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Editor:

W. Emmett Small

Associate Editors:

*John Cooper
Kenneth Small*

Acknowledgements:

*Doreen Domb
Vera Meyer
Carmen Small*

Issue Composition:

*Kenneth Small
W. Emmett Small*

Design:

John Odam Design Associates

Layout/Production:

Deborah Ivanoff

Cover design:

*A design from the
BOOK of KELLS*

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EDITORIAL

G. DE PURUCKER — AND THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

by W. Emmett Small

When in the cyclic course of history the Teacher comes and gives the Teaching in line with the Original Source, a few respond; but the many, whom we here call the Voice of the People, remain lethargic or respond not at all. The Light fails for that cycle and the cover of Night descends. And Karma reports the resulting history.

That was the historic course some two thousand years ago. The Teaching was given appropriate for that cyclic time. The faithful understood and strived to live the great precepts; but the majority, the Vox Populi, filled with their own loudness, became increasingly deaf to the great Call, and within a hundred years division and discord had brought irreparable disunity. Karma had its inevitable say, and the Dark Ages enfolded the western world.

And we should ask ourselves today, Was it not, though in less degree, the same when the great New Effort was made by H.P.B. in 1875? She carried out the work she was pledged and trained to do. But, again, what of the Voice of the People? An honest reading of history tells us something of the failure again. And later, and in the lifetime of some still living who remember, following the leadership of G. de P. of the Point Loma T.S., was not a similar course repeated, resulting in fragmentation and disunity? No need to dwell on all this here; much of it has been recorded in earlier pages of our bi-monthly *Eclectic Theosophist* (see note at end).

We turn to today. September 27 of this year of 1992 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the death of G. de P., and the event gives Theosophists incentive to review what he stood for at a crucial time in T.S. history, and to assess what he accomplished. And to that we add that it offers opportunity to overview the world-wide situ-

ation of the Theosophical Movement today. Much of this we have covered in earlier issues of our *Eclectic* (see e.g., No. 21 of March 1974, and No. 85 of Jan.-Feb. 1985). Those pages can be checked and studied for an honest facing of facts, and we see, simply put, two main points G. de P. worked for: (1) in true union is our strength (of all the several T.S. splintered societies and groups); (2) in the Teaching of H.P.B. and Those that sent her is the Life.

The scenes of half a century flash before us as in video replay. Not all will have witnessed them, but from the following selections past history may in part be discerned. We limit these mainly to extracts from G. de P.'s General Letters, stretching over his 13-year tenure of office. In them can be traced, if studied carefully, something of inner design or pattern in the march of karmic events. Editorial linking passages in square brackets are added to help the reader in the sequential flow.

1. PREPARATION ON THE HOME FRONT

General Letter No. I, July 29, 1929

"...Not only is the outer work of the Theosophical Movement to be conducted constantly along lines ever closer to those first laid down by H.P.B. ...but also the work in the E.S. will be continued along the general lines, and more or less after the methods, of H.P.B."

Letter No. II, September 1, 1929

"...It will be my duty...to issue new E.S. teachings of a far deeper and more esoteric kind than those which were issued even by H.P.B. or by W. Q. Judge, or Katherine Tingley. This I can do for the simple reason that these, my three great Predecessors, never had the opportunity to do what karma now impels and compels me to do: to besiege the

BOOK REVIEWS

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS DECEPTION

by Michael Baigent & Richard Leigh, New York, Summit Books, 1991

The Huntington Library's release of microfilm copies of the Dead Sea Scrolls has made them available to scholars worldwide. For decades a handful of Christianscholars suppressed the Dead Sea Scrolls' contents until this event. Literary critic, Edmund Wilson, suspected that those "experts" cloistering the scrolls hoped to distance the Qumran scrolls chronologically, both from Judaism and Christianity, nervously sensing these religions might need radical revision due to their deciphering.

If the scrolls dated well before the Christian era they might compromise Jesus' originality and uniqueness, showing a teaching tradition already established. The authors boldly state:

"If the scrolls dated from Jesus' lifetime...they might be more embarrassing still. They might be used to argue that the Teacher of Righteousness who figures in them was Jesus himself, and that Jesus was not therefore perceived as divine by his contemporaries" [p. 131]. The Church might also fear scroll statements about a messianic nationalism surrounding Jesus, who was supposed to be non-political. "It might even emerge that Jesus had never dreamed of founding a new religion or of contravening Judaic law" [*ibid*].

