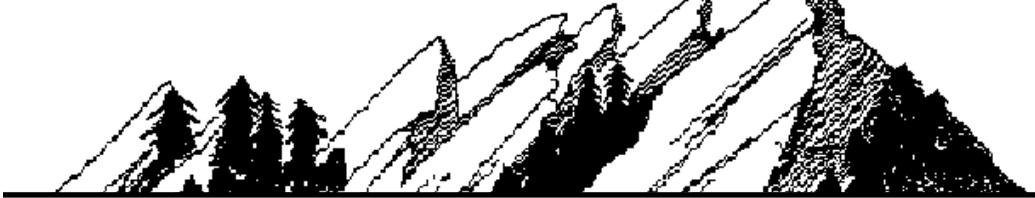


THE HIGH COUNTRY NEWSLETTER



Vol. 3 A

Boulder, Colorado

January - May 1988

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THE HIGH COUNTRY NEWSLETTER



Vol. 3A No. 1

Boulder, Colorado

January, 1988

JANUARY MEETING

WHERE: Denver Public Library, 1357 Broadway, in Room 305.
Free parking at on-street meters after 6:00 P.M.,
or park in off-street lots on Broadway or on Acoma.

WHEN: Tuesday, January 19th at 6:00 P.M. Call 494-5482 for information.

TOPIC: **Introduction to the Mahatma Letters** study course by Virginia Hanson; Chapter 1. - What is a Mahatma?

NEWS AND COMMENTARY

Our December meeting, devoted to Mahatma Letter #10 - "On God", welcomed five new participants; three from the **Learning Unlimited** class just completed, one learned of us from one of the seven local metaphysical bookstores posting our newsletter, the other from the LU catalog offering the new January course. Other outreach efforts are also bearing fruit; of the nine letters sent to Colorado members-at-large, two have already responded with newsletter subscriptions and interest in study center activities. This was our first meeting at DPL and it is proving to be an ideal meeting place; it is centrally located with ample parking and provides a pleasant environment with public access.

Interest and participation in the topic was high and the discussion touched on many topics of related interest as well as encountering some of the basic concepts of theosophical philosophy; i.e., the fundamental concepts of Space, Duration and Motion and the principle of the One Life which, as Mahatma K.H. describes it:

“When we speak of our One Life, we also say that it penetrates, nay is the essence of every atom of matter, and that it therefore not only has correspondence with matter but has all its properties likewise, etc., - hence is material, is matter itself.”

As Virginia Hanson very succinctly says in her article on letter #10, xeroxed from the May 1979 *American Theosophist*, which we studied along with the “letter”; “It cannot but be noticed, as one studies the Letters, that the Masters do not deny the reality of spirit - only spirit as a separate and distinct principle apart from matter. ‘... It is one of the fundamental and elementary doctrines of Occultism,’ says the Mahatma K.H. elsewhere in the Letters, ‘that the two [spirit and matter] are one, and are distinct but in their respective manifestations, and only in the limited perceptions of the world of senses. ... Spirit is the called the ultimate sublimation of matter and matter the crystallization of spirit.’”

A number of other insights were gained in the study. Man, in using his organizing and categorizing mind, attributes manifestation and form to the mystery of **THAT** which is unmanifested and beyond form. In the light of this viewpoint, those of us having allegiance to formal devotional religions will immediately ask the question: “Who then are those holy founders of the world’s religions - and in particular, of my religion; if not God Himself or His representative in the flesh?”

It seems to me (editor), that herein lies a great deal of the controversy and sense of outrage that many Christians feel over the statements in letter #10. In the Bible, Jesus says: “I and the Father are one.” [John 11:30.] While recognizing that each theosophist is entitled to his/her own beliefs and view of the truth, the following statement made by H.P. Blavatsky to Charles P. Johnston in 1887, is offered as food for thought and a possible answer to the foregoing question as applied to Jesus. The context of the following is a visit paid by Johnston to H.P.B. in London during the time she was writing the Secret Doctrine, in which their discussion touched on the para-normal methods used in transmitting letters from her Teachers, Mahatmas K.H. and M., to A.P. Sinnett and A.O. Hume, and “how the adepts guide the souls of men”, among other topics:

“... How do the adepts guide the souls of men?”

“In many ways, but chiefly by teaching their souls direct, in the spiritual world. But that is difficult for you to understand. This is quite intelligible, though. At certain regular periods, they try to give the world at large a right understanding of

spiritual things. One of their number comes forth to teach the masses, and is handed down to tradition as the Founder of a religion. Krishna was such a Master; so was Zoroaster; so were Buddha and Shanka Acharya, the great sage of Southern India. So also was the Nazarene. He went forth against the counsel of the rest, to give to the masses before the time, moved by a great pity, and enthusiasm for humanity; he was warned that the time was unfavorable, but nevertheless he elected to go, and so was put to death at the instigation of the priests.”

“Have the adepts any secret records of his life?”

