

[W.Q. Judge, *Echoes of the Orient*, Point Loma Publications, 1975, p. 463-65, in second revised ed. 2009, p. 485-7]

*The original title of the text is "The Theosophical Movement", and was first published in the magazine "Path" in August 1895, pp. 137-39.*

There is a very great difference between the Theosophical Movement and any Theosophical Society. The Movement is moral, ethical, spiritual, universal, invisible except in its effects, and continuous. A Society formed for Theosophical work is a visible organization, an effect, a machine for conserving energy and putting it into action; it is not, and cannot be, universal, nor is it continuous. Organized Theosophical bodies are made by men for better co-operation, but as they are merely external cascades, they must change from time to time as human failings appear, as times change, and as the great underlying spiritual movement brings about such changes.

As the Theosophical Movement is continuous, it can be found in all times and in all nations. Wherever thought has struggled to be free, wherever spiritual ideas have been promulgated in opposition to forms and dogmatism, there the great movement can be seen. The work of Jacob Boehme was a part of it, and so was the Theosophical Society of more than a hundred years ago; Luther's reformation may be recognized as a part of it; the great struggle between science and religion, clearly described by Draper, was as much a part of the Theosophical Movement as the present Society under that name - indeed that struggle, and the freedom thus obtained for Science, were as important in the advancement of the world as are our different organizations. And among the political examples of the movement must be pointed out the Independence of the North American colonies, which concluded in the formation of a great nation, theoretically based on Brotherhood. We can see then that to worship an organization, even if it be the beloved Theosophical organization, is to fall to the level of Form, and to become a slave once more to that dogmatism which our portion of the Theosophical Movement, the TS, aimed to destroy.

Some members have come to worship the so-called "Theosophical Society," thinking that it is all that is needed, failing to see clearly its informal, patchwork character of organization, and failing to realize that this devotion to mere form would probably lead to the annulment of the Society during the first tension that arose. And tension did occur with several members. They even forgot, and still forget, that H.P. Blavatsky herself declared that it would be better to set aside the Society than to destroy the Society, and that H.P.B. proclaimed the freedom and independence of the European part of the Society. These worshippers feel that there must be a continuation of the old form, so that the Society may have an international character.

But true unity and predominance, and true internationalism, do not consist in having one organization. They lie in the sameness of aim, of aspiration, of purpose, of teaching, of ethics. Freemasonry—a large and important part of the true Theosophical Movement—is universally international; and yet its organizations are comprehensive, autonomous, sovereign, independent. The Grand Lodge of the State of New York, which includes its different Lodges, is independent of all others in any State, and yet every member is a Mason and all are working toward the same plan. Freemasons throughout the world belong to the great International Masonic Body, but they have their free and independent charters everywhere.

When the Theosophical Society was young and small, it was necessary that there should be one direction for the whole. But now that it has become large and strong, and has spread to many nations quite different from one another, such as the American, the English, the Spanish, the Swedish and other nations in Europe, and the Hindu, it is essential that a change should be made in the outward form. It must become like the Freemasons—with independent deliberative bodies wherever geographical or national conditions indicate this need. And there is no doubt that this will happen in due time, whatever some people may say to the contrary.

The North American group, being separated by geographical and other conditions, has initiated a change so as to have a free and independent direction, but remains united with all true Theosophists in basis, in aspiration, in aim and in work.

We have not changed HPB's work; we have expanded it. We hold that every person who has been admitted to any Theosophical Society should be received everywhere among Theosophists, as hands are received among hands. It is not Theosophical to reject the change made by the American group. This is not Theosophy; and it also helps to spread their legal rules regarding Theosophical names, symbols, and seals, so as to prevent others from using them. Every one should be invited to use our Theosophical property as freely as he pleases. Those who wish to carry on HPB's war against dogmatism will applaud and encourage the American movement, because their free minds permit it; but those who do not know true Theosophy, nor see the difference between the form and the soul of things, will continue to worship the Form, and sacrifice Brotherhood for the sake of an outer shell.