

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE ANCIENTS

A talk at the United Lodge of Theosophists, UK, starting with the readings on this page

on Sunday 02.02.2020; see also videos on the last page

- **ON BUDDHA'S THOUGHT**

Buddha realized, as no man before (or since) had ever done, that the soul is a living thing, and that, as such, it comes under the all-pervading, all-controlling law of growth. . . . He taught men that, if they would bring their lives into harmony with certain fundamental laws of Nature, their souls would grow—as well tended crops grow—vigorously and healthily; and that the sense of well-being which accompanies successful growth, and which, when consciously realized, is true happiness, would be theirs. . . . Penetrated with the conviction that what a man does reacts, naturally and necessarily, on what he is, and so affects for all time the growth of the soul and its consequent well-being; penetrated with the conviction that conduct moulds character, and that character is destiny;—*Buddha called upon each man in turn to take his life into his own hands, and himself to direct the process of his growth.* Insofar as science is of any use to *human beings as souls*, its ultimate principle is here declared. It is this principle which informs the new psychotherapy, and all thought, actually, which is concerned with man's efforts to better his life, in both individual and community.

- **FROM THE DHAMMAPADA, SOME SAYINGS OF BUDDHA**

Lusts are never satisfied . . . He who knows that enjoyment of passion is short-lived and also is the womb of pain, is a wise man.

Even in celestial pleasures he finds no delight. The disciple of the Supremely Enlightened delights in the destruction of craving . . . who clings to nothing but enjoys the freedom of detachment.

Who so lives disciplining himself, unmindful of pleasures, his senses restrained, moderate in eating, full of faith and dauntless energy (Virya)—him verily Mara (temptation) doth not overturn as a gale doth not overturn a rocky mountain.

Health is the greatest of gifts; contentment is the greatest wealth; trust is the best of relationships; Nirvana is the highest happiness.

Thinking is difficult to discipline. Mind is flighty, alighting where it listeth. Good is to tame it. The tame mind is the bearer of happiness.

Better than a man who conquers in battles a thousand times a thousand men is he who conquers himself. He indeed is the mightiest of warriors.

He who controls his mind escapes the bondage of Mara. The mind is incorporeal, moves alone, travels far and rests in the cave of the heart.

- **THE BHAGAVAD GITA – FROM CHAPTER VI**

ARJUNA: "O slayer of Madhu,* on account of the restlessness of the mind, I do not perceive any possibility of steady continuance in this yoga of equanimity which thou hast declared. For indeed, O Krishna, the mind is full of agitation, turbulent, strong, and obstinate. I believe the restraint of it to be as difficult as that of the wind."

KRISHNA: "Without doubt, O thou of mighty arms, the mind is restless and hard to restrain; but it may be restrained, O son of Kuntî, by practice and absence of desire. Yet in my opinion this divine discipline called yoga is very difficult for one who hath not his soul in his own control; yet it may be acquired through proper means and by one who is assiduous and controlleth his heart."

* *Madhu; a daitya or demon slain by Krishna, and representing the quality of passion in nature.*

Talk references

Psychology; The Science of Soul, in days of old: a Science which served as the unavoidable basis for physiology. Whereas in our modern day, it is psychology that is being based (by our great scientists) upon physiology.

Theosophical Glossary – H.P.Blavatsky

Soul; The ψυχη, or nephesh of the Bible; the vital principle, or the breath of life, which every animal, down to the infusoria, shares with man. In the translated Bible it stands indifferently for life, blood and soul. “Let us not kill his nephesh”, says the original text: “let us not kill him”, translate the Christians (Genesis xxxvii. 21), and so on.

Theosophical Glossary – H.P.Blavatsky

Nephesh; (Heb.) Breath of life. Anima, Mens, Vita, Appetites. This term is used very loosely in the Bible. It generally means prana “life”; in the Kabbalah it is the animal passions and the animal Soul. [w.w.w.] Therefore, as maintained in theosophical teachings, Nephesh is the synonym of the Prâna-Kâmic Principle, or the vital animal Soul in man. [H. P. B.]

