

The Heart of the Open Mind

THE OPEN MIND is dedicated to the liberation of the Ego, the Spirit-being of man, from the suffering of ignorance, the warp of prejudice and the lovelessness of fear and separation. Ultimately, and perhaps paradoxically, the open mind is founded on faith and sustained by love. It finds itself continually confirming the reality of spiritual light and the harmony of the Cosmos—the highest reasoning of which the mind of man is capable.

The philosopher declares that “God is truth and Light is His shadow.” Mind itself is an emanation of living Truth. Mental substance composing the densest body of the Beings evolving in the hierarchy of Sagittarius, the Lords of Mind, was radiated into man during the Atlantean Epoch. One of the functions of man’s mind is to give him self-conscious identification with these Beings of spiritual tone-substance, these logoi.

The open mind brooks no restriction to its pursuit of wisdom, but it must be wedded to Truth progressively by logic, intuition, and first-hand experience through initiation. Truth based on authoritative decree or imposed by the duress of power is anathema and ever opposed by the open mind.

Max Heindel is as respecting of each person’s integrity and free will as he is solicitous for their spiritual health and soul unfoldment. The tension created by these two concerns—his insistence on self-determination and his strong impulse to offer fatherly guidance—is at times conspicuous, if not amusing. For example, Heindel counsels the aspi-



Fresco (detail), Masaccio (1401-1428), Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria Del Carmine, Florence

The Fall of Man

The preacher says that knowledge is vanity. The desire to know was planted in naive humanity by Lucifer who appealed to Eve in a beautiful form—imaging her self, the beginning of self-knowledge. If ignorance is sin, (CL p. 20) and applied knowledge is salvation, early humanity’s disobedience to Jehovah was the beginning of a saving enlightenment.

rant to confine himself to Western, not Eastern, Wisdom only after immersing himself in the philosophy of Eastern religion—so that he will treat of Sanskrit etymology and draw from the *Upanishads* in refuting the notion of metempsychosis (*Cosmo*, p. 158). He will discuss the distinction between Hindu soul flights in the *linga shahira*, or astral body, and penetration of the desire world by the Western Ego in his soul body (*Letters to Students*, p. 181). He will seek to reconcile “the seemingly contradictory teaching of two such valuable works” as Blavatsky’s *The Secret Doctrine* and A.P. Sinnett’s *Esoteric Buddhism*. He will warn against Oriental breathing exercises as a result of practicing them himself and

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suffering ill effects therefrom. And, we well might ask, who warned him? Did he have to, did he *need* to, prove truth for himself?

Eve, that is, man's naive soul, was also warned. And to what avail? It seems that learning by doing, probing and proving for one's self, sacrifices immediate gains and incurs much suffering, but achieves added faculties, power, and certitude in the long run. The Fall of man, and man's daily falls, are stepping stones to augmented and ultimately divine self-consciousness. Error is parent to wisdom. Not that we willfully would violate, but we must know, and we must know for ourselves, firsthand.

The more experience we have in the school of

This synopsis represents, along with his membership in the Los Angeles Theosophical Society, a brief valedictory to some former life's/lives' achievement, antedating, as it must, the most momentous event in the spiritual history of Earth evolution—the birth of Christ in Jesus and then in planet Earth, and, stemming from this Presence, the continuous giving to man of wisdom born of His abiding love and power born of His ongoing sacrifice.

Clearly, any creed or sect that seeks to program and censor the minds of its members, or to deny the core truth of other religions is reprehensible to the spiritual aspirant.

All formulated truth is relative, however pro-

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hard knocks, with its curriculum of suffering, the more certain become our powers of discrimination and the more infallible the intuitions and forethought which enable us to know the truth or rightness of a course of action or an appraisal of character and situation at the outset, saving us further involutory dilemma and distress.

Naturally, if one is ripe for Western Wisdom Teachings he or she will already have extracted the essence of Oriental wisdom and amalgamated it as part of the Spirit's permanent Identity. So that an exposure to the Eastern metaphysic is, in most cases, simply a conscious recapitulation of an earlier acquisition, which is followed by contact with more current teachings, such as formulated by Rosicrucian philosophy and, generally, any science of spirit which takes due account of the pivotal importance of the Christ Event and the Christ Impulse.

We do not forget that Max Heindel wrote an excellent overview of Madame Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*, so terse, yet encompassing, because the writer had previously learned and largely absorbed the ancient wisdom set forth in this occult work.

found or cosmic its exposition. It is ever subject to reformation, to deepening and elaboration, as it reflects the advancing insight and spiritual development of the knower.

