

She Being Dead Yet Speaketh

(In the will of the late H. P. Blavatsky was made the request that her friends should assemble on the anniversary of her death and read passages from the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *Light of Asia*. This was accordingly done on May 8th, in Adyar, London, New York, and other places. In New York, among other interesting items reported at the time, Mrs. J. Campbell Keightley read, after a few introductory remarks, extracts from the private letters of H.P.B. In response to many requests we print these as follows. The remarks, being extemporaneous, are quoted from memory.)

MR. PRESIDENT, FRIENDS:

This being the first occasion upon which I have ever spoken in public, I will ask you to condone my inexperience while I make a few remarks upon the extracts chosen from the letters of Madame Blavatsky to a few friends.

In regard to Mme. Blavatsky, the world, to use a phrase of Charles Lamb, was "the victim of imperfect sympathies." It failed to know her; that failure was its own great loss. Among the many accusations flung at her was one which, at the last ditch, it never failed to make; it said that Mme. Blavatsky had no Moral Ideal. This was false.

She had this ideal; she had also the Eastern reverence for an ideal – a reverence to the Western world unknown. We might hence expect to find her teaching that Ideal to a great extent under the privacy of a pledge, and there are indications of this in all that has been published concerning the Esoteric School. That her ideal was ever present to her mind and heart these extracts from private letters to her friends will show.

Her main teachings can be reduced to the following propositions:

That Morals have a basis in Law and in fact.

That Moral Law *is* Natural Law.

That Evolution makes for Righteousness.

That the "fundamental identity of all souls with the Oversoul" renders moral contagion possible through the subtle psychic medium.

That the Spiritual Identity of all Being renders Universal Brotherhood the only possible path for truth-seeking men.

She distrusted the appeal to sentiment. She saw that existing religions fail in it; that modern civilization frustrates it; that emotionalism is no basis for the Will which annuls all temptations of the flesh, and the Faith which shall make mountains move.

Hence she taught the *scientific* aspect and bearing of sin. Taught that Universal Law, in every department, rigidly opposes and avenges the commission of sin,

showing the free will of man counterbalanced by the declaration "Vengeance is mine, saith the *Law*; I will repay." She taught that the awful responsibility of the occultist, extending down to the least atom of substance, forever forbade our asking that question of Cain which we do ask daily – "Am I my Brother's keeper?" She taught that the deep reply reverberated down the ages, as we may read it in our bibles: "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground."

Justice she taught, and the true discrimination of it; Mercy, too, and Love. She wrote of one: "He has developed an extraordinary hatred to me, but I have loved him too much to hate him." Above all she taught that "the pure in heart see God"; taught it as a scientific fact; showed it to be, so to say, materially as well as spiritually possible through the spiritual laws working in the one Substance, and, in the showing, lifted our courage higher than the visible stars.

The first of these extracts from H.P.B.'s letters is dated Nov. 29, 1878, and is interesting from the fact that it speaks of the original institution of three degrees of the T.S., a fact often disputed in these later days.

You will find the aims and purposes of the Theosophical Society in the two inclosed circulars. It is a brotherhood of humanity, established to make away with all and every dogmatic religion founded on dead-letter interpretation, and to teach people and every member to believe but in one impersonal God; to rely upon his (man's) own powers; to consider himself his only saviour; to learn the infinitude of the occult psychological powers hidden within his own physical man; to develop these powers; and to give him the assurance of the immortality of his divine spirit and the survival of his soul; to make him regard every man of whatever race, color, or creed, and to prove to him that the only truths revealed to man by superior men (not a god) are contained in the Vedas of the ancient Aryas of India. Finally, to demonstrate to him that there never were, will be, nor are, any miracles; that there can be nothing 'supernatural' in this universe, and that on earth, at least, the only god is man himself.

"It lies within his powers to become and to continue a god after the death of his physical body. Our society receives nothing the possibility of which it cannot demonstrate at will. We believe in the phenomena, but we disbelieve in the constant intervention of 'spirits' to produce such phenomena. We maintain that the embodied spirit has more powers to produce them than a disembodied one. We believe in the existence of spirits, but of many classes, the human spirits being but one class of the many.

"The Society requires of its members but the time they can give it without encroaching upon that due to their private affairs. There are three degrees of membership. It is but

in the highest or third that members have to devote themselves quasi entirely to the work of the T.S. . . .

"Everyone is eligible, provided he is an honest, pure man or woman, no free lover, and especially no *bigoted* Christian. We go dead against idolatry, and as much against materialism."

