiring a very suspicious reputation through the practice of the Black Art, in his native place, reformed in consequence of a vision. Giving up his evil practices, he made a solemn vow, and went on foot to Palestine, in order to make his *amende honorable* at the Holy Sepulchre. Once there, the Christian God, the meek, but well-informed Nazarene — trained as he was in the high school of the Essenes, those virtuous descendants of the botanical as well as astrological and magical Chaldaeans — appeared to Rosencranz, a Christian would say, in a vision, but I would suggest, in the shape of a materialized spirit. The purport of this visitation, as well as the subject of their conversation, remained forever a mystery to many of the Brethren; but immediately after that, the ex-sorcerer and Reuter disappeared, and was heard of no more till the mysterious sect of Rosicrucians was added to the family of Cabalists, and their powers aroused popular attention, even among the Eastern populations, indolent, and accustomed as they are to live among wonders. The Rosicrucians strove to combine together the most various branches of Occultism, and they soon became renowned for the extreme purity of their lives and their extraordinary powers, as well as for their thorough knowledge of the secret of the secrets.

As alchemists and conjurers they became proverbial. Later (I

need not inform Hiras precisely when, as we drink at two different sources of knowledge), they gave birth to the more modern Theosophists, at whose head was Paracelsus, and to the Alchemists, one of the most celebrated of whom was Thomas Vaughan (seventeenth century) who wrote the most practical things on Occultism, under the name of Eugenius Philalethes. I know and can prove that Vaughan was, most positively, "made before he became."

The Rosicrucian Cabala is but an epitome of the Jewish and the Oriental ones combined, the latter being the most secret of all. The Oriental Cabala, the practical, full, and *only* existing copy, is carefully preserved at the headquarters of this Brotherhood in the East, and, I may safely vouch, will never come out of its possession. Its very existence has been doubted by many of the European Rosicrucians. One who wants "to become" has to hunt for his knowledge through thousands of scattered volumes, and pick up facts and lessons, bit by bit. Unless he takes the nearest way and consents "to be made," he will never become a practical Cabalist, and with all his learning will remain at the threshold of the "mysterious gate." The Cabala may be used and its truths imparted on a smaller scale now than it was in antiquity, and the existence of the mysterious Lodge, on account of its secrecy, doubted; but it does exist and has lost none of the primitive secret powers of the ancient Chaldaeans.\* The lodges, few in number, are divided into sections and known but to the Adepts; no one would be likely to find them out, unless the sages themselves found the neophyte worthy of initiation. Unlike the European Rosicrucians, who, in order "to become and not be made," have constantly put into practice the words of St. John, who says, "Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force," and who have struggled alone, violently robbing Nature of her secrets, the Oriental Rosicrucians (for such we will call them, being

denied the right to pronounce their true name), in the serene beatitude of their divine knowledge, are ever ready to help the earnest student struggling "to become" with practical knowledge, which dissipates, like a heavenly breeze, the blackest clouds of sceptical doubt.

\* For those who are able to understand intuitively what I am about to say, my words will be but the echo of their own thoughts. I draw the attention of such only, to a long series of inexplicable events which have taken place in our present century; to the mysterious influence directing political cataclysms; the doing and undoing of crowned heads; the tumbling down of thrones; the thorough metamorphosis of nearly the whole of the European map, beginning with the French Revolution of '93, predicted in every detail by the Count de St.-Germain, in an autograph MS., now in possession of the descendants of the Russian nobleman to whom he gave it, and coming down to the Franco-Prussian War of the latter days. This mysterious influence called "chance" by the skeptic and Providence by Christians, may have a right to some other name. Of all these degenerated children of Chaldaean Occultism, including the numerous societies of Freemasons, only one of them in the present century is worth mentioning in relation to Occultism, namely, the "Carbonari." Let some one study all he can of that secret society, let him think, combine, deduce. If Raymond Lully, a Rosicrucian, a Cabalist, could so easily supply King Edward I of England with six millions sterling to carry on war with the Turks in that distant epoch, why could not some secret lodge in our day furnish, as well, nearly the same amount of millions to France, to pay their national debt — this same France, which was so wonderfully, quickly defeated, and as wonderfully set on her legs again. Idle talk! — people will say. Very well, but even an

hypothesis may be worth the trouble to consider sometimes.

Hiraf is right again when he says that "knowing that their mysteries, if divulged," in the present chaotic state of society, "would produce mere confusion and death," they shut up that knowledge within themselves. Heirs to the early heavenly wisdom of their first forefathers, they keep the keys which unlock the most guarded of Nature's secrets, and impart them only gradually and with the greatest caution. But still they *do* impart sometimes! Once in such a *cercle vicieux*, Hiraf sins likewise in a certain comparison he makes between Christ, Buddha, and Khong-foo-tse, or Confucius. A comparison can hardly be made between the two former wise and spiritual *Illuminati*, and the Chinese philosopher. The higher aspirations and views of the two Christs can have nothing to do with the cold, practical philosophy of the latter; brilliant anomaly as he was among a naturally dull and materialistic people, peaceful and devoted to agriculture from the earliest ages of their history. Confucius can never bear the slightest comparison with the two great Reformers. Whereas the principles and doctrines of Christ and Buddha were calculated to embrace the whole of humanity, Confucius confined his attention solely to his own country; trying to apply his profound wisdom and philosophy to the wants of his countrymen, and little troubling his head about the rest of mankind. Intensely Chinese in patriotism and views, his philosophical doctrines are as much devoid of the purely poetic element, which characterizes the teachings of Christ and Buddha, the two divine types, as the religious tendencies of his people lack in that spiritual exaltation which we find, for instance, in India. Khong-foo-tse has not even the depth of feeling and the slight spiritual striving of his contemporary, Lao-tse. Says the learned Ennemoser: the spirits of Christ and Buddha have left indelible, eternal traces all over the face of the world. The doctrines of

Confucius can be mentioned only as the most brilliant proceedings of cold human reasoning." C. F. Haug, in his *Allgemeine Geschichte*, has depicted the Chinese nation perfectly, in a few words: their "heavy, childish, cold, sensual nature explains the peculiarities of their history." Hence any comparison between the first two reformers and Confucius, in an essay on Rosicrucianism, in which Hiram treats of the Science of Sciences and invites the thirsty for knowledge to drink at her inexhaustible source, seems inadmissible.

Further, when our learned author asserts so dogmatically that the Rosicrucian learns, though *he never* uses, the secret of immortality in earthly life, he asserts only what he himself, in his practical inexperience, thinks impossible. The words "never" and "impossible" ought to be erased from the dictionary of humanity, until the time at least when the great Cabala shall all be solved, and so rejected or accepted. The "Count de Saint-Germain" is, until this very time, a living mystery, and the Rosicrucian Thomas Vaughan another one. The countless authorities we have in literature, as well as in oral tradition (which sometimes is the more trustworthy) about this wonderful Count's having been met and recognized in different centuries, is no myth. Anyone who admits one of the practical truths of the Occult Sciences taught by the Cabala, tacitly admits them all. It must be Hamlet's "to be or not to be," and if the Cabala is true, then Saint-Germain need be no myth.

But I am digressing from my object, which is, firstly, to show the slight differences between the two Cabalas — that of the Rosicrucians and the Oriental one; and, secondly, to say that the hope expressed by Hiram to see the subject better appreciated at some future day than it has been till now, may perhaps become more than a hope. Time will show many things; till then, let us heartily thank Hiram for this first well-aimed shot at those



stubborn scientific runaways, who, once before the Truth, avoid looking her in the face, and dare not even throw a glance behind them, lest they should be forced to see that which would greatly lessen their self-sufficiency. As a practical follower of Eastern Spiritualism, I can confidently wait for the time when, with the timely help of those "who know," American Spiritualism, which even in its present shape has proved such a sore in the side of the materialists, will become a science and a thing of mathematical certitude, instead of being regarded only as the crazy delusion of epileptic monomaniacs.

The first Cabala in which a mortal man ever dared to explain the greatest mysteries of the universe, and show the keys to "those masked doors in the ramparts of Nature through which no mortal can ever pass without rousing dread sentries never seen upon this side of her wall," was compiled by a certain Shimon Ben Yochai, who lived at the time of the second Temple's destruction. Only about thirty years after the death of this renowned Cabalist, his MSS. and written explanations, which had till then remained in his possession as a most precious secret, were used by his son Rabbi Eleazar and other learned men. Making a compilation of the whole, they so produced the famous work called *Zohar* (God's splendour). This book proved an inexhaustible mine for all the subsequent Cabalists, their source of information and knowledge, and all more recent and genuine Cabalas were more or less carefully copied from the former. Before that, all the mysterious doctrines had come down in an unbroken line of merely oral traditions as far back as man could trace himself on earth. They were scrupulously and jealously guarded by the Wise Men of Chaldaea, India, Persia and Egypt, and passed from one initiate to another, in the same purity of form as when handed down to the first man by the angels, students of God's great Theosophic Seminary. For the first time since the world's creation, the secret

doctrines, passing through Moses who was initiated in Egypt, underwent some slight alterations. In consequence of the personal ambition of this great prophet-medium, he succeeded in passing off his familiar spirit, the wrathful "Jehovah," for the spirit of God himself, and so won undeserved laurels and honors. The same influence prompted him to alter some of the principles of the great oral Cabala in order to make them the more secret. These principles were laid out in symbols by him in the first four books of the *Pentateuch*, but for some mysterious reasons he withheld them from *Deuteronomy*. Having initiated his seventy Elders in his own way, the latter could give but what they had received themselves, and so was prepared the first opportunity for heresy, and the erroneous interpretations of the symbols. While the Oriental Cabala remained in its pure primitive shape, the Mosaic or Jewish one was full of drawbacks, and the keys to many of the secrets — forbidden by the Mosaic law — purposely misinterpreted. The powers conferred by it on the initiates were formidable still, and of all the most renowned Cabalists, King Solomon and his bigoted parent, David, notwithstanding his penitential psalms, were the most powerful. But still the doctrine remained secret and purely oral, until, as I have said before, the days of the second Temple's destruction. Philologically speaking, the very word Cabala is formed from two Hebrew words, meaning *to receive*, as in former times the initiate received it orally and directly from his Master, and the very Book of the *Zohar* was written out on received information, which was handed down as an unvarying stereotyped tradition by the Orientals, and altered through the ambition of Moses, by the Jews.

If the primitive Rosicrucians learned their first lessons of wisdom from Oriental masters, not so with their direct descendants, the fire-philosophers or Paracelsists; for in many things the Cabala of the latter *Illuminati* proves to be degenerated into a twin sister of

the Jewish. Let us compare. Besides admitting the "*Shedim*," or intermediate spirits of the Jews — the elementary ones, which they divide into four classes, those of the air, of the water, the fire, and of minerals — the Christian Cabalist believes like the Jewish, in Asmodeus, the *Ever-accursed One*, or our good friend the orthodox Satan. Asmodeus, or Asmodi, is the chief of the elementary goblins. This doctrine alone differs considerably from the Oriental philosophy, which denies that the great Ain-soph (the Endless or Boundless) who made his existence known through the medium of the spiritual substance sent forth from his Infinite Light — the eldest of the ten Intelligences or Emanations — the first Sefhira — could ever create an endless, macrocosmal evil. It (Oriental philosophy) teaches us that, though the first three spheres out of seven — taking it for granted that our planet comes in fourth — are inhabited by elementary or future *men* (this might account for the modern doctrine of Re-incarnation, perhaps) and, though until they become such men they are beings without immortal souls in them and but the "grossest purgations of the celestial fire," still they do not belong to Eternal Evil. Every one of them has the chance in store of having its matter *reborn* on this "fourth sphere," which is our planet, and so have "the gross purgation" purified by the Immortal Breath of the Aged of the Aged, who endows every human being with a portion of his boundless self. Here, on our planet, commences the first spiritual transition, from the Infinite to the Finite, of the elementary matter which first proceeded from the pure Intelligence, or God, and also the operation of that pure Principle upon this material purgation. Thus begins the immortal man to prepare for Eternity.

In their primitive shape, the elementary spirits, so often mistaken in modern Spiritualism for the undeveloped or unprogressed spirits of our dead, stand in relation to our planet as we stand in relation to the Summer Land. When we use the term

"disembodied spirit," we only repeat what the elementary ones most certainly think or say of us human beings, and if they are as yet devoid of immortal souls, they are, nevertheless, gifted with instinct and craft, and we appear as little material to them as the spirits of the fifth sphere appear to us. With our passage into each subsequent sphere, we throw off something of our primitive grossness. Hence, there is eternal progress — physical and spiritual — for every living being. The transcendental knowledge and philosophy of the greatest Oriental Cabalists never penetrated beyond a certain mark, and the Hermetist, or rather Rosicrucian, if we would be precise, never went farther than to solve the majestic, but more limited problems of the Jewish Cabala, which we can divide thus:

1. The nature of the Supreme Being:
2. The origin, creation, and generation of the Universe, the *Macrocosmos*;
3. The creation, or generation, of *outflowing* of angels and man;
4. The ultimate destiny of angels, man, and the Universe; or the *inflowing*;
5. To point out to humanity the real meaning of the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures.

As it is, the real, the complete Cabala of the first ages of humanity is in possession, as I said before, of but a few Oriental philosophers; where they are, who they are, is more than is given me to reveal. Perhaps I do not know it myself, and have only dreamed it. Thousands will say it is all imagination; so be it. Time will show. The only thing I can say is that such a body exists, and that the location of their Brotherhoods will never be revealed to other countries, until the day when Humanity shall awake in a mass from its spiritual lethargy, and open its blind eyes to the dazzling light of Truth. A too premature discovery might blind

them, perhaps forever. Until then, the speculative theory of their existence, will be supported by what people erroneously believe to be *supernal* facts. Notwithstanding the selfish, sinful opposition of science to Spiritualism in general, and that of the scientists in particular, who, forgetting that their first duty is to enlighten Humanity, instead of that, allow millions of people to lose themselves and drift about like so many disabled ships, without pilot or compass, among the sandbanks of superstition; notwithstanding the toy-thunderbolts and harmless anathemas hurled around by the ambitious and crafty clergy, who, above all men, ought to believe in spiritual truths; notwithstanding the apathetic indifference of that class of people who prefer believing in nothing, pretending the while to believe in the teachings of their churches, which they select according to their best notions of respectability and fashion; notwithstanding all these things, Spiritualism will rise above all, and its progress can be as little helped as the dawn of the morning or the rising of the sun. Like the former, will the glorious Truth arise among all these black clouds gathered in the East; like the latter, will its brilliant light pour forth upon awakening humanity its dazzling rays. These rays will dissipate these clouds and the unhealthy mists of a thousand religious sects which disgrace the present century. They will warm up and recall into new life the millions of wretched souls who shiver and are half frozen under the icy hand of killing skepticism. Truth will prevail at last, and Spiritualism, the new world's conqueror, reviving, like the fabulous Phoenix out of the ashes of its first parent, Occultism, will unite for ever in one Immortal Brotherhood all antagonistic races; for this new St. Michael will crush for ever the dragon's head — of Death!

I have but a few words more to say before I close. To admit the possibility of anyone becoming a practical Cabalist (or a Rosicrucian, we will call him, as the names seem to have become

synonymous) who simply has the firm determination to "become" one, and hopes to get the secret knowledge through studying the Jewish Cabala, or every other one that may come into existence, without actually being initiated by another, and so being "made" such by someone who "knows," is as foolish as to hope to thread the famous labyrinth without the clue, or to open the secret locks of the ingenious inventors of the mediaeval ages, without having possession of the keys. If the Christian New Testament, the easiest and youngest of all the Cabalas known to us, has presented such immense difficulties to those who would interpret its mysteries and secret meanings (which, were they only once studied with the key of modern Spiritualism, would open as simply as the casket in Aesop's fable), what hope can there be for a modern Occultist, learned only in theoretical knowledge, to ever attain his object? Occultism without practice will ever be like the statue of Pygmalion, and no one can animate it without infusing into it a spark of the sacred Divine Fire. The Jewish Cabala, the only authority of the European Occultist, is all based on the secret meanings of the Hebrew scriptures, which, in their turn, indicate the keys to them, by signs *hidden* and unintelligible to the uninitiated. They afford no hope for the adepts to solve them practically. The Seventh Rule of the Rosicrucian "who became, but was not made" has its secret meaning, like every other phrase left by the Cabalists to posterity, in writing. The words: "The dead letter killeth," which Hiram quotes, can be applied in this case with still more justice than to the Christian teachings of the first apostles. A Rosicrucian had to struggle ALONE, and toil long years to find some of the preliminary secrets — the A B C of the great Cabala — only on account of his ordeal, during which were to be tried all his mental and physical energies. After that, if found worthy, the word "Try" was repeated to him for the last time before the final ceremony of the ordeal. When the High Priests of the Temple of Osiris, of Serapis, and others, brought the neophyte

before the dreaded Goddess Isis, the word "Try" was pronounced for the last time; and then, if the neophyte could withstand that final mystery, the most dreaded as well as the most trying of all horrors for him who knew not what was in store for him; if he bravely "lifted the veil of Isis," he became an initiate, and had naught to fear more. He had passed the last ordeal, and no longer dreaded to meet face to face the inhabitants from "over the dark river."

The only cause for the horror and dread we feel in the presence of death, lies in its unsolved mystery. A Christian will always fear it, more or less; an initiate of the secret science, or a *true* Spiritualist, never; for both of the latter have lifted the veil of Isis, and the great problem is solved by both, in theory and in practice.

Many thousand years ago the wise King Solomon declared that "There is nothing new under the Sun," and the words of this very wise man ought to be repeated till the farthest ends of time. There is not a science, nor a modern discovery in any section of it, but was known to the Cabalists thousands of years since. This will appear a bold and ridiculous assertion, I know; and one apparently unconfirmed by any authority. But I will answer that where truth stares one in the face, there can be no other authority than one's senses. The only authority I know of, lies scattered throughout the East. Besides, who would ever dare, in the ever-changing, ever-discovering Europe, or adolescent America, to risk proclaiming himself as an authority? The scientist, who was an authority yesterday, becomes by the mere lucky chance a contemporary discoverer, a worn-out hypothesisist. How easily the astronomer of today forgets that all his science is but the picking up of crumbs left by the Chaldaean astrologists. What would not modern physicians, practitioners of their blind and lame science of medicine, give for a part of the knowledge of botany and plants — I won't say of the Chaldaeans — but even of

the more modern Essenians. The simple history of the Eastern people, their habits and customs, ought to be a sure guarantee that what they once knew, they cannot have totally forgotten. While Europe has changed twenty times its appearance, and been turned upside down by religious and political revolutions and social cataclysms, Asia has remained stationary. What was, two thousand years ago, exists now with very little variation. Such practical knowledge as was possessed by the ancients could not die out so soon with such a people. The hope of finding remnants even of such wisdom as Ancient Asia possessed, ought to tempt our conceited modern science to explore her territory.

And thus is it that all we know of what we profess and live upon, comes to us from the scorned, despised Occultism of the East. Religion and sciences, laws and customs — all of these, are closely related to Occultism, and are but its result, its direct products, disguised by the hand of time, and palmed upon us under new pseudonyms. If people ask me for the proof, I will answer that it does not enter my province to teach others what they can learn themselves with very little difficulty, provided they give themselves the trouble to read and think over what they read. Besides, the time is near when all the old superstitions and the errors of centuries must be swept away by the hurricane of Truth. As the prophet Mohammed, when he perceived that the mountain would not come to him, went himself towards the mountain, so Modern Spiritualism made its unexpected appearance from the East, before a skeptical world, to terminate in a very near future the oblivion into which the ancient secret wisdom had fallen.

Spiritualism is but a baby now, an unwelcome stranger, whom public opinion, like an unnatural foster mother, tries to crush out of existence. But it is growing, and this same East may one day send some experienced, clever nurses to take care of it. The immediate danger of Salem tragedies has passed away. The



Rochester knockings, tiny as they were, awoke some vigilant friends, who, in their turn, aroused thousands and millions of jealous defenders for the true Cause. The most difficult part is done; the door stands ajar; it remains for such minds as Hiram invites to help earnest truth-seekers to the key which will open for them the gates, and aid them to pass the threshold dividing this world from the next, "without rousing the dread sentries never seen upon this side of her wall." It belongs to the exact knowledge of the Occultist to explain and alter much of what seems "repulsive" in Spiritualism, to some of the too delicate Orthodox souls. The latter may object the more to Spiritualistic phenomena, on the ground that Cabalism is mixed up with it. They will begin to prove that Occultism, *if it does exist*, is the forbidden "Black Art," the sorcery for which people were burnt, not so long ago. In such a case I will humbly reply, that there is nothing in nature but has two sides to it. Occultism is certainly no exception to the rule, and is composed of *White* and *Black* magic. But so is Orthodox religion, likewise. When an Occultist is a real Rosicrucian, he is a thousand times purer and nobler, and more divine, than any of the holiest Orthodox priests; but when one of the latter gives himself up to the turbulent demon of his own vile passions, and so rouses all the fiends, they shout with joy at the sight of such a perversity. In what, pray, is this Orthodox priest better than the blackest of all the sorcerers' dealings with the Elementary "Dweller," or with the "Diakka" of A. J. Davis? Verily, we have *White* and *Black* Christianity, as well as *White* and *Black* magic.

O, you very Orthodox priests and clergymen of various creeds and denominations, you who are so intolerant towards Spiritualism, this purest of the Children of Ancient Magic, can you tell me why, in such a case, you practice daily yourselves, all the most prominent rites of magic in your churches, and follow the

antetypes of the very ceremonies of Occultism? Can you light a taper, or illuminate your altars with circles of wax lights, for instance, and not repeat the rites of magic? What is your altar with the vertical burning candles, but the modern mimicry of the original magic monolith with the Baal fires upon it? Don't you know that by doing so you are following right in the steps of the ancient fire-worshippers, the Persian Heathen Ghebers? And your Pope's sparkling mitre, what is it but the direct descendant of the Mithraic Sacrifice, symbolical covering invented for the heads of the high priests of this very Occultism in Chaldaeae? Having passed through numerous transformations it now rests in its last (?) Orthodox shape, upon the venerable head of your successor of St. Peter. Little do the devout worshippers of the Vatican suspect, when they lift up their eyes in mute adoration upon the head of their God on Earth, the Pope, that what they admire, is after all, but the caricatured head-dress, the Amazon-like helmet of Pallas Athene, the heathen goddess Minerva! In fact, there is scarcely a rite or ceremony of the Christian Church that does not descend from Occultism.

But say or think what you will, you cannot help that which was, is, and ever will be, namely, the direct communication between the two worlds. We term this intercourse modern Spiritualism, with the same right and logic as when we say the "New World," in speaking of America.

I will close by startling, perhaps, even Orthodox Spiritualists by reaffirming that all who have ever witnessed our modern materializations of genuine spirit-forms, have, unwittingly, become the initiated neophytes of the Ancient Mystery; for each and all of them have solved the problem of Death, have "lifted the veil of Isis."



## From Madame H. P. Blavatsky to Her Correspondents

### An Open Letter Such As Few Can Write

[*Spiritual Scientist*, Boston, Vol. III, September 23, 1875, pp. 25-7]

Being daily in receipt of numerous letters — written with the view of obtaining advice as to the best method of receiving information respecting Occultism, and the direct relation it bears to modern Spiritualism, and not having sufficient time at my disposal to answer these requests, I now propose to facilitate the mutual labor of myself and correspondents, by naming herein a few of the principal works treating upon *magiism*, and the mysteries of such modern Hermetists.

To this I feel bound to add, respecting what I have stated before, to wit: that would-be aspirants must not lure themselves with the idea of any possibility of their becoming practical Occultists by mere book-knowledge. The works of the Hermetic Philosophers were never intended for the masses, as Mr. Charles Sotheran, one of the most learned members of the Society *Rosae Crucis*, in a late essay, thus observes: "Gabriele Rossetti in his *Disquisitions on the Antipapal spirit, which produced the Reformation*, shows that the art of speaking and writing in a language which bears a double interpretation, is of very great antiquity; that it was in practice among the priests of Egypt, brought from thence by the Manichees, whence it passed to the Templars and Albigenses, spread over Europe, and brought about the Reformation."

The ablest book that was ever written on Symbols and Mystic Orders, is most certainly Hargrave Jennings' *The Rosicrucians*, and yet it has been repeatedly called "obscure trash" in my

presence, and that too, by individuals who were most decidedly well-versed in the rites and mysteries of modern Freemasonry. Persons who lack even the latter knowledge, can easily infer from this, what would be the amount of information they might derive from still more obscure and mystical works than the latter; for if we compare Hargrave Jennings' book with some of the mediaeval treatises and ancient works of the most noted Alchemists and Magi, we might find the latter as much more obscure than the former — as regards language — as a pupil in celestial Philosophy would the Book of the Heavens, if he should examine a far distant star with the naked eye, rather than with the help of a powerful telescope.

Far from me, though, the idea of disparaging in anyone the laudable impulse to search ardently after Truth, however arid and ungrateful the task may appear at first sight; for my own principle has ever been to make the Light of Truth, the beacon of my life. The words uttered by Christ eighteen centuries ago: "Believe and you will understand," can be applied in the present case, and repeating them with but a slight modification, I may well say: "Study and you will believe."

But to particularize one or another Book on Occultism, to those who are anxious to begin their studies in the hidden mysteries of nature is something, responsibility of which, I am not prepared to assume. What may be clear to one who is intuitional, if read in the same book by another person, might prove meaningless. Unless one is prepared to devote to it his whole life, the superficial knowledge of Occult Sciences will lead him surely to become the target for millions of ignorant scoffers to aim their blunderbusses, loaded with ridicule and chaff, against. Besides this, it is in more than one way dangerous to select this science as a mere pastime. One must bear forever in mind the impressive fable of Oedipus, and beware of the same consequences. Oedipus

unriddled but one-half of the enigma offered him by the Sphinx, and caused its death; the other half of the mystery avenged the death of the symbolic monster, and forced the King of Thebes to prefer blindness and exile in his despair, rather than face what he did not feel himself pure enough to encounter. He unriddled the man, the form, and had forgotten God — the idea.

If a man would follow in the steps of Hermetic Philosophers, he must prepare himself beforehand for martyrdom. He must give up personal pride and all selfish purposes, and be ready for everlasting encounters with friends and foes. He must part, once for all, with every remembrance of his earlier ideas, on all and on everything. Existing religions, knowledge, science must rebecome a blank book for him, as in the days of his babyhood, for if he wants to succeed he must learn a new alphabet on the lap of Mother Nature, every letter of which will afford a new insight to him, every syllable and word an unexpected revelation. The two hitherto irreconcilable foes, science and theology — the Montecchi and Captiletti of the nineteenth century — will ally themselves with the ignorant masses, against the modern Occultist. If we have outgrown the age of stakes, we are in the heyday, *per contra*, of slander, the venom of the press, and all these mephitic *venticelli* of calumny, so vividly expressed by the immortal Don Basilio. To Science, it will be the duty, arid and sterile as a matter of course — of the Cabalist to prove that from the beginning of time there was but one positive Science — Occultism; that it was the mysterious lever of all intellectual forces, the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil of the Allegorical Paradise, from whose gigantic trunk sprang in every direction boughs, branches and twigs, the former shooting forth straight enough at first, the latter, deviating with every inch of growth, assuming more and more fantastical appearances, till at last one after the other, lost its vital juice, got deformed, and, drying up,

finally broke off, scattering the ground afar with heaps of rubbish. To Theology, the Occultist of the future will have to demonstrate, that the Gods of the Mythologies, the Elohim of Israel as well as the religious, theological mysteries of Christianity, to begin with the Trinity, sprang from the sanctuaries of Memphis and Thebes; that their mother Eve is but the spiritualized Psyche of old, both of them paying a like penalty for their curiosity, descending to Hades or Hell, the latter to bring back to earth the famous Pandora's box — the former, to search out and crush the head of the serpent — symbol of time and evil; the crime of both expiated by the Pagan Prometheus and the Christian Lucifer; the first, delivered by Hercules — the second conquered by the Saviour.

Furthermore, the Occultist will have to prove to the Christian Theology, publicly, what many of its priesthood are well aware of in secret — namely, that their God on earth was a Cabalist, the meek representative of a tremendous Power, which, if misapplied, might shake the world to its foundations; and that, of all their evangelical symbols, there is not one but can be traced up to its parent fount. For instance, their Incarnated Verbum or *Logos* was worshipped at His birth by the three Magi, led on by the star, and received from them the gold, the frankincense and myrrh, the whole of which is simply an excerpt from the Cabala our modern theologians despise, and the representation of another and still more mysterious "Ternary,"\* embodying allegorically in its emblems, the highest secrets of the Cabala.

\* The Ternarius or Ternary, the Symbol of perfection in antiquity, and the Star, the Cabalistic sign of the Microcosm.

A clergy, whose main object ever has been to make of their Divine Cross the gallows of Truth, and Freedom, could not do otherwise than try and bury in oblivion the origin of that same cross, which,

in the most primitive symbols of the Egyptians' magic, represents the key to Heaven. Their anathemas are powerless in our days, the multitude is wiser; but the greatest danger awaits us just in that latter direction, if we do not succeed in making the masses remain at least neutral — till they come to know better — in this forthcoming conflict between Truth, Superstition and Presumption; or, to express it in other terms, Occult Spiritualism, Theology and Science. We have to fear neither the miniature thunderbolts of the clergy, nor the unwarranted negations of Science. But Public Opinion, this invisible, intangible, omnipresent, despotic tyrant; this thousand-headed Hydra — the more dangerous for being composed of individual mediocrities — is not an enemy to be scorned by any would-be Occultist, courageous as he may be. Many of the far more innocent Spiritualists have left their sheepskins in the clutches of this ever-hungry, roaring lion — for he is the most dangerous of our three classes of enemies. What will be the fate, in such a case, of an unfortunate Occultist, if he once succeeds in demonstrating the close relationship existing between the two? The masses of people, though they do not generally appreciate the science of truth, or have real knowledge, on the other hand are unerringly directed by mere instinct; they have intuitionally — if I may be allowed to express myself — the sense of what is formidable in its genuine strength. People will never conspire except against *real* Power. In their blind ignorance, the Mysteries and the Unknown have been, and ever will be, objects of terror for them. Civilization may progress, human nature will remain the same throughout all ages. Occultists, beware!

Let it be understood, then, that I address myself but to the truly courageous and persevering. Besides the danger expressed above, the difficulties to becoming a practical Occultist in this country, are next to insurmountable. Barrier upon barrier, obstacles in



every form and shape will present themselves to the student; for the Keys of the Golden Gate leading to the Infinite Truth, lie buried deep, and the gate itself is enclosed in a mist which clears up only before the ardent rays of implicit Faith. Faith alone, one grain of which as large as a mustard-seed, according to the words of Christ, can lift a mountain, is able to find out how simple becomes the Cabala to the initiate, once that he has succeeded in conquering the first abstruse difficulties. The dogma of it is logical, easy and absolute. The necessary union of ideas and signs; the trinity of words, letters, numbers, and theorems; the religion of it can be compressed into a few words: "It is the Infinite condensed in the hand of an infant," says Eliphaz Levi. Ten ciphers, 22 alphabetical letters, one triangle, a square and a circle. Such are the elements of the Cabala, from whose mysterious bosom sprang all the religions of the past and present; which endowed all the Free Masonic associations with their symbols and secrets, which alone can reconcile human reason with God and Faith, Power with Freedom, Science with Mystery, and which has alone the keys of the present, past and future.

The first difficulty for the aspirant lies in the utter impossibility of his comprehending, as I said before, the meaning of the best books written by Hermetic Philosophers. The latter who mainly lived in the mediaeval ages, prompted on the one hand by their duty towards their brethren, and by their desire to impart to them and their successors only, the glorious truths, and on the other very naturally desirous to avoid the clutches of the blood-thirsty Christian Inquisition, enveloped themselves more than ever in mystery. They invented new signs and hieroglyphs, renovated the ancient symbolical language of the high-priests of antiquity, who had used it as a sacred barrier between their holy rites and the ignorance of the profane, and created a veritable Cabalistic slang. This latter, which continually blinded the false

neophyte, attracted towards the science only by his greediness for wealth and power which he would have surely misused were he to succeed, is a living, eloquent, clear language; but it is and can become such, only to the true disciple of Hermes.

But were it even otherwise, and could books on Occultism, written in a plain and precise language, be obtained, in order to get initiated in the Cabala, it would not be sufficient to understand and meditate on certain authors. Galatinus and Pico della Mirandola, Paracelsus and Robertus de Fluctibus do not furnish one with the key to the practical mysteries. They simply state what can be done and why it is done: but they do not tell one *how* to do it. More than one philosopher who has by heart the whole of the Hermetic literature, and who has devoted to the study of it upwards of thirty or forty years of his life, fails when he believes he is about reaching the final result. One must understand the Hebrew authors, such as *Sepher Yetzirah*, for instance; learn by heart the great book of the *Zohar* in its original tongue; master the *Kabbalah Denudata*, from the Collection of 1684 (Paris); follow up the Cabalistic Pneumatics at first, and then throw oneself headlong into the turbid waters of that mysterious unintelligible ocean, called the *Talmud*,\* this compilation of "absurd monstrosities" according to some blind profanes, the final key to all the Hermetists in its dogmatic and allegorical signs.

\* Immanuel Deutsch found it otherwise, and in his celebrated *Quarterly Review Essay* eulogizes the *Talmud* as the repository of vast stores of information for the philosophical student, placing it in certain respects above even the Old Testament itself. — ED., *Spiritual Scientist*]

Were I to name two of the books, which contain the most of the occult information which was derived and utilized by the greatest

Cabalists of the mediaeval ages — Paracelsus was one of them — I might astonish many of my correspondents "craving for knowledge," and they might let it pass unnoticed. Adepts more learned than I will nevertheless endorse the truths of my assertion. For prudence sake I prefer quoting from a book, written by one of our greatest modern Occultists.

"Among the sacred books of the Christians," says Eliphas Levi, "there exist two works, which, strange to say, the Infallible Church does not even pretend to understand and never tried to explain: the *Prophecy of Ezekiel* and the *Apocalypse*; two Cabalistic treatises, reserved, without doubt, for the commentaries of the Magi Kings; books closed with the seven seals to the faithful Christian; but perfectly clear to the Infidel initiated in the Occult Sciences."

Thus, the works on Occultism were not, I repeat, written for the masses, but for those of the Brethren who make the solution of the mysteries of the Cabala the principal object of their lives, and who are supposed to have conquered the first abstruse difficulties of the Alpha of Hermetic Philosophy.

To fervent and persevering candidates for the above science, I have to offer but one word of advice, "Try and become." One single journey to the Orient, made in the proper spirit, and the possible emergencies arising from the meeting of what may seem no more than the chance acquaintances and adventures of any traveller, may quite as likely as not throw wide open to the zealous student, the heretofore closed doors of the final mysteries. I will go farther and say that such a journey, performed with the omnipresent idea of the one object, and with the help of a fervent will, is sure to produce more rapid, better, and far more practical results, than the most diligent study of Occultism in books — even though one were to devote to it

dozens of years. In the name of Truth,

Yours,

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

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[Blavatsky Articles](#)

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THEOSOPHICAL UNIVERSITY PRESS ONLINE EDITION

## The Science of Magic

Proofs of its Existence — Mediums in Ancient Times, Etc., Etc.

By Mme. H. P. Blavatsky.

[*Spiritual Scientist*, Boston, Vol. III, October 14, 1875, pp. 64-5]

Happening to be on a visit to Ithaca, where spiritual papers in general, and the *Banner of Light* in particular, are very little read, but where, luckily, the *Scientist* has found hospitality in several houses, I learned through your paper of the intensely interesting, and very erudite attack in an editorial of the *Banner*, on "Magic"; or rather on those who had the *absurdity* to believe in Magic. As hints concerning myself — at least in the fragment I see — are very decently veiled, and, as it appears, Col. Olcott alone, just now, is offered by way of a pious Holocaust on the altar erected to the angel-world by some Spiritualists, who seem to be terribly in earnest, I will — leaving the said gentleman to take care of himself, provided he thinks it worth his trouble — proceed to say a few words only, in reference to the alleged *non-existence* of Magic.

Were I to give anything on my own authority, and base my defence of Magic only on what I have seen *myself*, and *know* to be true in relation to that science, as a resident of many years' standing in India and Africa, I might, perhaps, risk to be called by Mr. Colby — with that unprejudiced, spiritualized politeness, which so distinguishes the venerable editor of the *Banner of Light* — "an irresponsible woman"; and that would not be for the first time either. Therefore, to his astonishing assertion that no *magic* whatever either exists or has existed in this world, I will try to find as good authorities as himself, and maybe, better ones, and thus politely proceed to contradict him on that particular point.

Heterodox Spiritualists, like myself, must be cautious in our days and proceed with prudence, if they do not wish to be persecuted with all the untiring vengeance of that mighty army of "Indian Controls" and "Miscellaneous Guides" of our bright Summer Land.

When the writer of the editorial says, that "he does not think it at all improbable that there are humbugging spirits who try to fool certain aspirants to Occult knowledge, with the notion that there is such a thing as magic" (?) then, on the other hand, I can answer him that I, for one, not only think it probable, but I am perfectly sure, and can take my oath to the certainty, that more than once, spirits, who were either elementary or very unprogressed ones, calling themselves Theodore Parker, have been most decidedly *fooling* and disrespectfully *humbugging* our most esteemed Editor of the *Banner of Light* into the notion that the Apennines were in Spain, for instance.

Furthermore, supported in my assertions by thousands of intelligent Spiritualists, generally known for their integrity and truthfulness, I could furnish numberless proofs and instances where the Elementary Diakka, *Esprits malins et farfadets*, and other suchlike unreliable and ignorant denizens of the spirit-world, arraying themselves in pompous, world-known and famous names, suddenly gave the bewildered witnesses such deplorable, unheard-of, slip-slop trash, and betimes something worse, that more than one person who, previous to that, was an earnest believer in the spiritual philosophy, has either silently taken to his heels; or, if he happened to have been formerly a Roman Catholic, has devoutly tried to recall to memory with which hand he used to cross himself, and then cleared out with the most fervent exclamation of *Vade retro, Satanas!* Such is the opinion of every educated Spiritualist.

If that indomitable Attila, the persecutor of modern Spiritualism,

and mediums, Dr. G. Beard, had offered such a remark against Magic, I would not wonder, as a too profound devotion to blue pill and black draught is generally considered the best antidote against mystic and spiritual speculations; but for a firm Spiritualist, a believer in invisible, mysterious worlds, swarming with beings, the true nature of which is still an unriddled mystery to everyone — to step in and then sarcastically reject that which has been proved to exist and believed in for countless ages by millions of persons, wiser than himself, is too audacious! And that skeptic is the editor of a leading Spiritual paper! A man, whose first duty should be, to help his readers to seek-untiringly and perseveringly — for the TRUTH in whatever form it might present itself; but who takes the risk of dragging thousands of people into error, by pinning them to his personal rose-water faith and credulity. Every serious, earnest-minded Spiritualist must agree with me, in saying, that if modern Spiritualism remains, for a few years only, in its present condition of chaotic anarchy, or still worse, if it is allowed to run its mad course, shooting forth on all sides, idle hypotheses based on superstitious, groundless ideas, then will the Dr. Beards, Dr. Marvins, and others, known as scientific (?) skeptics, triumph indeed.

Really, it seems to be a waste of time to answer such ridiculous, ignorant assertions as the one which forced me to take up my pen. Any well-read Spiritualist, who finds the statement "that there ever was such a science as magic, has never been proved, nor ever will be," will need no answer from myself, nor anyone else, to cause him to shrug his shoulders and smile, as he probably has smiled, at the wonderful attempt of Mr. Colby's spirits to reorganize geography by placing the Apennines in Spain.

Why, man alive, did you never open a book in your life, besides your own records of Tom, Dick and Harry descending from upper

spheres to remind their Uncle Sam that he had torn his gaiters or broken his pipe in the Far West?

