

Theosophy and Psychism

Compiled by Pedro Oliveira

In a world that has normalized psychic practices, in which so many are ready to play with and explore their latent energies and powers, without knowing the 'rules of the road', Madame Blavatsky's words may seem politically incorrect. Yet, they are true. She spent years with her Adept-Teachers in Tibet learning about the inner workings of human beings, including their latent powers. She also learned how to unfold her own psychic abilities safely, for the benefit of all. She knew, in a way that very few people can know, that to seek powers without cleansing one's heart and mind from every form of ambition and greed is the recipe for disaster, for any power awakened by an unprepared and selfish mind will generate an active force for division, disunion and harm. This compilation concludes with a few quotations from C. W. Leadbeater's writings on the dangers of rushing into psychic development.

Some of the phenomena produced by Madame Blavatsky:

1. Direct and perfectly clear written and verbal answers to mental questions – or 'thought-reading'.
2. Prescriptions for different diseases, in Latin, and subsequent cures.
3. Private secrets, unknown to all but the interested party, divulged, especially in the case of those persons who mentioned insulting doubts.
4. Change in weight of furniture and of persons, at will.
5. Letters from unknown correspondents, and immediate answers written to queries made, and found in the most out-of-the-way mysterious places.
6. Appearance and *apport* of objects unclaimed by anyone present.
7. Sounds as of musical notes, in the air wherever Mme Blavatsky desired they should resound.

(from *Personal Memoirs of H. P. Blavatsky* by Mary K. Neff¹)

We have had, as said before, to hold our own against the Spiritists, in the name of Truth and Spiritual Science. Not against the students of the true psychic knowledge, nor against the enlightened Spiritualists; but against the lower order of phenomenalists—the blind worshippers of illusionary phantoms of the Dead. These we have fought for the sake of Truth, and also for that of the world which they were misleading. I repeat it again: no “fight” was ever waged against the real students of the psychic sciences.

H. P. Blavatsky's Second Message to the American Theosophists, 1889

<https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/hpb-am/hpb-am2.htm>

¹ Rider & Co. Paternoster House, 1937, p. 124-125.

Professor Coues did much last year to make plain our real position, in his address to the Western Society for Psychic Research. He put in plain language the real importance of psychic studies, and he did excellent work in also laying stress upon the difficulties, the dangers, and, above all, the responsibilities of their pursuit. Not only is there a similarity, as he showed, between such pursuits and the manufacture of dangerous explosives—especially in unskilled hands—but the experiments, as the Professor truly said are conducted on, with, and by a human soul. Unless prepared carefully by a long and special course of study, the experimentalist risks not only the medium's soul but his own.

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The experiments made in Hypnotism and Mesmerism at the present time are experiments of unconscious, when not of conscious Black Magic. The road is wide and broad which leads to such destruction; and it is but too easy to find; and only too many go ignorantly along it to their own destruction. But the practical cure for it lies in one thing. That is the course of study which I mentioned before. It sounds very simple, but is eminently difficult; for that cure is "ALTRUISM." And this is the keynote of Theosophy and the cure for all ills; this it is which the real Founders of the Theosophical Society promote as its first object UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.

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Thus even if only in name a body of Altruists, the Theosophical Society has to fight all who under its cover seek to obtain magical powers to use for their own selfish ends and to the hurt of others. Many are those who joined our Society for no other purpose than curiosity. Psychological phenomena were what they sought, and they were unwilling to yield one iota of their own pleasures and habits to obtain them. These very quickly went away empty-handed.

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The Theosophical Society has never been and never will be a school of promiscuous Theurgic rites. But there are dozens of small occult Societies which talk very glibly of Magic, Occultism, Rosicrucians, Adepts, etc. These profess much, even to giving the key to the Universe but end by leading men to a blank wall instead of the "Door of the Mysteries." These are some of our most insidious foes. Under cover of the philosophy of the Wisdom-Religion they manage to get up a mystical jargon which for the time is effective and enables them, by the aid of a very small amount of clairvoyance, to fleece the mystically inclined but ignorant aspirants to the occult, and lead them like sheep in almost any direction.

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Witness the now notorious H. B. of L, and the now famous G. N. K. R. But woe to those who try to convert a noble philosophy into a den for disgusting immorality, greediness for selfish power, and money making under the cloak of Theosophy. Karma reaches them when least expected. But is it possible for our Society to stand by and remain respected, unless its members are prepared, at least in future, to stand like one man, and deal with such slanders upon themselves as Theosophists, and such vile caricatures of their highest ideals, as these two pretenders have made them?

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As the preparation for the new cycle proceeds, as the forerunners of the new sub-race make their appearance on the American continent, the latent psychic and occult powers in man are grow. Hence the rapid Christian Science, Mind Spiritual Healing, and so represent nothing but exercise of these growing understood and therefore misused. Understand nothing "spiritual" or manifestations. The cures simply to the occult power on the lower planes of nature—usually of prana or life-currents.

