

# THE LIGHT OF LUXOR

VOLUME VII



INDEPENDENT THEOSOPHICAL MAGAZINE





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Independent Theosophical Magazine



## Theosophy

We often speak of Theosophy as not in itself a religion, but the truth, which lies behind all religions alike. That is so; yet, from another point of view, we may surely say that it is at once a philosophy, a religion and a science.

C.W. Leadbeater

## The Society

"The Theosophical Society was organized for the purpose of promulgating the Theosophical doctrines, and for the promotion of the Theosophic life. The present Theosophical Society is not the first of its kind."

H.P. Blavatsky

## Its Objects

1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
2. To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.
3. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.

In extinct religions the same idea of a Trinity is found. In Egypt it dominated all religious worship. "We have a hieroglyphical inscription in the British Museum as early as the reign of Senechus of the eighth century before the Christian era, showing that the doctrine of Trinity in Unity already formed part of their religion". [S. Sharpe. Egyptian Mythology and Egyptian Christology, p. 14.] This is true of a far earlier date. Râ, Osiris, and Horus formed one widely worshipped Trinity; Osiris, Isis, and Horus were worshipped at Abydos; other names are given in different cities, and the triangle is the frequently used symbol of the Triune God. The idea which underlay these Trinities, however named, is shown in a passage quoted from Marutho, in which an oracle, rebuking the pride of Alexander the Great, speaks of: "First God, then the Word, and with Them the Spirit". [See Williamson's The Great Law, p. 196.]

Annie Besant - Esoteric Christianity

# Editors Note

In this Volume of The Light of Luxor you can find a mixture of theosophical reprints and new articles.

The first article of this volume was written by Linda Oliveira for Theosophy in Australia. Linda was president of the Theosophical Society in Australia for nearly 20 years. She is a well-known Theosophical teacher in Australia and Across the world. The article reprinted from the Theosophist for this edition is On Becoming Fully Human.

Shikar Agnihotri article is a lecture he provided for the Theosophical Society titled Annie Besant a Great Occultist. Shikar is a TS member and Devoted worker at Adyar, he is also a theosophical lecturer and conducts a group that is currently studying the Mahatma Letters.

Santiago Beltran Sanchez, M.A. is a history teacher and researcher in Bogota Colombia, he is a regular contributor to The Light of Luxor. His article for this volume is on Religious Music in 18th century Spanish Colony of Santa fe known today as Bogota the Capital of Colombia. Beltran provides a historical description of the influence that religious catholic music had on culture and spirituality in the Spanish Colonies with a focus on the history of religious music in Bogota.

The Roots of Modern Theosophy written by Pablo Sender provides an insightful introduction to Theosophy, its History and the different shapes it has taken from Ancient to modern times. Pablo Sender is an International Theosophical Speaker and Writer. For more information on his most recent work please see his website: <http://pablosender.com>

The Stable Mind written by Pedro Oliveira is a deep philosophical paper that goes into the essence of Theosophy. This paper gives insights into what a true seeker should aspire to if they are genuine about "The Path." Pedro is an International Lecturer and Writer, for more information on his most recent work please visit his website: <http://www.cwlworld.info> .

Occultism, Semi-Occultism and Pseudo-Occultism written by Annie Besant and printed in the Adyar Pamphlet series.

The Brotherhood of Luxor is a paper written by the editor to shed light on the other master's that Blavatsky and other early theosophists entered into contact with. There are many rumors about the brotherhood of Luxor, and there are other groups named with similar titles. The reason that this paper is presented, is to clarify who The Brotherhood of Luxor are in the context of Theosophical History and literature.

Julian Ochoa  
The Editor

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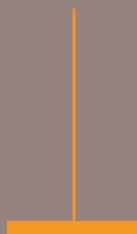
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“Theosophy is that ocean of knowledge which spreads from shore to shore of the evolution of sentient beings; unfathomable in its deepest parts, it gives the greatest minds their fullest scope, yet, shallow enough at its shores, it will not overwhelm the understanding of a child.”

William Quan Judge, *The Ocean of Theosophy*.







# On Becoming Fully Human

By Linda Oliveira

(First Published in Theosophy in Australia, June 2004)

The human being is one of Nature's myriad expressions—unique, gifted with mind, yet a being of mystery with heights yet to be scaled.

What does being fully human imply? To the world at large, being human may be different from the vision of humanity which is portrayed in the Perennial Wisdom tradition. Being human, to many, may imply a certain dominion over the earth, leading to competition, aggression and exploitation—with a little kindness thrown in. Some may think that humanity is at its pinnacle now. But one theosophical writer, Emily Sellon, has even spoken of humanity as incipient, implying that most of our evolution, or perhaps the most significant phase of our evolution, is yet to come.

Whatever the case may be, it seems we have a long journey ahead. In this context,

it is useful to bear in mind one of the most well-known comments in The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett from one of his spiritual teachers, '... it is "Humanity" which is the great Orphan, the only disinherited one upon the earth, my friend.' (Mahatma Letters, chronological edition, Letter #15) What are the characteristics of an orphan? If humanity is an orphan then it is somehow cut off from its parents, its bloodline. In a broader sense, we could assume that humanity is severed from its roots, its spiritual bloodline or spiritual inheritance. In this sense, we might say that many humans seem to be cut off from their roots. If this is truly so, then in the main we are devoid of that sustenance which might propel us eventually towards the refined air of Atman, Self, pure consciousness, our essence. For it is from this, the core of our being, that all of the human principles are said to emerge and ultimately return. As Shirley Nicholson



has written, 'We travel from our home in atman into the world to gain experience and return to that home enriched by the journey.' Therefore, becoming fully human involves a journey—one of monumental proportions.

What is the essence of this journey? We might describe it as the unfoldment of inner wisdom as a result of worldly experience, which is certainly not something that can take place during the course of a single life. Are we alive to the journey? How do we create an opening in order to access that core of our being which is at once the beginning and end of our journey—we might even say, our spiritual birth right? We will consider here:

1. The human being as a living system
2. Creating an opening for renewal to take place, and
3. Some speculative thoughts on what becoming fully human might mean

### **The Human Being as a Living System**

Our International President has used the term 'human regeneration' as the essence of all theosophical work. To regenerate means to 'breathe new life' into something. Perhaps that is what happens during the later stages of human evolution. That which is old ultimately has to become new. Therefore, being alive, truly living, is an intimate part of the regenerative process.

Rohit Mehta has mentioned that living systems are sources of regeneration. He

observed that, according to the principle of entropy in physical science, everything in the universe is running down steadily toward thermodynamic equilibrium, or death and extinction. This running down involves an irreversible loss of energy. However, he quotes the late Ilya Prigogine who, he said, provided hope. Prigogine said that order and organisation can arise 'spontaneously' out of disorder and chaos, through the process of 'self-organisation'. Therefore, a reversal of the flow of energy can take place in a self-organising system, but not in a mechanistic one.

According to Rohit Mehta, a self-organising system is one which is living. With a machine, fresh energy has to be given from outside. But in a living organism we have self-organisation. For example, he points out that it is possible for a human body to heal a wound (we could add, at least one that is not too large). And then he made some important observations: 'A living system is open, not closed.' In other words, there is a free exchange between itself and the environment, along with a certain flexibility. A living system may bend when required, but soon recovers its original state. Also, it is vulnerable, in fact extremely fragile, appearing as though it will break but being prevented from breaking by its inherent strength. A living system gets back its lost energy and, in fact, contains the secret of regeneration.

The human body has quite remarkable physical regenerative abilities, in various ways— provided, of course, that it is properly sustained and fed appropriately



by its environment. For human spiritual regeneration we may be able to draw parallels with this description of a living system, which requires a different kind of sustenance. What might be the requirements of a human living system which contains the potential of spiritual renewal?

- *Open/free exchange:* We have been told that in a living system there is a free exchange with the environment. Consider for a moment that spiritual regeneration requires a mind (which is the pivotal point of a human living system) that is not closed off from its environment, which allows a free flow of ideas and perceptions — tempered, hopefully, by viveka or spiritual discernment. It is said that the awakened faculty of manas and its attendant self-consciousness makes us uniquely human. A living mind can develop great capacity. Somehow we need to be able to take the world within. Ultimately, to use HPB's terminology, the human mind can 'embrace the universe'.

- *Flexibility:* A living system, Rohit Mehta said, may bend when required, but soon recovers its original state. Is it possible to become inherently flexible? This is reminiscent of that beautiful statement in The Voice of the Silence which says that the stalks of the holy germs which sprout and grow unseen in the disciple's Soul wax strong at each new trial, bend like reeds but never break. When we become rigid, life does not flow, we create barriers to life, we can become brittle and perhaps snap, unable to cope with life's many

changes which seem to have proceeded almost exponentially in recent decades.

*Vulnerability/Strength:* According to Rohit Mehta, a living system is vulnerable, even fragile, yet inherently strong. We have here, of course, a paradox, which is also the language of the spirit. Therefore, by analogy, human beings need two things: We need strength in order to sustain the inevitable transmutation of the personality so that the inner being can emerge. This strength, it is suggested, is gained through the trials and challenges of life. But we also need an opening of the heart in order to become vulnerable, to be able to temper that strength with compassion and sensitivity.

So attributes such as an open mind, flexibility, strength and vulnerability, provide an environment in which renewal can take place. This is no mere poetic fancy. One meaning of 'regenerate' is to 'inspirit'. The regenerate human being is therefore a person who is inspirited, in whom the spiritual nature is awakened, a dynamic living system of a high order. Perhaps, in this sense, we could say that most human beings are not yet fully living systems.

### **Keys to Creating an Opening for Renewal**

How do we create an opening to renew ourselves and become fully alive?

#### *Discontent*

The term 'Divine discontent' will be



familiar to many. Somehow, discontent seems to be an important element within the human spiritual journey. But there is discontent— and then there is discontent! Often discontent can result in destructiveness. However, as Rohit Mehta pointed out, regeneration can take place only through individuals who are afire with constructive discontent — not those who are well adapted to the prevalent environment. Therefore, complacency or satisfaction with our lives is not likely to lead to fundamental change. It is also clear that the nature of this discontent should be constructive rather than destructive. The spiritual journey requires a certain orientation away from worldly things while, for most of us, remaining and acting in the world. Some might take the extreme step of monastic life but for most spiritually aware individuals, the trick is to be able to live a fairly simple and discerning life within the noise of worldly culture.

N. Sri Ram perhaps echoed this need for discontent when he wrote 'that which is static cannot create'. It follows that if we are too content, renewal is not possible. He wrote: 'Theosophy should be to us a creative force, a wisdom which re-creates ourselves. In those who are able to receive its fire into their hearts the transformation begins. At present we are vessels of clay, opaque, lacking strength and lustre, a non-conducting medium.' That which is opaque does not transmit light, cannot be a conveyor of light. Therefore, if we are clay-like or opaque, the light of subtler realms cannot enter our consciousness,

let alone be transmitted by us.

### *Effort*

It seems that creating space for an opening occurs gradually at first, perhaps fed by this level of constructive discontent with the world or our circumstances. But that opening or bridge will become wider when the process of discontent becomes increasingly conscious, tempered by altruism. It also seems that life doesn't get any easier at this point! As Madame Blavatsky wrote on the subject of spiritual progress (CW, Vol. VI, p. 331):

From the Vedas and Upanishads to the recently published *Light on the Path*, search as we may through the bibles of every race and cult, we find but one only way,—hard, painful, troublesome, by which man can gain the true spiritual insight. The true Adept, the developed man, must, we are always told, become — he cannot be made. The process is therefore one of growth through evolution, and this must necessarily involve a certain amount of pain.

Therefore, the process has its painful challenges, especially during the later reaches of the human journey. Also, it is clear that we are not made fully human by some outside agency. Rather, this is a conscious process for each individual. Help is available up to a point, from spiritual teachings or spiritual teachers. However, life itself ultimately provides the conditions for the opening or bridge to be made manifest, in order for human



spiritual evolution to proceed.

### *Opening*

What is this bridge or, should we say, this opening? In theosophical terminology a word which is commonly used is antahkarana (sometimes called antaskarana). HPB describes it as the path or bridge between the higher and lower aspects of manas, which serves as a medium of communication between the two. But it is also said that this term relates to several such bridges or openings between a number of centres in the human being, links of 'vibrating consciousness-substance'. This gives us a sense that an antahkarana is very much alive, in motion.

If an antahkarana can unite certain centres within the human being, then it somehow performs a binding function. This is reminiscent of fohat, that essence of kosmic electricity or kosmic consciousness, which is said to be ever-present from the beginning until the end of a universe, that living universal energy which also has a binding or uniting effect on life. In a similar way, a permanently open antahkarana can bind us to our higher or inner nature, reuniting us with our Source.

When that antahkarana which bridges the two aspect of manas opens us to the interior of the mind, great creative human insights can occur — insights into science, insights into life, truth, and so forth.

The question arises: How do we create this

opening, this bridge? The process may occur more consciously when the mind has the ability to be aware but quiet, such as in times of reflective contemplation or meditation. In fact, this antahkarana may open and close quite regularly in a person whose focus of consciousness is not fully immersed in the material world.

### *Radical Development / Purification*

Does the acquisition of powers assist the process of renewal?

HPB has a very interesting answer to this question, which is relevant here. Some might think of the journey towards adeptship as a cumulative process—developing additional faculties and powers. However, this is what she has to say:

Many persons seem to think that adeptship is not so much the result of radical development as of additional construction; they seem to imagine that an Adept is a man who ... acquires first one power and then another; and when he has attained a certain number of these powers is forthwith dubbed an adept. (H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings, VI, p.333)

Uncompromisingly, she calls the acquisition of powers in order to become an Adept a 'mistaken fancy', while acknowledging that 'powers' such as clairvoyance and travelling out of the body do tend to fascinate the most. The TS, she observed, was not founded to teach new and easy paths to the acquisition of 'powers'; rather, its mission is to 're-ignite



the torch of truth so long extinguished for all but the very few, and to keep that truth alive by the formation of a fraternal union of mankind; the only soil in which the good seed can grow'. It is said that certain inner powers develop in the course of evolution anyway. If we seek to develop them, it is probably premature. How wise to focus, instead, on creating a union of humanity, the 'only soil in which the good seed can grow' — that seed which does not sprout from the soil of the personal self.

HPB used the term 'radical development' in this quotation as a contrast. What might this mean? That which is radical is fundamental or primary. So radical development could be considered as that change or development which makes way for our fundamental or primary nature to emerge.

We may surmise that the permanent opening or bridge to our inner nature, the antahkarana, is formed by radical development, which involves the purification and transmutation of what already exists within us, rather than adding to our store of qualities, powers and abilities.

This brings us to another key to renewal, which is an intimate aspect of radical development ...

### *Self-observation*

Rather than acquiring powers, our first and most important task is surely to

see ourselves truthfully. Sri Ram gave some hints about this in a talk called 'A Revolution in Oneself'. He observed that we need to be aware of what is within our consciousness in the first instance, before radical change (HPB's 'radical development') can take place. He likened the reactions and ideas present in the mind to a kind of sack with varied contents, with its mouth nearly closed, packed with information about the world. He suggested that our thinking moves largely around and in between these ideas. This perspective might not, in fact, be too far fetched. By turning the mind inside out we empty it, so that it is no longer the mind as we know it but a pure expanse of consciousness with nothing adhering to it. Then we can clearly see what is there. Even if we cannot turn the mind inside out permanently, perhaps we can try it at least temporarily when a problem presents itself. This may assist considerably with self-understanding.