“They must have,” she answered; “for they have records of the lives of all Initiates. Once I was in a great cave-temple in the Himalaya mountains, with my Master,” and she looked at the picture of the splendid Rajput [her Master, the Mahatma Morya]; “there were many statues of adepts there; pointing to one of them, he said: ‘This is he whom you call Jesus. We count him to be one of the greatest among us.’”

“But that is not the only work of the adepts. At much shorter periods, they send forth a messenger to try to teach the world. Such a period comes in the last quarter of each century, and the Theosophical Society represents their work for this epoch.” [*H.P. Blavatsky, Collected Writings, Vol. VIII, pp. 401-402.*]

In an 18 page article entitled “What is Matter and What is Force?” which originally appeared in *The Theosophist* of September 1882, the author - the Master K.H. says; “Chemistry, ... still persists in making a difference between organic and inorganic matter, though both are due to the same mysterious energy, ever at work by her own occult processes in nature’s laboratory, in the mineral no less than in the vegetable kingdom.

Therefore do the Occultists maintain that the philosophical conception of spirit, like the conception of matter, must rest on one and the same basis of phenomena, adding that Force and Matter, Spirit and Matter, or Deity and Nature, though they may be viewed as opposite poles in their respective manifestations, yet are in essence and in truth but one, and that life is present as much in a dead as in a living body, in the organic as in the inorganic matter. This is why, while science is searching still and may go on searching forever to solve the problem “What is life?” the Occultist can afford to refuse taking the trouble, since he claims, with as much good

reason as any given to the contrary, that Life, whether in its latent or dynamical form, is everywhere. That it is as infinite and as indestructible as matter itself, since neither can exist without the other, and that electricity is the very essence and origin of - Life itself. [*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 225]

The study topic for January is, as mentioned above, Chapter 1 of the study course *An Introduction to THE MAHATMA LETTERS* by Virginia Hanson, in print at The Theosophical Publishing House at Wheaton, Illinois. It can be ordered through the High Country Study Center. Chapter 1 covers who the Mahatmas are, their relationship with humanity, their work, their lineage and whether they still exist.

CLASS REMINDER

The seven week introductory class, “The search for Truth, A Theosophical Quest,” is being offered again in January both in Boulder through **The Boulder Free School** and in Denver through **Learning Unlimited**. For the Boulder class, beginning Monday January 18, call Dick Slusser at 494-5482. For the Denver class, beginning Thursday January 14, call **LU** at 393-6706.

HIGH COUNTRY

Theosophical Study Center
140 S. 33rd St.
Boulder, Colo. 80303
(303) 494-5482

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THE HIGH COUNTRY NEWSLETTER



Vol. 3A No. 2

Boulder, Colorado

February, 1988

FEBRUARY MEETING

WHERE: Denver Public Library, 1357 Broadway, in Room 305. Free parking at on-street meters after 6:00 pm, or park in off-street lots on Broadway or on Acoma.

WHEN: Tuesday February 16th at 6:00 pm. Call 494-5482 for information.

TOPIC: Introduction to the Mahatma Letters study course by Virginia Hanson; Chapters 2 (Some pertinent questions) and 3 (The first letter).

NEWS AND COMMENTARY

The January meeting covered general introductory questions to the study of the Mahatma Letters, summarized below:

Q. Who are the Mahatmas? Are they spirits or physical men?

“I am not a disembodied spirit, Brother. I am a living man; gifted with such powers by our Lodge as are in store for yourself someday.” [*Old Diary Leaves* Vol. 1, p. 237]

“We are not gods, and even they, our chiefs - they hope.” [*M.L.*, p. 208]

Annie Besant, in an article entitled “Who are the Masters?” commented:

“They are men who have evolved during past ages, through hundreds of lives like our own. They, in the past, lived and loved and wrought and toiled as we are living, loving, working, toiling now. They are bone of our bone, flesh of our own flesh; they belong to our humanity and differ from us in nothing save that they are older and more advanced than we are. They are not placid gods in a far-off heaven. They are men on our earth who have conquered death, who have won immortality.” [Study course p. 6]

Q. What was the purpose of the Brotherhood in transmitting the teachings contained in the Letters to the two Englishmen, A.P. Sinnett and A.O. Hume?

“One or two of us had hoped that the world had so far advanced intellectually, if not intuitively, that the Occult doctrine might gain an intellectual acceptance, and the impulse given for a new cycle of occult research. Others - wiser as it would now seem - held differently, but consent was given for the trial.” [*M.L.*, 3rd ed., p. 259]

“The truths and mysteries of occultism constitute, indeed, a body of the highest spiritual importance, at once profound and practical for the world at large. Yet, it is not as a mere addition to the tangled mass of theory or speculation in the world of science that they are being given to you, but for their practical bearing on the interests of mankind. ... And this is why our chiefs have determined to shed upon a few recipient minds more light upon the subject, and to prove to them that such manifestations are as reducible to law as the simplest phenomena of the physical universe.” [*M.L.*, p. 23]

“We feel that the time is approaching, and that we are bound to choose between the triumph of Truth and the reign of Error - and Terror. We have to let a few chosen ones into the great secret ... “ [*M.L.*, p. 280]

Q. Is the inspiration from the Masters that led to the formation of the Theosophical Society still flowing i.e., does the Brotherhood still exist and watch over the movement?

