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THEOSOPHY

AND

OCCULTISM.

BY

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Theosophy and Occultism.

THEOSOPHY, in its ideal sense of Divine Wisdom, is identical with real Occultism as distinguished from the Occult Arts. But in treating of Theosophy as contrasted with Occultism, in the ordinary meaning given them by students of Theosophy, a more limited signification must be assigned to the term. H. P. Blavatsky in her famous article on "Practical Occultism" (*LUCIFER*, May, 1888) gives the following definition of a Theosophist :

"Any person of average intellectual capacities, and a leaning toward the metaphysical; of pure, unselfish life, who finds more joy in helping his neighbour than in receiving help himself; one who is ever ready to sacrifice his own pleasures for the sake of other people; and who loves Truth, Goodness and Wisdom for their own sakes, not for the benefits they may confer—is a Theosophist."

That is to say that any man, whether a member of the T. S. or not, who endeavours to be moral, just and unselfish, and who at the same time exercises his reason in matters of belief, may be said to be deserving of the name of Theosophist. He may even be the follower of some exoteric creed or the disciple of some particular school of thought, but if he is large-minded and large-hearted enough not to let his sectarian views warp his love for humanity, he is deserving of the title of Theosophist.

But this does not in any way constitute him an Occultist; for the Occultist is one who learns how to

consciously distinguish good from evil. He is not a man of theory but one of practice. He does not act on intuition and blind faith alone; he must be something more than merely *good*; he must be *wise*. The contents of his consciousness are something more than his five-sense perceptions *plus* the deductions he draws from them by his reason, and such vague ideas and intuitions as he may possess. Nevertheless no man can be a real Occultist without first being a Theosophist, and this is why morals are so strongly insisted upon in all systems of religion. To be wise, a man must first be good and compassionate to all. The wicked can gain some *knowledge*, it is true; but they can never have *wisdom*.

It is this Wisdom that lies at the root of all evolution and is the reason of what is called "creation," and the ultimate goal of perfected manhood. In all the world-scriptures it is the same. The schools of the Gnôsis or Wisdom in the early centuries of our era taught that: "The Emanation (or Evolution) of the Universe was the Knowledge thereof." *Genesis* also commences with the words: "In Wisdom the Elohim (or Great Creative Powers) fashioned the substance of the Heavens and the Earth"—such at any rate is the interpretation of the learned Rabbis who wrote the Targum of Jerusalem, and surely they knew more of their own religion than the orthodox who prefer the mistranslation, "In the beginning"! So again the first chapter of the Johannine gospel opens with the words "In the beginning was the Word." But the word translated "beginning" is a technical term of the Gnostic philosophers (to whose school, as the best biblical scholars are agreed, the Gospel according to John must be assigned), and the meaning of it is Wisdom. And again in the *Rig Veda* (x. 129) we read: "Desire first arose in It which was the primal germ of mind; (and which) sages, searching with their *intellect*, have discovered *in their heart* to be the bond which connects entity with non-entity."

Here "Desire" is Wisdom, "that all embracing desire for universal good, (Divine) love for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness, the feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy," which is the supreme reason of "creation," as H. P. Blavatsky so well explains in her *Theosophical Glossary*.

I have been led away into this digression in order to show how the ideas of compassion and wisdom are identical, and how real wisdom and knowledge of the great *why* of the universe can never be attained by the selfish or unjust man.

Now the Occultist is one who treads this path of unselfishness, justice, and true knowledge. A man cannot be really just if he is ignorant. What may appear just for a limited number is often unjust when the welfare of a larger community has to be considered, and what appears just for that community may be unjust to the other communities which together with it form a nation. And so also, apparent justice to a nation may be injustice to humanity; and apparent justice to humanity, injustice to the Universe. And thus we can easily see that the supposed "cruelty" of nature is only a delusive appearance created by the ignorance of minds that can only view an infinitesimal fraction of the whole problem. There is no "cruelty" in nature. Nature works for the good of *all* creatures, of *all* that lives; aye, even of the rocks, for their life too is seen by the Eye of Wisdom.

