

Letter 1

FROM THE MAHA-CHOHAN

To A.P. Sinnett

AN abridged version of the view of the Chohan on the T.S. from his own words as given last night. My own letter, the answer to yours, will shortly follow.

K.H.

The doctrine we promulgate being the only true one, must, supported by such evidence as we are preparing to give become ultimately triumphant as every other truth. Yet it is absolutely necessary to inculcate it gradually, enforcing its theories, unimpeachable facts for those who know, with direct inferences deduced from and corroborated by the evidence furnished by modern exact science. That is the reason why Colonel H.S.O., who works but to revive Buddhism, may be regarded as one who labours in the true path of theosophy, far more than any other man who chooses as his goal the gratification of his own ardent aspirations for occult knowledge. Buddhism, stripped of its superstitions, is eternal truth, and he who strives for the latter is striving for Theos-Sophia, Divine Wisdom, which is a synonym of truth.

For our doctrines to practically react on the so-called moral code, or the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, etc., we have to popularize a knowledge of theosophy. It is not the individual and determined purpose of attaining oneself Nirvana (the culmination of all knowledge and absolute wisdom) which is after all only an exalted and glorious *selfishness*—but the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead on the right path our neighbour, to cause as many of our fellow-creatures as we possibly can to benefit by it, which constitutes the true theosophist.

The intellectual portions of mankind seem to be fast drifting into two classes, the one unconsciously preparing for itself long periods of temporary annihilation or states of non-consciousness, owing to the deliberate surrender of their intellect, its imprisonment in the narrow grooves of bigotry and superstition, a process which cannot fail to lead to the utter deformation of the intellectual principle; the other unrestrainedly indulging its animal propensities with the deliberate intention of *submitting* to annihilation pure and simple in case of failure, to millenniums of degradation after physical dissolution. Those 'intellectual classes', reacting upon the ignorant masses which they attract and which look up to them as noble and fit examples to follow, degrade and morally ruin those they ought to protect and guide. Between degrading superstition and still more degrading brutal materialism, the white dove of truth has hardly room where to rest her weary unwelcome foot.

It is time that theosophy should enter the arena; the sons of theosophists are more likely to become in their turn theosophists than anything else. No messenger of truth, no prophet has ever achieved during his lifetime a complete triumph, not even Buddha. The Theosophical Society was chosen as the corner-stone, the foundation of the future religions of humanity. To achieve the proposed object, a greater, wiser, and especially a more benevolent intermingling of the high and the low, of the Alpha and the Omega of society, was determined upon. The white race must be the first to stretch out the hand of fellowship to the dark nations, to call the poor despised 'nigger' brother. This prospect may not smile to all, but he is no Theosophist who objects to this principle.

In view of the ever-increasing triumph and at the same time misuse of free-thought and *liberty* (the universal reign of Satan, Éliphas Levi would have called it), how is the combative *natural* instinct of man to be restrained from inflicting hither-to unheard-of cruelty and enormities, tyranny, injustice, etc., if not through the soothing influence of a brotherhood, and of the practical application of Buddha's esoteric doctrines?

For as everyone knows, total emancipation from authority of the one all-pervading power or law called God by the priests—Buddha, Divine Wisdom and enlightenment or Theosophy, by the philosophers of all ages—means also the emancipation from that of human law. Once unfettered and delivered from their dead weight of dogmatic interpretations, personal names, anthropomorphic conceptions and salaried priests, the fundamental doctrines of all religion will be proved identical in their esoteric meaning. Osiris, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, will be shown as different names for one and the same royal highway to final bliss, Nirvana.

Mystical Christianity, that is to say that Christianity which teaches self-redemption through our own seventh principle—this liberated Para-Atma (Augoeides) called by some Christ, by others Buddha, and equivalent to regeneration or rebirth in spirit—will be found just the same truth as the Nirvana of Buddhism. All of us have to get rid of our own Ego, the illusory apparent *self*, to recognize our true self in a transcendental divine life. But if we would not be selfish, we must strive to make other people see that truth, to recognize the reality of that transcendental self, the Buddha, the Christ or God of every preacher. This is why even exoteric Buddhism is the surest path to lead men towards the one esoteric truth.