The following excerpt is quoted from a letter received by Annie Besant in 1900, 9 years after the death of H.P. Blavatsky;

... At favourable times we let loose elevating influences which strike various persons in various ways. It is the collective aspect of many such thoughts that can give the correct

note of action. We show no favours. The best corrective of error is an honest and open-minded examination of all facts subjective and objective. ... Namelessly and silently we work and the continual references to ourselves and the repetition of our names raises up a confused aura that hinders our work. The greatest of your trials is yet to come. We watch over you but you must put forth all your strength. K.H.

Q. Is the Theosophical Society the only instrument through which the Mahatmas guide and influence the affairs of humanity?

“There is more of this movement than you have yet had an inkling of, and the work of the T.S. is linked in with similar work that is secretly going on in all parts of the world. Even in the T.S. there is a division, managed by a Greek Brother about which not a person in the Society has a suspicion excepting the old woman (H.P. Blavatsky) and Olcott; and even he only knows it is progressing, and occasionally executes an order I send him in connection with it.”

[*Mahatma Letters* p. 267]

A possible indication of this was presented in the meeting by one of our members, from a book “*Think and grow rich! - With Peace of Mind*” by Napoleon Hill. The author says;

“Now and again I have had evidence that unseen friends hover about me, unknowable to ordinary senses. In my studies I discovered there is a group of strange beings who maintain a school of wisdom which must be ten thousand years old, but I did not connect them with myself. Now I have found there is a connection. I am not one of them - but I have been watched by them. ...

[Having finished the book] I was alone in my study and all was very still. A voice spoke. I saw nobody. I cannot tell you from whence it came. First it spoke a password known to few men that riveted my attention.

‘I have come,’ said the voice, ‘to give you one more section to include in your book. In writing this section, you may cause many readers to disbelieve you, yet you will write honestly and many will believe and be benefited.’ ...

I whispered: ‘Who are you?’ In a softened voice that sounded like chimes of great music, the unseen speaker replied: ‘I come from the great school of the Masters. I am one of the Council of Thirty-Three who serve the Great School and its initiates on the physical plane.’”

“The Great School of the Masters! That is the school that has persisted secretly in the Himalayas for ten thousand years. Sometimes known as the Venerable Brotherhood of Ancient India, it is the great central reservoir of religious, philosophical, moral, physical, spiritual and psychical knowledge.

Patiently, this school strives to lift mankind from spiritual infancy and darkness to maturity of soul and final illumination. From the remotest days of antiquity, the Masters of the great school have communicated with each other by telepathy.” [pp. 158-59]

The current Learning Unlimited class “The Search for Truth - A Theosophical Quest” began on January 14 with seven students and is progressing with enthusiastic interest.

New course announcement at LU:

THE MAHATMA LETTERS CHanneled ANCIENT WISDOM

One hundred years ago in India, an incredible series of communications occurred between the editor of a prominent English language newspaper and two members of a secret brotherhood of Adepts in Tibet. Learn how occult methods of transmission, still unknown today, were used. Discover the treasure of this ancient teaching from the guardians of humanity. The Mahatma Letters contain fragments of timeless wisdom for the seeker of metaphysical truths. The door to the mysteries still opens to the right knock. Dick Slusser is Secretary of the High Country Theosophical Study Center and life member of The Theosophical Society.

Materials Fee: \$15 for Mahatma Letters, Study Guide and Xeroxes. Mon. 7:30-9:00 pm, Mar 14 Five weeks, Capitol Hill. Call Learning Unlimited at 393-6706 to enroll.

HIGH COUNTRY

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THE HIGH COUNTRY NEWSLETTER



Vol. 3A No. 3

Boulder, Colorado

March, 1988

TWO MARCH MEETINGS

WHERE: Denver Public Library, 1357 Broadway, in Room 305.

Free parking at on-street meters after 6:00 pm, or park in off-street lots on Broadway or on Acoma. Call 494-5482 for details.

WHEN: Tuesday March 8 at 6:00 pm.

TOPIC: A Talk by Pam Hughes on "Healing with Sound and Music". We will also show the Theosophical Video "The Esoteric Nature of Music," which will cover "views held in ancient cultures regarding the effect of music on consciousness; ideas from the Secret Doctrine regarding the effects of sound on the material world; angels and music; music forms; psychological changes induced by music, and the spiritualizing influences of music."

WHEN: Tuesday March 15 at 6:00 pm.

TOPIC: **Introduction to the Mahatma Letters** study course by Virginia Hanson; Chapter 4, Philosophical Teachings and Questions at end of chapter.

