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THEOSOPHY AND THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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Introduction

This the first publication of the Theosophical History Centre, formed in 1985 and attached to the English Section of the Theosophical Society whose headquarters are in Adyar, India. Members of the Centre may expect to receive its publications free at regular intervals in the years ahead. (For details of membership, see cover).

We are very pleased that Professor Santucci is the author of our first paper. He is one of a growing number of academics who are now exploring the history and significance of Theosophy. In 1983-4 he taught a course for credit on Theosophical History in California State University, a course that is unique in the English-speaking world. We hope that this paper will be a valuable teaching aid for students of Theosophy elsewhere, not least because of its bibliography. He conveys something of the wide scope and cultural impact of Theosophy. He shows too how, for better or worse, the original impulse fragmented into many groups and variant teachings, in the manner of other revelations before us. Particularly interesting is his discussion of the origins of the T.S., a vexed question but of great importance.

Leslie Price

On this the 25th anniversary of California State University, Fullerton, it is particularly noteworthy to announce a highly unusual course offering introduced in the Spring, 1984 semester under the auspices of the Department of Religious Studies senior seminar on contemporary religious topics: "Theosophy and the Theosophical Society." To my knowledge, it is the first time that this subject has been offered on an American university campus, a rather surprising fact taking into account the influence that the Theosophical Society has had on American culture and South Asian political history. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to introduce the reader to those areas in which the Society has had an influence. Furthermore, an account of the meaning of the term "theosophy" will be provided, as well as the circumstances that led to the formation of the Theosophical Society on November 17, 1875 and the objects that the Society strives to achieve.

THEOSOLOGY: Meaning

Theosophy "wisdom concerning God or things divine"¹ or "Divine Wisdom"² is not a term unique to the Theosophical Society or to Madame Blavatsky. According to the latter, it is a term that has been in circulation from the time of Ammonius Saccas and his disciples³ in the third century C.E.; according to the Oxford English Dictionary. It first appears in Pseudo-Dionysius, that is, in a work that has been ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Paul's first Athenian convert: Mystical Theology.⁴ Be it as it may, the term was revived in the seventeenth century "to denote a kind of speculation . . . which sought, usually by the doctrine of the macrocosm and microcosm, to derive from the knowledge of God contained in sacred books, or traditions mystically interpreted, a profounder knowledge and control of nature than could be obtained by the methods of the Aristotelian or other current philosophy."⁵

Theosophy, therefore, was nothing new, nor was it ever presented as a novel doctrine by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. Though universal in the sense that it was "once known in every ancient country having claim to civilization,"⁶ it is in its "pure" form an esoteric or secret teaching, mainly because the vast majority of humanity was not capable or ready to receive such a "gnosis."⁷ On the other hand, the esoteric teaching can be partially known from "comparative study and analysis"⁸ of the historical religions which, however imperfect, corrupt, obscure or allegorical their teachings, a common thread or "melody" can be discerned amid their distinctiveness.⁹ With regard to its antiquity, it has been claimed by H.P.B. that theosophical teaching has been traced to the pre- or early Ptolemaic Egyptian priest Pot-Amun¹⁰,

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who first taught it to the uninitiated;¹¹ yet, it is much older than this ascribed period, especially if theosophy is considered the source of the historical religions. The Master K.H. (Koot Hoomi) has written: ". . . this Theosophy [as presented in the Theosophical Society] is no new candidate for the world's attention, but only the re-statement of principles which have been recognized from the very infancy of mankind."¹² Or to state the above in a more direct manner:

. . . all the great minds of the past enunciated the same wisdom-doctrine, the same theosophy, which was originally taught to the first self-conscious human beings on this earth by manasaputric entities from other planes . . . 13

Thus the Wisdom of the Ages existed from the dawn of Humanity,¹⁴ preserved and transmitted by initiates from its inception to the present. Theosophists will include among these initiates the Buddha, Plato, Pythagoras, Jesus, St. Paul, Porphyry, Proclus, and Patañjali to name but a few.¹⁵ And it is to the Veda, the Upanisads, the Bhagavad Gītā, the Purānas, the Zohar, the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, the Buddhist Canon, the Avesta, and Neo-Platonic literature that the theosophist will find confirmation of the universality of the Esoteric Wisdom.¹⁶

This primordial, gnostic, universal teaching -- called The Theosophical Movement¹⁷ -- was "restated" and made public by Madame Blavatsky and the Society she helped found: The Theosophical Society.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY: Foundations

The Inaugural Address of the first President of the Theosophical Society, Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907) begins with the following words:

"In future times, when the impartial historian shall write an account of the progress of religious ideas in the present century, the formation of this Theosophical Society, whose first meeting under its formal declaration of principles we are now attending, will not pass unnoticed. 18

That the Theosophical Society has not passed unnoticed in the last and present centuries is a very true, if understated, remark in more ways than Col. Olcott imagined. The origins of the Society center around the personages of a Russian mystic (H.P.B.), an American agriculturalist (Olcott), and Irish-American lawyer (William Quan Judge),¹⁹ and a group of upper middle-class Americans with interests in spiritualism, occultism, and psychic phenomena.²⁰ Spiritualism, in fact, was a subject of considerable interest in the United States since 1848, when the Fox sisters, teenaged daughters of a Methodist farmer, first heard mysterious rappings in their home. Modern spiritualism received its birth from these events precisely because communication with the dead was purported to have been achieved.²¹ There

can be no denying the fact that the Theosophical Society was established at least partly out of an interest in Spiritualism. Madame Blavatsky contributed many articles and letters defending spiritualist phenomena in 1874 and 1875.²² Colonel Olcott likewise had an abiding "fascination for the occult and mystical" as well as for spiritualist phenomena.²³ The two in fact became acquainted in Chittenden, Vermont, at which time the Colonel was writing accounts for The New York Daily Graphic of spiritualist phenomena seemingly produced by William and Horatio Eddy at their farmhouse.²⁴ Within one year of their first meeting (October 14, 1874),²⁵ the Theosophical Society was for all intents and purposes established.

The creation of the Society would indicate that modern Spiritualism was somehow inadequate to both Blavatsky and Olcott. Indeed, H.P.B. made an about-face toward spiritualist phenomena, the raison d'être of Modern Spiritualism on account of the nature of such phenomena. Kuhn²⁶ puts it quite well:

Madame Blavatsky's apparently double-faced attitude toward spiritualism is reflected in the posture of most Theosophists toward the same subject today. When Spiritualism, as a demonstration of the possibility and actuality of spiritistic phenomena, is attacked by materialists or unbelievers, they at once bristle in its defense; when it is a question of the reliability and value of the messages, or the dignity and wholesomeness of the seance procedure, they respond negatively. 27

This attitude is first revealed, in my opinion, in her Scrapbook,²⁸ written most likely in November, 1874. By 1877 with the publication of Isis Unveiled, her attitude becomes much clearer.²⁹ Without going into details, suffice it to say that "spirits" do not represent the "true selfhood" of once-living human beings, nor does Spiritualism have any suitable philosophy.³⁰ As Olcott wrote (on behalf of the Brotherhood of Luxor)³¹:

The leading spiritual papers are of necessity compelled to devote most of their space to communications of a trivial and purely personal character In England the London Spiritualist, and in France the Revue Spirite, present to us examples of . . . papers which devote more space to the discussion of principles, the teaching of philosophy, and the display of conservative critical ability 32

Almost three years later (February 8, 1878), H.P.B. wrote that "Spiritualism must either be a true philosophy, amenable to the tests of the recognized criterion of logic, or be set up in its niche beside the broken idols of hundreds of antecedent Christian sects."³³

The evidence, therefore, points to H.P.B. not rejecting Spiritualism³⁴ nor seeking to destroy the discoveries of spiritualists vis-à-vis phenomena, but rather providing the

philosophical -- or better, Occult -- underpinnings of the movement. Such is the import of her statement that Occultism or Magic is the cause, Spiritualism the effect, that it is also the Infinite to Spiritualism's finiteness, and the Unity to Spiritualism's multifariousness.³⁵ The article containing these words ("A Few Questions to 'Hiraf'") was H.P.B.'s "first Occult Shot"³⁶ as she aptly put it. Occultism, also known as the Esoteric Science, refers here to the hidden laws of the Universe in the broadest terms from the "physical, psychical, mental, and spiritual"³⁷ microcosm to the "origin and destiny"³⁸ of the macrocosm.³⁹

The formulation of the proposition that Occultism lay at the heart of Spiritualism served, in my opinion, as a major impetus in the decision to establish an organization that accepted the validity of spiritualist phenomena by seeking to provide a scientific basis for it. It was to such an end that between July and September of 1875 a group of individuals interested in occult matters gathered at Madame Blavatsky's apartment to share their ideas and insights.⁴⁰ Among those who attended was an engineer and architect with an interest in Egyptology, George H. Felt.⁴¹

On September 7, 1875, Mr. Felt gave a lecture entitled "The Lost Canon of Proportion of the Egyptians" in H.P.B.'s apartment at 46 Irving Place, New York. Colonel Olcott's recollection of the lecture is as follows:

Mr. Felt told us in his lecture that, while making his Egyptological studies, he had discovered that the old Egyptian priests were adepts of magical science, had the power to evoke and employ the spirits of the elements, and had left the formularies on record; he had deciphered and put them to the test, and had succeeded in evoking the elementals. He was willing to aid some persons of the right sort to test the system for themselves, and would exhibit the nature-spirits to us all in the course of a series of lectures, for which we were to pay him. 42

An "animated discussion" resulted following the lecture, during the course of which Colonel Olcott wrote a short note, which he passed on to H.P.B., suggesting the organization of a society dedicated to the investigation of subjects such as those elucidated in Mr. Felt's lecture.⁴³

Following the discussion, Colonel Olcott introduced his "plan to organize a society of occultists and begin at once to collect a library, and diffuse information concerning those secret laws of nature which were so familiar to the Chaldeans and Egyptians" ⁴⁴

The passages appearing in Mrs. Hardinge-Britten's book (Nineteenth Century Miracles), in the Old Diary Leaves cited above and in the minutes of a meeting the following night (September 8) leave no doubt that it was Colonel Olcott who first proposed the founding of a Society for the purposes already

mentioned. I stress this fact because we find a contradictory account given by Mrs. Besant in 1893:

It was America to which H.P. Blavatsky was sent to find Colonel H.S. Olcott, her future co-worker, and it was there that in the autumn of 1875 she saw the time was ripe for founding the Society which was to be charged with the duty of spreading the Eastern thought. She has told me herself how her Master bade her find it, and how at His bidding she wrote the suggestion of starting it on a slip of paper and gave it to W. Q. Judge to pass to Colonel Olcott. . . . 45

Yet in the minutes of the September 8th meeting, the Recording Secretary, William Quan Judge, indicates at the inception of the record that such was not the case:

In consequence of a proposal of Col. Henry S. Olcott that a Society be formed for the study and elucidation of Occultism, the Cabala &c, the ladies and gentlemen then and there present resolved themselves into a meeting and, upon motion of Mr. W. Q. Judge it was Resolved, that Col. H. S. Olcott take the chair. 46

The evidence, therefore, clearly points to Colonel Olcott first broaching the subject of forming a society at the September 7th gathering. In the ensuing meetings between September 8 and November 17, the latter being the inaugural date of the Theosophical Society, Madame Blavatsky was noticeably silent. In fact, the only mention of her in the minutes was in regard to her presence, as was the case in the September 8th and October 16th meetings, or to her selection as Corresponding Secretary for the new Society in the October 30th meeting. Yet, we must acknowledge the theosophical conviction, aptly worded by Mrs. Besant, that Madame Blavatsky was the true founder.⁴⁷ Stated succinctly, H.P.B. was the "immediate agent"⁴⁸ of her Masters, those highly evolved humans who served as her Teachers of the esoteric doctrine, who was sent by them as their messenger to impart the doctrine to the world.⁴⁹ Thus, in her Scrapbook (vol. I, p. 58) dated July, 1875, she writes: "Orders received from India direct to establish a philosophico-religious Society and choose a name for it -- also to choose Olcott."⁵⁰ This passage is the prime evidence in Madame Blavatsky's role in the formation of the Society.⁵¹ Whatever one makes of the evidence that is available to us, the historian must be mindful that it is neither consistent nor copious; therefore, not ironclad. As such, conclusions and opinions must be left somewhat open with regard to this period of time.

The period from September 7 to November 17, 1875 has been somewhat confused in the minds of theosophists and commentators alike. The number and dates of meetings are sometimes inaccurately reported; in addition, one prominent scholar proposes a date for the birth of the Theosophical Society that carries no significance whatsoever.⁵²

The source of the confusion surrounding the dates and number of meetings in the above-mentioned period lies with John Storer Cobb, the Recording Secretary of the September 13th meeting, and Colonel Olcott himself. An examination of the handwritten minutes reveal that Mr. Cobb recorded the wrong date of the meeting: Monday, September 18, instead of the actual date September 13.⁵³ This latter date was also indicated to be the proposed time for the second meeting⁵⁴ (following the September 8th meeting) in the minutes of the September 8th meeting. Colonel Olcott accepted the September 18th date as the second meeting on page 126 of his Old Diary Leaves (Volume I), yet reproduced a letter he wrote, dated October 13, 1875, that included the correct date of the meeting: September 13.⁵⁵ Using Olcott as his prime source, Alvin Kuhn recorded both the September 13th date (from the September 8th minutes) and mentioned in the very next line a lecture that Mr. Felt gave on September 18, implying, at least to this reader, two meetings (the 13th and 18th).⁵⁶ He also mentions, incidentally, that following the September meetings "several October meetings were held in furtherance of the Society"⁵⁷ when just two were held: October 16th and 30th.

Summarizing the evidence taken from the minutes of the meetings between September 8 and November 17, 1875, we can state with certainty that five meetings were held: September 8th and 13th, October 16th and 30th, and November 17th.

