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WORLD AGES

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Theosophy is a student journal and reflects a variety of minds. Its articles express a cornucopia of thought inspired primarily from a study of the writings of H.P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge.

THEOSOPHY

is that ocean of knowledge

which spreads from shore to shore;

unfathomable in its deepest parts,

it gives the greatest minds their fullest scope,

yet shallow enough at its shore,

it will not overwhelm

the understanding of a child.

— Wm. Q. Judge

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* *THEOSOPHY IN POETRY AND LITERATURE*
* *SYNTHESIS AND SUSTAINABILITY*

NOTE:

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HPB—Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891)

Judge—William Quan Judge (1851-1896)

Gita—The Bhagavad-Gita, rendition by Judge, ISBN 0-938998-09-9

Glossary—The Theosophical Glossary by HPB, 1892, ISBN 0-938998-04-8

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Key—The Key to Theosophy by HPB, 1889, ISBN 0-938998-03-X

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SD—The Secret Doctrine by HPB, 1888, ISBN 0-938998-00-5

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FETTERS OF TIME

> The present is the child of the past; the future, the begotten of the present. And yet, O present moment! Knowest thou not that thou hast no parent, nor canst thou have a child; that thou art ever begetting but thyself? Before thou hast even begun to say 'I am the progeny of the departed moment, the child of the past,' thou hast become that past itself. Before thou utterest the last syllable, behold! Thou art no more the present but verily that future. Thus, are the past, the present, and the future, the ever-living trinity in one—the Mahamaya of the absolute is.
>
> —*The Secret Doctrine* ii, 446

HPB quoted a Master saying "I feel irritated at having to use these three clumsy words—Past, Present, and Future—miserable concepts of the objective phases of the subjective whole, they are about as ill-adapted for the purpose as an axe for fine carving" (*SD* i, 44). It may be noted that by obligingly revealing his irritation over the need to employ linear terms to mark off "objective phases of the subjective whole," the "Master" offers a helpful insight into the permanent Ego's conscious state. What he refers to as "the subjective whole" would doubtless provide a vantage point that presents a panoramic view not limited to the partial conceptions issuing from embodied minds. The objectivity of our plane consists of a passing parade composed of unfolding images. Therefore people seek to understand the true realities of life in a visible world of illusive images. Under

these conditions the average person becomes trapped and delayed—lost in the self-conceived world of three dimensions and linear time.

An impartial look into occult philosophy reveals that the commonly recognized divisions of time—the present, the past and the future—develop within the mind (lower manas) in response to the demands of consciousness. The human mind continually sorts, separates and compares the daily flow of events, giving order to experiences on this plane. Thus time as we know it unfolds within our waking consciousness in an arranged order. But outside of the embodied mind, beyond the pairs of opposites, undivided consciousness holds sway. Hence, occultism teaches that at the limits of time the familiar divisions of the past and the future fade into the panoramic visions of the soul.

The following from *Light on the Path* expresses concern for those who struggle to escape from the confinements of "objective" time. And he takes a vow:

> In the far spaces of Time all will pass those gates. But I am one who wish that Time, the great deluder, were not so over-masterful. To those who know and love him I have no word to say; but to others—and there are not so very few as some may fancy—to whom the passage of Time is as the stroke of a sledge-hammer, and the sense of Space like the bars of an iron cage, I will translate and re-translate until they understand fully (p. 31).

The popular expression "seize the moment" is one example of how familiar sayings quite often carry messages that echo eternal truths. The assertion that "tomorrow never comes" is another. These ring true. And yet, while ignoring the "present moment," people eagerly anticipate "the morrow." Even though *tomorrow* never comes, the calendar displays it in graphic terms. Boldly depicting days, months and even multiple sets of years in the future, the commonly accepted concept of time is reinforced by giving it definite form. As a result, many people tend to look past the opportunity that lies directly before them to a longed for harvest at the cycles end. This does not mean that people do not actually know they live in the present. They do. But evidence from all quarters supports the assertion that people tend to override their inborn sense of the "ever present now."

One could say local time records physical change with an aligned sequence of events; and that non-local Egoic "time"—reflected within the "subjective whole"—records the impact of root causes that continuously govern evolutionary change. The flow of karmic events within average human consciousness continues to produce the past, the present, and a vision of the future to be reckoned in "local time." The fact that people can *realize* the depths of a problem and still remain unable to comprehend it constitutes one of the great paradoxes of human life. Needless to say that the mystery of time remains a psychological challenge.

In *The Secret Doctrine*, HPB offers a fundamental truth regarding the passing of time. It captures the attention of nearly everyone who reads it, yet soon moves into the sub-conscious realms of self-conscious minds. She explains:

> Time is only an illusion produced by the succession of our states of consciousness as we travel through eternal

> duration, and it does not exist where no consciousness exists in which the illusion can be produced; but "lies asleep." The present is only a mathematical line which divides that part of eternal duration which we call the future, from that part which we call the past….Even so of persons and things, which, dropping out of the to-be into the has-been, out of the future into the past—present momentarily to our senses a cross-section, as it were, of their total selves, as they pass through time and space (as matter) on their way from one eternity to another; and these two constitute that "duration" in which alone anything has true existence, were our senses but able to cognize it there (i, 37).

The first of Mr. Judges "Aphorisms on Karma" declares that "There is no Karma unless there is a being to make it or feel it effects." To comprehend Karma is to comprehend time. Under *Karma*, commingling self-consciousness with partial knowledge produces worlds of illusion *in time*, wherein an opportunity to serve and learn more of who we really are is provided. We periodically receive doctrines from Elder Brothers, the Great Teachers, to assist us in awakening to the hidden spirit that pervades the material world. From the beginning, their occult teachings expose inherent paradoxes. Yet the embodied mind, obedient to the demands of waking consciousness, continues to project the anticipated conventional world. It takes considerable effort to break established habits, and ingrained habits of perception resist perhaps most of all. Thus, under Karma, fifth race humanity remains largely captive to the self-imposed limitations of, what in truth is, undivided time.

~

FACETS OF INQUIRY

DOES PHILOSOPHY OFFER SUFFICIENT VISION FOR AN ETHICAL LIFE?

What inspires ethical behavior? Sometimes called moral philosophy, ethics is culturally based, often looking for sustenance from some mixture of deific authority, scientific nature, and rational thought. At times, today's philosophers have asked, where is the wonder of ethics? Socrates and Plato are quoted widely that philosophy begins in wonder. Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) in *Modes of Thought* (1938) noted, "And, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains. There have been added, however, some grasp of the immensity of things, some purification of emotion by understanding."

Does philosophy remove the mystery so thoroughly that we "unweave the rainbow," as poet John Keats claimed (1795-1821, *Lamia*)? Or is it more like John Milton's perpetual feast (*Comus*, 1634)? Francis Bacon (1561-1626) thought that a little philosophy creates atheists and that depth in philosophy brings us to religion—with Ralph Waldo Emerson (essay on "Powers and Laws of Thought") prophesizing that philosophy will one day be taught by poets. The questions remain: How enduring is its sustenance? Is it solely an intellectual precursor to scientific exploration? Is it the breach in the status quo that lures the curious forward? Or is it the bridge between science and religion?

If ethical living is considered akin to the inner perfection we seek as well as how we relate to each other and the world, Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) said of ethics that it would lead to a reverence for all life. The absence of this reverence causes many people to claim that philosophy is dead. Where, mournful philosophers ask, has the wonder gone? Does philosophy offer sufficient vision for an ethical life? Several students of theosophy ponder this question along diverse facets of inquiry:

PRINCIPLES AT THE CORE

Philosophy, literally meaning "love of wisdom," works in the realm of principles. A philosophical principle is a fundamental truth that can be applied to any situation in life. An example of a principle is the universality of the law of cycles. It does not say to do or not to do anything in particular, but provides a basis for action at any time and in any place.

A rule, or an entire code of behavior, is different. It is a statement of what one should or should not do in specific circumstances but does not provide the underlying basis of why one should or should not act in this way. It can be as minor as "say thank you when you receive a gift" to as major as "do not commit murder." These rules may help one to lead an outwardly ethical life, but they do not connect one to the underlying truth about life that makes such rules comprehensible and reasonable. Without such a basis, external forces are needed to reinforce the ethical behavior: fear of God, fear of hell, the promise of a heaven, the disapproval of one's peers, and so on.

The fundamental ideas of theosophy, however, are philosophical principles that offer a comprehensive,

understandable and practical rationale for ethical action. Take the first fundamental idea of theosophy—an eternal, boundless, indescribable principle that permeates all life, that is at the heart of all beings, making all of us united, inseparable. In essence, you and I and all beings are the same. Since we are all connected, any act I commit affects the whole. As I am a part of the whole, any act I commit affects myself as well. Therefore, to hurt another is to hurt myself. To help another is to help myself. This idea alone can serve as a proper basis for action. But there is more.

Take the second great idea of theosophy—cycles. Everything returns: the minutes, the hours, the days, the years, the ages; the seasons; our heartbeat; our breathing. Karma, which means literally "action," is that same law of return applied to our behavior. Our deeds come back to us. Everything we experience, everything that happens to us — the pleasant, the painful, the joyous, the sorrowful—is a result of actions we ourselves have performed in the past. As the Buddha says, "The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows and woes/The bygone right breeds bliss" (*The Light of Asia* by Sir Edwin Arnold). Do we want to avoid the painful and the sorrowful in the future? Then we must avoid committing any actions that will produce those effects; i.e., any acts that disrupt the whole of life, that cause harm to any other entity in the great ocean of being. Do we want to experience the pleasant and the joyful in the future? Then we must perform only those actions that will cause those results; i.e., any acts that bring succor and ease to our fellow creatures of the earth.

Another aspect of the eternal law of return is reincarnation. The soul returns again and again to life, each time taking up a new body and a new set of circumstances. If we have not experienced the karmic effects of a given act in one life, we

most certainly will experience those effects in a subsequent incarnation. Karma is unerring, exact, and relentless.

These philosophical principles—the one life, karma, and reincarnation—provide a firm foundation for ethical action. Others may speak of rules. Others may speak of "oughts" and "ought nots." But philosophical principles are superior to these. Rules and human-made laws are rigid. They bind and encumber us. But philosophical principles are flexible. They can be applied to each and every situation in life. They free us.

CHOICE OF CATALYSTS

What is philosophy anyway? It has always meant different things to different people. The love of or search for the wisdom of life is the closest meaning to the Greek words from which the word "philosophy" is derived. Other definitions—for example, to understand the universe as a whole, to examine our moral responsibilities and social obligations, to explain the place of will and consciousness in the universe, to examine the values of truth, goodness and beauty, and so on—still share the meaning that, no matter how one defines it, philosophy is a reflective and meditative activity.

