

THE HIGH COUNTRY THEOSOPHIST



Vol. 6 No. 9

Boulder, Colorado

September, 1991

Why Study H.P. Blavatsky?

Contents

Why Study H.P. Blavatsky?...	1
Why B.P. Wadia resigned from T.S. in 1922.....	3
An Occult View of the Russian Coup.....	4
Notes from a High Country Theosophist's journal:.....	5
Letters Received.....	5

An old issue, familiar to many dedicated and long-time theosophists, is again being confronted and debated in our *High Country Theosophical Study Center*. In deciding what shall be our ongoing theosophical study, it was proposed by this editor that the writings of H.P.B. be considered. Why H.P.B., it was asked? What makes her so special? Are we to form a *cult* of H.P.B.? The querist, it seems, would prefer to concentrate on latter and present-day authors offering “modern and more easily understood concepts” in preference to the century old writings of the former.

In rebuttal to the charge of advocating an H.P.B. “personality cult,” I wish to make it clear that it is the *integrity of the Message*, not the personal identity of the Messenger that is of overriding importance to me. As one who, after the better part of a lifetime of searching for a soul satisfying spiritual philosophy, discovered the Message of Theosophy, has, in studying its varying presentations, arrived at the conclusion that the Message in its “original” pure and unaltered form is to be found in the writings of the Masters in the *Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, and in the writings of Their Messenger, H.P. Blavatsky.



Now some qualifications are in order here: It is readily

admitted that H.P.B.'s *Secret Doctrine* is not easy reading. H.P.B. in *The Key to Theosophy* points this out saying: "To the mentally lazy or obtuse, Theosophy must remain a riddle; for in the world mental as in the world spiritual each... must progress by [their] own efforts. The writer cannot do the reader's thinking for him, nor would the latter be any better off if such vicarious thought were possible."

So we must make the effort if we are to progress in the Wisdom teachings. However, in our times a hundred years after the impulse given by the Masters through H.P.B., we are fortunate to have available, writings which provide reliable and well organized overviews of the original work. But we must still be responsible for using and exercising our own discrimination and judgement as to the fidelity of these commentaries to the Source Teachings -- by constantly comparing them with the original.

As Al Skrobisch, who has been conducting the Friday evening series of studies from *Introduction to Esoteric Principles*, put it: "I am very interested in studying The Ancient Wisdom, but if the group wants to study psychic phenomena and other New Age trash, I have better things to do." A position with which I heartily concur.

So, from the foregoing it should be clear that I am not worshipping at the feet of H.P.B. as the only source of Theosophical Truth but rather I regard her Message, as she received it from the Masters -- and that of the Masters Themselves, as a standard baseline

against which I compare and evaluate other writings claiming to be "theosophical." Thus, with that proviso, not only do I conditionally accept other writings, but I strongly advocate their study *in the light of the Source Teachings*.

John Algeo, in the *American Theosophist* of Nov./Dec. 1990, charged that "the Theosophy taught by Blavatsky is not a uniform, unchanging doctrine. It evolved continually during her lifetime."

It is clear to me, beyond question or debate, that the Ancient Wisdom, variously known as Gupta Vidya, Gnosis, etc., i.e. the Source Teachings *in their fullness of Truth* has never yet been given out. We would be unable to comprehend it in its fullness, were it possible to do so. What we have been privileged to receive is a progressively greater, but always partial view of it. And it becomes obvious from a comparison of the chronology of H.P.B.'s teachings that they constitute a progressive revelation of an unchanging spiritual reality rather than an evolution in which latter teachings are in conflict with earlier ones.

At the beginning of this editorial, I referred to our present debate as "an old issue" and indeed it is. There is much to learn from the study of history, for human nature and human foibles change little over the years. Theosophical history is no exception to the rule.

Why B.P. Wadia resigned from T.S. in 1922

In India in 1922, we find B.P. Wadia, a long-time and dedicated Theosophist resigning from the Society headquarters at Adyar and from the Indian Section under Adyar.