"Of the two unpardonable sins, the first is Hypocrisy – Pecksniffianism. Better one hundred mistakes through unwise, injudicious sincerity and indiscretion than Tartuffe-like *saintship* as the whitened sepulchre, and rottenness and decay within. . . . This is not unpardonable, but very dangerous, . . . doubt, eternal wavering – it leads one to wreck. . . . One little period passed without doubt, murmuring, and despair; what a gain it would be; a period a mere tith of what every one of us has had to pass through. But every one forges his own destiny."

"Those who fall off from our *living* human Mahatmas to fall into the *Saptarishi* – the Star Rishis, are no Theosophists."

"Allow me to quote from a very esoterically wise and exoterically foolish book, the work and production of some ancient friends and foes: 'There is more joy in the Kingdom of Heaven for one repentant sinner than for ninety-nine saints.' . . . Let us be just and give to Caesar what is Caesar's, however imperfect, even vicious, Caesar may be. 'Blessed be the peacemakers,' said another old adept of 107 years B.C., and the saying is alive and kicks to the present day amongst the MASTERS."

"The Esoteric Section is to be a School for earnest Theosophists who would learn more (than they can from published works) of the true Esoteric tenets. . . . There is no room for despotism or ruling in it; no money to pay or make; no glory for me, but a series of misconceptions, slanders, suspicions, and ingratitude in almost an immediate future: ¹ but if out of the . . . Theosophists who have already pledged themselves I can place on the right and true path half a dozen or so, I will die happy. Many are called, few are chosen. Unless they comply with the lines you speak of, traced originally by the Masters, they *cannot* succeed. ² I can only show the way to those whose eyes are open to the truth, whose souls are full of altruism, charity, and love for the whole creation, and who think of themselves *last*. The blind . . . will never profit by these teachings. They would make of the 'strait gate' a large public thoroughfare leading not to the Kingdom of Heaven, now and hereafter, to the Buddha-Christos in the Sanctuary of our innermost souls, but to their own idols with feet of clay. . . . The Esoteric Section is not of the earth, earthy; it does not interfere with the exoteric administration of Lodges; takes no stock in *external Theosophy*; has no officers or staff; needs no halls or meeting rooms. . . . Finally, it requires neither subscription fees nor money, for 'as I have not so received it, I *shall* not so impart it,' and that I would rather starve in the gutter than take one penny for my teaching of the sacred truths. . . . Here I am with perhaps a few years or a few months only (Master knoweth) to remain on earth in this loathsome, old, ruined body; and I am ready to answer the call of any good Theosophist who *works for*

Theosophy on the lines traced by the Masters, and as ready as the Rosicrucian pelican to feed with my heart's blood the chosen 'Seven.' He who would have his inheritance before I die . . . let him ask first. What I have, or rather what I am permitted to give, I will give."

"Many are called but few are chosen. Well, no need breaking my heart over spilt milk. Come what may, I shall die at my post, Theosophical banner in hand, and while I live I *do* fervently hope that all the splashes of mud thrown at it will reach me personally. At any rate I mean to continue protecting the glorious truth with my old carcass so long as it lasts. And when I do drop down for good, I hope in such Theosophists as . . . and . . . to carry on the work and protect the banner of Truth in their turn. Oh, I do feel so sick at heart in looking round and perceiving nothing save selfishness, personal vanity, and mean little ambitions. What is this about 'the soldier not being free'?³ Of course no soldier can be free to move about his physical body wherever he likes. But what has the esoteric teaching to do with the outward man? A soldier may be stuck to his sentry box like a barnacle to its ship, and the soldier's Ego be free to go where it likes and think what it likes best. . . . No man is required to carry a burden heavier than he can bear; nor do more than it is possible for him to do. A man of means, independent and free from any duty, will have to move about and go, missionary-like, to teach Theosophy to the Sadducees and the Gentiles of Christianity. A man tied by his duty to one place has no right to desert it in order to fulfill another duty, let it be however much greater; for the first *duty* taught in Occultism is to do one's duty unflinchingly *by every duty*. Pardon these seemingly absurd paradoxes and Irish Bulls; but I have to repeat this *ad nauseam usque* for the last month. 'Shall I risk to be ordered to leave my wife, desert my children and home if I pledge myself?' asks one. 'No,' I say, 'because he who plays truant in one thing will be faithless in another. No real, genuine MASTER will accept a chela who sacrifices *anyone* except himself to go to that Master.' If one cannot, owing to circumstances or his position in life, become a full adept in this existence, let him prepare his mental luggage for the next, so as to be ready at the first call when he is once more reborn. What one has to do before he pledges himself irretrievably is, to probe one's nature to the bottom, for self-discipline is based on self-knowledge. It is said somewhere that self-discipline often leads one to a state of self-confidence which becomes vanity and pride in the long run. I say, foolish is the man who says so. This may happen only when our motives are of a worldly character or selfish; otherwise, self-confidence is the first step to that kind of WILL which will make a mountain move: 'To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou can'st not then be false to any man.'