The question is can philosophical principles give a sufficient vision and consistent basis for ethical action considering all the complexities that 21st century life entangles us in? If a philosophy has a universal outlook, is based upon principles of wholeness and oneness, and shows that we are all in it together and that "my" actions affect the whole and I either aid or hinder the evolutionary process according to them, then principles of right action can be derived (that is, if your end in view is to do the greatest good and cause the least

harm). Yet principles and knowing how to apply them (that is, knowing what to do in a given situation) are two entirely different things. Sometimes there are no perfect choices, and all we can do is make sure our motives are pure and do what seems best. Also, each of us often functions at times from two disparate sets of impulses, which are sometimes in direct conflict. This is the archetypal dichotomy between "what I want in my picture" and what is fair and good for the larger picture that includes others.

Philosophy (no matter how reflective of the way the universe works, our place in the scheme of things, and how our thought and action affects life in part and as a whole) is by itself inadequate. A person must evoke the will from within to be able to act in consonance with those expressed principles. We must find those principles within. Experience tells us that this is easier said than done. Why? Because each of us carries a load of habitual and often unconscious baggage with us. We might call this the personality's core ideas concerning who we are, what is important in life, what we are capable of achieving, what are our best interests, what we deserve in life, and so on. This is the philosophy of the personality based on past thought and action. It is made up of our personal desires, habits, psychic tendencies, heredity, education (religious and secular), likes, dislikes, fears, fantasies, etc. Of course, these can be positive as well as negative. If we see these for what they are, we can transform and transcend them in order to become reflectors of and embrace fully that visionary philosophy held in our mind's eye.

A philosophy that has the breadth to couch our fullest understanding and can also act as a catalyst for our higher aspirations can aid us in this process and help keep vital a working vision for an ethical life.

METAPHYSICAL DYNAMICS OF ONENESS

Ethics are those guides that delineate the difference between right and wrong. Who or what establishes these guides? Are they the same for everyone? Or, are they arbitrary codes based on convenience? They have been said to be synonymous with morality, but what is morality? Theosophical morality is that which is beneficial to the whole of life. It transcends external differences, even in philosophy. It recognizes universal brotherhood as the highest expression of ethical behavior. Implied herein is the Platonic idea of the good. The idea that all are potentially the same at their center with a transcendent consciousness in space and time that pervades the universe.

This view provides the metaphysical dynamics necessary for understanding the causal side of action. Without these dynamics, the theologians may infer that we are fundamentally irresponsible—that we are creatures of a god whose mercies are needed to save us from our inherent tendencies to sin. And to materialists, we may be creatures of random cosmic happenings, and our rational allegiance, only to the principles of self-preservation and self-aggrandizement. Truly ethical behavior, based on the unity of life, is that which acts with an equal-minded attitude from first principles. This means thinking and acting without self-interest or partiality and with the reasoned conviction that the causes we set in motion will manifest according to universal law and return to the center from which they began.

Everyone expresses a philosophy consciously or otherwise. Much of this can be discerned from one's habits and ideals, which reflect one's sense of purpose in life, how universal law binds it, and why. Humans are thinking beings with choice and, as such, are responsible for all thoughts and actions. These thoughts and actions affect the quality of life

on the inner planes through the medium of the astral light. This, in turn, acts as a reservoir of all thought and influences all beings, depending on varying degrees of passivity.

While the metaphysics explains the occult laws at work, the philosophical attitude is embraced in the "six glorious virtues," described by Robert Crosbie (1849-1919, *Friendly Philosopher*). These virtues (comparable in varying numbers with the Buddhist's *paramitas*, or perfections, which are also found in HPB's *Voice of the Silence* and the Advaiti Hindu's *shad-sampat*) include perfect mastery over the mind (the seat of emotions and desires), mastery over bodily acts, etc.—particularly what in other systems may be called discipline or described as harmony in word and act—in other words, moral ethics.

Crosbie notes one "last accomplishment" that is required, adding "an intense desire for liberation from conditioned existence, and for transformation into the One Life." Why link virtue to the unity of life? Perhaps philosophy is a process that moves us toward divineness, well-stated by Hierocles of Alexandria, a Neoplatonist who led the Alexandrian school between 415 and 450 CE: "Philosophy is the purification and perfection of human life." He further explains that it is purification, because philosophy delivers it "from material irrationality and the mortal body," and perfection, "in consequence of being the resumption of our proper felicity and a re-ascent to the divine likeness." To effect these two is the province of virtue and truth, he adds; the former exterminates the immoderation of the passions; and the latter introduces the divine form to those who are naturally adapted to its reception (Thomas Taylor, introduction to *The Works of Plato*).

Gleanings from Historical Journals

THE LONG WALL

SOCRATES TEACHES A CHILD ABOUT THE SOUL

This dialogue is an extract from Gorgo, *by Charles Kelsey Gaines*

"Do you see the Long Walls?" he said. "They stretch far; but you saw that they had a beginning, and you know that they have an end. For all things that have a beginning have an end. Can you think otherwise?"

"But is there anything like that?" I cried.

"You know the meaning of what men call 'time'," he said. "Can you think that it had any beginning, or that it will ever have an end?"

"No; it goes on always. But time—it isn't anything at all," I persisted.

"Well," he said, "you, at least, are some thing; for you can think and know. But can you remember when first you began to be?"

"No; I cannot remember."

"Perhaps, then, there is something within you that had no beginning. And if that is so, it has had plenty of time to learn. Some think," he said, "that what we call learning is really

only remembering. Already you have much to remember, little son of Hagnon."

"Yes," I cried, harking back, "and if it had no beginning it hasn't any end either; for you said so. My mother thought that; but she did not explain as you do."

"And if there is something within us that was not born and can never die, but is like time itself, can this be anything else than that part of us which thinks and knows, which men call the soul?"

"It must be that," I said; "for they put the rest in the ground or burn it up. I never understood about the soul before."

"And now," said he, "which part do you think is best worth caring for,—that part which we cast away like a useless garment when it is torn by violence or grows old and worn, or that part which lives always?"

"It is foolish to ask me that; of course it is the part that doesn't die," I answered.

"I am glad," said he, "that you think this a foolish question. Yet there are many who do not understand even this; for just as some care only for clothes, some care only for their bodies. And that, perhaps, is why people do not remember all at once, but very slowly and not clearly, just as one would see things through a thick veil, such as the women some times wear before men. It is only when this veil, which is our flesh, is woven very light and fine, or when it has grown old and is worn very thin, that we can see anything through it plainly; and even then all that we see looks misty and does not seem real."

"Yes, but the women can peep over," I explained.

"And we, too, doubtless, can peep over sometimes," he answered, smiling. "It is better then, as you think, and I

certainly think so, to seek the things that are good for the soul, which is your very self, than to seek what seems good to the body, which we keep only for a little while."

"And that is why you wear no shoes!" I cried.

"What need have I of shoes?" he said.

Again I pondered. "What are the things that are good for the soul?" I asked him.

"There is but one thing that is good for the soul," he said. "Men call it virtue. But it is only doing what is right."

[The "long walls" connected Athens to its port the Piraeus. They protected and defended the road that linked the two towns.]

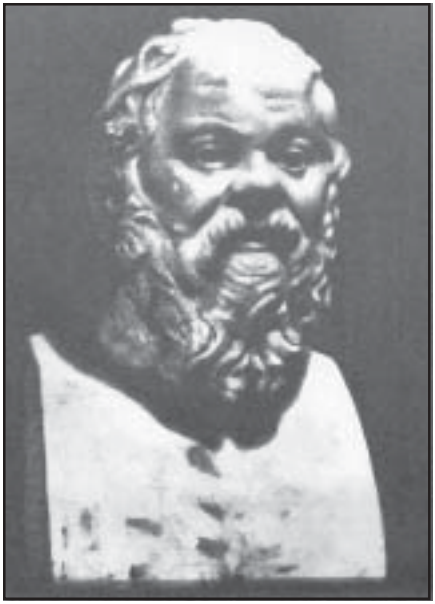
Wind buffs up empty bladders; opinion, fools

To find yourself, think for yourself.

True knowledge exists in knowing that you know nothing.

And in knowing that you know nothing, that makes you the smartest of all.

—*Socrates*



THE BUST OF SOCRATES

Time-honored head of Socrates! To learn
What were thy lineaments through sculptor's hand
Is sweet delight! Though on that classic land
I may not look, whose myrtled groves once shook
Harmonious to thy breath, e'en here each brook
Where hemlock grows keeps green thy memory,
Since 'twas her potent root which set thee free
From vulgar rage, safe wafting to return
To some bright planet 'mid the jewel spheres.
Thou martyred sage, how many chanticleers
Would I in meek obedience immolate
To ´sculapius, if some kindly Fate
Thereby propitious, 'mong the wise below,
Thy living, wrinkled, rugged face would show.

—*Mary W. Gale,* Lucifer, 1888

LAOTZE: FROM THE TAO TE KING

NATURE

Nature is not kind;
It treats all things impartially.
The Sage is not kind,
And treats all people impartially.

Nature is like a bellows,
Empty, yet never ceasing its supply.
The more it moves, the more it yields;
So the sage draws upon experience
And cannot be exhausted.

WATER

The best of man is like water,
Which benefits all things, and does not contend with them,
Which flows in places that others disdain,
Where it is in harmony with the Way.

So the sage:
Lives within nature,
Thinks within the deep,
Gives within impartiality,
Speaks within trust,
Governs within order,
Crafts within ability,
Acts within opportunity.

He does not contend, and none contend
against him.

WORLD AGES

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YUGA *(a yoke). An age. While the exoteric classification gives only four yugas*—Krita *or* Satya, Treta, Dvapara, *and* Kali—*the esoteric cycles regard* Kali *as the turning or balancing point of greatest materiality in a series of seven cycles, retracing the* Yugas *until the age of regained or conscious innocence,* Satya *is realised. Technically, a* Yuga *is a very small part of a* Kalpa. *A half round is 306,720,000 years or 71* Maha Yugas; *a Chain or Day of* Brahma *with its round-twilights is 4,320,000,000 years with an equal length* pralaya *or Night of* Brahma. *An age of* Brahma *or* Maha Kalpa *equals 100 years of* Brahma.

According to Hindu, as to Graeco-Roman and Mediaeval, teaching there are four ages in the manvantara *or cycle from the "Earthly Paradise" of Adam before the fall to the "Heavenly Jerusalem." They are called the* Sattya Yuga—*Age of Truth or Purity,* Dwapara Yuga, Tretya Yuga, Kali Yuga—*Dark Age. Their duration is said to be in the proportion of 4,3,2,1, so that the* Kali Yuga *is one-tenth of the entire* manvantara.

