

True Knowledge – The Great Purifier

Extract from "True Happiness and Altruism" by Helena Blavatsky

It is a fundamental doctrine of Theosophy that the “separateness” which we feel between ourselves and the world of living beings around us is an illusion, not a reality.

In very deed and truth, all men are one, not in a feeling of sentimental gush and hysterical enthusiasm, but in sober earnest. As all Eastern philosophy teaches, there is but ONE SELF in all the infinite Universe, and what we men call “self” is but the illusionary reflection of the ONE SELF in the heaving waters of earth. True Occultism is the destruction of the false idea of Self, and therefore true spiritual perfection and knowledge are nothing else but the complete identification of our finite “selves” with the Great All. It follows, therefore, that no spiritual progress at all is possible except by and through the bulk of Humanity. It is only when the whole of Humanity has attained happiness that the individual can hope to become permanently happy - for the individual is an inseparable part of the Whole.

Hence there is no contradiction whatever between the altruistic maxims of Theosophy and its injunction to kill out all desire for material things, to strive after spiritual perfection. For spiritual perfection and spiritual knowledge can only be reached on the spiritual plane; in other words, only in that state in which all sense of separateness, all selfishness, all feeling of personal interest and desire, has been merged in the wider consciousness of the unity of Mankind.

This shows also that no blind submission to the commands of another can be demanded, or would be of any use. Each individual must learn for himself, through trial and suffering, to discriminate what is beneficial to Humanity; and in proportion as he develops spiritually, i.e., conquers all selfishness, his mind will open to receive the guidance of the Divine Monad within him, his Higher Self, for which there is neither Past nor Future, but only an eternal Now.

Again, were there no “poor”, far from the “benefits of civilization being lost”, a state of the highest culture and civilization would be attained, of which we cannot now form the faintest conception.

Similarly, from a conviction of the impermanence of material happiness would result a striving after that joy which is eternal, and in which all men can share.

“There is no doubt but that by an earnest aspiration one arouses all the hidden inner foes, but then determined effort will destroy them. It is wise to always remember that “Ishwara” the Spirit that is common to all dwells inside of us and if that be so, our sincere belief in and reliance upon It will gradually awaken us to the consciousness that we are that spirit itself and not the miserable creatures which walk on this earth bearing our names. Hence I would ever reflect on the spiritual unity of all beings, continually saying to myself that I am actually that spirit. Our difficulties are always due to the personality which is unwilling to give itself up to the great idea that it has no real existence except in the one Spirit.”

William Q. Judge – "Letters That Have Helped Me"

HPB Art II 102-3 "Occultism vs. the Occult Arts"

"There are four (out of the many other) names of the various kinds of Esoteric Knowledge or Sciences given, even in the esoteric Purânas. There is

(1) Yajna-Vidya,¹ knowledge of the occult powers awakened in Nature by the performance of certain religious ceremonies and rites.

(2) Maha-vidya, the "great knowledge," the magic of the Kabalists and of the Tantrika worship, often Sorcery of the worst description.

(3) Guhya-Vidya, knowledge of the mystic powers residing in Sound (Ether), hence in the Mantras (chanted prayers or incantations) and depending on the rhythm and melody used; in other words a magical performance based on Knowledge of the Forces of Nature and their correlation; and

(4) ATMA-VIDYA, a term which is translated simply "knowledge of the Soul," true Wisdom by the Orientalists, but which means far more.