In his open letter “To all Fellow Theosophists and Members of the Theosophical Society,” he speaks of a dismay and disillusionment which grew over the years in which he saw the T.S. becoming, as H.P.B. had warned in *The Key to Theosophy*, ‘stranded on a sandbank of thought.’ [The danger, she pointed out, was that sooner or later the movement might degenerate into a sect of ‘hard and fast dogmas’ and thereby gradually lose the vitality that living truth alone can impart. See *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 305].

Wadia saw “a ready made programme of spiritual advancement, which had become a creed, with its saviour-initiates and eternal hell of lost opportunities, and of the devil of jesuitical black magicians, and the permanent garden of Eden, 750 years hence in southern California for the faithful who obey and follow like soldiers of a fanatical army, zealously if not too wisely; Pseudo-Theosophy had taken the place of Theosophy. The straight and virile doctrine taught by H.P.B. of seeking the God within, ‘The Initiator of Initiates’ had been forgotten.”

Fortunately for the Adyar T.S., Krishnamurti rejected the mantle of World Teacher and Saviour prepared for him by C.W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant. In his speech of August 1929 dissolving The Order of the Star of the East, Krishnamurti said; “Truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect. Truth being limitless, unconditioned, unapproachable by path whatsoever, cannot be organized; nor should any organization be formed to lead or coerce people along any particular path.”

[Krishnamurti: *The Years of Awakening*, pub. by Krishnamurti Foundation].

With the dissolution the the Order of the Star, membership in the Adyar T.S. American Section plummeted. Could it not be that of the majority of those who left the Adyar Society at that time were those who were looking for a leader who could supply them with ready-made dogma?

An Occult View of the Russian Coup

August 21, 1991. Following the collapse of the Russian Coup, a reporter interviewing President Bush asked whether Gorbachev might possibly have “orchestrated” the coup himself. Bush said that the whole idea was “ridiculous!”

But on the PBS Neil-McLehrer news the same evening, Dmitri Simes suggested that in an indirect way the idea was not so far-fetched. “Gorbachev is a very interesting politician. He leads people on. He gives them the ‘amber light’ to do certain things. He agrees with their petitions but refuses to go all the way. ...

He orders the troops into Lithuania and when somebody is killed he is shocked. The interesting question is ‘what games did he play’ with [the coup leaders] that would have led them to believe he would allow them to move in that direction?”

Listening to this discussion, I was struck by a seeming parallel in the Mahabharata.

Following the crooked dice game in which Yudhishtira, son of the god Dharma, has lost everything -- fortune, lands, his four Pandava brothers, their common wife Draupadi and his own freedom to the crafty Shakuni, playing for the wicked Duryodhana - eldest of the 100 Kaurava brothers; his losses are restored to him by the blind king Dhritrashtra.

As the five Pandavas and their wife Draupadi are leaving the Palace, Yudhishtira is challenged to one final dice game in which a single roll of the dice will either win back all his losses and all of the Kauravas kingdom and

possessions in addition or else condemn him and his brothers and wife to a twelve year exile in the forest.

When Yudhishtira incredibly accepts, his brother asks; “Why did you agree to play again when you knew you would lose?” Yudhishtira, son of Dharma replies; “I must play - I must give my rivals a last chance of salvation.”

Might there be a parallel here to the drama played out between Gorbachev and the leaders of the coup?

And what invisible strings are pulled behind the scene in this puppet-show?

Master K.H. in the first letter to A.O. Hume says:

“There never was a time within or before the so-called historical period when our predecessors were not moulding events and ‘making history,’ the facts of which were invariably and subsequently distorted to suit contemporary prejudices. Are you quite sure that the visible heroic figures in the successive dramas were not often but their puppets?”

In the 1900 letter to Annie Besant, the same Master said:

“At favorable times we let loose elevating influences that strike various persons in various ways.”