NEWS AND COMMENTARY

In our November 87 newsletter, we discussed the current interest in "Channeling", in which we attempted to provide an intelligent basis for evaluating the content of the plethora of channeled material currently available. In researching theosophical writings on the subject we had hoped to find some support for the position that some of the present-day material might indeed be coming from spiritual

sources of genuine occult wisdom - but were unable then to do so. In this light, consider the following statement by H.P. Blavatsky, recently noted in an article; “Is Theosophy a Religion”:

“... we know that beings from other, higher worlds confabulate with some elect mortals now as ever; though now far more rarely than in days of old, ... Meanwhile, an humble student of theosophy, the Editor [H.P.B.], declares once more her belief in Beings, grander, wiser, nobler than any personal God, who are beyond any “Spirits of the dead,” Saints or winged Angels, who nevertheless, do condescend in all and every age to occasionally overshadow rare sensitives - often entirely unconnected with Church, Spiritualism or even Theosophy. And believing in high and holy Spiritual Beings, she must also believe in the existence of their opposites - lower “spirits,” good, bad and indifferent. Therefore does she believe in spiritualism and its phenomena, some of which is so repugnant to her.”

“There is not a religion worthy of the name which has been started otherwise than in consequence of such visits from Beings on the higher planes. Thus were born all prehistoric, as well as all the historic religions, Mazdeism and Brahamanism, Buddhism and Christianity, Gnosticism and Mohammedism; in short every more or less successful “ism”. All are true at their bottom, and all are false on their surface. The Revealer, the artist who impressed a portion of the Truth on the brain of the Seer, was in every instance a true artist, who gave out genuine truths; but the instrument proved also, in every instance to be only a man.”

[Blavatsky: *Collected Writings*, Vol X, pp. 168-9]

This Editor happens to believe there are some diamonds to be found among the glass trinkets masquerading as treasures of spiritual teachings in what has become known as “The New Age.” Now as always, it is up to the seeker to use his developing spiritual discrimination to separate the Wisdom from its distortions. Personally, I use the source teachings of Theosophy - *The Mahatma Letters* and the works of H.P. Blavatsky - as a general standard, against which to measure the value of other teachings - whatever their source. For example, in the March 87 issue of *THE ECLECTIC THEOSOPHIST*, a Dutch Theosophist identified nineteen passages “reminiscent of the Ancient Wisdom” in Shirley MacLaine’s book, *OUT ON A LIMB*.

In a related article THE ABC’S OF THE NEW AGE, in *THEOSOPHICAL NETWORK* for Winter 1987 just received, the author identifies three influences in life:

A influences; those worldly pursuits i.e., money, power, politics, etc.

C influences; coming from “The Higher Consciousness Circle of Humanity.”

B influences; a mixture of A and C influences.

The author describes the A influences as those “which bind us to the power of life ... nothing can be changed as long as people are asleep in this way. Now to escape from the influences of life one must begin to surrender oneself gradually to the influences of the Work. The Work influences are called C influences and ... come from ... The Conscious Circle of Humanity [which] is constantly sowing on earth influences that can awaken Humanity [to] resist the power of A influences. ... Conscious man cannot talk to mechanical man because they use different languages ... As a result, all attempts of the Conscious Circle of Humanity ... are misrepresented and not comprehended, but are changed into the language of mechanical man and become what are called B influences. In the light of these definitions, the New Age movement is a huge influx of B influences, ranging widely in purity and usefulness.”

He then quotes from the reply of Mahatma K.H. to A.O. Hume [*The Occult World* by A.P. Sinnett, p. 117], suggesting that “we can come to a new appreciation of the occult factors involved in the present ‘New Age’ boom in reading these words.” In the 1880s, when the letter was received, Hume had asked the Mahatma “how it was that the Fraternity had failed to leave any mark on the history of the world.” The reply of Mahatma K.H., in part was:

“How do you know they have made no such mark? Are you acquainted with their successes and failures? Have you any dock upon which to arraign them? How could your world collect proofs of the doings of men who have sedulously kept closed every possible door of approach by which the inquisitive could spy upon them? The prime condition of their success was they should never be supervised or obstructed. What they have done they know; all that those outside their circle could perceive was results, the causes of which were masked from view. ... There never was a time within or before the so-called historical period when our predecessors were not moulding events and ‘making history’, the facts of which were subsequently and invariably distorted by historians to suit contemporary prejudices. Are you quite sure that the visible heroic figures in the successive dramas were not often but their puppets? We never pretended to be able to draw nations in the mass to this or that crisis in spite of the general drift of the world’s cosmic

relations. The cycles must run their rounds ... and we, borne along on the mighty tide, can only modify and direct some of its minor currents. ... Earth is the battle ground of moral no less than physical forces, and the boisterousness of animal passion, under the stimulus of the rude energies of the lower group of etheric agents, always tends to quench spirituality. What else could one expect of men so nearly related to the lower kingdom from which they evolved? So we, who cannot stop the world from going in its destined direction, are yet able to divert some part of its energy into useful channels.”