This last is the only kind of Occultism that any theosophist who admires Light on the Path, and who would be wise and unselfish, ought to strive after. All the rest is some branch of the "Occult Sciences," i.e., arts based on the knowledge of the ultimate essence of all things in the Kingdoms of Nature--such as minerals, plants and animals--hence of things pertaining to the realm of material nature, however invisible that essence may be, and howsoever much it has hitherto eluded the grasp of Science. Alchemy, Astrology, Occult Physiology, Chiromancy, exist in Nature and the exact Sciences--perhaps so called, because they are found in this age of paradoxical philosophies the reverse--have already discovered not a few of the secrets of the above arts. But clairvoyance, symbolised in India as the "Eye of Siva," called in Japan, "Infinite Vision," is not Hypnotism, the illegitimate son of Mesmerism, and is not to be acquired by such arts. All the others may be mastered and results obtained, whether good, bad or indifferent; but Atma-Vidya sets small value on them. It includes them all and may even use them occasionally, but it does so after purifying them of their dross, for beneficent purposes, and taking care to deprive them of every element of selfish motive. Let us explain: Any man or woman can set himself or herself to study one or all of the above specified "Occult Arts" without any great previous preparation, and even without adopting any too restraining mode of life. One could even dispense with any lofty standard of morality. In the last case, of course, ten to one the student would blossom into a very decent kind of sorcerer, and tumble down headlong into black magic. But what can this matter? The Voodoos and the Dugpas eat, drink and are merry over hecatombs of victims of their infernal arts. And so do the amiable gentlemen vivisectionists and the diploma-ed "Hypnotizers" of the Faculties of Medicine; tube only difference between the two classes being that the Voodoos and Dugpas are conscious, and the Charcot-Richet crew unconscious, Sorcerers. Thus, since both have to reap the fruits of their labours and achievements in the black art, the Western practitioners should not have the punishment and reputation without the profits and enjoyments they may get therefrom. For we say it again, hypnotism and vivisection as practiced in such schools, are schools, are Sorcery pure and simple, minus a knowledge that the Voodoos and Dugpas enjoy, and which no Charcot-Richet can procure for himself in fifty years of hard study and experimental observation. Let then those who will dabble in magic, whether they understand its nature or not, but who find the rules imposed upon students too hard, and who, therefore lay Atma-Vidya or Occultism aside--go without it. Let them become magicians by all means, even though they do become Voodoos and Dugpas for the next ten incarnations. "

OCCULT ARTS - SOME PROPOSITIONS BY H.P. BLAVATSKY

The following is extracted from H.P.B.'s first book "Isis Unveiled" and is given here with the belief that it will be useful as well as interesting. She gives some fundamental oriental propositions relating to occult arts, thus:

1. There is no miracle. Everything that happens is the result of law-eternal, immutable, ever-active. Apparent miracle is but the operation of forces antagonistic to what Dr. W.B. Carpenter, F.R.S.-a man of great learning but little knowledge-calls "the well ascertained laws of nature." Like many of his class, Dr. Carpenter ignores the fact that there may be laws once "known," now unknown, to science.
2. Nature is triune: there is a visible objective nature, an invisible, indwelling, energizing nature, the exact model of the other and its vital principle; and above these two is *spirit*, the source of all forces, alone eternal and indestructible. The lower two constantly change; the higher third does not.
3. Man is also triune: he has his objective physical body; his vitalizing astral body (or soul), the real man; and these two are brooded over and illuminated by the third-the sovereign, the immortal spirit. When the real man succeeds in merging himself with the latter, he becomes an immortal entity.
4. Magic, as a science, is the knowledge of these principles, and of the way by which the omniscience and omnipotence of the spirit and its control over nature's forces may be acquired by the individual while still in the body. Magic, as an art, is the application of this knowledge in practice.
5. Arcane knowledge misapplied is sorcery; beneficently used, true magic or WISDOM.
6. Mediumship is the opposite of Adeptship; the medium is the passive instrument of foreign influences, the Adept actively controls himself and all inferior potencies.
7. All things that ever were, that are, or that will be, having their record upon the astral light, or tablet of the unseen universe, the initiated Adept, by using the vision of his own spirit can know all that has been known or can be known.
8. Races of men differ in spiritual gifts as in color, stature, or any other external quality; among some peoples seership naturally prevails, among others mediumship. Some are addicted to sorcery, and transmit its secret rules of practice from generation to generation, with a range of psychical phenomena, more or less wide, as the result.
9. One phase of magical skill is the voluntary and conscious withdrawal of the inner man (astral form) from the outer man (physical body). In the cases of some mediums withdrawal occurs, but it is unconscious and involuntary. With the latter the body is more or less cataleptic at such times; but with the Adept the absence of the astral form would not be noticed, for the physical senses are alert, and the individual appears only as though in a fit of abstraction-"a brown study," as some call it.

