

THE HIGH COUNTRY NEWSLETTER



Vol. 4D No. 11-12 Boulder, Colorado Nov. - December, 1989

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Boulder, Colorado

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NOVEMBER MEETINGS

WHEN: Sunday November 12 at 9:30 A.M. Brunch meeting; bring food to share.

WHERE: Barbara Ginsberg's home in south east Denver. For directions, call 696-0794 evenings.

TOPIC: We will continue with the Ed and Mary Abdill video **FUNDAMENTALS OF THE AGELESS WISDOM**; part 1: Introduction to Theosophy and the First Fundamental Proposition of the Secret Doctrine. We will use study guides provided by The Dept. of Education (Wheaton) to discuss the concepts introduced in the video.

WHEN: Monday November 13, at 6:00 P.M.

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 13th. Call 494-5482 for details.

TOPIC: We shall continue with John Algeo's study guide: **GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE SECRET DOCTRINE**, part 6: How to Study The Secret Doctrine. If you missed the October meeting, please study and review parts 3, 4 and 5 of the study guide. Especially, read over the poetic epigraphs referred to in part 3 and reflect on and ponder their significance to the parts of the Secret Doctrine they preface.

NEWS AND COMMENTARY

Stephan Hoeller to speak

We are again pleased to host Dr. Stephan Hoeller at 1:00 pm on Saturday December 9th at the Regency Hotel, 3900 Elati Street in Denver. The Regency is located on Interstate 25 at exit 213 (38th Ave.).

Dr. Hoeller will present a free public talk on *The Lost Gospels: The Wisdom of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gnostic Gospels*. Both the Essenes who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gnostic authors of the Nag Hammadi Library experienced visions of an esoteric nature, and their documents are essentially mystical.

The discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 and the Nag Hammadi Library are considered by Biblical scholars to be the two greatest finds of religious archaeology in the twentieth century, and are considered to have enormous importance inasmuch as they complement and in some cases contradict accepted versions of both the Old and New Testaments. The talk is to be based on his recently released Quest book *JUNG AND THE LOST GOSPELS*, copies of which will be available for sale, in addition to his earlier works; *The Royal Road* and *The Gnostic Jung* and the *Seven Sermons to the Dead*.

WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF RACE, CREED, SEX ... ? IS THE TS SEXIST ?

The following is excerpted from an audio tape of a workshop, "Hearing into being," presented by Beverley Noia at the annual summer school of the Theosophical Society in America at Lake Geneva Wisconsin in July 1989.

Beverley is professor of religion and philosophy at Regis college in Denver, has lectured at Krotona Institute of Theosophy at Ojai California and has recently written "An Intuitive Approach to the Seven Stanzas of Dzyan," of H.P. Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine.

In the workshop, Beverley related how "really small things can start huge events

in your life” ... a year ago at the 1988 convention, she called home to see how her dogs were doing and talk to her room mate, a native of Sri Lanka — a brilliant woman who “constantly challenges” her.

In the course of the conversation, the roommate said, referring to the theosophical convention: “I don’t see how you can waste your time with all those sexists.”

Bev’s first reaction was: “Now, wait a minute dear; you’re crazy!” — but at a deeper level an inner voice said; “but she’s not crazy — you’ve got to listen and figure out where she’s `coming from.”” It happened that she had been in Bev’s room and saw her treasured poster with the three objects of The Theosophical Society, on which the First Object reads: “To Form a Nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity”

“I guess that leaves me out,” she said. “Come on,” Bev rejoined, “you know `Brotherhood’ means everybody.” “Then, what about this,” she replied; “To Investigate the Unexplained Laws of Nature and the Powers Latent in Man’. What about the Powers Latent in Woman?” “But `Man’ means `Woman’,” protested Bev while the voice inside said: “Double-speak, just like in Orwell’s `1984.’”

Reflecting on this, Bev thought: “But even though she was raised in Sri Lanka, she speaks the `Kings English’ ... whoops! [laughter] ... the `Queen’s English’ better than I do, so she knows that `man’ means `woman.’” Bev went on to explain that at the time she didn’t stop to think why “`man’ means `woman’” and the sort of [subtle] message that people give and get when they consistently use language that is exclusive of part of humanity. As an English teacher and a philosopher she has, she says, had no problem with this and it has worked “just fine.”