The September 8th meeting gave formal conception to Colonel Olcott's suggestion of the previous evening. In addition to the quote taken from minutes of this meeting given above, it was resolved that a constitution and by-laws be drafted by committee.⁵⁸

The September 13th meeting saw the continuation of Mr. Felt's lecture from September 7th (or 8th, according to the minutes of the September 13th meeting taken down by Mr. Cobb)⁵⁹ and the naming of the Society as "The Theosophical Society." The individual responsible for the suggestion that "Theosophy" be applied to the new Society was Charles Sotheran, a prominent author, newspaper editor, Mason, and Rosicrucian.⁶⁰

The October meetings of the 16th and 30th were concerned mainly with the preamble and by-laws.⁶¹ At the meeting held on October 30th, the by-laws were adopted and it was resolved that the preamble was to be completed by a committee composed of Colonel Olcott, Mr. Sotheran, and Mr. Cobb. The officers of the Society were also chosen with Colonel Olcott as President, G. Felt and Seth Pancoast as Vice-Presidents, H.P.B. as Corresponding Secretary, John Cobb as Recording Secretary, Henry J. Newton as Treasurer, Charles Sotheran as Librarian, Rev. J. H. Wiggin, R. B. Westbrook, Mrs. Hardinge-Britten, Dr. C. E. Simmons and H. D. Monchesi as Councillors, and William Q. Judge as Counsel to the Society.

Finally, on Wednesday, November 17 the Society met at Mott

Memorial Hall on 64 Madison Avenue, where the President delivered his Inaugural Address.⁶² With the Address delivered and the constitutional work completed, the Society was "thus fully constituted."⁶³ As such, November 17th is regarded as the date of the founding of the Society.

Since this section of the paper was introduced with a quote from the Inaugural Address, I think it appropriate to conclude the section with a statement by the same author:

Thus the Theosophical Society, first conceived of on the 8th September and constitutionally perfected on the 17th November, 1875, after a gestatory period of seventy days, came into being and started on its marvellous career of altruistic endeavor *per angusta ad augusta* [through difficulties to honor]. 64

THE OBJECTS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The inclusion of the objects of the Society is absolutely necessary if we wish to ascertain the rationale and motivation of the organization and its members. What is generally not recognized is that the objects quoted by commentators on the Society represent those of the Adyar Theosophical Society, the largest and best known of the three separate Societies now in existence. In 1895, a schism occurred wherein the American section, under the leadership of William Q. Judge, separated from the international Theosophical Society, headquartered in Adyar, Madras (India) and under the Presidency of Colonel Olcott.⁶⁶ Still a third major organization was established in 1909 in Los Angeles under the leadership of Robert Crosbie, a student of Mr. Judge and Katherine Tingley, and a member of the "American" Theosophical Society until 1904.⁶⁷ Called the United Lodge of Theosophists, its main object was and is to study and promulgate Theosophy as presented by Madame Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge.⁶⁸

The objects of the Theosophical Societies are similar, especially between the Adyar Theosophical Society and the United Lodge of Theosophists:

Adyar Theosophical Society

1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or color.

United Lodge of Theosophists

1. To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color.

2. To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.

2. The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study.

3. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.⁶⁹

3. The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychological powers latent in man.⁷⁰

The objects of the Theosophical Society (Pasadena), the sister society of the Adyar T.S. (see above, page 11) are five in number:

1. to diffuse among men a knowledge of the laws inherent in the universe;
2. to promulgate the knowledge of the essential unity of all that is, and to demonstrate that this unity is fundamental in nature;
3. to form an active brotherhood among men;
4. to study ancient and modern religion, science, and philosophy;
5. to investigate the powers innate in man.⁷¹

The evolution of the objects of the Theosophical Society from 1875 to 1896 is a study in itself and therefore beyond the scope of this paper. It should be drawn to the reader's attention, however, that disagreement does exist with regard to the evolution of the final wording of the objects of the Adyar Theosophical Society and to the original object of the Society. Nonetheless, Madame Blavatsky herself states quite explicitly that the three objects⁷² have been "so from the beginning."⁷³ This view has been defended by the anonymous author(s) of The Theosophical Movement: 1875-1950, arguing that Colonel Olcott, a principal in the formation of the rules and object of the Society at its inception, "failed to appreciate the full meaning of the Movement at the outset . . ."⁷⁴ Without passing judgment on this interpretation, the published evidence reveals that the original "objects of the society are, to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the universe."⁷⁵ These objects reflect well the interest of Colonel Olcott and, I would submit, of Madame Blavatsky, considering the climate of the times and the rather explicit views of H.P.B. on Occultism described in the previous section.

These original objects, however, were extensively revised and expanded in 1878⁷⁶ including, for the first time, the mention of a Brotherhood of Humanity. Subsequent revisions were made in

between 1879 and 1896.⁷⁷ The 1896 revision is the current statement employed by the Adyar Society.

No matter what form the statements on the objects assume, what is of interest is the pervasive theme of Unity expressive in them. The Brotherhood of Humanity is an expression of this theme not only on the existential level but also on the ethical plane; the "hidden and unexplained" laws of Nature -- the Occult Laws -- where revealed, also allude to a Unity that belies the apparent diversity of the "universe". Furthermore, the Truth that underlies all religion, philosophy, and science is One and Absolute, not merely relative and discursive.⁷⁸ In brief, theosophical teaching is fundamentally monistic from the philosophical viewpoint. Madame Blavatsky writes:

We conceive of the universe as one in essence and origin. And though we speak of Spirit and Matter as its two poles, yet we state emphatically that they can only be considered as distinct from the standpoint of human, mayavic (i.e., illusionary) consciousness. 79

THE IMPACT OF THEOSOPHY

Historical accounts of events and prominent individuals often omit the context and conditions that shed light upon the subject under investigation. The result, of course, is a less than perfect analysis of the topic in question. To a degree, such omission has minimalized the impact of the Theosophical Society on popular culture, the arts, and political activism. The purpose of this section, therefore, is to introduce a "theosophical context" in the areas of occultism and orientalism, literature, art, and political and social reform.

Mention has already been made of the relation of occultism and theosophy with regard to the foundation of the Society. There can be no doubt that Madame Blavatsky's magnum opus, The Secret Doctrine, contributed to the identification of the two in the popular mind. Later theosophical authors, especially the controversial Charles W. Leadbeater (1847 or 1854-1934), a member of the Adyar Theosophical Society and the Liberal Catholic Church, also wrote extensively on occult phenomena. Indeed, it is very likely apropos of Leadbeater that more individuals were introduced into the world of the occult through his numerous books than any other writer on the subject.⁸¹ It may be further asserted that the interest and popularization of the occult on the part of theosophical authors, Leadbeater and others, has led to a pervasive influence of later occult and metaphysical movements.⁸² Braden⁸³ and Campbell⁸⁴ have mentioned such "offshoots and related movements" as the Arcane School of Alice Bailey (1880-1949), founded in 1923⁸⁵; the Anthroposophical Society, founded by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) in 1913; and the Rosicrucian Fellowship (with headquarters in Oceanside, California)

founded by Louis van Grasshoff, a.k.a. Max Heindel (1865-1919) in 1910. All three individuals were prominent members of the Theosophical Society (Adyar): Alice Bailey was editor of the magazine The Messenger, which the Society published at the time; Rudolf Steiner was the head of the German section of the Theosophical Society before he withdrew his membership, along with fifty-five of the sixty-nine lodges of the Society; and Max Heindel was at one time the Vice-President of the Los Angeles (T.S.) Lodge.⁸⁶

