



teozofija v sloveniji



Patrick Gillman Bowen

WHAT I OWE TO A BOOK

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Prispevki k raziskovanju zgodovine Teozofskega gibanja - v izvirniku

I HAVE COMPLETED THREE MONTHS study of a book, and it is borne in upon me that I owe a duty to the many whose position is more or less similar to that which was mine to indicate what my study has done for me. The book of which I speak is *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy* by G. de Purucker.

I began my study of Dr. de Purucker's work with, I regret to say, by no means an open mind. Since my first contact with organized Theosophy, which occurred half-a-dozen years ago, I have observed with pain how the message which H. P. Blavatsky left to the world has been garbled and corrupted by persons who profess to be its interpreters, and who ought to be its preservers and guardians. Like hundreds — perhaps thousands — of others who observed what I observed, and who thought more or less as I thought, I grew into feeling that those who represent Theosophical organizations must, almost inevitably, become corrupters of the pure teachings, or fabricators of artificial parodies, either because of lack of knowledge, or because some form of self-interest urged them thereto. Notwithstanding this feeling, something deeper — inner hope fighting against outer pessimism — sent me continually searching, not merely throughout the British Isles but also in America, for a school of Theosophy which existed but to preserve the message of the Masters which H. P. Blavatsky brought to the West, and for a teacher whose teaching would manifest the spirit which lives in the Blavatsky teachings, and would not be a mere "Thought Form," the creation of an unregenerate human mind. Strange to say, though I encountered in my search a score or more of societies each claiming some variant of the title Theosophical, it was not until less than a year ago that I heard of Dr. de Purucker. I confess that what I learned about him did nothing towards killing my prejudices. I looked upon certain statements which he had made as evidences of unwisdom, and was much inclined to regard him as being of one class with other, better known, "revealers." Then, three months ago, as already said, a copy of *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy* came into my hands.

To show the impression which this book has produced upon me, and the change in my attitude towards its author which it has effected, I will pass in review a few of the more outstanding features of the teachings it contains. The items I select for comment are those which I anticipate will provoke adverse criticism — and have, to my knowledge, already provoked it from students who otherwise might be expected to be in sympathy with the author and his aims and objects.

The FORM in which the teachings are presented will provoke (and already has provoked) adverse criticism. The book (it will be said) is chaotic, formless, filled with unnecessary repetitions and irritating asides, all of which may be quite in place or readily excusable in a lecture, but not in a book.

The lack of form, etc., which the critic finds is to my seeing purely a surface appearance. True, the book is devoid of anything resembling *literary* form, but this is not to say that it does not possess a form which has been carefully planned. The rules of literary construction must be observed when presenting ordinary exoteric teaching in book form, because the aim in such teaching is to leave the reader with a clear-cut conception such as will satisfy his mind — for the time being at least. But in giving esoteric teachings, no such rules apply, for the aim is not to give the student a cut-and-dried conception, but in fact to prevent him from forming anything of the kind. The esoteric teacher seeks to keep the minds of those he instructs in what may be termed a *fluid* state and, while inducing them to flow on through constantly expanding conceptions, to prevent them from crystallizing in any one. The form in which Dr. de Purucker presents his teachings has exactly the effect I describe. His methods seem to me to be practically identical with those of the Jnana Yoga gurus, and of other non-European teachers, of whom I have had some experience.

The teaching concerning the Absolute will be severely criticized. A friend, devoted to the Blavatsky teachings, writes:

H. P. B. teaches of an Absolute Principle from which all proceeds, and into which all is absorbed at the end of the Maha-Manvantara ... Dr. de Purucker seems to talk about every cycle of manifestation whether of an atom, or a universe as having its own Absolute, out of which it emerges, and into which it returns ... This is a meaningless absurdity.

I appreciate my friend's difficulty, but it is really only a difficulty to the finite human mind which faints before the thought of an "endless endlessness." Dr. de Purucker, as I understand him, is wholly right, and he has done a great service to those who are anxious to become genuine esoteric students by putting the matter as he has done.

Let us consider this matter of the Absolute a little. The average student, if he directs his mind towards the subject at all, thinks of the Absolute as some *thing* filling all Space, and pervading everything. But get to the bottom of this thought and it will be found that the "Space" he conceives is *dimensional* space, and not at all that which is meant by the word in *The Secret Doctrine*. He visualizes the universe, vaguely perhaps, as the manifestation of this "Absolute" of his. But all lesser entities he will think of but as manifestations of some "sparks" — that is, *portions* of "the Absolute." The student who has allowed an idea of this kind to possess him will naturally kick violently at Dr. de Purucker's teaching which, if considered at all, will do what the author constantly advises us to do, "break up the molds of the mind."

The Absolute cannot of course be anything greater or lesser than absoluteness. The apotheosis of consciousness arrived at through a complete life-cycle of self-experiences represents a return to and absorption in absoluteness. But the apotheosis of consciousness achieved by the atomic entity cannot be conceived to be the same as that which the human or the universal entity achieves. Yet each is absolute. To my seeing, Dr. de Purucker's teaching leads the true esoteric student onward into clearer and wider conceptions, and that seems to be its purpose, not to provide "Guidebook" information.