Did you suppose that Magic is confined to witches riding astride broomsticks and then turning themselves into black cats? Even the latter superstitious trash, though it was never called Magic, but Sorcery, does not appear so great an absurdity for one to accept, who firmly believes in the transfiguration of Mrs. Compton into Katie Brinks. The laws of nature are unchangeable. The conditions under which a medium can be transformed, entirely absorbed in the process by the spirit, into the semblance of another person, will hold good whenever that spirit or rather *force* should have a fancy to take the form of a cat.

The exercise of *magical* power is the exercise of *natural* powers, but SUPERIOR to the ordinary functions of Nature. A miracle is not a violation of the laws of Nature, except for ignorant people. Magic is but a *science*, a profound knowledge of the Occult forces in Nature, and of the laws governing the visible or the invisible world. Spiritualism in the hands of an adept becomes Magic, for he is learned in the art of blending together the laws of the Universe, without breaking any of them and thereby violating Nature. In the hands of an experienced medium, Spiritualism becomes UNCONSCIOUS SORCERY; for, by allowing himself to become the helpless tool of a variety of spirits, of whom he knows nothing save what the latter permit him to know, he opens, unknown to himself, a door of communication between the two worlds, through which emerge the blind forces of Nature lurking in the astral light, as well as good and bad spirits.

A powerful mesmerizer, profoundly learned in his science, such as Baron Du Potet, Regazzoni, Pietro d'Amicis of Bologna, are *magicians*, for they have become the adepts, the initiated ones, into the great mystery of our Mother Nature. Such men as the



above-mentioned — and such were Mesmer and Cagliostro — *control* the spirits instead of allowing their subjects or themselves to be controlled by them; and Spiritualism is safe in their hands. In the absence of experienced Adepts though, it is always safer for a naturally clairvoyant medium to trust to good luck and chance, and try to judge of the tree by its fruits. Bad spirits will seldom communicate through a pure, naturally good and virtuous person; and it is still more seldom that pure spirits will choose impure channels. Like attracts like.

But to return to Magic. Such men as Albertus Magnus, Raymond Lully, Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, Robert Fludd, Eugenius Philalethes, Khunrath, Roger Bacon and others of similar character, in our skeptical century, are generally taken for visionaries; but so, too, are Modern Spiritualists and mediums — nay worse, for charlatans and poltroons; but never were the Hermetic Philosophers taken by anyone for fools and idiots, as, unfortunately for ourselves and the Cause, every unbeliever takes ALL of us believers in Spiritualism to be. Those Hermeticists and philosophers may be disbelieved and doubted now, as everything else is doubted, but very few doubted their knowledge and power during their lifetime, for they always could prove what they claimed, having command over those forces which *now command* helpless mediums. They had their science and demonstrated philosophy to help them to throw down ridiculous negations, while we sentimental Spiritualists, rocking ourselves to sleep with our "Sweet By-and-By," are unable to recognize a spurious phenomenon from a genuine one, and are daily deceived by vile charlatans. Even though doubted then, as Spiritualism is in our day, still these philosophers were held in awe and reverence, even by those who did not implicitly believe in their Occult potency, for they were giants of intellect. Profound knowledge, as well as cultured intellectual powers, will always be respected and

revered; but our mediums and their adherents are laughed and scorned at, and we are all made to suffer, because the phenomena are left to the whims and pranks of self-willed and other mischievous spirits, and we are utterly powerless in controlling them.

To doubt Magic is to reject History itself as well as the testimony of ocular-witnesses thereof, during a period embracing over 4,000 years. Beginning with Homer, Moses, Hermes, Herodotus, Cicero, Plutarch, Pythagoras, Apollonius of Tyana, Simon the Magician, Plato, Pausanias, Iamblichus, and following this endless string of great men, historians and philosophers, who all of them either believed in magic or were magicians themselves, and ending with our modern authors, such as W. Howitt, Ennemoser, H. R. Gougenot des Mousseaux, Marquis de Mirville and the late Eliphas Levi, who was a magician himself — among all these great names and authors, we find but the solitary Mr. Colby, Editor of the *Banner of Light*, who ignores that there ever was such a science as *Magic*. He innocently believes the whole of the sacred army of Bible prophets, commencing with Father Abraham, including Christ, to be merely mediums; in the eyes of Mr. Colby they were all of them acting under control! Fancy Christ, Moses, or an Apollonius of Tyana, controlled by an Indian guide!! The venerable editor ignores, perhaps, that spiritual mediums were better known in those days to the ancients, than they are now to us, and he seems to be equally unaware of the fact that the inspired Sibyls, Pythonesses, and other mediums, were entirely guided by their High Priest and those who were initiated into the Esoteric Theurgy and mysteries of the Temples. Theurgy was *magic*; as in modern times, the Sibyls and Pythonesses WERE MEDIUMS; but their High Priests were magicians. All the secrets of their theology, which included *magic*, or the art of invoking ministering spirits, were in their hands.

They possessed the science of DISCERNING SPIRITS; a science which Mr. Colby does not possess at all — to his great regret no doubt. By this power they controlled the spirits at will, allowing but the good ones to absorb their mediums. Such is the explanation of *magic* — the real, existing, *White* or sacred magic, which ought to be in the hands of science now, and would be, if science had profited by the lessons which Spiritualism has inductively taught for these last twenty-seven years.

That is the reason why no trash was allowed to be given by unprogressed spirits in the days of old. The oracles of the sibyls and inspired priestesses could never have affirmed Athens to be a town in India, or jumped Mount Ararat from its native place down to Egypt.

If the skeptical writer of the editorial had, moreover, devoted less time to little prattling Indian spirits and more to profitable lectures, he might have learned perhaps at the same time, that the ancients had their illegal mediums — I mean those who belonged to no special Temple, and thus the spirits controlling them, unchecked by the expert hand of the magician, were left to themselves, and had all the opportunity possible to perform their capers on their helpless tools; that such mediums were generally considered *obsessed* and *possessed*, which they were in fact; in other words, and according to the Bible phraseology, "they had the seven devils in them." Furthermore, these mediums were ordered to be put to death, for the intolerant Moses, the magician, who was learned in the wisdom of Egypt, had said, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Alone, the Egyptians and Greeks, even more humane and just than Moses, took such into their Temples, and when found unfit for sacred duties of prophecy [they] *were cured*, in the same way as Jesus Christ cured Mary of Magdala and many others, by "casting out the seven devils." Either Mr. Colby and Co. must completely deny the miracles of Christ [if he ever

lived — which is more than doubtful], the Apostles, Prophets, Thaumaturgists, and Magicians, and so deny point-blank every bit of the sacred and profane histories, or he must confess that there is a POWER in this world which can command spirits, at least the bad and unprogressed ones, the elementary and Diakka. The *pure ones*, the disembodied, will never descend to our sphere, unless attracted by a current of powerful sympathy and love, or on some useful mission.

Far from me the thought of casting odium and ridicule on our medium. I am not myself a Spiritualist, if, as says Colonel Olcott, a firm belief in our souls immortality and *the knowledge* of a constant possibility for us to communicate with the spirits of our departed and loved ones, either through honest, pure mediums, or by means of the Secret Science, constitutes a Spiritualist. But I am not of those fanatical Spiritualists, to be found in every country, who blindly accept the claims of every spirit, for I have seen too much of various phenomena, undreamed of in America. I *know* that MAGIC does exist, and 10,000 editors of Spiritual papers cannot change my belief in what I know. There is a white and a black magic; and no one who has ever travelled in the East, can doubt it, if he has taken the trouble to investigate. My faith being firm I am, therefore, ever ready to support and protect any honest medium — aye, and even occasionally one who appears *dishonest*; for I know but too well, what helpless tools and victims such mediums are in the hands of unprogressed, invisible beings. I am furthermore aware of the malice and wickedness of the elementary, and how far they can inspire not only a sensitive medium, *but any other person* as well. Though I may be an "irresponsible woman" in the eyes of those who are but "too responsible" for the harm they do to EARNEST Spiritualists by their unfairness, one-sidedness, and spiritual sentimentalism, I feel safe to say, that generally I am quick enough to detect

whenever a medium is cheating *under control*, or cheating consciously.

Thus magic exists and has existed ever since prehistoric ages. Begun in history with the Samothracian mysteries, it followed its course uninterruptedly, and ended for a time with the expiring theurgic rites and ceremonies of christianized Greece; then reappeared for a time again with the Neo-Platonic, Alexandrian school, and passing, by initiation, to sundry solitary students and philosophers, safely crossed the mediaeval ages, and notwithstanding the furious persecutions of the Church, resumed its fame in the hands of such adepts as Paracelsus and several others, and finally died out in Europe with the Count de St.-Germain and Cagliostro, to seek refuge from the frozen-hearted skepticism in its native country of the East.

In India, magic has never died out, and blossoms there as well as ever. Practised, as in ancient Egypt, only within the secret enclosure of the Temples, it was, and still is, called the "sacred science." For it is a science, based on natural occult forces of Nature; and not merely a blind belief in the poll-parrot talking of crafty, elementary ones, ready to forcibly prevent *real, disembodied* spirits from communicating with their loved ones whenever they can do so.

Some time since, a Mr. Mendenhall devoted several columns in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, to questioning, cross-examining, and criticizing the mysterious Brotherhood of Luxor. He made a fruitless attempt at forcing the said Brotherhood to answer him, and thus unveil the sphinx. I can satisfy Mr. Mendenhall. The BROTHERHOOD OF LUXOR is one of the sections of the Grand Lodge of which *I am a member*. If this gentleman entertains any doubt as to my statement — which I have no doubt he will — he can, if he chooses, write to *Lahore* for information. If perchance,

the *Seven of the Committee* were so rude as not to answer him, and would refuse to give him the desired information, I can then offer him a little business transaction. Mr. Mendenhall, as far as I remember, has two wives in the spirit world. Both of these ladies materialize at M. Mott's, and often hold very long conversations with their husband, as the latter told us of several times, and over his own signature; adding, moreover, that he had no doubt whatever of the identity of the said spirits. If so, let one of the departed ladies tell Mr. Mendenhall the name of that section of the Grand Lodge I belong to. For *real, genuine, disembodied* spirits, if both are what they claim to be, the matter is more than easy; they have but to enquire of other spirits, look into my thoughts, and so on; for a disembodied entity, an immortal spirit, it is the easiest thing in the world to do. Then, if the gentleman I challenge, though I am deprived of the pleasure of his acquaintance, tells me the true name of the section — which name three gentlemen in New York, who are accepted neophytes of our Lodge, know well — I pledge myself to give to Mr. Mendenhall the true statement concerning the Brotherhood, which is not composed of spirits, as he may think, but of *living* mortals, and I will, moreover, if he desires to, put him in direct communication with the Lodge as I have done for others. Methinks, Mr. Mendenhall will answer that no such name can be given correctly by the spirits, for no such Lodge or either Section exists at all, and thus close the discussion.

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[Blavatsky Articles](#)

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## Can the Double Murder?

*To the Editor of The Sun.*

Sir, — One morning in 1867 Eastern Europe was startled by news of the most horrifying description. Michael Obrenovitch, reigning Prince of Serbia, his aunt, the Princess Catherine or Katinka, and her daughter had been murdered in broad daylight, near Belgrade, in their own garden, assassin or assassins remaining unknown. The Prince had received several bullet-shots, and stabs, and his body was actually butchered; the Princess was killed on the spot, her head smashed, and her young daughter, though still alive, was not expected to survive. The circumstances are too recent to have been forgotten, but in that part of the world, at the time, the case created a delirium of excitement.

In the Austrian dominions and in those under the doubtful protectorate of Turkey, from Bucharest down to Trieste, no high family felt secure. In those half Oriental countries every Montecchi has its Capuletti, and it was rumoured that the bloody deed was perpetrated by the Prince Kara-Gueorguevitch, or "Tzerno-Gueorgey," as he is usually called in those parts. Several persons innocent of the act were, as is usual in such cases imprisoned, and the real murderers escaped justice. A young relative of the victim, greatly beloved by his people, a mere child, taken for the purpose from a school in Paris, was brought over in ceremony to Belgrade and proclaimed Hospodar of Serbia. In the turmoil of political excitement the tragedy of Belgrade was forgotten by all but an old Serbian matron who had been attached to the Obrenovitch family, and who, like Rachel, would not be comforted for the death of her children. After the proclamation of the young Obrenovitch, nephew of the murdered

man, she had sold out her property and disappeared; but not before taking a solemn vow on the tombs of the victims to avenge their deaths.

The writer of this truthful narrative had passed a few days at Belgrade, about three months before the horrid deed was perpetrated, and knew the Princess Katinka. She was a kind, gentle, and lazy creature at home; abroad she seemed a Parisienne in manners and education. As nearly all the personages who will figure in this true story are still living, it is but decent that I should withhold their names, and give only initials.

The old Serbian lady seldom left her house, going but to see the Princess occasionally. Crouched on a pile of pillows and carpeting, clad in the picturesque national dress, she looked like the Cumaean sibyl in her days of calm repose. Strange stories were whispered about her Occult knowledge, and thrilling accounts circulated sometimes among the guests assembled round the fireside of the modest inn. Our fat landlord's maiden aunt's cousin had been troubled for some time past by a wandering vampire, and had been bled nearly to death by the nocturnal visitor, and while the efforts and exorcisms of the parish pope had been of no avail, the victim was luckily delivered by Gospoja P---, who had put to flight the disturbing ghost by merely shaking her fist at him, and shaming him in his own language. It was in Belgrade that I learned for the first time this highly interesting fact in philology, namely, that spooks have a language of their own. The old lady, whom I will call Gospoja P—, was generally attended by another personage destined to be the principal actress in our tale of horror. It was a young gipsy girl from some part of Roumania, about fourteen years of age. Where she was born, and who she was, she seemed to know as little as anyone else. I was told she had been brought one day by a party



of strolling gipsies, and left in the yard of the old lady, from which moment she became an inmate of the house. She was nicknamed "the sleeping girl," as she was said to be gifted with the faculty of apparently dropping asleep wherever she stood, and speaking her dreams aloud. The girl's heathen name was Froस्या.

About eighteen months after the news of the murder had reached Italy, where I was at the time, I travelled over the Banat in a small waggon of my own, hiring a horse whenever I needed one. I met on my way an old Frenchman, a scientist, travelling alone after my own fashion, but with the difference that while he was a pedestrian, I dominated the road from the eminence of a throne of dry hay in a jolting waggon. I discovered him one fine morning slumbering in a wilderness of shrubs and flowers, and had nearly passed over him, absorbed as I was in the contemplation of the surrounding glorious scenery. The acquaintance was soon made, no great ceremony of mutual introduction being needed. I had heard his name mentioned in circles interested in mesmerism, and knew him to be a powerful adept of the school of Dupotet.

"I have found," he remarked, in the course of the conversation after I had made him share my seat of hay, "one of the most wonderful subjects in this lovely Thebaide. I have an appointment to-night with the family. They are seeking to unravel the mystery of a murder by means of the clairvoyance of the girl . . . she is wonderful!"

"Who is she?" I asked.

"A Roumanian gipsy. She was brought up, it appears, in the family of the Serbian reigning Prince, who reigns no more, for he was very mysteriously mur— Halloo, take care! *Diable*, you will upset us over the precipice!" he hurriedly exclaimed, unceremoniously snatching from me the reins, and giving the horse a violent pull.

"You do not mean Prince Obrenovitch? " I asked aghast.

"Yes, I do; and him precisely. To-night I have to be there, hoping to close a series of *seances* by finally developing a most marvellous manifestation of the hidden power of the human spirit; and you may come with me. I will introduce you; and besides, you can help me as an interpreter, for they do not speak French."

As I was pretty sure that if the somnambule was Frosya, the rest of the family must be Gospoja P---, I readily accepted. At sunset we were at the foot of the mountain, leading to the old castle, as the Frenchman called the place. It fully deserved the poetical name given it. There was a rough bench in the depths of one of the shadowy retreats, and as we stopped at the entrance of this poetical place, and the Frenchman was gallantly busying himself with my horse on the suspicious-looking bridge which led across the water to the entrance gate, I saw a tall figure slowly rise from the bench and come towards us.

It was my old friend Gospoja P---, looking more pale and more mysterious than ever. She exhibited no surprise at seeing me, but simply greeting me after the Serbian fashion, with a triple kiss on both cheeks, she took hold of my hand and led me straight to the nest of ivy. Half reclining on a small carpet spread on the tall grass, with her back leaning against the wall, I recognized our Frosya.

She was dressed in the national costume of the Wallachian women, a sort of gauze turban intermingled with various gilt medals and bands on her head, white shirt with opened sleeves, and petticoats of variegated colours. Her face looked deadly pale, her eyes were closed, and her countenance presented that stony, sphinx-like look which characterizes in such a peculiar way the entranced clairvoyant somnambule. If it were not for the heaving

motion of her chest and bosom, ornamented by rows of medals and bead necklaces which feebly tinkled at every breath, one might have thought her dead, so, lifeless and corpse-like was her face. The Frenchman informed me that he had sent her to sleep just as we were approaching the house, and that she now was as he had left her the previous night; he then began busying himself with the *sujet*, as he called Frosya. Paying no further attention to us, he shook her by the hand, and then making a few rapid passes stretched out her arm and stiffened it. The arm as rigid as iron, remained in that position. He then closed all her fingers but one — the middle finger — which he caused to point at the evening star, which twinkled in the deep blue sky. Then he turned round and went over from right to left, throwing on some of his fluids here, again discharging them at another place; busying himself with his invisible but potent fluids, like a painter with his brush when giving the last touches to a picture.

The old lady, who had silently watched him, with her chin in her hand the while, put her thin, skeleton-looking hands on his arm and arrested it, as he was preparing himself to begin the regular mesmeric passes.

"Wait," she whispered, "till the star is set and the ninth hour completed. The Vourdalaki are hovering round; they may spoil the influence."

"What does she say?" enquired the mesmerizer, annoyed at her interference.

I explained to him that the old lady feared the pernicious influences of the Vourdalaki.

"Vourdalaki! What's that — the Vourdalaki?" exclaimed the Frenchman. "Let us be satisfied with Christian spirits, if they honour us to-night with a visit, and lose no time for the

Vourdalaki!"

I glanced at the Gospoja. She had become deathly pale and her brow was sternly knitted over her flashing black eyes.

"Tell him not to jest at this hour of the night!" she cried. "He does not know the country. Even this holy church may fail to protect us once the Vourdalaki are roused. What's this?" pushing with her foot a bundle of herbs the botanizing mesmerizer had laid near on the grass. She bent over the collection and anxiously examined the contents of the bundle, after which she flung the whole into the water.

"It must not be left here," she firmly added; "these are the St. John's plants, and they might attract the wandering ones."

Meanwhile the night had come, and the moon illuminated the landscape with a pale, ghostly light. The nights in the Banat are nearly as beautiful as in the East, and the Frenchman had to go on with his experiments in the open air, as the priest of the church had prohibited such in the tower, which was used as the parsonage, for fear of filling the holy precincts with the heretical devils of the mesmerizer, which, the priest remarked, he would be unable to exorcise on account of their being foreigners.

The old gentleman had thrown off his travelling blouse, rolled up his shirt sleeves, and now, striking a theatrical attitude, began a regular process of mesmerization.

Under his quivering fingers the odile fluid actually seemed to flash in the twilight. Frosya was placed with her figure facing the moon, and every motion of the entranced girl was discernible as in daylight. In a few minutes large drops of perspiration appeared on her brow, and slowly rolled down her pale face, glittering in the moonbeams. Then she moved uneasily about and began chanting a low melody, to the words of which the Gospoja,

anxiously bent over the unconscious girl, was listening with avidity and trying to catch every syllable. With her thin finger on her lips, her eyes nearly starting from their sockets, her frame motionless, the old lady seemed herself transfixed into a statue of attention. The group was a remarkable one, and I regretted that I was not a painter. What followed was a scene worthy to figure in *Macbeth*. At one side she, the slender girl, pale and corpse-like, writhing under the invisible fluid of him who for the hour was her omnipotent master; at the other the old matron, who, burning with her unquenched fire of revenge, stood waiting for the long-expected name of the Prince's murderer to be at last pronounced. The Frenchman himself seemed transfigured, his grey hair standing on end; his bulky clumsy form seemed to have grown in a few minutes. All theatrical pretence was now gone; there remained but the mesmerizer, aware of his responsibility, unconscious himself of the possible results, studying and anxiously expecting. Suddenly Frosya, as if lifted by some supernatural force, rose from her reclining posture and stood erect before us, again motionless and still, waiting for the magnetic fluid to direct her. The Frenchman, silently taking the old lady's hand, placed it in that of the somnambulist, and ordered her to put herself *en rapport* with the Gospoja.

"What seest thou, my daughter?" softly murmured the Serbian Lady. "Can your spirit seek out the murderers?"

"Search and behold!" sternly commanded the mesmerizer, fixing his gaze upon the face of the subject.

"I am on my way — I go," faintly whispered Frosya, her voice seeming not to come from herself, but from the surrounding atmosphere.

At this moment something so strange took place that I doubt my ability to describe it. A luminous vapour appeared, closely

surrounding the girl's body. At first about an inch in thickness, it gradually expanded, and, gathering itself, suddenly seemed to break off from the body altogether and condense itself into a kind of semisolid vapour, which very soon assumed the likeness of the somnambule herself. Flickering about the surface of the earth the form vacillated for two or three seconds, then glided noiselessly toward the river. It disappeared like a mist, dissolved in the moonbeams, which seemed to absorb it altogether.

I had followed the scene with an intense attention. The mysterious operation, known in the East as the evocation of the scin-lecca, was taking place before my own eyes. To doubt was impossible, and Dupotet was right in saying that mesmerism is the conscious Magic of the ancients, and Spiritualism the unconscious effect of the same Magic upon certain organisms.

As soon as the vaporous double had smoked itself through the pores of the girl, Gospoja had, by a rapid motion of the hand which was left free, drawn from under her pelisse something which looked to us suspiciously like a small stiletto, and placed it as rapidly in the girl's bosom. The action was so quick that the mesmerizer, absorbed in his work, had not remarked it, as he afterwards told me. A few minutes elapsed in a dead silence. We seemed a group of petrified persons. Suddenly a thrilling and transpiercing cry burst from the entranced girl's lips, she bent forward, and snatching the stiletto from her bosom, plunged it furiously round her, in the air, as if pursuing imaginary foes. Her mouth foamed, and incoherent, wild exclamations broke from her lips, among which discordant sounds I discerned, several times two familiar Christian names of men. The mesmerizer was so terrified that he lost all control over himself, and instead of withdrawing the fluid he loaded the girl with it still more.

"Take care," exclaimed I. "Stop! You will kill her, or she will kill

you!"

But the Frenchman had unwittingly raised subtle potencies of Nature over which he had no control. Furiously turning round, the girl struck at him a blow which would have killed him had he not avoided it by jumping aside, receiving but a severe scratch on the right arm. The poor man was panic-stricken; climbing with an extraordinary agility, for a man of his bulky form, on the wall over her, he fixed himself on it astride, and gathering the remnants of his will power, sent in her direction a series of passes. At the second, the girl dropped the weapon and remained motionless.

"What are you about?" hoarsely shouted the mesmerizer in French, seated like some monstrous night-goblin on the wall.  
`Answer me, I command you!"

"I did . . . but what she . . . whom you ordered me to obey . . . commanded me to do," answered the girl in French, to my amazement.

"What did the old witch command you?" irreverently asked he.

"To find them . . . who murdered . . . kill them . . . I did so . . . and they are no more . . . Avenged! . . . Avenged! They are . . ."

An exclamation of triumph, a loud shout of infernal joy, rang loud in the air, and awakening the dogs of the neighbouring villages a responsive howl of barking began from that moment, like a ceaseless echo of the Gospoja's cry:

"I am avenged! I feel it; I know it. My warning heart tells me that the fiends are no more." She fell panting on the ground, dragging down, in her fall, the girl, who allowed herself to be pulled down as if she were a bag of wool.

"I hope my subject did no further mischief to-night. She is a

dangerous as well as a very wonderful subject," said the Frenchman.

We parted. Three days after that I was at T---, and as I was sitting in the dining-room of a restaurant, waiting for my lunch, I happened to pick up a newspaper, and the first lines I read ran thus:

VIENNA, 186--. Two Mysterious Deaths.

Last evening, at 9:45, as P— was about to retire, two of the gentlemen-in-waiting suddenly exhibited great terror, as though they had seen a dreadful apparition. They screamed, staggered, and ran about the room, holding up their hands as if to ward off the blows of an unseen weapon. They paid no attention to the eager questions of the prince and suite, but presently fell writhing upon the floor, and expired in great agony. Their bodies exhibited no appearance of apoplexy, nor any external marks of wounds, but, wonderful to relate, there were numerous dark spots and long marks upon the skin, as though they were stabs and slashes made without puncturing the cuticle. The autopsy revealed the fact that beneath each of these mysterious discolourations there was a deposit of coagulated blood. The greatest excitement prevails, and the faculty are unable to solve the mystery.

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## The Luminous Circle

### Wonderful Powers of the Divining Girl of Damascus.

**A Theosophical Tale Told by an Old Traveller in the Far East. — A Magic Moon. — What Was Seen Therein. — The Dervishes of Constantinople. — A Dwarf's Transformation.**

[*The Sun*, New York, Vol. XLIII, No. III, January 2, 1876]

We were a small party of merry travellers. We had arrived at Constantinople a week before from Greece, and had devoted fourteen hours a day to running up and down the steep hills of Pera, visiting bazaars, climbing to the tops of minarets, and fighting our way through armies of hungry dogs, traditional masters of the streets of Stamboul. Nomadic life is infectious, they say, and no civilization is strong enough to destroy the charm of unrestrained freedom when it has once been tasted. For the first three days my spaniel, Ralph, had kept at my heels, and behaved like a tolerably well-educated quadruped. He was a fine fellow, my travelling companion and most cherished friend; I was afraid to lose him, and so kept a good watch over his incomings and outgoings. At every impudent attack by his Mohammedan fellow creatures, whether demonstrations of friendship or hostility, he would merely draw in his tail between his legs, and seek in a dignified and modest manner protection under one or the other wing of our little party. He had shown from the first a decided aversion to bad company, and so, having become assured of his discretion, by the end of the third day I relinquished my vigilance. This neglect was speedily followed by punishment. In an unguarded moment he listened to the voice of some canine siren, and the last I saw of him was his bushy tail vanishing around the corner of a dirty, crooked street.

Greatly annoyed, and determined to recover him at all hazards, I passed the remainder of the day in a vain search. I offered twenty, thirty, forty francs reward for him. About as many vagabond Maltese began a regular chase, and toward night we were assailed in our hotel by the whole troop, every man of them with a mangy cur in his arms, which he tried his best to convince me was the dog I had lost. The more I denied, the more solemnly they insisted, one of them actually going down upon his knees, snatching from his bosom an old corroded image of the Virgin, and swearing with a solemn oath that the Queen of Heaven herself had appeared to him and kindly shown him which dog was mine. The tumult had increased so as to threaten a riot, when finally our landlord had to send for a couple of kavasches from the nearest police station, who expelled the army of bipeds and quadrupeds by main force. I was the more in despair, as the headwaiter, a semi-respectable old brigand, who, judging by appearances, had not passed more than a half-dozen years in the galleys, gravely assured me that my pains were all useless, as my spaniel was undoubtedly devoured and half digested by this time, the Turkish dogs being very fond of their toothsome Christian brothers.

The discussion was held in the street, at the door of the hotel, and I was about to give up the search for that night, when an old Greek lady, a Phanariote, who had listened attentively to the fracas from the steps of a neighboring house, approached our disconsolate group and suggested to Miss H., one of our party, that we should inquire of the Dervishes concerning the fate of Ralph.

"And what can the Dervishes know about my dog?" inquired I, in no mood to joke.

**THE "HOLY MEN"**

"The holy men know all, Kyrea (madam)!" answered she, somewhat mysteriously. "Last week I was robbed of my new satin pelisse, which my son had brought me from Brusa, and, as you all see, there I have it on my back again."

"Indeed? Then the holy men have also metamorphosed your new pelisse into an old one, I should say," remarked a gentleman of our company, pointing to a large rent in the back, which had been clumsily mended with pins.

"And it is precisely that which is most wonderful," quietly answered the Phanariote, not in the least disconcerted. "They showed me in the luminous circle the quarter of the town, the house, and even the room in which the Jew who stole it was preparing to rip and cut my garment into pieces. My son and I had barely the time to run over to the Kalindjikoulosek quarter and save my property. We caught the thief in the very act, and both instantly recognized him as the man shown us by the Dervishes in the magic moon. He confessed, and is in prison now."

Not understanding what she meant by the luminous circle and magic moon, but not a little mystified by her account of the divining powers of the "holy men," we felt so satisfied that the story was not wholly a fabrication that we decided to go and see for ourselves on the following morning.

The monotonous cry of the Muezzin from the top of a minaret had just proclaimed the noon of the day as we, descending from the heights of Pera to the port of Galata, with difficulty elbowed our way through the unsavory crowds of the commercial quarter of the town. Before we reached the docks we had been half deafened by the shouts and incessant, ear-piercing noises, and the Babel-like confusion of tongues. In this part of the city it is useless to expect to be guided by either house numbers or names of

streets. The location of any desired place is indicated by its relative proximity to some other conspicuous building, such as a Mosque, bath or European storehouse; for the rest one has to put his faith in Allah and his prophet.

### **DERVISHES AT HOME**

It was with the greatest difficulty, therefore, that we finally found the British shipchandler's store in the rear of which we were to look for the place of our destination. Our hotel guide knew about the Dervishes as little as ourselves; but at last a Greek urchin, in all the simplicity of primitive undress, consented for a modest copper *bakshish*, to lead us to the dancers.

We arrived at last, and were shown into a gloomy and vast hall, which appeared to me like a vacated stable. It was long and narrow, the floor was thickly strewn with sand, as in a *manege*, and it was lighted only through small windows under the cornices of the ceiling. The Dervishes had finished their morning performances, and were evidently resting from their exhausting labors. They looked completely prostrated, some lying about in corners, others sitting on their heels, staring vacantly, in mute contemplation of the Invisible Divinity, as we were informed. They appeared to have lost all power of speech and hearing, for none of them responded to our questions until a gaunt, giant-limbed fellow, in a tall pointed cap, which made him appear over seven feet high, emerged from an obscure nook.

Informing us that he was the chief, he remarked that the holy brethren, being in the act of receiving orders for further ceremonies of the day from Allah himself, must not be disturbed. But when the interpreter had explained to him the object of our visit, which concerned himself alone, he being the sole proprietor of the "divining rod," his objections vanished, and he extended his hand for the alms. Upon being gratified, he beckoned two of our

party, signifying that he could not accommodate more at once, and led the way.

### THE SIBYL'S RETREAT

Plunging after him into the darkness of what seemed a half-subterranean passage, we were led to the foot of a tall ladder reaching to a chamber under the roof. We scrambled up after our guide and found ourselves in a wretched garret, of moderate size, destitute of all furniture. The floor, however, was carpeted with a thick layer of dust, and cobwebs festooned the walls in profusion. In one corner we perceived something which I mistook, at first, for a bundle of old rags; but the heap presently moved, got on its legs, advanced to the middle of the room, and stood before us, the most extraordinary-looking creature that I ever beheld. Its sex was female, but it was impossible to decide whether she was a woman or a child. She was a hideous-looking dwarf, with a head so monstrously developed that it would have been too big for a giant; the shoulders of a grenadier; the bosom of a Normandy wet nurse; and the whole supported on two short, lean, spider-looking legs, which trembled under the disproportionate size of the trunk as she advanced. She had a grinning countenance, like the face of a satyr, and it was ornamented with letters and signs from the *Koran*, painted in bright yellow. On her forehead was a blood-red crescent; her head was crowned with a dusty *tarboosh*; the lower extremities covered with large Turkish trousers; the upper portion of the body wrapped in dirty white muslin, barely sufficient to conceal one-half of its deformities. This creature rather let herself drop than sat down, in the middle of the floor, and as her weight came upon the rickety boards it sent up a thick cloud of dust, which invaded our throats and set us to coughing and sneezing. This was the famous Tatmos, known as the Damascus Oracle!

## THE MAGICIAN AT WORK

Without losing time in idle talk, the Dervish produced a piece of chalk, and traced round the girl a circle about six feet in diameter. Fetching from behind the door twelve small copper lamps, and filling them with a dark liquid contained in a vial which he drew from his bosom, he placed them symmetrically around the magic circle. He then broke a chip of wood from the half-ruined panel of the door, which bore evident marks of many a similar depredation, and, holding the chip between his thumb and finger, began blowing on it at regular intervals, alternating with mutterings of weird incantation; suddenly, and to all appearance without any apparent cause for its ignition, there appeared a spark on the chip, and it blazed up like a dry match. He lit the twelve lamps at this self-generated flame. During this process, Tatmos, who until then had sat altogether unconcerned and motionless, removed her yellow *babouches* off from her naked feet, and throwing them into a corner, disclosed, as an additional beauty, a sixth toe on each deformed foot. The Dervish then reached over into the circle, and, seizing the dwarf's ankles, gave a jerk as if he had been lifting a bag of corn, raised her clear off the ground, and stepping back, held her head downward. He shook her as one might a sack to pack its contents, the motion being regular and easy. He then swung her to and fro like a pendulum until the necessary momentum was acquired, when, letting go one foot and seizing the other with both hands, he made a powerful, muscular effort and whirled her round in the air as if she had been an Indian club.

My companion had shrunk back into a corner in fear. Round and round the Dervish swung his living burden, she remaining perfectly passive. The motion increased in rapidity, until the eye could hardly follow her body in its circuit. This continued perhaps for two or three minutes, until gradually slackening the

motion, he stopped it, and in an instant had landed the girl upon her knees in the middle of the lamp-lit circle. Such was the Eastern method of mesmerization as practised among the Dervishes.

### **IN A TRANCE**

And now the dwarf seemed entirely oblivious of external objects, and in a deep trance. Her head and jaw dropped upon her chest, her eyes were glazed and staring, and altogether her appearance was hideous. The Dervish then carefully closed the wooden shutters of the only window, and we would have been in total obscurity but that there was a hole bored in it, through which entered a bright ray of sunlight, which shot through the darkened room and shone upon the girl. He arranged her drooping head so that the ray should fall directly upon the crown, after which, motioning us to remain silent, he folded his arms upon his bosom, and fixing his gaze upon the bright spot, became as motionless as an image of stone. I, too, riveted my eyes upon the same spot, and followed the proceeding with intense interest, for I had seen something similar before, and knew what beautiful phenomena to expect.

By degrees the bright patch, as if it had drawn through the sunbeam a greater splendor from without and condensed it within its own area, shaped itself into a brilliant star, which from its focus sent out rays in every direction.

A curious optical effect then occurred. The room, which previously had been partially lighted by the sunbeam, grew darker and darker as the star increased in radiance, until we found ourselves in an Egyptian gloom. The star twinkled, trembled, and turned, at first with a slow, gyratory motion, then faster and faster, expanding and increasing its circumference at every rotation until it formed a brilliant disc, and we lost sight of

the dwarf as if she herself had been absorbed into its light. Having gradually attained a vertiginous velocity, as the girl had when whirled by the Dervish, the motion began decreasing, and finally merged into a feeble vibration, like the shimmer of moonbeams on rippling water. Then it flickered for a moment longer, emitted a few last flashes, and assuming the density and iridescence of an immense opal, it remained motionless. The disc now radiated a moon-like lustre, soft and silvery, but instead of illuminating the garret, this seemed only to intensify the darkness. Its edge was not penumbrous, but, on the contrary, sharply defined like that of a silver shield.

### **THE MAGICAL SHIELD**

All being now ready the Dervish without uttering a word, or removing his gaze from the disc, stretched out a hand and taking hold of mine, he drew me to his side and pointed to the illuminated shield. Looking at the place indicated, we saw dark patches appear like those upon the moon. These gradually formed themselves into figures, which began moving about till they came out in high relief in their natural colors. They neither appeared like a photograph nor an engraving; still less like reflection of images on a mirror; but as if the disc were a cameo and they were raised above its surface and then endowed with life and motion. To my astonishment and my friend's consternation we recognized the bridge leading from Galata to Stamboul, spanning the Golden Horn from the new to the old city. There were the people hurrying to and fro, steamers and gay caiks gliding on the blue Bosphorus; the many-colored buildings, villas and palaces reflected in the water; and the whole picture illuminated by the noonday sun.

It passed like a panorama; but so vivid was the impression that we could not tell whether it or ourselves were in motion. All was



bustle and life, but not a sound broke the oppressive stillness. It was noiseless as a dream. It was a phantom picture. Street after street and quarter after quarter succeeded each other; there was the Bazaar, with its narrow, roofed passages, the small shops on each side, the coffee house, with gravely-smoking Turks; and as either they or we glided past them, one of the smokers upset the narghile and coffee of another, and a volley of soundless invectives caused us great amusement. So we travelled with the picture until we came to a large building, which I recognized as the Palace of the Minister of Finance. In a ditch behind the house and close by to a Mosque, lying in a pool of mud, with his silken coat all bedraggled, lay my poor Ralph! Panting and crouching down as if exhausted, he seemed dying; and near him were gathered some sorry-looking curs who lay blinking in the sun and snapping at the flies!

I had seen all that I desired, although I had not breathed a word about the dog to the Dervish, and had come more out of curiosity than with the idea of any success. I was impatient to leave at once to recover Ralph; but as my companion besought me to remain a little while longer, I reluctantly consented.

### **THINKING OF HIM**

The scene faded away, and Miss H — — placed herself in her turn nearer by the side of the gigantic Dervish.

"I will think of *him*," whispered she into my ear, with that sentimental tone which young ladies generally assume when referring to a "him."

A long stretch of sand; a blue sea, with white caps dancing in the sun; a great steamer, ploughing her way along past a desolate shore, and leaving a milky track behind her. The deck is full of life; then men busy forward; the cook, with his white cap and

apron, coming out of his galley; uniformed officers moving about; passengers on the quarter deck flirting, lounging, or reading; and a young man we both recognize comes forward and leans over the taffrail. It is — *him!*

Miss H — — gives a little gasp, blushes and smiles, and concentrates her thoughts again. The picture of the steamer fades away in its turn; the magic moon remains for a few seconds pictureless. But new spots appear on its luminous face; we see a library slowly emerging from its depths — a library with green carpet and hangings, and book-shelves around three sides of the room. Seated in an armchair by the table, under the chandelier, is an old gentleman writing. His grey hair is brushed back from his forehead, his face is smooth-shaven, and his countenance has an expression of benignity.

"Father!" joyfully exclaims Miss H — — .

The Dervish makes a hasty motion to enjoin silence. The light on the disc quivers, but resumes its steady brilliancy once more.

### **WONDERFUL**

We are back in Constantinople now; and out of the pearly depths of the shield forms our own apartment in the hotel. There are our papers and books lying upon the bureau, my friend's travelling-hat in a corner, her ribbons hanging on the glass, and on the bed the very dress which she had exchanged when we started out on our memorable expedition. No detail was lacking to make the identification complete; and, to prove that we were not seeing something conjured up in our own imaginations, there lay upon the dressing case two sealed letters, the very handwriting upon which my friend recognizes. They were from a very dear relative of hers, from whom she had expected to hear at Athens, but had been disappointed. The scene faded away, and we now see her

brother's room, with himself lying upon the lounge, and the servant bathing his head, which, to our horror, we see bleeding!

We had left the boy perfectly well one hour before; but upon seeing his picture my companion uttered a cry of alarm, and seizing me by the hand dragged me towards the door. Down below we rejoined our guide, and hurried back to our hotel.

The boy had fallen downstairs and cut himself badly on the forehead; in the room, on the writing desk were the two letters which had been forwarded from Athens, letters she had seen in the disc and recognized, and the arrival of which had been so impatiently expected. Ordering the carriage, I drove hurriedly to the Minister of Finance, and alighting with the guide went right to the ditch I had never seen but in the magic room. In the middle of the pool, badly mangled, half famished, but still alive, lay my beautiful spaniel, Ralph! — HADJI MORA.