Other organizations that have been influenced by Theosophy were the "I Am" Movement, the Halcyon Community, the Liberal Catholic Church⁸⁷, Psychiana, and the Order of the Cross⁸⁸. I might further add that the Church Universal and Triumphant, the Association for Research and Enlightenment, Eckankar, Morningland, the Aetherius Society, and the Tara Center may be considered to be distant relatives of the Theosophical Society.⁸⁹

Turning to a subject closely related to the above is the theosophical preoccupation with oriental thought. Such an interest mushroomed with the journey to India of H.P.B. and Colonel Olcott in 1879. The association of occultism to orientalia is aptly summarized in the view that "Āryāvarta" is the "cradle of the purest occult knowledge."⁹⁰ Elsewhere, H.P.B. stated that the Society "has a Buddhist colouring simply because that religion, or rather philosophy, approaches more nearly to the TRUTH (the secret wisdom) than does any other exoteric form of belief."⁹¹ With an especial interest in the religions and philosophies of India, it is little wonder that H.P.B. introduced many concepts and Sanskrit terms in her writings, most notably in the Secret Doctrine. As a result, she helped in popularizing Sanskrit terms like karma(n), avatāra-, ātman, prāṇa-, manas-, as well as concepts like reincarnation to non-specialists.⁹²

It has been observed by Judah, to take an example, that the Unity School of Christianity accepted karma and reincarnation as a result of a study of theosophy on the part of Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, the founders of Unity.⁹³ This is not to say that the Society's role in disseminating oriental thought was unique; one need only mention the role of the Transcendentalists in this regard,⁹⁴ yet Braden is still quite correct in stating that "no movement in America has been more influential in introducing oriental thought."⁹⁵

Needless to say, many prominent figures in the arts and sciences were influenced by the ideas current in theosophical literature. William Butler Yeats was perhaps the most prominent figure of the Irish literary renaissance to have studied theosophy. He first met H.P.B. in London in 1887, and for a time thereafter was a member of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society.⁹⁶ Other prominent figures influenced by theosophical teachings included the poet and essayist George W. Russell (Æ) ⁹⁷, Charles Weekes, John Eglington, and the orientalist Charles Johnston.⁹⁸ The author of King of the Khyber Rifles, Talbot Mundy, was a theosophist who resided for a number of years at

Lomaland, the theosophical community at Point Loma in San Diego County.⁹⁹ In a recent dissertation, William Linville has drawn attention to two prominent American writers who have been influenced by theosophical thought: Jack London and Henry Miller. London's books Martin Eden, The Star Rover, and John Barleycorn all reveal a debt to the Secret Doctrine.¹⁰⁰ Henry Miller was influenced by Rudolph Steiner's Philosophy of Freedom in his early years and by the Secret Doctrine, both books contributing to Miller's creative impulses in the three volume work The Rosy Crucifixion.¹⁰¹ Another writer known to have been an admirer of H.P.B. was D. H. Lawrence. His works, The Phoenix and The Plumed Serpent reveal again the influence of the Secret Doctrine on the author.¹⁰² Finally, it has been observed that James Joyce read and quoted Isis Unveiled and A. P. Sinnett's Esoteric Buddhism,¹⁰³ both works important in understanding certain leit-motifs in his novel, Ulysses.¹⁰⁴

Besides literary figures, we find the arts and music represented as well. Alexander Scriabin, the Russian composer and avid reader of H.P.B.'s Key to Theosophy and Secret Doctrine, is said to also have influenced Wassily Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian, and Paul Klee, all of whom were affected by theosophical teaching to varying degrees.¹⁰⁵

In the sciences, it is common knowledge that Thomas Edison, the astronomer Camille Flammarion, Alfred Russel Wallace, and Sir William Crookes were members of the Society.¹⁰⁶ This does not exhaust the list of prominent members and sympathizers. It should serve to illustrate, however, the intellectual or psychic debt that these individuals owe to theosophy, especially to the theosophical insights of H.P. Blavatsky.

Theosophical influence was not limited to the West. Significant contributions were made in India and Sri Lanka by members and sympathizers to the movement. The contributions of Colonel Olcott to the Buddhist revival in Sri Lankā, of Allan Octavian Hume to the Indian National Congress, and of Annie Besant to the political and social climate of India come readily to mind.

Henry Olcott to this day is recognized and honored as a national hero in Sri Lanka, primarily because of the respect and interest that he displayed to the inhabitants and to their religion. This was illustrated, for instance, by his becoming a Buddhist;¹⁰⁷ thereafter, he championed Buddhist education by establishing Buddhist schools throughout the island, argued for religious freedom and increased tolerance,¹⁰⁸ and contributed to Buddhist unity by writing the Buddhist Catechism and designing the Buddhist flag.¹⁰⁹ When independence came to Sri Lanka, the new government honored the Colonel with a special day -- Olcott Day -- to commemorate his many contributions to the country.

The name of Allan Octavian Hume is perhaps not as well-known as that of Col. Olcott's, but his importance is no less significant in some respects. He is associated with the Indian National Congress, an organization that played perhaps the dominant role

in the Freedom Movement of India. Whatever the genesis of the Congress -- the circumstances are not very clear --¹¹⁰ there can be no doubt that it was Mr. Hume who took the initiative in convening the new Congress.¹¹¹

No Indian could have started the Indian National Congress. Apart from the fact that anyone putting his hand to such a gigantic task had need to have Mr. Hume's commanding personality, even if an Indian had possessed such a personality and had come forward to start such a movement, embracing all India, the officials would not have allowed it to come into existence. 112

These words, delivered in 1913 by a prominent member of the Congress, G. K. Gokhale, aptly describe Hume's role as the driving force behind the Movement.¹¹³ A.O. Hume was a highly intelligent, far-sighted, energetic but egotistical Anglo-Indian.¹¹⁴ His association with the Theosophical Society grew out of his interest in "mysticism, esoteric philosophy, and things Indian."¹¹⁵ He first became acquainted with H.P.B. and Colonel Olcott in December, 1879 and became a member of the Society in 1881. By 1883, however, he left the Society after numerous clashes with Madame Blavatsky.¹¹⁶ These disagreements focused primarily on Hume's misplaced interest (in H.P.B.'s view) in occult phenomena and practice in addition to his refusal to accept Madame Blavatsky's perception of theosophical teaching as being far more comprehensive in nature.¹¹⁷

Theosophical participation in the Congress continued over the years, and it was only appropriate that the second President of the Adyar Theosophical Society, Annie Besant (1847-1933), should have been elected President of the Indian National Congress during a particularly crucial period of history: World War I.¹¹⁸ The tireless campaigning for Indian independence, the formation of the Home Rule League in 1915, the extensive work undertaken by her in Indian education, women's suffrage, and the abolition of child marriage¹¹⁹ made Mrs. Besant perhaps the most universally beloved and respected leader in India prior to the ascendancy of Mohandas Gandhi.¹²⁰ Indeed, it may be said that without the efforts of theosophists, particularly Mrs. Besant, Gandhi's success and quality of leadership would be quite different from the historical fact.

