

The Great Ones And The Way To Them

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The Great Ones

Students of occultism--even those who have been students for many years--sometimes seem to fail to realize the Masters as they truly are. I have often found people thinking of them as some kind of angels or devas, or, at any rate, as so far removed from us by their greatness that it is scarcely possible for us to derive much help from them. Their greatness is indisputable, and from that point of view the gulf between them and ourselves may well seem incalculable in its extent; and yet from another point of view they are very close to us, so that their sympathy and help are very near and very real. That our thought on the subject may be clearer, let us first of all try to define exactly what we mean by that term " Master " .

We mean by it always one who is a member of the Great White Brotherhood--a member of such a level that he is able to take Pupils. Now the Great White Brotherhood is an organization unlike any other in the world, and for that reason it has often been misunderstood. It has sometimes been described as the Himalayan or the Tibetan Brotherhood, and the idea has been conveyed of a body of Indian ascetics residing together in a monastery in some inaccessible mountain fastness. Perhaps this has arisen largely from the knowledge of the facts that the two brothers principally concerned in the foundation and work of the Theosophical Society happen at the moment to be living in Tibet, and to be wearing Indian bodies. To comprehend the facts of the case it may be better to approach its consideration from another point of view

Many of our students are familiar with the thought of the four stages of the path of holiness, and are aware that a man who has passed through them and attained to the level of the Asekha, has achieved the task set before humanity during this chain-period, and is consequently free from the necessity of reincarnation on this planet or on any other. Before him then open seven ways among which he must choose. Most of them take him away from the earth into wider spheres of activity, probably connected with the solar system as a whole, so that the great majority of

those members of our humanity who had already reached this goal have passed entirely out of our ken.

The limited number who are still working directly for us may be divided into two classes--those who retain physical bodies, and those who do not. The latter are frequently spoken of under the name of Nirmanakaya. They hold themselves suspended as it were between this world and nirvana, and they devote the whole of their time and energy to the generation of spiritual force for the benefit of mankind. This force they pour into what may be described as a reservoir, upon which the Masters and their pupils can draw for the assistance of their work with humanity. The Nirmanakaya, because he remains to this extent in touch with the lower planes, has been called " a candidate for woe," but that is misleading. What is meant is that he has not the joy of the higher work, or of the nirvanic levels. He has chosen to remain upon lower planes in order to help those who still suffer. It is quite true that to come back from a higher life into this world is like going down from the fresh air and glorious sunlight into a dark and evil-smelling dungeon; but the man who does this to help someone out of that dungeon is not miserable and wretched while there, but full of the joy of helping, notwithstanding the greatness of the contrast and the terrible feeling of bondage and compression indeed, a man who refused such an opportunity of giving aid when it came to him would certainly feel far more woe afterwards, in the shape of remorse. When we have once really seen the spiritual misery of the world, and the condition of those who need such help, we can never again be careless or indifferent about it, as are those who have not seen

Fortunately those of us who have seen and realized this have ever at our command a means whereby we can quite really and definitely help. Tiny though our efforts may be as compared with the splendid Outpouring of force of the Nirmanakaya, we also can add our little drops to the great store of force in that reservoir. Every outpouring of affection or devotion produces a double result--one upon the being to whom it is sent, and another upon ourselves, who sent it forth. But if the devotion or affection be utterly without the slightest thought of self, it brings in its train a third result also. Ordinary affection or devotion, even of the high kind, moves in a closed curve however large that curve may be, and the result of that comes back upon the sender. But the devotion or affection of the truly unselfish man moves in an open curve, and though some of its effects inevitably react upon the sender, the grandest and noblest

part of its force ascends to the Logos himself, and the response, the magnificent response of benediction which instantly pours forth from him, falls into that reservoir for the helping of mankind. So that it is within the power of every one of us, even the weakest and poorest, to help the world in its most beautiful manner. It is this adding to the reservoir of spiritual force which is really the truth that lies at the back of the Catholic idea of works of supererogation.

The still more limited number of Adepts who retain physical bodies remains in even closer touch with us, in order to fill certain offices, and to do certain work necessary for our evolution; and it is to the latter that the names of the Great White Brotherhood and the Occult Hierarchy have sometimes been given. They are, then, a very small number of highly advanced man belonging not to anyone nation, but to the world as a whole. On the physical plane they do not live together, though they are of course in continual communication on higher planes. Since they are beyond the necessity of rebirth, when one body wears out they can choose another whenever it may be most convenient for the work they wish to do, so that we need not attach any special importance to the nationality of the body which they happen to be wearing at any particular time. Just now, several of those bodies are Indian, one is Tibetan, one is Chinese, two at least are English, one is Italian, one Hungarian, and one Syrian, while one was born on the island of Cyprus. As I have said, the nationality of these bodies is not a matter of importance, but I mention these in order to show that it would be a mistake to think of the ruling Hierarchy as belonging exclusively to one race

Reverence restrains us from saying much of the Great Head of this Hierarchy, in whose hands is the fate of the continents, in whose name all initiations are given. He is one of the very few now remaining upon earth of the Lords of the Flame, the children of the Fire-Mist, the Great Beings who came down from Venus nearly eighteen million years ago to help and to lead the evolution of humanity on our chain. These Great Ones did not take bodies from our then entirely undeveloped humanity, but made for themselves bodies in appearance resembling ours by the force of their will, a kind of permanent materialization. At that period, and for long after it, no members of our humanity were sufficiently developed to fill any of the higher offices in this Hierarchy, and consequently we needed and received this help from without. Gradually, as humanity has evolved, it has become more and more able

to provide for itself, and the Great Lords of the Flame have been set free to go to the help of yet other evolutions. But one of them still holds this, the highest office of all--the position of the King who guides and controls all evolution taking place upon this planet--not only that of humanity and of the animal, vegetable, mineral and elemental kingdoms below it, but also of the great non-human kingdoms of the Nature-Spirits of the Devas, some of which rise so far above it.

