

UNITY – A THEOSOPHICAL VIEW

From Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and the Mahatmas

What follows is an explanation of why Unity lies at the very heart of Theosophy and the Theosophical Society. It is given in the words* of those who brought this “Hidden Wisdom” forward for our predecessors and for us and for many generations to come. They founded a Society which jealously guards and promotes freedom of thought. Its members come from all walks of life and belong to any philosophy or religion, or none. They stand in unity through their acceptance of the three Objects of the Society and their aspiration to learn about the timeless teachings of Theosophy – the Esoteric Wisdom. The instigation for this article was to share with you some of its key tenets, chief of which is Unity and why this has a central place within the theosophical community, inspires its activities and also the lives of its members. ‡

What, then, is Theosophy, and how may it be defined in its latest presentation in this closing portion of the 19th century? “Theosophy is not a Religion” it is “Religion Itself”. A Religion in the true and only correct sense, is a bond, uniting men together - not a particular set of dogmas and beliefs. Now Religion, per se, in its widest meaning is that which binds not only all MEN, but also all BEINGS and all things in the entire Universe into one grand whole.

This is our theosophical definition of religion... the One Universal religion, the only definition they could subscribe to and accept in full is one given by Miller. How truly and Theosophically he describes it, by showing that: ...true Religion is always mild, propitious and humble; plays not the tyrant, plants no faith in blood, nor bears destruction on her chariot wheels; but stoops to polish, succour and redress, and builds her grandeur on the public good.

The above is a correct definition of what true theosophy is, or ought to be... In this respect, as it is the duty and task of every genuine theosophist to accept and carry out these principles, Theosophy is RELIGION, and the Society its one Universal Church; the temple of Solomon’s wisdom¹, in building which “there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building” (I Kings, vi, 7); for this “temple” is made by no human hand, nor built in any locality on earth - but, verily, is raised only in the inner sanctuary of man’s heart wherein reigns alone the awakened soul. Thus Theosophy is not a Religion, we say, but RELIGION itself, the one bond of unity, which is so universal and all-embracing that no man, as no speck - from gods and mortal down to animals, the blade of grass and atom - can be outside of its light. Therefore, any organization or body of that name must necessarily be a UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD. Were it otherwise, Theosophy would be but a word added to hundreds other such words as high-sounding as they are pretentious and empty. Viewed as a philosophy, Theosophy in its practical work is the alembic of the Mediaeval alchemist. It transmutes the apparently base metal of every ritualistic and dogmatic creed... into the gold of fact and truth, and thus truly produces a universal panacea for the ills of mankind. This is why,

* The paragraphs which follows this introduction are taken directly from referenced sources (as noted at the end of each passage quoted) and by necessity abridged. In the main, quotation marks are not given except where used in the original text.

‡ Editor Esoterica magazine.

¹ Whose 700 wives and 300 concubines, by the bye, are merely the personations of man’s attributes, feelings, passions and his various occult powers: the Kabalistic numbers 7 and 3 showing it plainly. Solomon himself, moreover, being, simply, the emblem of SOL—the “Solar Initiate” or the Christ-Sun, is a variant of the Indian “Vikarttana” (the Sun) shorn of his beams by Visvakarman, his Hierophant - Initiator, who thus shears the Chrestos-candidate for initiation of his golden radiance and crowns him with a dark, blackened aureole—the “crown of thorns.” (See The Secret Doctrine for full explanation). Solomon was never a living man. As described in Kings, his life and works are an allegory on the trials and glory of Initiation.

when applying for admission into the Theosophical Society, no one is asked what religion he [/she] belongs to, nor what his [/her] deistic views may be. These views are his [/her] own personal property and have nought to do with the Society. Because Theosophy can be practised by Christian or Heathen, Jew or Gentile, by Agnostic or Materialist, or even an Atheist, provided that none of these is a bigoted fanatic, who refuses to recognise as his brother any man or woman outside his own special creed or belief... And these principles are those of Theosophy... because they are universal ethics, and were preached by... all the great Sages... Hence, once that we live up to such theosophy, it becomes a universal panacea indeed, for it heals the wounds inflicted by the gross asperities of the Church “isms” on the sensitive soul of every naturally religious man. How many of these... forcibly thrust out by the reactive impulse of disappointment from the narrow area of blind belief into the ranks of arid disbelief, have been brought back to hopeful aspiration by simply joining our Brotherhood - yea, imperfect as it is.¹

The Secret Doctrine, the “Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy”, is an epitome of occult truths that will make it a source of information and instruction for earnest students for long years to come.² The Secret Doctrine was the universally diffused religion of the ancient and prehistoric world... Proofs of its diffusion, authentic records... Together with the teachings of all its great adepts, exist to this day in the secret crypts of libraries belonging to the occult fraternity.³