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## Madame Blavatsky on Fakirs

[*Banner of Light*, Boston, Vol. XLI, April 21, 1877, p. 8]

To the Editor of *The Sun*:

Sir, — However ignorant I may be of the laws of the solar system, I am, at all events, so firm a believer in heliocentric journalism that I subscribe for *The Sun*. I have, therefore, seen your remarks in to-day's *Sun* upon my "iconoclasm."

No doubt it is a great honor for an unpretentious foreigner to be thus crucified between the two greatest celebrities of your chivalrous country — the truly good Deacon Richard Smith, of the blue gauze trousers, and the nightingale of the willow and the cypress, G. Washington Childs, A.M. But I am not a Hindu fakir, and therefore cannot say that I enjoy crucifixion, especially when unmerited. I would not even fancy being swung round the "tall tower" with the steel hooks of your satire metaphorically thrust through my back. I have not invited the reporters to a show. I have not sought notoriety. I have only taken up a quiet corner in your free country, and, as a woman who has travelled much, shall try to tell a Western public what strange things I have seen among Eastern peoples. If I could have enjoyed this privilege at home, I should not be here. Being here, I shall, as your old English proverb expresses it, "Tell the truth and shame the devil."

*The World* reporter who visited me wrote an article which mingled his souvenirs of my stuffed apes and my canaries, my tiger-heads and palms, with aerial music and the flitting *doppelgangers* of adepts. It was a very interesting article, and certainly intended to be very impartial. If he made me appear to deny the immutability of natural law, and inferentially to affirm

the possibility of miracle, it is due to my faulty English or to the carelessness of the reader.

There are no such uncompromising believers in the immutability and universality of the laws of nature as students of occultism. Let us then, with your permission, leave the shade of the great Newton to rest in peace. It is not the principle of the law of gravitation, or the necessity of a central force acting toward the sun, that is denied, but the assumption that behind the law which draws bodies toward the earth's centre, and which is our most familiar example of gravitation, there is not another law, equally immutable, that under certain conditions appears to counteract it. If but once in a hundred years a table or a fakir is seen to rise in the air, without a visible mechanical cause, then that rising is a manifestation of a natural law of which our scientists are yet ignorant. Christians believe in miracles; occultists credit them even less than pious scientists — Sir David Brewster, for instance. Show an occultist an unfamiliar phenomenon, and he will never affirm *a priori* that it is either a trick or a miracle. He will search for the cause in the region of causes.

There was an anecdote about Babinet, the astronomer, current in Paris in 1854, when the great war was raging between the Academy and the "waltzing tables." This skeptical man of science had proclaimed in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (January 15, 1854, p. 414) that the levitation of furniture without contact "was simply as impossible as perpetual motion." A few days later, during an experimental *seance*, a table was levitated, without contact, in his presence. The result was that Babinet went straight to a dentist to have a molar tooth extracted, which the iconoclastic table, in its aerial flight, had seriously damaged. But it was too late to recall his article.

I suppose nine men out of ten, including editors, would maintain

that the undulatory theory of light is one of the most firmly established. And yet, if you will turn to page 22 of *The New Chemistry* (New York, 1876), by Professor Josiah P. Cooke, Jr., of Harvard University, you will find him saying: "I cannot agree with those who regard the wave theory of light as an established principle of science. . . . [it] requires a combination of qualities in the ether of space, which I find it difficult to believe are actually realized." What is this but iconoclasm?

Let us bear in mind that Newton himself received the corpuscular theory of Pythagoras and his predecessors, from whom he learned it, and that it was only *en desespoir de cause* that later scientists accepted the wave theory of Descartes and Huyghens. Kepler maintained the magnetic nature of the sun. Leibnitz ascribed the planetary motions to agitations of an ether. Borelli anticipated Newton in his discovery, although he failed to demonstrate it as triumphantly. Huyubens and Boyle, Horrocks and Hooke, Halley and Wren, all had ideas of a central force acting toward the sun, and of the true principle of diminution of action of the force in the ratio of the inverse square of the distance.

The last word has not yet been spoken with respect to gravitation; its limitations can never be known until the nature of the sun is better understood. They are just beginning to recognize (see Professor Balfour Stewart's lecture at Manchester, entitled *The Sun and the Earth*, and Professor A. M. Mayer's lecture, *The Earth a Great Magnet*) the intimate connection between the sun's spots and the position of the heavenly bodies. The interplanetary magnetic attractions are but just being demonstrated. Until gravitation is understood to be simply magnetic attraction and repulsion, and the part played by magnetism itself in the endless correlations of forces in the ether of space — that "hypothetical medium," as Webster terms it, I maintain that it is neither fair nor

wise to deny the levitation of either fakir, or table. Bodies oppositely electrified attract each other; similarly electrified, repulse each other. Admit, therefore, that any body having weight, whether man or inanimate object, can by any cause whatever external or internal, be given the same polarity as the spot on which it stands, and what is to prevent its rising?

Before charging me with falsehood when I affirm that I have seen both men and objects levitated, you must first dispose of the abundant testimony of persons far better known than my humble self. Mr. Crookes, Professor Thury of Geneva, Louis Jacolliot, your own Dr. Gray and Dr. Warner, and hundreds of others, have, first and last, certified to the fact of levitation.

I am surprised to find how little even the editors of your erudite contemporary, *The World*, are acquainted with Oriental metaphysics in general, and the trousers of Hindu fakirs in particular. It was bad enough to make those holy mendicants of the religion of Brahma graduate from the Buddhist Lamaseries of Tibet; but it is unpardonable to make them wear baggy breeches in the exercise of their religious functions. This is as bad as if a Hindu journalist had represented the Rev. Mr. Beecher entering his pulpit in the scant costume of the fakir — the *dhoti*, a cloth about the loins; "only that and nothing more." To account, therefore, for the oft-witnessed, open-air levitations of the *Svamis* and *Gurus* upon the theory of an iron frame concealed beneath the clothing, is as reasonable as Monsieur Babinet's explanation of the table-tipping and tapping as "unconscious ventriloquism."

You may object to the act of disembowelling, which I am compelled to affirm I have seen performed. It is, as you say, "remarkable"; but still not miraculous. Your suggestion that Dr. Hammond should go and see it is a good one. Science would be the gainer, and your humble correspondent be justified. Are you,

however, in a position to guarantee that he would furnish the world of skeptics with an example of "veracious reporting," if his observation should tend to overthrow the pet theories of what we loosely call science?

Yours very respectfully,

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

*New York, March 28th 1877.*

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## "Elementaries"

### A Letter from the Corresponding Secretary of the Theosophical Society.

[*Religio-Philosophical Journal*, Chicago, Vol. XXIII, Nov. 17, 1877]

Editor, *Journal*:

Dear Sir, — I perceive that of late the ostracized subject of the Kabalistic "elementaries," is beginning to appear in the orthodox spiritual papers, pretty often. No wonder; Spiritualism and its philosophy are progressing, and they will progress, despite the opposition of some very learned ignoramuses who imagine the cosmos rotates within the academic brain. But if a new term is once admitted for discussion the least we can do is to first clearly ascertain what that term means; we students of the Oriental philosophy count it a clear gain that Spiritualist journals on both sides of the Atlantic are beginning to discuss the subject of subhuman and earth-bound beings, even though they ridicule the idea. Only do those who ridicule it know what they are talking about? Having never studied the Kabalist writers, it becomes evident to me that they confound the "elementaries" — disembodied, vicious, and earth-bound, yet human spirits, with the "elementals," or nature-spirits.

With your permission, then, I will answer an article by Dr. Woldrich, which appeared in your *Journal* of the 27th inst., and to which the author gives the title of "Elementaries." I freely admit that owing to my imperfect knowledge of English at the time I first wrote upon the elementaries, I may have myself contributed to the present confusion, and thus brought upon my doomed head the wrath of Spiritualists, mediums, and their "guides" into

the brain. But now I will attempt to make my meaning clear. Eliphas Levi applies equally the term "elementary" to earth-bound human spirits and to the creatures of the elements.

This carelessness on his part is due to the fact that as the human elementaries are considered by the Kabalists as having irretrievably lost every chance of immortality, they therefore, after a certain period of time, become no better than the elementals who never had any soul at all. To disentangle the subject, I have, in my *Isis Unveiled*, shown that the former should alone be called "elementaries," and the latter "elementals" (Before the Veil, Vol. I, pp. xxix-xxx).

Dr. Woldrich, in imitation of Herbert Spencer, attempts to explain the existence of a popular belief in nature-spirits, demons and mythological deities, as the effect of an imagination untutored by science, and wrought upon by misunderstood natural phenomena. He attributes the legendary sylphs, undines, salamanders and gnomes, four great families, which include numberless subdivisions, to mere fancy; going, however, to the extreme of affirming that by long practice one can acquire "that power which disembodied spirits have of materializing apparitions by his will." Granted that "disembodied spirits" have sometimes that power, but if disembodied, why not embodied spirit also, *i.e.*, a yet living person who has become an adept in occultism through study? According to Dr. Woldrich's theory an embodied spirit or magician can create only subjectively, or to quote his words — "he is in the habit of summoning, that is, bringing up to his imagination his familiar spirits, which, having responded to his will, he will consider as real existences."

I will not stop to inquire for the proofs of this assertion, for it would only lead to an endless discussion. If many thousands of Spiritualists in Europe and America have seen materialized

objective forms which assure them they were the spirits of once living persons, millions of Eastern people throughout the past ages have seen the Hierophants of the temples, and even now see them in India, also evoking, without being in the least mediums, objective and tangible forms, which display no pretensions to being the souls of disembodied men. But I will only remark that, as Dr. Woldrich tells us that, though subjective and invisible to others, these forms are palpable, hence objective to the clairvoyant, no scientist has yet mastered the mysteries of even the physical sciences sufficiently to enable him to contradict, with anything like plausible or incontrovertible proofs, the assumption that because a clairvoyant sees a form remaining subjective to others, this form is nevertheless neither a hallucination nor a fiction of the imagination. Were the persons present endowed with the same clairvoyant faculty, they would everyone of them see this "creature of hallucination" as well; hence there would be sufficient proof that it had an objective existence. And this is how the experiments are conducted in certain psychological training schools, as I call such establishments in the East. One clairvoyant is never trusted. The person may be honest, truthful, and have the greatest desire to learn only that which is real, and yet mix the truth unconsciously and accept an elemental for a disembodied spirit, and *vice versa*. For instance, what guarantee can Dr. Woldrich give us that "Hoki" and "Thalla," the guides of Miss May Shaw, were not simply creatures produced by the power of imagination? This gentleman may have the word of his clairvoyant for this; he may implicitly and very deservedly trust her honesty when in her normal state; but the fact alone that a medium is a passive and docile instrument in the hands of some invisible and mysterious powers, ought to make her irresponsible in the eyes of every serious investigator. It is the spirit, or these invisible powers, he has to test, not the clairvoyant's; and what proof has he of their trustworthiness that he should think himself

warranted in coming out as the exponent of a philosophy based on thousands of years of practical experience, the iconoclast of experiments performed by whole generations of learned Egyptian Hierophants, Guru-Brahmans, adepts of the sanctuaries, and a whole host of more or less learned Kabalists, who were all trained Seers? Such an accusation, moreover, is dangerous ground for the Spiritualists themselves. Admit once that a magician creates his forms only in fancy, and as a result of hallucination, and what becomes of all the guides, spirit friends, and the *tutti quanti* from the sweet Summerland crowding around the trance medium and seers? Why these would-be disembodied entities should be considered more identified than the elementals, or as Dr. Woldrich terms them, "elementaries" — of the magician, is something which could scarcely bear investigation.

From the standpoint of certain Buddhist schools, your correspondent may be right. Their philosophy teaches that even our visible universe assumed an objective form as a result of the fancy followed by the volition or the will of the unknown and supreme adept, differing from Christian theology, however, inasmuch as they teach that instead of calling out our universe from nothingness, he had to exercise this will upon pre-existing matter, eternal and indestructible as to invisible substance, though temporary and ever-changing as to forms. Some higher and still more subtle metaphysical schools of Nepal even go so far as to affirm — on very reasonable grounds too — that this pre-existing and self-existent substance or matter (Svabhavat) is itself without any other creator or ruler; when in the state of activity it is *Pravritti*, a universal creating principle; when latent and passive, they call this force *Nivritti*. As for something eternal and infinite, for that which had neither beginning nor end, there can be neither past nor future, but everything that was and will be, IS,

therefore there never was an action or even thought, however simple, that is not impressed in imperishable records on this substance called by the Buddhists Svabhavat, by the Kabalists astral light. As in a faithful mirror this light reflects every image, and no human imagination could see anything outside that which exists impressed somewhere on the eternal substance. To imagine that a human brain can conceive of anything that was never conceived of before by the "universal brain," is a fallacy, and a conceited presumption. At best, the former can catch now and then stray glimpses of the "eternal thought" after these have assumed some objective form, either in the world of the invisible or visible universe. Hence the unanimous testimony of trained seers goes to prove that there are such creatures as the elementals; and that though the elementaries have been at some time human spirits, they, having lost every connection with the purer immortal world, must be recognized by some special term which would draw a distinct line of demarcation between them and the true and genuine disembodied souls which have henceforth to remain immortal. To the Kabalists and the adepts, especially in India, the difference between the two is all important, and their tutored minds will never allow them to mistake the one for the other; to the untutored medium they are all one.

Spiritualists have never accepted the suggestions and sound advice of certain of their seers and mediums. They have regarded Mr. Peebles' "Gadarenes" with indifference; they have shrugged their shoulders at the "Rosicrucian" fantasies of P. B. Randolph, and his "Ravalette" has made none of them the wiser; they have frowned and grumbled at A. Jackson Davis' "Diakka"; and finally lifting high the banner have declared a murderous war of extermination to the Theosophs and Kabalists. What are now the results?

A series of exposures of fraudulent mediums that have brought mortification to their endorsers and dishonor upon the cause; identification by genuine seers and mediums of pretended spirit-forms that were afterwards found to be mere personations by living cheats — which goes to prove that in such instances at least, outside of clear cases of confederacy the identifications were due to illusion on the part of the said seers, spirit-babes discovered to be battered masks and bundles of rags; obsessed mediums driven by their guides to drunkenness and immorality of conduct — the practices of free love endorsed and even prompted by alleged immortal spirits; sensitive believers forced to the commission of murder, suicide, forgery, embezzlement and other crimes; the overcredulous led to waste their substance in foolish investments and the search after hidden treasures; mediums fostering ruinous speculations in stocks; free loveites parted from their wives in search of other female affinities; two continents flooded with the vilest slanders, spoken and sometimes printed by mediums against other mediums; *incubi* and *succubi* entertained as returning angel-husbands or wives; mountebanks and jugglers protected by scientists and the clergy and gathering large audiences to witness imitations of the phenomena of cabinets, the reality of which genuine mediums themselves and spirits are powerless to vindicate by giving the necessary test-conditions; *seances* still held in Stygian darkness where even genuine phenomena can readily be mistaken for the false and false for the real; mediums left helpless by their angel guides, tried, convicted and sent to prison and no attempt made to save them from their fate by those, who, if they are spirits having the power of controlling mortal affairs, ought to have enlisted the sympathy of the heavenly hosts in behalf of their mediums in the face of such crying injustice; other faithful Spiritualist lecturers and mediums broken down in health and left unsupported by those calling themselves their patrons and

protectors. Such are some of the features of the present situation, the black spots of what ought to become the grandest and noblest of all religious philosophies — freely thrown by the unbelievers and materialists into the teeth of every Spiritualist; no intelligent person of the latter class need go outside of his own personal experience to find examples like the above. Spiritualism has not progressed and is not progressing, and will not progress until its facts are viewed in the light of the Oriental philosophy.

Thus, Mr. Editor, your esteemed correspondent, Dr. Woldrich, may be found guilty of two erroneous propositions. In the concluding sentence of his article he says:

I know not whether I have succeeded in proving the "elementary" a myth, but at least I hope that I have thrown some more light upon the subject to some of the readers of the *Journal*.

To this I would answer: (1) He has not proved at all the "elementary a myth," since the elementaries are with a few exceptions the earth-bound guides and spirits in which he believes together with every other Spiritualist; (2) Instead of throwing light upon the subject the Doctor has but darkened it the more; (3) Such explanations and careless exposures do the greatest harm to the future of Spiritualism and greatly serve to retard its progress, by teaching its adherents that they have nothing more to learn.

Sincerely hoping that I have not trespassed too much on the columns of your esteemed *Journal*, allow me to sign myself, dear sir, yours respectfully,

H. P. BLAVATSKY,

*Corresponding Secretary of the Theosophical Society.*  
*New York*





## Kabalistic Views on "Spirits" as Propagated by the Theosophical Society

[*Religio-Philosophical Journal*, Chicago, Vol. XXIII, January 26, 1878, p. 2]

Editor, *Journal*:

Dear Sir, — I must beg you to again allow me a little space for the further elucidation of a very important question — that of the "Elementals" and the "Elementaries." It is a misfortune that our European languages do not contain a nomenclature expressive of the various grades and conditions of spiritual beings. But surely I cannot be blamed for either the above linguistic deficiency, or because some people do not choose or are unable to understand my meaning! I cannot too often repeat that in this matter I claim no originality. My teachings are but the substance of what many kabalists have said before me, which, today, I mean to prove with your kind permission.

I am accused (1) of "turning somersaults" and jumping from one idea to another. The defendant pleads — not guilty. (2) Of coining not only words, but philosophies out of the depths of my consciousness: defendant enters the same plea. (3) Of having repeatedly asserted that "intelligent spirits other than those who have passed through an earth experience in a human body were concerned in the manifestations known as the phenomena of Spiritualism:" true, and defendant repeats the assertion. (4) Of having advanced, in my bold and unwarranted theories, "beyond the great Eliphaz Levi himself." Indeed? Were I to go even as far as he (see his *La Science des Esprits*), I would deny that a single so-called spiritual manifestation is more than hallucination, produced by soulless Elementals, whom he calls "Elementary."

(See *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie.*)

I am asked, "What proof is there of the existence of the elementals?" In my turn, I will inquire, what proof is there of "diakkas," "guides," "bands," and "controls"? And yet these terms are all current among Spiritualists. The unanimous testimony of innumerable observers and competent experimenters furnishes the proof. If Spiritualists cannot or will not go to those countries where they are living, and these proofs are accessible, they, at least, have no right to give the lie direct to those who have seen both the adepts and the proofs. My witnesses are living men, teaching and exemplifying the philosophy of hoary ages; theirs, these very "guides" and "controls" who, up to the present time, are at best hypothetical, and whose assertions have been repeatedly found, by Spiritualists themselves, contradictory and false.

If my present critics insist that since the discussion of this matter began a disembodied soul has never been described as an "elementary," I merely point to the number of the *London Spiritualist* for February 18th, 1876, published nearly two years ago, in which a correspondent, who has certainly studied occult sciences, says: "Is it not probable that some of the elementary spirits of an evil type are those spirit-bodies which, only recently disembodied, are on the eve of an eternal dissolution, and which continue their temporary existence only by vampirizing those still in the flesh? They had existence; they never attained to being." Note two things: that human elementaries are recognized as existing, apart from the gnomes, sylphs, undines and salamanders — beings purely elemental; and that annihilation of the soul is regarded as potential.

Says Paracelsus, in his *Philosophia Sagax*: "The current of astral light with its peculiar inhabitants, gnomes, sylphs, etc., is

transformed into human light at the moment of the conception, and it becomes the first envelope of the soul — its grosser portion; combined with the most subtle fluids, it forms the sidereal (astral, or ethereal) phantom — the inner man." And Eliphas Levi: "The astral light is saturated with souls which it discharges in the incessant generation of beings . . . At the birth of a child, they influence the four temperaments of the latter — the element of the gnomes predominates in melancholy persons; of the salamanders in the sanguine; of the undines, in the phlegmatic; of the sylphs, in the giddy and bilious. . . . These are the spirits which we designate under the term of occult elements." (*Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, Vol. II, chapter on the conjuration of the four classes of elementaries.) "Yes, yes," he remarks (in Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 164), "these spirits of the elements do exist. Some wandering in their spheres, others trying to incarnate themselves, others again already incarnated and living on earth. These are vicious and imperfect men."

Note that we have here described to us more or less "intelligent spirits other than those who have passed through an earth experience in a human body." If not intelligent, they would not know how to make the attempt to incarnate themselves. Vicious elementals, or elementaries, are attracted to vicious parents; they bask in their atmosphere, and are thus afforded the chance by the vices of the parents to perpetuate in the child the paternal wickedness. The unintellectual "elementals" are drawn in unconsciously to themselves; and in the order of nature, as component parts of the grosser astral body or soul, determine the temperament. They can as little resist as the animalcules can avoid entering into our bodies in the water we swallow.

Of a third class, out of hundreds that the Eastern philosophers and kabalists are acquainted with, Eliphas Levi, discussing spiritistic phenomena, says: "They are neither the souls of the

damned nor guilty; the elementary spirits are like children curious and harmless, and torment people in proportion as attention is paid to them." These he regards as the sole agents in all the meaningless and useless physical phenomena at *seances*. Such phenomena will be produced unless they be dominated "by wills more powerful than their own." Such a will may be that of a living adept, or as there are none such at Western spiritual *seances*, these ready agents are at the disposal of every strong, vicious, earth-bound, human elementary who has been attracted to the place. By such they can be used in combination with the astral emanations of the circle and medium, as stuff out of which to make materialized spirits.

So little does Levi concede the possibility of spirit-return in objective form, that he says: "The good deceased come back in our dreams; the state of mediumism is an extension of dream, it is somnambulism in all its variety and ecstasies. Fathom the phenomenon of sleep and you will understand the phenomena of the spirits"; and again: "According to one of the great dogmas of the kabala, the spirit despoils itself in order to ascend, and thus would have to reclathe itself to descend. There is but one way for a spirit already liberated to manifest itself again on earth — it must get back into its body and resurrect. This is quite another thing from hiding under a table or a hat. That is why necromancy is horrible. It constitutes a crime against nature. . . . We have admitted in our former works the possibility of vampirism, and even tried to explain it. The phenomena now actually occurring in America and Europe unquestionably belong to this fearful malady. . . . The mediums do not, it is true, eat the flesh of corpses [like one Sergeant Bertrand], but they breathe in throughout their whole nervous organism the phosphoric emanations of putrefied corpses, or spectral light. They are not vampires, but they evoke vampires. For this reason, they are nearly all debilitated and

sick."

Do those in Europe and America, who have heretofore described the cadaverous odor that, in some cases, they have noticed as attending materialized spirits, appreciate the revolting significance of the above explanation?

Henry Khunrath was a most learned kabalist, and the greatest authority among mediaeval occultists. He gives, in one of the clavicles of his *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae*, illustrative engravings of the four great classes of elementary spirits, as they presented themselves during an evocation of ceremonial magic, before the eyes of the magus, when, after passing the threshold, he lifts the "Veil of Isis." In describing them, Khunrath corroborates Eliphas Levi. He tells us they are disembodied, vicious men, who have parted with their divine spirits and become elementary. They are so termed, "because attracted by the earthly atmosphere, and are surrounded by the earth's elements." Here Khunrath applies the term "elementary" to human doomed souls, while Levi uses it, as we have seen, to designate another class of the same great family — gnomes, sylphs, undines, etc. — sub-human entities.

I have before me a manuscript, intended originally for publication but withheld for various reasons. The author signs himself "Zeus," and is a kabalist of more than twenty-five years' standing. This experienced occultist, a zealous devotee of Khunrath, expounding the doctrine of the latter, also says that the kabalists divided the spirits of the elements into four classes corresponding to the four temperaments in man.

It is charged against me as a heinous offense that I aver that some men lose their souls and are annihilated. But this last-named authority, "Zeus," is equally culpable, for he says, "They (the kabalists) taught that man's spirit descended from the great ocean

of spirit, and is therefore, *per se*, pure and divine; but its soul or capsule, through the (allegorical) fall of Adam, became contaminated with the world of darkness, or the world of Satan (evil), of which it must be purified, before it could ascend again to celestial happiness. Suppose a drop of water enclosed within a capsule of gelatine and thrown in the ocean; so long as the capsule remains whole, the drop of water remains isolated: break the envelope, and the drop becomes a part of the ocean, its individual existence has ceased. So it is with the spirit, so long as its ray is enclosed in its plastic mediator or soul, it has an individual existence. Destroy this capsule (the astral man, who then becomes an elementary), which destruction may occur from the consequences of sin, in the most depraved and vicious, and the spirit returns back to its original abode — the individualization of man has ceased." "This militates," he adds, "with the idea of progression, that Spiritualists generally entertain. If they understood the law of harmony, they would see their error. It is only by this law that individual life can be sustained; and the farther we deviate from harmony the more difficult it is to regain it." To return to Levi, he remarks (*Dogma et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, Vol. I, p. 319), "When we die, our interior light (the soul) ascends, agreeably to the attraction of its star (the spirit), but it must first of all get rid of the coils of the serpent (earthly evil — sin); that is to say, of the unpurified astral light, which surrounds and holds it captive, unless, by the force of will, it frees and elevates itself. This immersion of the living soul in the dead light (the emanations of everything that is evil, which pollute the earth's magnetic atmosphere, as the exhalation of a swamp does the air) is a dreadful torture; the soul freezes and burns therein, at the same time."

The kabalists represent Adam as the Tree of Life, of which the trunk is humanity; the various races, the branches; and

individual men, the leaves. Every leaf has its individual life, and is fed by the one sap; but it can live through the branch, as the branch itself draws its life through the trunk. "The wicked," says the Kabala, "are the dead leaves and the dead bark of the tree. They fall, die, are corrupted, and changed into manure, which returns to the tree through the root."

My friend, Miss Emily Kislingbury, of London, Secretary of the British National Association of Spiritualists, who is honored, trusted and beloved by all who know her, sends me a spirit-communication obtained, in April, 1877, through a young lady, who is one of the purest and most truthful of her sex. The following extracts are singularly *a propos* to the subject under discussion: "Friend, you are right. Keep our Spiritualism pure and high, for there are those who would abase its uses. But it is because they know not the power of Spiritualism. It is true, in a sense, that the spirit can overcome the flesh, but there are those to whom the fleshly life is dearer than the life of the spirit; they tread on dangerous ground. For the flesh may so outgrow the spirit, as to withdraw from it all spirituality, and man become as a beast of the field, with no saving power left. These are they whom the Church has termed "reprobate," eternally lost, but they suffer not, as the Church has taught — in conscious hells. They merely die, and are not; their light goes out, and has no conscious being." (Question) "But is this not annihilation?" (Answer): "It amounts to annihilation; they lose their individual entities, and return to the great reservoir of spirit — unconscious spirit."

Finally, I am asked: "Who are the trained seers?" They are those, I answer, who have been trained from their childhood in the pagodas, to use their spiritual sight; those whose accumulated testimony has not varied for thousands of years as to the fundamental facts of Eastern philosophy; the testimony of each generation corroborating that of each preceding one. Are these to

be trusted more, or less, than the communications of "bands," each of whom contradicts the other as completely as the various religious sects, which are ready to cut each other's throats, and of mediums, even the best of whom are ignorant of their own nature, and unsubjected to the wise direction and restraint of an adept in psychological science?

No comprehensive idea of nature can be obtained except by applying the law of harmony and analogy in the spiritual as well as in the physical world. "As above, so below," is the old Hermetic axiom. If Spiritualists would apply this to the subject of their own researches, they would see the philosophical necessity of there being in the world of spirit as well as in the world of matter, a law of the survival of the fittest.

Respectfully,

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

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[Blavatsky Articles](#)

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## Madame Blavatsky on the Views of the Theosophists

[*The Spiritualist*, London, February 8, 1878, pp. 68-9]

Sir,

Permit an humble Theosophist to appear for the first time in your columns, to say a few words in defence of our beliefs. I see in your issue of December 21st ultimo, one of your correspondents, Mr. J. Croucher, makes the following very bold assertions:

Had the Theosophists thoroughly comprehended the nature of the soul and spirit, and its relation to the body, they would have known that if the soul once left the body, it could not return. The spirit can leave, but if the soul once leaves, it leaves for ever.

This is so ambiguous that, unless he uses the term "soul" to designate only the vital principle, I can only suppose that he falls into the common error of calling the astral body, spirit, and the immortal essence, "soul." We, Theosophists, as Colonel Olcott has told you, do *vice versa*.

Besides the unwarranted imputation to us of ignorance, Mr. Croucher has an idea (peculiar to himself) that the problem which has heretofore taxed the powers of the metaphysicians in all ages has been solved in our own. It is hardly to be supposed that Theosophists or any others "thoroughly" comprehend the nature of the soul and spirit, and their relation to the body. Such an achievement is for Omniscience; and we Theosophists, treading the path worn by the footsteps of the old sages in the moving sands of exoteric philosophy, can only hope to approximate the absolute truth. It is really more than doubtful whether Mr. Croucher can do better, even though an "inspirational medium,"

and experienced "through constant sittings with one of the best trance mediums" in your country. I may well leave to time and Spiritual philosophy to entirely vindicate us in the far hereafter. When any Oedipus of this or the next century shall have solved this eternal enigma of the Sphinx-man, every modern dogma, not excepting some pets of the Spiritualists, will be swept away, as the Theban monster, according to the legend, leaped from his promontory into the sea, and was seen no more.

As early as February 18th, 1876, your learned correspondent, "M. A. (Oxon.)," took occasion, in an article entitled "Soul and Spirit," to point out the frequent confusion of the terms by other writers. As things are no better now, I will take the opportunity to show how sorely Mr. Croucher, and many other Spiritualists of whom he may be taken as the spokesman, misapprehended Colonel Olcott's meaning, and the views of the New York Theosophists. Colonel Olcott neither affirmed nor dreamed of implying that the immortal spirit leaves the body to produce the medial displays. And yet Mr. Croucher evidently thinks he did, for the word "spirit" to him means the inner astral man or double. Here is what Colonel Olcott did say, double commas and all:

That mediumistic physical phenomena are not produced by pure spirits, but by "souls" embodied or disembodied, and usually with the help of elementals.

Any intelligent reader must perceive that, in placing the word "souls" in quotation marks, the writer indicated that he was using it in a sense not his own. As a Theosophist, he would more properly and philosophically have said for himself "astral spirits," or "astral men," or doubles. Hence, the criticism is wholly without even a foundation of plausibility. I wonder that a man could be found who, on so frail a basis, would have attempted so sweeping a denunciation. As it is, our President only propounded the *trine*

of man, like the ancient and Oriental philosophers and their worthy imitator Paul, who held that the physical corporeity, the flesh and blood, was permeated and so kept alive by the *psyche*, the soul or astral body. This doctrine, that man is trine — spirit, or *Nous*, soul and body — was taught by the Apostle of the Gentiles more broadly and clearly than it has been by any of his Christian successors (see *1 Thess.*, v, 23). But having evidently forgotten or neglected to "thoroughly" study the transcendental opinions of the ancient philosophers and the Christian Apostles upon the subject, Mr. Croucher views the soul (*psyche*) as spirit (*Nous*) and *vice versa*.

The Buddhists, who separate the three entities in man (though viewing them as one when on the path to Nirvana), yet divide the soul into several parts, and have names for each of these and their functions. Thus confusion is unknown among them. The old Greeks did likewise, holding that *psyche* was *bios*, or physical life, and it was *thumos*, or passional nature, the animals being accorded but a lower faculty of the soul-instinct. The soul or *psyche* is itself a combination, *consensus* or unity of the *bios*, or physical vitality, the *epithumia* or concupiscible nature, and the *phren*, *mens*, or mind. Perhaps the *animus* ought to be included. It is constituted of ethereal substance, which pervades the whole universe, and is derived wholly from the soul of the world — *Anima Mundi* or the Buddhist Svabhavat — which is *not* spirit; though intangible and impalpable, it is yet, by comparison with spirit or pure abstraction — objective matter. By its complex nature, the soul may descend and ally itself so closely to the corporeal nature as to exclude a higher life from exerting any moral influence upon it. On the other hand, it can so closely attach to the *nous* or spirit, as to share its potency, in which case its vehicle, physical man, will appear as a God even during his terrestrial life. Unless such union of soul and spirit does occur,

either during this life or after physical death, the individual man is not immortal as an entity. The *psyche* is sooner or later disintegrated. Though the *man* may have gained "the whole world," he has lost his "soul." Paul, when teaching the *anastasis*, or continuation of individual spiritual life after death, set forth that there was a physical body which was raised in incorruptible substance. The spiritual body is most assuredly not one of the bodies, or visible or tangible *larvae*, which form in circle-rooms, and are so improperly termed "materialized spirits." When once the *metanoia*, the full developing of spiritual life, has lifted the spiritual body out of the psychical (the disembodied, corruptible astral man, what Colonel Olcott calls "soul"), it becomes, in strict ratio with its progress, more and more an abstraction for the corporeal senses. It can influence, inspire, and even communicate with men subjectively; it can make itself felt, and even, in those rare instances, when the clairvoyant is perfectly pure and perfectly lucid, seen by the inner eye (which is the eye of the purified *psyche* — soul). But how can it ever manifest objectively?

It will be seen, then, that to apply the term "spirit" to the materialized *eidola* of your "form-manifestations," is grossly improper, and something ought to be done to change the practice, since scholars have begun to discuss the subject. At best, when not what the Greeks termed *phantasma*, they are but *phasma*, or apparitions.

In scholars, speculators, and especially in our modern *savants*, the psychical principle is more or less pervaded by the corporeal, and "the things of the spirit are foolishness and impossible to be known" (1 *Cor.*, ii, 14). Plato was then right, in his way, in despising land-measuring, geometry, and arithmetic, for all these overlooked all high ideas. Plutarch taught that at death Proserpine separated the body and the soul entirely, after which the latter became a free and independent *demon* (*daimon*).

Afterward, the good underwent a second dissolution: Demeter divided the *psyche* from the *nous* or *pneuma*. The former was dissolved after a time into ethereal particles — hence the inevitable dissolution and subsequent annihilation of the man who at death is purely psychical; the latter, the *nous*, ascended to its higher Divine power and became gradually a pure, Divine spirit. Kapila, in common with all Eastern philosophers, despised the purely psychical nature. It is this agglomeration of the grosser particles of the soul, the mesmeric exhalations of human nature imbued with all its terrestrial desires and propensities, its vices, imperfections, and weakness, forming the astral body — which can become objective under certain circumstances — which the Buddhists call *skandhas* (the groups), and Colonel Olcott has for convenience termed the "soul." The Buddhists and Brahmanists teach that the man's individuality is not secured until he has passed through and become disembarassed of the last of these groups, the final vestige of earthly taint. Hence their doctrine of the metempsychosis, so ridiculed and so utterly misunderstood by our greatest Orientalists. Even the physicists teach us that the particles composing physical man are, by evolution, reworked by nature into every variety of inferior physical form. Why, then, are the Buddhists unphilosophical or even unscientific, in affirming that the semi-material *skandhas* of the astral man (his very *ego*, up to the point of final purification) are appropriated to the evolution of minor astral forms (which, of course, enter into the purely physical bodies of animals) as fast as he throws them off in his progress toward *Nirvana* Therefore, we may correctly say, that so long as the disembodied man is throwing off a single particle of these *skandhas*, a portion of him is being reincarnated in the bodies of plants and animals. And if he, the disembodied astral man, be so material that "Demeter" cannot find even one spark of the *pneuma* to carry up to the "divine power," then the individual, so to speak, is dissolved, piece by piece, into the

crucible of evolution, or, as the Hindus allegorically illustrate it, he passes thousands of years in the bodies of impure animals. Here we see how completely the ancient Greek and Hindu philosophers, the modern Oriental schools, and the Theosophists, are ranged on one side, in perfect accord; and the bright array of "inspirational mediums" and "spirit guides" stand in perfect discord on the other. Though no two of the latter, unfortunately, agree as to what is and what is not truth, yet they do agree with unanimity to antagonize whatever of the teachings of the philosophers we may repeat!

Let it not be inferred, though, from all this, that I, or any other real Theosophist, undervalue true Spiritual phenomena or philosophy, or that we do not believe in the communication between pure mortals and pure spirits, any less than we do in communication between bad men and bad spirits, or even of good men with bad spirits under bad conditions. Occultism is the essence of Spiritualism, while modern or popular Spiritualism I cannot better characterize than as adulterated, unconscious magic. We go so far as to say that all the great and noble characters, all the grand geniuses — the poets, painters, sculptors, musicians — all who have worked at any time for the realization of their highest ideal, irrespective of selfish ends — have been Spiritually inspired; not mediums, as many Spiritualists call them — passive tools in the hands of controlling guides — but incarnate, illuminated souls, working consciously in collaboration with the pure disembodied human and newly-embodied high Planetary Spirits, for the elevation and spiritualization of mankind. We believe that everything in material life is most intimately associated with Spiritual agencies. As regards psychical phenomena and mediumship, we believe that it is only when the passive medium has given place, or rather grown into, the conscious mediator, that he can discern between spirits good

and bad. And we do believe, and know also, that while the incarnate man (though the highest adept) cannot vie in potency with the pure disembodied spirits, who, freed of all their *skandhas*, have become subjective to the physical senses, yet he can perfectly equal, and can far surpass in the way of phenomena, mental or physical, the average "spirit" of modern mediumship. Believing this, you will perceive that we are better Spiritualists, in the true acceptance of the word, than so-called Spiritualists, who, instead of showing the reverence we do to true spirits — gods — debase the name of spirit, by applying it to the impure, or, at best, imperfect beings who produce the majority of the phenomena.

The two objections urged by Mr. Croucher against the claim of the Theosophists, that a child is but a duality at birth, "and perhaps until the sixth or seventh year," and that some depraved persons are annihilated at some time after death, are (1) that mediums have described to him his three children, "Who passed away at the respective ages of two, four, and six years"; and (2) that he has known persons who were "very depraved" on earth come back. He says:

These statements have been afterwards confirmed by glorious beings who come after, and who have proved by their mastery of the laws which are governing the universe, that they are worthy of being believed.

I am really happy to learn that Mr. Croucher is competent to sit in judgment upon these "glorious beings," and give them the palm over Kapila, Manu, Plato, and even Paul. It is worth something, after all, to be an "inspirational medium." We have no such "glorious beings" in the Theosophical Society to learn from; but it is evident that while Mr. Croucher sees and judges things through his emotional nature, the philosophers whom we study took

nothing from any glorious being that did not perfectly accord with the universal harmony, justice, and equilibrium of the manifest plan of the universe. The Hermetic axiom, "as below, so above," is the only rule of evidence accepted by the Theosophists. Believing in a spiritual and invisible universe, we cannot conceive of it in any other way than as completely dovetailing and corresponding with the material, objective universe; for logic and observation alike teach us that the latter is the outcome and visible manifestation of the former, and that the laws governing both are immutable.

In his letter of December 7th, Colonel Olcott very appropriately illustrates his subject of potential immortality by citing the admitted physical law of the survival of the fittest. The rule applies to the greatest as to the smallest things — to the planet equally with the plant. It applies to man. And the imperfectly developed manchild can no more exist under the conditions prepared for the perfected types of its species, than can an imperfect plant or animal. In infantile life, the higher faculties are not developed, but, as everyone knows, are only in the germ, or rudimentary. The babe is an animal, however "angelic" he may, and naturally enough, ought to appear to his parents. Be it ever so beautifully molded, the infant body is but the jewel-casket preparing for the jewel. It is bestial, selfish, and, as a babe, nothing more. Little of even the soul, Psyche, can be perceived except as vitality is concerned; hunger, terror, pain, and pleasure appear to be the principal of its conceptions. A kitten is its superior in everything but possibilities. The grey neurine of the brain is equally unformed. After a time mental qualities begin to appear, but they relate chiefly to external matters. The cultivation of the mind of the child by teachers can only affect this part of the nature — what Paul calls natural or psychical, and James and Jude sensual or psychical. Hence the words of *Jude*, "psychical,



having not the spirit," and of Paul:

The psychical man receiveth not the things of the spirit, for to him they are foolishness; the spiritual man discerneth.