Sri Ram went even further. He said that when everything the mind holds is let go of, then the consciousness, which is indestructible and extraordinarily elastic, is restored to its original condition, without any distortion, free of association with past contents, pure and capable of reflecting truth. This might seem to us almost an impossibility, but meditative moments could help gradually prepare us for this type of mind. In any event, for most of us it is probably a gradual process. This brings us to one more key to renewal:

### *Humility*



It is Sri Ram's next comment which is perhaps the most important:

The mind's condition, when pure, is one of humility, in which alone there is the possibility of wisdom.

What does humility actually mean? It does not mean self-deprecation, which implies that we might really like to be more important. Rather, humility is likened by Sri Ram to the darkness of an extraordinarily sensitive photographic film or plate in which everything is truly reflected. He describes it as a state of 'masterful negativity in which everything positive within its field is automatically comprehended'. Therefore any assertion of oneself has to cease for humility to exist. This, then, is the state in which the antahkarana to our inner nature can be fully opened: through purity and a genuinely humble nature.

Six possible keys to renewal have been suggested here: discontent, effort, opening, radical development/transmutation, self-observation and humility.

### **Becoming Fully Human — What Might it Mean?**

These keys might be of assistance. Yet part of the wonder of the journey to full 'humanhood' is that in many ways it is a mystery which draws us onwards. It clearly involves the cultivation of a different mode of living. The Perennial

Wisdom teachings may help us, but they need to be seamlessly integrated into our lives, rather than impounded by our minds. There is another thought from Sri Ram which is pertinent here:

Theosophy has to be understood in the heart, but it must issue through the hands — that is, in acts in various ways. In other words, it has to transform our living. We have to live differently ... bring into each individual act of our lives, a new quality ... Therefore, every department of life can be illuminated, can be beautiful, can be spiritualized, re-created, put into new shape, by this wisdom which we call Theosophy. ('The Theosophical Revolution')

The journey to our full humanity is therefore a series of re-creations, rebirths, renaissances, transformations involving every department of life.

We have the potential to give each aspect of our life a new form, to spiritualise it, to re-create it. But if we regard each expansion of consciousness as a fixed achievement on which we can build, then we have missed the point. For it seems that transformation is a qualitative experience rather than quantitative in nature. As an analogy, we can think of a body of water as a symbol for a human being. The quantity of water does not vary. However, we can change it by running it through filters. Each filter consists of some type of quality. However, we cannot quantify exactly how much filtration needs to take place before the water (us) changes qualitatively into



the most perfect representation possible of what it is essentially.

In a similar way, the evolving human being may eventually tend to adopt an increasingly qualitative, rather than a quantitative, approach to life.

As a new quality of consciousness occurs through one transformation, it seems that something else dies or disappears or, at least, is transmuted. Ultimately, when we die to the old or that which is impermanent, we transmute or change our nature, open ourselves to what we are essentially, to that aspect of our nature which is more lasting. Each human being ultimately brings forth, through svabhava — self-generation or regeneration — his or her uniqueness.

### **When Does Human Renewal Take Place?**

It would seem, from our literature, that more dramatic transformations of consciousness occur as a result of our experiences in physical life, but in silence, not uncommonly after some kind of interior storm. As *Light on the Path* says (p.37):

Look for the flower to bloom in the silence that follows the storm; not till then. ... not until the whole nature has yielded and become subject unto its higher Self, can the bloom open. Then will come a calm such as comes in a tropical country after the heavy rain ... And in the deep silence the mysterious event will occur which will prove that the way has been found.

... The silence may last a moment of time or it may last a thousand years. But it will end. Yet you will carry its strength with you. Again and again the battle must be fought and won. It is only for an interval that Nature can be still.

So the process is repeated again and again until, from an incipient human being, a fully realised human being emerges. Each of us, if shown an image of what we might become as a fully realised human being, might even find that we are totally unrecognisable. Such, it seems, is the extent of the regenerative effect of becoming fully human.

What, then, does it mean to be fully human? We might tentatively say that to be fully human is to realise our uniqueness, to live totally differently with a pure mind and a genuinely humble nature, to be a 'mere beneficent force in nature', to use HPB's words. It is to open ourselves to the life of the universe, to be a living system, to be what we are naturally, interiorly, ever vitalised by that which is unchanging and stainless. Self-centredness with its attendant aggression, self-justification, ambition and so forth, would be transmuted into Self-centredness, being firmly established in that within us which is universal, yet unique. The inspiring teaching that Mahatmas or Great Souls exist, suggests that it is possible eventually to experience a deep and abiding joy which will remain unshaken by life's vicissitudes. Such a human being will indeed be a potent centre of peace, expanding into further



vistas of evolution that we can scarcely imagine. Then the orphan will reunite with its true bloodline, its spiritual heart. Then—only then—will we know who we truly are.

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"To know, to dare, to will, to keep silence."

Eliphas Levi, The Doctrine and The Ritual of Magic.







# Annie Besant a Great Occultist

Lecture By Shikar Agnihotri

It is a matter of great pleasure and honour to be here in front of you all and share a few incidents, events and insights about that aspect of the life of Annie Besant which not only permeated but also, in my understanding, were the source of inspiration and guidance, in every other aspect of her life. And not just that, it was due to the exposure to this dimension of life that gave AB a completely new & broader vision of life.

As we all know that Dr. Besant passed through several phases of life-housewife, propagator of atheism, trade unionist, feminist leader and Fabian Socialist before coming in touch with HPB. And all of these were her way of removing the suffering of the poor, helpless and downtrodden. But how did it all change?

*In her own words, "Such was the bearing of the Theosophical teaching, as laid before*

*me by H.P. Blavatsky, and when I urged, out of my bitter knowledge of the miseries endured by the poor, **she (HPB) bade me look beyond the moment** and see how the suffering must come back and back with every generation, unless we sought to remove the roots of wrong."*

*"I do not judge a woman," she (HPB) said, "who has resort to such means of defence in the midst of circumstances so evil, and whose ignorance of the real causes of all this misery is her excuse for snatching at any relief. But it is not for you (AB), an Occultist, to continue to teach a method which you now know must tend to the perpetuation of the sorrow."*

As a consequence, AB writes, "I felt that she was right, and though I shrank from the decision, yet the decision was made. I refused to reprint the "Law of Population," or to sell the copyright, giving pain, as



I sadly knew, to all the brave and loyal friends who had so generously stood by me in that long and bitter struggle”.

We all know that Annie Besant was described as a Diamond Soul. Just like the light shines from every aspect of a diamond, in the same manner, the divine light shone out from every aspect of her personality. Be it an outstanding orator of her time, a champion of human freedom, educationist, philanthropist, and author with more than three hundred books and pamphlets to her credit.

And that aspect of her life which we all are aware about is being a great Occultist. But very often the word “Occult” is surrounded with doubt and prejudices against it. Such doubts and suspicions are completely misplaced if we understand the real meaning of WHAT IS OCCULT.

The occult comes from the Latin word occultus “hidden, secret” is simply “the knowledge of the hidden”. So, basically whatever that is hidden from our physical senses is the OCCULT WORLD. And the individual who has such capacity of probing in those realms of consciousness obviously becomes an Occultist. And the third objective of the TS is an indication towards that. To investigate the unexplained laws of nature and powers latent in (hu)man.

But AB was not always an OCCULTIST. Although she had a great potential. And I would like to take you all to the time that led Dr. AB on to the journey of manifesting

this potential and becoming a GREAT OCCULTIST.

In her Autobiography Annie Besant writes:

*“Since 1886 there had been a growing conviction that her philosophy was not sufficient, that life and mind were more than she had dreamed. Psychology was advancing with rapid strides; hypnotic experiments were revealing unlooked-for complexities in human consciousness, strange riddles of multiplex personalities, and, most startling of all, vivid intensities of mental action. Fact after fact came hurtling in upon me, demanding explanation I was incompetent to give. I studied the obscurer sides of consciousness, dreams, hallucinations, illusions, insanity. Into this darkness a ray of light came through A. P. Sinnett’s “The Occult World”. I added Spiritualism to my studies, experimenting privately, finding the phenomena indubitable, but the spiritualistic explanation of them incredible. The phenomena of clairvoyance, clairsentience, thought-reading, were found to be real. I experimented in various ways suggested in them, and got some (to me) curious results.*

*By early spring of 1889 she (AB) was convinced that there was some ‘hidden thing, some hidden power’ and grew desperately determined to find at all costs what she was searching for. In this state of seeking, she ‘heard a Voice that was later to become for her the holiest sound on earth, bidding her to take courage for the light was near’.*



Proving that inner voice to be true, about 15 days later, Annie Besant finds herself writing the review of the two volumes of The Secret Doctrine written by H. P. Blavatsky. While going through the book she realised that her long and tiring search was over and the very Truth was found. And that is why in her review of The Secret Doctrine Mrs Besant made it clear that there is very much more to be known than our present faculties can grasp; she stated that there is nothing supernatural. The occult powers we possess are not supernatural, they are latent in every human being, and will be evolved as the race progresses."

After writing the review she wanted to meet HPB and described her first meeting conversation with HPB as a general one, no word of occultism. Soon after joining the TS, with her membership certificate in hand, she expressed to HPB the desire to be a pupil of HPB. And to that, Annie Besant writes that *\*Madame Blavatsky's stern face softened and with tears in her eyes, put her hand upon Mrs Besant's head and said: 'You are a noble woman. May Master bless you.'*\*

It is easy to make an IDOL of the IDEAL and remain IDLE. But what really is needed to think of the IDEAL every time we look at the IDOL and work towards that IDEAL, shunning the IDLENESS. And thus, AB journey to being a great occultist started.

**Two more incidences convinced the Countess Wachtmeister that AB can be a possible successor to HPB:**

One day she saw Mrs Besant 'enveloped in a cloud of light – Master's colour. He was standing by her side with his hand over her head'. She rushed to Madame Blavatsky and narrated what she had seen. Madame Blavatsky confirmed the truth of the incident.

At a lecture to workmen, she saw the Master by Mrs Besant's and felt that she spoke with an eloquence not noticed before. While living with Madame Blavatsky, Mrs Besant spent some time every evening with her to receive occult teachings.

As a result of this when HPB wrote an introductory note to WQJ for AB for her travel to USA IN 1891, she described AB as, "the soul of honour and uncompromising truthfulness ... unselfishness and altruism is Annie Besant's name ... It is only a few months she studies occultism with me in the innermost group of the E.S. and yet she has passed far beyond others..."

**And we all know how at the suggestion of Mr A.P. Sinnett, Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater started** looking at chemical elements with their clairvoyant sight and the results of their observation appeared for the first time in Lucifer, November 1895. Later these investigations were made in much more detail and published as Occult Chemistry.

**HER REALIZATION: (In her own words)**

"I have sometimes wondered of late years whether, had I met her (HPB) then



or seen any of her writings, I should have become her pupil. I fear not; I was still too much dazzled by the triumphs of Western Science, too self-assertive, too fond of combat, too much at the mercy of my own emotions, too sensitive to praise and blame. I needed to hear yet more deeply the depths of human misery, to feel yet more keenly the lack of wider knowledge and of clearer light if I were to give effective help to man, ere I could bow my pride to crave admittance as pupil to the School of Occultism, ere I could put aside my prejudices and study the Science of the Soul."

#### MESSAGE TO OTHERS:

In her auto biography Annie Besant writes, "This same path of knowledge that I am treading is open to all others who will pay the toll demanded at the gateway—and **that toll is willingness to renounce everything for the sake of spiritual truth, and willingness to give all the truth that is won to the service of man**, keeping back no shred for self."

Annie Besant's contribution as an Occultist is magnificent and we can go on talking about so many things but her gift to

humanity with which I would like to close is, I feel, one of her greatest gifts that could not have come out without her being a great occultist, a person who sees the hidden interconnectedness and working in nature. It is the Universal Invocation in 1923 that she coined which is like a potent mantra and every time it is pronounced, it creates a magnetic effect of uplifting everyone's consciousness.

"O hidden life, vibrant in every atom,  
O hidden light, shining in every creature,  
O hidden love, embracing all in oneness,  
May each who feels himself as one with thee,  
Know he is also one with every other."

Undoubtedly, Dr Annie Besant was a great occultist during whose presidentship, the Theosophical Society not only touched its peak in terms of number of members, assets and influence on the world but also accelerated the preparation for India's freedom movement and therefore it does not seem at all a coincidence that when we recently celebrated 175 years of Annie Besant's birth, it was also the 75th anniversary year of India's independence.







# Religious Music

By Santiago Beltrán Sánchez, M.A.

A representative art among the social sectors of colonial Bogotá in the late 18th century. (Historical Description)

Music is an evident aspect in all social groups that constituted the Spanish colony in the late 1700s. This type of expression was intertwined with most aspects of daily life. Interestingly, the musical training provided by the Catholic Church (predominant at that time) was also connected to configurations of non-religious harmonies strictly linked to theatrical and festive music.

## Religious Music and Church Music:

Religious music in the colonial era had a significant influence. To individuals, the most significant aspect was leading a life in accordance with the moral guidelines dictated by the church and transmitted by the clergy. Consequently, the path to mysticism was one of the only ways to ascend socially, considering the rigid caste system. The influence of Christian religion in everyday life was undeniable in the

colonial context, as there was significant dominance of social and cultural life by religious figures who taught and practiced various arts, including music.



Ángel músico con bajón  
Detalle. Catedral Primada  
(1)

Religious music in Santafé de Bogotá always had a clear pattern and idea that adhered to parameters established



long before the 18th century. Musical regulations were established earlier at the Council of Trent as a consequence of the Counter-Reformation in Europe. In this context, the church aimed to spread Christian beliefs through cultural forms such as music and art. Harmonies were undoubtedly a means for indoctrination and evangelization, turning prayers and liturgical rites into theatrical performances, a practice common in both Spain and America. Musical arts were now widely appreciated as a form of religiosity.

Despite the undeniable influence of various musical trends on religious music, such as Baroque and even Romanticism, the styles of religious music maintained an almost constant character. The Mozarabic, Gregorian, and profound Spanish melodies mentioned earlier remained largely intact in both Spain and America, particularly in Santafé. This was not due to the restricted reception of musicality itself but rather to the organized structures of composition. Music was something that could be heard, sung, and embraced by all believers, as this was the Catholic goal. However, its transformation and condition maintained certain well-organized canons.

This organization displayed many tendencies driven by different religious orders such as the Jesuits, Franciscans, or Dominicans, which took a practical teaching approach regarding music as a means of Christian persuasion and conviction. In this context, musical knowledge gained prominence in education and public life because the

church aimed to multiply and expand as an institution.



The differences between styles were minimal but depended heavily on the influence of Spanish cathedrals; for example, some received influences from the Cathedral of Toledo, while others adhered to the musical organization of Seville. However, the structure and hierarchy of musical personnel were very similar. For instance, the Cathedral of Santafé had two groups: one of singers and another of instrumentalists. The first group was further divided into interpreters and those responsible for polyphony or "organ singing," respectively. The interpreters, belonging to the ecclesiastical chapter, needed knowledge of plainchant and musical grammar.

Among this group of interpreters, the director, called the chanter, stood out. The chanter collaborated or received guidance from another person of higher



hierarchy in terms of church governance and musicality called the subchanter. This group also had a limited number of chaplains skilled in vocal sound. The aforementioned polyphony group was a special set of voices reinforcing singing, composed of professional musicians, not all of whom were religious. They were directed by the Chapel Master and usually practiced in the music chapel of the Primatial Cathedral.