However, the authors also show points of Qumran agreement with early church views and Christian texts. There is to be found a ritual similar to Baptism, communal sharing and the belief in the leadership of 12 apostles of the early Church in Jerusalem.

However, the Messiah of the Qumran community was a Teacher of Righteousness, not divine as later portrayed by the Church.

The historical problems of associating the Essenes with the Qumran

area have continued to confront the International team investigating them. The authors remind us that this team has limited itself to paleographic research alone, ignoring important internal or historical factors the text reveals.

According to earlier views, from Josephus onward, the Essenes were celibate. The authors in fact credit H. P. Blavatsky's Theosophy as postulating "Jesus as a magus or adept who embodied elements of both Essene and Gnostic tradition" [p. 167]. They cite, for instance, Anna Kingsford's concept of esoteric Christianity, which portrayed Jesus as a healer, or Edouard Shur's *The Great Initiates*. The idea of the Essenes as healers appears to these authors to be contradicted by the Qumran literature. However, the association of the "Osime" of the Qumran with the "Ossenes" of Epiphanius as the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls, is evident [See pp. 172-73]. At least it seems clear that H. P. B.'s designation of the sect associated with Jesus is valid. Professor Matthew Black of St. Andrews University, Scotland, wrote that the term Essene is acceptable:

"...provided we do not define Essenism too narrowly, for instance, by equating it exclusively with the Dead Sea group, but are prepared to understand the term as a general description of this widespread movement of anti-Jerusalem, anti-Pharisaic non-conformity of the period. It is from such an Essene-type of Judaism that Christianity is descended" [*The Scrolls and Christianity*, p. 99].

For this conclusion alone we are grateful for the insights the authors of the current scroll study provide. Light is also shed upon the historical figure of James, as well as overturning previous theories regarding the travels of Paul. James proves to represent a faction "zealous for the Law," arrogating priestly functions, but involved in political revolt against the Romans and



the corrupt Sadducee priesthood of the Temple. This leads also to a split with Paul, who appears to have "turned renegade, quarreled with the Teacher, and hijacked part of the community's doctrine and membership" [p. 195]. This scroll revelation supports statements in the Acts of the Apostles.

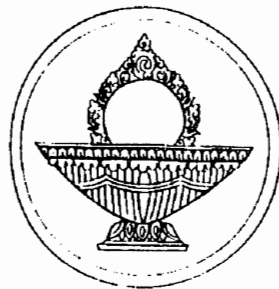
International team leader Professor Strugnell and other Judaic scholars state that the identity of the sect writing the scrolls is not yet finalized. But it is now more generally recognized that 150 years earlier than Christianity, the Judaic tradition itself refers to ideas thought exclusively Christian. Furthermore the scrolls are no longer the sole property of an exclusive International team, and hopefully Truth will win the day! —Dara Eklund

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE,

H.P. Blavatsky, Wheaton, Illinois, Theosophical Publishing House, Second Quest Edition, 1992.

The attractively printed new Quest Edition of *The Voice of the Silence* was published to commemorate both the one-hundredth anniversary of the death of H. P. Blavatsky and the tenth anniversary of the death of Boris de Zirkoff. To achieve the former, the text is a verbatim reprint of Blavatsky's original 1889 edition; to achieve the latter, de Zirkoff's Introductory and Index are included. This important Introductory, "How *The Voice of the Silence* Was Written," was heretofore available only in the Nov.-Dec. 1988 *American Theosophist*, while this Index is here published for the first time.

With all due appreciation for the laudable intent of this commemora-



tive edition, it yet strikes one as a curious combination. Perhaps not unlike the impact if one were to see a Martin Luther King commemorative issue of the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) magazine. It is all very well, but Dr. King was known for his advocacy of black people. There is a sense of anomaly to it.