Concludes the author: “But if the inner current inspiring them is the same [as that inspiring the Theosophical movement], the “New Age” movement deserves the profound respect of theosophists.

Both publications are highly recommended to the serious student:

THE ECLECTIC THEOSOPHIST, Point Loma Publications, P.O. Box 6507, San Diego Ca. 92106 (\$5.00 a year) and THEOSOPHICAL NETWORK, P.O. Box 155, Muskogee Ok., 74402 (\$6.00 a year).

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THE HIGH COUNTRY NEWSLETTER



Vol. 3A No. 4

Boulder, Colorado

April, 1988

APRIL MEETING

WHERE: Denver Public Library, 1357 Broadway, in Room 305. Free parking at on-street meters after 6:00 pm, or park in off-street lots on Broadway or on Acoma. Call 494-5482 for details.

WHEN: Tuesday, April 19 at 6:00 pm.

TOPIC: Introduction to the Mahatma Letters study course by Virginia Hanson; Chapter 5, Probation and Chelaship.

NEWS AND COMMENTARY

At our March 8 meeting on “The Music of our life; our Inner and Outer Harmonies”, Pam Hughes from the Divine Science Church made a most interesting presentation. Prior to her talk and singing, accompanied by her harp which she calls “Orpheus”, we viewed the Theosophical video “The Esoteric Nature of Music.”

Both Pam and the video pointed out that the nature of sound is that of vibration, which in turn is one of the basic theosophical principles - that of cycles - and that sound (called Vach in the Secret Doctrine) can be creative and healing or destructive. “Because our bodies are vibrating mass of atoms,” she said, “we need to keep our human instrument in tune and we can do this by using our own voice to heal ourselves through singing and the use of mantra.” Pam cautioned us to be aware of the quality and content of the music we listen to. Much of today’s rock music is adverse to spiritual harmony, she said, and according to the video, has actually been shown to hinder the growth of plants.

In the March 15 meeting, we discussed Mahatma Letter #16 and its teachings about Devachan. In order for our newer members to understand the Letter even superficially, it was necessary to briefly review the seven principles constituting man's nature and the way in which these principles undergo dissolution following death of the body. This led to a discussion of the Astral world and its seven classes of inhabitants, described [*ML* p. 104-5] by the Master as;

“(1) and (2) Dhyān Chohans, ex-men [both] having form and formless [respectively]; (3) Pisachas, (two principled) ghosts [also called shells]; (4) Mara-rupa - Doomed to death (3 principled); (5) and (6) future men; Asuras - Elementals having human form, and Elementals 2nd class - animal Elementals; and (7) Rakshasas, Souls or Astral Forms of sorcerers - men who have reached the apex of the forbidden art. Dead or alive they have, so to say cheated nature; but it is only temporary - until our planet goes into obscurity, after which they have to be ... annihilated.”

“It is in stock No. 1 that are the intelligent Rulers of this world of Matter, and who with all of this intelligence are but the blindly obedient instruments of the ONE; the active agents of a Passive Principle.”

Interest then led to a discussion of (3) the Mara-rupa, those doomed to death and (7) the sorcerers. The former is the subject of “Lost Souls” - those personalities who possess no spiritual attributes or altruistic qualities whatever, which can be harvested and incorporated into the spiritual monad following physical death. They are what, it is said, constitute “a blank page torn from the book of the lives” of the monad. In this sense, the monad has lost part of its essence in its spiritual investment in the personality of that lifetime. Looking at it from the standpoint of the personality, the personality has lost its soul.

Category (7), otherwise known as “brothers of the shadow or the left hand”; those who lifetime after lifetime consciously and consistently choose evil, are at the end of the manvantara “ground over in nature's laboratory.” This, we understood only to mean eventual dissolution of the principles of such an entity into the component life-atoms, since the One Life is eternal and indestructible.

Also of great interest, was the after death condition and fate of suicides and the victims of accidents [pp. 106-108]:

“But there is another kind of “Spirits,” we have lost sight of, the suicides and those killed by accident. Both can communicate [with mediums], and both have to pay dearly for

such visits. ...

They are an exception to the rule, as they have to remain within the earth's attraction, and in its atmosphere - the Kama-Loka - till the very last moment of what would have been the natural duration of their lives. In other words, that particular wave of life-evolution must run on to its shore.

But it is a sin and cruelty to revive their memory and intensify their suffering by giving them a chance of living an artificial life; a chance to overload their Karma, by tempting them into open doors, viz., mediums and sensitives, for they will have to pay roundly for every such pleasure. I will explain.

The suicides, who, foolishly hoping to escape life, found themselves still alive, - have suffering enough in store for them from that very life. ... Having lost by the rash act their seventh and sixth principles, though not forever, as they can regain both - instead of accepting their punishment, and taking their chances of redemption, they are often made to regret life and tempted to regain a hold upon it by sinful means.

In the Kama-Loka, the land of intense desires, they can gratify their earthly yearnings but through a living proxy; and by so doing they lose their monad forever.