It is only the man of full age, with his faculties disciplined to discern good and evil, whom we can denominate spiritual, noetic, intuitive. Children developed in such respects would be precocious, abnormal — abortives.

Why, then, should a child who has never lived other than an animal life; who never discerned right from wrong; who never cared whether he lived or died — since he could not understand either of life or death — become individually immortal? Man's cycle is not complete until he has passed through the earthlife. No one stage of probation and experience can be skipped over. He must be a man before he can become a spirit. A dead child is a failure of nature — he must live again; and the same *psyche* re-enters the physical plane through another birth. Such cases, together with those of congenital idiots, are, as stated in *Isis Unveiled*, the only instances of human reincarnation. If every child-duality were to be immortal, why deny a like individual immortality to the duality of the animal? Those who believe in the trinity of man know the babe to be but a duality — body and soul; and the individuality which resides only in the psychical is, as we have seen proved by the philosophers, perishable. The completed trinity only survives. Trinity, I say, for at death the astral form becomes the outward body, and inside a still finer one evolves, which takes the place of the *psyche* on earth, and the whole is more or less overshadowed by the *nous*. Space prevented Colonel Olcott from developing the doctrine more fully, or he would have added that not even all of the elementaries (human) are annihilated. There is still a chance for some. By a supreme struggle these may retain their third and higher principle, and so,

though slowly and painfully, yet ascend sphere after sphere, casting off at each transition the previous heavier garment, and clothing themselves in more radiant spiritual envelopes, until, rid of every finite particle, the trinity merges into the final Nirvana, and becomes a unity — a God.

A volume would scarce suffice to enumerate all the varieties of elementaries and elementals; the former being so called by some Kabalists (Henry Khunrath, for instance) to indicate their entanglement in the terrestrial elements which hold them captive, and the latter designated by that name to avoid confusion, and equally applying to those which go to form the astral body of the infant, and to the stationary nature-spirits proper. Eliphas Levi, however, indifferently calls them all "Elementary," and "souls." I repeat again, it is but the wholly psychical, disembodied astral man, which ultimately disappears as an individual entity. As to the component parts of his *psyche*, they are as indestructible as the atoms of any other body composed of matter.

That man must indeed be a true animal who has not, after death, a spark of the divine *ruach* or *nous* left in him to allow him a chance of self-salvation. Yet there are such lamentable exceptions; not alone among the depraved, but also among those who, during life, by stifling every idea of an after-existence, have killed in themselves the last desire to achieve immortality. It is the will of man, his all-potent will, that weaves his destiny, and if a man is determined in the notion that death means annihilation, he will find it so. It is among our commonest experiences that the determination of physical life or death depends upon the will. Some people snatch themselves by force of determination from the very jaws of death; while others succumb to insignificant maladies. What man does with his body he can do with his disembodied *psyche*.

Nothing in this militates against the images of Mr. Croucher's children being seen in the Astral Light by the medium, either as actually left by the children themselves, or as imagined by the father to look when grown. The impression in the latter case would be but a *phasma*, while in the former it is a *phantasma*, or the apparition of the indestructible impress of what once really was.

In days of old the "mediators" of humanity were men like Krishna, Gautama Buddha, Jesus, Paul, Apollonius of Tyana, Plotinus, Porphyry, and the like of them. They were adepts, philosophers — men who, by struggling their whole lives in purity, study, and self-sacrifice, through trials, privations, and self-discipline, attained divine illumination and seemingly superhuman powers. They could not only produce all the phenomena seen in our times, but regarded it as a sacred duty to cast out "evil spirits" or demons, from the unfortunate who were obsessed. In other worlds, to rid the medium of their days of the "elementaries."

But in our time of improved psychology every hysterical sensitive blooms into a seer, and behold! there are mediums by the thousand! Without any previous study, self-denial, or the least limitation of their physical nature, they assume, in the capacity of mouthpieces of unidentified and unidentifiable intelligences, to outrival Socrates in wisdom, Paul in eloquence, and Tertullian himself in fiery and authoritative dogmatism. The Theosophists are the last to assume infallibility for themselves, or recognize it in others; as they judge others, so they are willing to be judged.

In the name, then, of logic and common sense, before bandying epithets, let us submit our differences to the arbitrament of reason. Let us compare all things, and, putting aside emotionalism and prejudice as unworthy of the logician and the

experimentalist, hold fast only to that which passes the ordeal of ultimate analysis.

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

New York, January 14th, 1878.

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[Blavatsky Articles](#)

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THEOSOPHICAL UNIVERSITY PRESS ONLINE EDITION

## A Society without a Dogma

[*The Spiritualist*, London, February 8, 1878, pp. 62-3; square brackets in this article are H.P.B.'s]

Times have greatly changed since the winter of 1875-6, when the establishment of the Theosophical Society caused the grand army of American Spiritualists to wave banners, clang steel, and set up a great shouting. How well we all remember the putting forth of "Danger Signals," the oracular warnings and denunciations of numberless mediums! How fresh in memory the threats of "angel-friends" to Dr. Gardiner, of Boston, that they would kill Colonel Olcott if he dared call them "Elementaries" in the lectures he was about delivering! The worst of the storm has passed. The hail of imprecations no longer batters around our devoted heads; it is but raining now, and we can almost see the rainbow of promised peace spanning the sky.

Beyond doubt, much of this subsidence of the disturbed elements is due to our armed neutrality. But still, I judge that the gradual spread of a desire to learn something more as to the cause of the phenomena must be taken into account. And yet the time has not quite come when the lion (Spiritualism) and the lamb (Theosophy) are ready to lie down together — unless the lamb is willing to lie inside the lion. While we held our tongues we were asked to speak, and when we spoke — or rather our President spoke — the hue and cry was raised once more. Though the popgun fusillade and the dropping shots of musketry have mostly ceased, the defiles of your Spiritual Balkans are defended by your heaviest Krupp guns. If the fire were directed only against colonel Olcott there would be no occasion for me to bring up the reserves. But fragments from both of the bombs which your able gunner

and our mutual friend, "M. A. (Oxon.)," has exploded, in his two letters of January 4th and 11th, have given me contusions — under the velvet paw of his rhetoric I have felt the scratch of challenge!

At the very beginning of what must be a long struggle, it is imperatively demanded that the Theosophical position shall be unequivocally defined. In the last of the above two communications, it is stated that Colonel Olcott transmits "the teaching of the learned author of *Isis Unveiled*, the *master key to all problems* [?]." Who has ever claimed that the book was that, or anything like it? Not the author, certainly. The title? A misnomer for which the publisher is unpremeditatedly responsible; and, if I am not mistaken, "M. A. (Oxon.);" knows it. My title was the *Veil of Isis*, and that headline runs through the entire first volume. Not until that volume was stereotyped did any one recollect that a book of the same name was before the public. Then, as a *derniere ressource*, the publisher selected the present title.

"If he [Olcott] be not the rose, at any rate he has lived near it," says your learned correspondent. Had I seen this sentence apart from the context, I would never have imagined that the unattractive old party, superficially known as H. P. Blavatsky, was designated under this poetical Persian simile. If he had compared me to a bramble-bush, I might have complimented him upon his artistic realism. "Colonel Olcott," he says, "of himself would command attention; he commands it still more on account of the store of knowledge to which he has had access." True, he has had such access, but by no means is it confined to my humble self. Though I may have taught him a few of the things that I had learned in other countries (and corroborated the theory in every case by practical illustration), yet a far abler teacher than I could not in three brief years have given him more than the alphabet of what there is to learn before a man can become wise in spiritual

and psycho-physiological things. The very limitations of modern languages prevent any rapid communication of ideas about Eastern philosophy. I defy the great Max Muller himself to translate Kapila's *Sutras* so as to give their real meaning. We have seen what the best European authorities can do with the Hindu metaphysics; and what a mess they have made of it, to be sure! The Colonel corresponds directly with Hindu scholars, and has from them a good deal more than he can get from so clumsy a preceptor as myself.

Our friend, "M. A. (Oxon.)," says that Colonel Olcott "comes forward to enlighten us" — than which scarce anything could be more inaccurate. He neither comes forward nor pretends to enlighten anyone. The public wanted to know the views of the Theosophists, and our president attempted to give, as succinctly as possible in the limits of a single article, some little glimpse of so much of the truth as he had learned. That the result would not be wholly satisfactory was inevitable. Volumes would not suffice to answer all the questions naturally presenting themselves to an enquiring mind; a library of quartos would barely obliterate the prejudices of those who ride at the anchor of centuries of metaphysical and theological misconceptions — perhaps even errors. But, though our president is not guilty of the conceit of pretending to "enlighten" Spiritualists, I think he has certainly thrown out some hints worthy of the thoughtful consideration of the unprejudiced.

I am sorry that "M. A. (Oxon.);" is not content with mere suggestions. Nothing but the whole naked truth will satisfy him. We must "square" our theories with his facts, we must lay our theory down "on exact lines of demonstration." We are asked, "Where are the seers? What are their records? and (far more important), how do they verify them to us?" I answer, the seers are where "Schools of the Prophets" are still extant, and they have

their records with them. Though Spiritualists are not able to go in search of them, yet the philosophy they teach commends itself to logic, and its principles are mathematically demonstrable. If this be not so, let it be shown.

But, in their turn, Theosophists may ask, and do ask, where are the proofs that the medial phenomena are exclusively attributable to the agency of departed "spirits"? Who are the "seers" among mediums blessed with an infallible lucidity? What "tests" are given that admit of no alternative explanation? Though Swedenborg was one of the greatest of seers, and churches are erected in his name, yet except to his adherents what proof is there that the "spirits" objective to his vision — including Paul — promenading in hats, were anything but the creatures of his imagination? Are the spiritual potentialities of the living man so well comprehended that mediums can tell when their own agency ceases, and that of outside influences begins? No, but for all answer to our suggestions that the subject is opened to debate, "M. A. (Oxon.\*)" shudderingly charges us with attempting to upset what he designates as "a cardinal dogma of our faith" — *i.e.*, the faith of the Spiritualists.

Dogma? Faith? These are the right and left pillars of every soul-crushing theology. Theosophists have no dogmas, exact no blind faith. Theosophists are ever ready to abandon every idea that is proved erroneous upon strictly logical deductions; let Spiritualists do the same. Dogmas are the toys that amuse and can satisfy but unreasoning children. They are the offspring of human speculation and prejudiced fancy. In the eye of true philosophy it seems an insult to common sense that we should break loose from the idols and dogmas of either Christian or heathen exoteric faith to catch those of a church of Spiritualism. Spiritualism must either be a true philosophy, amenable to the tests of the recognized criterion of logic, or be set up in its niche beside the



broken idols of hundreds of antecedent Christian sects. Realizing as they do the boundlessness of the absolute truth, Theosophists repudiate all claims to infallibility. The most cherished preconceptions, the most "pious hope," the strongest "master passion," they sweep aside like dust from their path, when their error is pointed out. Their highest hope is to approximate the truth; that they have succeeded in going a few steps beyond the Spiritualists, they think proved in their conviction that they know nothing in comparison with what is to be learned; in their sacrifice of every pet theory and prompting of emotionalism at the shrine of Fact; and in their absolute and unqualified repudiation of everything that smacks of "dogma."

With great rhetorical elaboration "M. A. (Oxon.\*)" paints the result of the supersedure of Spiritualistic by Theosophic ideas. In brief, he shows Spiritualism a lifeless corpse — "a body from which the soul has been wrenched, and for which most men will care nothing." We submit that the reverse is true. Spiritualists wrench the soul from *true* Spiritualism by their degradation of spirit. Of the infinite they make the finite; of the divine subjective they make the human and limited objective. Are Theosophists materialists? Do not their hearts warm with the same "pure and holy love" for their "loved ones" as those of Spiritualists? Have not many of us sought long years "through the gate of mediumship to have access to the world of spirit" — and vainly sought? The comfort and assurance modern Spiritualism could not give us we found in Theosophy. As a result we believe far more firmly than many Spiritualists — for our belief is based on knowledge — in the communion of our beloved ones with us; but not as materialized spirits with beating hearts and sweating brows.

Holding such views as we do as to logic and fact, you perceive that when a Spiritualist pronounces to us the words dogma and facts, debate is impossible, for there is no common ground upon

which we can meet. We decline to break our heads against shadows. If fact and logic were given the consideration they should have, there would be no more temples in this world for exoteric worship, whether Christian or heathen, and the *method* of the Theosophists would be welcomed as the only one insuring action and progress — a progress that cannot be arrested, since each advance shows yet greater advances to be made.

As to our producing our "Seers" and "their records" — one word. In *The Spiritualist* of January 11th, I find Dr. Peebles saying that in due time he "will publish such facts about the Dravida Brahmans as I am [he is] permitted. I say permitted because some of these occurred under the promise and seal of secrecy." If ever the casual wayfarer is put under an obligation of secrecy, before he is shown some of the less important psycho-physiological phenomena, is it not barely possible that the Brotherhood to which some Theosophists belong, has also doctrines, records, and phenomena, that cannot be revealed to the profane and the indifferent, without any imputation lying against their reality and authoritativeness? This, at least, I believe, "M. A. (Oxon.)" knows. As we do not offensively obtrude ourselves upon an unwilling public, but only answer under compulsion, we can hardly be denounced as contumacious if we produce to a promiscuous public, neither our "Seers" nor "their records." When Mahomet is ready to go to the mountain it will be found standing in its place.

And that no one that makes this search may suppose that we Theosophists send him to a place where there are no pitfalls for the unwary, I quote from the famous *Commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita* of our brother Hurrychund Chintamon, the unqualified admission that "In Hindostan, as in England, there are doctrines for the learned and dogmas for the unlearned; strong meat for men, and milk for babes; facts for the few, and fictions for the many; realities for the wise, and romances for the

simple; esoteric truth for the philosopher, and exoteric fable for the fool." Like the philosophy taught by this author in the work in question, the object of the Theosophical Society "is the cleansing of Spiritual truth."

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

New York, January 20th, 1877 [1878].

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[Blavatsky Articles](#)

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THEOSOPHICAL UNIVERSITY PRESS ONLINE EDITION

## Madame Blavatsky on Indian Metaphysics

[*The Spiritualist*, London, March 22, 1878, pp. 140-41; square brackets in the body of this article are H.P.B.'s own.]

Sir,

Two peas in the same pod are the traditional symbol of mutual resemblance, and the time-honoured simile forced itself upon me when I read the twin letters of our two masked assailants in your paper of February 22nd. In substance they are so identical that one would suppose the same person had written them simultaneously with his two hands, as Paul Morphy will play you two games of chess, or Kossuth dictate two letters at once. The only difference between these two letters — lying beside each other on the same page, like two babes in one crib — is, that "M. A. (Cantab.)'s" is brief and courteous, while "Scrutator's" is prolix and uncivil.

By a strange coincidence both these sharp-shooters fire from behind their secure ramparts a shot at a certain "learned occultist" over the head of Mr. C. C. Massey, who quoted some of that personage's views, in a letter published May 10th, 1876. Whether in irony or otherwise, they hurl the views of this "learned occultist" at the heads of Colonel Olcott and myself, as though they were missiles that would floor us completely. Now, the "learned occultist" in question is not a whit more, or less, learned than your humble servant, for the very simple reason that we are identical. The extracts published by Mr. Massey, by permission, were contained in a letter from myself to him. Moreover, it is now before me, and, save one misprint of no consequence, I do not find in it a word that I would wish changed. What is said there I repeat now over my own signature — the

theories of 1876 do not contradict those of 1878 in any respect, as I shall endeavour to prove, after pointing out to the impartial reader the quaking ground upon which our two critics stand. Their arguments against Theosophy — certainly "Scrutator's" — are like a verdant moss, which displays a velvety carpet of green, without roots, and with a deep bog below.

When a person enters a controversy over a fictitious signature, he should be doubly cautious, if he would avoid the accusation of abusing the opportunity of the mask to insult his opponents with impunity. Who or what is "Scrutator"? A clergyman, a medium, a lawyer, a philosopher, a physician (certainly not a metaphysician), or what? *Quien sabe* He seems to partake of the flavour of all, and yet to grace neither. Though his arguments are all interwoven with sentences quoted from our letters, yet in no case does he criticize merely what is written by us, but what he thinks we *may* have meant, or what the sentences *might* imply. Drawing his deductions, then, from what existed only in the depths of his own consciousness, he invents phrases, and forces constructions upon which he proceeds to pour out his wrath. Without meaning to be in the least personal — for, though propagating "absurdities" with "utmost effrontery," I would feel sorry and ashamed to be as impertinent with "Scrutator" as he is with us — yet, hereafter, when I see a dog chasing the shadow of his own tail, I will think of his letter.

In my doubts as to what this assailant might be, I invoked the help of Webster to give me a possible clue in the pseudonym. "Scrutator," says the great lexicographer, "is one who scrutinizes," and "scrutiny" he derives from the Latin *scrutari*, "to search even to the rags"; which *scrutari* itself he traces back to a Greek root, meaning "trash, trumpery." In this ultimate analysis, therefore, we must regard the *nom de plume*, while very applicable to his letter of February 22nd, very unfortunate for himself; for at best

it makes him a sort of literary *chiffonnier*, probing in the dust-heap of the language for bits of hard adjectives to fling at us. I repeat that, when an anonymous critic accuses two persons of "slandorous imputations" (the mere reflex of his own imagination), and of "unfathomable absurdities," he ought, at least, to make sure (1) that he has thoroughly grasped what he is pleased to call the "teachings" of his adversaries; and (2) that his own philosophy is infallible. I may add, furthermore, that when that critic permits himself to call the views of other people — not yet half-digested by himself — "unfathomable absurdities," he ought to be mighty careful about introducing as arguments into the discussion sectarian absurdities far more "unfathomable" and which have nothing to do with either science or philosophy.

I suppose [gravely argues "Scrutator"] a babe's brain is soft, and a quite unfit tool for intelligence, otherwise Jesus could not have lost His intelligence when He took upon Himself the body and the brain of a babe [!?!].

The very opposite of Oliver Johnson evidently, this Jesus-babe of "Scrutator's."

Such an argument might come with a certain force in a discussion between two conflicting dogmatic sects, but if picked "even to rags," it seems but "utmost effrontery" — to use "Scrutator's" own complimentary expression — to employ it in a philosophical debate, as if it were either a scientific or historically proved fact! If I refused, at the very start, to argue with our friend "M. A. (Oxon.)," a man whom I esteem and respect as I do few in this world, only because he put forward a "cardinal dogma," I shall certainly lose no time in debating Theosophy with a tattering Christian, whose "scrutinizing" faculties have not helped him beyond the acceptance of the latest of the world's *Avatars*, in all its unphilosophical dead letter meaning, without even suspecting

its symbolical significance. To parade in a would-be philosophical debate the exploded dogmas of any church, is most ineffectual, and shows, at best, a great poverty of resource. Why does not "Scrutator" address his refined abuse, *ex cathedra*, to the Royal Society, whose Fellows doom to annihilation every human being, Theosophist or Spiritualist, pure or impure?

With crushing irony he speaks of us as "our teachers." Now, I remember having distinctly stated in a previous letter that we have *not* offered ourselves as teachers, but, on the contrary, decline any such office — whatever may be the superlative panegyric of my esteemed friend, Mr. O'Sullivan, who not only sees in me "a Buddhist priestess"(!), but, without a shadow of warrant of fact, credits me with the foundation of the Theosophical Society and its Branches! Had Colonel Olcott been half as "psychologised" by me as a certain American Spiritualist paper will have it, he would have followed my advice and refused to make public our "views," even though so much and so often importuned in different quarters. With characteristic stubbornness, however, he had his own way, and now reaps the consequence of having thrown his bomb into a hornet's nest. Instead of being afforded opportunity for a calm debate, we get but abuse, pure and simple — the only weapon of partisans. Well, let us make the best of it, and join our opponents in picking the question "to rags." Mr. C. C. Massey comes in for his share, too, and, though fit to be a leader himself, is given by "Scrutator" a chief!

Neither of our critics seems to understand our views (or his own) so little as "Scrutator." He misapprehends the meaning of Elementary, and makes a sad mess of spirit and matter. Hear him say that elementary

is a new-fangled and ill-defined term . . . not yet two years

old!

This sentence alone proves that he forces himself into the discussion, without any comprehension of the subject at issue. Evidently, he has neither read the mediaeval nor modern Kabalists. Henry Khunrath is as unfamiliar to him as the Abbe Constant. Let him go to the British Museum, and ask for the *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae* of Khunrath. He will find in it illustrative engravings of the four great classes of elementary spirits, as seen during an evocation of ceremonial magic by the Magus who lifts the *Veil of Isis*. The author explains that these are disembodied vicious men, who have parted with their divine spirits, and become as beasts. After reading this volume, "Scrutator" may profitably consult Eliphas Levi, whom he will find using the words "Elementary Spirits" throughout his *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, in both senses in which we have employed it. This is especially the case where (Vol. I, p. 262 *et seq.*) he speaks of the evocation of Apollonius of Tyana by himself. Quoting from the greatest Kabalistic authorities he says:

When a man has lived well, the astral cadaver evaporates like a pure incense, as it mounts towards the higher regions; but if a man has lived in crime, his astral cadaver, which holds him prisoner, seeks again the objects of his passions and desires to resume its earthly life. It torments the dreams of young girls, bathes in the vapour of spilt blood, and wallows about the places where the pleasures of his life flitted by; it watches without ceasing over the treasures which it possessed and buried: it wastes itself in painful efforts to make for itself material organs [materialize itself] and live again. But the stars attract and absorb it; its memory is gradually lost, its intelligence weakens, all its being dissolves . . . The unhappy wretch loses thus in succession all the organs which served its



sinful appetites. Then it [this astral body, this "soul," this all that is left of the once living man] dies a second time and for ever, for it then loses its personality and its memory. Souls which are destined to live, but which are not yet entirely purified, remain for a longer or shorter time captive in the astral cadaver, where they are refined by the odic light, which seeks to assimilate them to itself and dissolve. It is to rid themselves of this cadaver that suffering souls sometimes enter the bodies of living persons, and remain there for a time in a state which the Kabalists call embryonic [*embryonat*]. These are the aerial phantoms evoked by necromancy [and I may add, the "materialized Spirits" evoked by the unconscious necromancy of incautious mediums, in cases where the forms are not transformations of their own doubles]; these are larvae, substances dead or dying with which one places himself *en rapport*.

Further Levi says (*op. cit.*, p. 164):

The astral light is saturated with elementary souls . . . Yes, yes, these spirits of the elements do exist. Some wandering in their spheres, others trying to incarnate themselves, others, again, already incarnated and living on earth; these are vicious and imperfect men.

And in the face of this testimony (which he can find in the British Museum, two steps from the office of *The Spiritualist*!) that since the Middle Ages the Kabalists have been writing about elementaries, and their potential annihilation, "Scrutator" permits himself to arraign Theosophists for their "effrontery" in foisting upon Spiritualists a "new-fangled and ill-defined term" which is "not yet two years old"!!

In truth, we may say that the idea is older than Christianity, for it

is found in the ancient Kabalistic books of the Jews. In the olden time they defined three kinds of "souls" — the daughters of Adam, the daughters of the angels, and those of sin; and in the book of *The Revolution of the Souls* three kinds of "spirits" (as distinct from material bodies) are shown — the captive, the wandering and the free spirits. If "Scrutator" were acquainted with the literature of Kabalism, he would know that the term elementary applies not only to one principle or constituent part, to an elementary primary substance, but also embodies the idea which we express by the term elemental — that which pertains to the four elements of the material world, the first principles or primary ingredients. The word "elemental," as defined by Webster, was not current at the time of Khunrath, but the idea was perfectly understood. The distinction has been made, and the term adopted by Theosophists for the sake of avoiding confusion. The thanks we get are that we are charged with propounding, in 1878, a different theory of the "elementaries" from that of 1876!

Does anything herein stated, either as from ourselves, or Khunrath, or Levi, contradict the statement of the "learned occultist" that:

Each atom, no matter where found, is imbued with that vital principle called spirit . . . Each grain of sand, equally with each minutest atom of the human body, has its inherent latent spark of the divine light?

Not in the least. "M. A. (Cantab.);" asks, "How then, can a man *lose* this divine light, in part or in whole, as a rule before death, if each minutest atom of the human body has its inherent latent spark of the divine light?" Italicizing some words, as above, but omitting to emphasize the one important word of the sentence, *i.e.*, "latent," which contains the key to the whole mystery. In the grain of sand, and each atom of the human material body, the spirit is *latent*,

not active; hence, being but a correlation of the highest light, something concrete as compared with the purely abstract, the atom is vitalized and energized by spirit, without being endowed with distinct consciousness. A grain of sand, as every minutest atom, is certainly "imbued with that vital principle called spirit." So is every atom of the human body, whether physical or astral, and thus every atom of both, following the law of evolution, whether of objective or semi-concrete astral matter, will have to remain eternal throughout the endless cycles, indestructible in their primary, elementary constituents. But will "M. A. (Cantab.)," for all that, call a grain of sand, or a human nail-paring, consciously immortal? Does he mean us to understand him as believing that a fractional part, as a fraction, has the same attributes, capabilities, and limitations as the whole? Does he say that because the atoms in a nail-paring are indestructible as atoms, therefore the body, of which the nail formed a part, is of necessity, as a conscious whole, indestructible and immortal?

Our opponents repeat the words Trinity, Body, Soul, Spirit, as they might say the cat, the house, and the Irishman inhabiting it — three perfectly dissimilar things. They do not see that, dissimilar as the three parts of the human trinity may seem, they are in truth but correlations of the one eternal essence — which is no essence; but unfortunately the English language is barren of adequate expression, and, though they do not see it, the house, the physical Irishman, and the cat are, in their last analysis, one. I verily begin to suspect that they imagine that spirit and matter are two, instead of one! Truly says Vishnu Bawa Brahmachari, in one of his essays in Marathi (1869), that

The opinion of the Europeans that matter is "Padartha" (an equivalent for the "pada," or word "Abhava," *i.e.*, *Ahey*, composed of two letters, "Ahe," meaning *is*, and "nahin," *not*), whereas "Abhava" is no "Padartha," is foolishly

erroneous!

Kant, Schopenhauer and Hartmann seem to have written to little effect, and Kapila will be soon pronounced an antiquated ignoramus. Without at all ranging myself under Schopenhauer's banner, who maintains that in reality there is neither spirit nor matter, yet I must say that if ever he were studied, Theosophy would be better understood.

But can one really discuss metaphysical ideas in an European language? I doubt it. We say "spirit," and behold, what confusion it leads to! Europeans give the name spirit to that something which they conceive as apart from physical organization, independent of corporeal, objective existence; and they call spirit also the airy, vaporous essence, alcohol. Therefore, the New York reporter who defined a materialized Spirit as "frozen whiskey," was right, in his way. A copious vocabulary, indeed, that has but one term for God and for alcohol! With all their libraries of metaphysics, European nations have not even gone to the trouble of inventing appropriate words to elucidate metaphysical ideas. If they had, perhaps one book in every thousand would have sufficed to really instruct the public, instead of there being the present confusion of words, obscuring intelligence, and utterly hampering the Orientalist, who would expound his philosophy in English. Whereas, in the latter language, I find but one word to express, perhaps, twenty different ideas, in the Eastern tongues, especially Sanskrit, there are twenty words or more to render one idea in its various shades of meaning.

We are accused of propagating ideas that would surprise the "average" Buddhist. Granted, and I will liberally add that the average Brahminist might be equally astonished. We never said that we were either Buddhists or Brahminists in the sense of their popular exoteric theologies. Buddha, sitting on his lotus, or

Brahma, with any number of teratological arms, appeal to us as little as the Catholic Madonna, or the Christian personal God, which stare at us from cathedral walls and ceilings. But neither Buddha nor Brahma represent to their respective worshippers the same ideas as these Catholic icons, which we regard as blasphemous. In this particular, who dares say that Christendom, with its boasted civilization, has outgrown the fetishism of the Fijians? When we see Christians and Spiritualists speaking so flippantly and confidently about God and the materialization of "spirit," we wish they might be made to share a little in the reverential ideas of the old Aryas.

We do not write for "average" Buddhists, or average people of any sort. But I am quite willing to match any tolerably educated Buddhist or Brahman against the best metaphysicians of Europe, to compare views on God and on man's immortality.

The ultimate abstract definition of this — call it God, force, principle, as you will — will ever remain a mystery to Humanity, though it attain to its highest intellectual development. The anthropomorphic ideas of Spiritualists concerning spirit are a direct consequence of the anthropomorphic conceptions of Christians as to the Deity. So directly is the one the outflow of the other, that "Scrutator's" handiest argument against the duality of a child and potential immortality is to cite "Jesus who increased in wisdom as his brain increased."

Christians call God an Infinite Being, and then endow Him with every finite attribute, such as love, anger, benevolence, mercy! They call Him All-Merciful, and preach eternal damnation for three-fourths of humanity in every church; All-Just, and the sins of this brief span of life may not be expiated by even an eternity of conscious agony. Now, by some miracle of oversight, among thousands of mistranslations in the "Holy" Writ, the word

"destruction," the synonym of annihilation, was rendered correctly in the King James' version, and no dictionary can make it read either damnation, or eternal torment. Though the Church consistently put down the "destructionists," yet the impartial will scarcely deny that they come nearer than their persecutors to believing what Jesus taught and what is consistent with justice, in teaching the final annihilation of the wicked.

To conclude, then, we believe that there is but one undefinable principle in the whole universe, which being utterly incomprehensible by our finite intellects, we prefer rather to leave undebated, than to blaspheme its majesty with our anthropomorphic speculations. We believe that all else which has being, whether material or spiritual, and all that may have existence, actually or potentially in our idealism, emanates from this principle. That everything is a correlation in one shape or another of this Will and Force; and hence, judging of the unseen by the visible, we base our speculations upon the teachings of the generations of sages who preceded Christianity, fortified by our own reason.

I have already illustrated the incapacity of some of our critics to separate abstract ideas from complex objects, by instancing the grain of sand and the nail-paring. They refuse to comprehend that a philosophical doctrine can teach that an atom imbued with divine light, or a portion of the great Spirit, in its latent stage of correlation, may, notwithstanding its reciprocal or corresponding similarity and relations to the one indivisible whole, be yet utterly deficient in self-consciousness. That it is only when this atom, magnetically drawn to its fellow atoms, which had served in a previous state to form with it some lower complex object, is transformed at last, after endless cycles of evolution, into MAN — the apex of perfected being, intellectually and physically, on our planet — in conjunction with them becomes, as a whole, a living

soul, and reaches the state of intellectual self-consciousness. "A stone becomes a plant, a plant an animal, an animal a man, and man a spirit," say the Kabalists. And here again, is the wretched necessity of translating by the word "spirit" an expression which means a celestial, or rather ethereal, transparent man — something diametrically opposite to the man of matter, yet a man. But if man is the crown of evolution on earth, what is he in the initiatory stages of the next existences — that man who, at his best, even when he is pretended to have served as a habitation for the Christian God, Jesus, is said by Paul to have been "made a little lower than the angels"? But now we have every astral spook transformed into an "angel"! I cannot believe that the scholars who write for your paper — and there are some of great intelligence and erudition who think for themselves; and whom exact science has taught that *ex nihilo nihil fit*; who know that every atom of man's body has been evolving by imperceptible gradations, from lower into higher forms, through the cycles — accept the unscientific and illogical doctrine that the simple unshelling of an astral man transforms him into a celestial spirit and "angel" guide.

In Theosophical opinion a spirit is a ray, a fraction of the whole; and the Whole being Omniscient and Infinite, its fraction must partake, in degree, of the same abstract attributes. Man's "spirit" must become the drop of the ocean, called "Ivara-Bhava" — the "I am one body, together with the universe itself" (I am in my Father, and my Father is in me), instead of remaining but the "Jiva-Bhava," the body only. He must feel himself not only a part of the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer, but of the soul of the three, the Parabrahma, who is above these, and is the vitalizing, energizing, and ever-presiding Spirit. He must fully realize the sense of the word "Sahajananda," that state of perfect bliss in Nirvana, which can only exist for the It, which has become co-

existent with the "formless and actionless present time." This is the state called "Vartamana," or the "Ever Still Present," in which there is neither past nor future, but one infinite eternity of present. Which of the controlling "spirits," materialized or invisible, have shown any signs that they belong to the kind of real spirits known as the "Sons of Eternity"? Has the highest of them been able to tell even as much as our own Divine *Nous* can whisper to us in moments when there comes the flash of sudden prevision? Honest communicating "intelligences" often answer to many questions: "We do not know; this has not been revealed to us." This very admission proves that, while in many cases on their way to knowledge and perfection, yet they are but embryonic, undeveloped "spirits"; they are inferior even to some living Yogis who, through abstract meditations, have united themselves with their personal individual Brahma, their Atman, and hence have overcome the "Ajnana," or lack of that knowledge as to the intrinsic value of one's "self," the *Ego*, or self-being, so recommended by Socrates and the Delphic commandment.

London has been often visited by highly intellectual, educated Hindus. I have not heard of any one professing a belief in "materialized spirits" — as spirits. When not tainted with Materialism, through demoralizing association with Europeans, and when free from superstitious sectarianism, how would one of them, versed in the Vedanta, regard these apparitions of the circle? The chances are that, after going the rounds of the mediums, he would say: "Some of these may be survivals of disembodied men's intelligences, but they are no more spiritual than the average man. They lack the knowledge of 'Dhyananta,' and evidently find themselves in a chronic state of 'Maya,' *i.e.*, possessed of the idea that 'they are that which they are not.' The 'Vartamana' has no significance for them, as they are cognizant but of the 'Vishama' [that which, like the concrete numbers in



mixed mathematics, applies to that which can be numbered]. Like simple, ignorant mortals, they regard the shadow of things as the reality, and *vice versa*, mixing up the true light of the 'Vyatireka' with the false light or deceitful appearance — the 'Anvaya.' . . . In what respect, then, are they higher than the average mortal? No; they are not spirits, not 'Devas,' they are astral 'Dasyus'."

Of course, all this will appear to "Scrutator" "unfathomable absurdities," for, unfortunately, few metaphysicians shower down from Western skies. Therefore, so long as our English opponents will remain in their semi-Christian ideas, and not only ignore the old philosophy, but the very terms it employs to render abstract ideas; so long as we are forced to transmit these ideas in a general way — particularly being impracticable without the invention of special words — it will be unprofitable to push discussion to any great length. We would only make ourselves obnoxious to the general reader, and receive from other anonymous writers such unconvincing compliments as "Scrutator" has favoured us with.

H. P. BLAVATSKY

New York, March 7th, 1877 [1878].

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[Blavatsky Articles](#)

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## The Cave of the Echoes

### An Appalling Tale of Retributive Justice Inflicted by an Earthbound "Spirit."

By H. P. BLAVATSKY.

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In the older countries of Europe and Asia there frequently occur examples of interference by the dead with the living, to which American Spiritualists are as yet comparative strangers. The experience of many generations has taught the higher, equally with the lower classes, to accept this intervention as a fixed fact. With this difference, however, that as a rule, the former acknowledging the reality of the phenomena, find, to escape ridicule, a convenient loophole by attributing them to strange coincidences, while the latter, with less learning but more intuition, have no difficulty in divining the real cause. Tales calculated to freeze the blood with horror circulate in many of the lands I have visited, and more than once, instances of the reward and punishment of good or evil deeds by occult agency have come under my own observation.

The story I am about to relate has the merit of being perfectly true. The family is well-known in that portion of the Russian dominions where the scene is located. The circumstance was witnessed by one of my relatives, upon whom it made an impression that he carried to his grave. My object in telling it is to illustrate one of the many phases of psychological science studied by Theosophists, and which must be studied by whoever would inform himself thoroughly upon the relations of living man with

the silent world of shadows — that bourne from which . . . *some travellers do return. . . .*

It may be taken as a case of mediumship of a most striking kind — in short, a *transfiguration*. It differs only in degree from that of Mrs. Markee — formerly Compton — witnessed and described by Colonel Olcott in his work, and one of the most astounding ones on record. [[*People from the Other World*]] The physical body of Mrs. Compton was transformed alternately into the shapes of a dwarfish girl and a tall Indian chief. In the present instance the haunting soul of an old man enters a child's body, and temporarily re-incarnating itself, becomes the agent of inexorable destiny. The intelligent reader will need no further hint to enable him to trace the lesson which my veracious narrative conveys.

In one of the distant governments of Russia, in a small town on the very borders of Siberia, a mysterious tragedy occurred some twenty years ago — a tragedy which haunts the memory of the older inhabitants of the district to this very day, and is recounted but in whispers to the inquisitive traveller.

About six versts from the little town of P — — , famous for the wild beauty of its scenery, and for the wealth of its inhabitants — generally proprietors of mines and iron foundries — stood an old and aristocratic mansion. Its household consisted of the master, a rich old bachelor, and his brother, a widower and the father of two sons and three daughters. It was known that the proprietor, Mr. Izvertzoff, had adopted his brother's children, and, having formed an especial attachment for his eldest nephew, Nicholas, had made him the sole heir to his numerous estates.

Time rolled on. The uncle was getting old, the nephew coming of age. Days and years had passed in monotonous serenity, when, on the hitherto clear horizon of the quiet family appeared a cloud. On an unlucky day one of the nieces took it into her head to study

the zither. The instrument being of purely Teutonic origin, and no teacher for that specialty residing in the neighborhood, the indulgent uncle sent to St. Petersburg for both. After diligent search only one such professor could be found willing to trust himself in such close proximity to Siberia. It was an old German artist, who, sharing equally his earthly affections between his instrument and a pretty blonde daughter, would part with neither. And thus it came to pass that, one fine morning, the old professor arrived at the mansion with his zithercase under one arm, and his fair Minchen leaning on the other.

From that day the little cloud began growing rapidly; for every vibration of the melodious instrument found a responsive echo in the old bachelor's heart. Music awakens love, they say, and the work begun by the zither was completed by Minchen's blue eyes. At the expiration of six months the niece had become an expert zither player and the uncle was desperately in love. One morning, gathering his adopted family around him, he embraced them all very tenderly, promised to remember them in his will, and wound up by declaring his unalterable resolution to marry the blue-eyed Minchen. After which he fell upon their necks and wept in silent rapture. The family also wept: but it was for another cause. Having paid this tribute to self-interest, they tried their best to rejoice, for the old gentleman was sincerely beloved. Not all of them rejoiced, though. Nicholas, who had equally felt himself heart-smitten by the pretty Germain maid, and who found himself at once defrauded of his belle and his uncle's money, neither rejoiced nor consoled himself, but disappeared for the whole day.

### **STARTING ON A LONG JOURNEY.**

Meanwhile Mr. Izvertzoff gave orders to prepare his travelling carriage for the following morning. It was whispered that he was

going to the government town at some distance from here, with the intention of altering his will. Though very wealthy he had no superintendent on his estate, but kept his books himself. The same evening, after supper, he was heard in his room scolding angrily at his body-servant who had been in his service for over thirty years. This man, Ivan, was a native of Northern Asia, from Kamchatka. Brought up by the family in the Christian religion, he was thought very much attached to his master. But when the tragic circumstances I am about to relate had brought all the police force to the spot, it was remembered that Ivan was drunk on that night; that his master, who had a horror of this vice, had paternally thrashed him and turned him out of the room; and that Ivan had been seen reeling out of the door and heard to mutter threats.

There was on the estate of the Izvertzoffs a great cavern, which excited (and still excites) the curiosity of all who visited it. A pine forest, which began nearly at the garden gate, climbed by steep terraces a long range of rocky hills, which it covered with a belt of impenetrable verdure. The grotto leading to the place, which people called the "Cave of the Echoes," was situated about half a mile from the mansion, from which it appeared as a small excavation in the hillside, almost hidden by luxuriant plants. Still it was not so masked as to prevent any person entering it from being readily seen from the terrace of the house. Inside the grotto, the explorer finds at the rear of an ante-chamber a narrow cleft, having passed which he emerges into a lofty cavern, feebly lighted through fissures in a ceiling fifty feet high. The cavern itself is immense, capable of easily holding two or three thousand people. A part of it was, at the time of my story, paved with flags, and often used in the summer by picnic parties as a ball-room. Of an irregular oval shape, it gradually narrows into a broad corridor, which runs several miles underground, intercepted here

and there by other chambers as large and lofty as the ballroom, but, unlike that, inaccessible except by boat, as they are full of water. These natural basins have the reputation of being unfathomable.