In all ages, and in all lands, the belief has existed that a Divine degree of knowledge is possible to human beings under certain conditions; and, as a corollary to this, the conviction has dwelt in the hearts of people that living men exist who possess this knowledge... In ancient times, this knowledge was taught and communicated in the “Mysteries”, of which traces have been found among all of the nations of the earth... the existence of this knowledge has been called by various names, of which “The Secret Wisdom” is one... The purpose of the present work, then, is to lay out before the thinking world” as much of this “Hidden Wisdom” as it is thought expedient to make known at present to men in general.⁴ It is perhaps desirable to state unequivocally that the teachings... belong neither to the Hindu, the Zoroastrian, the Chaldean, nor the Egyptian religion, neither to Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, nor Christianity exclusively. The Secret Doctrine is the essence of all these. Sprung from it in their origins, the various religious schemes are now made to merge back into their original element, of which every mystery and dogma has grown, developed and become materialised.⁵ Religions are... an exoteric veil thrown over the face of esoteric truth; and – as a direct result of this – they are allegorical i.e. mythological in form.⁶ Its doctrines belong exclusively to no religion, and are confined to no society or time. They are the birth-right of every human soul.⁷

If Eastern comparisons may be permitted, Theosophy is the shoreless ocean of universal truth, love and wisdom, reflecting its radiance on the earth, while the Theosophical Society is only a visible bubble on that reflection. Theosophy is divine nature, visible and invisible, and its Society human nature trying to ascend to its divine parent. Theosophy, finally, is the fixed eternal sun, and the Society the evanescent comet trying to settle in an orbit to become a planet, ever revolving with attraction of the sun of truth. It was formed to assist in showing that such a thing as Theosophy exists, and to help them to ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities.. [Speaking of God, the Soul and Man:] In their origin and in eternity the three, like the universe and all therein, are one with the absolute Unity, the unknowable deific essence... We believe in no creation, but in the periodical and consecutive appearances of the universe from the subject on to the objective plane of being, at regular intervals of time, covering periods of immense duration....⁸

¹ HPB’s magazine ‘Lucifer’, Volume III, p 2. November 1888.

² Letter No, 19, p 52, Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom, C. Jinarājadāsa. 4th ed. Adyar 1948.

³ Introductory, SD, V I, p xxxiv. TPH, Adyar, 1978.

⁴ Circular printed for distribution in 1888. Historical Introduction, SD, V I, p 50-51. TPH, Adyar, 1978.

⁵ Preface to the SD, p viii, facsimile of the original edition of 1888. Cunningham Press, USA.

⁶ SD, V II, p 658. TPH, Adyar, 1978. See also the Key to Theosophy and Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett.

⁷ Theosophia Inner Wisdom: Origin, practical application, and ultimate destiny, by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, p 18.

⁸ Key to Theosophy, pp 57, 83. H P. Blavatsky, 1889. Theosophical Publishing House. Dedicated by HPB to all her Pupils

that they may Learn and Teach in turn.

No Theosophist has the right to this name, unless he [/she] is thoroughly imbued with the correctness of Carlyle's truism: "The end of man is an action and not a thought, though it were the noblest" – and unless he [/she] sets and models his [/her] daily life upon this truth. The profession of a truth is not yet the enactment of it; and the more beautiful and grand it sounds, the more loudly virtue or duty is talked about instead of being acted upon, the more forcibly it will always remind one of the Dead Sea fruit... The Theosophical idea of charity means personal exertion for others; personal mercy and kindness; personal interest in the welfare of those who suffer; personal sympathy, forethought and assistance in their troubles and needs... If we had money, we would found schools[§] which would turn out something else than reading and writing for candidates for starvation. Children should above all be taught self-reliance, love for all men, altruism, mutual charity, and more than anything else to think for themselves... We should aim at creating free men and women, free intellectually, free morally, unprejudiced in all respects, and above all things, unselfish. And we believe that much if not all of this could be achieved by proper and truly theosophical education.⁹

Only the progress one makes in the study of Arcane knowledge from its rudimentary elements, brings him [/her] gradually to understand our meaning. Only thus, and not otherwise, does it, strengthening and refining those mysterious links of sympathy between intelligent men – the temporarily isolated fragments of the universal Soul and the cosmic Soul itself – bring them into full rapport. Once this [is] established then only will these awakened sympathies serve, indeed, to connect MAN with – what... I am again compelled to describe as that energetic chain which bind together the material and immaterial Kosmos, Past, Present and Future, and quicken his perceptions so as to clearly grasp, not merely all things of matter but of Spirit also.all will give way to, become blended into one universal feeling, the only true and holy, the only unselfish and Eternal one – Love, an Immense Love for humanity – as a Whole! For it is "Humanity" which is the great Orphan, the only disinherited one upon this earth, my friend. And it is the duty of every man who is capable of unselfish impulse to do something, however little, for its welfare.by the act of joining other sympathisers in this organisation they are stimulated to effort and incite each other to investigate. Unity always gives strength... Union and cooperation are indispensable.¹⁰

⁹ Op cit, pp 230, 245, 271.

¹⁰ Mahatma Letter No 15 from 'KH', pp 46, 49, 51-52. Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett (Chronological), TPH 1998.]

[§] Olcott Memorial School, Adyar, Chennai, India, was the first Theosophical School, founded by Col. H. S. Olcott in 1894, just a few years after HPB wrote these words. The Golden Link College, Caloocan City in the Philippines, was established 2002. Both provide Theosophically-based transformational education for underprivileged children and young people - boys and girls. Members of the Theosophical Society and the Theosophical Order of Service, actively support these schools and many other educational activities run by the TOS and TS in disadvantaged areas of the world. Major centres of Theosophical activity and individual members or groups of members, also provide many other community based services. See p 4-9.