CONCLUSION

The Theosophical Society, to allude to Colonel Olcott's introductory remarks in his Inaugural Address, has not passed unnoticed. The accomplishments of Madame Blavatsky vis-à-vis the articulation and development of theosophical teachings, especially the doctrine of Universal Brotherhood, for the present age, of Annie Besant's and Colonel Olcott's attempt to actualize the teachings and the concept of Brotherhood in the economic,

social and political spheres, and of all theosophists, following the inspiration of Madame Blavatsky and later leaders, that humans of whatever race, creed, sex, caste, or color are equal, that all the world religions contain the same essential message reflecting the Wisdom of the Ages, and that this Wisdom resides in all the nations of the world, reveal a cosmopolitan and universalism in the purist sense of the terms. It is in accordance with this understanding that Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott spread their message to India and Sri Lanka, not as missionaries spreading Truth to those in the grip of falsehood, but as seekers of the Truth who merely wished to gain from their hosts that Truth which lay within the sacred and philosophical writings of the Orient. Although non-theosophists may not agree to the proposition of an underlying Wisdom-Religion, the comparative study of religion in a sympathetic and open manner is an idea whose time has already come, and this in part through the efforts and accomplishments of the Theosophical Society.

1

Oxford English Dictionary [Sir James A. H. Murray and C. T. Onions, A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles. Volume IX, Part II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919)], p. 279.

2

H. P. Blavatsky, The Key to Theosophy (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1972), p. 1. This is a reprint of the 1889 edition. The United Lodge of Theosophists has also published this same 1889 edition (Los Angeles: The Theosophy Company, 1973). The pagination is identical in both versions; the Pasadena reprint, however, contains a glossary (which appeared in the second edition) and an index.

For a similar rendering of "theosophy" see H. P. Blavatsky's The Theosophical Glossary (Los Angeles: The Theosophy Company, 1973), p. 328. This is a reprint of the original 1892 edition.

3

"What is Theosophy?", p. 88 of H.P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings: 1879-1880. Volume Two. Compiled by Boris de Zirkoff. Reprinted from The Theosophist, vol. I, no. 1 (October, 1879), pp. 2-5.

It may be of interest to the reader to know that the Theosophy Company has published some 35 pamphlets containing articles of H.P.B. subsumed under various common topics. The present article is contained in the pamphlet Basic Questions About Theosophy, pp. 5-13.

4

Oxford English Dictionary, p. 279. A brief overview of the Dionysian corpus is given in R. T. Wallis, Neo-Platonism (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1972), pp. 160-161. See also J. F. Staal, Advaita and Neo-Platonism (Madras: University of Madras, 1961), p. 205, fn. 225. A most interesting article comparing meditative states in Mystical Theology and in the Buddhist Abhidharma tradition appears in Neoplatonism and Indian Thought, edited by R. Baine Harris (Norfolk, Virginia: International Society for Neoplatonic Studies, 1982): "Meditative States in the Abhidharma and in Pseudo-Dionysius" (pp. 121-136) by David F. T. Rodier.

5

Oxford English Dictionary, p. 279.

6

"What is Theosophy?", p. 89 (of Collected Writings, vol. II).

7

The Key to Theosophy, p. 9. See also pp. 7f. and p. 12; the latter page contains the following statement: ". . . Firstly, the perversity of average human nature and its selfishness, always tending to the gratification of personal desires to the detriment of neighbours and next of kin. Such people could never be entrusted with divine secrets. Secondly, their unreliability to keep the sacred and divine knowledge from desecration"

8

One of the three objects of the Theosophical Society is in fact the study of comparative religion, philosophy, and science. These objects will be mentioned again in the course of the article.

The quote in the main body of the paper is from The Key to Theosophy, p. 4. I might add here an interesting quote from the Preface of the Secret Doctrine (by H.P.B. Los Angeles: The Theosophy Company, 1974. Two volumes in one. Reprint of the original 1888 edition): "But it is perhaps desirable to state unequivocally that the teachings . . . contained in these volumes, belong neither to the Hindu, the Zoroastrian, the Chaldean, nor the Egyptian religion, neither to Buddhism, Islam, Judaism nor Christianity exclusively. The Secret Doctrine is the essence of all these. Sprung from it in their origins, the various religious schemes are now made to merge back into their original element, out of which every mystery and dogma has grown, developed, and become materialized." (Vol. I. p. viii)

9

"What is Theosophy?" (Collected Writings, vol. II, p. 89). Compare William Q. Judge, "The Theosophical Movement" (in the pamphlet The Theosophical Movement. William Q. Judge Series, no. 3. Los Angeles: The Theosophy Company, n.d., p. 1), originally published in the Path (August, 1895); "The Theosophical Movement being continuous, it is to be found in all times and in all nations. Whenever thought has struggled to be free, wherever spiritual ideas, as opposed to forms and dogmatism, have been promulgated, there the great movement is to be discerned." This article is also found in Echoes of the Orient: The Writings of William Q. Judge, compiled by Dara Eklund (San Diego: Point Loma Publications, 1975), pp. 463f.

10

"What is Theosophy?", p. 88. Compare The Theosophical Glossary, p. 259.

11

The Theosophical Glossary, p. 259.

12

The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett. Transcribed and compiled by A. Trevor Barker (Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1975. Reprint of the second edition of 1926), pp. 34-35. This is Letter No. 8 written in February, 1881. See The Key to Theosophy, pp. 7-8.

13

G. de Purucker, Fountain-Source of Occultism (Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1974), p. 100. The Manasaputras "sons of Mind" are highly evolved beings, roughly comparable to gods but called in theosophical literature dhyanis-chohan-s "lords of meditation," who awakened intelligence in humanity. For a simplified account see de Purucker, ibid., pp. 477 f., especially p. 481; Occult Glossary (Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1953), pp. 96-97; Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy (Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1979), pp. 303-304, 336-337, 585-586; Gertrude W. van Pelt, Rounds and Races² (Covina, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1940), pp. 46 f. and on pp. 41-42 of Man's Divine Parentage and Destiny, a new edition brought out by Point Loma Publications, San Diego, CA., 1975; Annie Besant, The Ancient Wisdom (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1969) p. 213; Geoffrey A. Barborka, The Divine Plan² (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1964), pp. 133 f., 294 f. The Secret Doctrine details the role of the Manasaputras in Vol. II. pp. 161-168, 171-173. See also Vol. I, pp. 207-212.

14

Secret Doctrine, I, pp. 207-208 and II, 69, 148 f. The period of time implied by Dr. de Purucker in the quoted passage is in the vicinity of 18,000,000 years, at which time "Man" becomes a "thinker" (manas).

15

"What is Theosophy?", pp. 90-96; The Key to Theosophy, pp. 7-8; Alvin Boyd Kuhn, Theosophy (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1930), pp. 1-17; "Views of the Theosophists," p: 299 (H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings: 1874-1878, Vol. I; L. E. Harcus, "Theosophy in Outline." The Theosophist, vol. XVII, no. 11 (August, 1896), p. 650.