In the dialogue that followed, Bev’s roommate pointed out “Your language is sexist and language is part of what you `do’ — and I put more stock in what you do than what you say.” Bev denied that our [the Theosophical Society’s] intent was sexist — it’s right there in the first object “without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or color — we are not sexist” — and reflected that we inherit a language and we must use that language.

“But language is constantly changing, and if we mis-communicate because

language is changing and we aren't changing our language along with it so that we continue to say what we need to — people are mis-hearing!"

Bev quoted a number of references in theosophical literature which clearly show that theosophy accords equal status to women and men on the spiritual path.

"Theosophists are of necessity the friends of all movements in the world, whether intellectual or simply practical, for the amelioration of the condition of mankind. We are the friends of all those who fight against drunkenness, against cruelty to animals, against injustice to women, against corruption in society or in government ..." (1888) [H.P. Blavatsky to the American Conventions, Theosophical University Press., p. 7]

"Woman must not be looked upon as only an appanage of man, since she was not made for his mere benefit or pleasure any more than he for hers; but the two must be realized as equal powers though unlike individualities. Until the age of 7 the skeletons of girls do not differ in any way from those of boys, and the osteologist would be puzzled to discriminate them. Woman's mission is to become the mother of future occultists — of those who will be born without sin. On the elevation of woman the world's redemption and salvation hinge. And not until woman bursts the bonds of her sexual slavery, to which she has ever been subjected, will the world obtain an inkling of what she really is and of her proper place in the economy of nature." (This quotation was incorporated in an article by A.O. Hume, entitled Paradoxes of the Highest Science, and signed "Eminent Occultist," a pen-name pseudonym for Master K.H.) [Blavatsky Collected Writings, Vol. VI, p. 259]

From Lucifer, June 1889, the question is asked by C.S.; "... Has any woman ever attained to Adeptship proper? Will her intellectual and spiritual nature and gifts permit it? ... It would testify ... a curious partiality on the part of the "All-Love" and "All-Wisdom" to have denied woman, that half of humanity which is said to be the counter-type of even that Wisdom ... the feminine principle in Deity — the means and possibilities to claim and attain the same high wisdom which is attainable for men." H.P.B. replied unequivocally: "Woman has as good a chance as any man has to reach high Adeptship. Why she does not succeed in this direction in Europe is simply due to her early education and the social prejudice which causes her to be regarded as inferior to man. This prejudice, amounting to a curse in Christian lands, was mainly derived from the Jewish Bible, and man has profited from it." [B.C.W., Vol XI, p. 301]

Bev made the important observation, that in the above quotation, H.P.B. must surely have meant “man” as the male gender, otherwise she would have said; “and mankind has not profited by it.” I agree with Bev’s assertion, for if “man” is taken to mean mankind, the statement — as given — is contrary to the sense of its context. (ed.)

Additional search of theosophical literature revealed the following quote from William Q. Judge, one of the principal founders of the Theosophical Society:

“Do not fancy that because ours is called a brotherhood any exclusion of woman is inferred. English is not the only language on earth, and in many others the same term describes both feminine and masculine. Theosophy does not concern sex distinctions, and talks more of souls, which are sexless, than it does of the bodies they inhabit.”

William Q. Judge. [Echoes of the Orient, Vol. I, p. 352]

Bev went on to observe that for her and for many of the women in her audience, the “revolution is over,” equality in education and opportunity has been attained, but there are a lot of women in our culture in 1989-1990 who still feel oppressed — Sonja Johnson who was excommunicated from the Mormon Church because of her support of the Equal Rights Amendment. Mary Daly, a Catholic theologian.

At first, Bev dismissed most of the feminist message, not wanting the things they were saying about our culture to be true, it sounded harsh and critical — not loving and accepting. Yet, with the realization of each new truth in the feminist message she became less able to dismiss it. For the theosophist — There is no Religion higher than Truth, which means that you must follow truth wherever it leads you — and some of the feminist claims began to penetrate her consciousness.

