

Occult Science – A Regenerative Synthesis Part 2

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One feature of our time is a certain sense of void in the life of people. Many feel that their existence does not have a deep meaning, an ultimate aim, and seek happiness through sensual enjoyment. The belief that happiness is attained through possessions (objects, people, situations, etc.) is the source of egoism, competition, and violence, which are so prevalent in our present culture.

How did we come to this situation? As we think over this matter we can see that science and religion have played an important role in producing the present state of affairs. When modern science started to develop, it began to question the beliefs of dogmatic religion. The latter, unable to answer to the challenges that the new scientific discoveries were posing, denounced knowledge as evil and tried to silence the scientists, as in the famous case of Galileo Galilei in 1633. This produced a sharp severance between the two disciplines.

In part as a reaction to religion, the growing science systematically chose the most secular possible interpretation of the facts it discovered, and turned towards a materialistic view. It was not long until scientists denounced religion as a mere superstition, stating there was no other reality than what can be perceived through our senses. With a religion unable to respond to the awakening intellect, the situation resulted in a fading of transcendental aspirations from the hearts of many people, even of those who did not have more than a superficial knowledge of science. Thus, narrow religion and materialistic science generated a fertile ground for the present sense of void that many try to fill by means of possessions, sensual stimuli, and distractions.

Today, we face an additional danger because modern science, which is basically unwilling to limit itself by ethical considerations, is capable of dangerous manipulations of life, or even of utter destruction by means of nuclear or biological weapons.

A change is greatly needed. We need to move towards a more religious science and a more scientific religion, and the occult science can prove to be the 'missing link'.

Science and Mahatmas

In the first part of this article we showed instances of the occult knowledge possessed by those called 'Mahatmas' or 'Adepts' in the Theosophical literature. These individuals, by means of a systematic yogic training, have developed reliable extra-sensory faculties that can be used to research into the hidden dimensions of nature. The Adepts, known as 'Rishis' in Hinduism and 'Bodhisattvas' in Mahayana Buddhism, have developed not only psychic and spiritual powers, which are latent in every human being, but also wisdom and compassion. Having freed themselves from suffering, they are devoted to help humanity to do the same.

They help in many ways. Sometimes they become spiritual teachers, or they may become influential leaders in different fields of human endeavour. On other occasions they inspire the

formation of philosophical or spiritual organizations. The founding of the Theosophical Society (TS) at the end of the 19th century was part of their efforts.

During the early years of the TS two of these Mahatmas maintained correspondence with two Englishmen, A. P. Sinnett and A. O. Hume, who were scientifically minded. In these letters it became clear that the Adepts had much scientific knowledge, and Sinnett and Hume could not understand why they did not share this knowledge openly with the world.

a) A question of responsibility

One of the limitations the Adepts find in sharing their knowledge lies in the fact that their help could result in more harm than good. Scientific knowledge can be dangerous; it gives the power to manipulate the forces of nature. But power can be handled safely only when there is responsibility, maturity and a firm moral basis. Unfortunately, this is not the case in our current society, and a number of discoveries in different fields have become more a curse than a blessing to humanity. Mahatma K.H. wrote to Mr Sinnett about this as early as 1880:

The public safety is only ensured by our keeping secret the terrible weapons which might otherwise be used against it, and which, as you have been told, became deadly in the hands of the wicked and selfish.¹

As we have shown previously, Mme. Blavatsky and the Mahatmas knew, for example, that the atom was divisible and contained energy. This information would have seemed a harmless piece of scientific knowledge for most people at the time. However, when science became aware of this fact, the knowledge was used to build a nuclear bomb, which was soon to be used upon fellow human beings.