The question is whether Polonius meant this for worldly wisdom or for occult knowledge; and by 'own self' the *false Ego* (or the terrestrial personality) or that spark in us which is but the reflection of the 'One Universal Ego.'

But I am dreaming. I had but four hours' sleep. . . . Give my sincere, fraternal respects to . . . and let him try to feel my old hand giving him the *Master's grip*, the strong grip of the Lion's paw of Punjab (not of the tribe of Judah) across the Atlantic. To you my eternal affection and gratitude.

– Your H.P.B."

"To live like cats and dogs in the T.S. is *positively* against all rules – and wishes of 'the Masters,' as against our Brotherhood – so-called – and all its rules. THEY are disgusted. THEY look on, and in that look (oh Lord! if you could only see it as I have!) there's an ocean deep of sad disgust, contempt, and sorrow. . . . The ideal was besmeared with mud, but as it is no golden idol on feet of clay it stands to this day immovable . . . and what the profane see is only their own mud thrown with their own hands, and which has created a veil, an impassable barrier between them and the ideal . . . without touching the latter. . . . Have a large Society, the more the better; all that is chaff and husk is bound to fall away in time; all that is grain will remain. But the *seed is* in the bad and evil man as well as in the good ones, – only it is more difficult to call into life and cause it to germinate. The good husbandman does not stop to pick out the seeds from the handful. He gives them all their chance, and even some of the half-rotten seeds come to life when thrown into good soil. Be that soil. . . . Look at me – the universal Theosophical manure – the rope for whose hanging and lashing is made out of the flax I have sown, and each strand it is twisted of represents a 'mistake' (so-called) of mine. Hence, if you fail only nine times out of ten in your selections you are successful one time out of ten – and that's more than many other Theosophists can say. . . . Those few true souls will be the nucleus for future success, and their children will. . . . Let us sow good – and if evil crops up, it will be blown away by the wind like all other things in this life – in its time."

"I am the Mother and the Creator of the Society; it has my magnetic fluid, and the child has inherited all of its parent's physical, psychical, and spiritual attributes – faults and virtues if any. Therefore I alone and to a degree . . . can serve as a lightning conductor of Karma for it. I was asked whether I was willing, when on the point of dying – and I said Yes – for it was the only means to save it. Therefore I consented to live – which in my case means to suffer physically during twelve hours of the day – mentally twelve hours of night, when I get rid of the physical shell. . . . It is true about the Kali Yuga. Once that I have offered myself as the goat of atonement, the Kali Yuga⁴ recognizes its own – whereas any other would shrink from such a thing – as I am doomed and overburdened in this life worse than a poor weak donkey full of sores made to drag up hill a cart load of heavy rocks. You are the *first* one to whom I tell it, because you force me into the confession. . . . You have a wide and noble prospect before you if you do not lose patience. . . . Try to hear the small voice within."

"Yes, there are 'two persons' in me. But what of that? So there are two in you; only mine is conscious and responsible – and yours is not. So you are happier than I am.

I *know you* sympathise with me, and you do so because you feel that I have always stood up for you, and will do so to the bitter or the happy end – as the case may be."

"He may be moved to doubt – and that is the beginning of wisdom."

"Well, sir, and my *only friend*, the crisis is nearing. I am ending my *Secret Doctrine*, and you *are* going to replace me, or take my place in America. I *know you will have success* if you do not lose heart; but do, do remain true to the Masters and *Their* Theosophy and the *names*. . . . May *They* help you and allow us to send you our best blessings. . . ."

"There are traitors, conscious and *unconscious*. There is falsity and there is injudiciousness. . . . Pray do not imagine that because *I hold my tongue as bound by my oath and duty* I do not know who is who. . . . I must say nothing, however much I may be disgusted. But as the ranks thin around us, and one after the other our best intellectual forces depart, to turn into bitter enemies, I say – Blessed are the pure-hearted who have only intuition – for intuition is better than intellect."

"The duty, – let alone happiness – of every Theosophist – and especially Esotericist – is certainly to help others to carry their burden; but no Theosophist or other has the right to sacrifice himself unless *he knows for a certainty* that by so doing he helps some one and does not sacrifice himself in vain for the empty glory of the abstract virtue. . . . Psychic and vital energy are limited in every man. It is like a capital. If you have a dollar a day and spend two, at the end of the month you will have a deficit of \$30."