INTRODUCTION

> It is under cyclic law, during a dark period in the history of mind, that the true philosophy disappears for a time, but the same law causes it to reappear as surely as the sun rises and the human mind is present to see it.
>
> —*Ocean of Theosophy,* Chapter i

The term "Age" represents a period of time that exhibits both a beginning and ending. People who seriously work with the events associated with any discipline or line of study concerned with what occurs in the world find it necessary to employ the term "Age." Yet there are grand Ages that pass us by that people today fail to detect. Anything that has a beginning in time must also have an ending in time. Thus, the history of the world, or of the universe itself, is marked off in periods exhibiting particular characteristics. For example, the calendar traces the annual cycles of the seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter, to be followed by spring—the beginning of a new annual cycle.

Scholars and historians take note of great changes in the distinguishing features of archaeology, geology, mythology, science, etc., etc. "World Ages" denote a period of time marked by significant changes occurring in the characteristics of human behavior and the world. The condition of humanity and the condition of the world cannot be separated, as the two must be looked upon as one. In the pamphlet, *The Secret Doctrine and its Study,* HPB is reported to say: "the world is Man living in his personal nature." Hence, we have the period

of innocence (the Golden Age), the period of youth (the Silver Age), the period of young adulthood (the Bronze Age), and the period of full adulthood, and thus of full responsibility (the Iron Age).

As to the Ages, HPB writes in *Isis Unveiled:*

> As our planet revolves once every year around the sun and at the same time turns once in every twenty-four hours upon its own axis, thus traversing minor circles within a larger one, so is the work of the smaller cyclic periods accomplished and recommenced, within the Great Saros[1].
>
> The revolution of the physical world, according to the ancient doctrine, is attended by a like revolution in the world of intellect—the spiritual evolution of the world proceeding in cycles, like the physical one.
>
> Thus we see in history a regular alternation of ebb and flow in the tide of human progress. The great kingdoms and empires of the world, after reaching the culmination of their greatness, descend again, in accordance with the same law by which they ascended…
>
> The division of the history of mankind into Golden, Silver, Copper and Iron Ages, is not a fiction. We see the same thing in the literature of peoples. An age of great inspiration and unconscious productiveness is invariably followed by an age of criticism and consciousness. The one affords material for the analyzing and critical intellect of the other.
>
> Thus, all those great characters who tower like giants in the history of mankind, like Buddha-Siddârtha, and Jesus, in the realm of spiritual, and Alexander the

[1] …the circle is Sar, and Saros, or cycle, and was the Babylonian god whose circular horizon was the visible symbol of the invisible…(see *SD* i, 113-4).

> Macedonian and Napoleon the Great, in the realm of physical conquests, were but reflexed images of human types which had existed ten thousand years before…There is no prominent character in all the annals of sacred or profane history whose prototype we cannot find in the half-fictitious and half-real traditions of bygone religions and mythologies…*"As above, so it is below. That which has been, will return again. As in heaven, so on earth."* (*Isis* i, 34-35.)

That which is Below corresponds to that which is Above, and that which is Above corresponds to that which is Below, in the accomplishment of the Miracle of One Thing. And just as all things have come from One, through the Mediation of One, so all things follow from this One Thing in the same way.

—*The Emerald Tablet by Hermes Trismegistus*

QUESTIONING THE MYOPIC HISTORY OF FALSE GODS

QUESTIONS of the curious never end. Nothing satisfies this craving like theosophical study, which opens certain doors to challenge us with increasingly pressing questions. History is one of those challenges. Most of us first learned a somewhat documented history, typical of the particular political and religious cultures we have been raised in. H.P. Blavatsky's presentation in *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, however, expands our concepts of time so immensely both in span and transformation that the rest of the world is still catching up (although coming much closer).

To open this door to history exposes us to a different reality, which creates hurdles in gaining popular consensus. (Reality shifts make opinions of so-called facts.) Nevertheless, logic moves us forward to new, if uncertain, vistas. And if it changes our lives, the new priorities we set for ourselves are only reflecting what we then find relevant and purposeful, given a longer view. Once situations are posed in a context of 100s of 1,000s of years, instead of 5,000 plus years, one wonders how it is that everyone else limits life-history to the latter. (What did they think people have been doing with their lives previously? If human development spans this larger time frame, what fills their days?) Even if you fail to recognize that expanded history as your own (through reincarnation and unity), why care only for the history of your own knowable culture? We are pressed to explore an open history. If not, how is the future shaped with only myopic vision?

Where are our priorities? History measures the mind, the spirit, and the body. How do we account for all of what we are?

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In theosophical works, the focus on history lies in spiritual evolution, in our capacity as conscious beings—told in terms of races and subraces, which HPB describes as classifications within the cycle of evolution. Though much overlap occurs in these cycles (not to mention cycles within cycles), we are fifth-race, fifth-subrace peoples today, having matured in the physical vehicles we inhabit and merging in an awakening consciousness to recall the spiritual being we are. Mainstream history, however, only acknowledges fifth-subrace history, at best (*SD* ii, 351). Knowledge of the previous four races plus comes to us through oral traditions, now considered storytelling, primarily being creation myths and stories involving floods and worldwide destruction.

Ancient mythology, poetry, and religious mystery have captured these previous stages of development (*SD* ii, 271). An example: We are the children of Noahs in every culture—Noah being the singular representation of the Titans and Kabiris, the divine king-instructors, and the Promethean promise of the divine humanity (*SD* ii, 364). HPB presents many comparisons in mythology through the stanzas of *The Secret Doctrine* and, in this, provides some context for religious foundations, thus showing the commonalities among all. (A fuller sense of history gives us a context for our own stories and often a deeper understanding of our

lives. Through Krishna and Buddha many a student has rediscovered the meaning of Christ.) As important, the aims of such spiritual devotion are shown to be the mythic qualities of self-redemption (*SD* ii, 420): "There is one eternal Law in nature, one that always tends to adjust contraries and to produce final harmony. It is owing to this law of spiritual development superseding the physical and purely intellectual, that mankind will become freed from its false gods, and find itself finally—SELF-REDEEMED."

SALVATION STORIES

What are considered historical personages by many can, in comparison, expose recurring patterns and archetypal representations. As allegories, they provide a wealth of useful information. The study of the messianic cycle of great teachers and incarnated gods who visit regularly include Krishna, Buddha, and Jesus. They are described in *The Secret Doctrine* (ii, 359): "…each of these (as many others) had first appeared on earth as one of the seven powers of the LOGOS, individualized as a God or 'Angel' (messenger); then, mixed with matter, they had re-appeared in turn as great sages and instructors who 'taught the Fifth Race,' after having instructed the two preceding races, had ruled during the Divine Dynasties, and had finally sacrificed themselves, to be reborn under various circumstances for the good of mankind,

Buddha

and for its salvation at certain critical periods….”

An Ancient Diety

Collectively, we see other recurring patterns in cyclic evolution. Cyclic history implies a series of highly advanced civilizations that experience generation and destruction, as a natural course of life. Alongside these major changes, cycles are visible in the re-emerging thoughts carried through reincarnation throughout time. Karma and reincarnation are laws that carry implications in achieving this spiritual development as well as give us visible indications of our progress. In terms of practical application, the relationship between karma and ethics is under constant scrutiny. HPB (*SD* i, 637) challenges students of theosophy: “To make the working of Karma, in the periodical renovations of the Universe, more evident and intelligible to the student when he arrives at the origin and evolution of man, he has now to examine with us the esoteric bearing of the Karmic Cycles upon Universal Ethics. The question is, do those mysterious divisions of time, called Yugas and Kalpas by the Hindus, and?…‘cycle,’ ring or circle, by the Greeks, have any bearing upon, or any direct connection with, human life?”

What have the yugas, or ages, to do with justice (as suggested in *Isis* ii, 468) and enlightenment? Can we use our understanding of cycles to gain perspective on the collective

development of consciousness and the seeds we need to sow, as we work toward self redemption? In *Isis* i, 31, HBP suggests that these yugas are "life-problems to solve." Each of the seven races is divided into these ages—the Golden, Silver, Bronze, and Iron Age (*SD* ii, 198). In *Isis* (ii, 275) is a fuller description:

> Even the four ages of the Hindu chronology contain a far more philosophical idea than appears on the surface. It defines them according to both the psychological or mental and the physical states of man during their period. Crita-yug, the golden age, the "age of joy," or spiritual innocence of man; Treta-yug, the age of silver, or that of fire—the period of supremacy of man and of giants and of the sons of God; Dwapara-yug, the age of bronze—a mixture already of purity and impurity (spirit and matter) the age of doubt; and at last our own, the Kali-yug, or age of iron, of darkness, misery, and sorrow.**...**

Looking at our time of Kali Yuga, the iron age, as an example: What clues do our being in Kali Yuga offer to spiritual evolution regarding our perception of the divine self? Kali Yuga begins at the moment of Krishna's death, dated at 3102 BCE, which leads us to the *Bhagavad-Gita* as the allegorical foundation for Kali Yuga. In his *Notes on The Bhagavad-Gita*, Wm. Q. Judge links Krishna's mission to the onset of the dark ages:

> He is said to have descended in order to start among men those moral and philosophical ideas which were necessary to be known during the revolution of the Ages, at the end of which—after a brief period of darkness—a better Age will begin."

The *Gita* presents, in detail, the stages of the gunas (conditioned qualities, or life qualities)—sattvic (golden, buddhic), rajas (iron-like, mental and acquisitive energies), and tamas (earthy, stagnant). While Krishna instructs Arjuna to develop sattvic qualities as necessary for spiritual progress,

our experiences through the world's ages become increasing tamasic. In the transition from the sattvic, golden age, the last vestiges which left with the death of Krishna, we became increasing less spiritual. The dual evolution of the spiritual and physical in humans (*Isis* ii, 276-277) crosses paths:

> …it is only occasionally that men are born who are the types of what man should be, and yet is not. The first races of men were spiritual, and their protoplastic bodies were not composed of the gross and material substances of which we see them composed now-a-day. The first men were created with all the faculties of the Deity, and powers far transcending those of the angelic host; for they were the direct emanations of Adam Kadmon, the primitive man, the Macrocosm; while the present humanity is several degrees removed even from the earthly Adam, who was the Microcosm, or "the little world." …Hence, man was intended from the first to be a being of both a progressive and retrogressive nature. Beginning at the apex of the divine cycle, he gradually began receding from the centre of Light, acquiring at every new and lower sphere of being (worlds each inhabited by a different race of human beings) a more solid physical form and losing a portion of his divine faculties.

WHEN DID THE GODS WITHDRAW?

What actually changes in Kali Yuga? We have clues of this change in spiritual perception, which affects our sense of divine presence. Mentioned by Judge on page 91 of *Notes* are "certain powers and properties of nature which leave the world when the Kali Yuga or dark age, as this is called, has fully set in." The gods (personifications of those powers and forces) have withdrawn to other realms. The last vestiges of the golden age are gone. (Myth tells us that Zeus was king of the gods. These were the days of the Titans before

Prometheus, the god who would then raise mortals to godhood potential, enabling the departure of the gods.)