The scientific community is unwilling to refrain itself from researching into things just because they can be misused. In the name of the advance of knowledge, scientists seek to continue its course unrestrained, claiming that science is neutral. This may be true in regards to science itself, but the powers that fund most researches in the world are not. They are interested in learning how to manipulate nature (whether it is subatomic particles, forms of energy, bacteria, stem cells, environment, etc.) for self-serving purposes. The welfare of humanity is, at best, only a secondary consideration. Thus scientists, not questioning the motivation behind those who fund the researches, often work for people or companies that will use the knowledge acquired for domination—whether political, military, financial, or of other types.

The Adepts are free from any ulterior motive. They are only interested in helping humanity and are not willing to foster the development of a science that is being used for harmful purposes. For them to contribute openly to the development of modern science a further maturation of humanity is necessary, along with the development of a social and governmental awareness that prevents scientific discoveries from being applied to immoral or dangerous uses.

b) The cause of human suffering

A second reason that limits the possibility of help on the part of the Adepts is that science does not address the real problems of humanity. As Mahatma K.H. wrote in one of his letters to A. O. Hume:

The moral and spiritual sufferings of the world are more important and need help and cure more than science needs aid from us in any field of discovery.²

The Mahatmas are interested in producing a happier society, free from psychological compulsions and based on a perception of unity and a feeling of compassion. The real cause of suffering lies in the hearts and minds of people who are victims of fear, ignorance, greed, frustration and hatred. If the Adepts are not willing to make more efforts to help the development of science it is because it does not address the primary causes of human suffering. Again, in the words of Mahatma K.H.:

Now for us poor and unknown philanthropists, no fact of either of these sciences is interesting except in the degree of its potentiality of *moral* results, and in the ratio of its usefulness to mankind. And what, in its proud isolation, can be more utterly indifferent . . . than this materialistic and realistic science of fact?

May I not ask then without being taxed with a vain "display of science" what have the laws of Faraday, Tyndall, or others to do with philanthropy in their abstract relations with humanity viewed as an integral whole? What care they for MAN as an isolated atom of this great and harmonious Whole, even though they may sometimes be of practical use to him?³

We think that the development of technology benefits humanity. Of course it does to a certain extent, on a practical level. It is evident that the lives of a portion of humanity are more comfortable than in the past, and that our ability to do things has expanded. But can we affirm that, as a result of this, we are happier, freer from worries and stress than our ancestors? Even when considering this on a global scale we can see that, in spite of all the technological advancement that occurred during the last 150 years, humanity still has the same problems of violence, exclusion, intolerance, corruption, etc.

One may argue that these are not 'scientific problems'; that they are socio-political issues beyond the field and aim of science. This is true. But the Adepts claim that the inability of science to address these problems is not intrinsic to it. It is the result of its unwillingness to do it, and of the limitations this discipline puts on itself. As we are going to discuss later, they maintain that if science becomes more 'spiritual' or metaphysical, it will find the means to address and help solving these problems.

c) The problem of scepticism

The Adepts state that, despite the limitations previously considered, they have always tried to help science in directions that could be beneficial to humanity. However, their attempts have clashed against the scepticism found on part of the scientific community. As Mahatma KH told Mr Sinnett:

I am unable to give you purely scientific information since we can never agree entirely with Western conclusions; and that ours will be rejected as “unscientific”.⁴

The situation was not new, but had been the case since the early scientific development. Because of this, all that the Mahatmas have been able to do is to point out certain directions and let science get there at its own pace and with its own methods:

For it is we who were the divers and the pioneers, and the men of science have but to reap where we have sown. It is our mission to plunge and bring the pearls of Truth to the surface; theirs — to clean and set them into scientific jewels. And, if they refuse to touch the ill-shapen oyster-shell, insisting that there is [not], nor *cannot* be any precious pearl inside it, then shall we once more wash our hands of any responsibility before human-kind.⁵

Many of the scientific discoveries (such as the atoms, the sphericity of Earth, the heliocentric system, etc.) were known and taught by ancient philosophers and the esoteric traditions. This information served as a guide to a number of early European scientists who, being aware of this ‘philosophical’ knowledge, devised ways to prove it scientifically. But the source of their inspiration was seldom acknowledged. As the Mahatma wrote:

. . . Nothing that I may give you in answer will ever be accepted from us. Whenever discovered that “it is verily so,” the discovery will be attributed to him who corroborated the evidence — as in the case of Copernicus and Galileo, the latter having availed himself but of the Pythagorean MSS.⁶

The case of the discovery of isotopes a century ago is paradigmatic of this situation. Even though Professor Aston was fully aware of Annie Besant’s and C. W. Leadbeater’s research, their contribution received no recognition by the scientific community, except for a few isolated scientists.

Helping the few open-minded individuals found in every century seems to be all the Adepts can hope to achieve. In the letters received by A. P. Sinnett we can see they were aware of those scientists willing to apply their knowledge to foster man’s spiritual welfare:

There are —even among English men of Science— those who are already prepared to find our teachings in harmony with the results and progress of their own researches, and who are not indifferent to their application to the spiritual needs of humanity at large.⁷

In this correspondence we find evidence that the Adepts were helping in one way or another chemist William Crookes, discoverer of ‘plasma’, the fourth state of matter, and the inventor Thomas Edison. Both of them were members of the Theosophical Society. Even Alfred Russel Wallace, co-discoverer of the law of evolution, was in correspondence with Blavatsky for a while, though he did not become attracted to Theosophy. These scientists had something in

common: they all were interested in researching scientifically the spiritualistic phenomena prominent at the time.

H. P. Blavatsky and the Mahatmas hoped these scientists would lead an impulse towards the investigation of non-physical dimensions and laws unknown to modern science. However, since the phenomena produced in the séances were associated to 'spirits', and a number of mediums had found to be frauds, all spiritualistic phenomena were doubted.

Then, Mme Blavatsky (with the help of the Adepts) decided to perform some phenomena outside the spiritualistic circle, in open spaces, under the daylight, and with a variety of educated witnesses. Mr Sinnett published many of these phenomena in his book *The Occult World*, of which the Mahatma K. H. wrote:

. . . thoughtful men will read and ponder over the book, as they have never pondered over the most scientific efforts of Wallace and Crookes to reconcile modern science with Spirits, and — the little seed will grow and thrive.⁸

Unfortunately, the scientific community was not receptive to this. Both Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society were attacked for the production of such phenomena, and efforts in this direction were finally dropped. Blavatsky wrote about this some years later:

They failed to produce the desired effect. . . It was supposed that intelligent people, especially men of science, would, at least, have recognized the existence of a new and deeply interesting field of enquiry and research when they witnessed physical effects produced at will, for which they were not able to account. . . . These expectations were not realized. The phenomena were misunderstood and misrepresented, both as regards their nature and their purpose.⁹

Now, we can ask, has the attitude of current scientists changed in this regard? Are they more open to do research on unorthodox lines? This is a difficult question to answer, because we may be at the beginning of a transition. The fact that some scientists have begun to explore this field may be taken as a positive sign. However, if we are to make generalizations, the scientific community is still closed to researches that include "esoteric" elements. The scientists who ventured to explore these forbidden lands lost their credibility in the scientific community and were ostracized from it. A remarkable example of this is Rupert Sheldrake, a Cambridge-trained biochemist who at a time was a Research Fellow of the Royal Society. Because of his work on the morphogenetic fields and related topics, the prestigious scientific journal *Nature* branded him in an Editorial as a "heretic" and suggested his work should be burnt. This occurred in 1981. Other scientists like Dr Stephen Phillips, who took seriously the researches published in the book *Occult Chemistry*, also suffered a similar fate. Even the theories postulated by Dr David Bohm, considered to be one of the most significant theoretical physicists of the 20th century, do not receive much attention because his work is too holistic and close to the mystical view.