### **THE ECHOES.**

On the margin of the first of these was a small platform, with several mossy rustic seats arranged on it, and it is from this spot that the phenomenal echoes were heard in all their weirdness. A word pronounced in a whisper or a sigh seemed caught up by endless, mocking voices, and instead of diminishing in volume, as honest echoes generally do, the sound grew louder at every successive repetition, until at last it burst forth like the repercussion of a pistol shot, and receded in a plaintive wail down the corridor.

On the evening in question, Mr. Izvertzoff had mentioned his intention of having a dancing party in the cave on his wedding day, which he had fixed for an early date. On the following morning, while preparing for his departure, he was seen by his family entering the grotto, accompanied only by the Siberian. Half an hour later Ivan returned to the mansion for a snuffbox which his master had forgotten in his room, and went back with it to the cave. An hour later the whole household was startled with his loud cries. Pale, and dripping with water, Ivan rushed in like a madman and declared that Mr. Izvertzoff was nowhere to be found in the grotto. Thinking he had fallen into one of the lakes, he had dived into the first basin in search of him, and got nearly drowned himself.

The day passed in vain attempts to find the body. The police filled the house, and louder than the rest in his despair seemed Nicholas, the nephew, who had returned home only in time to hear the sad tidings.

A dark suspicion fell upon Ivan, the Siberian. He had been struck by his master the night before, and had been heard to swear revenge. He had accompanied him alone to the cave, and when his room was searched a casket full of rich family jewelry, known to have been carefully kept in old Izvertzoff's apartment, was found under Ivan's bedding. Vainly did the man call God to witness that the casket had been handed to him in charge by his master himself, just before they proceeded to the cave; that it was the latter's purpose to have the jewelry reset, as he intended it for a wedding present for his bride, and that he, Ivan, would willingly give his own life to recall that of his benefactor, if he knew him to be dead. No heed was paid to him, however, and he was arrested upon the charge of foul murder, though no definite sentence could be passed on him, as, under the old Russian law, a criminal cannot be sentenced for any crime, however conclusive the evidence, unless he confesses his guilt; yet the poor man had the prospect of prison for the whole of his life, unless he did confess.

### **A MARRIAGE.**

After a week spent in useless search the family arrayed themselves in deep mourning, and, as the will as originally drawn remained without a codicil, the whole of the estate passed into the hands of the nephew. The old teacher and his fair daughter bore this sudden reverse of fortune with true Germanic phlegm, and prepared to depart. Taking again his zither under one arm, the father was about to lead his Minchen by the other, when the nephew stopped him by offering himself as groom instead of his departed uncle. The change was found an agreeable one, and, without much ado, the young couple were married.

Ten years roll away again, and we find the happy family at the beginning of 1855. The fair, blue-eyed Minchen had become fat

and vulgar. From the day of the old man's disappearance Nicholas had been morose and retired in his habits. Many wondered at the change in him, for now he was never seen to smile. It seemed as if his only aim in life, since the catastrophe, was to find out his uncle's murderer or rather to bring Ivan to confess his guilt. But the man still persisted that he was innocent.

An only son had been born to the young couple, and it was hoped that this would have brought a ray of sunshine to the father's heart. But it was such a weak and puny little creature that it seemed scarce able to catch its breath; and so, according to the Russian custom in such cases, the family priest was called to christen it the same evening, lest, dying, it might go to the place prepared for unbaptized infants by Christian theology. The family and servants were gathered at the ceremony in the large reception room of the house, and the priest was about to dip the babe thrice in the water, when he was seen to stop abruptly, turn deadly pale, and stare into vacancy, while his hands shook so violently that he almost dropped the child into the baptismal font. At the same time, the nurse, who stood at the end of the first row of spectators, gave a wild shriek, and pointing to the direction of the library room used by the old Izvertzoff, ran away in terror. No one could understand the panic of these two personages, for, except them, no one had seen anything extraordinary. Some had remarked the library door swing slowly open, but it must have been caused by the wind, which was now wailing all through the old mansion. After the ceremony, the priest, corroborated by the hysterically sobbing maid, solemnly averred that he had seen, for one moment, the apparition of the deceased master upon the threshold of his library, then swiftly glide toward the font, and instantly disappear. Both witnesses described the spectre as having on its features an expression of menace. The priest, after crossing himself and muttering prayers, insisted that the whole



family should have Masses said for the space of seven weeks for the repose of the "troubled soul."

It was a strange child, this babe of Nicholas and Minchen, and seemed to have an uncanny atmosphere about it. Small, delicate, and ever ailing, his frail life appeared to hang by a thread as he grew. When his features were in repose, his resemblance to his grand uncle was so striking that the members of the family often shrank from him in terror. It was the pale, shrivelled face of a man of sixty upon the shoulders of a child of nine years. He was never seen to either laugh or play; but, perched in his high chair, gravely sat, folding his arms in a way peculiar to the late Izvertzoff. He would remain so for hours, motionless and drowsy. His nurse was often seen furtively crossing herself, at night, upon approaching him; and not one of his attendants would consent to sleep alone with him in the nursery. His father's behaviour toward him was still more strange. He seemed to love him passionately, and yet to hate him bitterly at moments. He never embraced or caressed the boy, but would pass long hours watching him, with livid cheek and staring eye, as he sat quietly in a corner, in his goblin-like, old-fashioned way. The child had never left the estate, and few outside the family knew him.

#### **A MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER.**

About the middle of July, a tall Hungarian traveller, preceded by a great reputation for eccentricity, wealth, and most extraordinary mesmeric powers, arrived at P — — from Kamchatka, where, as was rumoured, he had resided for some time, surrounded by Shamans. He settled in the little town, with one of this sect, and was said to experiment in mesmerism on this North Siberian "sorcerer," as he was called by the inhabitants. He gave dinners and parties, and during such receptions, invariably exhibited his Shaman of whom he felt very proud. One day, the notables of P —

— made an unexpected invasion of the domain of Nicholas Izvertzoff, and requested of him the loan of his "Cave" for an evening entertainment. Nicholas consented with great reluctance, and with still greater hesitancy was he prevailed upon to join the party, among whom was my own relative.

The first cavern and the platform beside the bottomless lake glittered that evening with lights. Hundreds of flickering torches and lamps, stuck in the clefts of the rocks, illuminated the place, and drove the shadows from the mossy nooks and corners, where they had been undisturbed for many years. The stalactites on the walls sparkled brightly, and the sleeping echoes were suddenly awakened by a confusion of joyous laughter and conversation. The Shaman, who was never lost sight of by his friend and patron, sat in a corner, half entranced as usual. Crouched on a projecting rock, about midway between the entrance and the water, with his orange-yellow wrinkled face, flat nose, and thin beard, he looked more like an ugly stone idol than a human being. Many of the company pressed round him and received correct answers from the oracle to their questions, the Hungarian cheerfully submitting his mesmerized "subject" to cross examination.

#### **A LOVING NEPHEW.**

Suddenly one of the party, a lady, thoughtlessly remarked that it was in that very cave that old Mr. Izvertzoff had so unaccountably disappeared ten years before. The foreigner appeared interested, and desired to learn more of the mysterious circumstances. Nicholas was sought in the crowd, and led before the eager group. He was the host, and he found it impossible to refuse the narrative demanded by a sympathizing guest. He repeated the sad tale in a trembling voice, with a pallid cheek, and a tear was seen to glitter in his feverish eye. The company

was greatly affected, and encomiums upon the behaviour of the loving nephew, who so honoured the memory of his uncle and benefactor, freely circulated in sympathetic whispers. Suddenly the voice of Nicholas became choked, his eyes started from their sockets, and, with a suppressed groan, he staggered back. Every eye in the crowd followed with curiosity his haggard look, as it remained riveted upon a weazened little face that peeped from behind the back of the Shaman.

"Where do you come from? Who brought you here, child?" lisped out Nicholas, as pale as death itself.

"I was in bed, papa; this man came to me and brought me here in his arms," simply answered the boy, pointing to the Shaman, beside whom he stood on the rock, and who, with his eyes closed, kept swaying himself to and fro like a living pendulum.

"That is very strange," remarked one of the guests; "why, the man has never moved from his place!"

"Good God! What an extraordinary resemblance!" muttered an old resident of the town, a friend of the dead man.

"You lie, boy!" fiercely exclaimed the father. "Return to your bed; this is no place for you. . . ."

"Come, come," interposed the Hungarian, with a strange expression of authority on his face, and encircling with his arm, as if in protection, the slender, childish figure. "The little fellow has seen my Shaman's double, which roams sometimes far away from his body, and has mistaken the astral man for the outward phantom itself. Let the child remain with us awhile."

At these strange words the guests stared at each other in mute surprise, and some of them looked upon the speaker with real terror.

## UNRAVELING THE MYSTERY AT LAST.

"By the bye," continued the Hungarian, with a very peculiar firmness of accent, and addressing the public rather than any one in particular, "why should we not try to unravel the mystery hanging over that tragedy, with the help of the clairvoyant powers of my Shaman? Is the suspected party still lying in prison? . . . What? . . . not confessed till now? This is indeed strange. But now we will learn the truth in a few minutes. . . . My Shaman's second sight, when properly directed, never errs. Let all keep silent!"

He then approached the Tehuktchene, and making as though drawing an imaginary circle with his hand around himself, the Shaman, and boy, immediately began his operations over the subject without so much as asking the consent of the master of the place. The latter stood rooted to the spot as if petrified with horror, and unable to articulate a sound. Except by him, the suggestion was met with general approbation, and the "Police-Master," Colonel S — — , was the first to approve the idea.

"Ladies and gentlemen," then said the mesmerizer in amiable tone, "allow me for this once to proceed otherwise than I generally do. I will employ the method of native magic. It is more appropriate to this wild place, and, I dare say, we will find it far more effective than our European mode of mesmerization."

Without waiting for an answer he drew from a bag that, as he explained, never left his person, first, a small drum, and then two little vials — one full of liquid, the other empty. With the contents of the former he sprinkled the Shaman, who fell to trembling and nodding more violently than ever. The air was filled with the perfumes of spicy odors, and the atmosphere itself seemed to become clearer. Then, to the horror of those present, he approached the Shaman, and taking a miniature, antiquated-

looking knife from his bosom, quietly plunged the sharp steel into the man's forearm and drew blood from it, which he caught in the empty vial. When it was half-filled he pressed the orifice of the wound with his thumb, and stopped the flow as easily as if he had corked a bottle; after which he sprinkled the blood over the little boy's head. He then suspended the drum from his neck, and with two ivory drumsticks which were covered with strange carved letters and signs, he began beating a sort of reveille — he said to drum up the shaman's "spirit."

### **MAGICAL WONDER.**

The bystanders, half shocked and half testified at these extraordinary proceedings, eagerly, yet half timidly, crowded around him, and for a few moments a dead silence reigned throughout the lofty cavern. Nicholas, with his face livid and corpse-like, stood speechless as before.

And now the mesmerizer magician had placed himself between the Shaman and the platform, and continued slowly drumming. The first notes were muffled, and vibrating so softly in the air that they awakened no echo; only the Shaman quickened still more his pendulum-like motion, and the child became restless. The mysterious drummer then began a low chant, slow, impressive and solemn.

As the unknown words issued from his lips, the flames of the torches, lamps and candles wavered and flickered, until they began dancing in rhythm with the chant. A cold wind came wheezing from the dark corridors beyond the water, leaving a plaintive echo in its trail. Then a sort of nebulous vapor, which seemed to ooze from the rocky ground and walls, gathered about the Shaman and the boy. Around the latter the aura was silvery and transparent, but the cloud which enveloped the former was red and sinister. Approaching nearer the platform, the adept beat

a louder call on his drum, and this time the echo caught it up with terrific effect. It reverberated near and far in incessant peals; one wail followed another, louder and louder, until the thundering roar seemed the chorus of a thousand demon voices rising from the fathomless depths of the dark lake. The water itself, whose tranquil surface, illuminated by many lights, had previously been smooth as a sheet of glass, became suddenly agitated, as if a powerful gust of wind had swept over its face.

Another chant and a roll of the drum, and the mountain trembled to its foundation with the cannon-like peals which rolled through the dark and distant corridors. The Shaman's body rose two yards in the air, and, nodding and swaying, he sat, self-suspended, like a hideous apparition. But the transformation which now occurred in the boy chilled everyone with fear as they speechlessly watched the scene. The silvery cloud about the child now seemed to lift him, too, into the air; but, *unlike the Shaman, his feet never left the ground*. The little boy began to grow as if the work of years was to be miraculously accomplished in a few seconds. He became tall and large, and his senile features grew older, in harmony with the body. A few more seconds and the youthful form had entirely disappeared: *it was totally absorbed in another individuality!* and, to the horror of those present who had been familiar with his appearance, this was old Izvertzoff! . . .

### **THE PHANTOM.**

On his left temple was a large gaping wound, from which trickled great drops of blood. The *phantom* now moved directly in front of Nicholas, who, with his hair standing erect, gazed at his own son, transformed into his uncle, with the look of a raving madman. This sepulchral silence was broken by the Hungarian, who, addressing the child phantom, asked him in solemn voice: "In the name of Them who have all powers, answer the truth, and

nothing but the truth. Restless soul, was thy body lost by accident, or foully murdered?"

The spectre's lips moved, but it was the echo from afar which answered in lugubrious shouts:

"Murdered! Murde-red! Mur-de-red!"

"Where? How? By whom?" asked the adept.

The apparition pointed a finger at Nicholas, and without removing its gaze or lowering its arm, retreated backward slowly towards the lake. At every step it took, the young Izvertzoff, as if compelled by some irresistible fascination, advanced a step toward it, until the phantom reached the edge of the water, and the next moment was seen gliding on its surface. It was a fearful, ghostly scene!

When Nicholas had come to within two steps of the brink of the watery abyss, a violent convulsion ran through the frame of the guilty man. Flinging himself upon his knees, he clung to one of the rustic seats with a desperate clutch, and, staring wildly, uttered one long, piercing cry of agony, which rang through the ears of the crowd, but was unable to arouse even one of them from the lethargy into which they seemed all plunged. Like one in the clutches of a nightmare, they saw, heard, and remembered all, but were unable to stir a finger. The phantom now remained motionless on the water, and, bending its extended hand, slowly beckoned the assassin to come. Crouched in abject terror, the wretched man shrieked until the cavern rang again:

"I did not . . . no, I did not murder you! . . . "

Then came a splash, and now there was the boy in the dark water, struggling for his life in the middle of the lake, with the same motionless, stern apparition brooding over him, from

whose very substance the child seemed to have dropped out.

"Papa! papa! save me! — I am drowning!" cried the piteous little voice amid the uproar of the echoes.

"My boy!" shrieked Nicholas in the accents of a maniac, springing to his feet, "My boy! save, oh, save him! . . . Yes, I confess — I am the murderer! . . . I killed him!"

"Killed . . . him . . . killed . . . killed! . . ." repeated hundreds of echoes like peals of laughter from a legion of infuriated demons.

Another splash, and the phantom suddenly disappeared. With one cry of unutterable terror the company, released from the spell which had hitherto paralyzed them, rushed toward the platform to the rescue of both father and child. But their feet were rooted to the ground anew as they beheld amid the swirling eddies a whitish, shapeless mass, an elongated mist, wrapping the murderer in tight embrace, and slowly sinking into the bottomless lake! . . .

On the morning after these occurrences, when, after a sleepless night, some of the party went to the residence of the Hungarian gentleman, they found it closed and deserted. He and the Shaman had disappeared. To add to the general consternation, the Izvertzoff mansion took fire on that same night, and was completely destroyed. The archbishop himself performed the ceremony of exorcism, but the locality is considered accursed to this day.

The government investigated the facts, and — ordered silence.

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And now a few words in conclusion. I hope that, whoever else may be disposed to question the possibility of an occurrence like the above, it will not be the intelligent Spiritualist. Not a feature in my narrative but finds in the records of mediumship its



parallel. The apparition of the astral form like that of old Izvertzoff at the baptism is an everyday affair with clairvoyants. If the child was transformed into a man, in the sight of a crowd of people, so has a child-apparition been seen to emerge from Dr. Monck's side, and many children to step out of William Eddy's cabinet. If elongation of the body occurred in the boy's case, the same thing is alleged of various mediums. If a "spirit" — according to the accepted phraseology, an "astral man" as we term it — crowding out the undeveloped soul of the newly-born *dual* creature, took possession of his body, so have hundreds of other earth-bound souls obsessed the bodies of mediums. Interchange of "souls" has been noticed in living men unacquainted with each other, and even residing at opposite points of the globe. This may happen either from disease, which generally loosens the bonds between the astral and the physical man, or in consequence of some other occult condition. The levitation of the Shaman is no more a matter of wonder; and if his "double" wandered from his entranced body, so has the same phenomenon been oft reported in Spiritualistic papers as happening under our own observation. This Russian episode but confirms what investigators of modern phenomena have experienced. In it, throughout a period of ten years, the whole plot is developed by a real disembodied "spirit." Earth-bound, he burned for a just but fiendish revenge, the planning and execution of which constituted certainly an insurmountable impediment to the progress and purification of the troubled soul. The "Elementals" play no part in my story, except when thrown into violent perturbation by the sounds of the magical drum and the *incantations* of the adept. The action of these creatures was limited to the flickering of the flames, the disturbance of the water in the lake, and the intensification of the awakened echoes. The phenomena at P — — were produced and controlled by an adept-psychologist, working *for*, *with*, and *through* a disembodied

soul, upon a deliberate plan for the accomplishment of a cruel vengeance, which, though charged to the account of the unhappy, restless astral man, yet accomplished the ends of the unerring law of Retribution in punishing the guilty and rescuing the innocent.

Let the Spiritualist who would pronounce magic an exploded superstition, compare the methods of the "magician" with those of the "circle." The latter derives its very name from the most common arrangement of the sitters, required by the "spirits" themselves. This is found *philosophical* and *necessary* by the Spiritualists. To ensure the formation of a circular magnetic current, the sitters are obliged to take hold of hands. Most generally the medium will complain of being affected if this magnetic chain is broken. Instances are known where instruments floating in the air have fallen upon the breaking of this current. The "magician" either draws with chalk a circle around the spot where the occult forces are to be concentrated to produce phenomena, as Baron Du Potet is known by all France to do — or forms one in thought, by *will power*; and this cannot be broken unless his WILL gives way. The rhythmic drum beats of the "magician" and his *incantations* are but another and more perfected form of the singing and music-playing of modern circles. In a word, the modern *seance* could be and should be made a school of magic, or philosophical, controllable Spiritualism. *Verb. sap.*

*New York, 1878.*

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## Fragments from Madame Blavatsky

[*La Revue Spirite*, Paris, April 1878; translated from the original French]

The Saxon Spiritualists are rather confused between the spirit and the perisprit. Perhaps they do not distinguish the one from the other, describing the first by the word soul, the second by spirit. Theosophists do the opposite; for them the spirit properly is *Nous*, the spirit. The perisprit or *Psyche*, is the soul.

Theosophists accept no dogmas, *i.e.*, preconceived ideas or principles, to which everything must be subordinated. They seek truth with wisdom and in good faith, and are willing to accept it from whatever source, even at the cost of the sacrifice of what they have hitherto accepted. Whatever they may teach at the present moment, they are far from thinking that they have settled everything. Such a claim would be that of omniscience; it would be ridiculous. On the day when a new Oedipus shall have found the *complete* solution of that riddle of the ages: "What is man?" on that day the ancient and modern doctrines, the approximations of the Spiritualists themselves, will, like the ancient sphinx, be flung into the ocean of oblivion.

Theosophists, like the ancient philosophers and their pupil Paul, who said that the physical body was penetrated and kept alive by the perisprit, *Psyche*, consider man as a trinity: body, perisprit, spirit.

The Buddhists, who distinguish these three entities, divide the perisprit still further into several parts. Nevertheless, on the point of approaching perfection — Nirvana — they hardly admit more than one of these parts: the Spirit.

The Greeks did the same, dividing the perisprit into life and the passionate nature, or *Thumos*. The perisprit is thus itself a combination: the physiological vitality, *Bios*; the concupiscible nature, *Epithumia*; and the ideality, *Phren*. The perisprit is constituted of the ethereal substance that fills the universe, hence it is derived from the cosmic astral fluid, which is not spirit at all, because although intangible, impalpable, this astral fluid is objective matter as compared with spirit. Owing to its complex nature, the perisprit can ally itself intimately enough with the corporeal nature, to escape the moral influence of a higher life. In the same way it can unite closely enough with the spirit to partake of its potency, in which case its vehicle, the physical man, can appear as a God, even during his terrestrial lifetime. If such a union, of the spirit and the perisprit, does not take place, a man does not become immortal as an entity: the perisprit is sooner or later dissociated.

*Plutarch* says that at death, Proserpine separates the body from the soul (perisprit), after which the latter becomes a genius or *Daimon*, free and independent. A second dissolution has to occur, under the action of the Good. *Demeter* separates the perisprit from the spirit. The first in time is resolved into ethereal particles; the second ascends, assimilates with the divine powers, and gradually becomes a pure divine spirit.

*Kapila*, like all the Oriental philosophers, made little of the perisprital nature. It is this agglomeration of gross particles, of human emanations teeming with imperfections, weaknesses, passions, the very human appetites, able, under certain conditions, to become objective, that the Buddhists call *Skandhas*, groups, the Theosophists, soul, Allan Kardec, the perisprit.

The Brahmanas and the Buddhists say that the human individuality is not secure so long as man has not left behind with

the last of these groups, the remaining vestige of terrestrial coloring. Hence their doctrine of metempsychosis, so much ridiculed but so little understood by our Orientalists themselves. Science teaches, indeed, that the material molecules that compose the physical body of man are, by the process of evolution, replaced by Nature into lower physical forms. Well, the Buddhists say the very same in regard to the particles of the astral body; they assert that the semi-material groups of the perisprit are appropriated to the evolution of lower astral forms and unite with them according to their degree of refinement. Consequently, so long as a discarnate man contains a single particle of these *skandhas*, some *parts* of his perisprit will have to enter the astral bodies of plants or animals. So if the astral man is composed of such material that Demeter cannot find a particle of spirit, the individual is dissolved, bit by bit, in the crucible of evolution. This is what the Hindus typify by a period of a thousand years spent in the impure bodies of animals. Theosophists are in essential agreement with this idea.

To Theosophists, the great characters, the geniuses, the poets, the true artists, are spiritually inspired, and are not — at least in general — simply mediums, passive instruments in the hands of their guides. They are, on the contrary, souls (perisprits) richly illuminated, *i.e.*, possessing the spiritual element in a high degree, and therefore able to collaborate with pure Spirits for the spiritualization and elevation of mankind.

In what relates to the phenomena of the perisprit and of mediumship, we believe that the purely passive medium cannot discern good spirits from bad, that to do so he must become a conscious mediator. We also know that though the incarnated man, even if a high adept, cannot compete in power with pure Spirits, who, being liberated from their *skandhas* have become subjective to the physical senses, they can at least equal and even

surpass in the matter of phenomenalism what is produced by ordinary mediums.

Can a child, *i.e.*, a not completely developed man, who passes into the other world, exist there in the conditions prepared for the perfected types of his species, any more than a plant or an animal?

The child does not yet possess a spirit, so to speak; he is merely a soul, and his education has only affected his astral nature, has only dealt with externals.

The cycle of man is not complete so long as he has not passed through terrestrial life. Not one stage of trial or experience can be skipped; he must have been a man before he reaches the state of pure Spirit.

A dead child then is a failure of nature; it must be born again; the same perispirit must in such a case pass through the interrupted trial by means of another birth. The same for the congenital idiot. *These are the only cases of human reincarnation.*

If the child, indeed, who is only a duality, were immortal, why not the animals also? The triad alone survives.

At death, the perispirit becomes the outermost body; within it is formed a more ethereal body, and the whole is more or less overshadowed by the Spirit.

The elementaries of the human body are, however, not always dissociated at bodily death; it may happen that by a supreme effort they are able to retain some of the third element, and in that way, slowly and with trouble, to ascend from sphere to sphere, throwing off at each step the heavier garment, and becoming clothed in more, radiant vestures; finally arriving at perfection, disencumbered of every material particle, and

becoming *unites*, Gods.

We said that the man who has not one spark of the divine spirit to save him after death can scarcely be distinguished from the animals.

There are some sad cases of this kind, not alone among the depraved but also among the willfully blind and the out-and-out deniers. It is, indeed, the will of man, his sovereign power, that partly rules his destiny, and if a man persists in believing in annihilation after death, it will take place. The conditions of the physical life, the kind of death, very often depend on the will.

There are some persons who merely by the force of their resolution, escape the embrace of death, while others yield to trifling maladies. Now, what a man can do with his body, he can also do with his astral body, *i.e.*, with his discarnated perisprit.

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

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## The Theosophical Society

### Its Origin, Plan and Aims

[Printed for the Information of Correspondents]

[[This the New York Circular drafted mainly by Colonel H. S. Olcott and which was ready for distribution on May 3rd, 1878. A packet of these was given to Dr. H. J. Billing to take to London, and another to Countess Lydia de Pashoff to take to Japan. As Col. Olcott points out himself (*Old Diary Leaves*, I, 399-400): "In drafting the New York circular it occurred to me that the membership of, and supervising entities behind, the Society would be naturally grouped in three divisions, viz., new members not detached from worldly interests; pupils, like myself, who had withdrawn from the same or were ready to do so; and the adepts themselves, who, without being actually members, were at least connected with us and concerned in our work as a potential agency for the doing of spiritual good to the world. With H.P.B.'s concurrence I defined these three groups, calling them sections, and subdividing each into three degrees. This, of course, was in the hope and expectation that we should have more practical guidance in adjusting the several grades of members than we had had — or have since had, I may add."

Col. Olcott specifically states that the passage beginning: "As the highest development . . ." and ending with: "unseen universes" was written by H.P.B. The important words: "the Brotherhood of Humanity" were here used for the first time, and the Circular is devoid of any mention of Spiritualism or phenomena. — Boris de Zirkoff in Blavatsky, *Collected Writings* 1:375.]]



I. The Society was founded at the City of New York, in the year 1875.

II. Its officers are a President; two Vice-Presidents; a Corresponding Secretary; a Recording Secretary; a Treasurer; a Librarian; and Councillors.

III. At first it was an open body, but, later, it was reorganized on the principle of secrecy, experience having demonstrated the advisability of such a change.

IV. Its Fellows are known as Active, Corresponding and Honorary. Only those are admitted who are in sympathy with its objects, and sincerely desire to aid in the promotion of the same.

V. Its Fellowship is divided into three Sections, and each Section into three Degrees. All candidates for active fellowship are required to enter as probationers, in the Third Degree of the Third Section, and no fixed time is specified in which the new Fellow can advance from any lower to a higher degree; all depends upon merit. To be admitted into the highest degree, of the first section, the Theosophist must have become freed of every leaning toward any one form of religion in preference to another. He must be free from all exacting obligations to society, politics and family. He must be ready to lay down his life, if necessary, for the good of Humanity, and of a brother Fellow of whatever race, color or ostensible creed. He must renounce wine, and every other description of intoxicating beverages, and adopt a life of strict chastity. Those who have not yet wholly disenthralled themselves from religious prejudice, and other forms of selfishness, but have made a certain progress towards self-mastery and enlightenment, belong in the Second Section. The Third Section is probationary: its members can leave the Society at will, although the obligation assumed at entrance will continually bind them to absolute secrecy as to what may have

been communicated under restrictions.

VI. The objects of the Society are various. It influences its fellows to acquire an intimate knowledge of natural law, especially its occult manifestations. As the highest development, physically and spiritually, on earth, of the Creative Cause, man should aim to solve the mystery of his being. He is the procreator of his species, physically, and having inherited the nature of the unknown but palpable Cause of his own creation, must possess in his inner, psychical self, this creative power in lesser degree. He should, therefore, study to develop his latent powers, and inform himself respecting the laws of magnetism, electricity and all other forms of force, whether of the seen or unseen universes. The Society teaches and expects its fellows to personally exemplify the highest morality and religious aspiration; to oppose the materialism of science and every form of dogmatic theology, especially the Christian, which the Chiefs of the Society regard as particularly pernicious; to make known among Western nations the long-suppressed *facts* about Oriental religious philosophies, their ethics, chronology, esoterism, symbolism; to counteract, as far as possible, the efforts of missionaries to delude the so-called "Heathen" and "Pagans" as to the real origin and dogmas of Christianity and the practical effects of the latter upon public and private character in so-called civilized countries; to disseminate a knowledge of the sublime teachings of that pure esoteric system of the archaic period, which are mirrored in the oldest Vedas, and in the philosophy of Gautama Buddha, Zoroaster and Confucius; finally, and chiefly, to aid in the institution of a Brotherhood of Humanity, wherein all good and pure men, of every race, shall recognize each other as the equal effects (upon this planet) of one Uncreate, Universal, Infinite, and Everlasting Cause.

VII. Persons of either sex are eligible.

VIII. There are branches of the parent Society in several countries of the East and West.

IX. No fees are exacted, but those who choose may contribute towards the Society's expenses. No applicant is received because of his wealth or influence, nor rejected because of his poverty or obscurity.

*Correspondence with the parent body may be addressed to "The Theosophical Society, New York."*

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## The Arya Samaj

### Alliance of Theosophy with a Vedic Society in the Far Orient.

**MADAME BLAVATSKY NARRATES THE HISTORY OF THE BRAHMO-SAMAJ AND THE ARYA-SAMAJ. — THE CONFLICT OF FAITHS IN INDIA. — WHY THE THEOSOPHISTS NOW RECEIVE THEIR INSTRUCTIONS FROM A HINDU SECRET SOCIETY.**

[Written for the New York *Echo* on June 2, 1878]

Christendom sends its missionaries to Heathendom at an expense of millions drained from the pockets of would-be pious folks, who court respectability. Thousands of homeless and penniless old men, women and children are allowed to starve for lack of funds, for the sake, perhaps, of one converted "heathen." All the spare money of the charitable is absorbed by these dead-head travelling agents of the Christian Church. What is the result? Visit the prison cells of so-called Christian lands, crammed with delinquents who have been led on to felony by the weary path of starvation, and you will have the answer. Read in the daily papers the numerous accounts of executions, and you will find that modern Christianity offers, perhaps unintentionally but none the less surely, a premium for murder and other heinous crimes. Is anyone prepared to deny the assertion? Remember that, while many a respectable unbeliever dies in his bed with the comfortable assurance from his next of kin, and good friends in general, that he is going to hell, the red-handed criminal has but to believe at his eleventh hour that the blood of the Saviour can and will save him, to receive the guarantee of his spiritual adviser that he will find himself when launched into eternity in the bosom of Christ, in heaven, and playing upon the traditional harp. Why, then, should any Christian deny himself the pleasure and

profit of robbing, or even murdering, his richer neighbor? And such a doctrine is being promulgated among the heathen at the cost of an annual expenditure of millions.

But, in her eternal wisdom, Nature provides antidotes against moral as well as against mineral and vegetable poisons. There are people who do not content themselves with preaching grandiloquent discourses, they act. If such books as Higgins' *Anacalypsis*, Inman's *Ancient and Pagan Christian Symbolism*, and that extraordinary work of an anonymous English author — a Bishop, it is whispered — entitled *Supernatural Religion*, cannot awaken responsive echoes among the ignorant masses, who do not read books, other means can be, and are resorted to — means more effectual and which will bring fruit in the future, if hitherto prevented by the crushing hand of ecclesiastical and monarchical despotism. Those whom the written proofs of the fictitious character of Biblical authority cannot reach, may be saved by the spoken word. And this work of disseminating the truth among the more ignorant classes is being evidently prosecuted by an army of devoted scholars and teachers, simultaneously in India and America.

The Theosophical Society has been of late so much spoken about; such idle tales have been circulated about it — its members being sworn to secrecy and hitherto unable, even if willing, to proclaim the truth about it — that the public may be gratified to know, at least, about one portion of its work. This much, we are now permitted to do, and we embrace the opportunity with alacrity, for, unlike our antagonists, the Christians, we are disposed to declare open war and not resort to forgery, intrigue and Machiavellism to accomplish our ends. The Theosophical Society means, if it cannot rescue Christians from modern Christianity, at least to aid in saving the "heathen" from its influence. It is now in organized affiliation with the Arya Samaj of India, its Western

representative, and, so to say, under the order of its chiefs. A younger Society than the Brahma Samaj, it was instituted to save the Hindus from exoteric idolatries, Brahmanism and Christian missionaries.

The purely Theistic movement connected with the Brahma Samaj had its origin in the same idea. It began early in the present century, but spasmodically and with interruption, and only took concrete shape under the leadership of Babu Keshub Chunder Sen in 1858. Rammohun Roy, who may be termed the combined Fenelon and Thomas Paine of Hindustan, was its parent, his first church having been organized shortly before his death in 1833. One of the greatest and most acute of controversial writers that our century has produced, his works ought to be translated and circulated in every civilized land. At his death, the work of the Brahma Samaj was interrupted. As Miss Collett says, in her *Brahmo Year Book* for 1878, it was only in October, 1839, that Debendra Nath Tagore founded the Tattvabodhini-Sabha (or Society for the Knowledge of Truth), which lasted for twenty years, and did much to arouse the energies and form the principles of the young church of the Brahma Samaj. But, exoteric or open religion as it is now, it must have been conducted at first much on the principles of the Secret Societies, as we are informed that Keshub Chunder Sen, a resident of Calcutta and a pupil of the Presidency College, who had long before quit the orthodox Brahmanical Church and was searching for a purely Theistic religion, "had never heard of the Brahma Samaj before 1858" (see *The Theistic Annual*, 1878, p. 45). Since then the Brahma Samaj, which he then joined, has flourished and become more popular every day. We now find it with Samajes established in many provinces and cities. At least, we learn that in May 1877, "fifty Samajes have notified their adhesion to the Society and eight of them have appointed their representatives. Native missionaries

of the Theistic religion oppose the Christian missionaries and the Orthodox Brahmans, and the work is going on livelily. So much for the Brahma movement."

And now, with regard to the Arya Samaj, *The Indian Tribune* of Allahabad uses the following language in speaking of its founder:

The first quarter of the sixteenth century was no more an age of reformation in Europe than the last of the 19th is in India. Similar causes to those which had operated to bring about a mighty reformation in Europe are, at this moment, working in India. From amongst its own "Benedictines," Swami Dyanand Saraswati has arisen, who, unlike other reformers, does not wish to set up a new religion of his own, but asks his countrymen to go back to the pristine purity and Theism of their Vedic religion. After preaching his views in Bombay, Poona, Calcutta, and the N.W. Provinces, he came to the Punjab, last year, and here it is that he found the most congenial soil. It was in the land of the five rivers, on the banks of the Indus, that the Vedas were first compiled. It was the Punjab that gave birth to a Nanak. And it is the Punjab that is making such efforts for a revival of Vedic learning and its doctrines. And wherever Swami Dyanand goes, his splendid physique, his manly bearing, his erudite discourses, his thundering eloquence, and his incisive logic bear down all opposition. People rise up and say: We shall remain no longer in this state of ignorance, we shall think and act for ourselves, we have had enough of a crafty priesthood and a demoralizing idolatry, and we shall tolerate them no longer. We shall wipe off the ugliness of ages, and try to shine forth in the original radiance and effulgence of our Aryan ancestors.

The Swami is a most highly honoured Fellow of the Theosophical

Society, takes a deep interest in its proceedings, and *The Indian Spectator* of Bombay, April 14th, 1878, spoke by the book when it said that the work of Pandit Dyanand "bears intimate relation to the work of the Theosophical Society."

While the members of the Brahma Samaj may be designated as the Lutheran Protestants of orthodox Brahmanism, the disciples of the Swami Dyanand should be compared to those learned mystics, the Gnostics, who had the key to those earlier writings which, later, were worked over into the Christian gospels and various patristic literature. As the above-named pre-Christian sects understood the true esoteric meaning of the Chrestos allegory, which is now materialized into the Jesus of flesh, so the disciples of the learned and holy Swami are taught to discriminate between the written form and the spirit of the word preached in the *Vedas*. And this is the principal point of difference between the Arya Samaj and the Brahmans who, as it would seem, believe in a personal God and repudiate the *Vedas*, while the Aryas see an everlasting Principle, an impersonal Cause in the great "Soul of the universe" rather than a personal Being, and accept the *Vedas* as the supreme authority, though not of divine origin. But we may better quote in elucidation of the subject what the President of the Bombay Arya Samaj, also a Fellow of the Theosophical Society, Mr. Hurraychund Chintamon, says in a recent letter to our Society:

Pandit Dyanand maintains that as it is now universally acknowledged that the *Vedas* are the oldest books of antiquity, if they contain the truth and nothing but the truth in an unmutated state, and nothing new can be found in other works of later date, why should we not accept the *Vedas* as a guide for Humanity? . . . A revealed book or revelation is understood to mean one of two things, viz: (1) a book already written by some invisible



hand and thrown into the world; or (2) a work written by one or more men while they were in their highest state of mental lucidity, acquired by profound meditation upon the problems of who man is, whence he came, whither he must go, and by what means he may emancipate himself from worldly delusions and suffering. The latter hypothesis may be regarded as the more rational and correct.

Our Brother Hurrychund here describes those superior men whom we know as Adepts. He adds:

The ancient inhabitants of a place near Thibet, and adjoining a lake called Mansovara [*Manasa-sarovara*], were first called Devneggury [Devanagari] or god-like people. Their written characters were also called Devneggury or Balbadha letters. A portion of them migrated to the North and settled there, and afterwards spread towards the South, while others went to the West. All these emigrants styled themselves Aryans, or noble, pure, and good men, as they considered that a pure gift had been made to humanity from the "Pure Alone." These lofty souls were the authors of the *Vedas*.

What more reasonable than the claim that such Scriptures, emanating from such authors, should contain, for those who are able to penetrate the meaning that lies half concealed under the dead letter, all the wisdom which it is allowed to men to acquire on earth? The Chiefs of the Arya Samaj discredit "miracles," discountenance superstition and all violation of natural law, and teach the purest form of Vedic Philosophy. Such are the allies of the Theosophical Society. They have said to us: "Let us work together for the good of mankind," and — we will.

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

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## The Real Madame H. P. Blavatsky

[*La Revue Spirite*, Paris, October, 1878; translated from the original French]

One of our many friends, a distinguished writer and publicist, received a letter about the Theosophists from one of his confreres in America (United States); we inserted it without imagining that it contained errors and a somewhat fantastic story; a letter from Madame H. P. Blavatsky enables us to rectify what we inserted in good faith, and we hasten to do so as a duty, and with pleasure; our friend seems to us to have been misinterpreted by someone who hardly knows her; we have absolute proof of it. This is rather a surprise to us.

Here is, textually, Madame Blavatsky's letter:

Hardly had I returned from a journey when I found in the June number of *La Revue Spirite* an article entitled "Les Theosophes — Madame Blavatsky," a fairly accurate translation of a story published last year in the *New York World*; this article repeats — quite innocently no doubt — the hallucinations of Mr. American Reporter.

There exists a race of bipeds — the rather recent production of our century of steam and iconoclasm *par excellence* — that the Academics of Science have hitherto neglected to classify under the heading of "*Teratology*" or the Science treating of human monsters. The monsters or *lusus naturae*, are called *reporters* here — as they are everywhere — but there is this difference, however, that the one of the land of Christopher Columbus and General Tom Thumb differs from his trans-atlantic cousin as much as the wild buffalo of the virgin forest does from the

domestic bull. If the latter sometimes becomes guilty of havoc committed on the fence of a neighbor, the former destroys whole forests in his furious career; he rushes blindly and kills and crushes everything that stands in his way. As to Messrs. the American reporters I really do not know why the good citizens of the United States take the trouble to fasten their doors; there is neither a lock sufficiently patented, nor a family secret sacred enough to prevent them from intruding, from ferreting out, from meddling in everything, and above all from substituting in their daily publication the most strangely dressed-up fiction for the bare truth.