The question of Nirvana arises naturally from that which has been discussed. Nirvana is the apotheosis of consciousness the man reaches (speaking now of the human entity) through his complete life-cycle of self-experience. It is absorption into absoluteness, or attainment of absolute self-consciousness. Is it the end of all our endeavors, the ultimate goal, eternal rest and bliss? The average student turns with loathing from any suggestion that it is not. Even the yogi who claims to have experienced samadhi scorns the idea that it is not. But Dr. de Purucker teaches, quite calmly and clearly, that it is not the end. Who is right? Is Dr. de Purucker, as the critic declares, a corrupter and exaggerator of *The Secret Doctrine*, letting his imagination run riot, and hurling words about in insane profusion?

Let's see whether *The Secret Doctrine* – the work which has been corrupted and exaggerated! — can help us in the matter. We do not have to go far to find something apposite. On page 2, volume I, we find these words, in reference to the Absolute:

It is the ONE LIFE, eternal, invisible, yet Omnipresent, without beginning or end, yet periodical in its regular manifestations, ... unconscious, yet absolute Consciousness; ... Its *one absolute* attribute, which is ITSELF, eternal, ceaseless Motion, is called ... the "Great Breath," which is the perpetual motion of the Universe, ...

Now what does this "eternal, ceaseless motion" mean? It cannot mean purposeless motion round and round a barren circle, therefore it must mean "eternal, ceaseless PROGRESS." If there is this eternal progress, how can man escape from sharing it? If he *rests* forever in the absolute consciousness of Nirvana he ceases to be a sharer in that "ceaseless, eternal PROGRESS *which is absoluteness itself*."

It is, again, the finite mind which can conceive a goal only as the end of effort. Yet the teaching of all true teachers, whether they deal with the philosophy or with its practical application, is different. "Desire the PATH, not the end of the Path." The goal is PROGRESS, not the state of having progressed!

The teachings of Dr. de Purucker concerning the Hierarchies, and his (apparent) multiplication of "The ONE, the summit or SELF of the Hierarchy" will also incur criticism as exaggerations or corruptions, and yet of course he is right if only the reader has the vision to follow the LEADING which the teaching gives.

A critic says lightly that there is nothing new in the "seven keys" to understanding of the esoteric philosophy which the author sets forth. Admittedly there is nothing unfamiliar in the enumeration of the doctrines, but does the critic really understand the full import of this teaching? The seven keys are (1) Reincarnation; (2) Karma; (3) Hierarchies; (4) Swabhava; (5) Evolution; (6) Individual Self-knowledge; and (7) Atma-Vidya, or knowledge of the Selfless Self.

Now how do these doctrines constitute "keys" to the esoteric philosophy? This is how I see the matter. Each one of those doctrines has to be studied separately and severally, and fully comprehended. That done the knowledge or wisdom gained from the study must be combined and held in the background of the mind as the basis of all further studies. Understanding of the working of reincarnation, karma, etc., will not constitute knowledge of the esoteric philosophy. It will mean only that one holds so many "keys" in one's hand. Not until one begins to apply the keys to the opening of the secret doors does one begin to penetrate into the hidden Arcanum.

The same critic finds another contradiction of *The Secret Doctrine* in the author's remarks concerning Pralaya (p. 181). He contends that HPB taught that Pralaya was a complete cessation of activity. But Dr. de Purucker implies that it is merely another form of activity. Now let us see what HPB really did teach: on p. 55, vol. I, *The Secret Doctrine*, (b), we read: "This Breath, as seen, can never cease, not even during the Pralayaic eternities." There is a reference to the chapter on "Chaos, Theos, Kosmos." Study of this is recommended to the critic.

One could go on to the extent of a decent sized volume indicating points which are sure to cause numerous worthy readers of *The Secret Doctrine* to rise in wrath and denounce them as "exaggerations or corruptions." It is a fact, which I discovered during my five years wandering in the Wilderness, that a very large number of most worthy people, genuinely wedded to the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky, are not really students of *The Secret Doctrine* at all. At best they are students of certain portions of this great work, and merely readers of the rest. The result of all such partial study is to congeal the mind into rigid conceptions. Partial study will never lead to understanding of *The Secret Doctrine*. Those who criticize in the way I have illustrated, and they will be many, do not, as I hope I have shown, understand *The Secret Doctrine*. One must have some comprehensive view of *The Secret Doctrine* before one can venture to criticize a work like *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy*.

The simple fact to be noted about Dr. de Purucker's book is that it is a presentation of esoteric instructions and is specifically addressed to esoteric students. Its object is assuredly not to give additional information of the "Guidebook" kind, but to help to roll up another inch or so the veil which hangs before the plan of existence. HPB tells us that all that *The Secret Doctrine* does is to lift a corner of the veil. If we study her work comprehensively we will find that it does just that. We glimpse a corner of a wonderful landscape. We see roads and tracks leading on beyond the edge of the upturned corner of the veil. "We see a picture of incompletenesses" as a friend not inaptly put it. Now the test to apply to Dr. de Purucker's work is, does that which he reveals to us, or rather that which he helps us to uncover for ourselves, fit on to and extend the "incompletenesses" already uncovered by the SD?

This is a question which each student must answer for himself. For myself I can answer very definitely in the affirmative. In very many directions it has extended my vision, and these extensions fit accurately on to the view which I already possessed. In saying this I do not for a moment imply that I have grasped more than a fraction of all that the book contains. There is much, very much, which eludes me in the book, but more which, though it brings no clear vision, yet sets shadowy pictures moving in the upper reaches of my mind. But I note that many things are deliberately veiled from those who are not members of Dr. de Purucker's School, and I am grateful for what I have got, all the more so as it was wholly unexpected.