Now the Occultist, seeing that the Spirit and Body of all men are one with the Spirit and Matter of the Universe, desires to make his Mind also at one with the Great Mind or World-Soul, for he knows that it is mind, and mind alone, which really separates him from the rest. Proposing this goal to himself, a radical change comes over him. With the blessing "Peace to all beings" ever in his mind, he silently expands his spiritual nature until it overflows the confines of the love of the individual, family, race or even of humanity, until that within him which had

been one of the constituent drops, expands into the Ocean of Compassion and Wisdom that embraces all nature. How then is it possible for any but the very few to tread the path of Occultism? Husbands and wives, parents, fathers and mothers, patriots, humanitarians of different kinds, all think their love of the best and noblest, and look upon such divine compassion for all beings as cold and unsympathetic. How is it possible for men and women who think they find in their loves an expression of their highest instincts, to regard these merely as subtle spells that dwarf their power of growth? And yet a dwarfing of spiritual growth it is; and none under such a spell can be Occultists. Now with men, as above said, the great principle of separation is the *Mind*. The mind keeps even the greatest lovers and firmest friends separate. The mind of man dictates the form and fashion of his faith or convictions. But no one who allows his mind to be warped by an exoteric creed or philosophy can be an Occultist. The Occultist to be just to all beliefs must be free from all. Tuning his own mind to the harmony of the Great Mind of the Universe he perceives the hidden secrets of nature, so that those things that are speculations for ordinary mankind become facts of consciousness and realities for him, and so also for all those who have trodden the same path of a liberated and perfected humanity. How can such a one then subscribe to this or that faith, or allow his mind to be crystallized into this or that mould of man-created thought? He who cramps his mind within the limits of any dogma, is to the Occultist as unwise as the Chinese woman who takes pleasure in deforming her feet and squeezing them into slippers of half the natural size, or the European woman who ruins her own health and that of her offspring by deforming her body with tight-lacing.

It will thus be seen that if we regard the Theosophical Society as a training school for teaching the *A B C* of Occultism, the attempt of the earnest stu-

dent to practically carry out the First and Second Objects of the Society and to live a Theosophic life will constitute a preliminary training which will fit him to approach with profit first of all the theoretical, and then the practical study of the Third Object.

Under the First Object of establishing the nucleus of a universal brotherhood would fall the development of that love and compassion that can embrace all men without distinction of race, sex, class, creed or caste. Under the Second would come the process of freeing the mind from prejudice and preconception in matters of religion, philosophy and science. And both of these would be preparatory to the proper study of the Third Object, which deals with the undiscovered laws of nature and the psychic powers latent in man.

The latter study may be conveniently classified under two heads, (a) Theoretical and (b) Practical Occultism. But before any attempt is made to deal with these two aspects of Occultism, I must insist upon a great distinction being made between real spiritual Occultism and Occult Arts or Magic.

Under the heading of Magic and the Occult Arts fall such arts and sciences as hypnotism, mesmerism, ceremonial magic, astrology, physical alchemy, the use of spells and enchantments, necromancy, chartomancy, cheiromancy, geomancy, and a thousand and one other mantic arts, physical and astral clairvoyance and clairaudience, psychometry and an almost endless list which any well-read person in the subject can fill up at his own pleasure. A man need not be moral to practise any of these things. Any psychic—that is, one who has an organism sensitive in any degree to the influences of the next plane of matter to our own—can blossom into a creditable psychometer, chartomantist, cheiromantist, or any other mantist, or into an astrologer or astral seer. And even if a person is by no means psychic he may become a very powerful hypnotist or mesmerist, or even a great physical alchemist or ceremonial magician and en-

chanter, if he is taught the right methods or discovers them for himself. And here I am at present at no pains to convince sceptics of the truth of those arts, but write for those only who know that they exist and are true arts. But what is to be noted is that the greatest villains on earth, provided they are psychic or in possession of the secret, can practise such things with success. It is because of this that all such arts have been guarded with the greatest secrecy in the past; and are to a very great extent still kept very secret. But some of the Occult Arts are beginning to be known, especially hypnotism and mesmerism, and it is an imperative necessity to point to the dangers that menace society by placing the knowledge of such things in the hands of the unscrupulous and immoral.