For five years I have been the victim of these hunters for literary sensations. When I try to shut my door in the face of one of these Arguses of the press, he comes in by the window. Swept from his observation post, he substitutes what he *might have* seen by what he never saw at all, and by what never existed; how can I, then, good-naturedly consent to pass in the eyes of the worthy readers of *La Revue Spirite* for an accomplice in these efforts of the imagination? Although in substance the article which treats of what the reporter and several other persons saw in my house one evening, may be accurate enough towards the end, the details that precede the apparition of the two Shades are hardly so.

To begin with I am not a *Countess* so far as I know. Without overlooking the fact that it would be more than ridiculous — it would be *unconstitutional* — in a citizen or citizeness of the Republic of the United States — who abjures all titles of nobility upon being naturalized — to claim one, above all one which never belonged to him or her — I am too democratic, and I love and respect the people sufficiently, having devoted all my sympathy to them, and this without distinction of race or color, to trick myself out in any kind of title! I have always publicly protested against this ridiculous inclination in a Republic like

ours of giving every foreigner a more or less high-sounding title.

However — and although I may not be a *Countess* — I have never been in the habit of offering pipes to my guests. One may be a democrat, bereft of every title, and yet not accept — above all at my age — a ridiculous and unseemly role.

Speaking of age, and although the newspapers of the country may have voted me respectively and at various times, the ages of 25, 60, 86, 92 and — 103 years, I must assure your readers that I have not "passed more than thirty years in India." It is precisely my age — however respectable it may be — that is radically opposed to that fantastic chronology. Neither have I embraced the "Buddhist faith" either "from conviction" or for any other reason.

It is true that I regard the philosophy of Gautama Buddha as the most sublime system; the purest, and, above all, the most *logical* of all. But the system has been distorted during the centuries by the ambition and fanaticism of the priests and has become a popular religion; the forms and the *exoteric* or popular cult proceeding from that system, too closely resemble those of the Roman church which has slavishly plagiarized from it, for me ever to be converted to it. Just as in every pure and primitive system, introduced by the great religious reformers of the ancient world, its rays have diverged too far from their common centre — *the Vedas of the Aryans*; and although among all modern beliefs the Buddhist Church may be the only one to encourage its members to question its dogmas and to seek the last word of every mystery which is taught therein — I much prefer to hold to the *mother* source rather than to depend upon any of the numerous streams that flow from it.

"Do not believe what I tell you just because it is *I*, your Buddha, who says it — but only because your judgment is not opposed to the truth of my assertion" — says Gautama in his *Sutras* or

aphorisms. Now although I admire with all my soul the lofty philosophy of Siddhartha, or Sakya-Muni, I bow quite as much before the moral grandeur and the powerful logic of the Hindu Kapila, the great Acharya, who was, however, the most implacable enemy of the Buddha. While the latter looked on the *Vedas* as the supreme authority — the Buddhists rejected them after all, though it was proved, nevertheless, that Gautama in his reform and protest against the abuses of the wily Brahmanas, based himself entirely upon the esoteric meaning of the grand primitive Scriptures. Then, if the reporter — the author of the article in question — had simply said that I belonged to the religion that had inspired the Buddha, instead of presenting me to the public as a Buddhist turning the *Wheel of the Law* — he would have spoken nothing but the truth. One can be a Platonist without necessarily being a pagan or an idolater at that, as one may remain a Christian without belonging to any of the Churches which have been fighting one another for eighteen hundred years in the name of the Man-God.

If our trans-atlantic *brothers* are interested in knowing what is the religion, or rather the system to which we — Theosophists (of the inner section) — adhere, I am ordered by the administrative Council of the "*Theosophical Society of the Arya Samaj of India*" to tell you about it immediately on receipt of your request. We make no secret of it. Only — do not call us Buddhists any more, because you would make a very serious mistake.

In concluding, I assure you that I have not mentioned half the absurdities attributed to me in the article in question. I never asserted, for example, that I *myself* did the delicate operation with the sheep and goats of Tibet, for the simple reason that I never went to the mountainous and almost inaccessible places where the phenomenon of artificial trance takes place, it is said. I only repeated what has been told to me, but personally I believe in the

possibility of that act — with certain reservations however. The possibilities of animal magnetism are infinite, and I believe in Magnetism — and you also, I think. On that subject, we fraternally shake hands across the Atlantic, and . . . do not trust too much in future to articles of American origin.

H. P. BLAVATSKY.

NOTE. — We hasten to accept the promised exposition of the system promulgated by Theosophists, and we shall insert whatever our correspondent will kindly send us; we shall be greatly interested in reading it.

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[Blavatsky Articles](#)

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## **Namastae!**

The foundation of this journal is due to causes which, having been enumerated in the Prospectus, need only be glanced at in this connection. They are — the rapid expansion of the Theosophical Society from America to various European and Asiatic countries; the increasing difficulty and expense in maintaining correspondence by letter with members so widely scattered; the necessity for an organ through which the native scholars of the East could communicate their learning to the Western world, and, especially, through which the sublimity of Aryan, Buddhistic, Parsi, and other religions might be expounded by their own priests or pandits, the only competent interpreters; and finally, to the need of a repository for the facts — especially such as relate to Occultism — gathered by the Society's Fellows among different nations. Elsewhere we have clearly explained the nature of Theosophy, and the platform of the Society; it remains for us to say a few words as to the policy of our paper.

It has been shown that the individual members of our Society have their own private opinions upon all matters of a religious, as of every other, nature. They are protected in the enjoyment and expression of the same; and, as individuals, have an equal right to state them in the THEOSOPHIST, over their own signatures. Some of us prefer to be known as Arya Samajists, some as Buddhists, some as idolators, some as something else. What each is, will appear from his or her signed communications. But neither Aryan, Buddhist, nor any other representative of a particular religion, whether an editor or a contributor, can, under the Society's rules, be allowed to use these editorial columns exclusively in the interest of the same, or unreservedly commit the paper to its propaganda. It is designed that a strict



impartiality shall be observed in the editorial utterances; the paper representing the whole Theosophical Society, or Universal Brotherhood; and not any single section. The Society being neither a church nor a sect in any sense, we mean to give the same cordial welcome to communications from one class of religionists as to those from another; insisting only, that courtesy of language shall be used towards opponents. And the policy of the Society is also a full pledge and guarantee that *there will be no suppression, of fact nor tampering with writings, to serve the ends of any established or dissenting church, of any country.*

Articles and correspondence upon either of the topics included in the plan of the THEOSOPHIST are invited; and while, of course, we prefer them to be in the English language, yet if sent in Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, or Gujrati, or in French, Italian, Spanish or Russian, they will be carefully translated and edited for publication. Where it is necessary to print names and words in Hebrew, Greek, and other characters (except Sanskrit and the Indian vernaculars) unlike the Roman, authors will kindly write also their phonetic equivalents in English, as the resources of our printer's office do not appear great in this direction. Manuscripts must be written legibly, upon one side of the sheet only, and authors should always keep copies at home as we will not be responsible for their loss, nor can we obligate ourselves to return rejected articles. Statements of fact will not be accepted from unknown parties without due authentication.

It is desired that our journal shall be read with as much interest by those who are not deep philosophers as by those who are. Some will delight to follow the pandits through the mazes of metaphysical subtleties and the translations of ancient manuscripts, others to be instructed through the medium of legends and tales of mystical import. Our pages will be like the many viands at a feast, where each appetite may be satisfied and

none are sent away hungry. The practical wants of life are to many readers more urgent than the spiritual, and that it is not our purpose to neglect them our pages will simply show.

One more word at the threshold before we bid our guests to enter. The first number of the THEOSOPHIST has been brought out under mechanical difficulties which would not have been encountered either at New York or London, and which we hope to escape in future issues. For instance: We first tried to have Mr. Edward Wimbridge's excellent design for the cover engraved on wood, but there was no wood to be had of the right sizes to compose the block, nor any clamps to fasten them together; nor was there an engraver competent to do justice to the subject. In lithography we fared no better; there was not a pressman who could be trusted to print artistic work in colors, and the proprietor of one of the best job offices in India advised us to send the order to London. As a last resort we determined to print the design in relief, and then scoured the metal markets of Bombay and Calcutta for rolled metal plate. Having finally secured an old piece, the artist was forced to invent an entirely novel process to etch on it, and to execute the work himself. We mention these facts in the hope that our unemployed young Indian brothers may recall the old adage, 'where there is a will, there is a way,' and apply the lesson to their own case. And now, friends and enemies, all — *Namastae!*

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[Blavatsky Articles](#)

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## What is Theosophy

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, Jamblichus, 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 Revd. 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," he says — "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 Laertius 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 "Philalethians" — 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, Vedantic and Magian, or Zoroastrian, systems were taught in the Eclectic Theosophical School along with all the philosophies of Greece. Hence also, that pre-eminently Buddhistic and Indian feature among the ancient Theosophists of Alexandria, of due reverence for parents and aged persons; a fraternal affection for the whole human race; and a compassionate feeling for even the dumb animals. While seeking to establish a system of moral discipline which enforced upon people the duty to live according to the laws of their respective countries; to exalt their minds by the research and contemplation of the one Absolute Truth; 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 Buddh, 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 Aryavart, the Theodidaktoi of Greece, included all knowledge of things occult and essentially divine. The *Mercavah* of the Hebrew Rabbis, the secular and popular series, were thus designated as

only the vehicle, the outward shell which contained the higher esoteric knowledges. The Magi of Zoroaster received instruction and were initiated in the caves and secret lodges of Bactria; the Egyptian and Grecian hierophants had their *aporrheta*, or secret discourses, during which the *Mysta* became an *Epopta* -- 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 *Brihadaranyaka* 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. Skeptics of a century ago would have been as wide of the mark if they had laughed at the idea of a phonograph or 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 Aryan nations was identical with the *Iao* 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 "Tiusco" of the Northmen, the *Duw* of the Britains, and the Zeus of the Thracians. As to the Absolute Essence, the One and all — whether we accept the Greek Pythagorean, the Chaldean Kabalistic, or the Aryan 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 Kabala which, speaking of En-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 (Hymn 129th, Book 10th) — enquire:

"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 Vedantic 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 Svabhavikas of Nepaul, maintains that nothing exists but "Svabhavat" (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 labors 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 Mahommedanism. Every Theosophist, then, holding to a theory of the Deity "which has not revelation, but an inspiration of his own for its basis," may accept any of the above definitions or belong to any of these religions, and yet remain strictly within the boundaries of 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 Kabalists *Tikkun* or Adam Kadmon — the archetypal man, and the Aryans *Purusha*, the manifested Brahm, or the Divine Male. Theosophy believes also in the *Anastasis* or continued existence, and in transmigration (evolution) or a series or changes in the soul\* which can be defended and explained on strict philosophical principles; and only by making a distinction between *Paramatma* (trancendental, supreme soul) and *Jiveatma* (animal, or conscious soul) of the Vedantins.

\*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.

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 carried 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 "Daimonlon-photi," or spiritual illumination of the Neo-Platonists; the "Sidereal



confabulation of soul," 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 coeval with the genesis of humanity, — each people giving it another name. Thus Plato and Plotinus call "Noetic work" that which the Yogas and the Shrotriya term Vidya. "By reflection, self-knowledge and intellectual discipline, the soul can be raised to the vision of eternal truth, goodness, and beauty — that is, to the *Vision of God* — this is the *epopteia*," said the Greeks. "To unite one's soul to the Universal Soul," says Porphyry, "requires but a perfectly pure mind. Through self-contemplation, perfect chastity, and purity of body, we may approach nearer to It, and receive, in that state, true knowledge and wonderful insight." And Swami Saraswati, who has read neither Porphyry nor other Greek authors, but who is a thorough Vedic scholar, says in his *Veda Bhashya* (opasna prakaru ank. 9) — "To obtain *Diksh* (highest initiations) and *Yog*, one has to practise 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 *Dikshit* 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 Gymnosophists\* 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 Yogins and the Pythagoreans, nearly 3,000 years ago. Thus, while the Aryan 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 *Atman* -- "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 the Thesmophorian 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, Aryan Yogis, Greek philosophers, and modern spiritualists, affirm that possibility on the ground that the embodied soul and its never embodied spirits — 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 Aryans 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 Patanjali's Yogis 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 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 Yogins, who maintained their ability to see Iswara "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 Bohme 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 reality of the *Yog-power* was affirmed by many Greek and Roman writers, who call the Yogins Indian Gymnosophists; by Strabo, Lucan, Plutarch, Cicero (*Tusculum*), Pliny (vii, 2), etc.

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 *hyponia*, or under-meaning. "The gods exist, but they are not what the *oi polloi*, the uneducated multitude, suppose them to be," says Epicurus." 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."

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 *hyponia* man thinks divine thoughts, views all thing 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 *Oversoul*. Besides this psychological, or soul-state, Theosophy cultivated every branch of sciences and arts. It was thoroughly familiar with what is now commonly known as mesmerism. Practical theurgy or "ceremonial magic," so often resorted to in their exorcisms by the Roman Catholic clergy — was discarded by the theosophists. It is but Jamblichus 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 *goetia* (or black magic, sorcery.) Yet, neither white, nor black magic are what popular superstition understands by the terms. The possibility of "raising spirit" 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 degree . . . himself a mystic and a Theosophist, in his large and valuable work, *The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia* (articles *Theosophical Society of New York* and *Theosophy*, p. 731).\* 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."

\* *The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia of History, Rites, Symbolism, and Biography*. Edited by Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie IX degree (Cryptonymus) Hon. Member of the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge, No. 2, Scotland. New York, J. W. Boutun, 706, Broadway, 1877.

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## [Blavatsky Articles](#)

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## What are the Theosophists

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 "*gobe-mouche*," 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 pother 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 Arya Samaj, headed by the learned Pandit Dayanund Saraswati Swami, 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 Aryavarta. 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 demonstration of this fact of the primogenitive nationality of Aryavart. 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 Patanjali through Plotinus to Jacob Bohme, 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* (Aug. 11th, 1879), 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 modernised 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 Aryan 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 idiosyncracies 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 towards 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 atheist 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 labors of such Orientalists as Sir W. Jones, Max Muller, Burnouf, Colebrooke, Haug, St. 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 toward its Hindu, Sinhalese, Parsi, 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 Mother Land. 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 upon 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 Samaj, 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 towards 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 to-day but to die to-morrow. 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 favor can lay at least his mite upon the one altar of Truth.

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## The Drift of Western Spiritualism

Late advices from various parts of the world seem to indicate that, while there is an increasing interest in the phenomena of spiritualism, especially among eminent men of science, there is also a growing desire to learn the views of the Theosophists. The first impulse of hostility has nearly spent itself, and the moment approaches when a patient hearing will be given to our arguments. This was foreseen by us from the beginning. The founders of our Society were mainly veteran Spiritualists, who had outgrown their first amazement at the strange phenomena, and felt the necessity to investigate the laws of mediumship to the very bottom. Their reading of mediaeval and ancient works upon the occult sciences had shown them that our modern phenomena were but repetitions of what had been seen, studied, and comprehended in former epochs. In the biographies of ascetics, mystics, theurgists, prophets, ecstasies; of astrologers, 'diviners,' 'magicians,' 'sorcerers,' and other students, subjects, or practitioners of the Occult Power in its many branches, they found ample evidence that Western Spiritualism could only be comprehended by the creation of a science of Comparative Psychology. By a like synthetic method of the philologists, under the lead of Eugene Burnouf, had unlocked the secrets of religious and philological heredity, and exploded Western theological theories and dogmas until then deemed impregnable.

Proceeding in this spirit, the Theosophists thought they discovered some reasons to doubt the correctness of the spiritualistic theory that all the phenomena of the circles must of necessity be attributed *solely* to the action of spirits of our deceased friends. The ancients knew and classified other supercorporeal entities that are capable of moving objects,

floating the bodies of mediums through the air, giving apparent tests of the identity of dead persons, and controlling sensitives to write and speak strange languages, paint pictures, and play upon unfamiliar musical instruments. And not only knew them, but showed how these invisible powers might be controlled by man, and made to work these wonders at his bidding. They found, moreover, that there were two sides of Occultism — a good and an evil side; and that it was a dangerous and fearful thing for the inexperienced to meddle with the latter, — dangerous to our moral as to our physical nature. The conviction forced itself upon their minds, then, that while the weird wonders of Spiritualism were among the most important of all that could be studied, mediumship, without the most careful attention to every condition, was fraught with peril.

Thus thinking, and impressed with the great importance of a thorough knowledge of mesmerism and all other branches of Occultism, these founders established the Theosophical Society, to read, to enquire, and compare, study, experiment and expound, the mysteries of Psychology. This range of enquiry, of course, included an investigation of Vedic, Brahmanical and other ancient Oriental literature; for in that — especially, the former, the grandest repository of wisdom ever accessible to humanity — lay the entire mystery of nature and of man. To comprehend modern mediumship it is, in short, indispensable to familiarize oneself with the Yoga Philosophy; and the aphorisms of Patanjali are even more essential than the "Divine Revelations" of Andrew Jackson Davis. We can never know how much of the mediumistic phenomena we *must* attribute to the disembodied, until it is settled how much *can* be done by the embodied, human soul, and the blind but active powers at work within those regions which are yet unexplored by science. Not even proof of an existence beyond the grave, if it must come to us in a phenomenal shape.

This will be conceded without qualification, we think, provided that the records of history be admitted as corroborating the statements we have made.

The reader will observe that the primary issue between the theosophical and spiritualistic theories of mediumistic phenomena is that the Theosophists say the phenomena may be produced by more agencies than one, and the latter that but one agency can be conceded, namely — the disembodied souls. There are other differences — as, for instance, that there *can* be such a thing as the obliteration of the human individuality as the result of very evil environment; that good spirits seldom, if ever, cause physical 'manifestations'; etc. But the first point to settle is the one here first stated; and we have shown how and in what directions the Theosophists maintain that the investigations should be pushed.

Our East Indian readers, unlike those of Western countries who may see these lines, do not know how warmly and stoutly these issues have been debated, these past three or four years. Suffice it to say that, a point having been reached where argument seemed no longer profitable, the controversy ceased; and that the present visit of the New York Theosophists, and their establishment of the Bombay Head-quarters, with the library, lectures, and this journal, are its tangible results. That this step must have a very great influence upon Western psychological science is apparent. Whether our Committee are themselves fully competent to observe and properly expound Eastern Psychology or not, no one will deny that Western Science must inevitably be enriched by the contributions of the Indian, Sinhalese, and other mystics who will now find in the THEOSOPHIST a channel by which to reach European and American students of Occultism, such as was never imagined, not to say seen, before. It is our earnest hope and belief that after the broad principles of our Society, its earnestness, and

exceptional facilities for gathering Oriental wisdom are well understood, it will be better thought of than now by Spiritualists, and attract into its fellowship many more of their brightest and best intellects.

Theosophy can be styled the enemy of Spiritualism with no more propriety than of Mesmerism, or any other branch of Psychology. In this wondrous outburst of phenomena that the Western world has been seeing since 1848, is presented such an opportunity to investigate the hidden mysteries of being as the world has scarcely known before. Theosophists only urge that these phenomena shall be studied so thoroughly that our epoch shall not pass away with the mighty problem unsolved. Whatever obstructs this — whether the narrowness of sciolism, the dogmatism of theology, or the prejudice of any other class, should be swept aside as something hostile to the public interest. Theosophy, with its design to search back into historic record for proof, may be regarded as the natural outcome of phenomenalistic Spiritualism, or as a touchstone to show the value of its pure gold. One must know both to comprehend what is Man.

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## Antiquity of the Vedas

A Journal interested like the THEOSOPHIST in the explorations of archaeology and archaic religions, as well as the study of the occult in nature, has to be doubly prudent and discreet. To bring the two conflicting elements — exact science and metaphysics — into direct contact, might create as great a disturbance as to throw a piece of potassium into a basin of water. The very fact that we are predestined and pledged to prove that some of the wisest of Western scholars have been misled by the dead letter of appearances and that they are unable to discover the hidden spirit in the relics of old, places us under the ban from the start. With those sciolists who are neither broad enough, nor sufficiently modest to allow their decisions to be reviewed, we are necessarily in antagonism. Therefore, it is essential that our position in relation to certain scientific hypotheses, perhaps tentative and only sanctioned for want of better ones — should be clearly defined at the outset.

An infinitude of study has been bestowed by the archaeologists and the orientalist upon the question of chronology — especially in regard to Comparative Theology. So far, their affirmations as to the relative antiquity of the great religions of the pre-Christian era are little more than plausible hypotheses. How far back the national and religious Vedic period, so called, extends — "it is impossible to tell," confesses Prof. Max Muller; nevertheless, he traces it "to a period anterior to 1000 B. C.," and brings us "to 1100 or 1200 B. C., as the earliest time when we may suppose the collection of the Vedic hymns to have been finished." Nor do any other of our leading scholars claim to have finally settled the vexed question, especially delicate as it is in its bearing upon the chronology of the book of Genesis. Christianity, the direct outflow

of Judaism and in most cases the State religion of their respective countries, has unfortunately stood in their way. Hence, scarcely two scholars agree; and each assigns a different date to the Vedas and the Mosaic books, taking care in every case to give the latter the benefit of the doubt. Even that leader of the leaders in philological and chronological questions, — Professor Muller, hardly twenty years ago, allowed himself a prudent margin by stating that it will be difficult to settle "whether the Veda is the 'oldest of books,' and whether some of the portions of the old Testament may not be traced back to the same or even an earlier date than the oldest hymns of the Veda." The THEOSOPHIST is, therefore, quite warranted in either adopting or rejecting as it pleases the so-called authoritative chronology of science. Do we err then, in confessing that we rather incline to accept the chronology of that renowned Vedic scholar, Swami Dayanund Saraswati, who unquestionably knows what he is talking about, has the four Vedas by heart, is perfectly familiar with all Sanskrit literature, has no such scruples as the Western Orientalists in regard to public feelings, nor desire to humour the superstitious notions of the majority, nor has any object to gain in suppressing facts? We are only too conscious of the risk in withholding our adulation from scientific authorities. Yet, with the common temerity of the heterodox we must take our course, even though, like the Tarpeia of old, we be smothered under a heap of shields — a shower of learned quotations from these "authorities."

We are far from feeling ready to adopt the absurd chronology of a Berosus or even Syncellus — though in truth they appear "absurd" only in the light of our preconceptions. But, between the extreme claims of the Brahmins and the ridiculously short periods conceded by our Orientalists for the development and full growth of that gigantic literature of the ante-Mahabharatan period, there ought to be a just mean. While Swami Dayanund

Saraswati asserts that "The Vedas have now ceased to be objects of study for nearly 5,000 years," and places the first appearance of the four Vedas at an immense antiquity; Professor Muller, assigning for the composition of even the earliest among the Brahmanas, the years from about 1,000 to 800 B. C., hardly dares, as we have seen, to place the collection and the original composition of the Sanhita, of Rig-Veda hymns, earlier than 1,200 to 1,500 before our era! [Lecture on the Vedas] Whom ought we to believe; and which of the two, is the better informed? Cannot this gap of several thousand years be closed, or would it be equally difficult for either of the two cited authorities to give data which would be regarded by science as thoroughly convincing?

It is as easy to reach a false conclusion by the modern inductive method as to assume false premises from which to make deductions, Doubtless Professor Max Muller has good reasons for arriving at his chronological conclusions. But so has Dayanund Saraswati Pandit. The gradual modifications, development and growth of the Sanskrit language are sure guides enough for an expert philologist. But, that there is a possibility of his having been led into error would seem to suggest itself upon considering a certain argument brought forward by Swami Dayanund. Our respected friend and teacher maintains that both Professor Muller and Dr. Wilson have been solely guided in their researches and conclusion by the inaccurate and untrustworthy commentaries of Sayana, Mahidar, and Uvata; commentaries which differ diametrically from those of a far earlier period as used by himself in connection with his great work the Veda Bhashya. A cry was raised at the outset of this publication that Swami's commentary is calculated to refute Sayana and the English interpreters. "For this," very justly remarks Pandit Dayanund, "I cannot be blamed; if Sayana has erred, and English interpreters have chosen to take him for their guide, the delusion

cannot be long maintained. Truth alone can stand, and Falsehood before growing civilization must fall."\* And if, as he claims, his Veda Bhashya is entirely founded on the old commentaries of the ante-Mahabharatan period to which the Western scholars have had no access, then, since his were the surest guides of the two classes, we cannot hesitate to follow him, rather than the best of our European Orientalists.

\* Answer to the Objections to the Veda-Bashya.

But, apart from such *prima facie* evidence, we would respectfully request Professor Max Muller to solve us a riddle. Propounded by himself, it has puzzled us for over twenty years and pertains as much to simple logic as to the chronology in question. Clear and undeviating, like the Rhone through the Geneva lake, the idea runs through the course of his lectures, from the first volume of "Chips" down to his last discourse. We will try to explain.

All who have followed his lectures as attentively as ourselves will remember that Professor Max Muller attributes the wealth of myths, symbols and religious allegories in the Vedic hymns, as in Grecian mythology, to the early worship of nature by man. "In the hymns of the Vedas," to quote his words, "we see man left to himself to solve the riddle of this world. He is awakened from darkness and slumber by the light of the sun." . . . . and he calls it — "his life, his truth, his brilliant Lord and Protector." He gives names to all the powers of nature, and after he has called the fire 'Agni,' the sun-light 'Indra,' the storms 'Maruts,' and the dawn 'Usha,' they all seem to grow naturally into beings like himself, nay greater than himself. [Chips from a German Workshop, Vol. I, p. 68] This definition of the mental state of *primitive* man, in the days of the very infancy of humanity, and when hardly out of its cradle — is perfect. The period to which he attributes those effusions of an infantile mind, is the Vedic period, and the time



which separates us from it is, as claimed above, 3,000 years. So much impressed seems the great philologist with this idea of the mental feebleness of mankind at the time when these hymns were composed by the four venerable Rishis, that in his introduction to the Science of Religion (p. 278) we find the Professor saying : "Do you still wonder at polytheism or at mythology? Why, they are inevitable. They are, if you like, a *parler enfantin* of religion. But the world has its childhood, and when it was a child it spake as a child, (*nota bene*, 3,000 years ago), it understood as a child, it thought as a child . . . The fault rests with us if we insist on *taking the language of children for the language of men*. . . . The language of antiquity is the language of childhood . . . *the parler enfantin* in religion is not extinct . . . as, for instance, the religion of India."

Having read thus far, we pause and think. At the very close of this able explanation, we meet with a tremendous difficulty, the idea of which must have never occurred to the able advocate of the ancient faiths. To one familiar with the writings and ideas of this Oriental scholar, it would seem the height of absurdity to suspect him of accepting the Biblical chronology of 6,000 years since the appearance of the first man upon earth as the basis of his calculations. And yet the recognition of such chronology is inevitable if we have to accept Professor Muller's reasons at all; for here we ran against a purely arithmetical and mathematical obstacle, a gigantic miscalculation of proportion. . . .

No one can deny that the growth and development of mankind — mental as well as physical — must be analogically measured by the growth and development of man. An anthropologist, if he cares to go beyond the simple consideration of the relations of man to other members of the animal kingdom, has to be in a certain way a physiologist as well as an anatomist; for, as much as ethnology it is a progressive science which can be well treated but

by those who are able to follow up retrospectively the regular unfolding of human faculties and powers, assigning to each a certain period of life. Thus, no one would regard a skull in which the wisdom-tooth, so called, would be apparent, the skull of an infant. Now, according to geology, recent researches "give good reasons to believe that under low and base grades the existence of man can be traced back into the tertiary times." In the old glacial drift of Scotland — says Professor W. Draper, — "the relics of man are found along with those of the fossil elephant;" and the best calculations so far assign a period of two-hundred-and-forty thousand years since the beginning of the last glacial period. Making a proportion between 240,000 years — the least age we can accord to the human race, — and 24 years of a man's life, we find that three thousand years ago, or the period of the composition of Vedic hymns, mankind would be just twenty-one — the legal age of majority, and certainly a period at which man ceases using, if he ever will, the *parler enfantin* or childish lispings. But, according to the views of the Lecturer, it follows that man was, three thousand years ago, at twenty-one, a foolish and undeveloped — though a very promising — infant, and at twenty-four, has become the brilliant, acute, learned, highly analytical and philosophical man of the nineteenth century. Or, still keeping our equation in view, in other words, the Professor might as well say, that an individual who was a nursing baby at 12 M. on a certain day, would at 12:20 P. M., on the same day, have become an adult speaking high wisdom instead of his *parler enfantin*!

It really seems the duty of the eminent Sanskritist and Lecturer on Comparative Theology to get out of this dilemma. Either the Rig-Veda hymns were composed but 3,000 years ago, and, therefore, cannot be expressed in the "language of childhood" — man having lived in the glacial period — but the generation which composed them must have been composed of adults,

presumably as philosophical and scientific in the knowledge of their day, as we are in our own; or, we have to ascribe to them an immense antiquity in order to carry them back to the days of human mental infancy. And, in this latter case, Professor Max Muller will have to withdraw a previous remark, expressing the doubt "whether some of the portions of the Old Testament may not be traced back to the same or even an earlier date than the oldest hymns of the Vedas."

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## [Blavatsky Articles](#)

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## **Persian Zoroastrianism and Russian Vandalism**

Few persons are capable of appreciating the truly beautiful and esthetic; fewer still of revering those monumental relics of bygone ages, which prove that even in the remotest epochs mankind worshipped a Supreme Power, and people were moved to express their abstract conceptions in works which should defy the ravages of Time. The Vandals — whether Slavic Wends, or some barbarous nation of Germanic race — came at all events from the North. A recent occurrence is calculated to make us regret that Justinian did not destroy them all; for it appears that there are still in the North worthy scions left of those terrible destroyers of monuments of arts and sciences, in the persons of certain Russian merchants who have just perpetrated an act of inexcusable vandalism. According to the late Russian papers, the Moscow arch-millionaire, Kokoref, with his Tiflis partner the American Croesus, Mirzoef, is desecrating and apparently about to totally destroy perhaps the oldest relic in the world of Zoroastrianism — the "Attesh-Gag" of Baku. [Attesh-Kudda also].

Few foreigners, and perhaps as few Russians, know anything of this venerable sanctuary of the worshippers around the Caspian Sea. About twenty versts from the small town of Baku in the valley of Absharon in Russian Georgia, and among the barren, desolated steppes of the shores of the Caspian, there stands — alas! rather stood, but a few months ago — a strange structure, something between a mediaeval Cathedral and a fortified castle. It was built in unknown ages, and by builders as unknown. Over an area of somewhat more than a square mile, a tract known as the "Fiery Field," upon which the structure stands, if one but digs from two to three inches into the sandy earth, and applies a lighted match, a jet of fire will stream up, as if from a spout [A

bluish flame is seen to arise there, but this fire does not consume, "and if a person finds himself in the middle of it, he is not sensible of any warmth." — See Kinneir's *Persia*, page 35]. The "Guebre Temple," as the building is sometimes termed, is carved out of one solid rock. It comprises an enormous square enclosed by crenelated walls, and at the centre of the square, a high tower also rectangular resting upon four gigantic pillars. The latter were pierced vertically down to the bed-rock and the cavities were continued up to the battlements where they opened out into the atmosphere; thus forming continuous tubes through which the inflammable gas stored up in the heart of the mother rock were conducted to the top of the tower. This tower has been for centuries a shrine of the fire-worshippers and bears the symbolical representation of the trident — called *teersoot*. All around the interior face of the external wall, are excavated the cells, about twenty in number, which served as habitations for past generations of Zoroastrian recluses. Under the supervision of a High Mobed, here, in the silence of their isolated cloisters, they studied the Avesta, the Vendidad, the Yacna — especially the latter, it seems, as the rocky walls of the cells are inscribed with a greater number of quotations from the sacred songs. Under the tower-altar, three huge bells were hung. A legend says that they were miraculously produced by a holy traveller, in the tenth century during the Mussulman persecution, to warn the faithful of the approach of the enemy. But a few weeks ago, and the tall tower-altar was yet ablaze with the same flame that local tradition affirms had been kindled thirty centuries ago. At the horizontal orifices in the four hollow pillars burned four perpetual fires, fed uninterruptedly from the inexhaustible subterranean reservoir. From every merlon on the walls, as well as from every embrasure flashed forth a radiant light, like so many tongues of fire; and even the large porch overhanging the main entrance was encircled by a garland of fiery stars, the

lambent lights shooting forth from smaller and narrower orifices. It was amid these impressive surroundings, that the Guebre recluses used to send up their daily prayers, meeting under the open tower-altar; every face reverentially turned toward the setting sun, as they united their voices in a parting evening hymn. And as the luminary — the "Eye of Ahura-mazda" — sank lower and lower down the horizon, their voices grew lower and softer, until the chant sounded like a plaintive and subdued murmur. . . . A last flash — and the sun is gone; and, as darkness follows daylight almost suddenly in these regions, the departure of the Deity's symbol was the signal for a general illumination, unrivalled even by the greatest fire-works at regal festivals. The whole field seemed nightly like one blazing prairie. . . . .

Till about 1840, "Attesh-Gag" was the chief rendezvous for all the Fire-worshippers of Persia. Thousands of pilgrims came and went; for no true Guebre could die happy unless he had performed the sacred pilgrimage at least once during his life-time. A traveller — Koch — who visited the cloister about that time, found in it but five Zoroastrians, with their pupils. In 1878, about fourteen months ago, a lady of Tiflis, who visited the Attesh-Gag, mentioned in a private letter that she found there but one solitary hermit, who emerges from his cell but to meet the rising and salute the departing sun. And now, hardly a year later, we find in the papers that Messrs. Kokoref and Co., are busy erecting on the Fiery Field enormous buildings for the refining of petroleum! All the cells but the one occupied by the poor old hermit, half ruined and dirty beyond all expression, are inhabited by the firm's workmen; the altar over which blazed the sacred flame, is now piled high with rubbish, mortar and mud, and the flame itself turned off in another direction. The bells are now, during the periodical visits of a Russian priest, taken down and suspended in the porch of the superintendent's house; heathen

relics being as usual used — though abused — by the religion which supplants the previous worship. And, all looks like the abomination of desolation. . . . "It is a matter of surprise to me," writes a Baku correspondent in the *St. Petersburg Vjedomosti*, who was the first to send the unwelcome news, "that the trident, the sacred *teersoot* itself, has not as yet been put to some appropriate use in the new firm's kitchen. . . ! Is it then so absolutely necessary that the millionaire Kokoref should desecrate the Zoroastrian cloister, which occupies such a trifling compound in comparison to the space allotted to his manufactories and stores? And shall such a remarkable relic of antiquity be sacrificed to commercial greediness which can after all neither lose nor gain one single rouble by destroying it?"

It must apparently, since Messrs. Kokoref and Co. have leased the whole field from the Government, and the latter seems to feel quite indifferent over this idiotic and useless Vandalism. It is now more than twenty years since the writer visited for the last time Attesh-Gag. In those days besides a small group of recluses it had the visits of many pilgrims. And since it is more than likely that ten years hence, people will hear no more of it, I may just as well give a few more details of its history. Our Parsee friends will, I am sure, feel an interest in a few legends gathered by me on the spot.

There seems to be indeed a veil drawn over the origin of Attesh-Gag. Historical data are scarce and contradictory. With the exception of some old Armenian Chronicles which mention it incidentally as having existed before Christianity was brought into the country by Saint Nina during the third century,\* there is no other mention of it anywhere else so far as I know.

\*Though St. Nina appeared in Georgia in the third, it is not before the fifth century that the idolatrous *Grouzines* were converted to Christianity by the thirteen Syrian Fathers. They

came under the leadership of both St. Antony and St. John of Zedadzene, — so called, because he is alleged to have travelled to the Caucasian regions on purpose to fight and conquer the chief idol *Zeda*! And thus, while, — as incontrovertible proof of the existence of both, — the opulent tresses of the black hair of St. Nina are being preserved to this day as relics, in Zion Cathedral at Tiflis — the thaumaturgic John has immortalized his name still more. *Zeda*, who was the Baal of the Trans-Caucasus, had children sacrificed to him, as the legend tells us, on the top of the Zedadzene mount, about 18 versts from Tiflis. It is there that the Saint defied the idol, or rather Satan under the guise of a stone statute — to single combat, and *miraculously* conquered him; *i.e.*, threw down, and trampled upon the idol. But he did not stop there in the exhibition of his powers. The mountain peak is of an immense height, and being only a barren rock at its top, spring water is nowhere to be found on its summit. But in commemoration of his triumph, the Saint had a spring appear at the very bottom of the deep, and — as people assert — a fathomless well, dug down into the very bowels of the mountain, and the gaping mouth of which was situated near the altar of the god *Zeda*, just in the centre of his temple. It was into this opening that the limbs of the murdered infants were cast down after the sacrifice. The miraculous spring, however, was soon dried up, and for many centuries there appeared no water. But, when Christianity was firmly established, the water began re-appearing on the 7th day of every May, and continues to do so till the present time. Strange to say, this fact does not pertain to the domain of legend, but is one that has provoked an intense curiosity even among men of science, such as the eminent geologist, Dr. Abich, who resided for years at Tiflis. Thousands upon thousands proceed yearly upon pilgrimage to Zedadzene on the seventh of May; and all witness the



"miracle." From early morning, water is heard bubbling down at the rocky bottom of the well; and, as noon approaches, the parched-up walls of the mouth become moist, and clear cold sparkling water seems to come out from every porosity of the rock; it rises higher and higher, bubbles, increases, until at last having reached to the very brim, it suddenly stops, and a prolonged shout of triumphant joy bursts from the fanatical crowd. This cry seems to shake like a sudden discharge of artillery the very depths of the mountain and awaken the echo for miles around. Every one hurries to fill a vessel with the miraculous water. There are necks wrung and heads broken on that day at Zedadzene, but every one who survives carries home a provision of the crystal fluid. Toward evening the water begins decreasing as mysteriously as it had appeared, and at midnight the well is again perfectly dry. Not a drop of water, nor a trace of any spring, could be found by the engineers and geologists bent upon discovering the "trick." For a whole year, the sanctuary remains deserted, and there is not even a janitor to watch the poor shrine. The geologists have declared that the soil of the mountain precludes the possibility of having springs concealed in it. Who will explain the puzzle?

Tradition informs us, — how far correctly is not for me to decide — that long before Zarathustra, the people, who now are called in contempt, by the Mussulmans and Christians, "Guebres," and, who term themselves "Behedin" (followers of the true faith) recognized Mithra, the Mediator, as their sole and highest God, — who included within himself all the good as well as the bad gods. Mithra representing the two natures of Ormazd and Ahriman combined, the people *feared* him, whereas, they would have had no need of fearing, but only of loving and reverencing him as Ahura-Mazda, were Mithra without the Ahriman element in him. One day as the god, disguised as a shepherd, was wandering

about the earth, he came to Baku, then a dreary, deserted sea-shore, and found an old devotee of his quarrelling with his wife. Upon this barren spot wood was scarce, and she would not give up a certain portion of her stock of cooking fuel to be burned upon the altar. So the Ahriman element was aroused in the god and, striking the stingy old woman, he changed her into a gigantic rock. Then, the Ahura-Mazda element prevailing, he, to console the bereaved widower, promised that neither he, nor his descendants, should ever need fuel any more, for he would provide such a supply as should last till the end of time. So he struck the rock again and then struck the ground for miles around, and the earth and the calcareous soil of the Caspian shores were filled up to the brim with naphtha. To commemorate the happy event, the old devotee assembled all the youths of the neighbourhood and set himself to excavating the rock — which was all that remained of his ex-wife. He cut the battlemented walls, and fashioned the altar and the four pillars, hollowing them all to allow the gases to rise up and escape through the top of the merlons. The god Mithra upon seeing the work ended, sent a lightning flash, which set ablaze the fire upon the altar, and lit up every merlon upon the walls. Then, in order that it should burn the brighter, he called forth the four winds and ordered them to blow the flame in every direction. To this day, Baku is known, under its primitive name of "Baadey-ku-ba," which means literally the gathering of winds.