As to victims of accident - these fare still worse. [Only the very] good and pure, [are] drawn immediately within the Akashic Samadhi, i.e., to fall into a state of quiet slumber, a sleep full of rosy dreams, during which they have no recollection of the accident, but move among familiar friends and scenes, until their natural life term is finished, when they find themselves born in the Devachan.

[For those] unhappy shades, if sinful and sensual, a gloomy fate is theirs, they wander about - (not shells, for their connection with their two higher principles is not quite broken) - until their death hour comes. Cut off in the full flush of earthly passions which bind them to familiar scenes, they are enticed by the opportunities, which mediums afford, to gratify them vicariously.

They are the Pisachas, the Incubi, and Succubi of medieval times. The demons of thirst, gluttony, lust and avarice, elementaries of intensified craft, wickedness and cruelty, provoking their victims to horrid crimes, and revelling in their commission. They not only ruin their victims, but these psychic vampires, borne along by the torrent of their hellish impulses, at last, at the fixed close of their natural period of life - they are carried out of the earth's aura into regions where for ages they endure exquisite suffering and end with entire destruction.

But if the victim of accident or violence be neither very good, nor very bad - an

average person - then this may happen to him. A medium who attracts him will create for him the most undesirable of things; a new combination of Skandhas and a new and evil Karma. But let me tell you what I mean by Karma in this case. ...

Karma is the guiding power and Trishna the thirst or desire to sentiently live - the proximate force or energy, the resultant of human (or animal) action, which, out of the old Skandhas produces the new group that form the new being and control the nature of the birth itself.

Or to make it still clearer, the new being is rewarded and punished for the meritorious acts and misdeeds of the old one; Karma representing an Entry Book, in which all the acts of man, good, bad, or indifferent, are carefully recorded to his debit and credit - by himself so to say, or rather by these very actions of his.”

(Mahatma Letters, pp. 106-108)

Definition: Skandha; exoterically five groups of attributes -: [Physical] Form, Perception, Consciousness, Action and Knowledge. These unite at birth and constitute the personality. *(Theosophical Glossary, p. 302)*

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THE HIGH COUNTRY NEWSLETTER



Vol. 3A No. 5

Boulder, Colorado

May, 1988

MAY MEETING

WHERE: Denver Public Library, 1357 Broadway, in Room 305. Free parking at on-street meters after 6:00 pm, or park in off-street lots on Broadway or on Acoma. Call 494-5482 for details.

WHEN: Monday May 23 at 6:00 p.m. *** Please note change in date [was Tue. May 17]. Date was changed to allow a week between Willamay Pym's visit and the May meeting, and the meeting room was not available on Tuesday May 24.

TOPIC: Introduction to the Mahatma Letters study course by Virginia Hanson; Chapter 6; Adeptship - What is an "Adept" and how is an Adept different from an ordinary man or woman?

NEWS AND COMMENTARY

Willamay Pym, vice-president of the Theosophical Society and National lecturer, will be visiting the Denver-Boulder area from Thursday May 12, through Saturday May 14 (see flyer with this newsletter).

We are also planning a High Country Study Center "pot-luck" dinner at 6:30 p.m., Friday May 13 with Willamay at the home of Terri Todd: 710 Gooseberry Court in Lafayette. Members of the High Country Study Center and subscribers to this newsletter are invited, RSVP. If you wish to attend, please call Terri at 665-2577 for details and directions not later than Wednesday May 11.

Willamay will be available to talk individually with members on personal concerns

and how national headquarters can help local members. If time allows, she is prepared to speak on “The Powers Latent in Man.” Willamay will visit Colorado Springs on Sunday the 15th for members-at-large there and will visit the Casper Wyoming Lodge on Tuesday.

~~At the April meeting we discussed Chapter 5, on Probation and Chelaship.~~ Following the footnote references led to mention in Mahatma Letter #30 [p. 233/230] of an article entitled “The Elixir of Life” which originally appeared in *The Theosophist* in March and April 1882.

A commentary on this article, authored by H.P. Blavatsky appears in *The Collected Works of H.P. Blavatsky*, Vol. VI, p. 241, entitled; “Is the Desire to ‘Live’ Selfish?” in which she says:

“The passage ‘to Live, to live, TO LIVE, must be his unswerving resolve,’ occurring in the article ‘The Elixir of Life’ ... - is often quoted, by superficial readers, unsympathetic with the Theosophical Society, as an argument that the above teaching of occultism is the most concentrated form of selfishness. In order to determine whether the critics are right or wrong, the meaning of the word ‘selfishness’ must first be ascertained. ... an absolutely selfish individual is one who cares for himself and none else ...

