

# Philosophical Tools

## *and how to befriend the Truth*

### PART 1 SOME ESSENTIALS

<http://www.theosophy-ult.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Philosophical-Tools-Part-1-Some-Essentials.pdf>

#### Starting where we find ourselves: “always seeking truth?”

For the empowerment of enquiry: “...the doctrine of the Eye is the intellectual one, the doctrine of the Heart is spiritual, where knowledge springs up spontaneously within. ***It is this latter which you crave, and which I can assure you Theosophy will lead you to.***”

*The Friendly Philosopher, Letter Two, p 6, Robert Crosbie*

#### On finding others who “disbelieve in truth itself!”

The Skeptic: “a thinker who doubts the possibility of real knowledge of any kind.”

*Random House Dictionary of the English Language, New York, 1966*

**Plato** “...no worse thing can happen to a man than to become a misologist” (*a hater of thought*)

“Let us take care not to become misologists; for as there are misanthropists or haters of men, there are also ***misologists***... both come from ignorance.

**Misanthropy** arises out of the too great confidence of inexperience; you trust a man and think him altogether true and sound and faithful, and then in a little while he turns out to be false and a rogue; and then another and another, and when this has happened several times to a man he at last hates all men and believes that no one has any good in him at all. But... is it not obvious that such a person was trying to deal with men without any experience of human nature?

**(Misology)** When a simple man who has ***no skill in dialectics*** believes an ***argument to be true*** and then false, and then another and another, he has no longer any faith left. And great disputers, as you know, come to think at last that they have grown to be the wisest of mankind, alone perceiving the utter unsoundness and instability of all arguments or all things. But how melancholy that a man should have alighted upon some false argument, seeming true, and instead of blaming himself and his own want of intelligence, should at last ***transfer the blame from himself to arguments in general***: and for ever afterwards should hate and abuse them, and ***loose truth and knowledge of realities***. Let us be careful of admitting into our Soul the notion there is no soundness in arguments...”

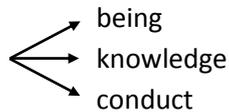
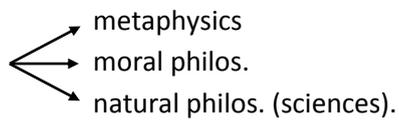
*edited extracts from Phaedo, 89 f, Plato*

H.P. Blavatsky "We cannot take sufficient precautions against theological subterfuges." SD ii 476

## Some Definitions

**Exoteric Philosophy, the Head Doctrine** *Gk. friend or lover of wisdom*

*from Random House Dictionary*

1. Rational investigation of truths and principles of 
2. Three branches 
  - metaphysics
  - moral philos.
  - natural philos. (sciences).
3. Principles for guidance in practical affairs.

## Esoteric Philosophy, the Heart Doctrine

"It is the province of the discipline of Philosophy to disenthral the Soul from the bondage of sense, and to raise it into the empyrean of pure thought, to the vision of eternal truth, goodness, and beauty, thus uniting it to Spirit." *"Old Philosophers and Modern Critics" H.P. Blavatsky, 1892*

"...this work (the Secret Doctrine) is written for the instruction of students of Occultism." SD i 23

A perennial basis: "...the pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric philosophy admits of no privileges or special gifts in man, save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit throughout a long series of metempsychoses and reincarnations." *Q & A p. 15.*

"It is only in the XXth century that portions, if not the whole, of the present work will be vindicated." *SD ii 442*

## Wisdom

*from Random House Dictionary*

A knowledge of what is True or right, coupled with just judgement as to action (cf W. of Solomon)

## Ignorance

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ignorance>

Ignorance is a state of being uninformed (lack of knowledge). Describes a person in the state of being unaware; an insult to describe individuals who deliberately ignore important facts.

## Truth

*summarised from the Random House Dictionary of the English Language*

Synonyms

1. The actual state. True. (conforming to reality or fact)
2. Verifiable. (by observation, reasoning and logic)
3. Sincere. Loyal. Accurate.
4. Ideal Reality. Fundamental Reality.
5. Agreement with the original (a true reflection)
6. Honesty. Integral.

Antonyms

- False. Incorrect. Misleading.  
Suppositional. Assumed.  
Deceitful. Not steadfast. Inexact.  
Relativistic. Conditional.  
Disputed. Distorted.  
Dishonest. Fractured. Not whole.

## Reasoning and perception

“from what is before” (Latin)

**Deductive** (a priori reasoning)

*starts with universal principles*

Take 2 Premises (premises *infer* things)

major p.: all men are mortal

minor p.: Socrates is a man

conclusion: Socrates is mortal  
(a syllogism)

**Inductive** (a posteriori reasoning)

*starts with particulars or observations; estimates validity from observations of **part** of a class, taken as evidence for propositions about the **whole** class.*

A method of proving a universal law by showing:

1. if true in one case, it is true in the next case.
2. then it can be true in a particular case.