The gods' departure is offset by an awareness of the indwelling divinity. Signifying the highest in ourselves, the atman, Krishna also has a message of awakening. The path to self-redemption transforms our lower desires to higher ones, and we make the Arjuna-Krishna connection. The revolution is played out in the transition. If we borrow from other dark ages, we see them characterized by great creativity and progress—of hope and aspiration amid destruction and change. Dark ages are full of heroes, like Hercules—the stuff of epic poems and distinguished battle legends. Arjuna being depicted as warrior is intentional, according to Judge.

The other meaning of Kali Yuga, Judge continues, is the "principle of reciprocity or Brotherhood," the wheel of unity that must be kept going. Leading by good example, as Arjuna is instructed, will imprint on the astral, causing "effects ever increasing in intensity until at last the 'gods' before referred to being in distant spheres to feel the force of these good actions and to return again to help mankind on the recurrence of a better age." (The warrior's duty is to mediate those internal battles between mind and action.)

INDWELLING ACCESS TO DIVINE INTELLIGENCES

Knowledge of what's answering people's prayers (or not), giving them insights still unacceptable to traditional science, and providing a source of awe to shake the skeptics is part of the whole of what we are. A corrective lens on today's short-sighted versions of history will help bring virtues and altruistic behavior to the top priority of how we model our society. The gods may have departed, but we are not alone in our self-redeeming divinity and we are not ultimately so

disfavored within our own Promethean powers. The history of our evolution shows that we live in a universe with divine intelligence, but that we must reach out if we are to have access to the sources of energy that provide assistance of a divine nature. The benefits of this focus are described in *Isis* (ii, 459-60):

> Like attracts like, they say; thus, according to the mood in which our attracts around itself astral form oozes out during the hours of sleep, according to our thoughts, pursuits, and daily occupations, all of which are fairly impressed upon the plastic capsule called the human soul, the latter spiritual beings congenial to itself.

Connecting with our indwelling spirit works on many levels. Through the study of theosophy, we explore how divinity flows within our deepest selves. Our aim is self-redemption. To act otherwise ultimately must fail. But that's taking the long view.

A special transmission outside the Scriptures;
No dependence upon words and letters;
Direct pointing to reality;
Seeing into one's own nature and realizing Buddhahood.

—*Bodhidharma*

RECIPROCATING LIVES

The Hermetic philosophy held that man is a copy of the greater universe; that he is a little universe in himself, governed by the same laws as the great one, and in the small proportions of a human being showing all those greater laws in operation, only reduced in time or sweep. This is the rule to which H. P. Blavatsky adheres, and which is found running through all the ancient mysteries and initiations. It is said that our universe is a collection of atoms or molecules—called also "lives"; living together and through each the spirit struggles to reach consciousness, and that this struggle is governed by a law compelling it to go on in or between periods. In any period of such struggle some of these atoms or collections of molecules are left over, as it were, to renew the battle in the next period, and hence the state of the universe at any time of manifestation or the state of each newly-manifested universe—must be the result of what was done in the preceding period.

We are now using matter that has been used over and over again, and are affected by the various tendencies impressed in it. This is a highly important matter, whether reincarnation be a true doctrine or not. For if each new nation is only a mass of new egos or souls, it must be much affected by the matter-environment left behind by nations and races that have disappeared forever.

—Drawn from the writings of Wm. Q. Judge

UNIVERSAL PROCESSES

CHILDREN wonder aloud about the beauty, and at times the peculiarity, of the passing parade of intricate and delicate forms they encounter daily. This should not be surprising, for the Earth sustains an enormous variety of complex organisms, continuously cycling in and out of our view and comprehension. Since people quite naturally feel involved in this process, they seek to learn more about this eternally "revolving door." It follows therefore that a discipline would emerge to categorize the details of this body of passing forms. Investigators carefully analyze the information made available, taking care to trace the dynamics that mark the processes of change. Yet, within the frame of this great body of descriptive information, nothing actually explains the source of the potential that mysteriously manifests into nature's "creations."

In contrast to this stance, the theosophical perspective stresses that evolution proceeds from Spirit, not from what we commonly call matter. Occult philosophy identifies universal consciousness with Spirit, commenting further that both words symbolize the unseen source of spiritual powers. Spirit, in itself, as universal life, cannot act without suitable vehicle to act through. It may be recalled that spiritual intelligences and physical organisms come together in the fourth Round to provide the needed focus to activate Spirit, which, in the process, lights-up individualized minds. Before this pivotal event, units of pure potential do not move consciously as potent forces. The human role in the Kosmic process appears evident in the following comments by HPB:

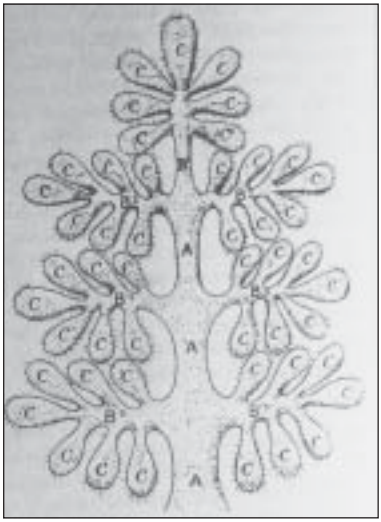
> The doctrine teaches that, in order to become a divine, fully conscious god,—aye, even the highest—the Spiritual primeval INTELLIGENCES must pass through the human stage. And when we say human, this does not apply merely to our terrestrial humanity, but to the mortals that inhabit any world, *i.e.*, to those Intelligences that have reached the appropriate equilibrium between matter and spirit, as *we* have now, since the middle point of the Fourth Root Race of the Fourth Round was passed. Each Entity must have won for itself the right of becoming divine through self-experience. (*SD* i, 106.)

Owing to the partial development of our perceptive faculties in, this, the fourth Round, many people think of metaphysical concepts largely in objective terms. This inherent condition distorts the true nature of being. Theosophy affirms that spirit and matter are inseparable, coexisting in the One Life. Hence, the doctrines that outline the Rounds and Races cover both subjective and objective perspectives. Occult philosophy submits that the objective world stands as the outer "effect" of evolving subjectivity. It follows, therefore, that the outer "fabric" of the universe mirrors the moral and intellectual development of humankind.

Allowing for today's perceptual bias one would say that during the first three Rounds the Earth forms and consolidates, settles and hardens during the fourth, and then slowly returns to its original ethereal form during the last three Rounds.

But in more subjective terms, occult philosophy reveals that in the first Round the process of evolution begins with an imprint of ideation. At the beginning of the first Round the basic pattern for that "Great Age" is projected by intelligences evolved during past Manvantaras. In addition to occult teachings, further insight into the seven Rounds consist of gleanings from analogy and correspondence. So, in the second Round, the monadic essence

of humanity may be said to proceed by clothing itself in the conceptual forms developed out of existing patterns. In the third Round, the existing conceptual forms grow into firm images. And then, as the teaching goes, during our present fourth Round the developing images manifest objectively and become the seat of evolving self-conscious souls. In the fifth Round, these self-conscious beings should attain clear understanding of the causes that underlie the then present field of relationships. It seems that in the sixth and seventh Rounds, mentally and morally awakened humanity would assimilate, through the process of realization and actualization, the inherent purpose of manifested being and spiritual relationships. The sixth and seventh Rounds may be characterized as periods of expanding spiritual subjectivity. Hence, intellectual and moral evolution carries the subjective development that supervenes on the six inner planes of the Earth chain of globes.



The human Race has been compared to a tree, and this serves admirably as an illustration. The main stem of a tree may be compared to the ROOT-RACE (A). Its larger limbs to the various SUB-RACES; seven in number (B1, B2). On each of these limbs are seven BRANCHES, OR FAMILY-RACES (C). After this the cactus-plant is a better illustration, for its fleshy "leaves" are covered with sharp spines, each of which may be compared to a nation or tribe of human beings.

Now our Fifth Root-Race has already been in existence—as a race sui generis *and quite free from its parent stem—about 1,000,000 years; therefore it must be inferred that each of the four preceding Sub-Races has lived approximately 210,000 years; thus each Family-Race has an average existence of about 30,000 years. Thus the European "Family Race" has still a good many thousand years to run, although the nations or the innumerable spines upon it, vary with each succeeding "season" of three or four thousand years. It is somewhat curious to mark the comparative approximation of duration between the lives of a "Family-Race" and a "Sidereal year."*

—*The Secret Doctrine* i, 434-5

As with each of the seven Rounds, the seven Root Races within each Round begin with a relatively ethereal substance and end with a truly spiritual essence. Within these two, the developing monadic essence proceeds on a double line of physical and moral evolution.

~

FROM THE PROEM

The Eternity of the Universe *in toto* as a boundless plane; periodically "the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing," called "the manifesting stars," and the "sparks of Eternity." The appearance and disappearance of Worlds is like a regular tidal ebb of flux and reflux....the absolute universality of that law of periodicity, of flux and reflux, ebb and flow, which physical science has observed and recorded in all departments of nature. An alternation such as that of Day and Night, Life and Death, Sleeping and Waking, is a fact so common, so perfectly universal and without exception, that it is easy to comprehend that in it we see one of the absolutely fundamental laws of the universe.

—*The Secret Doctrine*

BRAHMA

If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near,
Shadow and sunlight are the same,
The vanished gods to me appear,
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1856 [1857]

PRECESSIONAL BLUES

IN the time it takes to read this sentence, the Earth will glide 200 miles in its orbit around the sun, the sun 3,000 miles in its orbit around the center of our galaxy, and 350,000 miles of additional space will have opened up between our galaxy and those of the Hydra cluster as the universe goes on expanding. This is the universe based on the concept of the spectrum.

Newton coined the word "spectrum" and thereby gave impetus to the color-based analysis of the movement of the stars. Neither color nor the stars have recovered.

> May God us keep From a Single vision of Newton's sleep!
>
> —*William Blake*

As Blake realized, scientific materialism leaves much out. It leaves out what he has called "four fold vision" and leaves out the truth of the fundamentals of theosophy. The truth of the Second Fundamental (cyclical causation) is crucially absent, as is the power of the accumulated wisdom of the ancients.

> That it is the uninterrupted record covering thousands of generations of seers whose respective experiences were made to test and to verify the traditions passed orally by one early race to another, of the teachings of higher and exalted beings, who watched over the childhood of Humanity *SD* i, 272-3.

How indispensable this tradition at a time when nation states are reduced to being "red in tooth and claw." How valuable

to marry again our spirit with the vastness of the cosmos in a way that recognizes the immortality of each and all. Do we really want our sense of the cosmos (our home) governed by colors of light defined as "electromagnetic radiations that are resolved into their constituent wavelengths and frequencies?" Precessional Blues is counter to materialism in a way that gives us keys to the greatest of the secrets of the seers.

Newton's spectrum has become the tail that wags the dog of the science of the stars. There is no integration whatever with the vast, vast history of starlore-based wisdom generated without the spectroscope or the telescope or some other scope-like intermediary. The origin of this wisdom was in the observations of stars, and the wisdom was coded in secret codes, the keys of which have been lost.