Now, can an occultist be then said to be ‘selfish’ when he desires to live in the sense in which that word is ... used in ‘The Elixir of Life’? It has been said ... that the ultimate end of every aspirant after occult knowledge is Nirvana or Mukti [liberation from unconscious rebirth] For that purpose, every veil of illusion which creates a sense of personal isolation, a feeling of separateness from THE ALL, must be torn asunder, or, in other words, the aspirant must gradually discard all sense of selfishness with which we are all more or less affected. A study of the Law of Cosmic Evolution teaches us that the higher the evolution, the more does it tend towards Unity. In fact, Unity is the ultimate possibility of Nature, and those who through vanity and selfishness go against her purposes, cannot but incur the punishment of total annihilation.

The Occultist thus recognizes that unselfishness and a feeling of universal philanthropy are the inherent law of our being, and all he does is to attempt to destroy the chains of selfishness forged upon us all by Maya [the illusion of separateness]. The struggle between Good and Evil, God and the Devil, [etc.] which is mentioned in the sacred books of all nations and races, symbolizes the

battle between unselfish and selfish impulses, which takes place in a man, who tries to follow the higher purposes of Nature, until the lower animal tendencies, created by selfishness, are completely conquered ... The only difference between an ordinary man who works along with Nature during the course of cosmic evolution and an occultist, is that the latter, by his superior knowledge, adopts such methods of training and discipline as will hurry on the process of evolution, and he thus reaches in a comparatively very short time [a few thousand years] that apex to ascend to which the ordinary individual may take perhaps billions of years. It is evident that average man cannot become a MAHATMA in one life,

Now those, who have studied the occult teachings concerning Devachan and our after-states, will remember that between two incarnations there is a considerable period of subjective existence. The greater the number of such Devachanic periods, the greater is the number of years over which this evolution is extended. The chief aim of the occultist is therefore to so control himself as to be able to control his future states, and thereby gradually shorten the duration of his Devachanic states between his two incarnations.

In his progress, there comes a time when, between one physical death and his next re-birth, there is no Devachan but a kind of spiritual sleep, ... The period of this sleep may vary from 25 to 200 years, depending on the degree of his advancement. But even this period may be said to be a waste of time, and hence all his exertions are directed to shorten its duration

This is his last incarnation, as it were, for the shock of death no longer stuns him. This is the idea the writer of the article 'The Elixir of Life' means to convey, when he says:-

By or about the time when the Death-limit of his race is passed, HE IS ACTUALLY DEAD, in the ordinary sense, that is to say, that he has relieved himself of all or nearly all such material particles as would have necessitated in disruption the agony of dying. He has been dying gradually during the whole period of his Initiation. The catastrophe cannot happen twice over. He has only spread over a number of years the mild process of dissolution which others endure from a brief moment to a few hours. The highest Adept is, in fact, dead to, and absolutely unconscious of the world; - he is oblivious of its pleasures, careless of its miseries, in so far as sentimentalism goes, for the stern sense of DUTY never leaves him blind to its very existence ...

The process of the emission and attraction of atoms, which the occultist

controls, has been discussed at length in that article and in other writings. It is by these means that he gets rid gradually of all the old gross particles of his body, substituting for them finer and more ethereal ones, till at last the former sthula sarira [physical body] is completely dead and disintegrated and he lives in a body entirely of his own creation, suited to his work. That body is essential for his purposes, for, as the “Elixir of Life” says:-

But to do good, as in everything else, a man must have time and materials to work with, and this is a necessary means to the acquirement of powers by which infinitely more good can be done than with out them. When these are once mastered, the opportunities to use them will arrive ...

In another place, in giving the practical instructions for that purpose, the same article says:-

The physical man must be rendered more ethereal and sensitive; the mental man more penetrating and profound; the moral man more self-denying and philosophical.

The above important considerations in the following passage in the same article are lost sight of by those who snatch away from the context :-

And from this account too, it will be perceptible how foolish it is for people to ask the Theosophist “to procure for them communication with the highest Adepts.” It is with the utmost difficulty that one or two can be induced, even by the throes of a world, to injure their own progress by meddling with mundane affairs. The ordinary reader will say: “This is not god-like. This is the acme of selfishness” ... But let him realise that a very high Adept, undertaking to reform the world, would necessarily have to once more submit to Incarnation. And is the result of all that has ... gone before in that line [been] sufficiently encouraging to prompt a renewal of the attempt?

Now, in condemning the above passage as inculcating selfishness, superficial readers and thinkers lose sight of various important considerations. In the first place, they forget the other extracts already quoted which impose self-denial as a necessary condition of success, and which say that, with progress, new senses and new powers are acquired with which infinitely more good can be done than without them. The more spiritual the Adept becomes, the less he can meddle in mundane, gross affairs and the more he has to confine himself to a spiritual work. It has been repeated, time out of number, that the work on a spiritual plane is as superior to the work on an intellectual plane as the one on the latter plane is superior to that on a physical plane.

The very high Adepts, therefore do help humanity, but only spiritually: They are constitutionally incapable of meddling with worldly affairs. But this applies only to very high Adepts. There are various degrees of Adeptship, and those of each degree work for humanity on the planes to which they may have risen.

It is only the chelas that can live in the world, until they rise to a certain degree. And it is because the Adepts do care for the world that they make their chelas live in and work for it, as many of those who study the subject are aware.

