

# THE HIGH COUNTRY THEOSOPHIST



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The Canadian Theosophist

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The seed idea for the article in our April HCT, The Moon, an Enigma, came to me from *The Canadian Theosophist* via Mark Jaqua -- editor of *Protogonos*. For quite some time I had been hearing complimentary reports on the quality of this publication and have decided to add it to the HCT library here in Boulder. So, when I returned from California, a package containing 96 issues from 1975 through 1990 was waiting for me. Judging from two evenings of reading the CT, it is a real treasure. There are regular features such as *The Secret Doctrine Question and Answer Section*, which would be valuable as *High Country* study topics; *Studies in Early American Theosophical History* by Michael Gomes and various articles of theosophical interest by contemporary as well as historical authors.

The following article, showing how recent discoveries in Science are vindicating statements made 100 years ago by H.P.B. in *The Secret Doctrine* and by the Adepts in *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, appeared in the May-June '89 issue of the CT.

## Occult Astronomy

“Modern Science is our best ally,” wrote Mahatma K.H. in 1882. But he was quick to add, “Yet it is generally that same science which is made the weapon to break our heads with.” [*M.L.*, p.63]



Friend or foe? Or friend *and* foe? The anomaly remains to this day. Science knows little of Theosophy, and on principle would not recognize it as an acceptable source of knowledge. On the other hand, theosophical study includes science as one of its main components. The index to *The Secret Doctrine* confirms this, if confirmation is called for; and of course the Theosophical Society's second object explicitly encourages the study of Science.

Surveying the past hundred years, a case could be made that these two schools of thought are closer now than ever before. Closer, yes, but not that close. There is still a wide gap between the two, and there is a fundamental reason why.

In general, it has to be acknowledged that the majority of the differences between Theosophy and Science will never be resolved while their objects and methods are so basically different.

Science depends exclusively on the inductive course of reasoning, i.e., proceeding from particulars to universals. Theosophy also employs this system, but complements it with the deductive mode, siding with Plato in his insistence on proceeding from universals to particulars.

Then again, Science limits its field of observation to the physical plane only; Theosophy takes in all planes from matter to spirit. Until Science is liberalized, the two will remain distant from each other.

Modern scientists have this advantage over students of Theosophy: that within their

field of study they are able, and indeed required and expected, to check and re-check experiments that provide data from which theories are developed.

Most present Theosophical aspirants, however, have at their command only imperfect or still latent faculties with which to investigate "meta-scientific" postulates, let alone universals. Certain ideas -- especially those pertinent to the sciences -- that were promulgated in early Theosophical literature, have therefore either to be taken on trust, or held in abeyance until the means of testing them are individually perfected.

Occasionally, unexpected temporary bridges are put up, when new scientific data supports Theosophical ideas. But the latter have been on record for over a century, and surely it is of no little significance that *the Theosophical position has remained unchanged* over that period, and science has taken that long to reach a similar one in certain specific cases.

Under the "meta-scientific" heading could be classified certain statements made a hundred years or more ago by Madame Blavatsky or her teachers. A recent example should give both schools something to think about.

The relative proximity of Halley's Comet to planet Earth early in 1986 prompted astronomers and astrophysicists to mount a special research effort before, during and after the event.

The data thus obtained is now being studied, resulting in no few surprises. One

chemical analysis in particular revealed “that the ratio between Carbon 12 and Carbon 13 in Halley differs from all other solar system objects examined, including terrestrial and lunar rocks, meteorites and the atmospheres of the large planets.” (This statement by astronomer Dr. Susan Wyckoff of the Arizona State University, explaining the results of her research, is from a report in the *Calgary Herald*, March 31, 1989.)

The strong implication here is that Halley’s chemical content includes material unknown in the solar system. This has an interesting correlation with an assertion made by H.P. Blavatsky in 1883.

An English member of the Society (Frederick W.H. Myers) had submitted to her as editor of *The Theosophist* a number of technical questions prompted by his reading of *Esoteric Buddhism*. In content these ranged from scientific to historical. Obviously much effort went into the replies, some of which were written by T. Subba Row.

Included in some general remarks which preceded the answers, Blavatsky made some comments on the astronomy of her day, and observed that

“So far, it has been unable to discover with any approach to certainty the physical constitution of either Sun, stars, or even cometary matter. ... The essence of cometary matter must be -- and the `Adepts’ say is -- *totally different from any of the chemical or physical characteristics with which the greatest chemists*

*and physicists of the Earth are familiar* -- all recent hypotheses to the contrary notwithstanding. ...

