



# The Spiral Path...

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We lost touch ages ago with the Mighty Mother, Nature, and now need to go to her again, for the most part in her forests or on her hilltops or by the seashore, to find our own souls in her quiet places and to learn that all matter responds to the spiritual touch.

Out beyond hearing and seeing and thinking are infinite Laws that control our lives.

Divine Laws hold us in their keeping: immediately behind the veil of visible things, and but a little way from the consciousness of our mortal selves, are Higher Forces at work for our good.

Katherine Tingley, *The Wine of Life*

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## Refresh

Sometimes we need to refresh our purpose. Reset our understanding, as it should never become stagnant. The ballet dancer has barre exercises, where basics are repeated until they become fully ensconced. Then the dancer may use those practices to piece together more complex dance. We always have the opportunity to re-inculcate the basics, and join together a deeper understanding of the way things are and what we are doing here.

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Confused by thoughts, we experience duality in life.  
Unencumbered by ideas, the enlightened see the one Reality.

Hui-neng

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If you use your mind to try and understand reality, you will understand neither your mind or reality. If you try and understand reality without using your mind, you will understand both your mind and reality.

Bodhidharma

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## From the Editor

Watch what goes on around you. Be mindful of the world and its multifarious occurrences — in all departments of Nature. A wholistic view of Life will help give you a better understanding of how the universe we are manifest in, works. It will give you a basis for evaluating each thought and action you put in place in your life. A vision of how you fit into the whole, and how your moment to moment decisions affect everything around you. We are part of the whole, and the whole contains us. Every tiny thing we think and do affects the whole for better or worse. Be the universe.

Fraternally,  
Scott J. Osterhage

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## The New Cycle

H. P. Blavatsky

*La Revue Theosophique*, March 21, 1889 [Bolding by Editor]

We cannot inaugurate this first issue of an official and strictly Theosophical Magazine without giving our readers some information that seems essential to us.

Indeed, the ideas held to this day with regard to the Theosophical Society in India, as it has been called, are so vague and so varied, that even many of our members entertain very erroneous views concerning it. Nothing could show more convincingly the necessity of making well known the goals we pursue in a Magazine devoted exclusively to Theosophy. Also, before asking our readers to become interested in it, or even to take up its study, they need to be given some preliminary explanations.

What is Theosophy? Why use this pretentious name, we are asked at the outset. When we answer that Theosophy is Divine Wisdom, or the Wisdom of the Gods (*Theo-Sophia*), rather than that of a God, a still more extraordinary objection is raised: “Then, are you not Buddhists? Yet we know that the Buddhists believe neither in a, nor several Gods....”

Nothing could be more correct. But, in the first place, we are no more Buddhists than we are Christians, Mussulmans, Jews, Zoroastrians or Brahmins. Furthermore, concerning the question of Gods: we hold to the esoteric method of the *Hyponia* taught by Ammonius Saccas — *i.e.*, to the occult meaning of the term. Did not Aristotle say: “The Divine Essence permeating nature and diffused throughout the entire Universe (which is infinite), that which the *hoi polloi* call Gods, is simply ... the first principles” — in other words, the creative intelligent forces of Nature. From the fact that Buddhist philosophers admit and know of the nature of these forces as well as anybody, it does not follow that the Society — as a Society — is therefore Buddhist. **The Society, in its capacity as an abstract**

corporation, believes in nothing, accepts nothing, teaches nothing. The Society *per se* cannot and must not have any religion, for it contains all religions. Cults are, after all, but external vehicles, more or less material forms and containing more or less of the essence of the One and Universal Truth. In its essential nature Theosophy is the spiritual as well as the physical science of this Truth — the very essence of deistic and philosophical research. As visible representative of the universal Truth, since it contains all religions and philosophies, and since each of them contains in its turn a portion of this Truth — the Society could not be sectarian, have preferences, or be any more partial than, say, an anthropological or geographic society. Do the latter care to what religion their explorers belong, so long as each of their members bravely carries out his duty?