Under him are various heads of departments, the broad outlines of whose work are more within our comprehension than his work. Though the details are far beyond us we can form some slight idea of what must be the manifold responsibilities and activities of the Manu of a root-race; and perhaps we can to some extent imagine to ourselves the duties of him who is minister of religion in this world-kingdom--who sends forth religion after religion, suiting each to the needs of a particular type of people and to the period of the world's history in which it is launched, sometimes deputizing one of his subordinates to found it, sometimes even incarnating himself for that purpose, as he may see fit. This Minister of Religion is often called in the east the Bodhisattva--one who is about to become a Buddha. The previous holder of that high office was he whom we call the Lord Gautama Buddha. The attainment of Buddha hood is not simply the gaining of enlightenment; it is also the taking of a great and definite Initiation, and the man who has taken that step cannot again incarnate upon earth, but hands over his work to his successor, and usually passes away altogether from any connection with earth

The Lord Gautama, however, still remains to a certain extent within touch of the world, in order that he may still be able to help it. Once in each year he still shows himself to the Brotherhood of Adepts, and pours down his blessing upon them, to be passed through them to the world at large; and he may still be reached in certain ways by those who know how. Mrs. Besant has told us, in some of her recent writings, how he incarnated over and over again as a great teacher of the earlier sub-races of the Aryan race, how he was Hermes--the founder of the Egyptian mysteries--also the first and greatest Zoroaster, the original founder of the worship of the sun and fire, and again he was Orpheus, the founder of the Greek mysteries. Those mentioned of course were not his only births, for in the course of our researches into the past we have seen him as horse of other religions than these.

The statement made in some of the earlier Theosophical works that he was reborn as Shankaracharya is an error for, from an Occult point of view, the two great teachers were on entirely different lines. There was, however, a certain reason at the back of the statement in the fact that some of the vehicles prepared by one of them were also utilized by the other, as Madame Blavatsky has explained in the third volume of *The Secret Doctrine*.

The deep reverence and a strong affection felt for the Lord Gautama all over the East are due to two facts. One of these is that he was the first of our humanity to attain to the stupendous height of Buddhahood, and so he may be very truly described as the first fruits and the leader of our race. (All previous Buddhas had belonged to other humanities, which had matured upon earlier chains.) The second fact is that for the sake of hastening the progress of humanity, he took upon himself certain additional labors of the most stupendous character, the nature of which it is impossible to comprehend. It is stated that when the time came at which it was expected that humanity would be able to provide for itself someone who was ready to fill this important office, no one could be found who was fully capable of doing so. Few of our earthly race had then reached the higher stages of adeptship, and the foremost of these were two friends and brothers whose development was equal. These two were the mighty Egos now known to us as the Lord Gautama and the Lord Maitreya, and in his great love for mankind the former at once volunteered to make the tremendous additional exertions necessary to qualify him to do the work required, while his friend and brother decided to follow him as the next holder of that office thousands of years later.

In those far off times it was the Lord Gautama who rule the world of religion and education; but now he has yielded that high office to the Lord Maitreya, whom Western people call the Christ--who took the body of the Disciple Jesus during the last three years of its life on the physical plane. Anyone whose mind is broad enough to grasp this magnificent conception of the splendid reality of things will see instantly how it is worse than futile to set up in one's mind one religion as an opposition to another, to try to convert any person from one to another, or to compare it depreciatingly the founder of one with the founder of another. In the last case indeed it is especially ridiculous, because the two founders are either two pupils of the same school, or two incarnations of the same person, and so are entirely in accord as to

principles, though they may for the time be putting forward different aspects of the truth to suit the needs of those to whom they speak. The teaching is always fundamentally the same, though its presentation may vary widely. The Lord Maitreya had taken various births before he came into the office which he now holds, but even in these earlier days he seems always to have been a teacher or high priest.

It is not generally known that the two Masters who have been most intimately concerned with the foundation and the work of the Theosophical Society have taken respectively the offices of temporal and spiritual leader of the new sixth root-race, which is to come into existence in seven hundred years' time. The Manu, or temporal leader, is practically an autocratic monarch who arranges everything connected with the physical plane life of the new race, and endeavors in every way to make it as perfect and expression as possible of the idea which the Logos has set before him for realization. The spiritual leader will be in charge of all the various aspects of religion in the new race, and also of the education of its children. It is clear that one of the main objects of the foundation of the Theosophical Society was that these two Masters might gather from them a number of men who would be intelligent and willing operators in this mighty work. Round them will be grouped others who are now their pupils, but will by that time have attained the level of adeptship.

We may then set before ourselves as a goal the privilege of being chosen to serve them in this wonderful work for the world which lies before them. There will be ample opportunity for the display of all possible varieties of talent, for the work will be of the most varied character. Some of us will no doubt be attracted to one side of it as some to the other, largely according to the predominance of our affection for one or other of its great Leaders. It has often been said that the characteristic of one is power, and of the other love and compassion, and this is perfectly true, though, if it is not rightly understood, it may very easily prove misleading.