Bev quoted Sonja Johnson as saying; “I have never found a mixed group, and still haven’t, that was organized for something other than to fight women’s oppression, that was not sexist and thoroughly so.”

Metaphorically, Bev said that if we ask a friend to tell us how to get to Lake Geneva Wisconsin, the friend would most likely tell us to drive north about 55 miles and west about 15 miles until you see the signs. This works fine for those of us who live in Chicago, but if we live in Madison the directions will send us to Wisconsin Dells! Many of us, she said, live in Madison and the road from Chicago isn’t the

only way to get to Lake Geneva. Do we, in the TS, know that a lot of us live in Madison? Do we know where women are starting out?

Carol Crist has this to say regarding “some women’s” spiritual path in her book “Diving Deep and Surfacing”:

“Men are not conditioned to think of themselves as worthless. For them the experience often comes after they have taken their place in the world of male power and joined the traditional hierarchies that support men’s dominance in family and society. After achieving power and respect, men may come to experience their power as illusory. They may then open themselves to a deeper experience of power — not as the world knows it. As literatures of both East and West indicate, the male mystic’s quest is arduous and difficult. Men have often found it difficult to give up conventional power and ego gratification, to open themselves to union with the powers of Being.

“Women in contrast, live in a male-defined world in which culture has, for the most part, denied them access to power. The ordinary experience of women in patriarchy is already akin to the experience of nothingness. “Women never have what male mystics must strive to give up. Mystic insight may, therefore, be easier for women to achieve than men!

“‘Awakening’ might be a more appropriate term than ‘conversion’ for describing women’s mystical experience. ... ‘Awakening,’ suggests that the self needs only to notice what is already there ... and implies that the ability to see or to know is within the self — once the sleeping draught is refused. Conversion may often imply that one has turned from one source of Authority to another; from materialism to God for example. ... Conversion, for men, means giving up conventional worldly ego-centric notions of power and trusting that genuine power rooted in the union with the Powers of Being. Women often describe their ‘awakening’ as a coming to self, rather than a giving up of self — as a grounding in self-hood, in the powers of Being — rather than a surrender of self to the powers of Being.

Bev observes that the description of women’s spiritual ‘awakening,’ described by Carol Crist, above, sounds somewhat unfamiliar to her in terms of her grounding in the theosophical classics — and yet it resonated deeply with her as ‘true’. Maybe, she ventured, some of the things that H.P. Blavatsky said were not included in the Secret Doctrine were things the world was not ready to hear then, and maybe some

of them are things the women's spirituality people are talking about now —and are not in conflict with theosophical wisdom.

Men and women, she ventured, are not all on one side or the other of a black-white division between masculine-feminine oriented paths, but rather find themselves somewhere on a continuum between the extremes.

Returning to the earlier metaphor, Bev believes that there must exist maps showing many ways to get to Lake Geneva and urged that the TS should be open to alternative maps to spirituality — not just Eastern maps or Western maps or men's maps or nineteenth century maps. Hopefully, then, the Theosophical Society can become a repository and a distributor of diverse maps — including women's maps.

In Bev's workshop, Joy Mills (former president of the American Section of The Theosophical Society in America and present Director of the Krotona Institute) related how, in 1939, C. Jinarajadasa (not then the President of the Society at Adyar) had encouraged a group to form "The League for American Womanhood."

Joy added that:

"The quotation [given above] as signed 'E.O.' (Eminent Occultist, said to be the Mahatma K.H.) had appeared originally in THE IRISH THEOSOPHIST in an article entitled 'The Dream of Ravan.' It was brother 'Raja's' wish that we, the women of the American Section, should introduce into the American culture, the feminization of the work that we were doing, [The League for American Womanhood]. ... Our patron was Claude Bragdon, a great feminist. ... I was so involved in this effort ... well, we weren't able to do very much — we couldn't get it across, and here it's suddenly flowering — "

Bev: "You know, I'm having this image as you talk, Joy. I'm picturing a river — and it's in the desert perhaps, which means that it has something that is very much needed, but it also sinks into the sand because it's in the desert — then it comes out again — and what you were doing then ... it may not have taken it's flowering ... then, but look at our culture [now] ..."