16

There are many articles that Madame Blavatsky wrote mentioning the various traditions that belong to the "Theosophical Movement." Perhaps the most convenient way of reviewing the articles are the numerous pamphlets published by the Theosophy Company. (See footnote 3 above). The pertinent titles are the following: The Esoteric Character of the Gospels, Tibetan Teachings, Kabalah and Kabalism, Theosophy and the Western Mind, Ancient Survivals and Modern Errors. Also, The Secret Doctrine makes extensive use of the various religious literatures mentioned in the main body of this paper. Consult the Index to The Secret Doctrine (Los Angeles: The Theosophy Company, 1939).

17

Judge, "The Theosophical Movement" (see footnote 9).

18

Inaugural Address of the President, p. 1. (The speech was published in pamphlet form.)

19

Brief but excellent biographies of Olcott and Judge are provided by Boris de Zirkoff on pp. 472 f. and 503 f. of the Collected Writings (Vol. I). An overview of H.P.B.'s life up to 1874 is given in the same volume on pp. xxv f.

20

The names of these "formers" will be mentioned below (footnote 58). Brief accounts of their lives are given by de Zirkoff. Ibid., pp. 446 f.

21

The Fox sisters developed a code that made intelligible communication possible. The entity related his history over the course of the period that the sisters were in contact with him, revealing that he was a peddler murdered by a former occupant of the (Fox) house and interred in the cellar. Remains were later unearthed but no individual outside the immediate family was allowed to view the evidence. The whole episode, however, proved fraudulent; the rappings were actually produced by the toe joints of the girls, according to Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-Over District (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), pp. 345 f. There are, however, some psychical researchers who believe genuine phenomena was produced. For an overview of modern spiritualism, see Charles Samuel Braden, These Also Believe (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1949), pp. 319 f. and Colin Wilson, The Occult (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), pp. 458 f.

22

de Zirkoff, Collected Writings, vol. I. See for instance "Marvelous Spirit Manifestations," pp. 30 f.; "About Spiritualism," pp. 36 f.; "The Philadelphia 'Fiasco,' or Who is Who?," pp. 56 f. See also Kuhn, op. cit., pp. 91 f.; Charles J. Ryan, H. P. Blavatsky and the Theosophical Movement (San Diego: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1975), pp. 50 f. (and pp. 47f. of the Second and Revised Edition, edited by Grace F. Knoche, Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1975).

23

de Zirkoff, Collected Writings, Vol. I, p. 508. A biography of Olcott, entitled Hammer on the Mountain by Howard Murphet (Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1972), gives greater details of Olcott's experiences in spiritualism. See especially Chapters 2 and 5.

24

Ryan, op. cit., p. 32 (and p. 31 of Second and Revised Edition); The Theosophical Movement: 1875-1950 (Los Angeles, The Cunningham Press, 1951), pp. 27-28; de Zirkoff, Collected Writings, Vol. I, pp. li-iii.

25

For a chronology of events from 1874 to 1878, see de Zirkoff, op. cit., pp. liii-ixvi.

26

Op. cit., p. 94.

27

Compare Collected Writings, I, p. 73.

28

Vol. I, pp. 6-7 as quoted in Collected Writings, Vol. I, p. 44; "So much in defence of phenomena, as to whether these Spirits are ghosts is another question." See also p. 53, 72, 265 f. ("Elementaries"), 283 f. ("Kabalistic Views on 'Spirits' as Propagated by the Theosophical Society"), 290 f. ("Madame Blavatsky on the Views of the Theosophists"). A most revealing statement, under the heading "Important Note," is contained on p. 73.

29

H. P. Blavatsky, Isis Unveiled. Vol. I (Los Angeles: The Theosophy Company, 1982), pp. x f., 40 f., 73 f. and vol. II, pp. 636 f.

30

The Key to Theosophy, pp. 29-33. Compare Kuhn, p. 94-98.

31

A "Committee of seven Adepts belonging to the Egyptian group of the Universal Mystic Brotherhood." Olcott, Old Diary Leaves, vol. I., pp. 74-76 quoted in Collected Writings, I, p. 87.

32

Collected Writings, I, p. 86. The statement was published in the April 29, 1875 issue of the Spiritual Scientist (p. 85) under the heading "Important to Spiritualists." For an account of the events from Chittenden to the "Brotherhood of Luxor" statement, see Josephine Ransom, A Short History of the Theosophical Society: 1875-1937 (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1938), pp. 57-70.

33

"A Society Without a Dogma" (originally published in The Spiritualist of London), reprinted in Collected Writings, I, pp. 301 f. The quote appears on p. 304.

34

Collected Writings I, p. 74; Kuhn, p. 99.

35

"A Few Questions to 'Hiraf'" in Collected Writings, Vol. I., p. 101 (reprinted from the Spiritual Scientist, July 15 and 22, 1875, pp. 217-218, 224, 236-7).

36

This is found in her Scrapbook, I, p. 41 (Collected Writings, I, p. 101).

37

Theosophical Glossary, p. 237.

38

de Purucker, Occult Glossary, p. 119.

39

Two articles of interest were written by H.P.B. in later years: "Practical Occultism" (in Lucifer, October, 1887) and "Occultism Versus the Occult Arts" (Lucifer, April, 1888) both reprinted by the Theosophy Company in the pamphlet Spiritual Evolution and by the Theosophical University Press (Pasadena, 1980) in the book Studies in Occultism by H.P. Blavatsky. The articles also appear in H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings: 1888. Volume IX: pp. 155-166 and 249-261.

Also of interest is The Key to Theosophy, pp. 20-27 and William Q. Judge, "The Synthesis of Occult Science" in the William Q. Judge Series, no. 5 entitled Occult Philosophy (The Theosophy Company) and in Echoes of the Orient, pp. 192f.

In the article "Is Theosophy a Religion?" (H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings: 1888-1889. Vol. X, p. 166), H.P.B. writes: "So called 'Occultism,' or rather Esoteric Science, has to be traced in its origin to those Beings who, led by Karma, have incarnated in our humanity, and thus struck the key-note of that secret science which countless generations of subsequent Adepts have expanded since then in every age, while they checked its doctrines by personal observation and experience. The bulk of this knowledge -- which no man is able to possess in its fulness -- constitutes what we now call Theosophy or divine knowledge."

40

Bruce F. Campbell, Ancient Wisdom Revived: A History of the Theosophical Movement (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 26; G. Baseden Butt, Madame Blavatsky (London: Rider and Co., n.d. [1926?]), p. 36; Howard Murphet, When Daylight Comes (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1975), p. 87.

41

See Collected Writings, I, p. 463; Kuhn, op. cit., p. 104; Marion Meade, Madame Blavatsky (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1980), pp. 150-151; Gertrude Marvin Williams, Priestess of the Occult (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), p. 101.

42

Henry Steel Olcott, Old Diary Leaves, Volume I (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1895), p. 117.

43

Ibid. The note read as follows: "Would it not be a good thing to form a Society for the kind of study?" (Ibid., p. 118).

44

The account of the founding of the Society is perhaps most accurately portrayed in an extract reprinted in the Spiritual Scientist (1876) from the New York newspapers. The extract was reproduced in Emma Hardinge-Britten's Nineteenth Century Miracles (New York: Arno Press, 1976), p. 296. The quote is taken from Mrs. Hardinge-Britten's book.