Occultists have asserted and go on asserting daily the fallacy of judging the essence by its outward manifestations, ... the physical constitution of Sun, stars and comets by our terrestrial chemistry and the matter of our own planet.” [B.C.W. V, pp. 147-8]

In *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 85-86, she also suggested *external* nature in other Solar systems differs from our own.

Citing “The essence of cometary matter ...” statement in *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P.B. went on to say, “And even that matter, during rapid passage through our atmosphere undergoes a certain change in its nature. Thus not alone the elements of our planets, but even those of all its sisters in the Solar System differ as widely from each other in their combinations, as from the Cosmic elements beyond our Solar limits.” [S.D. I, p. 142]

To a student of occultism, far more important than the fact itself will be the question: how did Blavatsky (or perhaps her mentors) *know* cometary matter is of a different chemical composition from that of other bodies in our solar system?

[ed. HCT: How these things are *known* is asserted in a continuation of the text in *The Key to Theosophy* pp. 85-87, not included in the original CT article]:

“... the only world approximately known and understood in its physical composition by Science, is the planetary or Solar System ... though the fundamental law and the universal working of laws of Nature are uniform, still our Solar System (like every other such system in the millions of others in Cosmos) and even our Earth, has its own programme of manifestations differing from the respective programmes of all others. ...

Alter the conditions cosmic and planetary, and there must be as a result quite a different flora, fauna and mankind. The same laws will fashion quite a different set of things and beings even on this our plane, including in it all our planets.

How much more different then must be *external* nature in other Solar systems, and how foolish is it to judge of other *stars* and worlds and human beings by our own, as physical science does! ...

What Science in general will never accept as proof -- the cumulative testimony of an endless series of Seers who have testified to this fact. Their spiritual visions, real explorations by, and through, physical and spiritual senses untrammelled by blind flesh, were systematically checked and compared one with the other, and their nature sifted.

All that was not corroborated by unanimous and collective experience was rejected, while that only was recorded as

established truth which in various ages, under different climes, and throughout an untold series of incessant observations, was found to agree and receive constantly further corroboration. The methods used by our scholars and students of the psycho-spiritual sciences do not differ from those of students of the natural and physical sciences, as you may see. Only our fields of research are on two different planes, and our instruments are made by no human hands, for which reason, perchance, they are more reliable. The retorts, accumulators, and microscopes of the chemist and naturalist may get out of order; the telescope and the astronomer's horological instruments may get spoiled; our recording instruments are beyond the influence of the weather or the elements.

... While the observation and experience of physical science lead the Scientists to about as many “working” hypotheses as there are minds to evolve them, our *knowledge* consents to add to its lore only those facts which have become undeniable, and which are fully and absolutely demonstrated. We have no two beliefs or hypotheses on the same subject.”  
[end of added material, ed. HCT]

A supplementary question is *why* did she choose to make such a statement in 1883? At that time, astronomers had no means to check it. By publishing it, she ran the risk of ridicule, and even of being accused of bluffing. ...

Certainly, there are many statements scattered through the early Theosophical writings that would have been incredible, nay, *inconceivable* to scientifically minded readers a hundred years ago. But as modern science

gathers more facts, and is -- usually reluctantly -- forced to reject or modify old theories, the less fantastic some of the statements by H.P. Blavatsky and her teachers appear to modern readers. Curiously, several of them pertain to astronomy in one way or another.

Until relatively recently, the average intelligent though skeptical reader would have felt justified in describing some of those statements as nonsensical. Consider, for example, how such a reader might have reacted in 1923 when *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett* was first published. They contain a remarkable passage, written in 1882, stated in the following matter-of-fact terms:

“Science will *hear* sounds from certain planets before she *sees* them. This is a prophecy.” [*M.L.*, p. 170]

It was a prophecy indeed -- remarkably fulfilled seventy or more years later with the development of radio astronomy. But to the 1923 reader (to say nothing of the original recipient of the letter in 1882) the statement would have been next to meaningless. Radio was then in its infancy, and the electronic techniques necessary to design and construct radio “telescopes” were still thirty years and a world war away.

Another example is the statement that the true color of the sun is blue. [*B.C.W. XII*, p. 548 fn] -- confirmed by early astronauts. (And unconfirmable until space exploration began.)