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It is probably that even the Masters who are by name best known to you are not so real, not so clear, not so well-defined to you as they are to those of us who have had the privilege of meeting them face to face and seeing them constantly in the course of our work. Yet you should endeavor by reading and thinking of them to gain this realization, so that the Masters shall become to you not vague Ideals but living men--men exactly as we are, though enormously more advanced in every respect. They are men most emphatically, but men without failings, and so to us They seem like gods on account of the power, love and compassion radiating from them. It is most significant that, in spite of the all necessarily produced by the sense of this tremendous power; in their presence one never feels in the least afraid or embarrassed, but always uplifted.

The man who stands before one of them cannot but feel the deepest humility, because of the greatness of the contrast between himself and the Master. Yet with all this humility he yet feels a firm confidence in himself, for since the Master, who is also man, has achieved, that achievement is clearly possible even for him. In his presence everything seems possible and even easy, and one looks back with wonder on the troubles of yesterday, unable now to comprehend why they should have caused agitation or dismay. Now at least, the man feels, there can never again be trouble, since he has seen the right proportion of things. Now he will never again forget that, however dark the clouds may be, the sun is ever shining behind them. The vibrations of the Masters are so strong that only those qualities in you which harmonize with them are called

out, so that you will feel the uttermost confidence and love, and the desire to be always in his presence. It is not that you forget that you have undesirable qualities in you, but you feel that now you can conquer them, and you do not in the least mind his knowing all about them, because you are so certain that he understands perfectly, and to understand all is to pardon all.

It may perhaps help us to realize the human side of our MASTERS if we remember that many of them in comparatively recent times have been known as historical characters. The Master K. H., for example, appeared in Europe as the philosopher Pythagoras. Before that he was the Egyptian priest Sarthon, and on yet another occasion chief-priest of a temple at Agade, in Asia Minor, where he was killed in a general massacre of the inhabitants by a host of invading barbarians who swooped down upon them from the hills. On that occasion he took immediately the body of a Greek fisherman, which had been drowned in his attempt to escape, and in that body the Master journeyed on to Persia, where he rendered great assistance to the last of the Zoroasters in the founding of the modern form of the Mazdayaznian then. Later he was the flamen of the Temple of Jupiter in Rome, and later still Nagarjuna, the great Buddhist teacher. We have found him many times in our researches into the past lives of members of our group, but almost always as a priest or teacher.

Again in these researches into the remote past we have frequently found the Disciple Jesus, when Palestine had the privilege of yielding up his body to the Christ. As a result of that act he received the incarnation of Apollonius of Tyana and in the 11th century he appeared in India as the teacher Ramanujacharya, who revived the devotional element in Hinduism, and raised it to so high level.

No doubt some of you have heard a good deal about Other MASTERS besides the two principally take charge of Theosophical work. Another master, for example, dictated for us *Light On The Path*. *The Idyll Of The White Lotus*, while yet another has taken charge of a great deal of the work in Europe, and has written for us some of the most splendid works in the whole realm of literary activity. Then the one who was once the disciple Jesus stands ready especially to guide the various activities of the Christian Churches. Yet another looks especially after the work here in India.

Thus it may be seen that the evolution of the world is by no means left to itself, to get along as best it may, as people so often rashly suppose; on the contrary, it is being directed. For this Hierarchy of adepts is actually managing it, as far as it is possible to manage it while leaving its inhabitants their own free will. The members of the Brotherhood, through their agents, are constantly trying to work with the important people of the world, putting advice and suggestions into their minds, endeavoring to move them onwards towards the great future of Universal brotherhood when war shall have disappeared. But we must remember that the karma of all people concerned has to be considered and respected. It would no doubt be easy to force the world along at a far more rapid rate, but that would not be for the real advantage of the people concerned. The master K.H. once said in a letter which I received from him " Of course I could easily tell you exactly what to do, and of course you would do it, but then the karma of the act would be mine and not yours, and you would gain only the karma of prompt obedience. "

Men have to learn to be not merely intelligent servants; they have to learn to be co-workers, because they themselves will have the same work to do someday, and if they are to be fit for greater responsibilities in the future they must be willing to take up the smaller responsibilities now. Sometimes, it is true, a really great opportunity or responsibility of worldwide importance comes to one of us, but that may perhaps be once in many hundreds of lives. When it comes we shall take it or miss it, depending if we have or have not been in the habit of taking the smaller opportunities of daily life, so that we have got into the habit of doing the right thing, and shall do it automatically at a critical moment. Our opportunities of doing good or harm are usually small in regard to the world as a whole; but when we have learned inevitably and automatically to choose the right in the smaller matters, the Great Brotherhood will feel it safe to trust us in larger matters.

It is indeed well that we should try to understand these Great Ones, not as a mere matter of curiosity and interest, but in order that we may realize them as they are, and comprehend that they are meant just as we are, varying among themselves just as we vary, although at so much higher a level. Wisdom, power and love are present in all of them equally, yet they are by no means all alike. They are individuals just as we are. They are at the top of the ladder of humanity, but let us not

forget that we are somewhere on its lower rungs, and that one day we also show reached their level and stand where they stand.

One important fact among them is their all round development. If we examine ourselves we shall be sure to find that we are to some extent disproportionate in our development—one-sided in certain respects. Some of us are full of scientific faculty and intellectual development, but sadly lacking in devotion and compassion; others are full of whole-soul devotion, but defective on the intellectual side. A Master is perfect along both these lines, as may easily be seen when we think of the splendid intellect of Pythagoras along with the love and compassion of the Master K.H.