Now, if we are asked, as has been done already so many times, whether we are deists or atheists, spiritualists or materialists, idealists or positivists, royalists, republicans, or socialists, we can only answer that each of these opinions is represented in the Society. I have but to repeat what I said just ten years ago in a lead article in the *Theosophist*, to show how much that which the general public thinks of us is different from what we really are. Our Society has been accused from time to time of the most baroque and contradictory misdeeds, and has been charged with motives and ideas that it has never had. What has not been said of us! One day we were an association of ignoramuses, believers in miracles; the next day, we were declared to be thaumaturgists; our aim was secret and entirely political, it was said in the morning — that we were Carbonari and dangerous Nihilists; then, in the evening, we were found to be spies salaried by autocratic and monarchic Russia. At other times, without any transition, we were believed to be Jesuits seeking to ruin French Spiritism. American Positivists saw in us religious fanatics, while the clergy of all nations denounced us as emissaries of Satan etc., etc.... Finally, our good critics with impartial urbanity divided all theosophists into two categories: *charlatans* and *dupes*....

**Well, men slander only those they hate or “fear.”** Why should we be hated? As to fearing us, who can say? **Truth is not always welcome and, perhaps, we utter too many real truths!** Yet, since the day our Society was founded in the United States, fourteen years ago, our teachings have received wholly un hoped-for attention. The original program had to be enlarged, and the territory of our researches and combined explorations now extends towards unlimited horizons. This expansion was made necessary by the ever growing number of our members, a number still increasing daily; the diversity of their races and their religions requiring ever deeper studies on our part. **However, although our program was enlarged, nothing was changed as to the three main objects, except, alas, with regard to the one dearest to our heart, the first, that is: Universal Brotherhood without distinction of race, color or creed.** Notwithstanding all our efforts, this object has almost always been ignored, or has remained a dead letter, in India especially, thanks to the innate superciliousness and national pride of the English. Except for that, the other two objects, that is to say, the study of Oriental religions, especially of the ancient Vedic and Buddhist scriptures, and our researches into the latent powers of man, have been pursued with a zeal that has received its reward.

Since 1876 we have been compelled to deviate more and more from the main highway of general principles, originally laid down, and to take ever widening subsidiary paths. Thus in order to satisfy all Theosophists, and to follow the evolution of all religions, we have been forced to travel clear around the globe, beginning our pilgrimage at the dawn of the cycle of nascent humanity. **These researches have resulted in a synthesis which has just been sketched in *The Secret Doctrine*, certain portions of which will be translated in this Magazine. The doctrine is barely outlined in our volumes; and yet the mysteries unveiled therein concerning the beliefs of the prehistoric peoples, cosmogenesis and anthropology, had never been divulged until now.** Certain of its dogmas and theories are in conflict with scientific theories, especially with those of Darwin; yet they explain and throw light on what to this day had remained incomprehensible; and fill more

than one gap, left open,  *nolens volens*, by official science. But we had to present all these doctrines, such as they are, or never to broach the subject at all. He who is frightened by these infinite prospects and would seek to reduce them by using the shortcuts and the “flying bridges” artificially constructed by modern science over its thousand and one gaps, will do better not to enter the Thermopylae of archaic science.

Such has been one of the results our Society has achieved; a poor one, perhaps, but one that will certainly be followed by further revelations, exoteric or purely esoteric. **If we speak thereof it is to prove that we do not preach any religion in particular, leaving each member utterly free to follow his own particular belief. The prime object of our organization, of which we strive to make a real brotherhood, is fully expressed in the motto of the Theosophical Society and of all its organs: “There is no Religion higher than Truth.” Hence, as an impersonal Society, we must welcome Truth wherever it may be found, without partiality for any one belief as against another. This leads directly to a quite logical deduction: if we acclaim and welcome with open arms every earnest seeker after truth, it follows that there is no place in our ranks for the ardent sectarian, for the bigot, or for the hypocrite surrounded by a “Chinese wall” of dogmas, each stone of which bears the inscription: “No one may pass here.”** What, indeed, could be the position in our midst of a fanatic whose religion forbids all research, and does not admit the free use of reason — when the original concept, the very root from which grows the beautiful plant that we call Theosophy, is free and complete research into all the mysteries, natural, divine, or human!