Joy: "... And we worked terribly hard. ... Brother Raja started it with a hundred dollar donation, which in 1939 was quite a bit of money. And it has gone underground in the meantime ... But we couldn't get the message across ..."

Bev: “But you see, I’ll bet you did; you’re a teacher — and what do teachers do? We say something — we let go of it — sometimes we see results and many times we don’t and it’s faith that keeps us going ...”

Joy: “And now [the idea?] is capturing the Society, the American Section ...”

Bev: “That’s wonderful! I’ve got goose bumps”!

Joy: “Sometimes we don’t see — we think these things spring up — and we don’t see ~~this long, long current as Leon Eisler and others are showing that~~ the old European culture ... was a matriarchal-patriarchal partnership. We don’t see these threads that suddenly come to flower — because a seed is underground. The rose doesn’t suddenly appear.”

Bev: “That’s wonderful — thank you.”

SECULAR HUMANISM AND THE CRASH OF FLIGHT 232

Following this front page lead story (below) on Sept 7, an interesting dialogue has been taking place in the Open Forum of THE BOULDER DAILY CAMERA and addresses some fundamental metaphysical questions, forced upon our consciousness by the tragedies of sudden death:

HOW A HUMANIST SURVIVED THE CRASH OF FLIGHT 232: WERNICK DEALT WITH CRISIS WITHOUT ‘FINDING GOD.’

Everywhere Peter Wernick turns, he is confronted with the irony — the September issue of LIFE magazine with its stark title, “Finding God on Flight 232.” Ironic because Wernick, a member of Hot Rize bluegrass band, was one of the Boulder county survivors of that crash near Sioux City, and Wernick doesn’t believe in and did not search for a deity as the plane swooped low over that Iowa cornfield.

Wernick, who describes himself as an atheist who occasionally engages in “wishful thinking,” was quoted on his views in that issue of LIFE, but not as he wanted to be. The magazine article, with its one paragraph summations, made concrete one of the nagging problems of humanists like Wernick — the lack of a shorthand for their

views, some solid and easily identifiable symbol that explains what they believe in, not just what they reject.

“The humanist doesn’t say, ‘There is no God, period,’” a frustrated Wernick said at a gathering of Boulder county humanists Wednesday night. He also thinks of the good things and says: “I love life, and I give thanks to the pilot for having the guts to think on his feet. A human being and some good luck saved my life on that plane.”

Wernick, 43, and his wife and son were among the 177 people who survived the July 19 crash. More than 100 died when the plane cartwheeled through a cornfield after its hydraulic system failed. Wernick suffered minor back injuries, but he and his family were in a section of the plane where almost no passengers were injured or killed.

Wednesday night, Wernick met with the group that he organized to discuss humanist beliefs at monthly meetings. This time, their topic was how humanists deal with crisis. Although he does not begrudge those believers on board their prayers, Wernick said he never thought of seeking the intervention of a supernatural power in which he does not believe. “I envy them in a way,” he told the group. “I don’t have a little section like in the Bible on what you do when you face trouble. There are no easy prescriptions for humanists.”

“That,” said Denver humanist and counselor Vance Reed, “probably gives them the edge.” Clients who come to him with a background in organized religion often are familiar with ritual but have not delved into “the big issues.” When a crisis threatens their equanimity, they are unprepared for the strain.

Humanists, who have nothing to consider but their basic beliefs and who have learned to depend upon themselves and their relationships with others, have a strong sense of who they are and what they believe. Although he generally is able to recognize his minority status in a country saturated with Christian values, Wernick said, the hours after the crash were difficult. “It was hard to hear all those people who thought God chose them over others — a rabbi died, the mother of young children died. It got disgusting after awhile.” Open Forum - Sept. 12

The questions raised by Humanist Peter Wernick, one of the survivors of the crash of Flight 232, are fundamental soul searching issues that the life and death situations of accident and war bring us face to face with. A popular phrase during

WWII was; “There are no atheists in foxholes” —but there were many, for I was one.

Our emotional nature seeks assurance that in some way “all is well and a purpose for it all exists,” while the intellectual nature is deeply offended by the caricature of a personal “God “ that by all visible evidence capriciously allows the lives of the innocent to be snuffed out while others, no more deserving, are inexplicably spared. And then to be subjected to the spectacle of the fear induced selfish gratitude of those who “God had spared” is truly revolting to one’s sense of justice.