We must not misunderstand their wonderful knowledge. In order to attain the level of adeptship they must have cast off, among others, the center of avidya or ignorance, and it is often said that to cast off ignorance one must attain all-knowledge. Yet we know from personal acquaintance with them that this is not so in the mere literal sense; for example, there are Masters who do not know all languages, others who are not artists and musicians, and so on. I think that what is really meant by casting off the fetter of ignorance is the acquisition of power by which we can at any moment command any knowledge upon any subject which they happen to require. They certainly have not all facts stored within their physical brains, but equally certainly they can very quickly obtain any knowledge of which they have need. As to the question of languages, for example, if a Master wishes to write a letter in a language which he does not know, he very frequently employs the brain of a pupil who is acquainted with that language, throwing the ideas into that pupils brain, and then the employing the words in which he sees them clothe themselves. If a man speaks to them in a language which they do not understand, they can instantly grasped on the mental plane the thought that lies behind the incomprehensible words.

It is often asked whether an ordinary man who met a master. On the physical plane would instantly recognizable as such. I do not see any reason why he should. He would certainly find the Adept impressive, noble, dignified, holy and serene. He could hardly fail to recognize that he was in the presence of a remarkable man; but to know certainly that that man was an adept it would be necessary to see is causal body

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Adapts have no definite external peculiarities which they may be recognize, though there is a great calmness and benevolence, common to them all; their faces are stamped always with the joy is serenity, the peace which passeth all understanding. Most of them are distinctly handsome man, because their physical bodies are perfect, for they live in an absolutely hygienic way, and above all they never worry about anything. In the case of most of us there's still a great deal of karma of various kinds to be worked out and among other things this modifies the appearance of our physical bodies. In their case all karma is long ago exhausted, and consequently the physical body is a perfect expression on the physical plane of the Augoeides, or glorified body, of the Ego. Not only therefore is the body of a Master usually splendidly handsome, but also any new body that he may take in a subsequent incarnation will be an almost exact reproduction of the old one, because there's nothing to modify it.

Another remarkable fact is that they are able to preserve their physical bodies very much longer than we can--owing no doubt to the perfect health and absence of worry which we have already mentioned. Almost all the Masters whom we know appear as men in the prime of life, yet in many cases there is testimony to prove that their physical bodies must have long passed the ordinary age of man. I have heard Madame Blavatsky say that her Master as he appears now does not look a day older than when she first saw him in her childhood sixty years before. In one case only, that of a Master who has recently attained adeptship in the body which he is still wearing, there is a certain ruggedness in the face, which is doubtless the result of some remainder of past karma brought over into this incarnation, but I think we may feel sure that

when he chooses to take another body, that characteristic will not persist.

Probably they are more silent than most men; busy people have not much time for casual talk, and they are out of all proportion to busiest people in the world. Their pupil, Madame Blavatsky, was the most brilliant conversationalist that I have ever met, but she never made talk for the sake of making it. So with them a Master never speaks without a definite object in view, and his object is always to encourage, to help or to warn. He speaks always gently and with the greatest kindness, though he often betrays a very keen sense of humor; yet the humor itself is always of the kindly order, and is used never to wound, but always to lighten the troubles of the way, or to soften some necessary rebuke. Certainly a man who has no sense of humor would not be likely to make much progress in occult matters.

The number of adepts who retain physical bodies in order to help the evolution of the world is but small--perhaps some fifty or sixty in all. But it must be remembered that the great majority of these do not take pupils, as they are engaged in quite other work. Madame Blavatsky employed the term *Adept* very loosely, for in one place she actually speaks of adepts who have been initiated, and adepts who have not been initiated. In all later writings we have reserved the word "initiate" for those who have passed at least the first of the four great stages upon the path of holiness, and the word *Adept* we have restricted to those who have attained the *Asekha* level, and so have finished the evolution required of them in this chain of worlds. The consciousness of the *Asekha* rests normally upon the nirvanas or atomic plane while his physical body is awake. But out of the number who have already attained *Adeptship* only the very small proportion mentioned above retain physical bodies, and remain in touch with the earth in order to help it; and out of this a still smaller proportion are willing under certain conditions to accept men as pupils or apprentices; and it is to these last (the smallest number) only that we give the name of Masters. Yet few though they be, their office is of incalculable importance, since without their aid it would be impossible for man to enter the portals of initiation.

The Work Of The Christ

You ask about the Great One whom we call the Christ, The Lord Maitreya, and about His work in the past and in the future. The subject is a wide one--one also about which is somewhat difficult for us to speak

with freedom, because of the restrictions with which we are bound. Possibly the suggestion may be of use to you that there is what we may call a " department of the inner government of the world " which is devoted to religious instruction--the founding and inspiring of religions, and so on. It is the Christ who is in charge of that department; sometimes he himself appears on earth to found a great religion and sometimes he entrusts such work to one of his most advanced assistants. We must regard him as exercising a kind of steady pressure from behind all the time, so that the power employed will flow as though automatically into every channel anywhere and of any sort which is open to its passage; so that he is working simultaneously through every religion, and utilizing all that is good in the way of devotion and self-sacrifice in each.

The fact that these religions may be wasting their strength in abusing one another upon the physical plane is of course lamentable, but it does not make much difference due to the fact that whatever is good in each of them is being simultaneously utilized from behind by the same great Power. This is true of course of all movements in the world; every ounce of the good in them is being used as a channel, while the evil in them is in each case just so much regrettable waste of force which might have been utilized if the people had been more sensible. The section in *The Secret Doctrine* entitled *The Mystery Of Buddha* gives a good deal of information as to the relations between the Heads of this Department of Religion, and it may give some useful hints as to the Christ also. This is the subject of paramount interest to the members of our society, since one of our Masters has especially close relations with that department.