The other legend, which is but a continuation of the above, runs thus: For countless ages, the devotees of Mithra worshipped at his shrines, until Zarathustra, descending from heaven in the shape of a "Golden Star," transformed himself into a man, and began teaching a new doctrine. He sung the praises of the One but Triple god, — the supreme Eternal, the incomprehensible essence "Zervana-Akerene," which emanating from itself "Primeval

Light," the latter in its turn produced Ahura-Mazda. But this process required that the "Primeval One" should previously absorb in itself all the light from the fiery Mithra, and thus left the poor god despoiled of all his brightness. Losing his right of undivided supremacy, Mithra, in despair, and instigated by his Ahrimanic nature, annihilated himself for the time being, leaving Ahriman alone, to fight out his quarrel with Ormazd, the best way he could. Hence, the prevailing Duality in nature since that time until Mithra returns; for he promised to his faithful devotees to come back some day. Only since then, a series of calamities fell upon the Fire-worshippers. The last of these was the invasion of their country by the Moslems in the 7th century, when these fanatics commenced most cruel persecutions against the Behedin. Driven away from every quarter, the Guebres found refuge but in the province of Kerman, and in the city of Yezd. Then followed heresies. Many of the Zoroastrians abandoning the faith of their forefathers, became Moslems; others, in their unquenchable hatred for the new rulers, joined the ferocious Koords and became devil, as well as fire-worshippers. These are the Yezids. The whole religion of these strange sectarians, — with the exception of a few who have more weird rites, which are a secret to all but to themselves — consists in the following. As soon as the morning sun appears, they place their two thumbs crosswise one upon the other, kiss the symbol, and touch with them their brow in reverential silence. Then they salute the sun and turn back into their tents. They believe in the power of the Devil, dread it, and propitiate the "fallen angel" by every means; getting very angry whenever they hear him spoken of disrespectfully by either a Mussulman or a Christian. Murders have been committed by them on account of such irreverent talk, but people have become more prudent of late.

With the exception of the Bombay community of Parsees, Fire-

worshippers are, then, to be found but in the two places before mentioned, and scattered around Baku. In Persia some years ago, according to statistics they numbered about 100,000 men;\* I doubt, though, whether their religion has been preserved as pure as even that of the Gujarathi Parsees, adulterated as is the latter by the errors and carelessness of generations of uneducated Mobeds. And yet, as is the case of their Bombay brethren, who are considered by all the travellers its well as Anglo-Indians, as the most intelligent, industrious and well-behaved community of the native races, the fire-worshippers of Kerman and Yezd bear a very high character among the Persians, as well as among the Russians of Baku. Uncouth and crafty some of them have become, owing to long centuries of persecution and spoliation; but the unanimous testimony is in their favour and they are spoken of as a virtuous, highly moral, and industrious population. "As good as the word of a Guebre" is a common saying among the Koords, who repeat it without being in the least conscious of the self-condemnation contained in it.

\*Mr. Grattan Geary in his recent highly valuable and interesting work "Through Asiatic Turkey" (London, Sampson Law & Co.) remarks of the Guebres of Yezd — "it is said that there are only 5,000 of them all told." But as his information was gleaned while travelling rapidly through the country, he was apparently misinformed in this instance. Perhaps, it was meant to convey the idea to him that there were but 5,000 in and about Yezd at the time of his visit. It is the habit of this people to scatter themselves all over the country in the commencement of the summer season in search of work.

I cannot close without expressing my astonishment at the utter ignorance as to their religions, which seems to prevail in Russia even among the journalists. One of them speaks of the Guebres, in the article of the *St. Petersburg Vjedemosti* above referred to, as of

a sect of Hindu idolaters, in whose prayers the name of Brahma is constantly invoked. To add to the importance of this historical item Alexandre Dumas (senior) is quoted, as mentioning in his work *Travels in the Caucasus* that during his visit to Attesh-Gag, he found in one of the cells of the Zoroastrian cloister "two Hindu idols"!! Without forgetting the charitable dictum: *De mortuus nil nisi bonum*, we cannot refrain from reminding the correspondent of our esteemed contemporary of a fact which no reader of the novels of the brilliant French writer ought to be ignorant of ; namely, that for the variety and inexhaustible stock of *historical facts*, evolved out of the abysmal depths of his own consciousness, even the immortal Baron Munchausen was hardly his equal. The sensational narrative of his tiger-hunting in Mingrelia, where, since the days of Noah, there never was a tiger, is yet fresh in the memory of his readers.

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[Blavatsky Articles](#)

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## "The Light of Asia"

### As Told in Verse by an Indian Buddhist.

A timely work in poetical form, and one whose subject — perfect though the outward clothing be — is sure to provoke discussion and bitter criticisms, has just made its appearance. It is inscribed to "The Sovereign Grand Master and Companions of the Star of India," and the author, Mr. Edwin Arnold, C. S. I., late Principal of the Deccan College at Poona, having passed some years in India, has evidently studied his theme *con amore*. In his Preface he expresses a hope that the present work and his "Indian Song of Songs will preserve the memory of one who loved India and the Indian peoples." The hope is well grounded, for if any Western poet has earned the right to grateful remembrance by Asiatic nations and is destined to live in their memory, it is the author of the "Light of Asia."

\*The Light of Asia: or the Great Renunciation

(Mahabhinishkramana.) The Life and Teaching of Gautama, Prince of Indian and Founder of Buddhism. As told in verse by an Indian Buddhist. By Edwin Arnold, M. A., F. R. G. S., C. S. I. Formerly Principal of the Deccan College, Poona, and Fellow of the University of Bombay," London, Tribner & Co.

The novelty, and, from a Christian standpoint, the distastefulness of the mode of treatment of the subject, seems to have already taken one reviewer's breath away. Describing the volume as "gorgeous in yellow and gold," he thinks the book "chiefly valuable as . . . coming from one who during a long residence in India imbued his mind with Buddhistic philosophy." This, he adds, "is no criticism of a religion supposed to be false, but the sympathetic presentment of a religion so much of which is true as

*from the mouth of a votary (sic).*" By many, Mr. Arnold's "imaginary Buddhist votary" of the Preface, is identified with the author himself; who now — to quote again his critic — "carries out in his true colours," We are glad of it; it is a rare compliment to pay to any writer of this generation, whose peremptory instincts lead but too many to sail under any colours but their own. For our part, we regard the poem as a really remarkable specimen of literary talent, replete with philosophical thought and religious feeling — just the book, in short, we needed in our period of *Science of Religion* — and the general toppling of ancient gods.

The Miltonic verse of the poem is rich, simple, yet powerful, without any of those metaphysical inuendoes at the expense of clear meaning which the subject might seem to beg, and which is so much favored by some of our modern English poets. There is a singular beauty and a force in the whole narrative, that hardly characterizes other recent poems — Mr. Browning's idyl, the "Pheidippides," for one, which in its uncouth hero, the Arcadian goat-god, offers such a sad contrast to the gentle Hindu Saviour. Jar as it may on Christian ears, the theme chosen by Mr. Arnold is one of the grandest possible. It is as worthy of his pen, as the poet has showed himself worthy of the subject. There is a unity of Oriental colouring in the descriptive portion of the work, a truthfulness of motive evinced in the masterly handling of Buddha's character, which are as precious as unique; inasmuch as they present this character for the first time in the history of Western literature, in the totality of its unadulterated beauty. The moral grandour of the hero, that Prince of royal blood, who might have been the "Lord of Lords," yet

"..... let the rich world slip  
Out of his grasp, to hold a beggar's bowl —"

and the development of his philosophy, the fruit of years of solitary meditation and struggle with the mortal "Self," are exquisitely portrayed. Toward the end the poem culminates in a triumphant cry of all nature; a universal hymn at the sight of the World-liberating soul

"..... of the Saviour of the World,  
Lord Buddha — prince Siddhartha styled on earth,  
In Earth, and Heaven and Hell incomparable,  
All-honoured, Wisest, Best, and most Pitiful;  
The Teacher of Nirvana and the Law."

Whatever the subsequent fate of all the world's religions and their founders, the name of Gautama Buddha, or Sakya Muni [he belonged to the family of the Sakyas, who were descendants of Iksakvaku and formed one of the numerous branches of the Solar dynasty; the race which entered India about 2,300 years, B. C. "according to the epic poems of India." *Muni* means a saint or ascetic, hence — Sakyamuni] can never be forgotten; it must always live in the hearts of millions of votaries. His touching history — that of a daily and hourly self abnegation during a period of nearly *eighty* years, has found favour with every one who has studied his history. When one searches the world's records for the purest, the highest ideal of a religious reformer, he seeks no further after reading this Buddha's life. In wisdom, zeal, humility, purity of life and thought; in ardor for the good of mankind; in provocation to do good deeds, to toleration, charity and gentleness, Buddha excels other men as the Himalayas excel other peaks in height. Alone among the founders of religions, he had no word of malediction nor even reproach for those who differed with his views. His doctrines are the embodiment of universal love. Not only our philologists — cold anatomists of time-honoured creeds who scientifically dissect the victims of their critical analysis — but even those who are prepossessed



against his faith, have ever found but words of praise for Gautama. Nothing can be higher or purer than his social and moral code. "That moral code," says Max Muller, ("Buddhism") [Chips from a German Workshop, vol, I. page 217] "taken by itself is one of the most perfect which the world has ever known." In his work "Le Bouddha et sa Religion" (p. 5) Barthelemy St. Hilaire reaches the climax of reverential praise. He does not "hesitate to say" that "among the founders of religions there is no figure more pure or more touching than that of Buddha. *His life has not a stain upon it.* His constant heroism equals his convictions . . . He is the perfect model of all the virtues he preaches; his abnegation and charity, his inalterable gentleness, never forsake him for an instant". . . And, when his end approaches, it is in the arms of his disciples that he dies, "with the serenity of a sage who practised good during his whole life and who is sure to have found — the truth." So true is it, that even the early Roman Catholic saint-makers, with a flippant unconcern for detection by posterity, characteristic of the early periods of Christianity, claimed him as one of their converts, and, under the pseudonym of St. Josaphat, registered him in their "Golden Legend" and "Martyrology" as an orthodox, beatified Catholic saint. At this very day, there stands in Palermo, a church dedicated to Buddha under the name of Divo Josaphat. [See *Spaculum Historiale*, by Vincent de Beauvais, XIII century. Max Muller affirms the story of this transformation of the great founder of Buddhism into one of the numberless Popish Saints. See *Roman Martyrology*, p. 348 — Colonel Yule tells us (*Contemporary Review*, p. 588, July, 1870,) that this story of Balaam and Josaphat was set forth by the command of Pope Gregory XIII., revised by that of Pope Urban VIII., and translated from Latin into English by G. K. of the Society of Jesus.] It is to the discovery of the Buddhist canon, and the *Sacred Historical Books of Ceylon* — partially translated from the ancient Pali by the Hon. J. Turnour — and especially to the able translation of "Lalita

Vistara" by the learned Babu Rajendralal Mitra, that we owe nearly all we know of the true life of this wonderful being, so aptly named by our present author, "The Light of Asia," and now poetry wreaths his grave with asphodels.

Mr. Arnold, as he tells us himself in the *Preface*, has taken his citations from Spence Hardy's work, and has also modified more than one passage in the received narrative. He has sought, he says, "to depict the life and character, and indicate the philosophy of that noble hero and reformer, Prince Gautama of India," and reminds his readers that a generation ago "little or nothing was known in Europe of this great faith of Asia, which had nevertheless existed during 24 centuries, and at this day surpasses, in the number of its followers and the area of its prevalence, any other form of creed. Four hundred and seventy millions of our race live and die in the tenets of Gautama . . . "whose "sublime-teaching is stamped ineffaceably" even "upon modern Brahmanism. More than a third of mankind, therefore, owe their moral and religious ideas to this illustrious prince, whose personality . . . . . cannot but appear the highest, gentlest, holiest and most beneficent in the history of Thought . . . No single actor word mars the perfect purity and tenderness of this Indian teacher. . . ." We will now explain some of the sacred legends under review as we proceed to quote them.

Gautama, also called Savartha-Siddha — abbreviated to Siddhartha according to the Thibetans by his father, whose wish (artha) had been at last fulfilled (siddha) — was born in 624 B. C. at Kapilavastu. [The learned Dr. J. Gerson da Cunha, Member of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bombay, tells as in a "Memoir of the Tooth-Relic of Ceylon" that Kapila, of a part of which the father of Buddha was king and tributary to that of Kosala, was built by the departed sons of Ilkshvaku by the permission of the sage Kapila, whence the name." He also gives another version "to the effect

that Kapilavashtu means, *yellow dwelling*, and yellow . . . . . is the distinctive colour of the principality; and hence it may have been adopted as the badge of the Buddhists, who are sometimes spoken of as of the yellow religion." ] It was on the very spot on which now stands the town of Nagara, near the river Ghoghra, at the foot of the mountains of Nepaul, and about a hundred miles north of Benares, that he passed his early boyhood, and youth. His birth, like that of all founders, is claimed to have been miraculous. Buddha — the highest Wisdom — waits "thrice ten thousand years," then lives again, having determined to help the world, descended from on high, and went down —

".....among the Sakyas  
Under the southward snows of Himalaya  
Where pious people live and a just king

.....

That night the wife of king Suddhodana,  
Maya the queen, asleep beside her Lord,  
Dreamed a strange dream; dreamed that a star from heaven

—

Splendid, six-rayed, in colour rosy pearl,

.....

Shot through the void and, shining into her,  
Entered her womb upon the right ....."

The *Avatar* is born among a thousand wonders. Asita the gray-haired saint, comes, — significantly like old Simeon,— to bless the Divine Babe, and exclaims,

O Babe! I worship! Thou art He!  
. . . . . Thou art Buddh,  
And thou wilt preach the Law and save all flesh  
Who learn the Law, though I shall never hear,

Dying too soon, who lately longed to die;

*Howbeit I have seen Thee . . . . .\**

\*Compare Luke ii. v. 25-30. "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation," exclaims old Simeon.

The child grows; and his future taste for an ascetic life appears clearly in the contemplative mood which he exhibits from his very boyhood. According to the prophesy of Asita, who tells the "sweet Queen" that henceforth she has "grown too sacred for more woe" . . . the mother dies "on the seventh evening" after the birth of Gautama, a painless death. . .

Queen Maya smiling slept, and walked no more,  
Passing content to Trayastrinshas Heaven,  
Where countless Devas worship her and wait  
Attendant on that radiant MOTHERHOOD. . .

At eight years of age, the young Gautama conquers in learned disputations all the Guras and Acharyas. He knows without ever having learned the Scriptures, every sacred script and all the sciences. When he is eighteen, the king, his father, frightened at the prophecy that his only son is to become the destroyer of all the old gods, tries to find a remedy for it in a bride. Indifferent to the hosts of beauties invited to the palace, the Prince "to the surprise of all, takes fire at first glance" of a radiant Sakya girl, his own cousin, Yasodhara, also called "Gopa," the daughter of the king of Kali, Dandapani; because, as it is ultimately discovered by himself, they knew, and loved each other in a previous incarnation.

". . . . . We were not strangers, as to us  
And all it seemed; in ages long gone by  
A hunter's son, playing with forest girls

By Yumun's springs, where Nandadevi stands,  
Sate umpire while they raced beneath the firs —  
Like hares . . . . .

. . . . . but who ran the last  
came first for him, and unto her the boy  
Gave a tame fawn and his heart's love beside.  
And in the wood they lived many glad years,  
And in the wood they undivided died.

.....

Thus I was he and she Yasodhara;  
And while the wheel of birth and death turns round,  
That which hath been must be between us two."

But Gautama has to win his Sakya bride, for, we are told that.

". . . . . It was law  
With Sakyas, when any asked a maid  
Of noble house, fair and desirable,  
He must make good his skill in martial arts  
Against all suitors who would challenge it."

The Prince conquers them all and the lovely Indian girl drawing

"The veil of black and gold across her brow  
Proud pacing past the youths . . . . . —"

hangs on his neck the fragrant wreath, and is proclaimed the Prince's bride. "This veil of black and gold" has a symbolic significance, which no one knows at the time; and which he learns himself but long after when enlightenment comes to him. And then, when questioned, he unriddles the mystery. The lesson contained in this narrative of a Prince having every reason to be proud of his birth, is as suggestive as the verse is picturesque. It

relates to the metempsychosis — the evolution of modern science!

And the World-honoured answered . . . . .

.....

I now remember, myriad rains ago,  
What time I roamed Himala's hanging woods,  
A tiger, with my striped and hungry kind;  
I, who am Buddh, couched in the Kusa grass

.....

Amid the beasts that were my fellows then,  
Met in deep jungle or by reedy jheel,  
A tigress, comeliest of the forest, set  
The males at war; her hide was lit with gold,  
Black-broidered like the veil Yasodbara  
Wore for me; hot the strife waxed in that wood  
With tooth and claw, while underneath a neem  
The fair beast watched us bleed, thus fiercely wooed.  
And I remember, at the end she came  
Snarling past this and that torn forest lord  
Which I had conquered, and with fawning jaws  
Licked my quick-heaving flank, and with me went  
Into the wild with proud steps, amorously  
The wheel of birth and death turns low and high.'

And further on, we find again the following lines upon the same question, lines to which neither a Kabalist, Pythagorean, a Shakespeare's Hamlet, nor yet Mr. Darwin could take exception. They describe the mental state of the Prince when, finding nothing stable, nothing real upon earth, and ever pondering upon the dreary problems of life and death, he determines upon sacrificing himself for mankind; none of whom, whether Vishnu, Shiva, Surya or any other god, can ever save from

"The aches of life, the stings of love and loss,

The fiery fever and the ague shake,  
The slow, dull, sinking into withered age,  
The horrible dark death — and what beyond  
Waits — till the whirling wheel comes up again,  
And new lives bring new sorrows to be borne,  
New generations for the now desires  
Which have their end in the old mockeries?

.....

.....Our Scriptures truly seem to teach  
That — once, and wheresoo'er and whence begun —  
Life runs its rounds of living, climbing up  
From mote, and gnat, and worm, reptile and fish,  
Bird and shagged beast, man, demon, deva, god,  
To clod and mote again; so are we kin  
To all that is . . . . .

Dreading the consequences of such a train of thought,  
Suddhodana builds three luxurious palaces, one within the other,  
and confines the princely couple in it;

The king commanded that within those walls  
No mention should be made of death or age,  
Sorrow, or pain, or sickness . . . . .  
And every dawn the dying rose was plucked,  
The dead leaves hid, all evil sights removed:  
For said the King, "If he shall pass his youth  
Far from such things as move to wistfulness,  
And brooding on the empty eggs of thought,  
The shadow of this fate, too vast for man,  
May fade, belike, and I shall see him grow  
To that great stature of fair sovereignty  
When he shall rule all lands — if he will rule —  
The King of kings and glory of his time."  
Wherefore, around that pleasant prison-house —

Where love was gaoler and delights its bars,  
But far removed from sight — the King bade build  
A massive wall, and in the wall a gate  
With brazen folding-doors, which but to roll  
Back on their hinges asked a hundred arms;  
Also the noise of that prodigious gate  
Opening, was heard full half a yojana,  
And inside this another gate be made,  
And yet within another — through the three  
Must one pass if he quit that Pleasure-house.  
Three mighty gates there were, bolted and barred,  
And over each was set a faithful watch;  
And the King's order said, "Suffer no man  
To pass the gates, though he should be the Prince;  
This on your lives — even though it be my son."

But alas, for human precaution, Gautama's destiny was in the power of the Devas. When the King's vigilance was relaxed, and the Prince permitted to go outside the palaces for a drive,

"Yea" spake the careful King, " 'tis time he see!"  
But let the criers go about and bid  
My city deck itself, so there be met  
No noisome sight; and let none blind or maimed  
None that is sick or stricken deep in years,  
No leper, and no feeble folk come forth."

And yet, the first thing that met the eye of Gautama, was: —

An old, old man, whose shrivelled skin, sun-tanned,  
Clung like a beast's hide to his fleshless bones.  
Bent was his back with load of many days,

.....

Wagging with palsy  
..... One skinny hand



Clutched a worn staff to prop his quavering limbs,

.....  
'Alms! moaned he, 'give, good people! for I die  
To-morrow or the next day' . . . . .

It was a Deva, who had assumed that form of suffering humanity.  
Horrified at the sight, the Prince rode back, and gave himself  
entirely to his sad reflexions. And that night,

Lulled on the dark breasts of Yasodhara,  
Her fond hands fanning slow his sleeping lids,  
He would start up and cry, 'My world! Oh, world!  
I hear! I know! I come! And she would ask,  
"What ails my Lord?" with large eyes terror-struck;  
For at such times the pity in his look  
Was awful and his visage like a god's. . . . .

"The voices of the spirits," the "wandering winds," and the Devas  
ever sung to him, murmuring softly in his ears of the sorrows of  
mortal life, which is —

"A moan, a sigh, a sob, a storm, a strife."  
Yea! "who shall shut out Fate."

Gautama is again moved to see the world beyond the gates of his  
palaces, and meets with a poor wretch stricken by a deadly  
plague; and finally, with a bamboo bier, on which lay stretched —

". . . . . Stark and stiff, feet foremost, lean,  
Chapfallen, sightless, hollow-flanked, a-grin,  
Sprinkled with red and yellow dust — the Dead . . . . ."

whom the mourners carried to where a pile was built near a  
stream, and immediately set —

"The red flame to the corners four, which crept,  
And licked, and flickered, finding out his flesh

And feeding on it with swift hissing tongues,  
And crackle of parched skin, and snap of joint;  
Till the fat smoke thinned and the ashes sank  
scarlet and grey, with here and there a bone  
White midst the grey — THE TOTAL OF THE MAN.  
Then spake the Prince: 'Is this the and which comes  
To all who live?'

'This is the end that comes  
To all,' quoth Channa;  
. . . . . Oh suffering world,  
. . . . . I would not let one cry  
Whom I could save! How can it be that Brahm  
Would make a world and keep it miserable,  
Since, it all-powerful, he leaves it so,  
He is not good, and if not powerful,  
He is not God! — Channa! lead home again!  
It is enough! mine eyes have seen enough!" . . . . .

During that night, the Princess Yasodhara has a fearful dream —

"In slumber I beheld three sights of dread,  
. . . . . With thought whereof my heart is throbbing yet," . . . . .

She tells her lord she heard a

" . . . . . voice of fear  
Crying 'The time is nigh! the time is nigh!'  
Thereat the third dream came; for when I sought  
Thy side, sweet Lord! ah on our bed there lay  
An unpressed pillow and an empty robe —  
Nothing of thee but those! . . . . ."

The time was come indeed. That very night, the Prince is represented as giving up for mankind more than his throne and glory — more than his mortal life, for he sacrifices his very

heart's blood, the mother of his unborn babe. The scene of the departure is one of the most masterly of the whole poem.

Siddhartha has quieted his young wife and watches over, but

..... "with the whispers of the gloom  
Came to his ears again that warning song,  
As when the Devas spoke upon the wind:  
And sorely Gods were round about the place  
Watching our Lord, who watched the shining stars,  
'I will depart,' he spake 'the hour is come! .....  
My Chariot shall not roll with bloody wheels  
From victory to victory, till earth  
Wears the red record of my name. I choose  
To tread its paths with patient, stainless feet,  
Making its dust my bed, its loneliest wastes  
My dwelling, and its meanest things my mates:  
Clad in no prouder garb than outcasts wear,  
Fed with no meats save what the charitable  
Give of their will, sheltered by no more pomp  
Than the dim cave lends or the jungle-bush.  
This will I do because the woful cry  
Of life and all flesh living cometh up  
Into my ears, and all my soul is full  
Of pity for the sickness of this world;  
Which I will heal, if healing may be found  
By uttermost renouncing and strong strife.

".....

Oh, summoning stars! I come! Oh, mournful earth!  
For thee and thine I lay aside my youth,  
My throne, my joys, my golden days, my nights,  
My happy palace — and thine arms, sweet Queen!  
Harder to put aside than all the rest!

Yet thee, too, I shall save, saving this earth. . .  
My child, the hidden blossom of our loves,  
Whom if I wait to bless my mind will fail.  
Wife! child! father! and people! ye must share  
A little while the anguish of this hour  
That light may break and all flesh learn the Law!"

.....  
.....

Then to the saddle lightly leaping, he  
Touched the arched crest, and Kantaka sprang forth  
With armed hoofs sparkling on the stones and ring  
Of champing bit; but none did hear that sound,  
For that the Suddha Devas, gathering near,  
Plucked the red mohra-flowers and strewed them thick  
Under big tread, while hands invisible  
Muffled the ringing bit and bridle chains. . . . .  
But when they reached the gate  
Of tripled brass — which hardly fivescore men  
Served to unbar and open — lo! the doors  
Rolled back all silently, though one might hear  
In daytime two *koss* off the thunderous roar  
Of those grim hinges and unwieldy plates.  
Also the middle and outer gates  
Unfolded each their monstrous portals thus  
In silence as Siddartha and his steed  
Drew near; while underneath their shadow lay  
Silent as dead men, all those chosen guards —:  
The lattice and sword let fall, the shields unbraced,  
Captains and soldiers — for there came a wind,  
Drowsier than blows o'er Malwa's fields of sleep,  
Before the Prince's path, which, being breathed,  
Lolled every sense aswoon; and so he passed

Free from the palace."

A sacred legend is interwoven in the poem, which does not belong properly to the life of Gautama Buddha but pertains to the legendary myths of the monastic poetry of Buddhism — the Jatakas, or the previous transmigrations of the Prince Siddhartha. It is so touching, and Indian drought so masterfully described that we quote a few lines from it. A spot is yet shown at Attock, near Benares, where the Prince moved to an inexpressible pity by the hunger of a tigress and her cubs and, having nothing else to give — gave her his own body to devour! . . .

Drought withered all the land: the young rice died  
Ere it could hide a quail; in forest glades  
A fierce sun sucked the pools; grasses and herbs  
Sickened, and all the woodland creatures fled  
Scattering for sustenance. At such a time,  
Between the hot walls of a nullah, stretched  
On naked stones, our Lord spied, as he passed,  
A starving tigress. Hunger in her orbs  
Glared with green flame, her dry tongue lolled a span  
Beyond the gasping jaws and shrivelled jowl:  
Her painted hide hung wrinkled on her ribs,  
As when between the rafters sinks a thatch  
Rotten with rains; and at the poor lean dugs  
Two cubs, whining with famine, tugged and sucked.  
Mumbling those milkless teats which rendered naught,  
While she, their gaunt dam, licked full motherly  
The clamorous twins, yielding her flank to them  
With moaning throat, and love stronger than want,  
Softening the first of that wild cry wherewith  
She laid her famished muzzle to the sand  
And roared a savage thunder peal of woe.  
Seeing which bitter strait, and heeding nought

Save the immense compassion of a Buddh,  
Our Lord bethought, "There is no other way  
To help this murderess of the woods but one.  
By sunset these will die, having no meat:  
There is no living heart will pity her,  
Bloody with ravin, lean for lack of blood.  
Lo! if I feed her, who shall lose but I,  
And how can love lose doing of its kind  
Even to the uttermost?" So saying, Buddh  
Silently laid aside sandals and staff,  
His sacred thread, turban, and cloth, and came  
Forth from behind the milk-bush on the sand,  
Saying, "Ho! mother, here is meat for thee!"  
Whereat, the perishing beast yelped hoarse and shrill,  
Sprang from her cubs, and hurling to the earth  
That willing victim, had her feast of him  
With all the crooked daggers of her claws  
Rending his flesh, and all her yellow fangs  
Bathed in his blood: the great cat's burning breath  
Mixed with the last sigh of such fearless love. . . . .

"Purify the mind; abstain from vice; and practice virtue, is the essence of Buddhism." Gautama preached his first sermon in the Gazell-grove, near Benares. Like all other founders, he is tempted and comes out victorious. The snare of Mara (the deity of sin, love, and death) are unavailing — He comes off a conqueror.

The ten chief Sins came — Mara's mighty ones,  
Angels of evil — Attavada first,  
The Sin of Self, who in the Universe  
As in a mirror sees her fond face shown  
And crying "I" would have the world say "I,"  
And all things perish so if she endure.

.....

But quoth our Lord "Thou hast no part with me,  
False Visikitcha, subtlest of man's foes."  
And third came she who gives dark creeds their power,  
Silabbat-paramasa, sorceress,  
Draped fair in many lands as lowly Faith,  
But ever juggling souls with rites and prayers;  
The keeper of those keys which lock up Hells  
And open Heavens. "Wilt thou dare," she said,  
"Put by our sacred books, dethrone our gods,  
Unpeople all the temples, shaking down  
That law which feeds the priests and props the realms?"  
But Buddha answered "What thou bidd'st me keep  
Is form which passes, but the free truth stands;  
Get thee unto thy darkness." Next there drew  
Gallantly nigh a braver Tempter, he,  
Kama, the King of passions, . . .

.....

But even Kama-dhatu (the love principle, has no hold upon the holy ascetic. Rested for seven years, by the river Nairanjana, entirely abstracted in meditation under his Bodhi-tree, in the forest of Uruwela, he had already half-raised himself to the true condition of a Buddha. He has long ceased paying attention to the mere form — the Rupa. . . . . And, though the "Lords of Hell" had descended. themselves

"To tempt the Master.  
But Buddh heeded not,  
Sitting serene, with perfect virtue walled. . .

for, on this very night

"In the third watch,  
The earth being still, the hellish legions fled,  
A soft air breathing from the sinking moon,

Our Lord attained *Samma-Sambuddh*; he saw  
By light which shines beyond our mortal ken  
The line of all his lives *in all the worlds*,  
Far back and farther back and farthest yet,  
Five hundred lives and fifty . . . . .

. . . . . Also Buddha saw  
How new life reaps what the old life did sow  
And in the middle watch  
Our Lord attained Abhidjna — insight vast

.....

But when the fourth watch came the secret came  
Of sorrow, which with evil bears the law . . . . .

And then follows the magnificent enumeration of all the evils of  
life, of birth, growth, decay, and selfishness; of *Avidya* — or  
Delusion; *Sankhara* — perverse tendencies; *Namarupa* or the  
local form of the being born, and so on, till *karma* or the sum total  
of the soul, its deeds, its thoughts . . . . . It was on that night that  
the Reformed though alive and yet of this world reached the last  
Path to Nirvana, which leads to that supreme state of mind when .

. . . . .

"The aching craze to live ends, and life glides —  
Lifeless — to nameless quiet, nameless joy,  
Blessed NIRVANA — sinless, stirless rest —  
That change which never changes!"  
Lo! the Dawn  
Sprang with Buddh's Victory. . .

.....

So glad the World was — though it wist not why —  
That over desolate wastes went swooning songs  
Of mirth, the voice of bodiless Prets and Bhuts



Foreseeing Buddh; and Devas in the air  
Cried "It is finished, finished!" and the priests  
Stood with the wondering people in the streets  
Watching those golden splendours flood the sky  
And saying "There hath happed some mighty thing."  
Also in Ran and Jungle grew that day  
Friendship amongst the creatures; spotted deer  
Browsed fearless where the tigress fed her cubs,  
And cheetahs lapped the pool beside the bucks;  
Under the eagle's rock the brown hares scoured  
While his fierce beak but preened an idle wing;  
The snake sunned all his jewels in the beam  
With deadly fangs in sheath; the shrike let pass  
The nestling finch; the emerald halcyons  
Sate dreaming while the fishes played beneath,  
Nor hawked the merops, though the butterflies —  
Crimson and blue and amber — fitted thick  
Around his perch; the Spirit of our Lord  
Lay potent upon man and bird and beast,  
Even while he mused under that Bodhi-tree,  
Glorified with the Conquest carried for all  
And lightened by a Light greater than Day's.  
Then he arose — radiant, rejoicing, strong —  
Beneath the Tree, and lifting high his voice  
Spake this, in hearing of all Times and Worlds. . .  
"Many a house of Life  
Hath held me — seeking ever him who wrought  
These prisons of the senses, sorrow-fraught;  
Sore was my ceaseless strife!  
But now,  
Thou Builder of this Tabernacle — Thou!  
I know Thee! Never shalt thou build again  
These walls of pain,

.....  
Broken thy house is, and the ridge-pole split!  
Delusion fashioned it!  
Safe pass I thence — Deliverance to obtain."

"It is difficult to be rich and learn the Way" . . . used to say the master. But "my law is one of grace for all, . . . for rich and poor . . . come to me, and I will raise Arhats above the gods". . . Obedient to his call, millions upon millions have followed the Lord expecting their reward through no other mediator than a course of undeviating virtue, an unwavering observance of the path of duty. We must bear in mind that Buddhism from its beginning has changed the moral aspect of not only India but of nearly the whole of Asia; and that, breaking up its most cruel customs, it became a blessing to the countless millions of the East — of our brothers. It was at the ripe age of three score and ten, that Buddha felt his end approaching. He was then close to Kusinagara (Kasia) near one of the branches of the Ganges, called Atehiravati, when feeling tired he seated himself under a canopy of sal trees. Turning his eyes in the direction of Rajagriha, the capital of Magadha, he had murmured prophetically the day before: "This is the last time that I see this city and the throne of diamonds," and, his prophecy became accomplished at the following dawn. His vital strength failed, and — he was no more. He had indeed reached Nirvana.

"The Buddha died, the great Tathagato,  
Even as man 'mongst men, fulfilling all:  
And how a thousand thousand crores since then  
Have trod the Path which leads whither he went  
Unto NIRVANA where the Silence Lives."

No need of remarking that Mr. Arnold's views are those of most of the Orientalists of to-day, who have, at last, arrived at the

conclusion that Nirvana — whatever it may mean philologically — philosophically and logically is anything but *annihilation*. The views taken in the poem — says the author — of "Nirvana," "Dharma," "Karma" and the other chief features of Buddhism, "are . . . the fruits of considerable study, and also of a firm conviction that a third of mankind would never have been brought to believe in blank abstraction, or in Nothingness as the issue and crown of Being." The poem, therefore, comes to a close with the following fervent appeal: —

"Ah! Blessed Lord! Oh, High Deliverer!  
Forgive this feeble script, which doth thee wrong,  
Measuring with little wit thy lofty Love.  
Ah! Lover! Brother! Guide! Lamp of the Law!  
I take my refuge in Thy name and Thee!  
I take my refuge in thy Law of Good;  
I take my refuge in thy Order! OM!  
The dew is on the lotas! — Rise Great Sun!  
And lift my leaf and mix me with the wave.  
OM MANI PADME HUM, the Sunrise comes!  
The Dewdrop slips into the Shining Sea!"

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## The Magnetic Chain

We have read with great interest the first number of a new French journal devoted to the science of Mesmerism, or, as it is called Animal Magnetism, which has been kindly sent us by that venerable and most illustrious practitioner of that science, the Baron du Potet, of Paris. Its title is *La Chaine Magnetique* (the Magnetic Chain). After long years of comparative indifference, caused by the encroachments of sceptical science, this fascinating subject is again absorbing a large share of the attention of Western students of Psychology. Mesmerism is the very key to the mystery of man's interior nature; and enables one familiar with its laws to understand not only the phenomena of Western Spiritualism, but also that vast subject — so vast as to embrace every branch of Occultism within itself — of Eastern Magic. The whole object of the Hindu *Yogi* is to bring into activity his interior power, to make himself ruler over physical self and over everything else besides. That the developed *yogi* can influence, sometimes control the operations of vegetable and animal life, proves that the soul within his body has an intimate relationship with the soul of all other things. Mesmerism goes far towards teaching us how to read this occult secret; and Baron Reichenbach's great discovery of *Odyle* or *Od* force, together with Professor Buchanan's *Psychometry*, and the recent advances in electrical and magnetic science complete the demonstration. The THEOSOPHIST will give great attention to all these — Mesmerism, the laws of *Od*, Psychometry, etc. In this connection we give translated extracts from *La Chaine Magnetique* that will repay perusal. There is a great truth in what Baron du Potet says about the Mesmeric fluid: "It is no utopian theory, but a universal Force, ever the same; which we will irrefutably prove . . . . . A law of

nature as positive as electricity, yet different from it; as real as night and day. A law of which physicians, notwithstanding all their learning and science, have hitherto been ignorant. Only with a knowledge of magnetism does it become possible to prolong life and heal the sick. Physicians must study it some day or — cease to be regarded as physicians." Though now almost a nonogenarian, the Baron's intellect is as clear and his courageous devotion to his favorite Science as ardent as when, in the year 1826, he appeared before the French Academy of Medicine and experimentally demonstrated the reality of animal magnetism. France, the mother of many great men of science, has produced few greater than du Potet.

A disciple of the Baron's — a Mr. Saladin of Tarascon-sur-Rhone — reporting to him the results of recent magnetic experiments for the cure of disease, says: Once, while magnetizing my wife, I made a powerful effort of my will to project the magnetic fluid, when I felt streaming from each of my finger-tips as it were little threads of cool breeze, such as might come from the mouth of an opened air-bag. My wife distinctly felt this singular breeze, and, what is still more strange, the servant girl, when told to interpose her hand between my own hand and my wife's body, and asked what she felt, replied that 'it seemed as though something were blowing from the tips of my fingers.' The peculiar phenomenon here indicated has often been noticed in therapeutic magnetization; it is the vital force, intensely concentrated by the magnetizer's will, pouring out of his system into the patient's. The blowing of a cool breeze over the hands and faces of persons present, is also frequently observed at spiritualistic 'circles.'

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## **Spiritualism at Simla**

An esteemed young English lady of Simla, interested in Occultism, sends us some interesting narratives of psychological experiences which may safely be copied by our Western contemporaries. Our correspondent is perfectly trustworthy and has a place in the highest social circle. We hope to give from time to time many examples of similar mystical adventure by Europeans in Eastern countries.

Among other papers promised for the THEOSOPHIST is one by a British officer, upon curious phase of bhuta worship among a very primitive Indian tribe; and another upon the same custom, in another locality, by a well-known Native scholar. The value of such articles as these latter is that they afford to the psychologist material for comparison with the current Western mediumistic phenomena. Heretofore, there have been, we may say, very few observations upon East Indian spiritualism, of any scientific value. The observers have mainly been incompetent by reason of either bigotry, moral cowardice, or sceptical bias. The exceptions have but proved the rule. Few, indeed, are they who, seeing psychical phenomena, have the moral courage to tell the whole truth about them.

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### **THE YOUNG LADY'S STORY.**

There is a bangalow in Kussowlie called 'The Abbey;' and one year some friends of mine had taken this house for a season, and I went to stay with them for a short while. My friends told me the house was haunted by the ghost of a lady, who always appeared dressed in a white silk dress. This lady did really live, a great many years ago, and was a very wicked woman, as far as I

remember the story. Whether she was murdered, or whether she put an end to herself, I cannot say, but she was not buried in consecrated ground, and for this reason, it was said, her spirit cannot rest. Her grave may be seen by anybody, for it is still at Kussowlie. When my friends told me this I laughed, and said I did not believe in ghosts; so they showed me a small room divided from the drawing-room by a door, which they told me was an especial pet of the ghost's; and that after it got dark, they always had to keep it shut and they dared me to go into that room at 10 P. M. one night. I said I would; so at 10 P. M. I lighted a candle, and went into the room. It was small, had no cupboards, and only one sofa, and one table in the centre. I looked under the table and under the sofa, then I shut the door, and blowing out my candle, sat down to await the appearance of the ghost. In a little while I heard the rustle of a silk dress, though I could see nothing. I got up, and backed towards the door, and as I backed, I could feel something coming towards me. At last I got to the door and threw it wide open and rushed into the drawing room, leaving the door wide open to see if the ghost would follow after me. I sat down by the fire, and in a little while, my courage returning, I thought I would go again into the little room; but upon trying the door, I *found it was fast shut, and I could not open it*, so I went to bed. Another evening, a lady friend and I were sitting at a small round table with a lamp, reading; all of a sudden the light was blown out, and we were left in the dark. As soon as lights could be procured, it was found that the globe of the lamp had disappeared, and from that day to this, it has never been found. The ghost walks over the whole house at night, and has been seen in different rooms *by different* people. Kussowlie is between 30 and 40 miles away from Simla, in the direction of the plains.

