

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE T.S.

WITH ANNOTATIONS BY C. JINARAJADASA

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XIV

THE ORGANISATION OF THE T.S. (Continued)

By H. P. B.

THE undersigned is an ever patient theosophist, who has hitherto laboured under the impression that no amount of subtle scholasticism and tortured casuistry but would find like the Rosetta stone its champollion—some day. The most acute among theosophists are now invited to make out in “A Few Words”—what the writers or writer—is driving at—unless in plain and unvarnished language, it be—“Down with the Theosophical Society, President-Founder and its Headquarters!” This is the only possible explanation of the twelve pages of denunciations to which a reply is now attempted. What can indeed be made out of the following jumble of contradictory statements:—

(a) The President Founder having been shown throughout as a “tyrant,” a “*would be* Cesar,” “aiming at *papal* power” and a “Venitian Council of Three,” and other words to that effect implied in almost every sentence of the paper under review, it is confessed in the same breath that the “London Lodge” of the Theosophical Society has *completely ignored* the *Rules* (of the Pope Cæsar) published at Adyar! (p. 4) And yet, the “L.L. of the T.S.” still lives and breathes and one has heard of no *anathema* pronounced against it, so far. . . .

(b) Rule XIV stating that the Society has "to deal *only* with scientific and philosophical subjects," hence, "it is quite *evident* (?) that the power and position claimed in the *Rules* for the P' Founder and the Gen. Council and Convention are opposed to the spirit of the declared Objects".

It might have been as well perhaps to quote the entire paragraph in which these words appear,¹ once that hairs are split about the possibly faulty reaction of the *Rules*? Is it not self-evident, that the words brought forward "only with scientific and philosophical subjects" are inserted as a necessary caution to *true* theosophists, who by dealing with politics *within* any Branch Society might bring disgrace and ruin on the whole body,—in India to begin with? Has the Society or has it not over 140 Societies scattered through four parts of the world to take care of? As in the case of "Mahatmas" and "Mahatmaship"—active work of the Theosophical Society is confused—willingly or otherwise it is not for the writer to decide—with Theosophy. No need of entering here upon the difference between the jar that contains a liquid and the nature of, or that liquid itself. "Theosophy teaches *self-culture* . . . and not control," we are told. Theosophy teaches *mutual-culture* before *self-culture* to *begin* with. Union is strength. It is by gathering many theosophists of the same way of thinking into one or more groups, and making them closely united by the same magnetic bond of fraternal unity and sympathy that the objects of *mutual* development and progress in Theosophical thought may be best achieved. "Self-culture" is for isolated *Hatha Yogis*, independent of any Society and having to avoid

¹ XIV. The Society having to deal only with scientific and philosophical subjects, and having Branches in different parts of the world under various forms of Government, does not permit its members, as such, to interfere with politics, and repudiates any attempt on the part of any one to commit it in favor or against any political party or measure. Violation of this rule will meet with expulsion.

This rather alters the complexion put on the charge, which seems to conveniently forget that "scientific and philosophical subjects" are not the *only* declared objects of the Society. Let us not leave room for a doubt that there is more *animus* underlying the charges than would be strictly *theosophical*.

association with human beings; and this is a *triple distilled* SELFISHNESS. For real moral advancement—there “where two or three are gathered” in the name of the SPIRIT OF TRUTH—there that Spirit or Theosophy *will be in the midst of them*. To say that theosophy has no need of a Society—a vehicle and centre thereof,—is like affirming that the Wisdom of the Ages collected in thousands of volumes, at the British Museum has no need of either the edifice that contains it, nor the works in which it is found. Why not advise the British Gov' on its lack of discrimination and its *worldliness* in not destroying Museum and all its vehicles of Wisdom? Why spend such sums of money and pay so many officers to watch over its treasures, the more so, since many of its guardians may be quite out of keeping with, and opposed to the Spirit of that Wisdom. The Directors of such Museums may or may not be very perfect men, and some of their assistants may have never opened a philosophical work: yet, it is they who take care of the library and preserving it for future generations are indirectly entitled to their thanks. How much more gratitude is due to those who like our self-sacrificing theosophists at Adyar, devote their lives to, and give their services gratuitously to the good of Humanity!