A more accurate analogy would be if a Christian publishing house were to put out an edition of the Bible to commemorate both the anniversary of King James and the anniversary of the Committee on Bible Translation who prepared the New International Version. To achieve this, the text would be the King James Version, and the Preface and footnotes would be from the New International Version. Such an edition, though well-intentioned, would result in curious anomalies. For example, that new Preface would state that to use archaisms such as "thou," "thee," "thine," etc., "would violate accuracy in translation," in that "neither Hebrew, Aramaic, nor Greek uses special pronouns for the persons of the Godhead." Further, "a present-day translation is not enhanced by forms that in the time of the King James Version were used in everyday speech, whether referring to God or man." Yet this would be followed by the very edition using those archaic forms.

In the present case, de Zirkoff's index was prepared based on his own careful edition of the *Voice*, wherein the Sanskrit and Tibetan terms are given according to modern accepted standards of transliteration. Yet it is here preceded by the old edition of the *Voice* with its archaic spellings of those terms. The attempt by some un-named editor(s) to adapt his index to this edition has only created further confusion.

Although to some Christians the "thou arts" have a pious sentiment associated with them, as do terms like "Narjol" to some Theosophists, there is really nothing sacred about these forms. "Narjol," to use just one example, is not a secret mystic term, which is used for a saint or an adept, but is

a simple, straightforward mistake, an error of transposition of letters. It is the well-known Tibetan word pronounced "Naljor" and spelled "rnal-'byor" (as correctly given by Boris in his index), which is the standard Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit word "yoga" or "yogi," indeed regularly used for saints and adepts in both these languages. To perpetuate these pious fantasies is to invite the well-deserved scorn of scholars, Tibetan Buddhists, and other thinking people, and thus further distance Theosophy from "the highest minds" which it is supposed to arrest the attention of.

It is well known that Blavatsky wrote hurriedly under great pressure, of both time and health, resulting in frequent incomplete or incorrect references, and at a time before standardized transliteration systems existed. Today, the International Transliteration System for Sanskrit has been universally accepted and used for decades. That it is necessary to interact with the intelligentsia through keeping abreast of advances in scholarship, such as standardized transliteration systems, was always recognized by Mr. de Zirkoff. For, as pointed out by the Mahatma K. H. regarding the misprint "Shandba" for "Skandha" in *The Occult World*, "As it now stands I am made to express myself in a very original way for a supposed Adept." Mr. de Zirkoff's careful and painstakingly corrected editions of the *Blavatsky Collected Writings* stand as models of scholarship which go very far in placing Theosophy on a firm footing as a legitimate field of study in today's world.

No one can doubt the usefulness of verbatim editions of original works. However at present, verbatim editions

of the *Voice* are available from Theosophical University Press, Theosophy Company, H. P. B. Library, and Concord Grove Press, while de Zirkoff's carefully corrected edition, though completed two decades ago, is not yet available anywhere. Given these facts, the advisability of the course taken with the edition under review is questionable. But the promotion of the resulting mismatch as a tribute to and representation of the work of Boris de Zirkoff does a real disservice to him and especially to the direction which he so laboriously charted in Theosophical scholarship. It is much to be hoped that this edition does not mark a new trend at Theosophical Publishing House. —David Reigle

ON BEATING A DEAD HORSE

Two Replies by William Q. Judge," The Theosophy Co., 245 W. 33rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90007, \$2.00, 53 pages.

This writer thought himself conversant with most published literature about the "Judge Crisis" of 1895, but this pamphlet has brought him something completely new. It is probably familiar to some older students, being "long out of print" as indicated in the March 1992 *Theosophy* magazine. It consists of two lengthy replies by Judge to the rather vague charges of fraudulence levied against him by Annie Besant and Olcott. Actually it fills a gap, and is a documental fulcrum point of events before and after the famous split in the Theosophical Society in 1895. Although it may be, I know of nowhere else it is printed, and it is not included yet in the *Echoes of the Orient* series (which, however, is understandable, as it consists of occult and non-doctrinal matters not suitable in a general presentation of the teachings.)

Just why Judge—one of the three co-founders of the TS—has been almost completely ignored by the Adyar TS (officially, at least, and with a few notable exceptions) is made apparent by reading this pamphlet. It seems there are only three possible reactions