Each cycle produces its own occultists who will be able to work for humanity of those times on all the different planes; but when the Adepts foresee that at a particular period the then humanity will be incapable of producing occultists for work on particular planes, for such occasions they do provide by either giving up voluntarily their further progress and waiting in those particular degrees until humanity reaches that period, or by refusing to enter Nirvana and submitting to re-incarnation in time to reach those degrees when humanity will require their assistance at that stage.

And although the world may not be aware of the fact, yet there are even now certain Adepts who have preferred to remain status-quo and refuse to take the higher degrees, for the benefit of the future generations of humanity. In short, as the Adepts work harmoniously since unity is the fundamental law of their being, they have as it were made a division of labor, according to which each works on the plane at the time allotted to him, for the spiritual elevation of us all -and the process of longevity mentioned in “The Elixir of Life” is only the means to the end which, far from being selfish, is the most unselfish purpose for which a human being can labor.

For the aspirant, beginning on the path of purification, the following guidelines are found in “The Elixir of Life” [*The Theosophist*, April 1882, pp. 168-69]:-

... The prescribed course of discipline commences here. ... Its essence is a course of moral, mental, and physical development, carried on in parallel lines - one being useless without the others. The physical man must be rendered more ethereal and sensitive, the mental man more penetrating and profound, the moral man more self-restraining and philosophical. And it may be mentioned that the sense of restraint - even if self-imposed - is useless.

Not only is all “goodness” that results from the compulsion of physical force, threats, or bribes (whether of a physical or “so-called” spiritual nature) absolutely useless to the person who exhibits it, its hypocrisy tending to poison the moral

atmosphere of the world - but the desire to be “good” or “pure” to be efficacious must be spontaneous, must be a self-impulse from within, a real preference for something higher, not an abstention from vice because of fear of the Law; not a chastity enforced by the fear of Public Opinion; not a benevolence exercised through hope of praise or dread of consequences in a hypothetical future life. ...

It is not a “visionary” theory dealing with vague “ideas”, but actually a scientifically devised system of drill. It is a system by which each particle of the “several men” composing the septenary individual receives an impulse, and a habit of doing what is necessary for certain purposes of its own free will and “with pleasure.” ... [Virtue], to become efficacious, has to be practiced cheerfully, not with reluctance and pain.

The candidate for longevity, at the commencement of his career, must be able to eschew his physical desires, not from any sentimental theory of right or wrong, but for the following very good reason. As, according to a well-known and now established scientific theory, his visible, material frame is always renewing its particles, he will, while abstaining from the gratification of his desires, reach the end of a certain period during which those particles which composed the man of vice, and which were given a bad pre-disposition will have departed. At the same time, the disuse of such functions will tend to obstruct the entry, in place of the old particles, of new particles having a tendency to repeat the said acts. ...

What physical desires are to be abandoned, and in what order? First and foremost, he must give up alcohol in all forms; for while it supplies no nourishment, nor even of any direct pleasure, ... it induces a violence of action, a rush, so to speak, of life, the stress of which can only be sustained by very dull, gross and dense elements, and which, by the well known law of Reaction ... tends to summon them from the surrounding universe and, therefore, directly counteracts the end we have in view. Next comes meat-eating, and for the very same reason in a minor degree. It increases the rapidity of life, the energy of action, the violence of passions. It may be good for a hero who has to fight and die, but not for a would-be sage who has to exist and ...

Next in order come the sexual desires; for these, in addition to the great diversion of energy (vital force) into other channels, in many different ways, beyond the primary one (as, for instance, the waste of energy in expectation, jealousy, etc.) are direct attractions to a certain gross quality of the original matter of the Universe, simply because the most pleasurable physical sensations are only possible at that stage of density. Alongside with and extending beyond all these and other

gratifications of the senses (which include not only those things usually known as “vicious”, but all those which, though ordinarily regarded as “innocent,” have yet the disqualification of ministering to the pleasures of the body -the most harmless to others and the least “gross” being the criterion for those to be last abandoned in each case) - must be carried on in moral purification.

I believe it was St. Augustine who is said to have prayed; “Lord give me chastity and continence, but not just yet.” The path of purification will likely be a long and arduous one for most of us, for as Ram Dass says; “There are few things worse than a horny celibate.” The best most of us can do at our present stage of spiritual development is to stay conscious of our desire systems and work on extricating ourselves from our bondage to them.

RENEWAL NOTICE

This is the last issue on your present subscription. With the June Newsletter, next month we plan to expand to two 8 1/2 x 14 sheets (4 pages, as in this issue) in order to accommodate more news and topical material from theosophical sources. This change, together with the recent increase in first class postal rates will fix the yearly subscription cost at \$5.25. We hope you think it is worth it and will re-subscribe. From the standpoint of the fixed postage cost, it is a better value; we can mail 4 pages for the same cost as two. Over the past year, it has been a struggle to squeeze everything into the available space and some material often had to be left out.

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