The future work of the Christ was decided many thousands of years ago--some of it decided apparently in minute details, though it would seem that there is a good deal of flexibility with regard to other points. The utter certainty with which these Great Ones laid their plans many thousands of years ahead is one of the most wonderful features of this stupendous work that they do. Sometimes it is open to those of us who have been able to develop the faculties of the higher planes to be allowed a glimpse of their mighty schemes, to witness the lifting of a tiny corner of the veil which shrouds the future. Sometimes also we have glimpsed their plans in another way, for looking back into the records of the distant past we have found the making prophecies, the fulfillment of which is even now passing before our eyes.

I know of nothing more stirring, more absorbingly interesting, than such a glimpse. The splendor, the colossal magnitude, of their plans takes away one's breath, yet even more impressive is the calm dignity, the utter certainty, of it all. Not individuals only, but even nations are the pieces in this game; but neither nation nor individual is compelled to play any given part. The opportunity to play that part is given to it or to him; if she or it will not take it there is invariably an understudy ready to step in and fill the gap. But, whoever may be the instrument, this one thing at least is an utter certainty, that the intended end will be achieved; through whose agency this will be done matters very much to the agent but nothing at all to the total progress of the world.

Nineteenth hundred years ago Apollonius of Tyana was sent out by the Brotherhood upon a mission, one feature of which was that he was to find, in various countries, certain magnetic centres. Objects of the nature of talismans were given to him, which he was to bury in these chosen spots, in order that the force which they radiated might prepare these places to be the centers of great events in the future. Some of those centers have already been utilized, but some have not, and all these latter are to be employed in the immediate future in connection with the work of the future Christ. So that much of the detail of His work was already definitely planned nearly two thousand years ago, and arrangements even on the physical plane were being made to prepare for it. When once we realize this utter certainty, doubt and hesitation, anxiety and worry, all fade away and we gain a perfect peace and content, and the most absolute confidence in the Powers who are governing the world

It is owing to the assistance of this nature given to us from above that humanity has progressed even to its present position. We are still in the fourth round, which should naturally be devoted to the development of desire and emotion, and yet we are already engaged in the unfolding of the intellect, which is to be the special characteristic of the fifth round. That this is so is due to the immense stimulus given to our evolution by the descent of Lords of the Flame from Venus, and by the work of the Adepts who have preserved for us that influence and steadily sacrificed themselves in order that we might make better progress.

Those who understand anything of this work, and most especially those of us who have been privileged to see the Masters doing it, never for a moment think of interrupting them in such an altruistic labor as this by propounding any personal requests. The vast importance of the work

which they are doing, and the enormous amount of it, make it obviously impossible that they should take up personal work with individuals. In the cases where such work has to be done it is always delegated to pupils or performed by means of elementals and nature-spirits. Therefore it becomes emphatically the duty of the student to fit himself to do some of this lower work, for the very reason that if he does not do so, the work will for the present be left undone, since it would be obviously impossible for the Masters to turn aside from their far greater work for the whole world to attend to individual cases. The work of the invisible helpers of the astral plane would simply not be done unless there were pupils at the stage where that is the best work that they can do; for so soon as they pass beyond that stage and can do higher work, the higher work will certainly be given to them.

People sometimes ask why the Masters so often work through imperfect instruments; the answer is obviously because they have not time to do the work themselves, and they must therefore employ such instruments as they have, or the work will not be done at all. Take for example the writing of books for helping of humanity. It is obvious that the Masters could do this very far better than any of their pupils can, and by doing it they could entirely avoid any possibility of erroneous or imperfect statements. But they have absolutely no time to devote to such work, and therefore if it were not done by pupils it would remain undone. Besides, if the Masters did it they would take away the opportunity of making good karma from those who can do it--certainly not as well as they, but yet after all well enough for the use of those who know so very much less.

We must remember that every Master has at his command only a certain amount of force which, enormous as it seems to us, is still a limited quantity, and it is his duty to employ this force to the best possible advantage for the helping of humanity. Therefore it would, if we may say so without irreverence, be absolutely wrong for him to waste that force upon anything lower than the very highest that it can reach, or to spend upon individual cases, however deserving, that which can be so much better employed for the welfare of all.

Masters And Pupils

It has already been said of the comparatively small number of Adepts who retain their physical bodies and fill the office is connected with the

administration of the world and to the Great Hierarchy, there is a still smaller number who accept pupils, and to whom therefore we give the name of Masters. Let us see then what it means to be a pupil of one of these Masters, and what is expected of one who aspires to this position and what is the work which he has to do.

He will take a man as a pupil, or perhaps we should rather say as an apprentice, when he sees that the amount of time and strength spent in training him will produce more result eventually than any other way of expending the same amount--*but not otherwise*. For example, a man might have many qualifications which would make him useful as an assistant, but at the same time some one great fault which would be a constant obstacle in his way, which would nullify much of the good that he might otherwise do. No Master would accept such a man as a pupil; but he might say to him: "Go to work and conquer that special fault of yours, and when you have succeeded, I will take you as my assistant, and will train you further. "

So many of our earnest students are full of the most benevolent and an altruistic feelings, and, knowing themselves to be in this way very different from the majority of mankind, they sometimes say to themselves, " I am so deeply anxious to work for humanity; why will not the Master take me in hand and train me? "

Let us face the facts boldly. The Master would not train you because you are still full of all sorts of minor imperfections. It is quite true, as you no doubt feel within yourselves, that your benevolence, your kindness, your earnest wish to be helpful are far greater things on the credit side of the account than are all these small faults on the debit side. But try to realize that there are thousands of people in the world more benevolent and well meaning, and that you differ from them only in the fact that you happen to have a little more knowledge, and so you are able to direct your benevolence into more definitely useful channels than those others. If these were all the qualifications required for discipleship, each Master might have thousands of pupils, and his whole time would be taken up in endeavoring to bring into shape those few thousands of people, with all their petty little faults of the astral and physical planes, and in the meantime the Master's splendid work with the egos on the higher levels would have to be entirely neglected.