"One refuses to pledge himself not to listen without protest to any evil thing said of a brother – as though Buddha our divine Lord – or Jesus – or any great initiate has ever condemned any one on hearsay. Ah, poor, poor, blind man, not to know the difference between condemning in words – which is uncharitable – and withdrawing in silent pity from the culprit and thus punishing him, but still giving him a chance to repent of his ways. No man will ever speak ill of his brother without cause and proof of the iniquity of that brother, and he will abstain from all backbiting, slandering, and gossip. No man should ever say behind a Brother's back what he would not say openly to his face. Insinuations against one's neighbor are often productive of more evil consequences than gross slander. Every Theosophist has to fight and battle against evil, – but he must have the courage of his words and actions, and what he does must be done openly and honestly before all."

"Every pledge or promise unless built upon four pillars – absolute sincerity, unflinching determination, unselfishness of purpose, and *moral power*, which makes the fourth support and equipoises the three other pillars – is an insecure building. The pledges of those who are sure of the strength of the fourth alone are recorded."

"Are you children, that you want marvels? Have you so little faith as to need constant stimulus, as a dying fire needs fuel! . . . Would you let the nucleus of a splendid Society die under your hands like a sick man under the hands of a quack? . . . You should never forget what a solemn thing it is for us to exert our powers and raise the dread sentinels that lie at the threshold. They cannot hurt us, but they can avenge themselves by

precipitating themselves upon the unprotected neophyte. You are all like so many children playing with fire because it is pretty, when you ought to be men studying philosophy for its own sake."

"If among you there was one who embodied in himself the idea depicted, it would be my duty to relinquish the teacher's chair to him. For it would be the extreme of audacity in me to claim the possession of so many virtues. That the MASTERS do in proportion to their respective temperaments and stages of Bodhisatvic development possess such Paramitas, constitutes their right to our reverence as our Teachers. It should be the aim of each and all of us to strive with all the intensity of our natures to follow and imitate Them. . . . Try to realize that progress is made step by step, and each step gained by *heroic* effort. Withdrawal means despair or timidity. . . . Conquered passions, like slain tigers, can no longer turn and rend you. Be hopeful then, not despairing. With *each* morning's awakening try to live through the day in harmony with the Higher Self. 'Try' is the battle-cry taught by the teacher to each pupil. Naught else is *expected* of you. *One who does his best does all that can be asked.* There is a moment when even a Buddha ceases to be a sinning mortal and takes his first step toward Buddhahood. The sixteen Paramitas (virtues) are not for priests and yogis alone, as said, but stand for models for us all to strive after – and neither priest nor yogi, Chela nor Mahatma, ever attained all at once. . . . The idea that sinners and not saints are expected to enter the Path is emphatically stated in the *Voice of the Silence.*"

"I do not believe in the success of the . . . T.S. unless you assimilate *Master* or myself; unless you work with me and THEM, hand in hand, heart. . . . Yes; let him who offers himself to Masters as a chela, unreservedly, . . . let him do what *he can* if he would ever see Them. . . . Then things were done *because I alone was responsible for the issues.* I alone had to bear Karma in case of failure and *no reward* in case of success. . . . I saw the T.S. would be smashed or that I *had to offer myself as the Scapegoat for atonement.* It is the latter I did. The T.S. lives, – I am *killed.* Killed in my honor, fame, name, in everything H.P.B. held near and dear, for this body is MINE and I feel acutely through it. . . . I may err in my powers as H.P.B. I have not worked and toiled for forty years, playing parts, risking my future reward, and taking karma upon this unfortunate appearance to serve Them without being permitted to have some voice in the matter. H.P.B. is not infallible. H.P.B. is an old, rotten, sick, worn-out body, but it is the best I can have in this cycle. Hence follow the path I show, the Masters that are behind – and do not follow me or my PATH. When I am dead and gone in this body, then will you know the whole truth. Then will you know that I have *never, never,* been false to any one, nor have I deceived anyone, but had many a time to allow them to deceive themselves, for I had no right to interfere with their Karma. . . . Oh ye foolish blind moles, all of you; who is able to offer himself in sacrifice as I did!"

The Path, June, July, August, 1892

H. P. Blavatsky

¹ Dated December 1, 1888. Subsequent events proved the prediction true.

² Her correspondent had quoted the Simla letter of "K.H." in *The Occult World*.

³ Referring to the dilemma of an F.T.S. soldier in the army, presented to her.

⁴ *Kali Yuga* – the Dark Age, the present cycle.