Lest we become too attached to the *form* of our commitment, too literal or sectarian in our allegiance to the outer trappings of the way we have chosen, or are choosing, Max Heindel cautions us. The following statement from *Rosicrucian Philosophy in Questions and Answers*, Vol. 1, pp. 362-3 may serve as example: "The Rosicrucian Fellowship is not backed by these teachers [Elder Brothers] or inspired by them; they gave certain teachings to the writer on the condition that he should spread them to the best of his ability, and announced their readiness to help others who would qualify for that instruction. Students of these teachings have banded together for the benefit of associated study, but there is no hard and fast organization, nor is it intended to form one, but to let people obtain this teaching anywhere they please. We prefer that they remain with their churches."

The Truth is the important concern, not so much

the identity or location of the material channels that tap or transmit it. When one transfers the reverence properly addressed to holy living Truth to its manifest forms, be they inanimate symbols or persons divinely inspired, or institutions, which, as Emerson observed, are often the lengthened shadows of single individuals, one places oneself at the threshold of idolatry, which is a form of spiritual suicide.

The Elder Brothers do not support organizations *per se*, sanctifying one or several to the exclusion of others. They play no arbitrary favorites. Rather shall their genius manifest where man's obedience and abilities serve their Great Plan. Where merit admits and circumstances warrant, there shall they inform and assist. Where exist the chaste heart, the intense desire and the preparedness to know, there shall their influence be found, there shall they direct occult light.

Nor did Christ Jesus work through the structured priestcraft of His day, but through the wisdom of the informing Life Spirit, which is now, by virtue of Christ's love and sacrifice, available to all seekers the world over from within their own souls.

We bring these observations before our mind's eye not to upset proponents of one or another exoteric school or to contradict any system of metaphysics, but to encourage and support all earnest seeking after the divine wisdom and the Lord of Love. Wisdom, spiritual insight, and power purged of selfishness are our spiritual birthright, not the special holding of a clergy, an occult brotherhood, or any select group. *Merit alone counts*. And merit means that the withholding of spiritual truth and the power it confers is unconscionable—in fact, impossible. For Christ's atonement has opened the door of spiritual attainment to whomsoever will. How can this be? Because the mode of access to this wisdom and power is now a purely *internal* operation, not dependent on any outer affiliation, any secular appointment, any external ceremony. Initiation no longer carries with it organizational prerequisites. Christ is and waits at the heart of each Ego, attending on his readiness.

Self-complacency, stagnation, and crystallized attitudes quickly follow upon the student thinking



While some representations of the rending of the temple veil show the outer curtain (before the Hall of Service) affected, here the entrance to the Holy of Holies is rent, vaguely showing the presence of an angel. The door of spiritual attainment is now open to whomsoever wills. Christ abolished in his flesh the law contained in ordinances.

that the wisdom of life has once and for all been given, is a closed book, literally found between two covers. Please appreciate that nothing that had been formulated and made available on the material plane, nothing external to himself, sufficed Max Heindel's spiritual needs. He required a fuller, more direct revelation. Nor does *our* seeking stop with *his* answers.

While we ourselves may disdain this notion of finalized truth, yet the attitude of recurring to wisdom already given as the sole determinant for our actions and beliefs is all too evident. The preferment of Max Heindel by the Elder Brothers does not automatically devolve on us special favor simply because we subscribe to the ideas he has imparted. And as surely as a new bible shall be written for the New Age now on the horizon, so more elaborate and intensive works on the science of spirit shall be forthcoming. In prefatory remarks to the *Cosmo-Conception*, the author describes his monumental work as an "elementary" treatise. While the flippant may delight in this eventuality out of pure iconoclasm, we at present are a far cry from finding the teachings given by the Brothers through Max Heindel commonplace or dated. They remain substantially ahead of their times.

What we do care to emphasize is the vital quality that makes the person and writings of Max

Heindel as worthy as they are—the honesty, humility and openness with which they give forth of their wisdom, reminding the student that the spirit of free inquiry, the absence of dogma, and the ability to simultaneously hold multiple points of view, in a phrase, the cultivation of the open mind, are essential attributes of the spiritual aspirant.