Let any man of a serious and compassionate nature study the science of hypnotism and see the awful force of suggestion on a hypnotized subject, and then say whether such a power of not only moral life and death but even of physical life and death should be placed in the hands of any man, or what is worse, reserved to the medical faculty merely as such? This faculty that denies *in toto* the Occult Arts and is beginning to amuse itself with experiments in the most dangerous of all known sciences, tell us either that a suggestion can be removed as easily as suggested, or that the moral sense of the subject will enable him to resist a suggestion to commit a crime even in the hypnotized state. But this is not true; for a suggestion is a mental seed planted deep in the unresisting soil of the psychic nature of the lower mind of man, which will blossom forth into act as soon as the right train of circumstances or suitable surroundings present themselves. The public do not yet know the awful scourge to society that an unscrupulous man of strong hypnotic will can be; the respectable and sceptical public do not know the ease with which their young daughters, who are the most sensitive of all to hypnotic influences and suggestion, can be led willing

victims to their ruin by unscrupulous knaves; they do not know how comparatively easy it is to make them sign their wills in favour of a hypnotic adventurer, or tell a chance acquaintance where they keep the key of their strong box. And yet hypnotism is not the most potent of the Occult Arts by many a degree. There are powers that can be used to sway nations as well as individuals, and all within the reach of a moral leper with strong enough will, all attainable by the human animal who is indeed a million times more powerful for evil than the most savage of the animal or reptile kingdoms proper.

But none such are Occultists; they may be magicians and practisers of the Occult Arts, but none are fit to untie the shoe-latchet of the true Occultist, whose heart throbs in response to the pulsation of the Ocean of Compassion and whose mind vibrates in unison with the great harmony of the Intelligent Universe.

How many are those who think they are students of Occultism simply because they can cast a horoscope or see a picture in the Astral Light, or psychometrize the contents of a letter, or hold their breath a little longer than other people, or even investigate "spooks" at first hand! And yet they are not within a thousand leagues of the portals of the very infant school of Occultism where the "children" learn the letters of the elements and spell out the *mantras* of the universe. But few will "become as little children," few care to enter the school in the lowest class of the "innocents."

The normal product of nineteenth century conceit and selfishness considers itself fit for the highest form of the school, if not indeed to be its instructor, and so if it believes in Occult Science at all it wants to read all the books of the Science and enter on practical experiment before it has even learnt the letters or the theory.

To return then to the theoretical side of real Occultism. This is to be learnt either from an Occultist

or discovered from books. Happy are those who find a teacher, for teachers are few, and though they may be willing to teach can seldom find pupils ready or willing to submit to the discipline necessary before even theoretical knowledge can be imparted to them. Much, on the other hand, can be learnt from books; but the study is one of enormous difficulty and of no avail unless the spiritual intuition of the student is developed by the purification of desire and the habit of mental concentration. But even the theoretical side of Occultism is for only the few. It is only for those who have no divided interests; it is not for the doubters, not for the lazy, not for the fearful or vacillating. Once the desire for Spiritual Knowledge and the possibility of realizing it presents itself to the mind there is no further impetus wanted. The mind henceforth becomes "one-pointed" and moves steadily onward, attracting to itself by natural selection all the preliminary knowledge necessary. The man has become self-conscious: is awake and intelligent and regards his fellows as persons still in a dream or under the hypnotic influence of the senses. But even he can do nothing practical with safety until he finds a teacher: but find him he will when he is ready.