Not to belabor the point, but these examples should be sufficient to alert intelligent readers to the fact that over a hundred years

ago a few individuals possessed information unknown to science of the time. Then, too, there is every indication they knew much more than they told, and gave out hints only.

The modern Theosophical teaching was new to the world of a hundred years ago, yet it has a timeless quality. New students rightly want to know how dependable it is. Today, they can be referred to the old saying, “The proof of the pudding is in the eating.”

*The Secret Doctrine* reads exactly the same in 1989 as it did in 1889. It requires no apology, no commentary, and remarkably little correction. The exciting ideas, the awe-inspiring theories, have weathered the remarkable scientific discoveries of this century, and in many instances are comparatively more credible to the scientific establishment today than when written.

Little by little, Science and Theosophy move closer together. Perhaps in not too many centuries hence a leading scientist will have to admit that “Modern Theosophy is our best ally.” *Ted G. Davies*.

The truths of occultism constitute, indeed, a body of the highest spiritual importance, at once profound and practical to the world at large. Yet, it is not as a mere addition to the tangled mass of theory and 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 decided to shed upon a few recipient minds, more light on the subject.

[*M.L.*, p. 22.]

## Trip Report

Editor Dick Slusser and Marty Lyman of the HCSC recently returned from their trip to visit with theosophical friends in California.

We began our trip with a thoroughly enjoyable participation in the Kokopelli Classic 1991 -- four days and 145 miles of mountain bike riding over single-track trails, jeep roads and highways between Loma, Colorado and Moab, Utah. Highlights included wading across hip-deep Salt Creek in teams of two, carrying the bikes at shoulder level followed by a strenuous mile long push of the bikes up a trail too steep to ride to a mesa top promontory overlooking the Colorado river where lunch was provided.

Day three, the most demanding, involved a ten mile ride down the paved highway from historic Dewey Bridge in the breathtakingly beautiful Colorado River canyon to Onion Creek where we began a 4200 foot climb to the snow capped La Sal mountains. The road winding up Onion Creek canyon was spectacularly beautiful as we splashed through twenty three stream crossings before finally emerging into lush green ranch country of Fisher Valley above the canyon, and the lunch stop. The afternoon presented the steepest and most sustained climb of all, up serpentine grades of 15% or more to mountainsides commanding a view of the colorful canyons far below. Finally, in late afternoon, we pedalled the last few uphill miles through Ponderosa pine forests and green meadows, arriving at camp on Beaver Mesa at 8400 feet to the congratulatory cheers of earlier arrivals, weary but triumphant.

Day four began with a thousand foot climb to a spectacular overlook of the previous day's route in Fisher valley followed by a roller-coaster seven mile descent of 2000

feet and a final climb of 1500 feet to the lunch stop on the La Sal loop road. The afternoon was all downhill, descending on steep gullied jeep trails to rocky canyons which led ultimately to the finish ceremony at the Slick Rock bike trail. Awards were given for the youngest rider (18) and the "most seasoned" (65, your editor).

Two days of driving across Utah and Nevada brought us to Carson City and the crossing of the Sierra Nevada to the lush green of the California foothills in spring.

In Turlock we were warmly welcomed by April and Jerry Hejka-Ekins, recent emigres from Los Angeles. Although they have no theosophical group in Turlock, they are none-the-less actively involved in theosophical work. They had just returned from the H.P.B. Centenary conference in Los Angeles where both April and Jerry made presentations. Jerry has an office in Turlock from which he conducts a mail order book service dealing in theosophical and metaphysical books. (Nautilus Books 125 N. Broadway, Suite 2A, Turlock, Ca. 95380. Catalog on request.) But the most interesting feature of Jerry's office is his ante-room library consisting of several thousand volumes of rare and out-of-print books of theosophical and metaphysical interest which he has been collecting over the last thirty years or so. Jerry remarked that prof. John Cooper of the T.S. in Australia had visited recently and spent several weeks of research in the library. (Readers may recall a review of John Cooper's video on "The Theosophical Movement and its Importance" in the Sept. 90 HCT.)

In Altadena/Pasadena we visited Pasadena T.S. headquarters where we renewed warm friendships with Leader Grace Knoche, Eloise Hart, Kirby and John van Mater. Through the kind hospitality of David and

Virginia Spurlin, we shared the common experience of our recent trips to India, spending several nights with them in their beautiful home on the heights overlooking Pasadena.