The second major section of musicians was the group of instrumentalists or minstrels, mostly wind instrument players like flutes, shawms, and bassoons, who doubled the voices to accompany singing. They were led by an organist who was not part of the instrumentalists' group per se but belonged to the church's staff. The Chapel Master also directed this group, but, as mentioned earlier, he had to consider the opinions of the subchanter, who held the highest hierarchy in this musical-religious context.

According to the research of Perdomo Escobar, the first Consuetas Rules or statutes of the religious organization became increasingly imperative. These were devised by Archbishop Don Pedro Felipe Azua Iturgoyen. These rules established suggestions, norms, and traditional regulations for all ecclesiastical groups in the Cathedral, including the musicians. In Chapter 11, the Chapel Masters are mentioned as follows: "The duty of the Chapel Master is to oversee the governance of all musicians, their teaching with supervision, and care

for their punctual attendance. The said Chapel Master must attend all solemn and classical feasts every day, participating in the divine services of the altar and choir, always conducting the music, which should not be entrusted to other subordinates." This illustrates that these musical directors had a degree of autonomy within the organization and harmony formation in the church.



Ángel músico con laúd Detalle. Catedral Primada (3)

This organization remained quite constant; changes were generally made to personnel. Thus, there were many Chapel Masters, including Gutiérrez Fernández Hidalgo, Alonso Garzón de Thaušte, José Cascante, Juan de Herrera y Chumacero, Salvador Romero, and other composers. From the appearance of the Royal Audiences to the influence of the Bourbon Reforms, the city of Santafé underwent inevitable organizational changes and growth, leading to the



creation of various civic institutions. There was an apparent expansion of markets of all kinds, including musical instruments, strengthening the learning and work of different musicians. By the late 18th century, the first Luthiers or makers of small trebles or rudimentary shawms began to emerge. However, personal teaching of grammar and instrumental skills was uncommon. In other words, there were no teaching methods, and the church was the only place where books on musical systematization and necessary instructors could be found.

Thus, the church appeared socially as a prosperous stage that provided good opportunities for those seeking professional performance or advancement, at least in the case of musicians. The Cathedral was the only place for instruction and artistic development until the late 18th century. Therefore, this period is crucial because the decline of the ecclesiastical institution in terms of musical history in Santafé, following the Bourbon Reforms and the internationalization of Spanish musical taste, brought about an influx of foreign melodies, especially Italian and French, after the 18th century.

This also indicates a change in musical concepts, in line with the rejection of the Spanish, as the church itself became involved in foreign influences. Matteo Medici Melfi, an Italian violinist, was assigned to teach children around 1750 in the Primatial Cathedral. According to reports, his stay was not long-lasting, as

he left and became a fugitive due to debts, but he must have somehow acquainted Santafé with the style of Italian music. So much so that by 1780, the violin was added to the Music Chapel in the Primatial Cathedral.



Ángel músico con Violín Detalle.  
Catedral Primada (4)

Thus, one of the most significant displays of musicality was found in the church and the clergy. We could say that the form or style of this music in terms of composition did not change much; its heyday persisted for several centuries from its arrival until well into the 19th century and even part of the 20th century. However, by the late 1700s, in the aforementioned context of the Bourbon Reforms, ecclesiastical melodies in Santafé experienced a crisis in musical production and composition. Undoubtedly, the church went through a decline in terms of payments to musicians, instrument maintenance, and financial forms that profoundly affected



the propagation of religious music in the capital of New Granada.

Most celebrated composers, such as Doña María de Remedios Aguilar, were Chapel Masters, meaning they were affiliated with the church. However, the most important could be considered Juan de Herrera y Chumacero, as despite his activity predating the 18th century, his works were performed in the Cathedral well into the 19th century. Apart from Melchor Bermúdez, other music instructors and instrument repairers in Santafé in the late 1700s included Casimiro Lugo, Ignacio de Mesa (organ repairer), and Fray Francisco Rodríguez.

By 1783, musicians were not paid because the religious institution had limited resources. This was due to the crisis caused by the Bourbon Reforms, which aimed to modernize the political-economic structure of the American colonies. The Jesuits were instructors, teaching grammar and harmony as a means of evangelization; they were sellers of musical instruments and pioneers in music until their expulsion from Spanish dominions in 1789. By the late 18th century, religious music began to experience a decline.

This is evident in the deterioration of instruments belonging to the religious endowment since there were two organs in the cathedral that were difficult to repair. Many artists from the church began to engage in other jobs besides those in the Primatial Cathedral, distancing

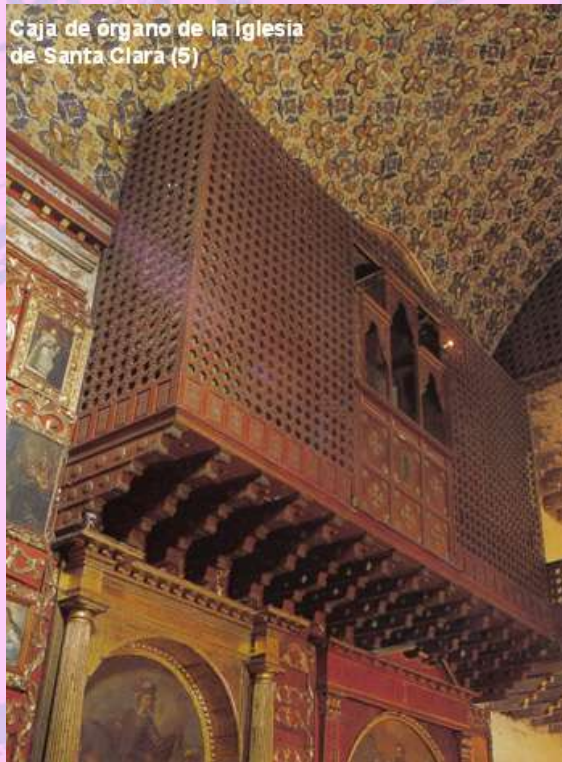
themselves from liturgical spaces or the mass. Musicians themselves performed in different scenarios. Thus, the subchanter took it upon himself to make external contracts to find work and distribute money during festivities, a practice referred to as “compadrazgo” by Bermúdez. In this sense, by the early 19th century, the church played the same works from years past, adapted. Many performers from the Coliseum of Comedies and the Military Regime supported the instrumental ensemble.

However, the monopoly of musical education in Santafé was not only centered in the Primatial Cathedral. There were also schools, convents, seminaries, congregations, and hermitages dedicated to nurturing religious art. In various places, plainchant, polyphony, or grammar were taught. Consequently, the path of mysticism, religion, and ecclesial life required strict adherence to the arts, as this was an important form of preparation for the path to God.

Since their arrival, missionaries, archbishops, and priests established themselves in colleges-seminaries like those of San Luis. These institutions educated future followers of Christ, but they also evangelized the indigenous people. As we know from a long time ago, the Jesuit orders shaped the formal teaching of music at the San Bartolomé institution, as did the Dominican order in the case of the College of Our Lady of the Rosary. In every religious venue dedicated to artistic education, there were rebecs,



clavichords, and various places where the principles of singing, and polyphony were taught. When the Santafé Maximum College was founded, reaching its peak activity in the 18th century, violinists, organists, and shawm players were integrated for the respective Corpus celebrations.



Just as there were colleges, there were also convents where many nuns were trained in singing, and others in harp playing, in multiple temples like those of Santa Clara. Musical participation in terms of brotherhoods, fraternities, and congregations was unavoidable. There are records of choir books, polyphony, harmonized masses, invitations, antiphons, and texts for writing or composing different carols. Following this line, many convents in Santafé recorded expenses for instrument accessories like clavichords or vihuelas. Additionally, there

are payment accounts for musicians hired to celebrate festivities during Holy Week and on December 8. Thus, from 1761 to 1804, documents in the La Concepción convent indicate requests from the nuns for strings, reeds, and spare parts for harps and bassoons.

In many parishes and hermitages, events were organized to hire various artists, with brotherhoods being the ones organizing or preparing the celebrations. Religious foundations were created, such as that of the Brotherhood of Our Lady of Loreto, which contracted shawm players for liturgical chants in small churches. The churches' resources for musical investment were never large but need to connect music with religion was persistent due to the importance of this art in relation to religious practice.

#### In Conclusion:

Identifying colonial life through historical musical understanding shaped from Spanish foundations can provide insight into this society, as musicality itself was an integral part of men and women's lives during the colonial period. There is a similarity between Spanish musical cultural patterns and rhythmic forms in Santafé because both attempted to establish courtly forms of musicality, either by following canons as with the House of Aragon or Castile, which sought to implement musical models from the realms of Italy and France. Spain's influence on music is undeniable, with most artistic forms being predominantly



peninsular, as we still know today in the form of couplets or Christmas Carols, ironically transformed into traditional musical forms.

On the other hand, identifying musical forms represented in colonial social spaces demonstrates how domestic, religious, and rural church life was related to the artistic environment. The importance of musical spaces is evident throughout the colonial period. However, the church's prominence in this matter also reflects changes in political and economic structures.

We believe that the colonial era will never be a period simply left behind; on the contrary, it contains many answers that can explain aspects of the present. Exploring life in this period allows us to find answers today.

For this reason, it is necessary to eliminate all historical reductions that

have been made to this era, limiting it only to a biased study that eliminates all possibilities of viewing coloniality as something that also contains or is subject to various cultural elements such as music, painting, or dance, which are also related to the humanities.

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# The Roots of Modern Theosophy

By Pablo Sender

First published in The Theosophist November 2011

The word theosophy is one with a long history. It has been used in different traditions and contexts, and consequently acquired a multiplicity of meanings. The term derives from the Greek theosophia (θεοσοφία), which is composed of two words: theos ('God', 'gods' or 'divine') and sophia ('wisdom'). According to the context and tradition in which this term has been used, theosophia can be translated as the 'wisdom of God (or the gods)', 'wisdom in things divine', or 'divine wisdom'.

The person in touch with this theosophia (variously called theosophos (Greek), theosopher, or Theosophist) acquires a knowledge that is not the product of his or her rational faculty. The source of this divine knowledge has been variously considered to be God, a divine being, or a state of inner illumination attained through purification and spiritual efforts.

In its deeper meaning, the concept of theosophia implies that there is in human beings a faculty higher than reason—an "interior principle" or spiritual intuition through which we can reach the Divine Wisdom. In HPB's words:

But all [sacred] books it [Theosophy] regards, on account of the human element contained in them, as inferior to the Book of Nature; to read which and comprehend it correctly, the innate powers of the soul must be highly developed. Ideal laws can be perceived by the intuitive faculty alone; they are beyond the domain of argument and dialectics, and no one can understand or rightly appreciate them through the explanations of another mind, though even this mind be claiming a direct revelation. [1]

**History and development of the term**



The word theosophy has been used in connection with a number of religions and philosophical schools. Although the Neo-Platonic, Christian, and modern Theosophical traditions have used this term more prominently, we can also find references to a Hermetic theosophy, a Jewish theosophy (found in the Kabbalah), a Muslim theosophy (mainly among the Sufis), a Persian theosophy, etc. In this article we will limit ourselves to examine briefly the use of this term among the Neo-Platonists, Christians, and members of the Theosophical Society.

#### a) The Neo-Platonist theosophos

The origin of the term theosophia is unknown, but it is likely to have been coined by the Neo-Platonists (a philosophical school founded by Ammonius Saccas, who was born ca. 175). Based on the writings of the famous Platonist Prof. Alexander Wilder, Mme Blavatsky suggests that the term was commonly used by all Neo-Platonists. [2] However, researches made in the late 1980s by scholars James Santucci [3] and Dr. Jean-Louis Siémons [4] showed that it is only with the third-generation Neo-Platonist Porphyry (234–305) that we find the term in writing for the first time. In Porphyry's view, the divine wisdom is a state of illumination that can be attained by self-exertion. The theosophos (Gr. θεόσοφος) tries "by himself, to elevate himself, alone to alone, to a communion with the divine." With Iamblichus (250–325), the pure mystical meaning given to the term by Porphyry acquires a more occult or magical significance. He proposed

that the theosophia can be attained through theurgy (Gr. θεουργία), a series of religious rituals and magic operations aimed at elevating consciousness. Proclus (412–485) uses the term in yet another way to denominate specific spiritual doctrines, making reference to a local 'Hellenic theosophy', but also to a foreign or barbarian (that is, non-Greek) theosophy, referring to Chaldean doctrines. [\*]

#### b) The Christian theosopher

Many early Christians, including a number of Church Fathers, were students of Neo-Platonic teachers. They also adopted the term theosophia, but used it in a more Christian sense to mean "the Wisdom of God". Clement of Alexandria (150–215) talks about a theosophos as one who writes "driven by divine inspiration," and thus in time this term came to be used to refer to the prophets of old. An important difference between the Neo-Platonic and Christian concepts of theosophia, is that in the former view no one is a born theosophos—he becomes such by long exertion, application to philosophy, self-purification and contemplation of the divine. [5] In the Christian view the divine wisdom is bestowed by God—as He chooses—upon the prophet, in the form of a revelation. After the Neo-Platonists disappeared in the 6th century, the term theosophia continued to be used in Christianity during the Middle Ages, but frequently in a lower sense as a synonym of theologia. [\*\*] In the 9th century, after the re-discovery of the works of Pseudo-Dionysius (a Christian Neo-Platonist



that lived ca. 500) the term regained a lofty meaning among great mystics such as Meister Eckhart, J. Tauler, John of Ruysbroeck, and others. It was through their writings that 17th to 19th century European mystics such as Boehme, Saint-Martin, Swedenborg, and others, inherited the term theosophy and adopted it as their own. With these "theosophers" (as they came to be known) the term became popular, being on the title of a number of books during the 1700s. [6] There continued to be publications on Christian theosophy until the middle of the 19th century.

### c) The modern Theosophist

At the opening of the last quarter of the 19th century a committee formed by Mme. Blavatsky, H. S. Olcott, W. Q. Judge, and others, founded what they called the Theosophical Society. According to Col. Olcott, the choice of the name of the newly formed Society was subject of discussion in the committee, and several options were suggested, such as the Egyptological, the Hermetic, the Rosicrucian, etc. However, none of them seemed the right one. 'At last,' he recalls 'in turning over the leaves of the Dictionary, one of us came across the word "Theosophy," whereupon, after discussion, we unanimously agreed that that was the best of all.' Olcott explained this name was appropriate because it expressed 'the esoteric truth we wished to reach' and covered the ground of 'methods of occult scientific research.' [7]

It does not seem likely that the name for

the Society was chosen merely out of a dictionary search, since Madame Blavatsky had already connected her knowledge with the term theosophy a few months before, in a letter to Hiram Corson:

My belief is based on something older than the Rochester knockings [that began the Spiritualistic movement in 1848], and springs out from the same source of information that was used by Raymond Lully, Picus della Mirandola, Cornelius Agrippa, Robert Fludd, Henry More, et cetera, etc., all of whom have ever been searching for a system that should disclose to them the "deepest depths" of the Divine nature, and show them the real tie which binds all things together. I found at last, and many years ago, the cravings of my mind satisfied by this theosophy taught by the Angels and communicated by them that the protoplast might know it for the aid of the human destiny. [8]

As shown in a previous article ("What is Theosophy?" The Theosophist, Dec. 2007) Mme. Blavatsky used the term Theosophy with the following meanings:

a) As a state of illumination where the theosophist is in touch with the Divine Wisdom. This, as we have seen, is the meaning used by Porphyry.

b) As a universal Ancient Wisdom, similar to the perennial philosophy of the Renaissance. This idea has been present under different names through a number of philosophers since the beginning of recorded history. Marcelo Ficino and



Pico della Mirandola, whose writings influenced Christian theosophers, called this Ancient Wisdom *prisca theologia*. Essential elements of this perennial philosophy are shared by the different theosophies, the term being applied here as a name for different doctrines, much as Proclus did.