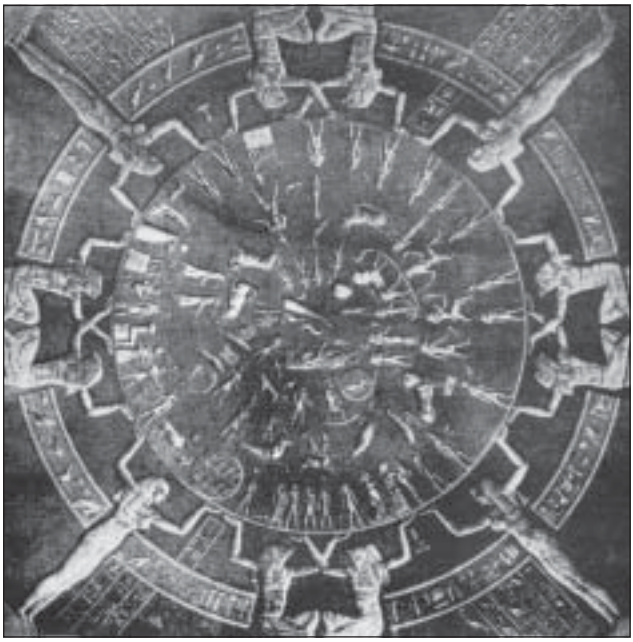
The Secret Doctrine, on the other hand, recaptures that which was lost.

It is truly stellar. It brings to us a conception of the cosmos that is spiritually imbued. It centers on cycles within cycles, upon movements of the stars and planets, and on us, each and all, as time space entities.

In a section of *The Secret Doctrine* titled "The Two Mystic Poles:"

> Here we have the pole of the earth within the plane of the ecliptic, attended with all the fiery consequences that must arise from such a state of the heavens: when the whole Zodiac in 25,000 (odd) years, must have reddened with the solar blaze, and each sign must have been vertical to the polar region (*SD* i, 357).

HPB makes reference to a mysterious cycle known to science as precession. This Great Cycle is known to science, but its esoteric meaning is, of course, absent from all of the scientific definitions.



Egyptian Zodiac

It is no simple matter to think about what HPB is referring to in the above quote. As aids to thought, most of the drawings, diagrams, analogies, and metaphors of science are worse than useless. Scientific definitions bring a prosaicness to such observations. Typical science all but destroys the grandeur of this most precious occult legacy. Tycho Brahe may have been the last relatively modern educated man to have directly experienced the basis of the phenomenon of "The Two Mystic Poles." Tycho Brahe may indeed be the last man to have had a direct peek into the origins of the wisdom tradition.

The location: the final resting place in Prague of the Danish nobleman Tycho Brahe. His tomb is being opened. On the lid of the sarcophagus an image of Brahe carved in stone shows his noble background. He is depicted in full armor

with his hand on a sword resting in a scabbard at his side. As the tomb's lid is moved aside and the skeleton within is revealed, a strange blue light flashes from his skull and the viewers gasp. The blue light confirms part of the myth of this larger-than-life man. The knowledgeable among the viewers exchange nods and amazed expressions. They all know about the famous duel.

It took place at seven o'clock on the night of December 29, 1566. Brahe, a student at the University of Rostock in Germany, while attending a dance at a professor's house, quarreled with a fellow student and the issue was settled with a duel "in perfect darkness." Tradition has it that the dispute was about mathematics. (Was it the appropriateness of mathematics as the ultimate model of celestial movement?) In the duel Brahe "lost a piece of his nose. He repaired the defect by devising an ingenious replacement of gold and silver (*The Discoverers*, 306)." This amalgam served as a replacement nose and left on his skull a colored blue-green print. Who was this man? Was he truly the last scholar to study the stars and not succumb to the seductions of over rigorous mathematical modeling?

On his death bed his last words (a question, "Have I lived my life in vain?") were barely stilled by the night air when his assistant Johannes Kepler began the mathematical reinterpretation of the countless direct observations of Brahe. Kepler categorized the frame by frame passion-imbued observations of Brahe (they have been compared to the recording capabilities of a movie camera) and introduced an elaborate mathematical model as a determining form. With Brahe's death, the idea of constellations of stars as magical portents alive to their suspension in space that is itself a directly engageable, palpable entity came to an end.

Kepler sounded the death knell with his scientific mathematical model:

> The earth's orbit is the measure of all things; circumscribe around it a dodecahedron, and the circle containing this will be Mars; circumscribe around Mars a tetrahedron, and the circle containing this will be Jupiter; circumscribe around Jupiter a cube, and the circle containing this will be Saturn. Now inscribe within the earth an icosahedron, and the circle contained in it will be Venus; inscribe within Venus an octahedron, and the circle contained in it will be Mercury (*The Discoverers,* 310).

So Kepler took twenty years of Brahe's direct observations of the light of stars and planets and imposed on them basic findings of mathematics. For mathematicians, there are five and only five regular polyhedrons. Kepler took the magic background of billions and billions of stars and mapped against it the paths of the planets in overly defined regularities of the five regular polyhedrons. Our sense of the cosmos has yet to recover.

The change from Brahe's direct observations was momentous but not understood as such. Brahe had neither sophisticated instrumentation (*i.e.*, no telescope) nor sophisticated mathematics. Thus Kepler's math modeling is presented in the history of science as a landmark of progress. Blake has warned us of Newton's sleep. We add a warning about Kepler's. There is no doubt, however, about the wonder Kepler himself experienced at the fit of Brahe's observations with his model. In his own words he really goes too far: "I dare frankly to confess that I have stolen the golden vessels of the Egyptians to build a tabernacle for my God far from the bounds of Egypt *(Ibid.,* 312).

Kepler captures partials. Let us look holistically, with the naked eye, like Brahe. Conceive of the long forgotten gazers

at the stars who revealed, thousands of years before Kepler observed the heavens, one of the greatest of the mysteries of the sky: its permanence in impermanence. This is exactly what HPB encourages in *The Secret Doctrine*.

> But more specifically, what was lost in the transition from Brahe to Kepler? Does not science take us nonstop from ancient civilizations right to now with vivid scenarios about our future? How could anything be left out? What is left out is the very origin of science itself.

In their radical book, *Hamlet's Mill: An Essay Investigating the Origins of Human Knowledge and its Transmission Through Myth*, Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha van Dechend propose and document (through cross-cultural study of exquisite detail) the existence of long forgotten geniuses who, with direct observation of the stars and elaborate oral tradition understood, among so many other mysterious stellar phenomenon, what scientists now call precession.

With tremendous steadfastness the authors keep readers away from typical scientific definitions. They establish that before time as we know it men and women with "immense, steady and minute attention" with "coherence, deduction and imaginative intention" learned about the third motion (the precessional motion) of planet Earth. In other words, human genius existed before any of the ages of the world. History, especially scientific history, does not have the market cornered on genius.

Unknown geniuses thought about and recorded star movements before any form of writing. They recorded the earth's third movement in folk tales and in myths and in their art. With the evolution of social structure built around power and hierarchy, wisdom was made secret. In early civilizations the stellar truths became the most precious of secrets. A myth

about a magic mirror that goes on for tens of thousands of years, reflecting the whole world, can be used to hide knowledge of the starry sky itself. A seven-ringed cup might represent seven planetary paths that are ruled by (possessed by) a king (a particular constellation). What seems a magic image or a fable to many, to those who understand is a reflection of Time itself.

Hidden in the folds of fables and the worlds of artisans, the Great Cycle influenced secret teachings about the nature of eternity. Regrettably, all too often the truths so crucial to understanding between cultures were hidden and turned into dogmas about particular paths to salvation. Myths framed the lives of the prophets (the wise men followed the star to find the baby Jesus). Symbols gained widespread commerce (staff of Moses, a symbol of authority, was cast down and became a snake, a symbol of eternity). Gradually the impenetrable fabric of dogma cloaks the occult workings of deep truths about the cyclical observables that inspired the stories and myths. Have a different version of the path to salvation, though it be based in the same unknown secrets, and you may perish by the sword for your beliefs.

Few know today that the ancients understood the 25,000 plus year cycle, the very cycle HPB identifies in the SD section "The Two Mystic Poles."

There are a lot of poor diagrams and drawings of this Great Cycle. The scientific analogies are also poor, the most frequent being that of a spinning top. Yes, the earth does spin on an axis. And yes, the concept of wobble is familiar to anyone who has watched a top spin. But honestly, can the mind shift from that little quick movement a small top makes as it rotates along a flat solid floor to a movement the earth, suspended in the vastness of space, takes 25,000 plus years to complete?

From the theosophical point of view we do better to look for knowledge of the cosmos as HPB did, across cultures. To do so we are aided by the use of blue as a key symbol. With blue we can move across cultures and understand how the cyclic movement of the stars was coded in myths that were the basis of teachings about immortality. This is a totally different approach to light, to the stars, and to color.

Goethe and Kandinsky have both recognized the Newton's sleep quality of the spectrum and have awakened us to the reality that experience of light creates inner light. Color is, therefore, for Goethe, an open secret. "The highest thing would be," for Goethe, "to comprehend that everything factual is already theory. The blue of heavens reveals to us a fundamental law of chromatics. One should only not see anything further behind the phenomenon: they themselves are the theory."

In Kandinsky's words in especial it is blue that summons man towards the infinite "and yields an infinite penetration into absolute essence—where there is, and can be, no end."

In all major religions light is associated with divinity and blue serves key symbolic functions. In the gospel of John, Christ is "the light of the world." Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the apostles are often depicted wearing blue robes or composed against blue sky backgrounds.

> The sky in El Greco's Christ Driving the Traders from the Temple is painted with azurite. And in Leonardo's 1485 Virgin of the Rocks (oil on wood), an initial layer of gray was painted over azurite before the final layer of ultramarine was applied (*The Primary Colors,* 40).

In Buddhism the practice of visualizing Hum utilizes the unifying power of blue. Hum is the concluding sound of Om Mani Padme Hum: the Jewel in the Lotus. The blue of Hum is visualized as unifying five other symbolic colors. Also:

> In Tibetan Buddhism the concepts of awareness and wisdom, called dharma-dhatu—attributes of the immortal androgyne—are of blinding blue color (*Ibid*, 22).

The Primary Colors author, Theroux also identifies the importance of blue in the Middle East. Blue beads are used to ward off evil in Iran. Mosque tiles, especially those of domes are often of exquisite blues. He writes:

> The blue Mosque in Tabriz, which owes its name to the brilliant ultramarine faience that, fully covering the masonry surface, seems to take on dimension (*Ibid*, 56).