Could it be that Gorbachev is one of the Masters agents “unbeknownst to himself?”

Notes from a High Country
Theosophist's journal:

I meditated on the current Russian events. I can feel how much the Russian soul is emerging -- they want freedom! I prayed to the soldiers and knew they were fighting for my fears, for none can be free until all are free -- yet here I was sitting in the mountains with peace and freedom.

I offered my love to them over and over. Every tree, mountain, cloud and sunset. I trusted in the overseeing Masters as I walked down the road. I thought of the picture of the Russian crowds and soldiers I saw on TV and I was there with them.

COL. H.S. OLCOTT
in his inaugural address of Nov. 17,
1875 said:

We [are] simply
investigators,
of earnest purpose
and unbiassed mind,
who study all things,
prove all things,
and hold fast
to that which is good.

We seek, inquire;
Reject nothing
without cause.
Accept nothing
without proof.
We are students,
not teachers.

Letters Received

As noted in the October 1990 issue of the HCT, The High Country Study Center has solicited contact with theosophical groups in Africa, eastern Europe or other third world countries to form a 'sister lodge' affiliation for mutual help and exchange of ideas.

Our proposal in this regard was printed in the July/August 1991 *Eclectic Theosophist* and a response was received from Mr. Darko Zgaga on behalf of the International Dharma Center in Plemenscina, Yugoslavia.

Mr. Zgaga writes as follows:

"Due to the kindness of Mr. Emmett Small, editor of the *Eclectic Theosophist*, I receive [his] magazine. In the last issue, I read about your highly interesting project and therefore decided to write to you.

About two years ago I registered this center with the authorities here with the aim to found a Theosophical Educational Center for Yugoslavia However, this project isn't yet developed due to the withdrawal of some people who should finance the entire project. So although the Center is registered, [it] isn't yet developed as I hoped it would.

However, this center is active and maintains contacts with many people in this country via letters and books we publish as translations ... with my wife and me as [the]

only members so far. ...

My wife isn't acquainted with English and she makes her studies through my translations. [Briefly], my personal interests and [those] of the Center are Buddhism and Theosophy.

I am an Agronomist and translator/interpreter by vocation. [I am especially interested in studies in] Karma and Reincarnation, Buddhism, Buddhist-Theosophical Education, Science of Emotions and Science of Social Organization (Manu's Laws).

Currently, I am compiling a commentary on the Buddhist DHAMMAPADA in English and [I'd like to have someone to review it critically and to make corrections in the English grammar].

Further, since we want to establish a good library for the future Center, we seek contact with groups which could help us [obtain] books.

Although we have managed to purchase some of the most important theosophical books (*Secret Doctrine*, *Mahatma Letters*, *Collected Works of H.P.B.*, etc.), [we can no longer buy books abroad due to new Yugoslavian Government regulations which prohibit the purchase of foreign exchange through the banks and theosophical books are not imported here.]

Since the establishment of the new democratic government here in the Croatian Republic of Yugoslavia in 1989 there is freedom of thought and of movement so there is no longer government interference with correspondence and other forms of contact. Previously I had some contacts, but from time to time letters disappeared and almost all mail was checked by police. I do hope you will want to open contact with this Center.

Sincerely yours in the Dharma, [signed]
Darko Zgaga

Here is an opportunity for the practical application of the first object of the Theosophical Society -- To promote the cause of Universal Brotherhood and disseminate the eternal Truths of the Ancient Wisdom.

Our correspondent writes from a land that has for long decades been in the darkness of repression and now that a new light of freedom is dawning there we have an opportunity to help.

We will be sending back issues of the *High Country Theosophist* with our initial response to brother Zgaga and invite our readers to join us in responding to him. His address:

41218 Pregrada
G. Plemenscina 32
Yugoslavia

Commenting on the July HCT, Gerald Schueler writes:

Your article on G. de Purucker was one of the most interesting that I have read in a long time. Although I have been a member of the Pasadena T.S. for over 20 years, I was unaware of G. de P.'s Tibetan origins.