Regarding the word "Theosophist," although today it is commonly used to refer to a member of the Theosophical Society, since the beginning of the organization its leaders established a difference between a real Theosophist and a member of the TS. While a Theosophist is in touch with the Divine Wisdom, members of the Society are students of the teachings of Theosophists, with the aspiration to develop their "inner senses" so to eventually become a real Theosophist.

### **On the modern and the Christian theosophies**

The modern and the Christian theosophies differ in their language, style, and reference books they use. Modern Theosophy is outside any religious framework. It does not teach the existence of a personal God and does not accept the idea of vicarious salvation. Blavatsky never claimed the Theosophical Society to be a direct continuation of the Christian current. As seen in an earlier quote, the first time that HPB associates herself to the word theosophy she does not mention Christian theosophers but refers to Alchemists, Kabbalists, and Platonists. [\*\*\*] It is with them that she claims to share

the same "source of knowledge." This does not mean, however, that she identified the modern Theosophy with the mediaeval European esotericism either:

But real Theosophy—i.e., the Theosophy that comes to us from the East—is assuredly Pantheism and by no means Theism. Theosophy is a word of the widest possible meaning which differs greatly in Eastern and Western literature. Moreover, the Theosophical Society being of Eastern origin, therefore goes beyond the narrow limits of the mediaeval Theosophy of the West . . . [9]

Some scholars feel that H.P. Blavatsky et al. unduly appropriated of the term when they used it for a worldview that was not based on the Judeo-Christian religions. This feeling cannot be justified unless we refuse to recognize its earlier use within a non-Christian philosophy by the Neo-Platonists. As a matter of fact, HPB did claim the Society was a successor of what Prof. Wilder called the "Theosophical Eclectic School" of Neo-Platonism:

The chief aim of the Founders of the Eclectic Theosophical School was one of the three objects of its modern successor, the Theosophical Society, namely, to reconcile all religions, sects and nations under a common system of ethics, based on eternal verities. [10]

The most important of [the Society's objects] is to revive the work of [the Neo-Platonist] Ammonius Saccas, and make various nations remember that they are



the children "of one mother." [11]

Since we can argue that modern Theosophy is closer to the original Neo-Platonic system than Christian theosophy is, Mme. Blavatsky seems justified in having used the term for her teachings.

This being said, we have to keep in mind that HPB was not so much concerned with the "academic" aspect of a word that has been used with a multiplicity of meanings. Just as the term "gnosis" can be used in a universal way, with no reference to a particular school of philosophy or religion, she employed the term "Theosophy" more based on its meaning than on the traditions that had previously used it:

The Theosophical Society, then, does not derive its name from the Greek word Theosophia, composed of the two words "God" and "wisdom" taken in the dead letter, but rather in the spiritual sense of the term. It is the Society for searching into Divine Wisdom, occult or spiritual wisdom. [12]

### **Common elements in the various theosophies**

One feature that strikes us when reading the teachings of those "possessed of divine wisdom" is that there is no doctrinal unity among them. Jacob Brucker (1696-1770), one of the first historians of Western philosophy, wrote about Christian theosophy: "There are as many theosophical systems as there are theosophers." [13] This statement is

applicable to other theosophies as well. There is a marked difference between the approaches of Plotinus and Iamblichus, while some people call "Neo-Theosophy" the teachings of Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater because they differ in some aspects from those of H. P. Blavatsky.

If this is the case within the particular traditions, what happens when we compare different theosophies, with differences in language and in their religious or philosophical background? Do they share any common elements?

Jacob Brucker identified some doctrines present in all of the Christian theosophical teachings. These principles, when expressed in a more religious-neutral language, are also to be found in Neo-Platonism and in modern Theosophy. They include the idea that everything emanates from a common source and must return to it; that one can get an immediate revelation of the soul by divine means or faculties, and not by philosophical reason; that the universal spirit resides in all things and we can find "signatures" of the divine everywhere; that the forces of nature can be manipulated by magical means; and that human beings are three-fold, being composed of a divine spark, an intermediary spirit or soul, and a physical body.

But perhaps what theosophoi, theosophers, and Theosophists have in common cannot be found so much at the doctrinal level, but rather at the level of attitudes of mind and general notions. For example, modern



scholar Antoine Faivre (again in relation to the Christian theosophy, but applicable to the Neoplatonic and the modern ones) describes three common notions found in most theosophical systems: The interest in the relationship between Man, God and the Universe; the use of myths to explain reality; and the possibility of direct access to higher worlds. [14] Working on this line of thought, we can add some other common features:

i) The lack of doctrinal uniformity. This fact discussed earlier is not merely a negative quality but an important common feature of all theosophical teachers. Given the fact that their knowledge is not the result of reading and reasoning, but of a supra-conceptual wisdom, those in touch with it have to find their own words in an attempt to describe their original spiritual perceptions. Since the spiritual realities cannot be appropriately expressed through words created to describe the material world, their teachings will be different, and even seem to be opposing in many points, without necessarily being really so. This is also a reason why many of them chose the fluid language of symbols and allegories to transmit their wisdom.

ii) Knowing by personal experience about the limitations of language to describe spiritual realities, they are not literalists, and usually advocate for an esoteric understanding of sacred scriptures and myths.

iii) Theosophical authors tend to be eclectic, being inclined to integrate

different elements (even from other traditions) within a general, harmonious whole. Theosophy is essentially holistic, frequently aiming at offering "a synthesis of Religion, Philosophy and Science," as described in the subtitle of Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine.

iv) Those in touch with theosophia seek union with the divine, becoming at the same time spectators of the "mysteries of creation". These new perceptions and images are not created by the activity of the intellect, but by divine revelations. Therefore, theosophical teachings are not only mystical, but also metaphysical, including a cosmology, a theogony, and an anthropogenesis.[\*\*\*\*] Due to the rich intellectual aspect of the theosophical teachings there is the danger of forgetting the real purpose of its metaphysics. It is not meant to satisfy the intellectual curiosity of the student. In the theosophical view, human beings (microcosm) are an expression and reflection of the universe (macrocosm), containing in them every element present in the cosmos. By knowing the universe we get to know our true nature and potentiality, as well as our relation to the whole. This knowledge becomes thus an important element of the theosophical spiritual practice.

v) All theosophies encourage an inner path, which is to be treaded individually. The "battle" between the spiritual and the material takes place inwardly, and produces the soul's transmutation and a spiritual awakening. Man does not find God or the Divine in a temple but in his



heart. However, although this intimate experience is independent of any external framework, many of those “wise in things divine” have created spiritual societies, orders, or communities to encourage and assist people in this individual change. These organizations were neither lay nor clerical. They were composed of people who maintained their outward place in society, but who were inwardly devoted to the spiritual practice. They existed in the boundaries between institutional religions and the lay populace. [15]

vi) The direction of this inner path is from the bodily consciousness towards an illumined, spiritual one. In other words, the psychological ego and its desires must be transcended. Here lies an important difference with the New Age. Although this movement shares many doctrinal elements with theosophy, its approach is typically the opposite one, focusing on the personal ego, and regarding the universal laws as means to produce personal satisfaction, which is mistakenly taken as a “spiritual state.”

Pablo Sender  
The Theosophist, November 2011

## NOTES

[\*] Porphyry also wrote about foreign sages (Egyptian and Indian) as being theosophoi (De Abstinencia, IV.9 and 17), while Iamblichus applied the term to the Indian yogis or sadhus. (De

Mysteriis 7.1)

[\*\*] Among the Greeks theosophia was generally regarded to be higher than theologia, since the source of the former is a direct perception or experience of the divine, while theologia is based on reasoning about the divine.

[\*\*\*] The mystics mentioned by HPB in this quote lived from the 1200s to the late 1600s. Though not theosophers, a number of them are regarded as early influences in the shaping of Christian theosophy.

[\*\*\*\*] This is an important difference with the mystics of the Catholic type, who are usually not interested in the workings of the universe but simply aim at going beyond all images to reach a state of union with God.

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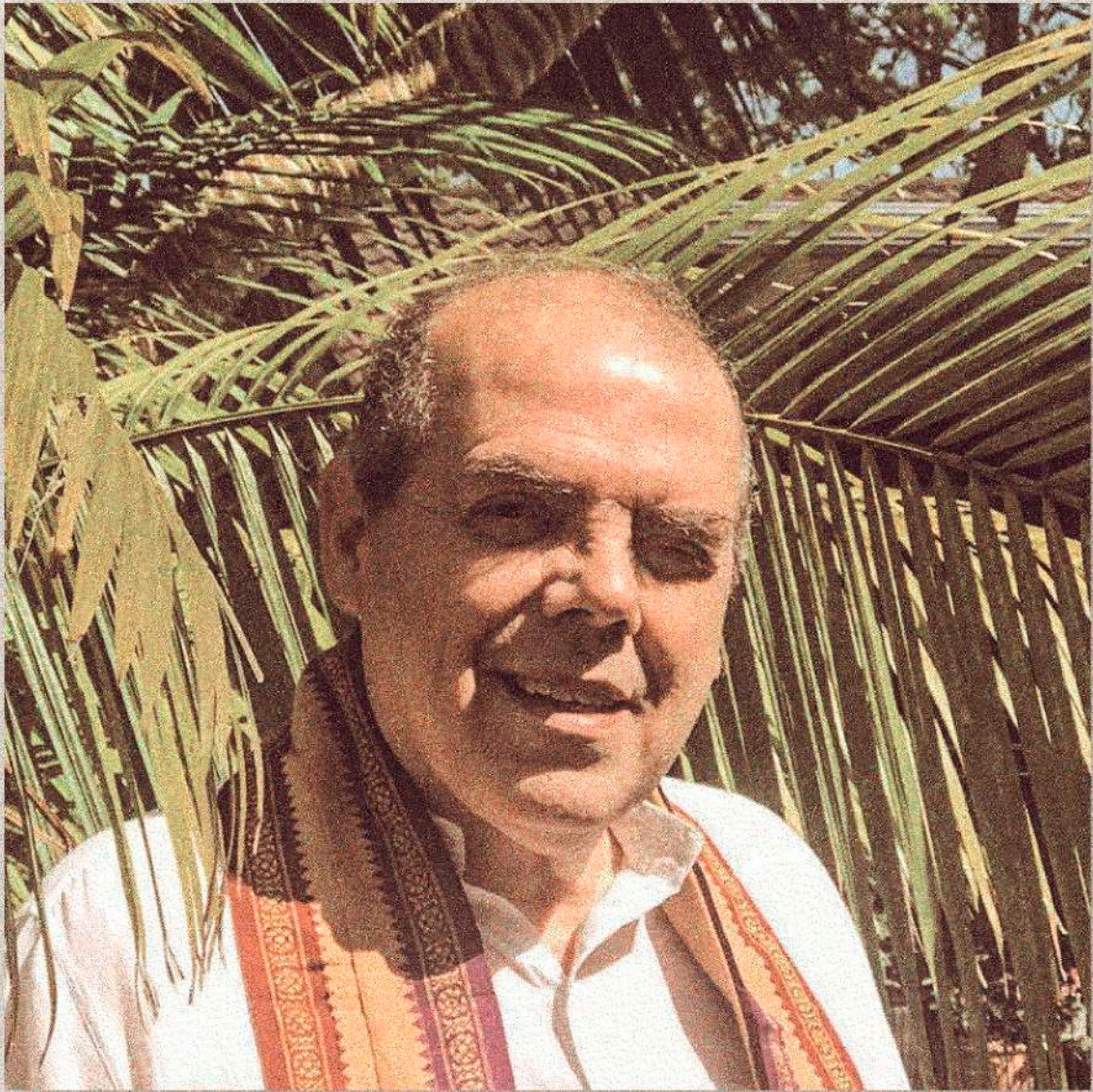
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"The mind is the great slayer of the real, let the disciple slay the slayer."

H.P. Blavatsky, The Voice of the Silence.







# The Stable Mind

By Pedro Oliveira

First Published in The Theosophist in August 2009

STUDENTS of Theosophy have been advised, again and again, to ponder and dwell on matters of deep significance. The sheer scope of theosophical literature is so vast that the temptation to get absorbed with details and descriptions may be sometimes quite overwhelming. Therefore, we do need to remind ourselves that Theosophy, in its essence, is not just a description of vast universal processes and systems. In its own essential nature it is a living wisdom, an understanding that brings us to the very heart of our true identity, which is one with the very heart of existence.

The same theosophical teaching suggests that in order for the student to truly learn about life's deeper aspects, contentment, detachment and stability of mind become necessary. A mind that oscillates and fluctuates, allowing itself to be tossed around by experiences, inevitably

becomes a prey to strong emotions and to self-aggrandizement. Under the sway of instability, the mind can neither see itself nor the reality around it. St Paul expressed this need to see clearly in his famous epistle to the Corinthians:

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (1 Cor., 13:12)

Our perception of life, of ourselves and others, is darkened by conditioning. The source of this conditioning includes unresolved experiences, frustrations, anger, desire, separateness as well as deep-seated self-interest and self-importance. Our experience of life and its relationships is therefore mediated by the 'dark glass' of conditioning. However, St Paul in his letter pointed to the possibility of seeing 'face to face' — a direct, non-mediated



perception, a true experience or insight. Such an experience can be profoundly transformative as it is an unconditional opening of oneself to the Other.

St Paul goes even deeper in his meditation on the nature of seeing. He says that now we know in part. Whatever knowledge we may have is bound to be a fragmentary knowledge so long as the background of conditioning is there in our minds. In its own essential form the nature of this conditioning has been called avidyâ, ignorance, lack of wisdom.

No amount of accumulation of knowledge can free us from ignorance which is the ultimate conditioning. As suggested by St Paul our liberation lies in the realization of our fundamental unity with the Other which is in itself all-knowing in its uncreated sacredness.

One of the important teachings in the Bhagavadgîtâ is about the nature of the stable mind. The Sanskrit expression sthita-prajña is translated as 'firm in judgement and wisdom, calm, contented'. The word sthita means 'firm, constant, invariable'. The following dialogue between Arjuna and Sri Krishna in the Gîtâ (II.54-7) conveys the depths of understanding which are open to one whose mind is stable:

What is the mark of him who is stable of mind, steadfast in contemplation, O Keoava? How doth the stable-minded talk, how doth he sit, how walk?

When a man abandoneth, O Pârtha, all the desires of the heart, and is satisfied in the SELF by the SELF, then is he called stable in mind. He whose mind is free from anxiety amid pains, indifferent amid pleasures, loosed from passion, fear and anger, he is called a sage of stable mind. He who on every side is without attachments, whatever hap of fair and foul, who neither likes nor dislikes, of such a one the understanding is well poised.