“Bacon was the first to strike the keynote of materialism, not only by his inductive method (renovated from ill-digested Aristotle) but by the tenor of his writings.” *SD i 481*

Reaching conclusions based on experiment is limited to the range of the experiment. *Isis i 393*

“... laboriously acquired knowledge by the senses and the mind.” *SD i 279*

contrasting with

### Intuitional perception

when ideas come in a flash, are Buddhi Manasic;  
verifiable by logical deduction

A. ... In occultism it is always best to proceed from universals to particulars.

Q. Apparently, then, the whole basis of occultism lies in this, that there is latent within every man a power which can give him true knowledge, a power of perception of truth, which enables him to deal first hand with universals if he will be strictly logical and face the facts. Thus we can proceed from universals to particulars by this innate spiritual force which is in every man.

A. Quite so: this power is inherent in all, but paralyzed by our methods of education, and especially by the Aristotelian and Baconian methods. Hypothesis (induction) now reigns triumphant.

Q: ... But in Schopenhauer's case at any rate it was not so. He acknowledges himself that the idea came to him like a flash (via intuition); having thus got his fundamental idea he set to work to arrange his facts, so that the reader imagines... is a logical deduction drawn from the facts.

A. This is not only true of the Schopenhauerian philosophy, but also of **all the great discoveries of modern times**.

How, for instance, did Newton discover the law of gravity? Was it not by the simple fall of an apple, and not by an elaborate series of experiments. **The time will come when the Platonic method will not be so entirely ignored and men will look with favor on methods of education which will enable them to develop this most spiritual faculty.**

*From Transactions p 58.*

## Pedagogy & means of instructions

### Dialectic method

Dialectics is a method of argument for resolving disagreement that has been central to European and Indian philosophy since antiquity. It was made popular by Plato in the Socratic dialogues.

The dialectical method is a **discourse** between two or more people holding different points of view about a subject who wish to establish the truth of the matter ***guided by reasoned arguments***.

#### Debate

Debate is not synonymous with dialectics. While in theory debaters are not necessarily emotionally invested in their point of view, in practice they frequently display an emotional commitment that may cloud rational judgement.

Debates are won through a combination of persuading the opponent or proving one's argument correct. Clear winners are frequently determined by either a judge, jury, or by group consensus.

#### Rhetoric

Rhetoric is not synonymous with dialectics. It is a method or art of discourse that seeks to persuade, inform, or motivate an audience. Concepts like "logos" or rational appeal, "pathos" or emotional appeal, and "ethos" or ethical appeal, are intentionally used by rhetoricians to persuade.

#### The Sophists

The Sophists taught aretē (Greek: quality, excellence) as the highest value and the determinant of one's actions in life. The Sophists taught artistic quality in oratory (motivation via speech) as a manner of demonstrating one's aretē. Oratory was taught as an art form, used to please and to influence other people via excellent speech; nonetheless, the Sophists taught the pupil to seek aretē in all endeavours, not solely in oratory.

#### Socrates

Socrates favoured truth as the highest value, proposing that it could be discovered through reason and logic in discussion: ergo, dialectic. Socrates valued rationality (appealing to logic, not emotion) as the proper means for persuasion, the discovery of truth, and the determinant for one's actions. To Socrates, truth, not aretē, was the greater good, and each person should, above all else, seek truth to guide one's life. Therefore, Socrates opposed the Sophists and their teaching of rhetoric as art and as emotional oratory requiring neither logic nor proof.

#### Forms of dialectical reasoning

Different forms of dialectical reasoning have emerged throughout history from the Greater India and the West, these include the Socratic method, Hindu, Buddhist, Medieval, Hegelian dialectics (more on this next session, Part 2 in August), Marxist, Talmudic, and Neo-orthodoxy.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialectic>

### Compare with “Didactic”

Didacticism is a philosophy that emphasizes instructional and informative qualities in literature and other types of art.

The term has its origin in the Ancient Greek "related to education and teaching", and signified learning in a fascinating and intriguing manner. Didactic art was meant to entertain and to instruct.

Around the 19th century the term didactic came to also be used as a criticism for work that appears to be overly burdened with instructive, factual, or otherwise educational information, to the detriment of the enjoyment of the reader, a meaning that was quite foreign to Greek thought.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Didacticism>

## The Theosophic Vision

### Plato on Philosophy

“If, as Plato has so nobly written, philosophy is the greatest good which the gods have conferred upon men, it naturally follows that the possession of it bestows the greatest wealth that any person is capable of accumulating.

“The philosopher being truly great, the philosopher is capable of being truly good, and philosophy alone contributes that immortality which must finally be the quest of every man.”