First of all then, to be a pupil of a Master means that one must look upon life as the Master looks upon it, solely from the point of view of

what is best for the progress of the world. The pupil must be prepared *absolutely* to forget himself, to sink his personality *entirely*, and he must understand that this is *not* a mere poetical figure or fashion of speech, but that it means just exactly what it says--that he must have no personal desires whatsoever, and must be willing to order the whole of his life according to the work that he has to do. How many of us are there who are wholeheartedly willing to take even this first step toward accepted discipleship?

Think what it means to become a disciple. When any man offers himself for such a position the Master will at once say whether or not he considers him fit to enter upon the stage of the probationary pupil. If the candidate appears to be reasonably near the possession of the necessary qualifications the Master may take him upon probation all Hall, which means that he will remain for a period of some years under very close observation. Seven years is the average time of this probation, but it may be indefinitely lengthened and if the candidate should prove unsatisfactory, or on the other hand it may be much shortened if it is seen that he has really taken himself in hand. I have known it to be extended to thirty years; I have known it to be reduced to five years, and even to three, and in one quite exceptional case it was only five months. During this period of probation the pupil is not in any sense in any kind of direct communication with the Master; he is little likely to hear or to see anything of him. Nor as a general rule are any special trials or difficulties put in this way; he is simply carefully watched in his attitude towards all the little daily troubles of life. For convenience of observation the Master makes what is called a "living image" of each such probationary pupil--that is to say, an exact duplicate of the man's astral and mental bodies. This image he keeps in a place where he can easily reach it, and he places it in magnetic rapport with the man himself, so that every modification of thought or feeling in the man's own vehicles is faithfully reproduced in the image. These images are examined daily by the Master, who in this way obtains with the least possible trouble a perfectly accurate record of his prospective pupil's thoughts and feelings, and from this he is able to decide when he can take him into the far closer relationship of the second stage--that of the accepted pupil.

Remember that the Master is a channel for the distribution of the forces of the Logos, and not indeed a mere unconscious channel but keenly intelligent operator; and he is this because he is himself consciously a

part of the Logos. In just the same way at a lower level the accepted pupil is a channel of the forces of the Master, but he, too, must be not an unconscious channel but an intelligent cooperator, and in order to be this he must also become virtually part of the consciousness of the Master.

An accepted pupil is taken into his Master's consciousness to so great an extent that whatever he sees or hears is within the knowledge of his Master--not that the Master necessarily sees or hears it at the same moment (though that often happens) but that it lies within the Master's memory exactly as it does within the memory of the pupil. What ever the pupil feels or thinks is within the astral and mental bodies of his Master. When we realize all that this means, we see very clearly why it would be utterly impossible for the Master to accept any pupil until the pupil's thoughts and feelings were such as the Master would wish to harbor within himself.

It unfortunately sometimes happens that there comes into the mind of the pupil some thought which is not fit to be harbored by the Master, and as soon as the Master feels that, he once erects a barrier and shuts off from himself that vibration, but to do this diverts his attention for a moment from his of the work, and takes a certain amount of energy. Once more we see clearly that it would be impossible for Master to take into such a relation with himself one who often indulged in thoughts unfit for the Master's mind; to have to be continually, or even frequently, turned aside from his work in order to shut off undesirable thoughts or feelings would clearly be a quite intolerable tax upon the Master's time and strength.

It is not because of any lack of compassion or patience that a Master could not take such a man; it is simply that it would not be a good use either of his time or his energy, and to make the best possible use of both of them is his simple duty. If a man feels himself worthy to be accepted as a pupil, and wonders why this privilege has not already been extended to him, let him watch himself closely for even a single day, and ask themselves whether during that day there has been in him in any single thought or feeling that would have been unworthy of the Master. Remember that not only definitely evil or unkind thoughts are unworthy of him, but also trifling thoughts, critical thoughts, irritated thoughts--above all, thoughts of self. Who of us is sufficient for these things?

The effect which the Master seeks to produce by this wonderfully close association is the harmonizing and attuning of the pupil's vehicles--the same result which an Indian teacher tries to gain by keeping his disciples always in the neighborhood physically. Whatever may be the special kind of exercises of the special course of study prescribed, in all cases the principal effect upon the pupil is that produced not by either exercises or study, but by being constantly in the presence of the teacher. The various vehicles of the people are vibrating at their accustomed rate--probably each of them at various rates, due to the constant presence of passing emotions and wandering thoughts of all kinds. The first and most difficult task of the pupil is to reduce all this chaos to order--to eliminate the host of minor interests, and control the wandering thoughts, and this must be achieved by steady pressure of the will exercised upon all his vehicles through a long period of years.

While he still lives in the world the difficulty of this undertaking is multiplied by a hundredfold by the ceaseless pressure of disturbing waves of thought and the motion, which give him no moment of rest, no opportunity to collect his forces in order to make a real effort. This is why in India the man who wishes to live the higher life retires to the jungle--why, in all countries and in all ages, there have been men willing to adopt the contemplative life of a hermit. The hermit at least has breathing space, has rest from the endless conflict, so that he can find time to think coherently. He has little to hinder him in his struggle, and the calm influences of nature are even to a certain extent helpful.