Steps towards integration

Let us explore now the conditions necessary for a hypothetical special effort on the part of the Mahatmas to help more actively in the scientific field.

It is doubtful that much energy will be spent by them in stimulating researches that would remain unattended, maybe to be unearthed by somebody years, decades, or even centuries after modern science slowly came to discover the same results. An obvious first condition, then, is that the scientific community opens up to the possibility of non-physical dimensions and whether they are subject to some kind of scientific research. This step towards the metaphysical seems to be essential for the Adepts to regard their efforts in this field worthwhile:

Exact experimental Science has nothing to do with morality, virtue, philanthropy, therefore can make no claim upon our help, until it blends itself with the metaphysics.¹⁰

In the first part of this article we have shown some instances of how the occult research can contribute to discoveries in the fields of astronomy, physics, chemistry, etc. However, aiding modern science at this level of research does not seem to be the ultimate aim of the Adepts. From the point of view of the moral and spiritual needs of humanity, it does not make much difference whether you are studying the subatomic particles through clairvoyant means or by means of a particle accelerator.

So far, questions related to the nature of desire, virtuous action, consciousness, after-death states, etc., have been addressed by religion and philosophy. And though in the past religious belief had a strong influence on people, this is not the case anymore for a large portion of humanity. Today's awakened intellect needs 'proof' to accept anything. If science were able to throw light on these important human concerns, this would have a very important impact on humanity's moral and spiritual life.

It is clear that a materialistic science cannot address these topics, except peripherally. But a more 'occult' science could. The Theosophical efforts to show the validity of the extrasensory perception to study the physical reality were made in the hope that, once scientists recognize the validity of these means and gradually incorporate them, it would not be long until they discover that the new means of research can bring the non-physical dimensions of the universe within the scientific reach.

Now, once a portion of the scientific community is willing to examine the metaphysical field, they will begin to explore whether they can use people with extrasensory abilities as part of their research. And here there is something important to keep in mind. It is well accepted that the performance of experiments by modern science is affected by environmental factors, so that scientists try to minimize them in their laboratory conditions. The research by extrasensory means also requires some "environmental" conditions. However, they are of a different kind: since the means used in the occult science are psychological rather than physical, the environmental conditions required are also at that level. Mahatma KH wrote to A. O. Hume:

But will you permit me to sketch for you still more clearly the difference between the modes of physical, called exact—often out of mere politeness—and metaphysical

sciences? The latter, as you know, being incapable of verification before mixed audiences, is classed by Mr. Tyndall with the fictions of poetry.¹¹

One of the foundational findings of the occult science is that thoughts are a type of energy, and that they have a very clear effect on the non-physical dimensions. Therefore if there is animosity and scepticism in the midst of an extrasensory observation, the results will be distorted or even completely precluded.

And here there is another important factor to keep in mind. Although the use of people born with some extrasensory ability can be useful in the beginning of the new science, a solid development cannot be attained by using untrained psychics. To develop a sound research on non-physical dimensions requires people who were systematically trained to use these faculties, such as was the case of H. P. Blavatsky, C. W. Leadbeater, and others.*

Finding people well trained in occult research is not easy, but once the right conditions are present, it is not unthinkable that the Adepts may send some of their disciples to get involved in this scientific research.

References

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2. C. Jinarajadasa (comp), *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, First Series, No. 43 (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1988), 101-102.
3. *cML*, Appendix I, 471.
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5. *cML* No. 18, 68.
6. *cML* No. 93B, 311.
7. *cML* Letter A, 463.
8. *cML* No. 18, 68.
9. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, "Collected Writings" vol. IX (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1974), 46-47.
10. *cML*, Appendix I, 472.
11. *Idem*, 471.

* The last two considerations are part of the reasons why the isolated experiments with psychics attempted in the past have not been very successful so far. However, even if using trained clairvoyants, the possibility of mistakes in a particular instance cannot be entirely ruled out in this, as in any other science.