Diplomas, and Charters are objected to, and chiefly the “admission fee”. The latter is a “taxation,” and therefore “*inconsistent* with the principle of Brotherhood” . . . A “forced gift is *unbrotherly*,” etc., etc. It would be curious to see where the T.S., would be led to, were the P. F. to religiously follow the proffered advices. “Initiation” on admission, has been made away with already in Europe, and has *led to that* which will very soon become known; no use mentioning it at present. Now the “Charters” and Diplomas would follow. Hence no document to show for any group, and no diploma to prove that one is affiliated to the Society. Hence also perfect liberty to any one to either call

himself a theosophist, or deny he is one. The "admission fee"? Indeed, it has to be regarded as a terrible and *unbrotherly* "extortion," and a "forced gift," in the face of those thousands of Masonic Lodges, of Clubs, Associations, Societies, Leagues, and even the "Salvation Army". The former, extort yearly *fortune* from their Members; the latter—throttle in the name of Jesus the masses and appealing to *voluntary* contributions make the converts pay, and pay in their turn every one of their "officers," none of whom will serve the "Army" for nothing. Yet it would be well, perchance were our members to follow the example of the Masons in their solidarity of thought and action and at least *outward* Union, notwithstanding that receiving a thousand times more from their members they give them in return still less than we do, whether spiritually or morally. This solitary single guinea expected from every new member is spent in less than one week, as was calculated, on postage and correspondence with theosophists. Or are we to understand that all correspondence with members—now left to "*self-culture*"—is also to cease and has to follow diplomas, Charters and the rest? Then truly, the Head Quarters and Office have better be closed. A simple *Query*—however: Have the 1£.—The yearly contribution to the L.L. of the T.S., and the further sum of 2.6*d.* to the Oriental Group been abolished as "acts of unbrotherly extortion," and how long, if so, have they begun to be regarded as "a *sale* of Brotherhood"?

To continue: the charges wind up with the following remarks, so profound, that it requires a deeper head than ours to fathom all that underlies the words contained in them. "Is the T.S. a Brotherhood, or not?" queries the plaintiff—"If the former is it possible to have any *centre of arbitrary power*?"¹ To hold that there is necessity for such a centre is only a

¹ It is the *first time* since the T.S. exists that such an accusation of "*arbitrary power*," is brought forward. Not many will be found of this way of thinking.



a roundabout way of saying that no Brotherhood is possible,¹ but in point of fact *that necessity itself is by no means* proved (!?). There have been no doubt Brotherhoods under high Masters . . . ” (there “have been” and *still are*, H. P. B.) . . . “but in such cases the Masters were never elected for *geographical* or other considerations (?). The natural leader of men was always recognised by his embodying the spirit of Humanity. To institute comparisons would be little short of blasphemy. The greatest among men is always the readiest to serve and yet is unconscious of the service. Let us pause before finally tying the millstone of worldliness around the neck of Theosophy. Let us not forget that Theosophy does not grow in our midst *by force and control* but by *sunshine of brotherliness* and the *dew of self-oblivion*. If we do not believe in Brotherhood and Truth let us put ashes on our head and *weep in sack-cloth* and not rejoice in the purple of authority and in the festive garments of pride and worldliness. It is by far better that the name of Theosophy should never be heard, than that it should be used as the *Motto of a papal authority.*” . . .

Who, upon reading this, and being ignorant that the above piece of rhetorical flowers of speech is directed against the luckless Pres^t Founder—would not have in his “mind’s eye”—an Alexander Borgia, a Caligula, or to say the least—General Booth in his latest metamorphosis! When, how, or by doing what, has our good natured, unselfish, ever kind President merited such a Ciceronian tirade? The state of things denounced exists now for almost twelve years, and our accuser knew of it and even took an active part in its organisation. Conventions, Councils, Rules, etc., etc., at Bombay, and at Adyar. This virulent *sortie* is no doubt due to “SELF-CULTURE”? The critic has outgrown the Movement and turned

¹ No need taking a *roundabout* way, to say that no Brotherhood would ever be possible if many theosophists shared the very original views of the writer.

his face from the original programme; hence his severity. But where is the *true theosophical charity*, the tolerance and the "sunshine of brotherliness" just spoken of, and so insisted upon? Verily—it is easy to preach the "dew of self-oblivion" when one has nothing to think about except to evolve such finely rounded phrases; were every theosophist at Adyar to have his daily wants and even comforts, his board, lodging and all, attended to by a wealthier theosophist; and were the same "sunshine of brotherliness" to be poured upon him, as it is upon the critic who found for himself an endless brotherly care, a fraternal and self-sacrificing devotion in two other noble minded members, then—would there be little need for the President Founder to call upon and humble himself before our theosophists. For, if he has to *beg* for 2 annual shillings—it is, in order that those—Europeans and Hindus—who work night and day at Adyar, giving their services free and receiving little thanks or honour for it, should have at least *one meal a day*. The fresh "dew of *self-oblivion*" must not be permitted to chill one's heart, and turn into the lethal *mold of forgetfulness* to such an extent as that. The severe critic seems to have lost sight of the fact that for months, during the last crisis, the whole staff of our devoted Adyar officers, from the President down to the youngest brother in the office, have lived on *5d.* a day each, having reduced their meals to the *minimum*. And it is *this mite*, the proceeds of the "2 shill. contribution," conscientiously paid by some, that is now called *extortion*, a desire to live "in the purple of authority and the festive garments of pride and worldliness"!