Man, the thinker, who refuses to be lulled to sleep by dogma that fails to answer these questions and increases our sense of alienation and separateness from one another is left with the tragic sense that perhaps we are helpless pawns in a random universe devoid of natural moral law. This is the predicament of the atheist and agnostic — the plight of the humanist.

But man, using his intellect as a tool — guided by the intuition from a higher source within, can if he so wills find a pathway to the truth. These, and other deeply fundamental problems of life are questions that profound thinkers and sages of all cultures and ages have investigated and solved using “the powers latent in man.” In India, it is called the Gupta Vidya — the secret knowledge; in the West it is called Gnosticism. Collectively, it is called theosophy — from the Greek compound “theos” = divine + “sophia” = knowledge.

Dick Slusser

Open Forum letters to be continued next month.

Reel-to-Reel Tape Player Needed

The High Country Study Center has inherited a large number of 1/4 inch reel-to-reel audio tapes from the former Denver lodge of the Theosophical Society which may contain valuable material. Unfortunately we have no 1970s vintage tape machine to review them with. We would be most grateful if a reader of this newsletter in the Denver metro area having access to a machine capable of playing these tapes would be willing to lend it to the H.C.S.C. so that we can re-record the valuable

archive material on cassettes. If you have, or know of such a machine, working or not, please call Dick Slusser at (303)-494-5482.

Dick Slusser and Marty Lyman to visit Adyar

Marty, and Dick (your Secretary and editor) will be leaving for India November 16th to attend the 114th annual convention of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, in Madras Tamil Nadu India. We also plan to visit headquarters of the [Adyar] Indian Section in Varanasi (Benares), Bodh Gaya — a noted Buddhist center and Auroville — a model international community founded by followers of Sri Aurobindo. We shall fly via Singapore, with our mountain bicycles, and expect to return on January 7th.

HIGH COUNTRY

Theosophical Study Center 11/89
(303) 494-5482

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA

THE HIGH COUNTRY NEWSLETTER



Vol. 4D No. 12

Boulder, Colorado

December, 1989

DECEMBER MEETINGS

WHEN: Sunday December 10th at 9:30 A.M. Brunch meeting, bring food to share.

WHERE: Terri Todd's home at 710 Gooseberry Court, Lafayette. For directions, call 665-2577 evenings.

TOPIC: We will continue with the Ed and Mary Abdill video FUNDAMENTALS OF THE AGELESS WISDOM; part 2: The Second Fundamental Proposition of the Secret Doctrine. We will use study guides provided by The Dept. of Education (Wheaton) to discuss the concepts introduced in the video.

WHEN: Monday December 18th at 6:00 P.M.

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 13th. Call 494-5482 for details.

TOPIC: We shall continue with John Algeo's study guide: GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE SECRET DOCTRINE, part 7: The Three Fundamental Propositions.

NEWS AND COMMENTARY

A SECOND PILGRIMAGE TO INDIA

As you read this, your editor Dick Slusser and Marty Lyman will be somewhere in India. This is the second trip for me, and we will be visiting many of the same places that I

visited in 1984.

We planned to fly into Madras on the south east coast on the Bay of Bengal, which is the name of the ocean which washes the east coast of the Indian subcontinent. Since this is Marty's first trip to India, our first three or four days are to be spent at Adyar, International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society to allow us time to get over the usual "jet-lag" and for Marty to get used to her first experience in a really foreign culture.

In order to share some of the impressions of our India experience with my brothers and sisters reading the High Country Newsletter, some excerpts from my journal and letters home, later incorporated into my book "Pilgrimage to India" are included here:

December 20, 1984: "Adyar is a beautiful estate of some 220 acres, fronting on the bay of Bengal beach and the Adyar river. Tomorrow, I plan to get up in time to see the sun as it rises out of the ocean. The lovely house I am quartered in is about 200 yards from the beach and the constant roll of the waves breaking can be heard and the fragrant sea breeze be felt. The daytime temperature is about 80 degrees, night 65-70 and the water must be about 80-85 also. I know you would love it. Early this afternoon, after lunch, I took a walk with Finn, a young 28 year old Norwegian who is my room mate, also here for the convention. There are many lovely sea shells on the beach and I'll bring a collection home.