*“First Principles of Philosophy” Manley P. Hall, 1942*

### “Journeying with Deity” ~ the soul’s vision before birth

“The soul cannot come into the form of a man if it has never seen the truth. This is a recollection of those things which our soul formerly saw when journeying with Deity, despising the things which we now say are, and looking up to that which really is. Wherefore the nous, or spirit, of the Philosopher [or student of the higher truth] alone is furnished with wings; because he, to the best of his ability, keeps these things in mind, of which the contemplation renders even Deity itself divine. By making the right use of these things remembered from the former life, by constantly perfecting himself in the perfect mysteries, a man becomes truly perfect -- an initiate into the diviner wisdom.

*“Old Philosophers and Modern Critics” H.P. Blavatsky, 1892*

### ... and when in a body, can we not remember and live according this great reality?

“To live as souls, to help as souls, to toil as souls, to serve as souls other souls, is to recognize the Soul of Souls in all places and at all times. Thus rivers and streams and oceans reveal the splendour of the Soul; flowering shrub speaks its own message as the giant mountain its small and great lose themselves in the identity of the One Spirit. The peace and power of realization arise in the knowledge that Masters live and work and help by the Way of that Love which is Compassion.”

*B.P. Wadia*

### The Soul’s Journey: its trials & successes

Philosophy lays illusion to rest by showing matter is only a temporary resting place for all beings, aspects of the One Reality. The material world is our necessary place of work but it is not a trustworthy one until we have helped it on its way by raising it up through the collective vision of the higher consciousness shared in the “Dhyan Chohan thought.”

“Unsullied by the hand of Matter, she shows her treasures only to the eye of Spirit  
– the eye which never closes, the eye for which there is no veil in all her kingdoms.”

*The Voice of the Silence, p 16*

“There is no need to grope, nor stagger, nor stray, for **the chart that has led many to the goal** is in your hands in the philosophy of Theosophy.”

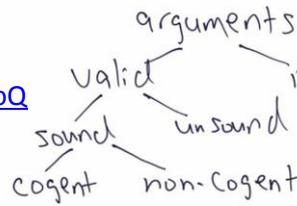
*The Friendly Philosopher, Letter Two, p 6, Robert Crosbie*

## YouTube videos - on evidence, opinion and logic

2a Arguments: Premises and Validity

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPRfNdLxSoQ>

up to 8:45 mins



\_\_\_\_\_ premises well-structured = true  
\_\_\_\_\_ true premises & logical conclusions  
\_\_\_\_\_ persuasive to a person if it is valid,  
sound & understandable; a provable arg.

2b Premises and Invalid arguments <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5uLDaWysaw> up to 6.57 mins

2d Validity, Soundness, Cogency, Proof <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2ebmxLDPHI> start to end.

3a Glaucon on happiness & morally good <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-amX4fDTzU> fm 4.20 to end

Further viewing on subjects such as Epistemology (“does knowledge exist in itself, in an absolute form... or is it relative?”) are useful.

## **Commentary on the Theosophical Movement of 1875**

In musing over the early pages in *The Secret Doctrine*, one may feel this discloses one of the important aspects of HPB's mission and work:

A gap of about 1,000 years had been created in Europe, beginning around the 3rd Century, between the wisdom of antiquity, and the increment in knowledge that has been studied ever more freely and recorded in the West, following the Renaissance in the 13-14th Century, when a concerted effort was made to effect the overthrow of the bonds of creedalism and dogmatism placed by the Church on the European nations and their successors.

HPB shows that our modern knowledge suffers from this information gap, and in *Isis and the SD* as well as in her many articles, she shows that its preservation is in actual "root" records and these have been kept secure in the Orient.

To create this 1,000 year gap, between the 3rd to the 14th Centuries, fanatics of Christianity and Islam, securing "political sanction" for the destruction of the records of ancient science and philosophy, systematically sought for and destroyed any records they could find relating to the ancient wisdom. Europe, and America her child, lost the benefit of the transmission of this traditional, ancestral lore.

Platonism, alone, served as a beacon guide in the "West," and as a counter-balance to blind dogmatism and materialism. Periodically we can trace its cyclic return starting with the Neo-Platonists, then, the Florentine Renaissance, the Cambridge Platonists and the Transcendentalists of New England, and finally the Theosophists of this century.

A knowledge of the moral factor, based on the Perennial Philosophy had to be restored to psychology. This, when understood, serves as a basis for the freedom of the mind of every individual. And this led to a search for and a consideration of the Fundamental Truths: Universal Unity, and Universal Causation; persistence of individual Egoic consciousness--the immortality intuition; universal equity, law and justice; in brief:

### **Fundamental Unity of all in ALL, Karma, Reincarnation and Universal Brotherhood.**

HPB's mission is the restoration of this link, the establishing of a bridge of understanding between modern thought based on observation of our physical, psychic and spiritual environment, and the ancient source--record of scientific thought, study and work preserved in the World, particularly in the "East" with respect to Europe, where the fresh wave of civilization rises.

*from a Dal Tenbroeck paper*