The ordinary human mind is activated by many desires. Each desire is born of the image-making that goes on within the mind all the time. What is called the personal self, the 'me', may be described as this intimate relationship between the energy of desire and the images which are constantly created within the mind. Unaware of this process the mind identifies itself with such emotions as anger, fear, suspicion, greed, pride and so on. The refusal to look at itself becomes the source of constant instability in the mind. This may be the reason why so many people in the world today, after having tried all sorts of meditation 'techniques', remain restless and discontented. As long as the sense of individuality is placed on the emotional- mental field there cannot be peace within. In the language of The Voice of the Silence, the senses will continue to make a playground of the mind.

However, if it is possible for someone to see the above process clearly and objectively, then there would be no need whatsoever to cling to any desire. One would observe desires arising within the



mind and naturally let them go, like waves that arise and break on the shore. The depths of the ocean remain unperturbed and at peace. There is a causeless joy in just being oneself. Perhaps the Indian tradition pointed this out when it maintained that one of the innermost aspects of the Ultimate Reality is *ânanda*. When one truly begins to know oneself all forms of artificial behaviour and mental habits come to an end, as well as all self-seeking.

Sri Kṛṣṇa also suggests that such an individual 'is free from anxiety amid pains, indifferent amid pleasures, loosed from passion, fear and anger'. As long as one lives in a body there is bound to be some degree of pain and pleasure. The extraordinary beauty of the above statement by Sri Kṛṣṇa is that the sage of stable mind is free from anxiety amid the experience of pain. Those who were near him reported about how composed and calm Rāmāṇa Maharshi was when he was being treated for cancer. The same was true of Annie Besant's attitude during the crises she faced as President of the Theosophical Society. At the core of such stable attitudes we may find a very deep realization that everything temporal is bound to come to an end. Also that consciousness, in its own essential nature, remains unaffected by the fluctuations of time and matter.

It is difficult to differentiate between pleasure and the identification with it. While there are naturally pleasurable experiences in life, it is the clinging to

them that coarsens the mind. And it is the false sense of identity (*asmitâ*) that makes such clinging possible. Someone who has discovered a source of deep contentment within does not need to cling to any experience, pleasurable or otherwise. They are seen for what they are and the consciousness remains unaffected.

The other quality mentioned by Sri Kṛṣṇa about the nature of the stable mind is that it is 'loosed from passion, fear and anger'. Passion, fear and anger are essentially reactions to experience. Perhaps they could be seen as the ways in which the ignorant self demonstrates its own unwillingness to learn. They also constitute deep undercurrents that maintain restlessness, anxiety and conflict in the mind. But they cannot grow in a stable mind for it is free from the reactions that have their source in self-centredness.

Finally, Arjuna's Teacher clarifies even further the precious nature of the stable mind. He says: 'He who on every side is without attachments, whatever hap of fair and foul, who neither likes nor dislikes, of such a one the understanding is well poised.' It is a fact of life that we do not have control over external circumstances nor over other people's behaviour. Yet a number of people live and behave as if they could have such a control, which is a form of illusion. The most enduring form of attachment, therefore, is attachment to our own sense of a separate self. When this attachment ends through insight into its vacuous, illusory nature, there is a profound sense of stability and real



security. There is a peace that passes all understanding.

What does the stable mind see? What is the nature of its relationship to life and the universe? Krishna, the Blessed Lord, says to Arjuna:

He attaineth Peace , into whom all desires flow as rivers flow into the ocean, which is filled with water, but remaineth unmoved — not he who desireth desires. Whoso forsaketh all desires and goeth onwards free from yearnings, selfless and without egoism — he goeth to Peace. This is the Eternal state, O son of Prthâ. Having attained thereto none is bewildered. Who, even at the death-hour, is established therein, he goeth to the Nirvâna of the Eternal. (II.70–2)

Such an individual can contribute to the transformation of the human consciousness not by being vocal, by writing or making speeches. Such a person, by being who he or she is, enables

the whole world to come nearer to peace, brother- hood and compassion. Such a person transcends all the stereotypes, all barriers, all beliefs, all labelling, and can touch the heart and soul of many towards awakening and liberation.

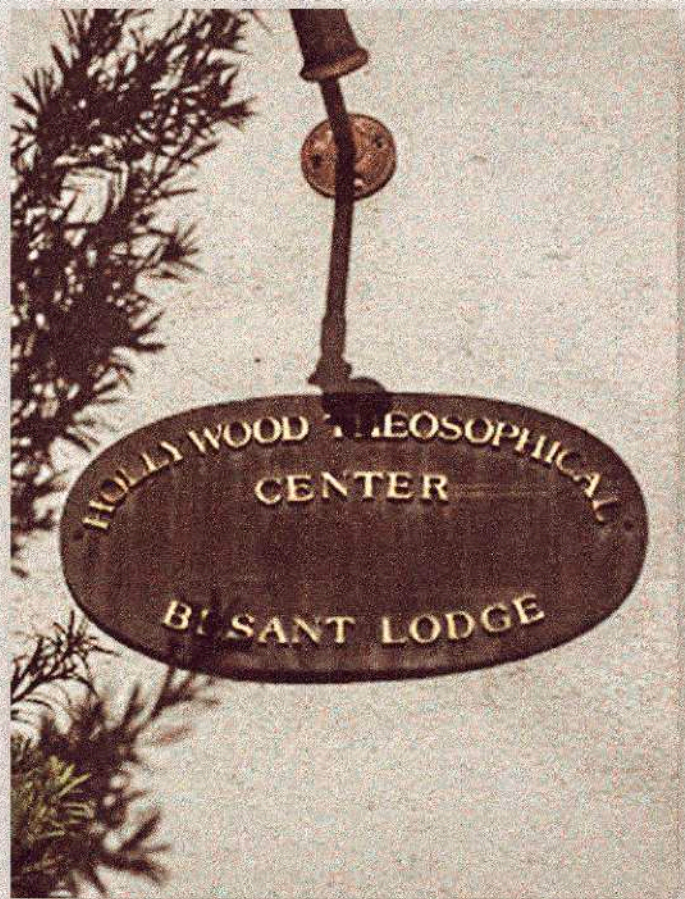
In the Gospel of Thomas, which is a Gnostic text containing the inner or esoteric teachings of Jesus, we find the following passage:

His disciples said to him, ‘When will the kingdom come?’ Jesus said: ‘It will not come by waiting for it. It will not be a matter of saying: “here it is” or “there it is”. Rather, the kingdom of the Father is spread out upon the earth, and men do not see it.’

The stable mind sees what is always present, always near, never far away, never lost: the blessedness alive in every form of life. In it the seen, the seer and seeing are one. For it, there is no other.

Oliveira, P. (2009), “The Stable Mind,” *The Theosophist* Voll. 130, 11 August (2009) pp: 425-428.







# Occultism, Semi-Occultism and Pseudo Occultism

By Annie Besant

A lecture delivered to the Blavatsky Lodge, London, on 30th June, 1898

Published in 1898 Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Chennai (Madras) India The Theosophist Office, Adyar, Madras. India

Speaking to the Lodge for the first time after returning from India, it will not seem to you, I think, either strange or inappropriate that I should take for my subject one which is largely drawn from Indian history; not the history of the outside nation, but the history of that inner line of thought which is of the deepest interest to us as students and as Theosophists. And inasmuch as history continually repeats itself, such a study may offer points of instruction to us in our own time. For I am going to ask you to consider with me what I may perhaps define - although definition is a little difficult - as, first, occultism, then what may be called semi-occultism, and, thirdly, the outgrowths which follow and surround these and which are specially marked and active at any time when true occultism is working in the world.

It is a very common blunder made by many people, to suppose that spiritual

forces have in them something which they are pleased to call unpractical, and we continually notice an assumption, which is taken for granted without argument, that if a nation, for instance, should turn itself towards a spiritual ideal, or if individuals should devote themselves to the spiritual life, that then such a nation is likely to be undistinguished along other more evident and visible walks in life, and such an individual is likely to lose much of what is called his practical value in the world. Such a view of life is a blunder, and a blunder of the most complete kind. The liberation of spiritual forces, the setting free of energies on the spiritual plane, has a far greater effect both on the individual than can be produced by any of the forces that are started on the lower planes of life. When a spiritual energy is set free, it works down through the other planes of being, giving rise on each plane to a liberation of energy, and bringing about results great



in proportion to the nature of the spiritual force. So that it is true in history, as you may find by study, that where spiritual forces are liberated, the intellectual life of the nation will also leap forward with tremendous energy, the emotional life of the nation will show fresh development, and even on the lowest plane of all - the physical, results will be brought about entirely beyond anything that could have been achieved by the energies of the physical plane which are set to work and which apparently cause these results. That is a principle, a law, which I will ask you to bear in mind through all that I have to say to you - that every force initiated on the higher planes, as it passes down to the lower, brings about results proportionate to itself; so that it is the shortest-sighted view of human life and of human activity which imagines that devotion to the spiritual life, the evolution of the individual in the spiritual world, is anything but an immense addition to all the forces of progress that work on the earth, anything but a lifting up of the world on the great ladder up which it is climbing.

But there is another principle that we must also bear in mind in our study, and it is this; that as forces are liberated on any plane, the results brought about by those forces will vary in their character according to those who utilise the energies after their liberation. As we have often pointed out to you here, energies on the different planes of nature are not what we call good or bad in themselves. Force is a force: energy is an energy. When we bring in the idea of good and evil, of right and wrong, of morality

and immorality, these ideas are connected with the results brought about by individuals in the utilisation of the forces. A time, then, of great spiritual energy, of great liberation of forces from the spiritual plane, will be marked to a great extent by activities of opposed characters on the lower planes of being, and those energies which are liberated on each plane may be taken up and used by individuals for what we should call either good or evil. The great mark of good or evil, looking at it from this standpoint, is the use that the individual is making of these forces, or such part of them as he is able to control; whether he is using them for the uplifting of humanity, whether he is regarding them as the Divine energy which he may use to forward the Divine purposes, or whether he is simply trying to grasp them for his own separate ends, striving to apply them to that which he desires to grasp and to hold, serving his own purposes without regard to the Divine economy. This, then, as I said, we will bear in mind in following out, first, as a lesson, something of the past in India, and then in applying the lesson that thus we learn to the movement which we know amongst ourselves at the present day, that great spiritual movement which is manifesting itself in the world and of which the Theosophical Society is one of the potent expressions.

To begin with, what is occultism? The word is used and misused in the most extraordinary ways. H.P. Blavatsky once defined it as the study of mind in nature, meaning by the word mind, in that connection, the study of the Universal



Mind, the Divine Mind, the study of the workings of God in the Universe, the study therefore of all the energies which, coming forth from the spiritual centre, work themselves out in the worlds around us. It is the study of the life side of the Universe, the side from which everything proceeds and from which everything is moulded, the looking through the illusory form to the reality which animates it; it is the study which underlies all phenomena; it is the ceasing to be wholly blinded by these appearances in which we so continually move and by which we are so continually deluded; it is the piercing through the veil of maya and perceiving the reality, the one Self, the one Life, the one Force, that which is in everything and all things in it. So that, really, occultism, in the true sense of the word, may be said to be identical with that vision which, as you know, is spoken of in the Bhagavad-Gita, where Shri Krishna declares that "He who sees Me," that is, who sees the One Self, "in everything and everything in Me, verily he seeth". Such a study, if you understand at all what is implied in it, must necessarily mean the development in the one who sees of the highest spiritual faculties, for only by the Spirit can the Spirit be known. We speak continually of proving this, that, or the other spiritual thing. There is no real proof possible of Spirit, save through Spirit; there is no proof of the intellect, no proof of the emotion, no proof of the senses, which is proof when you come to deal with the reality of the Spirit. Nothing of the nature of proof along those lines, whether sensuous, emotional, or intellectual, can be anything more than a suggestion, a

reflection of the truth, an analogy which may lead us on the right path, but proof in the true sense of the word it never can be. And it has been written truly in one of the great Indian scriptures, and repeated over and over again in the other scriptures of the world, that there is in the full sense of the word no proof of God save the belief in the Spirit, for only the Spirit that is akin to Him, and that is Himself, is able to know, is able to touch.

Now looking at real occultism as thus defined, realising that no one can be in the full sense of the word an occultist save one in whom the spiritual nature is developed and active, we should, in our next step, be able to separate off from this true occultism very much that goes by its name both in the past and the present, amongst those who went before us and amongst ourselves today. But we should need, in separating off all these forms of so-called occultism, to distinguish between those which may be said, in a sense, to be stepping stones to the real, which were intended as steppingstones by those who gave them to the world and which may be used as steppingstones and utilised for progress, and other forms which are not really included under the name of occultism in any true sense of the term, those things which H.P. Blavatsky once spoke of as occult arts and which for many people seem to include everything they regard as occultism - arts in which certain forces of nature are utilised and in which faculties are developed on various planes in nature below the spiritual; for there are worlds above what we call the



physical, but still below the spiritual regions, with which the development of certain faculties brings man into touch, enabling him to control and utilise their forces. There are almost a myriad arts and lines of study of this kind which ought never by any real student, by anyone who is seeking the higher truth, to be included in his thought when that thought is turned towards occultism. And some of you might clear up much confused thinking on this subject if you would refer to the writing of H.P. Blavatsky on Occultism versus the Occult Arts, where she draws the dividing line extremely clearly and shows the position that these occult arts hold, and should be recognised as holding, when we are dealing with human evolution.

True occultism, then, is that to which at first I would ask you to turn your thoughts, and its pursuit implies, as I have said, the development of the spiritual nature. Now the moment we speak of the development of the spiritual nature we must at once recognise that for the larger number of us that development must necessarily lie in the future, but that we may begin to work towards it today; that it is of enormous import to our true progress that we should recognise it and work towards it, and not, by misunderstanding the nature of that development, waste our time, waste possibly many lives, by following blind alleys and mistaken roads. The development of the spiritual nature must succeed - and this is one of the most important points that we can realise - must succeed the purification of the lower parts of our nature. We must be pure emotionally

and intellectually, we must have reached a certain stage, at least, of the elimination of the personality before anything that can rightly be called spiritual progress is within our reach. No amount of mere intellectual development - and I will come back to that point, for I do not wish in any way to depreciate that most necessary line of human growth - but no amount of mere intellectual development will of itself bring about the growth of the spiritual nature. With the fundamental reason for that I shall deal more fully in a future lecture, but I must say in passing that the development of the spiritual nature and of the intellectual nature are on one vital point in direct opposition. The principle that we call the intellect is the analysing, the dividing, the separative principle. The very purpose of its evolution is the building up of the individual, its root lies in the ahankara, or the "I"-making faculty, it is that which limits, which defines, which separates, which marks off the man from every other man, which makes what we may call that coating of selfishness which is absolutely necessary as one stage in evolution, which is one part of our growth in this world. It is a stage through which all humanity must pass, but which, regarded by itself, makes all those illusions which the Spirit transcends, and gives the touch of apparent reality to the separated self, the antagonistic self, the self that covets and grasps and holds and sets itself against all others. So that what we might call the very principle of illusion is represented by this intellectual faculty.