Theosophical Glossary – H.P.Blavatsky

Sûkshmopadhi (Sk.) In Târaka Râja Yoga the “principle” containing both the higher and the lower Manas and Kâma. It corresponds to the Manomaya Kosha of the Vedantic classification and to the Svapna state. [*Read in conjunction with the Secret Doctrine 1:157*].

Theosophical Glossary – H.P.Blavatsky

THE EGO: Two phases, higher and lower. In theosophical terminology [Ego] differs from the Higher Self. *Key to Theosophy should be carefully studied for such definition.* The ego commonly called manas or human mind or soul. Lower ego the personality with its desires. The higher ego that phase of the human soul united to the spirit. Object of attainment to unite the higher and lower egos. This is accomplished after death by most persons. The aim should be to complete the union before death. Initiation . . . Mind was needed to ‘embrace the universe’ – hence needed to verify and to interpret intuition, the resulting experience being the true doctrine of the heart. . .

Subjects for Discussions; W.Q. Judge – p. 11-15

Astrology is to exact astronomy what psychology is to exact physiology. In astrology and psychology one has to step beyond the visible world of matter, and enter into the domain of transcendent spirit.

Isis Unveiled; H.P.Blavatsky – 1:259

If modern science . . . can condescend to make experiments to determine whether the appearance of the spots on the sun's surface is in any way connected with the potato disease, and finds it is; and that, moreover, "*the earth is very seriously affected by what takes place in the sun,*" why should the ancient astrologers be held up as either fools or arrant knaves?

There is the same relation between natural and judicial or judiciary astrology, as between physiology and psychology, the physical and the moral.

Isis Unveiled; H.P.Blavatsky – 1:267

The astral body has within it the real organs of the outer sense organs. In it are the sight, hearing, power to smell, and the sense of touch. It has a complete system of nerves and arteries of its own for the conveyance of the astral fluid which is to that body as our blood is to the physical. It is the real personal man. There are located the subconscious perception and the latent memory, which the hypnotizers of the day are dealing with and being baffled by.

The Ocean Of Theosophy; W.Q. Judge – p.42

. . . the savage who has no knowledge of the complex machinery working in his body still carries on the process of digestion perfectly . . . for these acts and doings of the inner man are the unconscious actions of the subconscious mind. These words “conscious” and “subconscious” are of course used relatively, the unconsciousness being that of the brain only. And hypnotic experiments have conclusively proved all these theories, as on one day not far away will be fully admitted.

The Ocean Of Theosophy; W.Q. Judge – p.49

ENQ. And what may be the duty of a Theosophist to himself?

THEO. To control and conquer, through the Higher, the lower self. To purify himself inwardly and morally; to fear no one, and nought, save the tribunal of his own conscience. Never to do a thing by halves; i.e., if he thinks it the right thing to do, let him do it openly and boldly, and if wrong, never touch it at all. It is the duty of a Theosophist to lighten his burden by thinking of the wise aphorism of Epictetus, who says: *“Be not diverted from your duty by any idle reflection the silly world may make upon you, for their censures are not in your power, and consequently should not be any part of your concern.”*

The Key to Theosophy; H.P.Blavatsky – p. 241

Take the human mind in connexion with the body. Man has two distinct physical brains; the cerebrum with its two hemispheres at the frontal part of the head — the source of the voluntary nerves; and the cerebellum, situated at the back portion of the skull — the fountain of the involuntary nerves which are the agents of the unconscious or mechanical powers of the mind to act through. And weak and uncertain as may be the control of man over his involuntary, such as the blood circulation, the throbbing of the heart and respiration, especially during sleep — yet how far more powerful, how much more potential appears man as master and ruler over the blind molecular motion — the *laws* which govern his body (a proof of this being afforded by the phenomenal powers of the Adept and even the common Yogi) than that which you *will* call God, shows over the immutable laws of Nature.

A Letter from a Master

These videos were shown, on Stoic psychology and how *mind* exists independently of the brain.

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9OCA6UFE-0> & (5 minutes)

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ci2npsJlvFc> (3 minutes)