Except for this restriction, the Society invites everyone to participate in its investigations and discoveries. **Whoever feels his heart beating in unison with the great heart of humanity, whoever feels his interests at one with those who are poorer and less fortunate than himself; whoever, man or woman, is ever ready to lend a helping hand to those who suffer, whoever is fully conscious of the real meaning of “Egoism,” is a Theosophist by birth and by right.** He can always be sure of finding sympathetic hearts amongst us. Our Society is in fact a small, special humanity, where, as among mankind at large, one may always find his counterpart.

If it is objected that in it the atheist rubs elbows with the deist, and the materialist with the idealist, we answer: “What of it?” If an individual is a materialist, that is, discerns in matter an infinite potency for the creation, or rather for the evolution of all terrestrial life; or else a spiritualist endowed with a spiritual perception the other one does not have, why should this prevent one or the other from being a good Theosophist? Besides, those who worship a Personal God or Divine Substance are far more materialistic than the Pantheists who reject the idea of a carnalized God but who perceive the divine essence in each atom. The whole world knows that Buddhism recognizes neither a God nor Gods. And yet the Arhat, for whom each atom of dust is as full of *Swabhavat* (plastic substance, eternal and intelligent, though impersonal) as he is himself, and who tries to assimilate this *Swabhavat* by identifying himself with the All in order to reach Nirvana, must in order to reach it follow the same Path of sorrows, of renunciation, of good works and of altruism, and has to lead as saintly a life, although less selfish in motive, as the beatified Christian. What matters the passing form if the goal pursued is the same Eternal Essence, whether that Essence appear to human perception under the guise of a Substance, of an immaterial Breath, or of a No-thing! Let us admit the PRESENCE, whether called Personal God or Universal Substance, and let us admit a cause, since we all see effects. But these effects being the same for the Buddhist atheist as for the Christian deist, and the cause being as inscrutable for the one as for the other, why should we waste our time pursuing an illusive shadow? In the final analysis, the greatest of materialists, as well as the most transcendental of philosophers, admits the omnipresence of an impalpable Proteus, omnipotent in its ubiquity throughout all kingdoms of nature, including man — a Proteus indivisible in its essence, without form and yet manifesting itself in all forms, which is here, there, everywhere and

nowhere, which is the All and the Nothing, which is all things and always One, Universal Essence which binds, limits and contains everything, and which everything contains. What theologian can go beyond that? It is enough to recognize these verities to be a Theosophist; for such a confession amounts to admitting that not only humanity — even though consisting of thousands of races — but all that lives and vegetates, all that in one word is, is made up of the same essence and substance, is animated by the same spirit, and that, therefore, there is solidarity throughout nature, on the physical as well as on the moral plane.

We have already said in the *Theosophist*: **“Born in the United States of America, the Theosophical Society was constituted on the model of its mother country. The latter, as we know, omits the name of God from its constitution, lest, said the Fathers of the Republic, this word someday afford the pretext for a State religion; for they wanted to grant absolute equality in its laws to all religions so that all would support the State and all in their turn would be protected.”**

**The Theosophical Society was established on this beautiful model.**

As of today its one hundred seventy-three branches are grouped into several Sections. In India these sections are self-governing and self-supporting; outside of India there are two large Sections, one in America, and the other one in England (American Section and British Section). Thus each branch as well as each member, having the right to profess the religion and to study the sciences or philosophies it or he prefers, provided that the whole remains united by bonds of solidarity and fraternity — **our Society may be truly called the “Republic of Conscience.”**