Our "Brother" is right. Let us "weep in sack cloth and ashes on our head" if the T.S. has many more such *unbrotherly* criticisms to bear. Truly "it would be far better that the name of Theosophy should never be heard than that it should be used as a motto"—not of *papal authority* which exists nowhere at Adyar outside the critic's

imagination—but as a motto of a “self-developed fanaticism. All the great services otherwise rendered to the Society; all the noble work done by the complainant will pale and vanish before such an appearance of cold heartedness. Surely he cannot desire the *annihilation* of the Society? And if he did it would be useless: the T.S. *cannot be destroyed as a body*. It is not in the power of either Founders or their critics; and neither friend nor enemy can ruin that which is *doomed to exist*, all the blunders of its leaders notwithstanding. That which was generated through and founded by the “High Masters” and under their authority is not their instruction—MUST AND WILL LIVE. Each of us and all will receive his or her *Karma* in it, but the *vehicle* of Theosophy will stand indestructible and undestroyed by the hand of whether man or fiend. No; “truth does not depend on show of hands”; but in the case of the much abused President-Founder it must depend on the show of *facts*. Thorny and full of pitfalls was the steep path he had to climb up alone and unaided for the first years. Terrible was the opposition outside the Society he had to build—sickening and disheartening the treachery he often encountered within the Head Quarters. Enemies gnashing their teeth in his face around, those whom he regarded as his staunchest friend and co-workers betraying him and the Cause on the slightest provocation. Still, where hundreds in his place would have collapsed and given up the whole undertaking in despair, he, unmoved and unmoving went on climbing up and toiling as before, unrelenting and undismayed, supported by that one thought and conviction that he was doing his duty. What other inducement has the Founder ever had, but his *theosophical* pledge and the sense of his duty toward THOSE he had promised to serve to the end of his life? There was but one beacon for him—the hand that first pointed to him his way up: the hand of the MASTER in

loves and reveres so well, and serves so devotedly though occasionally perhaps, unwisely. President elected for life, he has nevertheless offered more than once to resign in favour of any one found worthier than him, but was never permitted to do so by the majority—not of “show of hands” but *show of hearts*, literally,—as few are more beloved than he is even by most of those who may criticize occasionally his actions. And this is only natural: for cleverer in administrative capacities, more learned in philosophy, subtler in casuistry, in metaphysics or daily life policy, there may be many around him; but the whole globe may be searched through and through and no one found stauncher to his friends, truer to his word, or more devoted to real, practical theosophy—than the President-Founder; and these are the chief requisites in a leader of such a movement—one that aims to become a Brotherhood of men. The Society needs no Loyolas; it has to shun anything approaching casuistry; nor ought we to tolerate no subtle casuists. There, where every individual has to work out his own Karma, the judgment of a casuist who takes upon himself the duty of pronouncing upon the state of a brother's soul, or guide his conscience is of no use, and may become positively injurious. The Founder claims no more rights than every one else in the Society: the *right of private judgment*, which, whenever it is found to disagree with Branches or individuals are quietly set aside and *ignored—as shown by the complainants themselves*. This then, is the sole crime of the would-be culprit, and no worse than this can be laid at his door. And yet what is the reward of that kind man? He, who as never refused a service, outside what he considers his official duties—to any living being; he who has redeemed tens of men, young and old from dissipated, often immoral lives and saved others from terrible scrapes by giving them a safe refuge in the Society; he, who has placed others again, on the pinnacle of Saintship *through their statues in that Society*,

when otherwise they would have indeed found themselves now in the meshes of "worldliness" and perhaps worse;—he, that true friend of every theosophist, and verily "the readiest to serve and as unconscious of the service"—he is now taken to task for what?—for insignificant blunders, for useless "special orders," a *childish*, rather than untheosophical love of display, out of pure devotion to his Society. Is then *human nature* to be viewed so uncharitably by us, as to call *untheosophical*, worldly and sinful the natural impulse of a mother to dress up her child and parade it to the best advantages? The comparison may be laughed at, but if it is, it will be only by him who would, like the fanatical Christian of old, or the naked, dishevelled Yogi of India—has no more charity for the smallest human weakness. Yet, the simile is quite correct, since the Society is the child, the beloved creation of the Founder; he may be well forgiven for this too exaggerated love for that for which he has suffered and toiled more than all other theosophists put together. He is called "worldly," "ambitious of power" and *untheosophical* for it. Very well; let then any impartial judge compare the life of the Founder with those of most of his critics, and see which was *the most theosophical*, ever since the Society sprung into existence. If no better results have been achieved, it is not the President who ought to be taken to task for it, but the Members themselves, as he has been ever trying to promote its growth, and the majority of the "Fellows" have either done nothing, or created obstacles in the way of its progress through sins of omission as of commission. Better unwise *activity*, than an overdose of too wise *inactivity*, apathy or indifference which are always the death of an undertaking.

(To be continued)