As we find the world now, whether Christian, Mussulman or Pagan, justice is disregarded and honour and mercy both flung to the winds. In a word, how, seeing that the main objects of the T. S. are misinterpreted by those who are most willing to serve us personally, are we to deal with the rest of mankind, with the curse known as the 'struggle for life', which is the real and most prolific parent of most woes and sorrows and all crimes? Why has that struggle become the almost universal scheme of the universe? We answer, because no religion, with the exception of

Buddhism, has hitherto taught a practical contempt for this earthly life, while each of them, always with that one solitary exception, has through its hells and damnations inculcated the greatest dread of death. Therefore do we find that struggle for life raging most fiercely in Christian countries, most prevalent in Europe and America. It weakens in the Pagan lands, and is nearly unknown among Buddhist populations. (In China during famine and where the masses are most ignorant of their own or any religion, it was remarked that those mothers who devoured their children belonged to localities where there were the most Christian missionaries to be found; where there were none, and the Bonzes alone had the field, the population died with the utmost indifference.) Teach the people to see that life on this earth even the happiest is but a burden and an illusion, that it is but our own *karma*, the cause producing the effect, that is our own judge, our saviour in future lives, and the great struggle for life will soon lose its intensity. There are no penitentiaries in Buddhist lands, and crime is nearly unknown among the Buddhist Thibetans. (The above is not addressed to you, i.e., A.P.S., and has naught to do with the work of the Simla Eclectic Society. It is meant only as an answer to the erroneous impression in Mr Hume's mind of the 'Ceylon work' as no theosophy.)

The world in general, the Christendom especially, left for two thousand years to the regime of a personal God, as well as its political and social systems based on that idea, has now proved a failure. If the Theosophists say: 'We have nothing to do with all this; the lower classes and the inferior races (those of India for instance, in the conception of the British) cannot concern us and must manage as they can,' what becomes of our fine professions of benevolence, philanthropy, reform, etc.? Are these professions a mockery? And if a mockery, can ours be the true path? Shall we not devote ourselves to teaching a few Europeans, fed on the fat of the land. many of them loaded with the gifts of blind fortune, the rationale of bell-ringing, cup-growing, of the spiritual telephone and astral body formations, and leave the teeming millions of the ignorant, of the poor and despised, the lowly and the oppressed, to take care of themselves and of their hereafter as best they know how? Never. Rather perish the T.S. with both its hapless founders than that we should permit it to become no better than an academy of magic, a hall of occultism. That we the devoted followers of that spirit incarnate of absolute self-sacrifice, of philanthropy, divine kindness, as of all the highest virtues attainable on this earth of sorrow, the man of men, Gautama Buddha, should ever allow the T.S. to represent the *embodiment of selfishness*, the refuge of the few with no thought in them for the many, is a strange idea, my brothers.

Among the few glimpses obtained by Europeans of Thibet and its mystical hierarchy of 'perfect Lamas', there is one which was correctly understood and described. 'The incarnations of the Bodhisattva, Padma Pani, or Avalokitesvara and of Tsong-ka-pa and that of Amitabha, relinquish at their death the attainment of Buddhahood — i.e., the *summum bonum* of bliss and of individual personal felicity—that they

might be born again and again for the benefit of mankind.' (R.D.) (1Rhys Davids.) In other words, that they might be again and again subjected to misery, imprisonment in flesh, and all the sorrows of life, provided that by such a self-sacrifice, repeated throughout long and dreary centuries, they might become the means of securing salvation and bliss in the hereafter for a handful of men chosen among but one of the many races of mankind. And it is we, the humble disciples of these perfect Lamas, who are expected to allow the T.S. to drop its noble title, that of Brotherhood of Humanity, to become a simple school of psychology. No, no, good brother, you have been labouring under the mistake too long already. Let us understand each other. He who does not feel competent enough to grasp the noble idea sufficiently, to work for it, need not undertake a task too heavy for him. But there is hardly a Theosophist in the whole Society unable to effectually help it by correcting the erroneous impressions of the outsiders, if not by actually propagating himself this idea. Oh, for the noble and unselfish man to help us *effectually* in India in that divine task! All our knowledge, past and present, would not be sufficient to repay him.

Having explained our views and aspirations, I have but a few words more to add. To be true, religion and philosophy must offer the solution of every problem. That the world is in such a bad condition morally is a conclusive evidence that none of its religions and philosophies, those of the *civilized* races less than any other, have ever possessed the *truth*. The right and logical explanations on the subject of the problems of the great dual principles—right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egotism and altruism—are as impossible to them now as they were 1881 years ago. They are as far from the solution as they ever were; but to these there must be somewhere a consistent solution, and if our doctrines prove their competence to offer it, then the world will be quick to confess *that* must be the true philosophy, the true religion, the true light, which gives *truth* and nothing but the truth.