The idea of avesa or consciousness transference is nothing new. In fact, Tibetans have known of it for centuries, and have their own grimoire [def.: a magician's manual for invoking demons or spirits of the dead.] showing how to do it - one of the famous six Yogas of Naropa.

This text was made famous by Evans-Wentz in his TIBETAN YOGA AND SECRET DOCTRINES where it is called the Yoga of Consciousness Transference (Pho-Wa in Tibetan).

Today, many books are available which compliment or repeat this yoga (Chang's TEACHINGS OF TIBETAN YOGA, Mullin's SELECTED WORKS OF THE DALAI LAMA II where it is one of the Six Yogas of Sister Niguma, and Chi and Muses' ESOTERIC TEACHINGS OF THE TIBETAN TANTRA, to name but three).

The idea of consciousness transference was also not new to G. de P., because William Quan Judge came up with it before him. There is some very interesting material at the end of Judge's LETTERS THAT HAVE HELPED ME. For example, Judge wrote a synopsis of a novel with this idea in mind. [See HCT August 1991]. According to his bio. at the very end of the book (on page 101), Judge ... almost died when he was seven years old. Upon recovery, he became interested in occultism and religion, and began reading although no one in his family had taught him to read.

We must be very careful about pho-wa or avesa - the doctrine of deliberate consciousness

transference from an old body to a young "host" which becomes, in effect, a new incarnation. It is, for one thing, a difficult doctrine to prove or disprove. ...

I judge all such claimants by their works - what I call the spiritual authority they exhibit. Judge and G. de P. are two individuals that I can well believe because their writings show clear signs of spiritual authority.

The doctrine of consciousness transference has both an exoteric and an esoteric side. Exoterically, the "I" or human personality is actually transferred to a new physical body with memories intact. Esoterically, the situation is not so easily explained, and quite possibly this is why G. de P. did not want to talk about it.

The esoteric side sees the "I" as a collection or aggregate rather than a thing-in-itself. Our sense of identity is very precarious, at best, and is constantly changing, sometimes gradually, sometimes in jumps.

There is, in short, no real ego to be transferred. (Recall the Zen koan; where does my fist go when I open my hand!).

Consciousness transference is somewhat similar to multiple personalities - a fragmentation, and therefore a change, in one's sense of identity, albeit in this case a change toward the spiritual and thus a change for the better.

Rather than the transference of an ego, it is more like a change in the focus of one's sense of identity. Esoterically, we don't go anywhere when we die, and we don't transfer consciousness anywhere either - but (a paradox) exoterically, we certainly do.

Calendar

Friday Sept. 6

Barbara Ginsberg's
home -: 696-0794 for
directions.

Al Skrobisch will discuss how we apply theosophy to situations in our everyday lives. He will bring the three volume series *Talks on the Path of Occultism: At the Feet of the Master, The Voice of the Silence and Light on the Path.* as potential choices for ongoing studies.

Tuesday Sept. 17

Park Hill Public Library,
Montview Blvd. at Dexter
St.

Jack Whittaker will discuss The Nag Hammadi Library and the Gnostic teachings of Jesus -- an alternative view.

Take Colo. Blvd to Montview (2000 N.),
7 blocks E. to Dexter.
Meeting begins at 6:00 P.M.

Friday Sept.20

Barbara Ginsberg's
home -: 696-0794 for
directions.

Studies in applied theosophy with Al Skrobisch. See Calendar for Sept. 6.

Ongoing

Two very important items of business need to be discussed and decided on at the Sept. 17 meeting:

We have the opportunity to host a theosophical speaker in November and another next spring.

Among our choices are Joy Mills, Stefan Hoeller, John Algeo, Ed Abdill and Shirley Nicholson.

We need to decide how we shall co-operate with the International Dharma Center in Yugoslavia. See letter from Darko Zgaga on page 5.