And who can forget once seen the delicate renderings of the blue God, Krishna, in the miniature paintings in the Lahore Museum. Blue is also a unifying symbol for the Masons. Lodges of Ancient Craft Masonry are called "blue lodges." In the clothing of Masons, depending on the rite, blue is used for edging of aprons. Aprons as symbols go back to the days when Masons actually wore aprons to protect themselves against fragments of splintering rock and blows from tools. The aprons are symbols of hard work which the blue unites to other Masonic symbols in a way that "the whole represents more than the sum of the parts." Such symbolic use of blue opens the doors of perception to inner light. Blue as a symbol links desires and ideas, imagination and reason, the generalizing mind with the detail mind. Blue is a vehicle that can carry the weight of the greatest of polarities.

Goethe was both a Mason and a poet, and his language captures this capacity of blue in an often quoted summary statement. "Color is the deeds and suffering of light." This is a paean to subjective knowledge of the spiritual.

Blue is key to the astounding complexity of Raphael's world famous painting, The School of Athens. The composition centers on two figures, both wearing blue: Plato and Aristotle.

Their gestures, when unified by blue, connect to representations of the sky. Plato points up beyond three blue windows to a blue diagram of the constellations and Aristotle points downward. Also clothed in blue are Alcibiades, Socrates, Pythagoras, Bramante, Ptolemy, Zoroaster, and Diogenes the Cynic in a racy off-the-shoulder pale blue robe.

Dramatic examples of precessional blues is found in the funeary art of the Egyptians. King Ramses III, 1170 BC, is depicted with a blue helmet out of which emerges a cobra image whose head is painted blue. A blue-headed cobra is also coiled on King Tutankhamen's funeary headdress and next to it is a vulture (symbol of death) whose beak is blue. The blue used by the Egyptians for this most sacred and secret function was lapis lazuli. Mythical lapis lazuli is symbolic of daybreak. Its goldlike pyrite crystals twinkle like stars. Blue lapis lazuli twinkles together with the cobra, the vulture, the blue and gold striped headdress and crook and flail, all together symbols of immortality. Look at the vulture and cobra reflected in the solid gold (there is 450 pounds of it) and we see the blues dissolve the forms, creating a moving picture of the ascending merger of Tutankhamen with the star god Osiris. Once in a Great Cycle. Once again in the next. Forever.

Esoterically, blue is darkness's transition to light. These universals take us to the essence of theosophy's fundamentals. The first fundamental subsumes the second. Oneness subsumes cyclical phenomena. Departures are subsumed by returns to origin. This is the secret of one of the greatest of human mysteries—that of immortality. Watch the day come out of night and you will see the ineffable blues of the sky devour the darkness. The dark yields to the character of day, becoming lighter as the blue earth turns in its daily cycle. Immortality is recurrence. One is two.

The daily movements of the earth and changes of the seasons are symbolically unified by blues in myth and tradition. The longer Great Cycle, precession, is also a key symbol. Both key symbols considered together, precession and blue, give renewed purchase on the grand, impossibly diverse mythic stories of the great secret keepers of past world ages.

It takes the heat of supernovas to create the elements which make the core of our existence. We are forged by star fire. We are made in star births and in star death cycles. The ancients knew many truths and preserved them in the myriad myths and folk tales and in the arts of all cultures. Gods and goddesses dying, that is going to the underworld, i.e., underneath the earth, only to be born again thousands or tens of thousands of years hence are described in these myths and stories. We have forgotten how to read these myths, these folk tales and how to look at the art. We are cloaked in a cloud of unknowing.

Cloaks are arrayed around the most precious secrets: those about immortality. We need special procedures and concepts to reveal these theosophical treasures. Precession and the color blue are keys to understanding our true stellar heritage and lineage.

What does this have to do with World Ages as we typically know them? History is the story of the victors and the vanquished, and science is the story of lockstep linear progress. Both incur massive omissions of wisdom traditions, traditions that certainly do not fit “progressive” linear definition. We can reclaim our true stellar heritage from all concepts of world ages, for we are star bright illuminations of the timeless One.

POETIC EXPRESSIONS IN THE PRESENT KALI YUGA

And in the Bhagavad Gita *it is said by Krishna:*

When Righteousness
Declines, O Bharata! when Wickedness
Is strong, I rise, from age to age, and take
Visible shape, and move a man with men,
Succoring the good and thrusting the evil back,
And setting Virtue on her seat again,…

"WHAT POTIONS HAVE I DRUNK OF SIREN TEARS"

What potions have I drunk of Siren tears
Distill'd from limbecks foul as hell within,
Applying fears to hopes, and hopes to fears,
Still losing when I saw myself to win!
What wretched errors hath my heart committed,
Whilst it hath thought itself so blessed never!
How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted,
In the distraction of this madding fever!
O benefit of ill! Now I find true
That better is by evil still made better;
And ruin'd love, when it is built anew,
Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.
So I return rebuk'd to my content,
And gain by ill thrice more than I have spent.

—*William Shakespeare , Sonnet CXIX.*

DUALITY

From me spring good and evil.

Who gave thee such a ruby flaming heart
And such a pure cold spirit? Side by side
I know these must eternally abide
In intimate war, and each to each impart
Life from its pain, in every joy a dart
To wound with grief or death the self allied.
Red life within the spirit crucified,
The eyes eternal pity thee: thou art
Fated with deathless powers at war to be,
Not less the martyr of the world than he
Whose thorn-crowned brow usurps the due of tears
We would pay to thee, ever ruddy life,
Whose passionate peace is still to be at strife,
O'erthrown but in the unconflicting spheres.

—George William ("A.E.") Russell (1867–1935).
Collected Poems by A.E. 1913.

Science may have found a cure for most evils; but it has found no remedy for the worst of them all- the apathy of human beings.

—Helen Keller

Through violence you may murder a liar, but you can't establish truth.

Through violence you may murder a hater, but you can't murder hate.

Darkness cannot put out darkness. Only light can do that. Difficult and painful as it is, we must walk on in the days ahead with an audacious faith in the future. When our days become dreary with low-hovering clouds of despair, and when our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, let us remember that there is a creative force in this universe, working to pull down the gigantic mountains of evil, a power that is able to make a way out of no way and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Throughout history it has been the inaction of thos3e who could have acted, the indifference of those who should have known better, the silence of the voice of justice when it mattered most, that has made it possible for evil to triumph."

—Haile Selassie

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THE KALI YUGA

By Wm. Q. Judge

A correspondent is confused on this subject from the statement in *What is Theosophy* by Mr. Old, that we are in the midst of the Iron or Black Age. Doubtless his sentence, which is on page 28 of the book, is misleading, because "kali" means "black," and hence it would seem that he meant we are now in the middle of Kali Yuga, but reading further it is seen that he refers only to the first part of the Age. Kali Yuga is in length 432,000 years according to the old Indian calculation, and we are now coming to the end of its first five thousand years, that preliminary period being reckoned from the death of Krishna. In passing, it may be justly thought that this five thousand year period is the origin of the idea of the Hebrews that the world is about that age, just as the Greeks in the time of Solon imagined that all things had to count from their former great cataclysm, but which the Egyptian priests showed to Solon was incorrect, for, as they said, "There had been many great cataclysms before that."

In *The Secret Doctrine* is to be found this: "The fourth sub-race was in Kali Yuga when destroyed." This is not amenable to objection on the ground that we who are not that race are in Kali, for each race goes through the various Ages for itself; hence the former races, both primary and sub-, go through all the four periods from the Golden to the Black.

It must follow from this, and such is the oldest teaching on the subject, that at one and the same time races may be on the earth running each for itself through one or other of the

periods. Some might be in the Golden Age and others in the Black. At present it is admitted that the Aryans are in the Kali Age, but certain childlike races are not so. Within the present five thousand year period we know that races have absolutely finished their Kali Yuga and gone out of existence. This happened to that which ruled a part of the American continent, and hence for them in particular their Kali Yuga must have begun earlier than ours did. The Hottentots also disappeared during our memory. This method of considering the subject will clear it up, leaving only to be settled for each race the period which they are in, or the beginning and ending of it. And, as said, for the Aryans the great Kali Yuga began five thousand (odd) years ago.

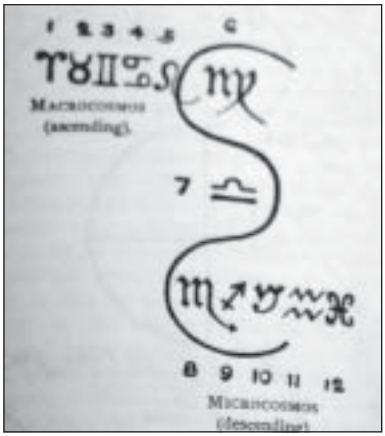
To find out when the great Kali Yuga for the major race, including all its sub-races, began would be impossible, as there are no means, and H.P.B., the only one for the present who had access to those who held the records, said precise figures on those heads would not be given out. But she and also those behind her who gave her so much information laid it down, as in accord with the philosophy of nature given out, that a division into four was the order for evolution in respect to the life of races, and hence that each great race, whatever its number in the whole seven, would be compelled to go through the four periods from the Satya to Kali, while at the same time the minor races had the same division, only that each part would be shorter than those pertaining to the great race as a whole. For that reason it seems plain that the figures for the various Ages (or Yugas) are only such as relate to and govern the sub- or minor races.

The overlapping of races as to their particular Yuga (or Age) can be easily seen in history. When the whites came to America the Indians were in their stone age in some places, using stone hammers, spears, knives, and arrows. Even in

cultured South America the priests used stone knives for use at the sacrifices. We, however, had gone far beyond that. The red Indian of North America would have remained wholly in the stone age had we not altered it to some extent while we proceeded as instruments for his annihilation. Therefore in our own period we have examples of two races being in different Ages while living at the same time on the globe.

The foregoing is the general scheme outlined in *The Secret Doctrine,* where there are numerous pages showing that when a new race, whether a sub or a major one, comes in it does so while many of the old race still exist, the one gradually rising in development while the other falls. They shade into one another as night does into day, until at last either night or day predominates. This period of shading is allowed for in regard to the Ages, and in the Brahmanical calculation we find that they add twilights and dawns, since preceding a new Age there must be the dawn as following it will come the twilight. The twilight of the one will be the dawn of the other.