**While being free to engage in those intellectual pursuits that please him the most, each member of our Society must, however, give some reason for belonging to it, which means that each member must do his own chosen part, however small it may be, by way of mental work or otherwise, for the good of all. If he does not work for others, he has no reason for being a Theosophist. All of us must work for the liberation of human thought, for the elimination of selfish and sectarian superstitions, and for the discovery of all the truths that are within the reach of the human mind. This goal cannot be attained with greater certainty than through the culture of solidarity on the plane of mental work. No honest worker, no serious seeker, has ever returned therefrom empty-handed; and there are hardly any men or women, however busy they may be thought to be, unable to lay their moral or pecuniary mite on the altar of Truth. Henceforth it will be the duty of the Presidents of branches and Sections to see to it that there be no such drones who do nothing but buzz in the Theosophical beehive.**

One further word. How many times have not the two founders of the Theosophical Society been accused of ambition and autocracy! How many times have they not been reproached with a pretended desire to impose their will on other members! Nothing could be more unjust. The founders of the Society have always been the first and humblest servants of their co-workers and colleagues; always showing themselves ready to help others with the feeble lights at their disposal, and to support them in the fight against the egoists, the indifferent and the sectarians; for such is the first battle for which everyone must be prepared who enters our Society, so little understood by the general public. Besides, the reports published after each Annual Convention are there to prove this. At our last convention, held in Madras, in December 1888, important reforms were proposed and adopted. Anything resembling a financial obligation was discontinued, even the payment of 25 francs for the cost of a diploma having been abolished. Hereafter members will be free to donate what they wish, if their heart is set on helping and supporting the Society, or, not to give anything.

Under these conditions, and at this moment of Theosophical history, it is easy to understand the goal of a Magazine devoted exclusively to the spread of our ideas. In it we would like to be able to open up new intellectual horizons, to trace unexplored paths leading to the amelioration of humankind; to offer words of comfort to all the disinherited of the earth who suffer from a spiritual void, or from an

absence of material goods. We invite all noble-hearted persons who would respond to this appeal to join us in this humanitarian work.

Every contributor, whether a member of our Society or merely in sympathy with it, can help us to make of this Magazine the only organ of true Theosophy in France. We are now facing all the glorious possibilities of the future. Once again the hour has struck for the great periodical return of the rising tide of mystic thought in Europe. We are surrounded on all sides by the ocean of universal science — the science of life eternal — bringing in its waters the buried and long forgotten treasures of vanished generations, treasures still unknown to the modern civilized races. The powerful current rising from the submarine abysses, from the depths where lie the learning and arts engulfed with the antediluvian Giants — demi-gods, though mortals hardly yet formed; ‘this current blows us in the face, murmuring: “That which was, still is; that which is forgotten, buried for aeons in the depths of Jurassic strata, may once again reappear on the surface. Prepare yourselves.”

Happy those who understand the language of the elements. But, where are those heading to whom the word element conveys no other meaning than the one given to it by materialistic physics and chemistry? Will the great waters carry them toward familiar shores when they will have been swept off their feet in the oncoming flood? Will they be carried toward the summit of a new Ararat, toward the heights where are light and sun and a safe spot to stand on, or toward a bottomless abyss that will engulf them as soon as they attempt to fight against the irresistible waves of a new element?

Let us prepare, and let us study Truth in all its aspects, trying not to ignore any of them, if we do not wish, when the hour will have struck, to fall into the abyss of the unknown. It is useless to rely on chance, and to await the approaching intellectual and psychic crisis with indifference if not with total incredulity, saying to oneself that if worse comes to worst, the tide will carry us quite naturally to the shore; for there is a strong likelihood of the tide stranding but a corpse! **The battle will be fierce, in any case, between brutal materialism and blind fanaticism on the one hand, and on the other philosophy and mysticism — that more or less thick veil of the Eternal Truth.**

**It is not materialism that will have the upper hand. Everyone fanatically clinging to an idea isolating him from the universal axiom — “There is no Religion higher than Truth” — will find himself separated like a rotten plank from the new ark called Humanity. Tossed by the waves, chased by the winds, buffeted by this element so terrible because unknown, he will soon find himself swallowed up.**