But the man who lives perpetually in the presence of one already upon the Path has a still greater advantage. Such a teacher has by the hypothesis already calmed his vehicles and accustom to them to vibrate at a few carefully selected rates instead of in a hundred promiscuous frenzies. These few rates of vibration are very strong and steady, and day and night, whether he is sleeping or waking, they are playing unceasingly upon the vehicles of the pupil, and gradually raising him to his teacher's key. Nothing but time and close association will produce this effect; and even then not with everyone, but only with those capable of being attuned. Many teachers require to see a reasonable proportion of this result before they will impart their special methods of occult development; in other words, before teaching a pupil something which may easily do him much harm is wrongfully used, they wish to be certain by ocular demonstration that he is a man of the type to which

this instruction is appropriate, and is sufficiently amenable to their influence to be held in the right way by it when the strain comes. A thousand times greater are the advantages gained by those who the Master selects--who thus have the opportunity of such close and intimate contact with him.

This then is what is meant by been an accepted pupil of the Master--that the man becomes a kind of outpost of that Master's consciousness, so that the strength of the Great Ones may be poured out through him, and the world may be definitely the better for his presence in it. The pupil is so closely in touch with a Master's thought that he can at any time see what that thought is upon any given subject, and in the way he is often saved from error. The Master can at any moment send the thought through that pupil either in the form of a suggestion or message. If, for example, the pupil is writing a letter or giving a lecture, the Master is subconsciously aware of that fact, and may at any moment throw into the mind of pupil a sentence to be included in that letter or a useful illustration for that lecture. In earlier stages the pupil is often unconscious of this, and supposes these ideas to have arisen spontaneously in his own mind, but he very soon learns to recognize the thought of the Master. Indeed, it is eminently necessary that he should learn to recognize it, because there are many other entities on the astral and mental planes who are very ready in the most friendly way and with the best intentions to make similar suggestions, and it is assuredly well that the people should learn to distinguish from whom they come.

We must not, however, confuse such use by a Master of his pupil's body with the mediumship which we have so often characterized as objectionable. For example, there have been some occasions on which one or other of our Masters has spoken through Annie Besant, and it has been stated that on such occasions sometimes her very voice and manner and even her features have been changed. But it must be remembered that in all such cases she has retained the fullest consciousness and has known exactly who is speaking and why. That is a condition so different from what is ordinarily understood by mediumship that it would be quite unfair to call it by the same name. There can be no objection to such use of a pupil's body, but it is only in the case of a very few pupils that the Masters have ever done this. Between then and now that young student has attained adeptship, and thus passed on far in advance of the friend who then introduced him to the temple. In the work which he has had to do in these later days he

needed someone to put before the world certain truths which had to be published, because the time for such unfoldment was fully ripe. He looked round for instrument whom he could use, and he found his old friend and helper of six thousand years ago in a position in which it was possible to employ him in this work. At once he remembered his ancient debt and repaid the debt by giving to his friend this wonderful privilege of being the channel of the truth to the world.

Such cases indeed are fairly numerous. We all know how at period still far earlier one of the founders of the Theosophical Society saved the life of the other, who was at the time the eldest son of him which is now the Master and teacher of both, and thus established the karmic claim which has drawn those three into close relationship ever since. Again on another occasion in the remote past Annie Besant saved the life of her present teacher when there was a conspiracy to assassinate him; and in yet another instance one who has but just passed the portals of initiation saved the life of the Boddhisatva, the great Lord Maitreya himself.

Now all these are unquestionably karmic links, and they constitute debts which will be fully repaid. It may have happened to any of us that in some past life we have come into touch with one who is now a Master, or done him some slight service, and if so, that may well prove to have been the commencement of an association which will ripen into discipleship on our side. It frequently happens that people are drawn together by a strong common interest in occultism, and in later lives, when some of these have outdistanced the others, those who were once friends and fellow students often fall naturally into the relation of teacher and pupil.

No doubt a man may attract their attention in many ways; he may bring himself to the portals of the Path by association with those in advance of him, by the force of sheer hard thinking, by devotion, or by earnest endeavor in good works; but all these are after all merely so many divisions of the one way, because they mean that he is making himself fit for one or other department of the work that is to be done. And so when by any of these methods he reaches a certain level, he inevitably attracts the attention of the Masters of the Wisdom and comes in some way into connection with them, though probably not upon the physical plane. The Masters usual plan is that he is brought into connection with one or other of their more prominent pupils, and this is very much

the safest way, since it is impossible for any ordinary person to assure himself of the good faith of astral communications.

Unless a man has had very wide experience in connection with mediumship, he would find it very difficult to realize how many quite ordinary people there are upon the astral plane who are burning with the desire to pose as great World-Teachers. They are generally quite honest in their intentions, and really think that they have teaching to give which will save the world. Now that they are dead they have fully realized the worthlessness of mere worldly objects, and they feel (quite rightly) that if they could only impress upon mankind in general the ideas which they have now acquired, the whole world would immediately become a very different place. They are also fully persuaded that they have only to publish their discoveries upon the physical plane in order at once to convince everybody of their inherent reasonableness, and so they select some impressionable lady and tell her that they have chosen her out of all the world to be the medium of the magnificent revelation.

