

H.P. BLAVATSKY on the MAHATMAS

(*Key to Theosophy*, pp. 289)

ENQUIRER. But what does the word "Mahatma" really mean?

THEOSOPHIST. Simply a "great soul," great through moral elevation and intellectual attainment. If the title of great is given to a drunken soldier like Alexander, why should we not call those "Great" who have achieved far greater conquests in Nature's secrets, than Alexander ever did on the field of battle? Besides, the term is an Indian and a very old word.

ENQUIRER. And why do you call them "Masters"?

THEOSOPHIST. We call them "Masters" because they are our teachers; and because from them we have derived all the Theosophical truths, however inadequately some of us may have expressed, and others understood, them. They are men of great learning, whom we term Initiates, and still greater holiness of life. They are not ascetics in the ordinary sense, though they certainly remain apart from the turmoil and strife of your western world.

ENQUIRER. But is it not selfish thus to isolate themselves?

THEOSOPHIST. Where is the selfishness? Does not the fate of the Theosophical Society sufficiently prove that the world is neither ready to recognise them nor to profit by their teaching? Of what use would Professor Clerk Maxwell have been to instruct a class of little boys in their multiplication-table? Besides, they isolate themselves only from the West. In their own country they go about as publicly as other people do.

ENQUIRER. Don't you ascribe to them supernatural powers?

THEOSOPHIST. We believe in nothing supernatural, as I have told you already. Had Edison lived and invented his phonograph two hundred years ago, he would most probably have been burnt along with it, and the whole attributed to the devil. The powers which they exercise are simply the development of potencies lying latent in every man and woman, and the existence of which even official science begins to recognise.

ENQUIRER. Is it true that these men *inspire* some of your writers, and that many, if not all, of your Theosophical works were written under their dictation?

THEOSOPHIST. Some have. There are passages entirely dictated by them and *verbatim*, but in most cases they only inspire the ideas and leave the literary form to the writers.

ENQUIRER. But this in itself is miraculous; is, in fact, a *miracle*. How can they do it?

THEOSOPHIST. My dear Sir, you are labouring under a great mistake, and it is science itself that will refute your arguments at no distant day. Why should it be a "miracle," as you call it? A miracle is supposed to mean some operation which is supernatural, whereas there is really nothing above or beyond NATURE and Nature's laws. Among the many forms of the "miracle" which have come under modern scientific recognition, there is Hypnotism, and one phase of its power is known as "Suggestion," a form of thought transference, which has been successfully used in combating particular physical diseases, etc. The time is not far distant when the World of Science will be forced to acknowledge that there exists as much interaction

between one mind and another, no matter at what distance, as between one body and another in closest contact. When two minds are sympathetically related, and the instruments through which they function are tuned to respond magnetically and electrically to one another, there is nothing which will prevent the transmission of thoughts from one to the other, at will; for since the mind is not of a tangible nature, that distance can divide it from the subject of its contemplation, it follows that the only difference that can exist between two minds is a difference of STATE. So, if this latter hindrance is overcome, where is the "miracle" of *thought transference*, at whatever distance.