45

Annie Besant, "Speeding the Message" in Lucifer (London), Vol. 12, no. 68 (April 15, 1893), p. 105.

46

Minutes of the September 8, 1875 meeting as recorded by the Secretary, William Quan Judge.

47

A good theosophical account of this position appears in Ryan, H. P. Blavatsky and the Theosophical Movement, pp. 53 f. (and pp. 50f. of the Second and Revised Edition).

48

Ryan, op. cit., p. 54. The italics are Mr. Ryan's. H. P. B. includes a letter by the Master K. H. (Koot Hoomi) in her article "An Explanation to All Theosophists" that defines her role as "direct agent" of the Masters. See H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings: 1888-1889. Vol. X, p. 138 f.

49

Kuhn, op. cit., p. 146. For a discussion of the Masters, see pp. 147 f., G. de Purucker, The Mahatmas and Genuine Occultism (San Diego: Point Loma Publications, 1972) and The Key to Theosophy, pp. 288 f.

50

Collected Writings, I, p. 94. The Scrapbooks have never been published; they are at present in the Adyar Library.

Braden (These Also Believe, p. 227) is of the opinion that the statement was "written at some time after the period to which it refers." He gives no evidence to support this view, however.

51

de Zirkoff (Collected Writings, I, p. 124) also includes a statement from her Scrapbook (I, pp. 20-21) that "...M[orya]... brings orders to form a Society -- a secret Society like the Rosicrucian Lodge. He promises to help."

52

J. Stillson Judah, The History and Philosophy of the Metaphysical Movements in America, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n.d.), p. 93. The date he assigns to the formation of the Society is October 20, 1875. He gives no citation indicating his source.

53

The meeting prior to this was on Wednesday, September 8, 1875.

54

Also reprinted in Olcott, Old Diary Leaves, I, p. 122.

55

Page 113. The passage at the end of the letter states: "The undersigned issues this call in compliance with the order adopted by the meeting of September 13th ultimo."

56

The recent publication of Ancient Wisdom Revived (1980) mentions only September 18, probably following the statement in Old Diary Leaves, p. 122 and Kuhn (p. 106). Campbell gives no citation, however.

57

Op. cit., p. 106.

58

Olcott (Old Diary Leaves, I, pp. 121-122) also records the meeting. Those present were H.P.B., Col. Olcott, Charles Sotheran, Charles E. Simmons, Herbert D. Monachesi, Charles C. Massey, William L. Alden, G. H. Felt, D. E. de Lara, Dr. W. Britten, Mrs. Emma Hardinge-Britten, Henry J. Newton, John Storer Cobb, James Hyslop, H. M. Stevens, and William Q. Judge.

59

This is puzzling since no mention is made of Mr. Felt lecturing at the September 8th meeting. The reference is most likely to the lecture presented on September 7.

60

For an overview of his life see Collected Writings, I, pp. 526 f. It is Mrs. Laura C. Langford-Holloway who first revealed the source of the Society's use of the term Theosophy in her article "Helena Petrovna Blavatsky: A Reminiscence" (Word [N.Y.], Vol. xxii, December 1915, pp. 136-153). The relevant passage is reprinted in the Collected Writings, p. 527.

61

Mrs. Ransom (A Short History of the Theosophical Society: 1875-1937, p. 80) mentions that Mr. Felt continued his Egyptological lectures at the October 16th meeting; there is, however, no record of this in the minutes.

62

Olcott, Old Diary Leaves, I, p. 135. On the Inaugural Address, see footnote 18.

63

Ibid.

64

Ibid., p. 136.

65

Compare, for instance, the incorrect impression given by Professor Judah (History and Philosophy of the Metaphysical Movements in America, p. 93).

66

The circumstances surrounding the schism are given in Kuhn, pp. 310 f., Murphet, op. cit., pp. 250 f.; The Theosophical Movement: 1875-1950, pp. 204 f.; Campbell, op. cit., pp. 103 f.

Two important documents that contain the opinions of the chief antagonists -- Annie Besant and W. Q. Judge -- are The Case Against W. Q. Judge by Annie Besant (Adelphi, W.C.: Annie Besant, 1895) and Reply by William Q. Judge to Charges of Misuse of Mahatmas' Names and Handwritings (read on April 29, 1895). Photocopies of the two were obtained from Mr. Jerry Ekins, the Vice-President of the Los Angeles Lodge of Theosophists. The latter work has no publication information.

67

The Theosophical Movement: 1875-1950, pp. 316; Ryan, op. cit., p. 338 (and on p. 308 of the Second and Revised edition). An interesting set of articles, entitled "In Defense of Robert Crosbie" appears in the Q.E. Library Critic (edited by H. N. Stokes), XXII/8, 10 and XXIII/4 (March and May, 1933 and Nov.-Dec., 1934).

68

Ibid., pp. 316-318; Campbell, pp. 185-187; The United Lodge of Theosophists: Its Mission and Its Future (Los Angeles: The Theosophy Company, n.d.).

69

Ransom, op. cit., pp. 551-552. Ransom provides a separate section on the objects and rules of the Theosophical Society from 1875 to 1934. Keep in mind that the Society was not divided until 1895. After 1895, all rules and objects refer only to the Adyar branch.

70

The United Lodge of Theosophists: Its Mission and Its Future, p. 2.

71

Taken from the introductory brochure of the Society. These objects have been so worded since 1929-1930, when Dr. G. de Purucker modified them. During Katherine Tingley's period of leadership (1896-1929), the Objects were expressed in somewhat simpler form:

"This Brotherhood is a part of a great and universal movement which has been active in all ages.

This Organization declares that Brotherhood is a fact in nature. Its principal purpose is to teach Brotherhood, demonstrate that it is a fact in nature, and makes it a living power in the life of humanity.

Its subsidiary purpose is to study ancient and modern religion, science, philosophy and art; to investigate the laws of nature and the divine powers in man."

The title of the Society in Mrs. Tingley's time (1900-1929) was The Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society.

The above information was provided by Mr. W. Emmett Small of Point Loma Publications in a letter dated August 15, 1984. The Objects of the Society were regularly listed in the Theosophical Path, the monthly journal.

72

The three objects mentioned in The Key to Theosophy, p. 39 are somewhat differently worded reflecting the 1882 revision of the objects. This preliminary observation is based upon a reading of the 1882 Objects published by the Society. As such, it is at variance with Ransom's account. She places the objects under the year 1886 (op. cit., pp. 548-549). For an account of the objects of the Society, see Grace F. Knoche, "Our Directives: A Study of the Evolution of the Objects of the T.S. From 1875 to 1891." Theosophical Forum, October, 1947, pp. 582-587.

73

The Key to Theosophy, p. 39.

74

Op. cit., p. 47.

75

Preamble and By-Laws of the Theosophical Society, (New York: October 30, 1875), p. 10.

76

"The Theosophical Society: Its Origin, Plan and Aims." Also in Ransom, op. cit., p. 546 with some important and interesting omissions; Knoche, op. cit., pp. 582-583.

77

As contained in the publication of the Objects and Rules of the Society for those years.

78

Compare Secret Doctrine, I, p. 14 f.; The Key to Theosophy, p. 41 f., 83 f.; H. P. Blavatsky, "Is Theosophy a Religion?" in Collected Writings, X, p. 159 f.; "What is Truth?" in Collected Writings, IX, pp. 30 f.