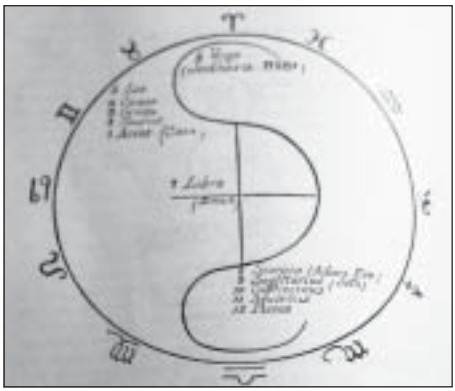
Using the Zodiac for the purpose of considering the question of the Ages, we find that, roughly speaking, the time taken by the sun to go round the whole circle is 25,800 years, as shown by the retrograde movement of the equinoctial points. This is the type for the yearly circle, which makes the four seasons and the four seasons in their turn symbolize the four Ages. Their length will be in proportion to the greater swing of the sun. Among the seasons the winter corresponds to the Kali Age, for then all is turned hard and cold, just as in the Black Age, the light of the Spiritual Sun being dimmed, the hardness and coldness of materiality appear in the moral life. Now if the sidereal period be divided by four, we have the figures 6450 years, or the five-thousand-year period with the requisite twilight or dawn added. And it was taught by the Egyptians that with every quarter of the



Macrocosmos and Microcosmos

circle of the Sun's great path there were changes caused physically by the alteration of the poles, and spiritually there must be changes due to the inner development of the human race as an entirety. While the materialistic philosopher thinks the changes would be due to the movement of the poles, the teaching from the Lodge is that the spiritual inner changes cause the physical ones through the appropriate means; in this case those means are in the movements of the great heavenly bodies. This is because the whole Cosmos is on the same grand plan, with all its parts working together, each in its own way.

For the present, students will have to be satisfied with the general statement that we are in Kali Yuga. The characteristics of the present time show it clearly enough, for while physical civilization is high the spiritual side of it is low and dark, and selfishness is the prevailing order. None of us can really pretend to know more than this, for while we have the Brahmanical calculation and the words of *The Secret Doctrine*, yet that is taking the word of


Macrocosmos and Microcosmos

another, plausible, of course, and also concordant with all other parts of the system, but still not of our own knowledge. The beginning of this Age and the time of its ending are dark to us; but the general theory, sufficient for our present needs, is perfectly clear, and as good an assumption as any of those indulged in by science certainly better than the incredible ideas of the theologian. Of one thing we are getting more and more proof each day, and that is of the immense period during which man has been on the earth, and with that admitted all the great cyclic lengths given by the ancient and modern Theosophists of weight are entitled to credence.

We can also get great comfort from the theory given out at various times, that in Kali Yuga a small effort goes farther for results than the same when made in a better Age. In the other Ages the rates of all things are slower than in this; hence, evil now seems quick; but in the same way good is also much quicker in effect and reach than in a slower time.

—Path, *November, 1894*

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ANCIENT AND MODERN CALENDARS

Thus at the roaring loom of Time I ply,
And weave for God the garment thou see'st Him.

—*Goethe*

THE theosophical conception of "time" is much closer to that held in the ancient world than it is to our common ideas today. This is a brief examination of some of the ancient's approaches to calendars and cyclic events, and a look at ways that a renewed paradigm of time and consciousness could help us in the modern world.

Usually, we think of "time" as a measurement denoting "how long" a span has occurred between events. Such "linear" thinking, while decried by some advocates of a more cyclic view, is so ingrained in us and in our culture that it is difficult to imagine a different kind of time. Yet, we are also intuitively aware that "time" is different for an adult than for a child, that activities which please or fulfill us seem to be "shorter" than those that displease or harm, and that there are qualitative differences between time "well-spent" and time "wasted."

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Ancient Calendar

Time in the ancient world was always viewed as cyclic. This simple statement is at the heart of understanding their views. Events not only repeated themselves, as we often think today, but "time" itself was seen as cyclic. Ebb and flow of life and energy, cyclic movements of planets, stars, rivers, seasons, crops and consciousness were seen as aspects of a greater whole. Calendars, which we think of as mere conveniences or attempts to impose order on an essentially random or chaotic world, were derived from a vaster and more all-encompassing science of unity. Modern scholars are only now beginning to understand just how accurate were the ancient calendars of, for instance, the Mayans and Egyptians.

The Mayans are understood by some today as "predicting" some sort of cataclysmic or "end-time" event, since their most-commonly discussed calendar "ends" on the Winter Solstice, December 2012. But this does not appear to be how the Mayans themselves viewed it, and might be better regarded as a modern interpretation made to suit the apocalyptic world-view of some. The Mayan so-called Long Count Calendar, that calculates the number of days since the start of the Mayan era, is akin to the Julian Day Number used by modern scientists and scholars. It spans a "Bak' tun," or basic unit of "long time," of some 5200 years. Thus, "Mayan time" began 3114 years B.C., according to our system of dating. But each Bak' tun is but one in a series, each of which cycles into the next, just as do our signs of the Zodiac.

Like many ancient cultures, the Mayans had several different calendars, three of which were apparently the most important:

> The Maya kept time with a combination of several cycles that meshed together to mark the movement of the sun, moon and Venus. Their ritual calendar, known as the Tzolkin, was composed of 260 days. It pairs the numbers from 1 through 13 with a sequence of…20 day-names…
>
> The "Calendar Round" is like two gears that inter-mesh, one smaller than the other. One of the 'gears' is called the tzolkin, or Sacred Round. The other is the haab, or Calendar Round.
>
> The Tzolkin consisted of 13 months each 20 days long, and the Haab of 18 months each 20 days long, and five rest days, thus making 365 days. The date was written using both rounds. For example, "6 lk 10 Camber" might be the same as if we wrote "20 June 30 Gemini." (Haab–Calendar round/20 June, and Tzolkin–Sacred round/30 Gemini.) As both these wheels turned so passed the Mayan years. Every 52 years the cycle began again. It was on one of these auspicious years that Cortez landed, thus giving credence to his god image (see www.crystalinks.com/may.html).

The Mayan calendars are not only far more sophisticated than previously recognized, modern investigators have learned of seventeen, and perhaps twenty different calendars! Not only were they practical for agriculture, they could be projected millions of years into the past and future. Small objects such as Venus were tracked against larger ones such as the sun and moon, resulting in a more complex but also more accurate system. Unlike our Gregorian calendar which still requires occasional modifications, the Mayan calendar will have to be adjusted by one day in 380,000 years! More importantly, time was cyclic, without beginning or end, which connected the Mayans to nature and with one another.

The Haab, or civil, calendar mentioned above is based on the cycle of earth. It has 18 months of 20 days each, totaling 360 days, plus five more. It synchronizes with the sacred calendar every 52 years. The moon calendar, Tun-uc, uses 28-day lunar periods. The Tzolkin is the sacred calendar, based on the cycles of the Pleiades, whose 26,000-year cycle is reflected in the 260 days of this calendar—the nine months' gestation period for a human being. Priests and shamans then and now studied the associated gods and goddesses to develop sacred almanacs to assist them with their calculations.

> The European calendar mandated by Pope Gregory in 1583 is the only world calendar that did not intercalate at least two celestial cycles. The Hebraic calendar acquired by Enoch after he was translated in a beam of light intercalated solar and lunar cycles in a fashion similar to the Maya. The Dogon in Africa were given four calendars by visitors from Sirius B: Solar, lunar, Venusian, and civil. The Tibetan calendar is so similar to the Mayan that traditional scholars now speculate that they share a common origin. The Vedic calendar is based on cosmic cycles, or Yugas. An ancient Hindu astrology used 27 houses of 13 degrees 20 minutes, which are key numbers in the Mayan calendar (*Ibid).*

The Egyptians, on the other hand, have left ample evidence that they used three calendars—one based on the stars for agriculture, a civil, solar year of 365 days divided into three seasons of four months each (12 months x 30, +5), and an older, lunar one to keep track of festivals and religious events.

Modified by the Ptolemies and known as the Alexandrian calendar, the Egyptian civil calendar was the basis for the Julian Calendar, which was again changed in the 16th Century by Pope Gregory as the Gregorian Calendar that we use today.

THOUGHTS ON HISTORY

EXCERPTED FROM RALPH WALDO EMERSON'S ESSAY ON HISTORY 1841

Nature is an endless combination and repetition of a very few laws. She hums the old well-known air through innumerable variations.

Nature is full of a sublime family likeness throughout her works; and delights in startling us with resemblances in the most unexpected quarters.

THERE is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate. What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand. Who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only and sovereign agent.

Of the works of this mind history is the record. Its genius is illustrated by the entire series of days. Man is explicable by nothing less than all his history. Without hurry, without rest, the human spirit goes forth from the beginning to embody every faculty, every thought, every emotion, which belongs to it in appropriate events. But the thought is always prior to the fact; all the facts of history preexist in the mind as laws. Each law in turn is made by circumstances predominant, and the limits of nature give power to but one

at a time. A man is the whole encyclopaedia of facts. The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn, and Egypt, Greece, Rome, Gaul, Britain, America, lie folded already in the first man. Epoch after epoch, camp, kingdom, empire, republic, democracy, are merely the application of his manifold spirit to the manifold world.

Emerson, 1844

This human mind wrote history, and this must read it. The Sphinx must solve her own riddle. If the whole of history is in one man, it is all to be explained from individual experience. There is a relation between the hours of our life and the centuries of time. As the air I breathe is drawn from the great repositories of nature, as the light on my book is yielded by a star a hundred millions of miles distant, as the poise of my body depends on the equilibrium of centrifugal and centripetal forces, so the hours should be instructed by the ages, and the ages explained by the hours. Of the universal mind each individual man is one more incarnation. All its properties consist in him. Each new fact in his private experience flashes a light on what great bodies of men have done, and the crises of his life refer to national crises.

Every revolution was first a thought in one man's mind, and when the same thought occurs to another man, it is the key to that era. Every reform was once a private opinion, and when it shall be a private opinion again, it will solve the problem of the age. The fact narrated must correspond to

something in me to be credible or intelligible. We as we read must become Greeks, Romans, Turks, priest and king, martyr and executioner, must fasten these images to some reality in our secret experience, or we shall learn nothing rightly. What befell Asdrubal or Caesar Borgia is as much an illustration of the mind's powers and depravations as what has befallen us. Each new law and political movement has meaning for you. Stand before each of its tablets and say, "Under this mask did my Proteus nature hide itself." This remedies the defect of our too great nearness to ourselves. This throws our actions into perspective: and as crabs, goats, scorpions, the balance, and the waterpot lose their meanness when hung as signs in the zodiac, so I can see my own vices without heat in the distant persons of Solomon, Alcibiades, and Catiline.

All inquiry into antiquity,—all curiosity respecting the Pyramids, the excavated cities, Stonehenge, the Ohio Circles, Mexico, Memphis,—is the desire to do away this wild, savage, and preposterous There or Then, and introduce in its place the Here and the Now. Belzoni digs and measures in the mummy-pits and pyramids of Thebes, until he can see the end of the difference between the monstrous work and himself. When he has satisfied himself, in general and in detail, that it was made by such a person as he, so armed and so motived, and to ends to which he himself should also have worked, the problem is solved; his thought lives along the whole line of temples and sphinxes and catacombs, passes through them all with satisfaction, and they live again to the mind,…

A Gothic cathedral affirms that it was done by us, and not done by us. Surely it was by man, but we find it not in our man. But we apply ourselves to the history of its production. We put ourselves into the place and state of the builder.