Our last three evenings in L.A. were filled with theosophical interest: We visited a study group of the Los Angeles Besant Lodge focussed on H.P.B.'s *Isis Unveiled*, attended an on-going study group conducted by Eloise Hart in Chapter 33 of G. de Purucker's *The Esoteric Tradition* -- Mysteries of Man's Inner Nature; how each of the seven principles contain within them seven sub-principles to be developed and unfolded in the course of evolution. [*The Esoteric Tradition*, pp. 1001-2.], and on the last evening presented a slide show of Marty's slides of our India trip to the staff at Deodars. Marty's presentation focussing on the Indian people, especially the poor, their way of life and how we came to know many of them through shared experiences was well received.

As we were leaving for San Diego, we stopped by the Theosophical University Press to pick up a book and ran into Will Thackeray who personally gave us a tour of the T.U.P. publishing facilities.

A three hour drive south brought us to San Diego and the precincts of Point Loma Publications where we received the warm hospitality of Emmett and Carmen Small.

One of the principal motivations of our trip was the archives in Emmett's library where we hoped to find unpublished material on G. de Purucker to serve as resource material for Marty's forthcoming presentation to the High Country Study Center. Two days of research found much unique and valuable material on G. de P.'s early boyhood and background as well as much additional archival material on the Masters

including some little known and unpublished letters.

An unexpected high spot of our stay in San Diego was Emmett's personally conducted tour of the grounds of the former Point Loma Theosophical Headquarters. Point Loma was founded by Katherine Tingley who succeeded William Q. Judge as Leader and the site is now occupied by the Point Loma Nazarene College. Emmett came to Point Loma at age two and received his entire education through university level there. Most of the buildings of former Point Loma theosophical days are still standing and in use by the present owners. Emmett was immediately recognized and waved through by the guard at the gate. He is evidently well known and loved by all on the campus, for as Emmett led us through the historic buildings and over the grounds, he was warmly greeted by staff and students alike.

On our second evening, Emmett invited a group of his theosophical friends for a very enjoyable and informal social evening. Among the guests was Gordon Plummer, author of such scientific theosophical works as *The Mathematics of the Cosmic Mind*, and *From Atom to Snowflake*; also an alumnus of Point Loma, having been born and raised there.

Although we were sorry to have missed the H.P.B. memorial conference in L.A., since it coincided with the dates of the Kokopelli Classic, Marty observed that her preference is to meet our theosophical family members on an intimate one-to-one basis, free from the distractions and pressure of an organized conference, an insight with which I heartily concur.

# Calendar

Sunday June 2nd  
Gerald Lee's home  
3527 Perry St.  
Denver -: 477-4840

Iris Rawls will talk on the esoteric symbolism in the book of *Revelation in the Bible*.  
There will be a charge for xeroxed handouts.  
Additional donation suggested. Meeting begins at 1:30 P.M.

Monday June 10th  
Park Hill Public Library,  
Montview Blvd. at Dexter St.

Marty Lyman will present Part I of her talk on "G. de Purucker, his life and his work."  
Take Colo. Blvd to Montview (2000 N.), 7 blocks E. to Dexter. Meeting begins at 6:00 P.M.

Friday June 14th  
Charlene Laharpe's home -: 757-7298  
for directions.

Al Skrobisch leads study of *Introductory Study Course in Theosophy Part II -- Lesson X - The Question of Evil*  
Meeting begins at 7:00 P.M.

Sunday June 23  
Gerald Lee's home  
3527 Perry  
Denver -: 477-4840

Iris Rawls will conclude her talk on the esoteric symbolism in the book of *Revelation in the Bible*.  
Donation suggested.  
Meeting begins at 1:30 P.M.

Friday June 28th  
Charlene Laharpe's home -: 757-7298  
for directions.

Al Skrobisch leads study of *Introductory Study Course in Theosophy Part II -- Lesson XI - The Rise and Fall of Civilization* Meeting begins at 7:00 P.M.

Sunday June 30th  
Terry Todd's home  
710 Gooseberry Court  
Lafayette -: 665-2577

Brunch Meeting. Bring food to share. Video of *The Mahabharata* Part I will be shown and discussed.  
Marty Lyman and Dick Slusser will share their experiences of their recent trip to California.  
Meeting begins at 9:30 A.M.