I left the railroad station by bike last night at 10:15 pm and with the help of a city map and my compass, found my way to the T.S. Adyar estate with only slight difficulty, arriving at about 11 pm, a distance of about 6 to 7 miles.

Even at night, Madras seems to be a beautiful city, completely different from any other Indian cities I have been in. It has wide clean boulevards and attractive well maintained buildings, set on spacious grounds along the beach front. My Hindi is apparently of little use here, since the local indigenous language is Telugu but English seems pretty prevalent too, so I don't expect it to be a problem.

The people here at Adyar are so utterly warm and loving it's a little bit reminiscent of Family Synergy except that the overtones are on the spiritual level rather than the sensual.

The Adyar book shop is a treasure of Theosophical books and I'll probably bring a number of books home which I don't think are generally available in the U.S.

8 am Friday Dec. 21: Last night I slept on the roof so that I could see the brilliant

stars overhead and would have an opportunity to see the sunrise over the sea. The roof is tiled and flat and quite pleasant, affording a good view of the beach. The sky colors were quite nice before dawn but the actual sunrise was obscured owing to some clouds on the eastern horizon. I did get several shots of the sun rising with a fishing boat under the sun's disk.

Norma Sastry (to whom I wrote) is a delightful white haired woman not quite as tall as my sister Eleanor and appears to be in her late 70s. She comes originally from Michigan and last night, treated us to a concert of western classical music. We listened to Rachmaninoff's 2nd Piano Concerto. She has a classical record collection with many of the same works that I have at home.

Sunday Dec. 23: Here it is Sunday already! The days seem to pass so swiftly in a place of great peace and spiritual energy such as Adyar. It is time again to bring you up to date on what is happening with me.

This morning I awoke at 4:45 am and went up to the roof to meditate until sunrise of which there was none since it was cloudy, but the meditation was good for about an hour. There was a cool breeze and I could see the waves breaking into foam a considerable distance off shore.

My resolve to fit myself to be worthy to serve the Masters is growing more powerful as I stay here and absorb the spiritual vibrations. In this wise, yesterday I sought out Mr. Kannan who is, I understand, in charge of the Esoteric section here at Adyar. I told him briefly about myself and of my quest, the purpose of this trip. He told me that they customarily require that those seeking admission to the Esoteric section must have been members of the T.S. for 2 years and I joined only last March.

I also told him of my concern that at home in Boulder there is presently no lodge of the Theosophical Society and that I felt that perhaps my spiritual progress would be hampered by this fact. He replied that my immediate task of preparation; that of working on myself (purification), ridding myself of the well known hindrances of anger, pride, jealousy, selfishness, etc., and quieting and strengthening the powers of the mind through meditation can all be accomplished without access to a local T.S. lodge. So, little by little, my next steps on the path are becoming clear to me.

He also recommended books for me to read, study and apply to my life. Most of these I already have and am using for guidance; *At the Feet of the Master*, *Light on the Path*, *The Voice of the Silence*, *The Key to Theosophy* and *In the Outer Court*.

The food here is good. I am taking the option of eating Indian food at Bhojanasala instead of western style at Leadbeater Chambers. I'll probably try western style just for variety's sake. Bhojanasala is about 20% cheaper, costing about Rs 20 a day. Lodging here at Shanti Kunj (Norma Sastry's house) is, I think, Rs 5 a day (about 40 cents). So, with my economies in food and lodging, I am able to have extra money in my budget for things like gifts, books, charitable contributions and watch batteries!

One of the things I am learning that is giving me the confidence and faith I need to follow my path is the statement that "the candidate for probation will force the Master" to take notice of him simply by his earnest efforts at purification and by following the precepts of right living contained in theosophical teachings. Such efforts cannot fail. It follows then, that to be accepted as a pupil of the Masters depends entirely upon the quality of one's own efforts and nothing else. And further, it doesn't matter where you are in the world because the Master's consciousness is everywhere and takes notice of a sincere aspirant wherever he is.