Castillo, the main pyramid at Chichén Itzá (Robin Rector Krupp)

The student interprets the age of chivalry by his own age of chivalry, and the days of maritime adventure and circumnavigation by quite parallel miniature experiences of his own. To the sacred history of the world, he has the same key. When the voice of a prophet out of the deeps of antiquity merely echoes to him a sentiment of his infancy, a prayer of his youth, he then pierces to the truth through all the confusion of tradition and the caricature of institutions. Rare, extravagant spirits come by us at intervals, who disclose to us new facts in nature. I see that men of God have, from time to time, walked among men and made their commission felt in the heart and soul of the commonest hearer. Hence, evidently, the tripod, the priest, the priestess inspired by the divine afflatus. How easily these old worships of Moses, of Zoroaster, of Menu, of Socrates, domesticate themselves in the mind. I cannot find any antiquity in them. They are mine as much as theirs.

ON THE LOOKOUT

A MAN TO REMEMBER

RALPH WALDO EMERSON
THE SAGE OF CONCORD

"A Precursor of HPB'S"

All those who have looked into the history of creative writing or, perhaps, even just taken a course in English Literature will remember the high praise given Ralph Waldo Emerson. He was one of America's finest writers as well as being a famous proponent of free thought. However, some Western "scholars" may not recall that one of the first copies of the *Bhagavad-Gita* to reach America ended up in Emerson's hands. Entrees in his personal journal record that, together with his friend Henry David Thoreau, Emerson spent many productive hours plumbing the philosophical and metaphysical depths of the ancient *Gita* as well as with other Eastern philosophical works. As it was with HPB, Emerson's writings trace the metaphysical link that moves from the Far East through Plato to the self-reliant thought in the far West. It should not be surprising, therefore, that students of Theosophy have commented that Emerson was an important precursor to HPB.

Two Centuries Passed

In commemoration of the two-hundredth birthday of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Richard Higgins (writing in the *UUWORLD*, March/April 2003) takes a penetrating look at perhaps the most famous thinker, speaker and writer of his time:

> Two hundred years after his birth on May 25, 1803, Emerson is recognized as the architect of American intellectual culture. School syllabi swell with his works and most Americans assume some familiarity with his thought. Aphorisms such as "hitch your wagon to a star," "a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds," or "trust thyself" pervade the American mind, although some people may not know Emerson coined

> them…Getting a clearer image of Emerson—and perhaps even a feel for the extraordinary and complex human being he was—will be easier this year. The bicentennial of the birth of this American Plato is being marked with exhibits, conferences, and lectures at universities and public libraries across the country.

Faced the Fire of Heresy

Richard Higgins observes that Emerson was not universally admired in his lifetime. "Nor," he adds, "Is he now." His popularity came primarily from exponents of creative writing and of free thought. Yet, Ralph Waldo Emerson also developed a following, according to Higgins, among those who say, "We don't know what he said, but we're sure he's giving us the best there is." Higgins affirms that Emerson showed courage in the face of the fundamentalist Christian doctrines. This was especially true of those who maintain that human beings are "fundamentally inadequate," and "that our hearts and minds are darkened by sin." Emerson met such talk by saying: "We have within us the resources we need to understand the world." And further claimed: "We are not just 'porters' of the fire, but rather we ourselves are 'children of fire'." Richard Higgins offers some examples of the feelings certain people had for a man with a mind of his own. "In his letters, Emerson sarcastically observed that as he walked around town, some Concord ladies out with their children would hurriedly cross the street to avoid contact with 'Mad-dog Emerson.' H.L. Mencken dismissed Emerson as a 'moon-struck parson.' Emerson, who was accused (falsely) of lacking a sense of evil, did not help his cause when he said that if he were sent to hell, he would 'make a heaven there'."

"EMERSON'S SELF"

In the 1850's Emerson changed his emphasis and became engaged in the social issues of the day. He spoke out strongly for the abolition of slavery and for women rights. He also attacked the excesses of capitalism and the consumerist qualities of American culture. At one point in his tribute to Emerson, writer Higgins explores Emerson's sense of Self:

> After publishing "Self-Reliance" in 1841, he largely stopped using the term because people confused it with insular self-sufficiency. Emerson believed that each person "is an inlet" to the "one mind" of creation. Through authentic self-development, we discover this mind and are united with others in a shared creation guided by common moral laws. True individuality is thus never selfish in Emerson's view. "Self-reliance, the height and perfection of man," Emerson wrote in 1854, "is God-reliance." While Emerson did indeed distrust institutions, the individualism he advocated was not of the isolationist kind. Self-reliance disclosed the link between the individual soul and the Universal Mind, bringing the individual into relation with all.

There is no great and no small
To the Soul that maketh all:
And where it cometh, all things are;
And it cometh everywhere.
I am owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year,
Of Caesar's hand, and Plato's brain,
Of Lord Christ's heart, and Shakspeare's strain.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

UPDATE ON ASTRONOMY

Hubble Space Telescope Observations

The Big-Bang theory involving galaxy and star formation wears a continually changing face these days. *Science News* for May 3 reports that several teams of astronomers have recently unveiled surprising new findings that change the landscape of "when the cosmos was young." Writer Ron Cowan says:

> In one study, astronomers used the Hubble Space Telescope to examine three of the most distant quasars known. These brilliant beacons are so remote that it takes their light 12.8 billion years to reach Earth. The observations therefore show how the quasars appeared when the universe was only 900 million year old. Hubble's near-infrared camera and multi-object spectrograph reveal that quasars back then already contained iron and magnesium. Because heavy elements such as these can be made only inside stars, their presence requires that an early generation of stars preceded the quasars. More significantly, the much higher abundance of iron relative to magnesium provides a time marker for when these first stars would have blazed into existence. Iron can be produced by two classes of stars: massive ones that last only a few million years and intermediate-mass stars that live a hundred times longer. Only intermediate-mass stars produce a high abundance of iron relative to magnesium, so these longer-lived stars are the likely source of the metals found in the quasars.

"*TANTALIZING RESULTS*"

The *Science News* report continues:

> The data suggest that the first stars in the universe were already in place when the cosmos was only 200 million years old.
>
> That's extraordinarily early in cosmic history yet it's consistent with recent signs of early stars in measurements from the Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe, a satellite that examines the radiation left over from the Big Bang, as reported in *Science News* (February 15, 2003).

All of this together with the data developed from other recent Hubble observations strongly suggest that current galaxy-formation models need revision. As one unnamed astronomer put it: "Standard models can't easily account for a large number of mature galaxies in the early universe." A study of Theosophy suggests that there will always be such difficulties cropping up in theories of cosmogenesis until the reality of cycles within cycles and the overarching presence of cyclic evolution is recognized as a general law.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

(Translated from their original sources)

FROM ENGLAND...

OXFORD KNIGHT—SIR ROGER PENROSE

Karl Giberson, an Editor-in-Chief with a physics background, says his interview with Roger Penrose, the famous Oxford Mathematician and Physicist, brought to mind the sort of "secrets Einstein liked to call 'the thoughts of God'." (*Science & Spirit*, March and April 2003). The early development of computers sparked Penrose's interest in the mechanics of the mind. He soon became convinced that human thinking was entirely different from the artificial intelligence of computers. This moved him to speak out and in time write two detailed books on the subject: *The Emperors New Mind* and *Shadows of the Mind* (both Oxford University Press). These books revealed him to be essentially a Platonist.

INTO THE DEPTHS OF THOUGHT

When Karl Giberson asked Roger Penrose why he called himself a Platonist, he explained:

> Usually it's other people who call me a Platonist! I view the mathematical world as having an existence of its own, independent of us. It is timeless. I think, to be a working mathematician, it's difficult to hold any other view. It's not so much that the Platonic world has its own existence,

> but that the physical world accords with such precision, subtlety, and sophistication with aspects of the Platonic mathematical world. And this, of course, does go back to Plato, who was clear in distinguishing between notions of precise mathematics and the usually inexact ways in which one applies this mathematics to the physical world. It is the shadow of the pure mathematical world that you see in the physical world.

MORE THAN MATHEMATICS

Penrose was then asked if his Platonic world was larger than just mathematics, and he said:

> Plato speaks of truth, beauty and morality, but in my view, truth in its purest form tends to be mathematical truth. However, I'm somewhat sympathetic towards a broader Platonism in which morality and beauty have fundamental elements which are also absolute and independent of individuals or cultures.

DEPTH, BREADTH AND OVERVIEW

And when the interviewer, who, may be recalled is a trained physicist, asked Roger Penrose about the role the mind plays in all of this, the Oxford Dean replies, saying:

> I like to say that one sees three worlds. There's the Platonic world that has this absolute existence and which would be there even if there were no physical world. In a sense, it just conjures itself into existence. And then there's the physical world that we talk about, filled with objects that we don't understand that well, but which often have a relation to the mathematical world. And then there's the mental world, which we don't understand either! I am interested in the mysterious connection between these worlds.

Currently, Sir Roger Penrose is collaborating with a colleague from over the seas. They are working together on a quantum model of consciousness. It becomes quite clear that some of today's best scientists are, as a student of theosophy might put it, breaching the gap between the observer and the observed.

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Note From the Editor…

ERRATA

Re the poem "H.P.B.*(In Memoriam),*" reprinted on page 11 of the Spring 2003 issue, the source is *The Irish Theosophist,* Vol ii, p. 164, not as shown. There, it is signed "R." who was George W. Russell (Æ). The identity is confirmed in *Printed Writings by George W. Russell(Æ): A Bibliography,* compiled by Alan Denson.

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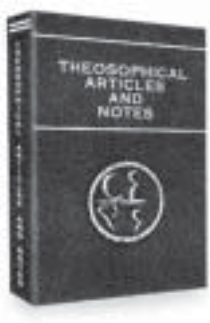

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THEOSOPHY — The name theosophy dates from the third century and began with the Eclectic Theosophical system. The primary aim of Eclectic Theosophy was to synthesize religions and ideologies under a common system of ethics, based on eternal truths.

MODERN THEOSOPHY — Modern theosophy has influenced literature, art, music, and film. It introduces philosophical themes into everyday life.

THEOSOPHIST (the·os·o·phist) n. — All real lovers of wisdom and truth have a right to the name "theosophist." Theosophist is a word many mystics have called themselves throughout history. The Neo-platonists of Alexandria were theosophists, as were the mediæval alchemists and cabalists. Also called theosophists were the martinists, the quietists, and various other mystics, whether acting independently or in association with a brotherhood or society.

EGO (ë·go), **EGO** (êg·o) n. — The term Ego (pronounced *ego* as in egg) is a Latin word which represents the immortal "I" in Man. In contrast, ego refers to the personality in its familiar Freudian sense.

MAN (mân), **MANAS** (mâ·nas) n. — In theosophical nomenclature, Man is used in a generic sense and carries no gender. It comes from the common root to think, as does the Sanskrit word *Manas* (the thinking principle in Man).

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