Yes, thus it must be, and it cannot be otherwise when the flame of modern materialism, artificial and cold, will be extinguished for lack of fuel. Those who cannot conceive of a spiritual Ego, of a living Soul, and of an eternal Spirit, within their material shell (which owes its illusory life only to these *principles*); those for whom the great wave of hope in a life beyond the grave is a bitter draught, the symbol of an unknown quantity, or else the subject of a belief *sui generis*, the result of mediumistic or theological hallucinations — those will do well to be prepared for the keenest of disappointments the future could have in store for them. For, from the depths of the muddy black waters of matter, hiding from them on all sides the horizons of the great beyond, a mystic force is rising towards the closing years of this century. A mere touch, at the most, until now, but a *superhuman* touch, “supernatural” only for the superstitious and the ignorant. **The Spirit of Truth is at this moment moving upon the face of these black waters, and, separating them, forces them to yield their spiritual treasures. This spirit is a force that cannot be either checked or stopped.** Those who recognize it and feel that this is the supreme moment of their salvation, will be carried by it beyond the illusions of the great astral serpent. The bliss they will experience will be so sharp and so keen that were they not in spirit detached from their bodies of flesh, this beatitude would wound them like a sharpened blade. It is not pleasure that they will feel, but a bliss which is a foretaste of the wisdom of the gods, of the knowledge of good and evil, and of the fruits of the Tree of Life.

But whether the man of today be a fanatic, a skeptic, or a mystic, he must realize that it is fruitless to struggle against these two moral forces now unleashed and engaged in a fight to the finish. He is at the mercy of these two adversaries and there is no intermediary power capable of protecting him. It is but a matter of choice: to let oneself be carried away naturally and without struggle by the flood of unfolding mysticism, or else to struggle and react against the stresses of the moral and psychic evolution and to feel oneself swallowed up in the Maelstrom of the new tide. **At this very time the whole world with its centers of great intellect and of human culture, with its political, literary, artistic and commercial centers, is in turmoil, everything is tottering, falling apart, and now tending to re-form. It is useless to blind oneself to this, useless to hope one will be able to remain neutral between these two warring forces; one can only be crushed, or has to choose between them. The man who thinks he has chosen freedom and who nevertheless remains submerged in this seething and foaming cauldron of filth called social life, utters the most terrible lie to his Divine Self; a lie that will blind this Self through its long series of future incarnations. All of you who waver on the path of Theosophy and of the occult sciences, who tremble on the golden threshold of Truth, the only Truth still open to you, since all the others have failed, one after the other — look the Great Reality now offering itself to you straight in the face.** These words are for the mystically inclined only, for them alone they will be of some importance; for those who have already made their choice they will prove vain and useless. But you Occultists, Kabalists and Theosophists, you know well that a word as old as the world, though new to you, has been sounded at the beginning of this cycle, and lies potentially, although not articulate for those others, in the sum of the ciphers of the year 1889; you know that a note, never before heard by the men of the present era, has just been sounded, and that a new kind of thought has arisen, fostered by the evolutionary forces. This thought differs from all that has ever been produced in the 19th Century; yet it is identical with what was the keynote and the keystone of every century, especially the last one: “Absolute Freedom of Human Thought.”

Why try to kill, to suppress, that which cannot be destroyed? Why fight when one has no other choice than either to allow oneself to be lifted up to heaven on the crest of the spiritual tide, beyond stars and universes, or to be swallowed in the gaping abyss of the ocean of matter? Vain are your efforts to plumb the unsoundable in search of the roots of that matter so glorified in our century; for these roots grow in Spirit and in the Absolute, and do not exist, though being eternal. **This continuous contact with flesh, blood, and bones, with the illusion of differentiated matter only blinds you; and the more you advance in the realm of chemical and impalpable atoms the more will you become convinced that they exist only in your imagination. Do you believe that you will really discover all truths and all the realities of being there?** But, death stands at the door of all of us, ready to close it on the soul of the beloved escaping from its prison, on that soul which alone gave reality to the body; and is love eternal to be likened to the molecules of that matter which changes and disappears?