Monday Dec. 24: Yesterday afternoon; Finn, Evert and I got the key to the beach gate and went to the beach and spent about an hour playing in the surf. There was a strong breeze and the waves breaking on the shore were larger than previously, being about 4 feet high. They would curl over, then sweep you off your feet and the undertow would pull you away from the shore. Not being a good swimmer as you are, I didn't venture into water deeper than my waist. I was thinking of how much you would have loved it!

Last night the Theosophical Youth conference began with an address by T.S. president, Radha Burnier. She is an excellent speaker and spoke for over a half hour in English without the use of notes on the subject of the problem of eliminating war. The fundamental point she made was that the real cause of war lies in men's hearts in feelings of fear and selfishness and this all is based on the feeling and illusion of separateness of the Catholics from the Protestants in Ireland, the Israelis from the Arabs in Palestine, the Hindus from the Sikhs, etc. Wars can only be eliminated when these feelings of separateness, greed and hostility are replaced by love and brotherhood in men's hearts so that there becomes no "other" or as Ram Dass says, "no them".

Last night in my sleep I was dedicating my life to the service of the Masters. Perhaps they were speaking to me in dreams, because I awoke with a great feeling of love and joy.

The night before last I went to an evening concert of the children of an English family here. There was a teenage brother and sister and a younger brother, a child of 5 years. The five year old, believe it or not, played a tiny violin, a little off key, but amazingly well

considering his age. The girl tap danced and played a flute while the elder boy played classical guitar and clarinet. We were also treated to devotional traditional Indian music by an Indian woman playing the “Vina” and singing in a hauntingly beautiful minor key.

The weather has turned cloudy and windy and it has been raining briskly and briefly about three times a day. Last night I got thoroughly soaked before I could get back to my Shanti Kunj home. But it really doesn’t matter much because it is so warm.

Up until today, I had been taking my meals at Bhojanasala Indian style. This means Chapatis, rice, dal, chutney and potatoes, all served on a large banana leaf plate without so much as a spoon. You simply scoop it up, mix it around and eat it all with your fingers. But since the convention started, Bhojanasala has been crowded with hundreds and meals there have been too much of a hassle, so I’ve been changing over to western style meals at Leadbeater Chambers. Still, the three daily meals come to only about \$3.50.

In the mornings I have been going up on the roof of Shanti Kunj here about 5:30 - 5:45 am, just before sunrise, to meditate and it is a very good experience.

As the conference has gotten underway, we have collected a fascinating international group of Theosophists here at Shanti Kunj. In addition to Finn from Norway and Evert from Belgium; we now have Bikkhu, a Buddhist monk from Sri Lanka (actually from Holland originally); Prakash, a Nepalese, an Indian and another Buddhist monk from Thailand. I wish you could be here to talk with all these wonderful people.

Today I met and spent time visiting with two interesting women. Banou Dudha is a Zoroastrian from Bombay and together we visited the T.S. museum and the quarters that Annie Besant occupied. There were many relics similar to Catholic Holy relics.

For example, there were objects that H.P. Blavatsky materialized. One was a beautiful china teacup, finished in gold trim, that H.P.B. materialized on a picnic to match an existing set of cups brought along on the picnic. It was dug out from under the roots of a tree. All of this is described in A.P. Sinnett’s book “The Occult World”.

They also have Master K.H.’s turban that he materialized after an Astral nighttime visit to Col. Olcott. Several other materialized items are there on display. Unfortunately, I was not allowed to see the Shrine room that is restricted to members of the Esoteric section.

The longer I stay here at Adyar and absorb the spiritual vibrations, the more

committed I become to devoting my life to Theosophical work in the service of the Masters and of mankind. And I can see that my purpose in being here is in forming that resolve and in learning how I am to begin that work.

When I acted upon the desire drawing me to India, I could not have told you what I sought - or expected to find here. It was an intuitive call from deep within me that I could not frame into words and so I could only follow the call with the intuition and heart.

At the conscious level I guess I was hoping to find a wise one, a Guru, who would accept me as a disciple and, answering all of my questions, give me explicit instructions as to what my next steps were to be. This I have not found, and I am learning from each earnest seeker after truth, the same verity; that such is not the way, because an inseparable aspect of the preparation for the path of discipleship is the cultivation of discrimination, initiative and responsibility that can only be attained through the exercise of free will.