Necessary as its evolution is, none the less



it is on this point in antagonism to spiritual evolution; for spiritual evolution means the recognition and the growth of the One Self into manifested activity, first within that sheath which has been formed by the intellect, and then by transcending it and bringing about that realised unity which is the object of our human evolution. It is for this that we place the unity of mankind in the spiritual regions, it is for this that we proclaim the brotherhood of man as a spiritual reality; for the Spirit is one, and it is only as that unity is recognised, consciously known - not simply intellectually seen, but consciously realised - it is only as that is done that the spiritual nature is in course of evolution. Inasmuch as the intellect is separative and the Spirit unifying, inasmuch as the one gives rise to illusion while the other transcends it, as the one is the source both of individuality and of personality, whereas the other is the source of that Oneship which we seek and shall realise - you will readily see how in the course of evolution these two parts of the nature cannot be regarded as causally related in the strict sense of the term, and we cannot say that by the evolution of the intellectual nature the spiritual nature will inevitably develop. On the contrary, we have to learn that we are not the intellect, but are to use the intellect as an instrument; that we are not the separated self, but the One Self living in all. That is the object of our evolution, that the goal of our pilgrimage; and therefore occultism, which means the study and the development of the spiritual nature, must transcend completely the intellectual evolution. It may even in many of its earlier

stages find, and does find, its bitterest antagonist, its most dangerous enemy, in that very maker of illusions that you may remember we are warned against in *The Voice of the Silence*, that most spiritual book which so many of us have found as opening up the path to us to the spiritual life. Recognising this, we shall naturally look forward to the spiritual evolution as a thing to be worked for rather than to be accomplished, from the stage at which we are at present. We should also be prepared to realise the immense difficulty of such an achievement, to understand how much will have to be done with the character and with the nature, how tremendous are the demands that we shall have to meet, before anything which in the strict sense of the term can be called occultism will be at all within our reach.

In the history of the past, where true occultism was the life of the world, where that great fount of spiritual life flowed from the Beings in whom the spiritual nature was wholly developed, when the world was drawing its light and its life from such Beings, it was obviously not possible that their knowledge, their powers, their work could be largely shared by undeveloped humanity, or even by the comparatively advanced humanity that surrounded them. Still less was it possible that any great part of their teaching or any true comprehension of their work and their methods could be known to the people at large; and yet it was necessary that links should be made, that steps, as it were, should be created. The result of this necessity was that men who were



advanced - although in them the spiritual nature was not yet wholly evolved - men of great powers, who stand out in history as giants of humanity, strove to make possible for the advancing ranks of mankind some understanding of the upward path that should be trodden, some realisation of the methods that might be adopted whereby approach might be made to the spiritual regions.

These men, great as they were, were not, as I have said, men in whom the spiritual nature was wholly developed, supreme, complete. Their evolution in many cases - and I speak with all reverence of those so much greater than ourselves - may even be said to have gone along one line in excess of other lines of their growth; so that one man might have enormously developed intellectual power but less perfection perhaps of moral character; another might have made great advance in devotion and might not have developed so much of intellectual force; another might be keenly alive to the religious necessities of man and not so much interested in his philosophical evolution; another, again, might have turned his attention towards the development of certain sides of man's nature which would touch the physical regions of existence, and even to the forcing of faculties in man, which, when built up from below, would bring him into touch with parts of the astral or the lower mental world, and might force those faculties and the part of his nature to which they belong in advance alike of mental and moral evolution. Along these various lines you will readily see that individuals

might have progressed, and that each man would be characterised in his thinking and in his endeavour to serve mankind, by his own qualities, the attributes which he had specially evolved. So that, looking back into the ancient history of India, we find great teachers, Rishis as they were called, of many different types, each giving to the nation some great gift from his thought or from his knowledge, intended to help the more advanced souls of that nation towards progress which should end in spiritual evolution. Hence, to take one line of growth, the great philosophical system which we find in Indian thought, such a system, for instance, as the Vedanta. Regarded as an intellectual system of pure philosophy it puts in a magnificent intellectual form a view of the Universe, of the One Self, of the One Life, and of its manifestations, as illusory in the deepest philosophical sense, that serves as an intellectual training, as a step which men must take in learning something of the mysteries of the Universe. This system, when studied apart from the Yoga that alone can make it practical, may be classed under the head of semi-occultism. It is a system true within its own realm, a system intended to help forward the progress of mankind, only capable of being grasped, of being followed, of being studied, by souls already advanced in mentality; but none the less it is not the spiritual truth; it is only an intellectual presentment of one aspect of it, an intellectual showing forth of one side of it.

It is a thing that must always be remembered, that the Spirit can never be



expressed in terms of the intellect, that the One can never be grasped in the terms of the many, and that any intellectual presentment of spiritual truths must necessarily be partial, must necessarily be imperfect, must be, as has often been said, a coloured glass through which the white light is seen; a ray is passed through the prism of the intellect which breaks up the white light of the Spirit, showing it in varied colours as these scattered beams, each one of which is imperfect in itself. One, then, of the great gifts to ancient India coming in this way as the result of true occultism, as the result of the mighty spiritual life, was the philosophy of the Vedanta and all those intellectual systems intended for the training of man, and giving, so far as the intellect could give it, a view of the spiritual reality. But remember the saving clause, "as far as the intellect could give it". The intellectual view is only a partial view; and such a view, however much it may help man to see intellectually something of the possibilities of the higher life, can never make him realise it in consciousness, or give the true knowledge which comes alone through the evolution of the spiritual nature itself.

Along another line of activity would come the many schools of Yoga. These schools, as you well know, were exceedingly various in their nature. Some of them were designed to develop the higher intellectual consciousness in man by means of concentration, by means of meditation, and thus to bring him into touch with the higher regions of his being; they were intended to lead him, stage by

stage, to get free from the body, to pass consciously into higher worlds, so that his consciousness might function in those more extended realms of being. And we find many of the teachings of Yoga - you may read many of these systems at your leisure, those which come under the great classification Raja Yoga - carefully adapted to aid the growth of the mind, the evolution of the loftier mental faculties, the rising on to the higher intellectual planes, the passing into states of consciousness far beyond the reach of ordinary humanity. They are again, a steppingstone offered, but still coming under this heading that I have called semi-occultism. Other schools were founded which dealt with man in different fashion, which strove to force his faculties from below, to force the evolution and the training of the astral faculties, to bring him first into touch with the astral world, to make him familiar with a part of the phenomenal universe closely allied to the material. These have generally been classed as the schools of Hatha Yoga, and in them various methods were employed dealing with the lower vehicles of man. By these methods the body was trained, was to a great extent purified and rendered an obedient instrument. The power of the will was also enormously developed, the man was taught to be master of his lower nature and so to take what in very many cases was a real step upwards, although we cannot include it in any sense of the term under the heading of true occultism.

It must be remembered when dealing with all these schools, when looking at them and striving to learn alike their use



and their abuse, that it is a great thing for a man to become master of his passions, it is a great thing to subject the animal nature, to be able to stand unshaken, no matter what temptations may assail the lower man. And very, very many of these schools, which it is often the fashion in the West to scoff at and despise, have yet in them this element, that they at least recognise that man's intellectual nature should be master of his sensuous nature and that he should learn complete control over the body, complete control over the passions. And even along many of the darker lines of evolution, even in the schools that tread the path which all those who would reach the highest should most carefully avoid, it is none the less true that the subjugation of the lower nature is most rigorously insisted upon. It is only the ignorant who suppose that those darker schools are all given over to sensuous practices. Many of the followers of those schools lead lives which, so far as that side of the nature is concerned, might be taken as examples by an enormous majority of the men of the western world.

Now the whole of these different schools rose and flourished in ancient India as the result of the great downpouring from the spiritual regions on to the lower planes, and naturally they were used both for selfish and for unselfish purposes. But in dealing with all those schools of Yoga which train the intellect and develop the high forms of intellectual consciousness, it is well to remember that they are real stepping stones to the higher, and that it is a necessary stage of our progress that

we should practice concentration, that we should use meditation, that we should be accustomed to contemplate intellectually and emotionally the ideals which appeal to us by their grandeur and their nobility. Those are stages in our upward path, and stages that very many of us might well be utilising now, with a view to the higher growth, the deeper wisdom of the future. Men took up these varying lines of evolution, stirred fundamentally by the prompting of the Divine Life within them, ever seeking to raise them and to help their upward growth; stirred, so far as they themselves were conscious, by the natural and rightful desire for higher evolution, for further progress, for growth in life. For, as we have often seen when we have been studying progress, we cannot leap at a bound to the heights of the spiritual life; we have to climb step by step, we have to utilise the higher thoughts in us for the subjugation of the lower, and then in turn to outgrow that higher when a greater height comes within our sight and without our reach. We have learnt, as we know well, in our studies, that we may constantly eliminate lower ambitions by nourishing a higher ambition, and that, though that higher ambition be still attached to the personality, or even transcending the personality, be attached still to the individual, it is none the less a steppingstone, it is one of the ways by which we climb. It is well continually to kill out our lower by our higher desires, though even those higher in their turn seem lower as we are rising above them and greater perfection comes slowly within our gaze. So that this longing for



a higher life, this desire to develop, this yearning for progress, had, and have, their rightful place in evolution; and it is out of the ranks of those who feel these, out of the ranks of those who use the methods which make progress possible, that are taken those who are capable of further evolution. They learn gradually to transcend the hope for individual progress, and learn that that also, in the fullest sense of the term, is illusion and cannot exist as life which is spent as part of the Divine Life, pouring itself out for others; and no life is true, no life real, no life spiritual, save when the very idea of the separated life is entirely transcended, and all the thought of the being, all the energies of the life, are poured forth as part of the One Self and no distinction is recognised. Service is then the natural expression of the life, helping is that in which the true existence is felt. But ere it is possible that this ideal can be even intellectually realised, some progress, at least, must have been made in transcending what we recognise as the personality; and it was in order to make that possible to every man immersed in illusion, as all men have been and are, that the various methods were suggested by those who would fain help their fellows forward, as steps on the upward path.

Others, seeing in the religious instinct in man - in that side of his nature allied to the emotions, in which devotion finds its root and the possibilities of its growth - seeing in that his easiest upward path, gave to the world the various forms of religion in all their variety of adaptation to human

needs, thus making the path upwards suitable for those whose constitution attracted them chiefly in the direction of love and of service. Seeing, then, that all these methods of growth were most active at the time when the real life was working at the heart of things, it will not be difficult to understand how, as that life found fewer channels for its expression in the world, fewer who were ready to transcend their own limitations and to give themselves wholly as channels of the Divine Life, all these methods lost their vitality and a great part of their usefulness. And so we find, in looking around the India of today, that many of those things that were living are now dead, that many of the systems that were vital are now mere shells, forming subjects for intellectual controversy or for individual pride, but no longer stepping stones to the higher life. Here and there, still some gleam of the true life survives, some real use is being made of these stepping stones upward; but so far as the great masses of the people are concerned, mere shells and forms remain - evidences of what existed in the past, evidences, may we dare to hope, of what may be in the future.

It is hardly worth while to remind you that while semi-occultism may serve as a steppingstone to real occultism, pseudo-occultism is generally a distinct obstacle and hindrance. Under this heading may be classed as the "occult arts", in the study of which many promising beginners have lost their way and wasted their lives. Geomancy, palmistry, the use of the tarot, etc., all these things are well enough for



those who want to tread the byways of nature and to gather knowledge of her obscurer workings. They may be harmless, interesting, even useful in a small way, but they are not occultists and their professors are not occultists. A little success in their pursuit - and success does not demand high qualities of either head or heart - is apt to breed the most absurd vanity and pretentiousness, as though this dalliance with the apsaras of the kingdom of occultism converted a commonplace man into one of its rulers, a mage. A man may be past-master of all these arts, and yet be further away from occultism than is a pure and selfless woman seeking only to love and to serve, or a generous, clean-souled man, devoted to helping his fellows. And if these arts be turned to selfish purposes, or if they nourish vanity, their professor may find himself approaching perilously near to the gateway of the left-hand path.

Looking for the application of this to our present movement, the lesson springs easily enough to our gaze. Again, in our own days, a great outpouring of real life has occurred, again an effort has been made by those who are the guardians, the Reservoirs, of that life for our humanity, to pour out the true spiritual energies for the helping and the uplifting of man in every region of his being, the manifesting again of the possibility of the real life. This has been marked by certain definite statements made from time to time, by hints thrown out here and there by her who was the special messenger in our own day of this possibility opening up for our own race. And there is one passage in that

paper to which I referred at the beginning, which gives us in a phrase the reality of life: we are told that when a man becomes a real occultist he becomes only a force for good in the world. Here is a sentence that people read without realising at all its meaning, a sentence that comes in the middle of many other statements, and does not strike with its full force on the unprepared mind and heart. For many things may be said which are missed for want of receptivity, and many truths are proclaimed which remain dark and silent, save to those whose eyes are beginning to be opened to see, and whose ears are beginning to be opened to hear. And that statement, which really puts the occult life in a few words, is one that most readers pass by without realising its significance. There is no true spiritual life, there is no real occultism, until the man at least recognises that the goal of his living is to become a force for good, and that only, in the world. He is no longer to seek his own progress, no longer to seek his own life, no longer to seek his own development - no longer to ask aught that heaven or earth or any of the other worlds can give him for himself. There is only one thing left within him, the longing to be of service: only one thing the motive of his being, to be a channel for the great life of God, to enable that life to be scattered more effectively over the world of man, and over all worlds where that life exists.

When that is recognised, even afar off, when that ideal first dimly dawns upon the human heart - come it by way of intellectual apprehension of its sublimity,



or by way of devotional recognition of its truth - then for the first time the spiritual life stirs within the man, the first germ of the spiritual nature begins to quicken into life. And so we begin to realise that if true occultism would be reached and understood by any of us, we should have to begin the preparation for it by working at character in the way that every religion has taught. How often do we hear it said amongst ourselves:

"We know all these moral truths, there is nothing new in Theosophy when it simply reiterates the old morality. When we are told to be unselfish, to seek to help others forward, to eliminate the personality, to kill out our faults, it is all an old story that we have heard to weariness. We want something new, we want some fresh knowledge, some facts of the astral world, some strange things of the mental region - that is what we demand from Theosophy, that is what we are seeking, and we do not desire to have pressed upon us these ethical maxims, these continual repetitions, these old-world stories which every religion has made familiar, and which we can hear from any pulpit."

And yet the truth of the matter is that along that path only the spiritual life has been and is possible for man; that the Divine Teachers who gave the religions to the world with their perpetual insistence on morality, gave them knowing the spiritual life, and knowing that only along that line the real progress of man into unity with

God was possible. And when it was again declared by the lips of the Christ that only he might gain his life who lost it, that those who would be perfect must sacrifice all that they had, when he again reiterated the ancient teaching that narrow was the path and straight was the gateway, he was only repeating what all true occultists have taught as to the necessity of the training for the spiritual life.