Perhaps even more important than the teachings themselves, valuable as they are, is the spirit in and with which they are given, which is so deeply respecting of individual free will and awed by the magnitude of heavenly wisdom that expresses in and through man and ever awaits his fuller understanding. No quality runs so counter to the whole tenor of Heindel's contribution than that of intractable viewpoint, intellectual arrogance, cultism, denial of the relevancy of new ideas, and resistance to change.

If we ourselves are to be honest and true to the spirit in which Max Heindel conducted his research and expressed himself, we feel compelled to emulate and carry on this quest of the Logos, the Sophia, the holy, hidden Wisdom, using as key the concern for our fellow man, which urges us to be fully present in each moment and to refine from out of its crude ore the living gold, that which despite all outward fluctuation, has enduring value.

We understand that forms are not the primary element in brotherhood (this group versus that group, this ideology versus that ideology). *Forms* specify, separate and incarcerate. Rather we seek the one *life* that expresses through all forms, be they social, cultural, or religious. We have witnessed the absurd conflict of creeds which purport to be founded on God-consciousness (or at least God-directedness) and brotherly love and yet have deployed armies to champion a preferential reading of a religious text or simply to vindicate with spoils and victory God's chosen. Tolerance, patience, self-renunciation, and rigorous honesty are among the qualities associated with genuine open-mindedness.

Exponents of Western Wisdom Teachings are often the more individually specialized members of society, more into their selves, more mental. They may require an additional philosophic thrust

to readjust to a committed and productive involvement in daily living. This is not necessarily a cause for rejoicing. The Teachings are indeed sublime, but the need for them implies a certain selfishness to be overcome, indicates a certain insularity of experience to be bridged.

Rather than priding ourselves on the excellence of the Teachings which it *is* our privilege to know, we would do well to consider the inner strength and purity of the many souls who require no wonderful cosmic schemes in order to walk the path of holiness and helpfulness; who refuse to allow personal suffering and social upheaval to weaken their faith in God, or to cast a shadow on the light of their love, or to diminish their optimism. These persons, in a sense, already know the Teachings, for the Teachings serve the primary function of promoting a life lived in optimum harmony and helpfulness with Cosmic process. For while an active mind can certify and sustain, it can also doubt and deny; and doubt is the great slayer of action and the enemy of spiritual community. Mind may reason for improvement. It can also rationalize *status quo* and paralyze. But we are here, on this material plane, to *do*, to do wisely, to do well.

Rosicrucian Philosophy encourages one to think for one's self. We do not stifle our fellow man with restrictions and prohibitions but in an atmosphere of impersonal love we support the *individual* faculty for determining the good and the true. As we would reject limits imposed on our own mental activities, so we are disposed to respect the autonomy of others. Yet we strive to be always ready to help when it seems appropriate.

This loving noninvolvement in another's Self-choosing is difficult to develop, for we may often feel the urge to yoke another to *our* personal truth, to persuade him to *our* preferred course of action, or to alert him to what *we* think will bring him harm or benefit. So in effect we would sow, weed, and even harvest his mental and psychic garden for him. Usually, we must simply permit our friends to conduct their life as they deem fit, surrounding them with the light of our genuine concern and freeing them with the force of our positive thoughts.

The whole mind must work out of a larger

context than routine mundane thinking, which typically has its reference and application to the objects of sense perception, to the world of material forms. The mind which is truly open must and will admit disclosures pertaining to invisible worlds, and in this area there is no finer example than the faith, trust, and believingness evinced by the child. “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter therein.”

There is nothing so remarkable about a child as the impressionability of its mind, which renders it so teachable, and the pupil who endeavors to live the higher life should always aim to keep his mind in that fluidic state, for as soon as our ideas have become set and incapable of being changed, our progress ceases.

When anything new is presented to him, an adult’s typical mental response is usually tinged with skepticism. He fears being deceived and of having to change his basic assumptions. The little child has no overwhelming sense of its own superior knowledge, is rather characterized by complete openness, by spontaneous and immediate consent to relationship, by an eagerness to experience the present moment in its fullness, accepting all. As the child is father to the man, so may the inner immortal child in us be teacher of our mortal outer man.

The great teacher, life itself, is always ready to instruct us through daily event and the immediate, radical *now*. Open mind describes consciousness alert, poised, patient, centered, awake to the truth that divinity is ever present and seeks our presence of mind that it may manifest light and love to us through the myriad forms and frequencies of daily occurrence.