As a result of what I am learning, the resolve is forming as a sacred pledge to serve those guardians of the human race, the unseen Elder Brotherhood who are said to comprise the Inner Government of mankind, two of Whom were the real founders of the Theosophical Society.

This being the case, in which the Theosophical Society is the vehicle and instrument, through which can be promoted, the evolution of mankind towards its destined union with the spiritual source from which it issued; I am deciding to serve its cause which is so well defined:

To form the nucleus of a universal brotherhood of mankind without distinction of race, creed, caste, color, sex, or nationality.

To study, and attempt to explain the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man.

To undertake the comparative study of religion.

The experience at the T.S. 109th international conference here at Adyar has been truly inspiring. The environment is highly charged with spiritual vibrations and love. The moral, spiritual and intellectual calibre of the people here is beyond anything I have experienced anywhere else previously.

The first part of the dialog in the BOULDER DAILY CAMERA resulting from the front page lead story about “How a humanist survived the crash of Flight 232” was reprinted in last month’s High Country Newsletter and is concluded here.

Open Forum — Oct. 2

Having read the front page article about how a humanist survived the crash of Flight 232, I have some questions and comments about humanism.

The “Humanist Manifesto II” states that, “Reason and intelligence are the most effective instruments that mankind possesses.” This tenet is reiterated by Dick Slusser ... in this way: “But man, using his intellect as a tool — guided by intuition from a higher source within — can if he so wills find a pathway to the truth.”

Thus, for the humanist, life hinges on the intellect. So, let’s test this conclusion in the following way: If humanistic naturalism is true, then human reason must be the result of natural forces (since, to the humanist, there is no supernatural). These natural forces are not rational themselves, nor can they be the result of rational causes. Thus human reason must be the result of non-rational causes. This would give us strong reason to distrust human reason, especially in its theoretical exercises.

A second tenet of the “Humanist Manifesto II” states: “We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience.” In other words, ethics are situational and subjective.

My question is this: Why does the humanist postulate an objective realm for critiquing God (“Why is there evil”) when he only applies the subjective realm to his own ethics? At one point he is appealing to an objective realm to analyze whether God exists or not, yet he chooses to live in a subjective ethical realm for himself. This does not seem very intellectual to me.

I believe the late philosopher Francis Schaeffer summed up humanism quite well by stating; “The humanist has both feet planted firmly in midair.”

Bill Mast, Lafayette, Colorado

Open Forum — Oct. 17

Regarding Bill Mast’s commentary, I would like to clear up some apparent misconceptions

about the theosophical world-view vis-a-vis humanism as I understand their viewpoint.

Mast says: “If humanistic naturalism is true, then human reason must be the result of natural forces (since, to the humanist there is no supernatural).”

One of theosophy’s human Adept teachers said: “The wiseacres say: ‘The age of miracles is past,’ but we answer, ‘It never existed.’” What this means is that there is no such thing as the “supernatural,” i.e., the entire universe obeys natural law without exception, although there are indeed aspects of “natural law” entirely unknown to science.

With this qualification, theosophy agrees with the Humanists in denying the supernatural. The Ancient Wisdom, of which Theosophy is a modern and partial expression, again agrees with the humanists that “human reason is the result of natural forces” because the manifested universe is pervaded with consciousness and intelligence emanating from the unknowable causeless Cause, Be-ness behind all Be-ing, which some call God.

Again, theosophy agrees with humanists that: “... moral values derive their source from human experience,” with a critically important qualification which removes ethics entirely from the “situational and subjective” sphere.

Our Adept teachers, human beings wiser than we, as a result of millennia of study and testing of nature’s laws, tell us that what Plato called “innate ideas” — of truth, beauty and morality — are given the early members of the race at the beginning of each cycle by a “wondrous being called the ‘Initiator’” to be a part of what Carl Jung has called the “Collective unconscious.”

And so I see the humanists as definitely on the right track, so long as they pledge themselves to follow the search for truth wherever it leads, without preconceptions as to the finality of what is currently believed to be “true.” The phenomenal world of the senses is only the outer husk of a greater reality.

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