As progress is made, all those methods of Yoga which tend to help forward the individual, which are followed in order to gain progress, practised in order to evolve faculties, and used in order that the individual may faster forward himself - all these are dropped, and Yoga is regarded, not as the means of self-evolution, as we are accustomed to regard it here, but as the using of great forces for the lifting and the helping of humanity, with utter disregard for the going forward of him who is using them, with no thought of progress on the part of him who is wielding them for the helping of man. For in truth all control of higher forces, all utilisation of these vast energies, ought to come only within the grasp of man when he has transcended the personality and has learnt to use them only for the helping of all. We readily admit this in the common things of life, and recognise the difference between learning the use of an instrument and mere holding an instrument without knowing how to use it. A pen, for example is one of the most useful of instruments, but its utility depends upon the brain and the heart behind it, upon the knowledge and the skill that wield it; and a pen in the



hands of a child is of no more use than any fragment of wood that the same child might pick up to use as a toy in its play. Very much the same is the grasping of the forces of the superphysical world by those who have not yet conquered the lower nature, eliminated personal desires and consecrated themselves wholly to the divine service. They are, truly, picking up an instrument which may be used for the highest and noblest ends; they are, truly, placing their hands upon a tool, which in hands that know how to use it, may serve for the salvation of the race; but unless the spiritual nature be developed, that tool fails in its highest purposes, that instrument fails in all its noblest possibilities. And it has this peculiarity, that whereas the pen that I used as a symbol might be comparatively harmless in the hands of the child, the grasping of those forces by one in whom the personality is not eliminated may become a source of danger alike to himself and others, and may tend to retard the progress of the race instead of lifting it upwards. That is why some of us who have learnt but the mere alphabet of these great truths, lay so much stress - stress to weariness, as I know some of you think when I am speaking to you - on the moral training which must precede all attempt at occult study. H.P. Blavatsky gave us the same lesson when she herself said that she had blundered in teaching part of the alphabet of occult knowledge without insisting upon that old precept that the moral growth must come before the occult training, and that the character must be purified, raised and spiritualised before anyone should dare to lay his hand

upon the latch of the occult gateway. Hence it is that those qualifications that we have so often studied are made qualifications for initiation; hence it is that there has even been the demand that only the pure should enter, that only the selfless should come in.

If I have spoken of the past to you tonight, if I have reminded you that amongst us today the very outburst of the new spiritual life will cause activity on all the lower planes, it is because I would bring the experience of the past to reinforce a lesson so often given from this platform, it is because I would warn you of the dangers that surround us on every side - dangers that some of us are beginning keenly to recognise, and to recognise just because they have to some extent struck us, and have therefore made progress the more difficult. So that it is our duty as Theosophists, as would be students of the science of the soul, to be careful that in all things character precedes any attempt at the gaining of power, that purity, selflessness, devotion, utter self surrender, be found in us ere we touch the Ark of occultism - for without these any success is a defeat, without these any attempt is doomed to failure. And surely it is better for us to learn from the experience of the past than by the bitter suffering that grows out of the personal experience of today; better to learn by the authority of the Great Teachers who have proclaimed the lesson over and over again, than to have to learn it by the suffering that follows from grasping powers ere we are ready to use them, from plucking the fruit of knowledge ere it is



ripe for our consumption, from striving to rule ere yet we have learnt to obey, and from endeavouring to snatch at the mighty forces of the spiritual realm until we have learnt that great lesson of the Spirit - that only by giving is the Spirit shown, that only by utter abnegation is the true life realised. As the very life of God in manifestation is a life that gives everything and asks nothing back, so those who would reach unity

with Him and realise what the spiritual life means, must learn to give and not to take, to help and not to hold, to pour out without seeking or looking for return. Only as we learn that, do we become fit candidates for the higher knowledge, only as the heart is thus rendered absolutely pure may we dare to face the presence of the Master, hoping that when "He looks at that heart He may find no stain therein."



"In the All everything IS always; all that has been, all that now is manifest, all that will be, all that can be, all possibilities as well as all actualities, are ever in being in the All."

Annie Besant, A Study in Karma.







# The Brotherhood of Luxor

By Julian Ochoa Sanchez

Blavatsky is best known for her writings and her extensive travels around the world. She is also known for her connection to a mysterious group that in the present is known as the Himalayan Brotherhood. It is without doubt that in her travels, Blavatsky met many extraordinary people, from Garibaldi in Italy to Islamic and Jewish Scholars in the middle east, nobles in Europe, Suffragettes in New York. However, in her many travels she visited Egypt several times, and in some occasions she stayed there for extended periods of time. It is recorded by different testimonies that in Egypt Blavatsky met several people of high degree with from which she learnt occult knowledge. Some of these people that Blavatsky met are said to have been members of a mysterious organisation called The Brotherhood of Luxor, which in turn is connected to the Himalayan Brotherhood. In this paper

the focus will be on trying to answer who The Brotherhood of Luxor is according to Theosophical literature. Firstly, definitions of what a Master is according to Theosophical Literature will be provided. Secondly with the sources available it will be attempted to respond the question of who the Brotherhood of Luxor is. Lastly anecdotes and additional historical information about The Brotherhood of Luxor and Blavatsky in Egypt will be presented. The overall Aim of this is to present the variety of Blavatsky's sources and the connection she had with the Masters of the Wisdom.

## Who are the Masters of the Wisdom?

In a letter to Franz Hartmann, Blavatsky says the following of the Masters:

*"There is beyond the Himalayas a nucleus*



*of Adepts of various nationalities; and the Teschu Lama knows Them, and They act together, and some of Them are with Him and yet remain unknown in Their true character even to the average lamas - who are ignorant fools mostly. My Master and K. H. and several others I know personally are there, coming and going, and They are all in communication with Adepts in Egypt and Syria, and even Europe.”<sup>1</sup>*

In Theosophical literature the Masters of the Wisdom are addressed by different names: The Adepts, The Masters, the Mahatmas, the more common names are the Himalayan Brotherhood and the Great White Brotherhood. According to the Theosophical Glossary the word Adept means: *“(lat.). Adeptus, “He Who has obtained.” In Occultism one who has reached the stage of Initiation and become a Master in the science of Esoteric philosophy.”<sup>2</sup> The same Glossary defines Mahatma as: “Lit., “great soul.” An Adept of the highest order. Exalted beings who, having attained to the mastery over their lower principles are thus living unimpeded by the “man of flesh,” and are in possession of knowledge and power commensurate with the stage they have reached in their spiritual evolution. Called in Pali Rahats and Arhats.”<sup>3</sup>*

In the Key to Theosophy Blavatsky responds to the inquirer about who the Masters of the Wisdom are:<sup>4</sup>

*“Enq. Who are they, finally, those whom you call your “Masters”? Some say they are “Spirits,” or some other kind of supernatural beings, while others call them “myths.”*

*Theo. They are neither. I once heard one outsider say to another that they were a sort of male mermaids, whatever such a creature may be. But if you listen to what people say, you will never have a true conception of them. In the first place they are living men, born as we are born, and doomed to die like every other mortal.*

*Enq. Yes, but it is rumoured that some of them are a thousand years old. Is this true?*

*Theo. As true as the miraculous growth of hair on the head of Meredith’s Shagpat. Truly, like the “Identical,” no Theosophical shaving has hitherto been able to crop it. The more we deny them, the more we try to set people right, the more absurd do the inventions become. I have heard of Methuselah being 969 years old; but, not being forced to believe in it, have laughed at the statement, for which I was forthwith regarded by many as a blasphemous heretic.*

*Enq. Seriously, though, do they outlive the ordinary age of men?*

*Theo. What do you call the ordinary age?*

1 The Theosophist, (1907), “Echoes from the past,” Journal: The Theosophist, Vol. 29 No. 1 October (1907) pg: 77.

2 Blavatsky, H.P.B., “Theosophical Glossary,” The Theosophical Publishing Society, (2006). Pg:6.

3 Blavatsky, H.P.B., “Theosophical Glossary,” The Theosophical Publishing Society, (2006). Pg:185.

4 Blavatsky, H.P.B., The Key To Theosophy,” ULT, L.A. California, (1920) pp:228-9.



*I remember reading in the Lancet of a Mexican who was almost 190 years old; but I have never heard of mortal man, layman, or Adept, who could live even half the years allotted to Methuselah. Some Adepts do exceed, by a good deal, what you would call the ordinary age; yet there is nothing miraculous in it, and very few of them care to live very long.*

*Enq. But what does the word "Mahatma" really mean?*

*Theo. Simply a "great soul," great through moral elevation and intellectual attainment. If the title of great is given to a drunken soldier like Alexander, why should we not call those "Great" who have achieved far greater conquests in Nature's secrets, than Alexander ever did on the field of battle? Besides, the term is an Indian and a very old word.*

*Enq. And why do you call them "Masters"?*

*Theo. We call them "Masters" because they are our teachers; and because from them we have derived all the Theosophical truths, however inadequately some of us may have expressed, and others understood, them. They are men of great learning, whom we term Initiates, and still greater holiness of life. They are not ascetics in the ordinary sense, though they certainly remain apart from the turmoil and strife of your western world."*

In his book *Masters and the Path* Charles

Webster Leadbeater says the following about the Masters of the Wisdom:

*"The existence of Perfected Men is one of the most important of the many new facts which Theosophy puts before us. It follows logically from the other great Theosophical teachings of karma and evolution by reincarnation. As we look round us we see men obviously at all stages of their evolution-- many far below ourselves in development, and others who in one way or another are distinctly in advance of us. Since that is so, there may well be others who are very much further advanced; indeed, if men are steadily growing better and better through a long series of successive lives, tending towards a definite goal, there should certainly be some who have already reached that goal."*<sup>5</sup>

Annie Besant in her Book "The Masters" provides a brief definition of who the Masters are according to Theosophy:

*"A Master is a term applied to denote certain human beings, who have completed their human evolution, have attained human perfection, have nothing more to learn so far as our part of the solar system is concerned, have reached what the Christians call "Salvation", and the Hindus and Buddhists "Liberation". When the Christian Church still kept "the faith once delivered to the Saints" in its fulness, salvation meant much more than escape from everlasting damnation. It meant the*

5 Leadbeater, C.W., (1927), "Masters and the Path," TPH Second Edition 1927 Chapter 1. Website: Anand Gholap: [https://www.anandgholap.net/Masters\\_And\\_Path-CWL.htm](https://www.anandgholap.net/Masters_And_Path-CWL.htm) (2024).



*release from compulsory reincarnation, safety from all possibility of failure in evolution. "To him that overcometh" was the promise that he should [48] be "a pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall go out no more". He that had overcome was "saved".*

*The Master must be in a human body, must be incarnate. Many who reach this level no longer take up the burden of the flesh, but using only "the spiritual body" pass out of touch with this earth, and inhabit only loftier realms of existence. Further, a Master – as the name implies – takes pupils, and in [49] strictness the term should only be applied to those who discharge the special function of helping men and women to tread the arduous road which takes them "by a short cut" to the summit of human evolution, far in advance of the bulk of their fellow-men. Evolution has been compared to a road winding round and round a hill in an ascending spiral, and along that road humanity slowly advances; there is a short cut to the top of the hill, straight, narrow, rugged and steep, and "few there be that find it". Those few are the pupils, or "disciples" of the Masters. As in the days of the Christ, they must "forsake all and follow Him".*

*We may take, then, as a definition of a Master: a human being who has perfected himself and has nothing more to learn on earth, who lives in a physical body on earth for the helping of man, who takes*

*pupils that desire to evolve more rapidly in order to serve it, and are willing to forsake all for this purpose.<sup>6</sup>*

### **Who are the Brotherhood of Luxor?**

Since the foundation of the Theosophical Society in 1875, the mention of the Brotherhood of Luxor has been limited to passages in different theosophical books. It must be noted that The Brotherhood of Luxor is not the same organisation called the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor which was founded in 1884<sup>7</sup> almost ten years after the foundation of the Theosophical Society.

In *Isis Unveiled* Blavatsky mentions the Brotherhood of Luxor using a reference to Masonic Author K.R.H. Mackenzie's book *The Royal Masonic Encyclopaedia*. The following is Blavatsky's footnote:

*"It is known as the Brotherhood of Luxor, and its faithful members have the custody of very important secrets of science. Its ramifications extend widely throughout the great Republic of the West. Though this brotherhood has been long and hard at work, the secret of its existence has been jealously guarded. Mackenzie describes it as having "a Rosicrucian basis, and numbering many members" ("Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia," p. 461). But, in this, the author is mistaken; it has no Rosicrucian basis. The name Luxor is primarily derived from the ancient Beloochistan city of Looksur, which lies*

6 Besant, A., (1973), "The Masters," TPH Madras, India (1973), pp:22-3.

7 Godwin, J., (1995), "The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor," Samuel Weiser Inc, NYC. (1995) pg:3.



*between Bela and Kedjee, and also gave its name to the Egyptian city.”<sup>8</sup>*

The Theosophical Glossary provides an insight into who are The Brotherhood of Luxor:

*“A certain Brotherhood of mystics. Its name had far better never been divulged, as it led a great number of well-meaning people into being deceived, and relieved of their money by certain bogus Mystic Society speculators, born in Europe, only to be exposed and fly to America. The name is derived from the ancient Lookshur in Beloochistan, lying between Bela and Kedjee. The order is very ancient and the most secret of all. It is useless to repeat that its members disclaim all connection with the “H.B. of L.”, and the tutti quanti of commercial mystics, whether from Glasgow or Boston.”<sup>9</sup>*

The Theosophical Glossary also mentions Friedrich Anton Mesmer as a member of The Brotherhood of Luxor:

*“He was an initiated member of the Brotherhoods of the Frates Lucis and of Lukshoor or (Luxor), or the Egyptian Branch of the latter. It was the Council of “Luxor” which selected him – according to the orders of the “Great Brotherhood” – to act in the XVIIIth century as their pioneer, sent in the last quarter of every century to*

*enlighten a small portion of the Western occult lore.”<sup>10</sup>*

Blavatsky Wrote an article called the Science of Magic, in it she addresses Mr. Mendenhall in response to his comments about the Brotherhood of Luxor for a journal:

*“Some time since a Mr. Mendenhall devoted several columns, in The Religio-Philosophical Journal, to questioning, cross-examining, and criticizing the mysterious Brotherhood of Luxor. He made a fruitless attempt at forcing the said Brotherhood to answer him, and thus unveil the sphinx.*

*I can satisfy Mr. Mendenhall. The Brotherhood of Luxor is one of the sections of the Grand Lodge of which I am a member. If this gentleman entertains any doubt as to my statement—which I have no doubt he will—he can, if he chooses, write to Lahore for information. If, perchance, the seven of the committee were so rude as not to answer him, and should refuse to give him the desired information, I can then offer him a little business transaction.”<sup>11</sup>*

Jinarajadasa in his book Letters from The Masters of Wisdom presented a letter sent to Colonel Olcott by One of the Adepts of the Brotherhood of Luxor. The Letter

8 Blavatsky, H.P., (1877), “Isis Unveiled,” The Theosophy Company, L.A. California. (1877) pg:309.

9 Blavatsky, H.P., (1892), “The Theosophical Glossary,” The Theosophical Publishing Society, London. (2006). Pg:178.

10 Ibid, pg: 197.

11 Blavatsky, H.P., (1981), “A Modern Panarion,” The Theosophy Company, L.A. California, U.S.A. (1981) pp:55-61.



was transcribed as the original letter was already an old and it is archived in a private estate. Jinarajadasa explains the context of the letter and explains the difference between the brotherhood of Luxor and the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, He explains that the HBL spiritual teachings come from an incompatible lineage which is not connected in any shape or form to the Brotherhood of Luxor.<sup>12</sup>

In the foreword to letter number 3 from the Brotherhood of Luxor to Colonel Olcott Jinarajadasa provides context to the letter:

*"As is well known, H.P. Blavatsky went to America at the direct command of the Masters, and, throughout all her time there, she was in constant communication with several of Them. At first, the detailed direction of her work was t;tnnder the supervision of the Egyptian Brothers, of whom the chief is the Adept Who called Himself Serapis Bey. Associated with Him were others, among whom Tuitit Bey is referred to several times by H. P. B.*

*Colonel Olcott has not mentioned anywhere the date when he received this letter from the Brotherhood of Luxor. It is evidently among the earliest letters received by him, if not the first. The envelope is addressed as follows:*