79

"Force of Prejudice," in Collected Writings, vol. XI, p. 336.

80

The Key to Theosophy, pp. 25 f.

81

On the influence of C. W. Leadbeater see Kuhn, op. cit., pp. 329 f. and Campbell, op. cit., pp. 114 f. A recent biography has been written by Gregory Tillett, The Elder Brother: The Life and Writings of Charles Webster Leadbeater, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982).

82

Charles Godwin, Occult America, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1972), pp. 132-133: "It is hard to overestimate Madame Blavatsky's influence on the American metaphysical scene. Portions of her teachings have been incorporated into virtually every occult group extant -- though mostly without giving her a credit line. Over and over again I have listened to cult leaders expounding the Blavatsky gospel to their flock -- as their own uniquely original discoveries or rather revelations."

Although oversimplified, the statement is very true. It is probably more accurate to say that many of the leaders of the occult and metaphysical movements of late concentrated more on popularized and adulterated versions of Blavatsky's message.

83

These Also Believe, p. 255.

84

Ancient Wisdom Revived, pp. 147 f.

85

Campbell, pp. 150 f.; Robert S. Ellwood, Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), pp. 103 f.

86

Campbell, pp. 150 f., 156 f., 160-161; Ellwood, op. cit., pp. 103, 106 f., 110 f.

87

Ellwood, pp. 121 f. and Campbell, pp. 158 f.

88

Braden, p. 255.

89

This opinion is based on my own observations of these organizations. Benjamin Creme, the founder of the Tara Center, has noted in his book The Reappearance of the Christ and the Masters of Wisdom, (North Hollywood, CA: Tara Center, 1980) that his readings included Blavatsky, Leadbeater, Alice Bailey and others (pp. 11-13). He explicitly states that he wrote "out of a background of the Alice Bailey Teachings" and from his own experiences (p. 23).

90

Kuhn, p. 110; compare "What are the Theosophists?", (Collected Writings, II, p. 99) and "The Number Seven," (Collected Writings, II, p. 409).

91

"The Theosophical Society: Its Mission and Future," (Collected Writings, X, p. 70). Compare The Key to Theosophy, pp. 12 f.

92

I. M. Oderberg, "Relighting Creative Fires," Sunrise (Altadena), vol. 25, no. 2, (November 1975), p. 41. The Theosophical Glossary is a good source of terms used in H.P.B.'s writings.

93

History and Philosophy of the Metaphysical Movements in America, p. 235.

94

Arthur Christy, The Orient in American Transcendentalism, (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), passim.; Donald N. Koster, Transcendentalism in America, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975), pp. 10-12; Arthur E. Christy, The Asian Legacy and American Life, (New York: The John Day Co., 1942, 1943, 1945), pp. 1 f.; Dale Riepe, The Philosophy of India and Its Impact on American Thought, (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1970), pp. 23 f.

95

Op. cit., p. 255.

96

Oderberg, pp. 38-39; Campbell, pp. 165-166; William R. Linville, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Theosophy, and American Thought, (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, American Studies, University of Hawaii, December 1983), pp. iv, 146 f. Mr. W. E. Small questions whether Yeats was ever a member of the E.S. (letter dated August 15, 1984). His views are included in the article "H.P. Blavatsky's Influence on Ireland's Renaissance," appearing in Mirrors of the Hidden Wisdom (San Diego: Point Loma Publications, 1981), pp. 95-107, especially p. 101.

97

Oderberg, p. 39; Campbell, p. 167; Small, "H. P. Blavatsky's Influence on Ireland's Literary Renaissance," pp. 97f.

98

Johnston was the translator of Paul Deussen's important German work The System of the Vedanta. For a biography see Boris de Zirkoff, H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings: 1888, X, pp. 422 f. References to the other figures may be found in Emmett A. Greenwalt, California Utopia: Point Loma: 1897-1942², (San Diego, CA: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1978), p. 26. Campbell (p. 166) makes mention of Ernest Boyd's work entitled Ireland's Literary Renaissance (New York: Knopf, 1922) as an excellent source work on the Irish literary revival. See also Small, op. cit., pp. 100f.

99

Greenwalt, op. cit., pp. 111-115. Mr. Small remarks that Mundy was a theosophist for about ten years and was even a Cabinet member at Lomaland until Mrs. Tingley's death.

100

Op. cit., pp. 191 f., especially 194, 203, and 205.

101

Ibid., pp. 180 f., especially pp. 182 and 184.

102

Ibid., pp. 173-174.

103

Reprinted by Wizards Bookshelf (Minneapolis, 1973). Alfred Percy Sinnett (1840-1921) contributed to theosophy primarily as a recipient of a number of letters from the Masters of Wisdom or Mahatmas K. H. [Koot Hoomi] and M. [Morya] The letters have since been published under the editorship of A. T. Barker. See footnote 12.

104

Oderberg, op. cit., pp. 44-45; Campbell, p. 169. Stuart Gilbert's James Joyce's Ulysses. A Study serves as the prime source for Mr. Oderberg's observation.

105

Campbell. op. cit., pp. 169 f. and Oderberg, pp. 43-44.

106

Greenwalt, op. cit., p. 4; Campbell, p. 165.

107

Murphet, op. cit., p. 135.

108

Vesakha (=Vesak, or Wesak), the full moon day in May on which the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and Parinibbana are commemorated became an official government holiday mainly due to Olcott's efforts. See Ananda Wickremeratne, "Olcott, Sri Lankan Buddhism, and the British Raj," in American Theosophist, vol. 68, no. 4 (April 1980), p. 72 and de Zirkoff, Collected Writings, I, p. 512.

109

Wickremeratne, pp. 74-75; de Zirkoff, Ibid.; Murphet, p. 142.

110

The problems surrounding the origins of the Congress are set forth by R. C. Majumdar in The History and Culture of the Indian People: British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance, Volume X, part II. Edited by R. C. Majumdar (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965), pp. 524 f.

111

Ibid., p. 525.

112

Quoted in C. F. Andrews and Girija K. Mookerjee, The Rise and Growth of Congress in India (1832-1920), (Delhi: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1967), p. 69.

113

Ibid.

114

An account of Hume is given by Briton Martin, Jr., New India, 1885, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 53 f. A description of the man is given on pp. 56-57.

115

Ibid., p. 61.

116

Ibid., pp. 62-64.

117

Ibid., pp. 64-65.

118

The year of her election was 1917.

119

Campbell, pp. 119 f.; Arthur H. Nethercot, The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 214 f. The Home Rule Movement is detailed in R. C. Majumdar's account appearing in The History and Culture of the Indian People: Struggle for Freedom, vol. 11. Edited by R. C. Majumdar (Bombay: Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, 1969), pp. 249 f.

Gandhi's relation to the Theosophical Society and Annie Besant is detailed in Elizabeth Lorelei Thacker, "Mahatma Gandhi and the Theosophical Movement," in The Canadian Theosophist, Vol. 64, no. 5 (November - December 1983) for Part I, pp. 97-106 and no. 6 (January - February 1984) for Part II, pp. 123-130, 141.

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