"...the Ethics of Theosophy are more important than any divulgement of psychic laws and facts." HPB

beginning to germinate and growth of such movements as Cure, Metaphysical Healing, forth. All these movements different phases of the powers,—as yet not but too often ignorantly once for all that there is "divine" in any of these effected by them are due unconscious exercise of

H. P. Blavatsky's Third Message to the American Theosophists, 1890
<https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/hpb-am/hpb-am3.htm>

The conflicting theories of all these schools are based on misunderstood and misapplied metaphysics, often on grotesquely absurd logical fallacies. But the one feature common to most of them, a feature which presents the most danger in the near future is this. In nearly every case the tenor of the teachings of these schools is such as to lead people to regard the healing process as being applied to the mind of the patient. Here lies the danger, for any such process—however cunningly disguised in words and hidden by false noses—is simply to psychologise the patient. In other words, whenever the healer interferes, consciously or unconsciously— with the free mental action of the person he treats, it is—Black Magic.

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<https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/hpb-am/hpb-am3.htm>

Already these so-called sciences of "Healing" are being used to gain a livelihood. Soon some sharp person will find out that by the same process the minds of others can be influenced in many directions, and the selfish motive of personal gain and money getting having been once allowed to creep in, the one-time "healer" may be insensibly

led on to use his power to acquire wealth or some other object of his desire.

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What I said last year remains true today, that is, that the Ethics of Theosophy are more important than any divulgement of psychic laws and facts. The latter relate wholly to the material and evanescent part of the septenary man, but the Ethics sink into and take hold of the real man—the reincarnating Ego.

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Psychism, with all its allurements and all its dangers, is necessarily developing among you, and you must beware lest the Psychic outruns the Manasic and Spiritual development. Psychic capacities held perfectly under control, checked and directed by the Manasic principle, are valuable aids in development. But these capacities running riot, controlling instead of controlled, using instead of being used, lead the Student into the most dangerous delusions and the certainty of moral destruction.

H. P. Blavatsky's Fourth Message to the American Theosophists, 1891
<https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/hpb-am/hpb-am4.htm>

Watch therefore carefully this development, inevitable in your race and evolution-period so that it may finally work for good and not for evil; and receive, in advance, the sincere and potent blessings of those whose good-will will never fail you, if you do not fail yourselves.

H. P. Blavatsky's Fourth Message to the American Theosophists, 1891
<https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/hpb-am/hpb-am4.htm>

To the student of practical psychic development, they speak of the difficulties which attend the opening of the psychic senses, of the difficulty of distinguishing between the creation of man's own imagination and the more permanent creations of nature.

*H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*², vol. 9, p. 177

No member shall pretend to the possession of psychic powers that he has not, nor boast of those which he may have developed. Envy, jealousy, and vanity are insidious and powerful foes to progress, and it is known from long experience that, among beginners especially, the boasting of, or calling attention to, their psychic powers almost invariably causes the development of these faults and increases them when present.

*H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*³, vol. 12, p. 495

² The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India, 1962.

³ The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Ill., U.S.A., 1980.

The Theosophical Society does indeed desire to promote the spiritual growth of every individual who comes within its influence, but its methods are those of the ancient Rishis, its tenets those of the oldest Esotericism; it is no dispenser of patent nostrums composed of violent remedies which no honest healer would dare to use.

*H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*⁴, vol. 6, p. 334

In this connection we would warn all our members, and others who are seeking spiritual knowledge, to beware of persons offering to teach them easy methods of acquiring psychic gifts; such gifts (*laukika*) are indeed comparatively easy of acquirement by artificial means, but fade out as soon as the nerve-stimulus exhausts itself. The real seership and adeptship which is accompanied by true psychic development (*lokothra*), once reached, is never lost.

*H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*⁵, vol. 6, p. 334

The possession of psychic powers does not necessarily involve high moral character, any more than does the possession of great physical strength. It is quite true that the man who enters the Path of Holiness will presently find such powers developing in him, but it is quite possible to gain many of the powers without the holiness.

C. W. Leadbeater, *The Inner Life*⁶, Volume Two, p. 281

Powers can be developed by anyone who will take the trouble, and a man may learn clairvoyance or mesmerism just as he may learn to play the piano, if he is willing to go through the necessary hard work. It is far better and safer for the vast majority of people to work at the development of character, to try to fit themselves for the Path, and to leave the powers to unfold in due course, as they certainly will.

C. W. Leadbeater, *The Inner Life*⁷, Volume Two, p. 281

Some people are in too much of a hurry to do this, and set themselves to force the powers sooner. Well, if they are quite certain that they desire them only for the sake of helping others, and that they are wise enough to use them rightly, it may be that no harm will come of it; but it is not easy to be quite certain on these points, and the slightest deflection from the right line will mean disaster.

C. W. Leadbeater, *The Inner Life*⁸, Volume Two, p. 281

⁴ Blavatsky Writings Publication Fund, Los Angeles, California, 1954.

⁵ Blavatsky Writings Publication Fund, Los Angeles, California, 1954.

⁶ The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India, 1912.

⁷ The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India, 1912.

⁸ The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India, 1912.