***O . G. L. pour M essager Special  
Colonel H. S. Olcott,  
au No. 7, Beekman Street, New York,  
Etats Unis d'Amerique.  
aux hons soins de Madame H. Blavatsky  
F. G. S. : R +***

*The envelope is of black glazed paper and the inscription on it is in gold ink, which is now somewhat faded. It is closed with a red seal, but the seal is not decipherable. The letter is written in gold ink on thick green paper. The letter is now in four pieces.*<sup>13</sup>

Below is the content of the letter as transcribed by Jinarajadasa:

#### ***"LETTER 3"***<sup>14</sup>

***FROM THE BROTHERHOOD OF LUXOR,  
Section the Vth, to Henry S. Olcott.***

*Brother Neophyte, we greet thee.  
He who seeks us finds us. TRY. Rest thy mind-banish all foul doubt. We keep watch over our faithful soldiers. Sister Helen is a valiant, trustworthy servant. Open thy Spirit to conviction, have faith and she will lead thee to the Golden Gate of truth. She neither fears sword nor fire but her soul is sensitive to dishonour and she hath reason to mistrust the future. Our good brother "John" hath verily acted rashly, but he meant well. Son of the World, if thou dost hear them both.*

12 Jinarajadasa, C., (1926), "Letters From The Masters of Wisdom Second Series," The Theosophical Press (1926) pp:15-16.

13 Ibid, Pg:15.

14 Jinarajadasa, C., (1926), "Letters From The Masters of Wisdom Second Series," The Theosophical Press (1926) pp:19-21.



## **TRY.**

*It is our wish to effect an opprobrious punishment on the man Child1 and through thy means, Brother. TRY.*

*David1 is honest and his heart is pure and innocent as the mind of a babe, but he is not ready physically. Thou hast many good mediums around thee, don't give up thy club.*

## **TRY.**

*Brother "John" hath brought three of our Masters to look at thee after the seance. Thy noble exertions on behalf of our cause now give us the right of letting thee know who they were:*

*SERAPIS BEY (Ellora Section)*

*POLYDORUS ISURENUS (Section of Solomon)*

*ROBERT MORE (Section of Zoroaster)*

*Sister Helen will explain thee the meaning of the Star and colors. Activity and Silence as to the present.*

*By Order of the Grand*

*TUITIT BEY*

*Observatory of Luxor.*

*Tuesday Morning.*

*Day of Mars."*

Master Serapis uses the word TRY in his letters, Jinarajadasa wrote the following about it:

*"It is characteristic of the letters written to Colonel Olcott by the Master Serapis that often He gives the exhortation "Try.""<sup>15</sup>*

According to letter 3a of the Mahatma letters to A.P. Sinnett, it is mentioned that Serapis is "the youngest of the Chohans"<sup>16</sup>

In her book "The Masters," Annie Besant mentions another Master to be living in Egypt:

*"They live in different countries, scattered over the world. The Master Jesus lives mostly in the mountains of Lebanon; the Master Hilarion in Egypt – he wears a Cretan body; the Masters M. and K. H. in Tibet, near Shigatse, both using Indian bodies; the Master Rakoczi in Hungary, but travelling much; I do not know the dwelling-places of "the Venetian" and the Master "Serapis.""<sup>17</sup>*

In C.W. Leadbeater's Book Masters and The Path he mentions Master Serapis in relation to the Brotherhood of Luxor:

*"The Master Serapis is tall, and fair in complexion. He is a Greek by birth, though all His work has been done in Egypt and in connection with the Egyptian Lodge. He*

15 Jinarajadasa, C., (1926), "Letters From The Masters of Wisdom Second Series," The Theosophical Press (1926) pp:15-16.

16 Sinnett, A.P., (2021), "The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett," Theosophical University Press, Second and Revised Edition (2021), pg:10.

17 Besant, A., (1973), "The Masters," The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras India. (1973) pg: 23.

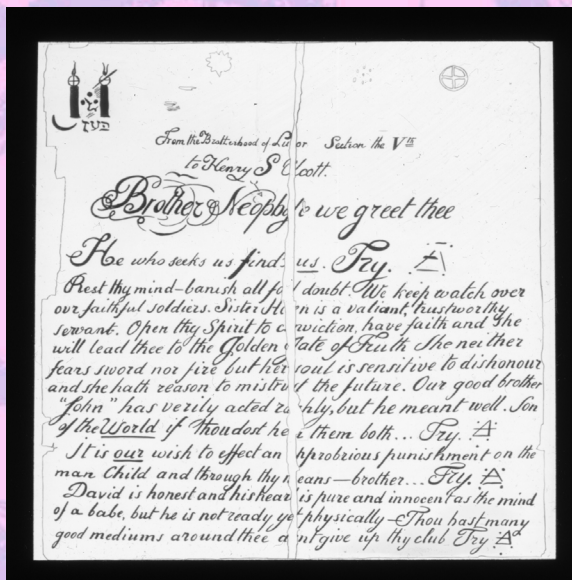


is very distinguished and ascetic in face, somewhat resembling the late Cardinal Newman."<sup>18</sup>

### Letter No. 3 in Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom, Second Series.

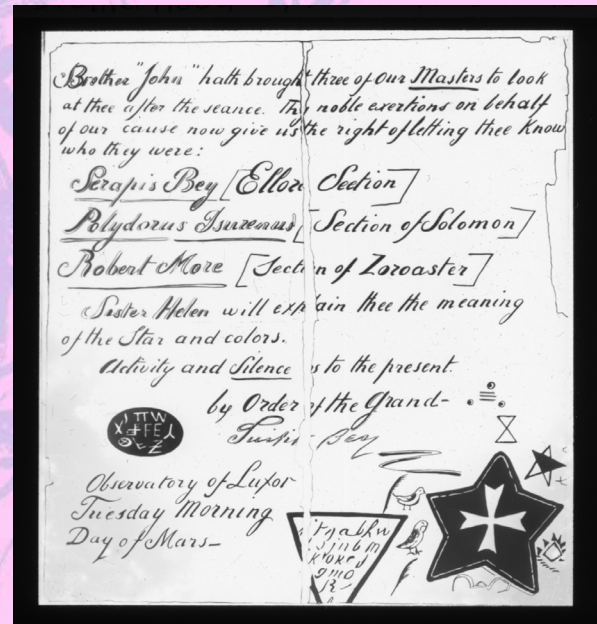


Theosophy Wiki: "Mahatma Letter to H. S. Olcott - LMW 2 No. " Website: [https://theosophy.wiki/en/Mahatma\\_Letter\\_to\\_H.\\_S.\\_Olcott\\_-\\_LMW\\_2\\_No.\\_3](https://theosophy.wiki/en/Mahatma_Letter_to_H._S._Olcott_-_LMW_2_No._3) (2024)



Theosophy Wiki: "Mahatma Letter to H. S. Olcott

- LMW 2 No. " Website: [https://theosophy.wiki/en/Mahatma\\_Letter\\_to\\_H.\\_S.\\_Olcott\\_-\\_LMW\\_2\\_No.\\_3](https://theosophy.wiki/en/Mahatma_Letter_to_H._S._Olcott_-_LMW_2_No._3) (2024).



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### Historical anecdotes about Egypt and the Egyptian adepts among Theosophists

A.P. Sinnett in his biography on Blavatsky: Incidents in the life of Madame Blavatsky recounts her contact with a Copt in Egypt:

"In Egypt, while travelling with the Countess Kisselev, Mme. Blavatsky already began to pick up some occult teaching, though of a very different and inferior order from that she acquired later. At that time there was an old Copt at Cairo, a man very well and widely known ; of considerable property and influence, and of a great reputation as a magician. The tales of wonder told about him by

<sup>18</sup> Leadbeater, C.W., (1927), "Masters and the Path," TPH Second Edition 1927 Chapter 1. Website: Anand Gholap: [https://www.anandgholap.net/Masters\\_And\\_Path-CWL.htm](https://www.anandgholap.net/Masters_And_Path-CWL.htm) (2024).



popular report were very thrilling. Mme. Blavatsky seems to have been a pupil who readily attracted his interest, and was enthusiastic in imbibing his instruction. She fell in with him again in later years, and spent some time with him at Boulak, but her acquaintance with him in the beginning did not last long, as she was only at that time in Egypt for about three months. With an English lady of rank whom she met during this period she also travelled for a time.<sup>19</sup>

In one of her trips to Egypt, Madame Blavatsky was accompanied by Charles Webster Leadbeater, in his book the inner life, he gives a recollection of the events that took place in Cairo. In his account The Brotherhood of Luxor was not mentioned, but his testimony provides evidence of her activities in Egypt:

*"In Cairo we took up our quarters in the Hotel d'Orient. Here it was that I first saw one of the members of the Brotherhood. While sitting on the floor at Madame Blavatsky's feet, sorting out some papers for her, I was startled to see standing between us a man who had not entered by the door. It was He who is now the Master D. K., though at that date He had not taken the degree which made Him an adept.*

*Our stay in Egypt with Madame Blavatsky was in many ways a most remarkable*

*experience, as she constantly told us much of the inner side of what we saw there. She had been in Egypt before, and was well acquainted with some of the officials, with the Prime Minister, Nubar Pasha, with the Russian Consul Monsieur Hitrovo, and especially with the curator of the museum, Monsieur Maspero. I remember particularly how we went through the museum with this last gentleman, and how Madame Blavatsky was able to give him a great mass of most interesting information about the various curiosities which were under his care."*<sup>20</sup>

In the same trip to Cairo 1884-1885, Isabel Cooper-Oakley reports in the Lucifer Journal the following about her experience accompanying Blavatsky around Egypt:

*"H. P. B. was a most interesting fellow-traveller, her varied information about every part of Egypt was both extensive and extraordinary. Would that I had space to go into the details of that time in Cairo, the drives through the quaint and picturesque bazaars, and her descriptions of the people and their ways. Especially interesting was one long afternoon spent at the Boulak Museum on the borders of the Nile, where H. P. B. astonished Maspero, the well-known Egyptologist, with her knowledge, and as we went through the museum she pointed out to him the grades of the Initiate kings, and*

19 Sinnett, A.P., (1886), "Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky," J.W. Bouton, 706 Broadway, London. (1886), pp:59-60.

20 Leadbeater, C.W., (1912) "The Inner Life,(Second Series) Vol 2."Website: Anand Gholap: [https://www.anandgholap.net/Inner\\_Life\\_Vol\\_II-CWL.htm](https://www.anandgholap.net/Inner_Life_Vol_II-CWL.htm) (2024).



*how they were to be known from the esoteric side.*<sup>21</sup>

In the Old Diary Leaves written by Colonel Olcott a passage can be found that provides further information about the existence of The Brotherhood of Luxor:

*"She replied that it was the wish of the Masters that it should be signed thus: "For the Committee of Seven, Brotherhood of Luxor." And so it was signed and published. She subsequently explained that our work, and much more of the same kind, was being supervised by a committee of seven Adepts belonging to the Egyptian group of the Universal Mystic Brotherhood. Up to this time she had not even seen the circular, but now I took one to her myself and she began to read it attentively. Presently she laughed, and told me to read the acrostic made by the initials of the six paragraphs. To my amazement, I found that they spelt the name under which I knew the (Egyptian) adept under whose orders I was then studying and working. Later I received a certificate, written in gold ink, on a thick green paper, to the effect that I was attached to this "Observatory," and that the three (named) Masters had me under scrutiny. This title, Brotherhood of Luxor, was pilfered by the schemers who started, several years later, the gudgeon trap called "The H.B. of L." The existence of the real Lodge is mentioned in Kenneth Mackenzie's Royal Masonic Encyclopaedia."*<sup>22</sup>

Pablo Sender in his essay titled: "Psychic Phenomena and the Early Theosophical Society," for Quest Magazine, explains certain passages from Olcott's Diary Leaves where Tuitit Bey of the Brotherhood of Luxor is mentioned by Blavatsky in connection to the early days of the Theosophical Society:

*"Under orders of "T.B." (most likely Tuitit Bey, an adept belonging to the Egyptian section of the Brotherhood) Olcott and HPB formed an organization of their own. The beginning of 1875 saw the formation of the "Miracle Club," where the phenomena of spiritualism would be studied, tested, and demonstrated. This attempt also failed, because the medium that was to be involved wanted to earn money from this endeavor, something HPB always opposed.*

*It is interesting to note that this work with the spiritualists was not so much under the guidance of the Tibetan Brotherhood (to which HPB's teacher belonged, and which would be involved in the future TS), but under the Egyptian "Brotherhood of Luxor." Some Theosophical authors suggest that this Brotherhood is connected with the fourth Root Race and its methods, which were principally psychic and theurgic. (Theurgy is a higher kind of spiritualism whereby the practitioner gets in touch with higher beings, especially with the aim of uniting with the divine.)*

21 Cooper-Oakley, I., (1891), "At Cairo and Madras," Journal: Lucifer Vol. VIII No. 46, London June (1891) pg:278.

22 Olcott, H.S., (1895), "Old Diary Leaves," G.P. Putman's Sons, Madras, (1895) pp: 75-76.



*These adepts are also said to have been behind the revival of spiritualism in the middle of the nineteenth century.*<sup>23</sup>

There is a posthumous publication by Theosophist Geoffrey Hodson, called *Light of The Sanctuary* published in 1988. This book is a compilation of diary notes and other papers Mr. Hodson left for publication. In it he mentions to have been in contact with the Brotherhood of Luxor and to have been under the guidance of Master Polidorus Isurenus, a member of the Egyptian lodge first mentioned in Letter 3 published by Jinarajadasa in *The Letters of The Masters of The Wisdom*.

## Conclusion

Blavatsky's Himalayan Masters are the most known of the Great Brotherhood, but in the research presented here, it can be noted that she was accompanied by Master's from the different lodges that are scattered across the world. Blavatsky visited Egypt several times, in each trip she met one of her Master's there and met other acquaintances that moved in the occult circles she frequented when visiting Cairo and Alexandria. If one looks carefully at Blavatsky's life and writings it can be concluded that for her to have been able to set up the Theosophical Society she had to study the teachings and mysteries of all ages and civilisations, and for this to have occurred she must have had a pure heart and an open mind. Blavatsky's connection to Egypt

is important but more so because of her membership to The Brotherhood of Luxor. Blavatsky's life and work is similar to the life of the Freemasonic Grand Copt Count Cagliostro who also visited Egypt and was under the guidance of the Adepts, one of his masters was connected to the Egyptian Lodge and another adept was from the Himalayan Lodge. It is unknown if The Brotherhood of Luxor is still operational or if its in abeyance.

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23 Sender, P., (2012), "Psychic Phenomena and the Early Theosophical Society," *Quest* 100, 3. (summer 2012) pg: 95-97.



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"Everywhere in God's workshop of the world, Master-Painters, Master-Singers, Master-Sculptors, Master-Builders at work. Sun-Light the common material. Sun-Light fashioned into forms - colour-forms, sound-forms, forms of every kind; but all Sun-Light. And we are apprentices to these Masters of Crafts, and fashion after them in our childish ways. Yet we, too, are some day to become Master-Craftsmen, Masters of the Light in the future as we are children of the Light to-day. From darkness our [20] Masters of the Light lead us to the Light, from the darkness and colour-divisions of unconscious divinity into the pure white radiance of Divine Self-Consciousness."

G. Arundale, NIRVANA A Study in Synthetic Consciousness.



The Light of Luxor Magazine  
Independent Theosophical Magazine Volume VII  
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Website: <https://lightofluxor.com>  
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