Now it is rather flattering to the average person to be told that he or she is the sole medium in all the world for some mighty entity, the only channel for some exclusive and transcendent teaching; and even though the communicating entity should disclaim any special greatness (which usually does not) this is put down to praiseworthy modesty on his part, and he is described as at least an archangel which, even if not a still more direct manifestation of the Deity. What such a communicating entity forgets is that when whole all he was alive on the physical plane other people were making similar communications through various mediums, and that then he never paid the slightest attention to them, nor was in any way affected by what they said, and so he does not realize that precisely as he, when immersed in the affairs of the world declined to be moved by those communications, so will all the world now go on contentedly with its own business and pay no attention to *him*.

Often such entities as soon distinguished names from what may almost be called a pardonable motive, for they know human nature well enough to be aware that if John Smith or Thomas Brown comes back from the dead and enunciates a certain doctrine it will have very little chance of acceptance, no matter how excellent and how entirely true it maybe; whereas the same words uttered by George Washington, Julius Caesar or the Archangel Michael would be at least suspectfully considered and very probably blindly accepted

Anyone functioning of the astral plane has a certain amount of insight into the thoughts and feelings of those with whom he is dealing, and therefore is not wonderful that when such people come into contact with the theosophists, and see their minds to be full of reverence for the Masters of Wisdom, they should sometimes impersonate those very Masters of Wisdom in order to command more ready acceptance for whenever ideas they wish to promulgate. Also it must not be forgotten that there are those who bear no goodwill to our Masters, and desire to do them any injury which lies within their power. They cannot of course harm them directly, and therefore they sometimes try to do so through the pupils whom they love. One of the easiest ways in which they can produce difficulties is by assuming the identity of the Master who is so strongly revered by their victims, and in many cases such an imitation is quite perfect, so far as the physical appearance is concerned, except that it always seems to me that they can never quite get the right expression into the eyes. One who has developed the sight of the higher planes cannot be thus deluded, as it is quite impossible for any of these entities to imitate the causal body of the Master.

More assuredly we shall do well to heed diligently the wise precept in the *Voice of the Silence*, " seek not the Guru in those mayavic regions. " Accepted no teaching from some self-appointed preceptor of the astral plane, but receive all communications and advice which comes from their precisely as you would receive similar advice or remarks made by a stranger on the physical plane. Take them for what they're worth, and accept the advice or rejected as your own conscience dictates, without paying attention to its alleged source. Seek rather for teaching which satisfies the intellect, and apply the test of intellect and conscience to any claims which are put forward.

Let it never be forgotten that ours are the only lines. The two Masters who are most intimately associated with the work of the Theosophical Society represent two different rays or methods of teaching; there are others besides these. All schools of the higher teaching give a preliminary training to purify the character, but the particular teachings given and practices recommended differ according to the type of the teacher. But all teachers will belong to the Great White Lodge insist upon the attainment of the highest only by means of the Path of Holiness, and the quenching of desire by conquering it and not by gratifying it.

The pupil will be employed by his mastery in many different ways. Some are set to take up the lines of work indicated in the book *Invisible Helpers*; others are employed specifically in assisting the Masters personally in some piece of work which they happen to have undertaken; some are set astrally to deliver lectures to audiences of less developed souls, or to help and teach others who are free temporarily during sleep, or are permanently after-death denizens of the astral world. When the pupil falls asleep at night he usually reports himself to his Master, and he is then told if there is any definite piece of work which he can do. If there happens to be nothing special he will take up his usual nocturnal work, whatever that may be. Every invisible helper acquires a number of regular cases or patients who are put under his charge just exactly as are those of a doctor on the physical plane; and whenever there is no unusual work for him to do he simply goes on his ordinary rounds, visits these cases and does his best for them. So that he has always plenty of work of this kind to fill up his time when he is not especially needed, as for some sudden catastrophe which throws out a large number of souls simultaneously into the astral plane in a condition of terror. Most of such training in astral work as a pupil needs is usually given by one of the older pupils of the Master.

The harm that may have been done by the indiscriminate publication of any of these half-physical systems has been very clearly exemplified in America, where a book of an Indian teacher guardedly mentioned certain practices, prefacing his teaching with a carefully expressed warning as to the necessity of preparation by the training of character. But nevertheless what he has written has caused a great deal of suffering, because people have uniformly disregarded his warning as to training and have recklessly tried to carry out the practices which he described. In a tour a few years ago in that country I met quite a number of people who through attempting to follow his directions had made themselves physical wrecks. Some have become insane, some were subject to fits, and others have fallen under the spell of various obsessing entities. In order that such practices as these may be attempted with safety it is absolutely necessary that they be undertaken (as they always are undertaken in India) in the actual presence of the teacher who watches the results and at once interferes when he sees that anything is going wrong. Indeed, in this country it is usual for the pupil to remain in physical proximity to his teacher, because here people understand what I mentioned some time ago--that the first and

greatest work which a teacher has to do is to attune the aura of the pupil to his own--to annul the effect of the ordinary disturbed conditions which prevail in the world, to show him how to abandon all that and to live in a world of absolute calm. One of our own Masters said in one of the earlier letters, " Come out of your world into ours, " and this of course refers not to place but to a condition of mind.

Remember that everyone who meditates upon the Master makes a definite link with him, which shows itself to clairvoyant vision as a kind of line of light. The Master always subconsciously feels the impinging of such a line and sends out along it in response a steady stream of magnetism which continues to play long after the meditation is over. The regular practice of such meditation and concentration is of the utmost help to the aspirant, and the regularity is one of the most important factors in producing the result. It should be undertaken daily at the same hour, and we should steadily persevere with it, even though no obvious effect may be produced. When no effect appears we must be especially careful to avoid depression, because depression makes it more difficult for a Masters influence to act upon us, and it also shows that we are thinking more of ourselves than of the Master.