What the practical part of Occultism is, H. P. B. has nowhere distinctly stated in her public works. If she had it would no longer have been "occult," but we do know that the real spiritual secrets are of such a nature as to be incommunicable in words. In the article on "Practical Occultism," to which I have already referred, H. P. B. does not say what Practical Occultism is; but only gives "an approximate idea of the conditions under which alone," even when a teacher has been found, the "study of Divine Wisdom can be pursued with safety." For this purpose she selects twelve precepts from a treatise of seventy-three on practical instruction, of which the chief points are as follows:—

The place chosen for instruction must be entirely free from malignant influences of every kind, physical, mental and moral—a somewhat difficult, if not almost unattainable, place to find in any large city.

Before the student is given any practical instruction “face to face” he must acquire preliminary instruction in a group of fellow-students, and no further instruction will be given unless the candidate has thoroughly purified his mind, and is “at peace with all, *especially with his other selves*,” that is to say, with his fellow-students. Such students must be united “as the fingers on one hand,” and if the rejoicing or sorrow of one finds no echo in the hearts of the others, then the proper conditions are absent, for the disciples are like the strings of a lute, which differ in texture and tension, but which must be tuned into proper accord before the hand of the Master can evoke from them the nature harmonies, which enshrine the words of Wisdom.

Moreover, all the vain things of the world have to be utterly renounced; and how much that the world thinks great and noble and its highest seems a vain and empty delusion to the calm and spiritualized mind of one who has set his feet in the path of true Occultism!

Then again—and this is perhaps one of the most difficult things for a Western to understand—though the heart of the neophyte must “throb in response to all that lives and breathes,” yet must he isolate himself physically from all contact with others. His bedding, drinking-cup and bowl must be touched by none but himself. This explains the reason of the isolation practised by the Brâhmans, their refusal to touch another’s hand, their throwing away of a glass out of which a non-Brâhman has drunk. It also explains the begging bowl of the Buddhist Bikshu, and the words of Jesus, “Who touched me, for I perceive that virtue has gone out of me?”

“His mind also must remain blind to all but the universal truths in nature”; and lastly, he must touch

no animal food, no wine, spirits, or narcotics, and above all must be absolutely chaste, both physically and mentally.

Such, then, being the conditions, it is high time for members of the T. S. not to mention Occultism in the same breath with the Occult Arts, and when they hear of people who can cast a horoscope, or even evoke an elemental, they should refrain from instantly dubbing them Occultists, for the said amateurs of magic may be people who could not get through an examination in ordinary respectability, much less pass with honours the searching tests of the occult moral laws.

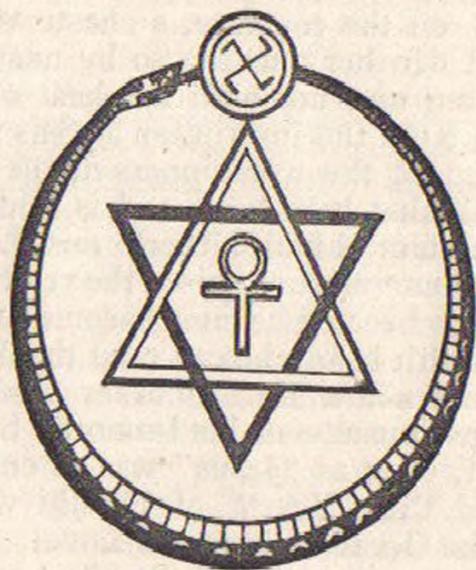
Those who understand the theosophical distinction between the Personality and Individuality—between the impermanent and semi-animal compound that makes up the average man, and the undying spiritual man within that personality—which, in the vast majority of cases, is disregarded and refused recognition—will easily see the difference between true Occultism and the Occult Arts. Occultism pertains to the higher trinity in man, to the divine Individuality that persists through the whole cycle of rebirths, whereas the Occult Arts are attainments of the Personality, of the lower psyche or soul, which has well been called “the earthly, sensual and devilish.” Mind I do not say that because a man studies the Occult Arts that he is, therefore, “earthly, sensual and devilish,” but I do assert that a thoroughly depraved and abandoned person can make just as much advance in the *lower* aspects of these arts as the honest and unselfish student. But all of these arts are simply the lower reflections of the One True Occult Art that pertains to the Higher Triad in man; once the “Eye of Shiva,” the organ of spiritual vision, uncloses, then all these arts are useless. There is a Spiritual Sense, which is One, and which can be called spiritual clairvoyance, spiritual clairaudience, or by any others of the occult faculties or arts with the prefix of “spiritual,” and yet it is *one*. So that the Occultist may, as far