But perhaps you are indifferent to all this; if so, of what importance to you are the love and the souls of those whom you loved, since you do not believe in these souls? Be it so. Your choice is already made. You have entered the path that crosses but the arid wastes of matter. You have doomed yourself to vegetate there through a long series of lives, content henceforth with feverish hallucinations instead of spiritual perceptions, with passions instead of love, with the rind instead of the fruit.

**But you, friends and readers, who aspire to something more than the life of the squirrel in its ceaselessly revolving wheel; you who are not satisfied with the cauldron which is ever boiling without producing anything, you who do not mistake hollow echoes as old as the world for the divine voice of Truth, prepare yourselves for a future that few of you have dreamed of unless you have already set your feet upon the Path. For you have chosen a way which, in the beginning lined with thorns, will soon widen, and lead you straight to the Divine Truth. You**

are free to doubt at first; free not to accept on someone's word what is taught concerning the source and the cause of this Truth, but you can always listen to what the voice is saying, you can always watch the effects produced by the creative force which emerges from the depths of the unknown. The arid soil upon which our present generations are moving at the close of this age of spiritual starvation and material satiety, is in need of a sign, of a rainbow — symbol of hope — above its horizon. For, of all past centuries, the nineteenth is the most criminal. It is criminal in its fearful selfishness, in its skepticism that scoffs at the mere idea of something beyond matter; in its idiotic indifference to all that is not the personal “I” — far more so than any of the centuries of barbaric ignorance and intellectual darkness. Our century must be saved from itself before its last hour strikes. Now is the time for action by all who see the sterility and foolishness of an existence blinded by materialism and so ferociously indifferent to the fate of others. It is for them to devote their best energies, all their courage and all their efforts to bring about an intellectual reform. This reform cannot be accomplished except through Theosophy, and, let us say it, Occultism, or the Wisdom of the East. Many are the paths leading to it, but Wisdom is forever one. Artists foresee it, those who suffer dream of it, the pure in spirit know it. Those who work for others cannot remain blind before its reality even though they do not always know it by name. It is only the light-headed and empty-minded, the selfish and vain drones deafened by the sound of their own buzzing who can ignore this high ideal. They will live until life itself becomes an unbearable burden to them.

Let it be known, however, that these pages are not written for the masses. They are neither a call for reform nor an effort to win over to our views those who are happy in life. They are addressed only to those who are ready to understand them, to those who suffer, to those who are thirsty and hungry for any reality in this world of shifting shadows. And why should those not have enough courage to give up their frivolous ways of life, above all their pleasures and even some of their business interests, unless the care of these interests is a duty owed to their families or to others? No one is so busy or so poor that he cannot be inspired by a noble ideal to follow. **Why hesitate to blaze a trail toward that ideal through all obstacles, all hindrances, all the daily considerations of social life, and to advance boldly until it is reached? Ah! those who would make this effort would soon find that the “narrow gate” and “the thorny path” lead to spacious valleys with unlimited horizons, to a state without death, for one rebecomes a God! It is true that the first requisites for getting there are absolute unselfishness and unlimited devotion to the interests of others, and complete indifference as to the world and its opinions. To take the first step on this ideal path requires a perfectly pure motive; no frivolous thought must be allowed to divert our eyes from the goal; no hesitation, no doubt must fetter our feet. Yet, there are men and women perfectly capable of all this, and whose only desire is to live under the aegis of their Divine Nature. Let these, at least, have the courage to live this life and not to hide it from the sight of others! No one's opinion could ever be above the rulings of our own conscience, so, let that conscience, arrived at its highest development, be our guide in all our common daily tasks. As to our inner life, let us concentrate all our attention on our chosen Ideal, and let us ever look beyond without ever casting a glance at the mud at our feet...**

**Those capable of such an effort are true Theosophists; all others are but members more or less indifferent, and quite often useless.**

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## Know, Dare, Will, ...

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### Let the Silence within Speak...

This quarterly circular is issued by the American Section National Secretary. Material, subjects, or ideas for potential publication in this circular are welcome from the membership. Should you not wish to receive this circular, let me know.