Open mind, left to itself, always tends to closure, to entropy, just as physical form, resilient at its inception, gradually tends toward stasis and fixity, unless fresh energies are introduced to retain flexibility. Therefore the mind *kept* open owes its



Oil on canvas James Tissot (1836-1902), Brooklyn Museum

Priests Ask Jesus by Whose Authority He Acts

Expressions of derision, mordant skepticism, and mock honor are evident on the faces of the doctors of learning who “know better” and are wiser in their generation than the children of light, whose wisdom, to them, is folly.

youthful vigor to consciously exerted will.

The esoteric-exoteric polarity hinges on the presence or absence of the enlightened openness of mind: The *exoteric* always describes tradition, orthodoxy, purveyable form. All religions, including Christianity, are exoteric in nature. They consist of teachings and liturgies designed to lead the seeker, the pilgrim, into houses of communal worship and then later into the church or temple of his own inner being. They direct him toward the altar of his interior Self. At that point, however, they leave him and it is from this point that the aspirant seeks to commune with the living God, to partake of the one Life and Truth whose Reality is everywhere and at all times One. The open mind travels the highways of exoteric teaching, refusing to stop and set up shop in conjunction with one or another organization, or to adopt a particular ritual stance *as an end point of seeking*.

The aspirant eventually discovers that all religious methods, disciplines, and systems are directed toward a common goal, the same spiritual capitol of the manifold wilderness he himself must travel through—through the wild weather of the passions, the profound darkness of metaphysical doubt, and the false brilliance of intellectual ego-

ism—the seemingly endless convolutions of the river of personal consciousness.

Exoteric defines that which is outwardly transmissible. *Esoteric* points to that inviolable yet common Source within each of us, that Shekinah within the Holy of Holies, where the One Life of us all, the Light of the world, the Light that lighteth every man, supra-intelligent, prior to all form, ever exists.

By emphasizing self-reliance and the priority of one's Inner Being in determining truth, the Rosicrucian Philosophy extends as far toward the true and vital esoteric as any formulable system of spiritual development can, and the appeal is directed especially to the mind. We do well to remember the admonition to maintain the mind in a condition of poised and elevated calm readiness, even as we daily dedicate our outward person to serving the world and bringing it before the altar of the most Holy High.

Each day we renew our efforts to build and be the mind of Christ, the whole mind, the esoteric mind, the mind of humanity as it exists as vibrant archetype. We shuck off the husks of partial or parochial teachings and converge toward germinal truths, preverbal realities, even as shells must be shed to expose the vital seed, the life-center.

With Dane Rudhyar we realize that there can be only one esoteric doctrine, just as there can be but one Christ, though many shall come in His name. Quoting Rudhyar, "Any tradition, be it occult, religious, or socio-cultural, can only be exoteric....The only esoteric tradition is one that cannot be taught and which does not imply a particular technique or approach. This is not philosophical reductionism—simply a statement on the limitations of verbal forms and techniques for experience of God or Truth."

What we might call the proto-esoteric intimates that which is *lived*, points to that which makes its appearance in the garment of the ephemeral now but lifts man into the eternal Now. Generically, mind is born out of an identity with the One Truth,

the All-Being of God, from which it slowly awakens, as from an ecstatic dream, into material consciousness. We may broaden the meaning of two terms used in logic to outline man's spiritual career. *Deduction* describes a proceeding down and out from the One into the fallenness of diversity, a dispersion of one Life into many forms. Man's course now describes an *inductive* process to attain unto a former condition of spirituality, but a condition ennobled through Self-consciousness. He works from the pluralism of the concrete given toward reunion with his Origin in the One Life existing before and after all forms.

The blessing of the open mind lies in its ability to apply the stethoscope of spiritualized awareness to the heartbeat of the profound present, more central to now than the most sublimely articulated thought or the subtlest emotion. The more high thought mind conceives and receives, the clearer and brighter becomes the light of its knowing, the emptier of personal self becomes the chalice of consciousness, and the more qualified man is to experience the living Presence in Holy Communion.

In the process of returning to the Kingdom of Spirit, the virtue of and kernel truth existing in all world religions is ratified, for they are seen alike as outrayings from the same divine Source. The open mind may become an Alexandria of information on world religions and occult knowledge. But this wide-ranging exposure, the gathering and synthetic activity of mind, constitutes a relatively early phase in its overall mission. Eventually it conforms and confirms its focus to the conditions of its immediate field of awareness and with ever increasing love, patience and willed wakefulness, it lives into present consciousness with the presumptive faith that herein does divinity make its abode and herethrough does the glory of the living truth flood into the open heart and mind of the one ready to receive it. □

—C.W.

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