as a technical knowledge of the Occult Arts goes, be as one "having nothing, but yet possessing all things."

To conclude then, Occultism is not Theosophy in the ordinary sense of the word, much less is it the Occult Arts, for an earnest Theosophist is far nearer the path of Occultism than the dabbler in "les sciences maudites." There is another thing also that the obtrusive spirit of the age, which would thrust its grimy and offensive person into every sanctuary, would do well to remember. Occult Wisdom is no harlot that loves to display her charms to the first comer, she is, on the contrary, a chaste virgin, and he who would win her must do so by unselfish love and compassion, and not with the heat of passion. Let us bear in mind the inscription at Sais in ancient Egypt, which told the worshippers at the shrine of Isis: "I am all that hath been, and is, and shall be; and my veil no mortal hath hitherto raised."

And why has no "mortal" raised the veil of spiritual nature? Simply because he must become "immortal" and conquer death before he can rend the Veil of the Temple of Nature in twain. In other words he must live in the consciousness of his Immortal Self and be at one with it, even as "Jesus" was at one with his "Father," and the "Heart" of Buddhi was at one with Bodhi, the Ocean of Spiritual Love.

But though we cannot all be Buddhas and Christs in one birth—for the sacred books tell us that from the time that the heart begins to long for spiritual freedom, seven births at least must be lived through before the goal is reached—still we can all prepare for the journey. We can make our garments white; that is to say we can make pure our garments of mind and desire, of sense and flesh, so that in another birth we may have a fit tabernacle for the indwelling Spirit of Love, our Higher Self, to manifest itself to the world.



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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

THE Theosophical Society is an international body which was founded at New York, U.S., on the 17th day of November, 1875, with three well defined objects, viz:

FIRST.—*To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.*

SECOND.—*To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, philosophies and sciences, and demonstrate the importance of that study.*

THIRD.—*To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the psychic powers latent in man.*

The Fellows of the Society are either members of its Branches (or Lodges) or unattached to any Branch, and in territories where there are sufficient Branches the latter are included in a Section. Each Branch and each Section has complete autonomy in all local affairs. All charters for Branches and diplomas for members draw their sanction from the whole Society, and are signed and sealed in its name by the President and recorded in the particular Section where the member may have been admitted or elected.

The acceptance of the Second and Third objects of the Society is optional with those desiring to enter, the First—Universal Brotherhood—being the only one to which it is expected all applicants will subscribe.

The Society does not pretend to be able to establish at once a Universal Brotherhood among men, but only strives to create a nucleus for such a body, and believes that a careful study of the religions and philosophies of the past as well as of the present day will reveal the common basis upon which all rest and therefore the truth underlying them all. The organization is therefore wholly unsectarian, with no creed or dogma to enforce or impose, its motto being:

THERE IS NO RELIGION HIGHER THAN TRUTH.

Hence in its ranks and coöperating in its work are to be found professors of all faiths as well as those who have none whatever. No restriction is placed on its members save that of loyalty to its one fundamental principle—Universal Brotherhood. Nor is it as a Society to be held responsible for the opinions of its members, who all have a right to hold their own views and to receive for them from their fellow-members