To the movements of the wandering astral form neither time nor space offers obstacles. The thaumaturgist thoroughly skilled in occult science can cause himself (that is, his physical body) to *seem* to disappear or to apparently take on any shape that he may choose. He may make his

astral form visible, or he may give it protean appearances. In both cases these results will be achieved by a mesmeric hallucination of the senses of all witnesses, simultaneously brought on. This hallucination is so perfect that the subject of it would stake his life that he saw a reality, when it is but a picture in his own mind, impressed upon his consciousness by the irresistible will of the mesmerizer. But while the astral form can go anywhere, penetrate any obstacle, and be seen at any distance from the physical body, the latter is dependent upon ordinary methods of transportation. It may be levitated under prescribed magnetic conditions, but not pass from one locality to another except in the usual way...Inert matter may be in certain cases and under certain conditions disintegrated, passed through walls and recombined, but living animal organisms cannot.

... Arcane science teaches that the abandonment of the living body by the soul frequently occurs, and that we encounter every day in every condition of life such living corpses. Various causes, among them overpowering fright, grief, despair, a violent attack of sickness, or excessive sensuality, may bring this about. The vacant carcass may be entered and inhabited by the astral form of an Adept, sorcerer, or an elementary (an earth-bound disembodied human soul), or, very rarely, an elemental. Of course an Adept of white magic has the same power, but unless some very exceptional and great object is to be accomplished he will never consent to pollute himself by occupying the body of an impure person. In insanity the patient's astral being is either semi-paralyzed, bewildered, and subject to the influence of every passing spirit of any sort, or it has departed, forever, and the body is taken possession of by some vampirish entity, near its own disintegration and clinging desperately to earth, whose sensual pleasures it may enjoy for a brief season longer by this expedient.

10. The corner stone of MAGIC is an intimate practical knowledge of magnetism and electricity, their qualities, correlations, and potencies. Especially necessary is a familiarity with their effects within and upon the animal kingdom and man. There are occult properties in many other minerals equally strange with that in the lodestone, which all practitioners of magic *must* know, and of which so-called exact science is wholly ignorant. Plants also have like mystical properties in a most wonderful degree, and the secrets of the herbs of dreams and enchantments are only lost to European science, and, useless to say too, are unknown to it except in a few marked instances, such as opium and hashish. Yet the psychical effects of even these few upon the human system are regarded as evidences of a temporary mental disorder...

To sum up all in a few words: MAGIC is spiritual WISDOM; nature the material ally, pupil, and servant of the magician. One common vital principle pervades all things, and this is controllable by the perfected human will. The Adept can stimulate the movements of the natural forces in plants and animals in a preternatural degree. Such experiments are not obstructions of nature but quickenings; the conditions of intenser vital action are given.

The Adept can control the sensations and alter the conditions of the physical and astral bodies of other persons not Adepts; he can also govern and employ, as he chooses, the spirits of the elements. He cannot control the immortal spirit of any human being, living or dead, for all such spirits are alike sparks of the Divine Essence and not subject to any foreign domination.

"Propositions 2 and 3 contain and include the seven-fold classification. In 1877 H.P.B. was writing for those who had known but the three-fold scheme. In number two the vital principle (*prana* or *jiva*) is given: the body with vitality makes two; the real man inside called the soul, being composed of *astral body*, *desires*, and *mind*, makes five; the spirit, including the connecting link of *Buddhi*, completes the seven. The will is one of the forces directly from spirit, and is guided, with ordinary men, by desire; in the Adept's case the will is guided by *Buddhi*, *Manas*, and *Atma*, including in its operation the force of a pure spiritual desire acting solely under law and duty." (William Q. Judge)