I may also tell you of something that came under the observation of my mother, some twenty years ago. An acquaintance of hers, a

young Mr. W----, was on a ship which in a terrific gale was wrecked on an island off the coast of Africa. News of the disaster was brought to England by another ship and it was supposed that every soul on board had been lost. Mr. W----'s relatives went into mourning, but his mother would not, for she was convinced that he had escaped. And as a matter of record she put into writing an account of what she had seen in a dream. The whole scene of the shipwreck had appeared to her as though she were an eye-witness. She had seen her son and another man dashed by the surf upon a rock whence they had managed to crawl up to a place of safety. For two whole days they sat there without food or water, not daring to move for fear of being carried off again by the surges. Finally they were picked up by a foreign vessel and carried to Portugal, whence they were just then taking ship to England. The mother's vision was shortly corroborated to the very letter; and the son, arriving at home, said that if his mother had been present in body she could not have more accurately described the circumstances.

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### **A FATHER'S WARNING.**

The events I shall now relate occurred in a family of our acquaintance. A Mr. P---- had lost by consumption a wife whom he devotedly loved, and, one after another, several children. At last but one daughter remained, and upon her, naturally enough, centered all his affections. She was a delicate girl, and being threatened with the same fate which had so cruelly carried away her mother and sisters, her father took her to live in Italy for change of climate. This girl grew to be about 17 or 18 when the father had to go over to London on business; so he left her with friends, and many and strict were his injunctions to them as to how she was to be looked after, and taken care of. Well, he went,



and whilst he was away, a fancy ball was to take place, to which these friends were going, and which of course, the girl also wished to attend. So they all wrote over to the father and begged and entreated she should be allowed to go, promising that they would take great care of her, and see that she did not get a chill, Much against his will, the poor man consented, and she went to the ball. Some little time after, the father was awakened one night, by the curtains at the foot of his bed being drawn aside, and there, to his astonishment, stood his daughter, in her fancy dress. He could not move, or say anything, but he looked at her attentively. She smiled, closed the curtains, and disappeared. He jumped up in great agitation, put down the date and the hour, and then wrote to Italy, asking after his daughter's health, giving a description of her dress and ornaments. Poor man; the next thing he heard was that the young lady had caught cold and died the very night she appeared to him in London. The friends said that even had he seen the dress, he could not have described everything more minutely.

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### **THE MIDDIE'S STORY.**

Since the THEOSOPHIST is collecting authenticated stories of ghosts, I may tell you of a personal adventure of mine when I was a midshipman on board Her Majesty's frigate ----- . One of the sailors in the larboard watch had been washed overboard in a storm, as he was clinging for life to one of the boats. The affair had been quite forgotten, when a hue and cry was raised that there was a ghost near this boat, and none of the men would go near the place after dark. Several, if not all of the men had seen it. I laughed at the story, however, for I had not a whit of confidence in these nonsensical tales of ghosts. So, some of our mess who pretended to have seen the apparition, dared me to go up to it at

*night* and accost it. I agreed to go, and took my revolver, loaded, with me. When at the appointed hour, I came near the boat, there certainly did seem to be a mist, or shadow which looked like a man, and this shadow turned and looked at me. I did not give it time to look twice before I fired two shots at it. Imagine, if you can, my feeling, when the shadow gently glided under the boat, (which was bottom upwards,) and disappeared. When this thing looked at me, I cannot tell you why, but I felt quite cold, and odd, and if it was not a ghost, it looked very like one. At any rate, I had had enough of shooting at it. My adventure of course greatly deepened the superstitious feeling among the sailors; and so, as the spectre was seen again the next night, they just tossed that boat overboard, and then they were never troubled further.

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## **Buddhistic Exegesis**

We feel honored in being able to lay before Western thinkers, preliminary contributions from two of the most eminent priests of the religion of Buddha, now living. They are H. Sumangala, High Priest of Adam's Peak, Ceylon, the most venerated of Buddhistic monasteries; and Mohottiwatte Gunamanda, superior of the Vihare Dipadattama, at Colombo, Ceylon. The former is recognized by European philologists as the most learned of all the representatives of his faith; in fact, Dr. Muir of Edinburgh recently called him a polyglot, so extensive and accurate is his knowledge of languages and philosophies. His eminence as an instructor is also shown in his occupancy of the position of President of the Elu, Pali, and Sanskrit, College Vidyodaya. As a preacher and expositor of doctrine he is no less distinguished, while his personal character is so pure and winsome that even the bigotted enemies of his religion vie with each other in praising him. In the year 1867 a synod of the Buddhist clergy, called to fix the text of the *Sutras* and *Pitakas*, was presided over by him. When it was decided to reorganize the Theosophical Society upon the basis of a Universal Brotherhood of humanity, uniting men of all creeds in an effort to spread throughout the world the basic principles of a true religion, he cheerfully gave his adhesion to the movement, and accepted a place in the General Council; thus dignifying the Society and securing it the good-will of Buddhists, the world over. Far from asking that it should be given a sectarian character and made a propaganda of Buddhism, he sent his "respectful and fraternal salutation to our brethren in Bombay" in his letter of acceptance, and has shown from first to last the disposition to assist unreservedly and cordially our labours.

Who our other contributor is, the Christian world, or at any rate that portion of it with which the Missionaries in Ceylon have relations, very well know. For years he has been the bravest, subtlest, wisest, and most renowned champion of Buddha's Doctrine, in Ceylon. Six, or more times he has met the chosen debaters of the Missionaries before vast assemblages of natives, to discuss the respective merits of the two religions, and was never yet worsted. In fact, it is only too evident in the admissions of Christian papers that he silenced his adversaries by his searching analysis of Bible history and doctrines, and his exposition of the Law of Buddha. A pamphlet edition of the report of one of these great debates was published at London and Boston, two years ago, under the title "Buddhism and Christianity Face to Face," which should be read by all for whom the subject has an interest. We are promised a translation of another similar debate from the careful report made at the time in the Sinhalese language. In all, Priest Mohottiwatte — or, as he is popularly termed in Ceylon, *Megittuwatte* — has preached over 5,000 discourses upon the Buddhistic religion, and devoted the whole strength of his noble heart to his sacred mission. His interest in our Society is as sincere as Sumangala's, and his ardor in promoting its influences characteristic of all he does. He has no reluctance whatever to co-operate with our Aryan, Brahmanic, Parsi, Jain, and Hebrew members in carrying on our work. "We feel happier than can be described," he writes, "to learn about the cordial receptions given you by the brothers in London and by the natives of India. I am sorry that, without putting my congregation and myself to great inconvenience, I cannot be present in person at the meeting with Swami Dayanand. But I enclose a letter signed by the Rev. Sumangala, the High Priest, and myself, recording our unqualified approbation of your kind suggestion to place us as representatives of our faith in your Oriental Council." In another letter to Col. Olcott, he says, "We are

rejoiced to know that such a learned, good and influential gentleman as Dayanand Saraswati Swami, is every way favorably disposed towards you." Such men as these two worthily exemplify the divine doctrines of Sakkyā Muni.

In the whole experience of the officers of the Theosophical Society, no incident has been more cheering and delightful, than the friendliness with which their advances have been met by the Buddhists. If we had been brothers long separated, our greeting could not have been warmer. Says the venerable Chief Priest Sumana Tissa, of the Paramananda Vihare, near Point de Galle — now in his sixty-sixth year: "To use an Oriental simile, I and my many disciples anxiously wait your arrival, as a swarm of peacocks joyously long for the downpour of a shower." We trust that our duties will permit us before long to meet all our Sinhalese brothers in person, and exchange congratulations over the encouraging prospects of our peaceful humanitarian mission.

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## A Thunder Cloud with Silver Lining

"All comes in good time to him who knows to wait," says the proverb. The small party of New York Theosophists, who arrived at Bombay eight months ago, had scarcely enjoyed the friendly greeting of the natives when they received the most unmerited and bitter insult of an accusation of political intrigue, followed by a shower of abuse and slander! We had come with the best and purest of intentions — however utopian, exaggerated, and even ill-timed, they may have seemed to the indifferent. But lo! who hath "believed our report?" Like Israel, the allegorical man of sorrow of Isaiah, we saw ourselves for no fault of ours "numbered with the transgressors," and "bruised for the iniquities" of one for whose race we had come to offer our mite of work, and were ready to devote our time and our very lives. This one, whose name must never pollute the columns of this journal, showed us *his* gratitude by warning the police that we were come with some dark political purpose, and accusing us of being *spies* — that is to say, the vile of the vile — the *mangs* of the social system. But now, as the last thunder-clap of the monsoon is dying away, our horizon too is cleared of its dark clouds. Thanks to the noble and unselfish editions of an English friend at Simla, the matter has been brought before His Excellency, the Viceroy. The sequel is told in the Allahabad *Pioneer*, of October 11th, as follows:

"It will be remembered that in the beginning of this year, their feelings were deeply hurt on the occasion of a trip they made up-country by an insulting espionage set on foot against them by the police. It appears that some groundless calamity had preceded them to this country, and that the police put a very clumsy construction upon certain orders

they received from Government respecting the new arrivals. However, since then the subject has been brought especially to the Viceroy's notice, and, satisfied that the Theosophists were *misrepresented in the first instance*, he has given formal orders, through the Political Department, to the effect that they are not to be any longer subject to interference."

From the bottom of our hearts we thank his Lordship for having with one single word rubbed the vile stain off our reputations. We thank Lord Lytton rather than the Viceroy, the *gentleman* who hastened to redress a wrong that the Viceroy might have overlooked. The high official has but done an act of justice, and would not have been wholly blameable if, under the temporary pressure of political work of the highest importance, he had put it off to the Greek kalends. We love to feel that we owe this debt of gratitude to the son of one whose memory will ever be clear and sacred to the heart of every true theosophist; to the son of the author of "Zanoni," "A Strange Story," "The Coming Race," and, the "House, and the Brain;" one who ranked higher than any other in the small number of genuine mystical writers, for he knew what he was talking about, which is more than can be said of other writers in this department of literature. Once more we thank Lord Lytton for having prompted the Viceroy.

And now, for the last time in these columns, as we hope, we will say a few words more in reference to this sad page in the history of our Society. We first wish to thank those many outside friends, as well as Fellows of the Theosophical Society, who, regardless of the danger of associating with strangers so much ostracized, kept true to us throughout the long trial, scorning to abandon us even at the risk of loss of employment, or of personal disgrace. Honour to them; most gladly would we, were it permitted, write their names for the information of our Western Fellows. But we can

never forget, on the other hand, the two or three instances of shameful, cowardly desertion, that have occurred. They were among those who had talked the most, who had most loudly protested their changeless and eternal devotion to us; who called us "brothers" near and dear to their hearts; had offered us their houses, their carriages, and the contents of their purses — if we would only accept them — which we did not. At the first apprehension that idle rumour might become a reality, these were the swiftest to desert us. One, especially, whose name we will refrain from mentioning, though we would have a perfect right to do so, acted towards us in the most disgraceful way. At the first hint from an official superior, cowering like a whipped hound before a danger more imaginary than real, he hastened to repudiate not only his "brothers," but even to pointedly disclaim the remotest connection with the Theosophical Society, and conspicuously published this repudiation in an Anglo-Vernacular paper!

To him, we have no word to say, but as a lesson for such others as in the future may feel like imitating him, we will quote these words of an English gentleman (not the lowest among Govt. officials) who has since joined our Society, who writes us in reference to this personage:

"If I were you, I would bless my stars that such a sneak left our Society of his own accord before he put us to the trouble of expelling him. *Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*. A Fellow who, after pledging his *word of honour*\* to protect the interest of his society, 'also the honour of a Brother Fellow,' even 'at the peril of his life,' (*Rules, Art II.*) breaks it and turns traitor without any other cause than his own shameful cowardice, offers but a poor guarantee for his loyalty even to the Government that he has sworn allegiance to . . . . ."



In all their search after strong words to fling at it, our enemies never once thought of charging the Theosophical Society with harboring and honoring poltroons.

\*The Theosophical Society requires no oaths, as it deems no pledge more binding than the word of honour. — *Ed.*

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THEOSOPHICAL UNIVERSITY PRESS ONLINE EDITION

## Cross and Fire

Perhaps the most widespread and universal among the symbols in the old astronomical systems, which have passed down the stream of time to our century, and have left traces everywhere in the Christian religion as elsewhere, — are the Cross and the Fire — the latter, the emblem of the Sun. The ancient Aryans had them both as the symbols of Agni. Whenever the ancient Hindu devotee desired to worship Agni — says E. Burnouf (*Science des Religions*, c. 10) — he arranged two pieces of wood in the form of a cross, and, by a peculiar whirling and friction obtained fire for his sacrifice. As a symbol, it is called *Swastica*, and, as an instrument manufactured out of a sacred tree and in possession of every Brahmin, it is known as *Arani*.

The Scandinavians had the same sign and called it Thor's Hammer, as bearing a mysterious magneto-electric relation to Thor, the god of thunder, who, like Jupiter armed with his thunderbolts, holds likewise in his hand this ensign of power, over not only mortals but also the mischievous spirits of the elements, over which he presides. In Masonry it appears in the form of the grand master's mallet; at Allahabad it may be seen on the Fort as the Jaina Cross, or the Talisman of the Jaina Kings; and the gavel of the modern judge is no more than this *crux dissamulata* — as de Rossi, the archaeologist calls it; for the gavel is the sign of power and strength, as the hammer represented the might of Thor, who, in the Norse legends splits a rock with it, and kills Medgar. Dr. Schliemann found it in *terra cotta* disks, on the site, as he believes, of ancient Troy, in the lowest strata of his excavations; which indicated, according to Dr. Lundy, "an Aryan civilization long anterior to the Greek — say from two to three thousand years B. C." Burnouf calls it the oldest form of the cross

known, and affirms that it is found personified in the ancient religion of the Greeks under the figure of Prometheus 'the fire-bearer,' crucified on mount Caucasus, while the celestial bird — the *Cyena* of the Vedic hymns, — daily devours his entrails. Boldetti, (*Osservazioni* I., 15, p. 60) gives a copy from the painting in the cemetery of St. Sebastian, representing a Christian convert and grave-digger, named Diogenes, who wears on both his legs and right arm the signs of the *Swastica*. The Mexicans and the Peruvians had it, and it is found as the sacred Tau in the oldest tombs of Egypt.

It is, to say the least, a strange coincidence, remarked even by some Christian clergymen, that *Agnus Dei*, the Lamb of God, should have the symbols, identical with the Hindu God Agni. While *Agnus Dei* expiates and takes away the sins of the world, in one religion, the God *Agni*, in the other, likewise expiates sins against the gods, man, the manes, the soul, and repeated sins; as shown in the six prayers accompanied by six ablations. (Colebrooke — *Essays*, Vol. I, p. 190.)

If, then, we find these two — the Cross and the Fire — so closely associated in the esoteric symbolism of nearly every nation, it is because on the combined powers of the two rests the whole plan of the universal laws. In astronomy, physics, chemistry, in the whole range of natural philosophy, in short, they always come out as the invisible cause and the visible result; and only metaphysics and alchemy — or shall we say *Metachemistry*, since we prefer coining a new word to shocking sceptical ears? — can fully and conclusively solve the mysterious meaning. An instance or two will suffice for those who are willing to think over hints.

The Central Point, or the great central sun of the Kosmos, as the Kabalists call it, is the Deity. It is the point of intersection between the two great conflicting powers — the centripetal and centrifugal

forces, which drive the planets into their elliptical orbits, that make them trace a cross in their paths through the Zodiac. These two terrible, though as yet hypothetical and imaginary powers, preserve harmony and keep the Universe in steady, unceasing motion; and the four bent points of the Swastica typify the revolution of the Earth upon its axis. Plato calls the Universe a "blessed god" *which was made in a circle and decussated in the form of the letter X.*

So much for astronomy. In Masonry the Royal Arch degree retains the cross as the triple Egyptian Tau. It is the mundane circle with the astronomical cross upon it rapidly revolving; the perfect square of the Pythagorean mathematics in the scale of numbers, as its occult meaning is interpreted by Cornelius Agrippa. Fire is heat, — the central point; the perpendicular ray represents the male element or spirit; and the horizontal one the female element — or matter. Spirit vivifies and fructifies the matter, and everything proceeds from the central point, the focus of Life, and Light, and Heat, represented by the terrestrial fire. So much, again, for physics and chemistry, for the field of analogies is boundless, and Universal Laws are immutable and identical in their outward and inward applications. Without intending to be disrespectful to any one, or to wander far away from truth, we think we may say that there are strong reasons to believe that in their original sense the Christian Cross — as the cause, and Eternal torment by Hell Fire — as the direct effect of negation of the former — have more to do with these two ancient symbols than our Western theologians are prepared to admit. If Fire is the Deity with some heathens, so in the Bible, God is likewise the Life and the Light of the World; if the Holy Ghost and Fire cleanse and purify the Christian, on the other hand Lucifer is also Light, and called the "Son of the morning star."

Turn wherever we will, we are sure to find those conjoint relics of

ancient worship with almost every nation and people. From the Aryans, the Chaldeans, the Zoroastrians, Peruvians, Mexicans, Scandinavians, Celts, and ancient Greeks and Latins, it has descended in its completeness to the modern Parsi. The Phoenician Cabiri and the Greek Dioscuri are partially revived in every temple, cathedral, and village church; while, as will now be shown, the Christian Bulgarians have even preserved the sun worship in full.

It is more than a thousand years since this people, who, emerging from obscurity, suddenly became famous through the late Russo-Turkish war, were converted to Christianity. And yet they appear none the less pagans than they were before, for this is how they meet Christmas and the New Year's day. To this time they call this festival *Sourjvaki*, as it falls in with the festival in honour of the ancient Slavonian god *Sourja*. In the Slavonian mythology this deity — *Sourja* or *Sourva*, — evidently identical with the Aryan *Surya* . . . sun . . . is the god of heat, fertility, and abundance. The celebration of this festival is of an immense antiquity, as, far before the days of Christianity, the Bulgarians worshipped *Sourva*, and consecrated New Year's day to this god, praying him to bless their fields with fertility, and send them happiness and prosperity. This custom has remained among them in all its primitive heathenism, and though it varies according to localities, yet the rites and ceremonies are essentially the same.

On the eve of New Year's day the Bulgarians do no work and are obliged to fast. Young betrothed maidens are busy preparing a large *platiy* (cake) in which they place roots and young shoots of various forms, to each of which a name is given according to the shape of the root. Thus, one means the "house," another represents the "garden;" others again, the mill, the vineyard, the horse, a cat, a hen, and so on, according to the landed property and worldly possessions of the family. Even articles of value such

as jewellery and bags of money are represented in this emblem of the horn of abundance. Besides all these, a large and ancient silver coin is placed inside the cake; it is called *babka* and is tied two ways with a red thread, which forms a cross. This coin is regarded as the symbol of fortune.

After sunset, and other ceremonies, including prayers addressed in the direction of the departing luminary, the whole family assemble about a large round table called *paralya*, on which are placed the above-mentioned cake, dry vegetables, corn, wax taper, and, finally, a large censer containing incense of the best quality to perfume the god. The head of the household, usually the oldest in the family — either the grandfather, or the father himself — taking up the censer with the greatest veneration, in one hand, and the wax taper in the other, begins walking about the premises, incensing the four corners, beginning and ending with the East; and reads various invocations, which close with the Christian "Our Father who art in Heaven," addressed to Sourja. The taper is then laid away to be preserved throughout the whole year, till the next festival. It is thought to have acquired marvelous healing properties, and is lighted only upon occasions of family sickness, in which case it is expected to cure the patient.

After this ceremony, the old man takes his knife and cuts the cake into as many slices as there are members of the household present. Each person, upon receiving his or her share, makes haste to open and search the piece. The happiest of the lot, for the ensuing year, is he or she who gets the part containing the old coin crossed with the scarlet thread; he is considered the elect of Sourja, and every one envies the fortunate possessor. Then in order of importance come the emblems of the house, the vineyard, and so on; and according to his finding, the finder reads his horoscope for the coming year. Most unlucky he who gets the cat; he turns pale and trembles. Woe to him and misery, for he is

surrounded by enemies, and has to prepare for great trials.

At the same, time, a large log which represents a flaming altar, is set up in the chimney-place, and fire is applied to it. This log burns in honour of Sourja and is intended as an oracle for the whole house. If it burns the whole night through till morning without the flame dying out, it is a good sign; otherwise, the family prepares to see death that year, and deep lamentations end the festival.

Neither the *momtzee*, (young bachelor), nor the *mommee* (the maiden), sleep that night. At midnight begins a series of sooth-saying magic, and various rites, in which the burning log plays the part of the oracle. A young bud thrown into the fire and bursting with a loud snap, is a sign of happiness and speedy marriage, and *vice versa*. Long after midnight, the young couples leave their respective houses, and begin visiting their acquaintances, from house to house, offering and receiving congratulations, and rendering thanks to the deity. These deputy couples are called the *Souryakari* and each male carries a large branch ornamented with red ribbons, old coins, and the image of Sourja, and as they wend along sing in chorus. Their chant is as original as it is peculiar and merits translation, though of course, it must lose in being rendered into a foreign language. The following stanzas are addressed by them to those they visit: —

Sourva, Sourva, Lord of the Season,  
Happy New Year mayest thou send;  
Health and fortune on this household,  
Success and blessings till next year.

With good crops and full ears,  
With gold and silk, and grapes and fruits;  
With barrels full of wine, and stomachs full,

You and your house be blessed by the God . . .  
His blessing on you all. — Amen! Amen! Amen!

The singing Souryakari, recompensed for their good wishes with a present at every house, go home at early dawn . . . And this is how the symbolical exoteric Cross and Fire worship of old Aryavart go hand in hand in Christian Bulgaria. . . . .

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[Blavatsky Articles](#)

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## War in Olympus

Dark clouds are gathering over the hitherto cold and serene horizon of exact science, which forebode a squall. Already two camps are forming among the votaries of scientific research. One wages war on the other, and hard words are occasionally exchanged. The apple of discord in this case is — Spiritualism. Fresh and illustrious victims are yearly decoyed away from the impregnable strongholds of materialistic negation, and ensnared into examining and testing the alleged spiritual phenomena. And we all know that when a true scientist examines them without prejudice. . . . . well, he generally ends like Professor Hare, Mr. William Crookes, F. R. S., the great Alfred Russell Wallace, another F. R. S., and so many other eminent men of science — he passes over to the, enemy.

We are really curious to know what will be the new theory advanced in the present crisis by the sceptics, and how they will account for such an apostasy of several of their luminaries, as has just occurred. The venerable accusations of *non compos mentis*, and "dotage" will not bear another refurbishing: the eminent perverts are increasing numerically so fast, that if mental incapacity is charged upon all of them who experimentally satisfy themselves that tables can talk sense, and mediums float through the air, it might augur ill for science; there might soon be none but weakened brains in the learned societies. They may, possibly, for a time find some consolation in accounting for the lodgment of the extraordinary "delusion" in very scholarly heads, upon the theory of *atavism* — the mysterious law of latent transmission, so much favoured by the modern schools of Darwinian *evolutionism* — especially in Germany, as represented by that thorough-going apostle of "modern struggle for culture," Ernst Haeckel, professor

at Jena. They may attribute the belief of their colleagues in the phenomena, to certain molecular movements of the cell in the ganglia of their once powerful brains, hereditarily transmitted to them by their ignorant mediaeval ancestors. Or, again, they may split their ranks, and establishing an *imperium in imperio* "divide and conquer" still. All this is possible; but time alone will show which of the parties will come off best.

We have been led to these reflections by a row now going on between German and Russian professors — all eminent and illustrious *savants*. The Teutons and Slavs, in the case under observation, are not fighting according to their nationality but conformably to their respective beliefs and unbeliefs. Having concluded, for the occasion, an offensive as well as a defensive alliance, regardless of race — they have broken up in two camps, one representing the spiritualists, and the other the sceptics. And now war to the knife is declared. Leading one party, are Professors Zollner, Ulrizzi, and Fichte, Butlerof and Wagner, of the Liepzig, Halle and St. Petersburg Universities; the other follows Professors Wundt, Mendelejef, and a host of other German and Russian celebrities. Hardly has Zollner — a most renowned astronomer and physicist — printed his confession of faith in Dr. Slade's mediumistic phenomena and set his learned colleagues aghast when Professor Ulrizzi of the Halle University arouses the wrath of the Olympus of science by publishing a pamphlet entitled "*The so-called Spiritualism a Scientific Question*," intended as a complete refutation of the arguments of Professor Wundt, of the Leipzig University, against the modern belief, and contained in another pamphlet called by its author "*spiritualism — the so-called scientific question*." And now steps in another active combatant, Mr. Butlerof, Professor of Chemistry and Natural Sciences, of St. Petersburg, who narrates *his* experiments in London, with the medium Williams, and thus

rouses up a most ferocious polemic. The humoristical illustrated paper *Kladderadatch* executes a war-dance, and shouts with joy, while the more serious conservative papers are indignant. Pressed behind their last entrenchments by the cool and uncontrovertible assertions of a most distinguished naturalist, the critics led forward by the St. Petersburg star, Mr. Bourenine, seem desperate, and evidently short of ammunition, since they are reduced to the expedient of trying to rout the enemy with the most remarkable paradoxes. The *pro* and *con* of the dispute are too interesting, and our posterity might complain, were the incidents suffered to be left beyond the reach of English and American readers interested in Spiritualism, by remaining confined to the German and Russian newspapers. So, Homer-like, we will follow the combatants and condense this modern Iliad for the benefit of our friends.

After several years of diligent research and investigation of the phenomena, Messrs. Wagner and Butlerof, both distinguished savants and professors in St Petersburg University, became thoroughly convinced of the reality of the weird manifestations. As a result, both wrote numerous and strong articles in the leading periodicals in defence of the "mischievous epidemic" — in his moments of "unconscious cerebration" and "prepossession" in favour of his own hobby, Dr. Carpenter calls spiritualism. Both of the above eminent gentlemen, are endowed with those precious qualities, which are the more to be respected as they are so seldom met with among our men of science. These qualities, admitted by their critic himself, Mr. Bourenine, are: (1) a serious and profound conviction that what they defend is true; (2) an unwavering courage in stating at every hazard, before a prejudiced and inimical public that such is their conviction; (3) clearness and consecutiveness in their statements; (4) the serene calmness and impartiality with which they treat the opinions of

their opponents; (5) a full and profound acquaintance with the subject under discussion. The combination of the qualities enumerated, adds their critic, "leads us to regard the recent article by Professor Butlerof, *Empiricism and Dogmatism in the Domain of Mediumship*, as one of those essays whose commending significance cannot be denied and which are sure to strongly impress the readers. Such articles are positively rare in our periodicals; rare because of the originality of the author's conclusions; and because of the clear, precise, and serious presentation of facts. . . . .

The article so euologized may be summed up in a few words. We will not stop to enumerate the marvels of spiritual phenomena witnessed by Professor Zollner with Dr. Slade and defended by Prof. Butlerof, since they are no more marvellous than the latter gentleman's personal experience in this direction with Mr. Williams, a medium of London, in 1876. The seances took place in a London hotel in the room occupied by the Honorable Alexandre Aksakof, Russian Imperial Councillor, in which, with the exception of this gentleman, there were but two other persons, — Prof. Butlerof and the medium. Confederacy was thus utterly impossible. And now, what took place under these conditions, which so impressed one of the first scientists of Russia? Simply this: Mr. Williams, the medium, was made to sit with his hands, feet, and even his person tightly bound with cords to his chair, which was placed in a dead-wall corner of the room, behind Mr. Butlerof's plaid hung across so as to form a screen. Williams soon fell into a kind of lethargic stupor, known, among spiritualists as the trance condition, and "spirits" began to appear before the eyes of the investigators. Various voices were heard, and loud sentences, pronounced by the "invisibles," from every part of the room; things — toilet appurtenances and so forth, began flying in every direction through the air; and finally "John King" — a sort

of king of the spooks, who has been famous for years — made his appearance bodily. But we must allow Prof. Butlerof to tell his phenomenal story himself. "We first saw moving" — he writes — "several bright lights in the air, and immediately after that appeared the full figure of 'John King.' His apparition is generally preceded by a greenish phosphoric light which, gradually becoming brighter, illuminates, more and more, the whole bust of John King. Then it is that those present perceive that the light emanates from some kind of a luminous object held by the 'spirit.' The face of a man with a thick black beard becomes clearly distinguishable; the head is enveloped in a white turban. The figure appears outside the cabinet (that is to say, the screened corner where the medium sat), and finally approaches us. We saw it each time for a few seconds; then rapidly waning, the light was extinguished and the figure became invisible to reappear again in a moment or two; then from the surrounding darkness, 'John's' voice is heard proceeding from the spot on which he had appeared mostly, though not always, when he had already disappeared. 'John' asked us 'what can I do for you?' and Mr. Aksakof requested him to rise up to the ceiling and from there speak to us. In accordance with the wish expressed, the figure suddenly appeared above the table and towered majestically above our heads to the ceiling which became all illuminated with the luminous object held in the spirit's hand, when 'John' was quite under the ceiling he shouted down to us: 'Will that do?'

During another seance M. Butlerof asked 'John' to approach him quite near, which the "spirit" did, and so gave him the opportunity of seeing clearly "the sparkling, clear eyes of John." Another spirit, "Peter," though he never put in a visible appearance during the seances, yet conversed with Messrs. Butlerof and Aksakof, wrote for them on paper furnished by them, and so forth.

Though the learned professor minutely enumerates all the precautions he had taken against possible fraud, the critic is not yet satisfied, and asks, pertinently enough: "Why did not the respectable *savant* catch 'John' in his arms, when the spirit was but at a foot's distance from him? Again, why did not both Messrs. Aksakof and Butlerof try to get hold of 'John's' legs, when he was mounting to the ceiling? Indeed they ought to have done all this, if they are really so anxious to learn the truth for their own sake, as for that of science, when they struggle to lead on toward the domains of the 'other world.' And, had they complied with such a simple and, at the same time, very little scientific test, there would be no more need for them, perhaps, to . . . further explain the scientific importance of the spiritual manifestations."

That this importance is not exaggerated, and has as much significance for the world of science, as for that of religious thought, is proved by so many philosophical minds speculating upon the modern "delusion." This is what Fichte, the learned German *savant*, says of it. "Modern spiritualism chiefly proves the existence of that which, in common parlance, is very vaguely and inaptly termed '*apparition of spirits*.' If we concede the reality of such apparitions, then they become an undeniable, practical proof of the continuation of our personal, conscious existence (beyond the portals of death). And such a tangible, fully demonstrated fact cannot be otherwise but beneficent in this epoch, which, having fallen into a dreary denial of immortality, thinks, in the proud self-sufficiency of its vast intellect, that it has already happily left behind it every superstition of the kind." If such a tangible evidence could be really found, and demonstrated to us, beyond any doubt or cavil, reasons Fichte further on, — "if the reality of the continuation of our lives after death were furnished us upon positive proof, in strict accordance with the logical elements of experimental natural sciences, then it would

be, indeed, a result with which, owing to its nature and peculiar signification for humanity, no other result to be met with in all the history of civilization could be compared. The old problem about man's destination upon earth would be dissolved, and consciousness in humanity would be elevated one step. That which, hitherto, could be revealed to man but in the domain of blind faith, presentiment, and passionate hope, would become to him — positive knowledge; he would have acquired the certainty that he was a member of an eternal, a spiritual world, in which he would continue living, and that his temporary existence upon this earth forms but a fractional portion of a future eternal life, and that it is only there that he would be enabled to perceive, and fully comprehend his real destination. Having acquired this profound conviction, mankind would be thoroughly impressed with a new and animating comprehension of life, and its intellectual perceptions opened to an idealism strong with incontrovertible facts. This would prove tantamount to a complete reconstruction of man in relation to his existence as an entity and mission upon earth; it would be, so to say, a 'new birth.' Whoever has lost all inner convictions as to his eternal destination, his faith in eternal life, whether the case be that of an isolated individuality, a whole nation, or the representative of a certain epoch, he or it may be regarded as having had uprooted, and to the very core, all sense of that invigorating force which alone lends itself to self-devotion and to progress. Such a man becomes what was inevitable — an egotistical, selfish, sensual being, concerned wholly for his self-preservation, his culture, his enlightenment, and civilization, can serve him but as a help and ornamentation toward that life of sensualism, or, at best, to guard him from all that can harm it."

Such is the enormous importance attributed by Professor Fichte and Professor Butler of Germany and Russia to the spiritual

phenomena; and we may say the feeling is more than sincerely echoed in England by Mr. A. R. Wallace, F. R. S. (See his "Miracles and Modern Spiritualism.")

An influential American scientific journal uses an equally strong language when speaking of the value that a scientific demonstration of the survival of the human soul would have for the world. If spiritualism prove true, it says, "it will become the one grand event of the world's history; it will give an imperishable lustre of glory to the Nineteenth Century. Its discoverer will have no rival in renown, and his name will be written high above any other. \* \* \* If the pretensions of Spiritualism have a rational foundation, no more important work has been offered to men of science than their verification." (*Scientific American*, 1874, as quoted in Olcott's "People from the Other World," p. V. Pref.)

And now we will see what the stubborn Russian critic (who seems to be but the mouth-piece of European materialistic science) has to say in response to the unanswerable arguments and logic of Messrs. Fichte and Butlerof. If scepticism has no stronger arguments to oppose to spiritualism but the following original paradox, then we will have to declare it worsted in the dispute. Instead of the beneficial results foretold by Fichte in the case of the final triumph of spiritualism, the critic forecasts quite a different state of things.

"As soon," he says, "as such scientific methods shall have demonstrated, beyond doubt or cavil, to the general satisfaction, that our world is crammed with souls of men who have preceded us, and whom we will all join in turn; as soon as it shall be proven that these 'souls of the deceased' can communicate with mortals, all the earthly physical science of the eminent scholars will vanish like a soap-bubble, and will have lost all its interest for us



living men. Why should people care for their proportionately short life upon earth, once that they have the positive assurance and conviction of another life to come after the bodily death; a death which does not in the least preclude conscious relations with the world of the living, or even their *post-mortem* participation in all its interests? Once, that with the help of science, based on mediumistic experiments and the discoveries of spiritualism, such relations shall have been firmly established, they will naturally become with every day more and more intimate; an extraordinary friendship will ensue between this and the 'other' worlds; that other world will begin divulging to this one the most occult mysteries of life and death, and the hitherto most inaccessible laws of the universe — those which now exact the greatest efforts of man's mental powers. Finally, nothing will remain for us in this temporary world to either do or desire, but to pass away as soon as possible into the world of eternity. *No inventions, no observations, no sciences will be any more needed!!* Why should people exercise their brains, for instance, in perfecting the telegraphs, when nothing else will be required but to be on good terms with spirits in order to avail of their services for the, instantaneous transmission of thoughts and objects, not only from Europe to America, but even to the moon, if so desired? The following are a few of the results which a communion *de facto* between this world and the 'other,' that certain men of science are hoping to establish by the help of spiritualism, will inevitably lead us to: to the complete extinction of all science, and even of the human race, which will be ever rushing onward to a better life. The learned and scholarly *phantasists* who are so anxious to promote the science of spiritualism, *i.e.*, of a close communication between the two worlds, ought to bear the above in mind."

To which, the "scholarly phantasists" would be quite warranted in

answering that one would have to bring his own mind to the exact measure of microscopic capacity required to elaborate such a theory as this, before he could take it into consideration at all. Is the above meant to be offered as an objection for *serious* consideration? Strange logic! We are asked to believe that, because these men of science, who now believe in naught but matter, and thus try to fit every phenomenon — even of a mental, and spiritual character, — within the Procrustean bed of their own preconceived hobbies, would find themselves, by the mere strength of circumstances forced, in their turn, to fit these cherished hobbies to *truth*, however unwelcome, and to *facts* wherever found — that because of that, science will lose all its charm for humanity. Nay — life itself will become a burden! There are millions upon millions of people who, without believing in spiritualism at all, yet have faith in another and a better world. And were that blind faith to become *positive knowledge* indeed, it could but better humanity.

Before closing his scathing criticism upon the "credulous men of *science*," our reviewer sends one more bomb in their direction, which unfortunately like many other explosive shells misses the culprits and wounds the whole group of their learned colleagues. We translate the missile *verbatim*, this time for the benefit of all the European and American academicians.

"The eminent professor," he adds, speaking of Butlerof, and his article, "among other things, makes the most of the strange fact that spiritualism gains with every day more and more converts within the corporation of our great scientists. He enumerates a long list of English and German names among illustrious men of science, who have more or less confessed themselves in favor of the spiritual doctrines. Among these names we find such as are quite authoritative, those of the greatest luminaries of science. Such a fact is, to say the least, very striking, and, in any case,

lends a great weight to spiritualism. But we have only to ponder coolly over it, to come very easily to the conclusion *that it is just among such great men of science that spiritualism is most likely to spread and find ready converts*. With all their powerful intellects and gigantic knowledge, our great scholars are firstly, men of sedentary habits, and, secondly, they are, with scarcely an exception, *men with diseased and shattered nerves, inclined toward an abnormal development of an overstrained brain*. Such sedentary men are the easiest to hoodwink; a clever charlatan will make an easier prey of, and bamboozle with far more facility a scholar than an unlearned but practical man. Hallucination will far sooner get hold of persons inclined to nervous receptivity, especially if they once concentrate themselves upon some peculiar ideas, or a favourite hobby. This, I believe, will explain the fact that we see so many men of science enrolling themselves in the army of spiritualists."

We need not stop to enquire how Messrs. Tyndall, Huxley, Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Lewes, and other eminent scientific and philosophical sceptics, will like such a prospect of rickety ganglionic centres, collective softening of the brain, and the resulting "hallucinations." The argument is not only an impertinent *naivete*, but a literary monstrosity.

We are far from agreeing entirely with the views of Professor Butlerof, or even Mr. Wallace, as to the agencies at work behind the modern phenomena; yet between the extremes of spiritual negation and affirmation, there ought to be a middle ground; only pure philosophy can establish truth upon firm principles; and no philosophy can be complete unless it embraces both physics and metaphysics. Mr. Tyndall, who declares ("Science and Man") that "Metaphysics will be welcomed when it abandons its pretensions to scientific discovery, and consents to be ranked as a kind of poetry," opens himself to the criticism of posterity. Meanwhile, he

must not regard it as an impertinence if his spiritualistic opponents retort with the answer that "physics will always be welcomed, when it abandons its pretension to psychological discovery." The physicists will have to consent to be regarded in a near future as no more than supervisors and analysts of physical results, who have to leave the spiritual causes to those who believe in them. Whatever the issue of the present quarrel, we fear, though, that spiritualism has made its appearance a century too late. Our age is pre-eminently one of extremes. The earnest philosophical, yet reverent doubters are few, and the name for those who rush to the opposite extreme is — Legion. We are the children of our century. Thanks to that same law of atavism, it seems to have inherited from its parent — the XVIIIth — the century of both Voltaire and Jonathan Edwards — all its extreme scepticism, and, at the same time, religious credulity and bigoted intolerance. Spiritualism is an abnormal and premature outgrowth, standing between the two; and, though it stands right on the high-way to truth, its ill-defined beliefs make it wander on through by-paths which lead to anything but philosophy. Its future depends wholly upon the timely help it can receive from honest science — that science which scorns no truth. It was, perhaps, when thinking of the opponents of the latter, that Alfred de Musset wrote the following magnificent apostrophe: —

"Sleep'st thou content, Voltaire;  
And thy dread smile hovers it still above  
Thy fleshless bones .....?  
Thine age they call too young to understand thee  
This one should suit thee better —  
Thy men are born!  
And the huge edifice that, day and night, thy great hands  
undermined,  
Is fallen upon us....."

