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## Article

# Mesmeric Yoga and the Development of Meditation within the Theosophical Society

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In the first part of this paper I would like to point out how and why mesmerism and yogic meditation methods were connected with each other in the early days of Theosophy, namely in *Isis Unveiled*. The following portion will refer to the Theosophical Society in India before the Coulomb affair. My most important source for that period is the Theosophical Society's Journal, *The Theosophist*, published in Bombay. I will conclude with a prospect of how the described developments influenced later Theosophical meditation practices.

Based on their experiences with magnetic therapy the Mesmerists created a theory of clairvoyance, visions and ecstatic religious experiences and a method to produce these states within an experimental setting. The Mesmerists also began collecting information about meditation, trance and ecstasy in the history of religions and e.g. became interested in Siberian shamans and Indian *yoga*. Thus they developed the first non-theological comparative approach to religious practices that induce altered states of mind. As the mesmeric cure was

connected with intense bodily experiences at the time, the mesmerists also began to reflect upon how paranormal perceptions of the body, physiological changes, and states of trance and ecstasy are interconnected. This enabled them to appreciate the mystic physiology of certain *yoga* doctrines which they knew from translations of the *Upaniṣads* (*Oupnek'hat* and others).

When Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky arrived at the shores of India in 1879, they brought with them the conviction that Mesmerism was the key to the hidden world of occult experiences and powers. In *Isis Unveiled* (1877) Blavatsky left no doubt that she was a confident follower of mesmerism. "Mesmerism," she says, "is the most important branch of magic; and its phenomena are the effects of the universal agent which underlies all magic and has produced at all ages the so-called miracles."<sup>1</sup> And in 1878 she wrote the following in an article, titled "The Real Madame Blavatsky": "The possibilities of animal magnetism are infinite, and I believe in Magnetism."<sup>2</sup>

Being involved in the 19th century network of occult fraternities, fringe and Oriental masonry, coming into contact with mesmerism and mesmeric magic was almost unavoidable for Blavatsky. In the 1850s, when she met French mesmerists in Paris, the young Colonel Olcott was a member of a spiritualist circle in Amherst, Ohio. Some men in this circle were empowered to heal by the laying on of hands. Olcott was fascinated by this and studied mesmerism to find out more about the causes of such healings. Soon, he discovered that he himself possessed the gift of mesmeric healing.<sup>3</sup> Thus, both leaders of the Theosophical Society had been involved with Mesmerism long before their arrival in India.

*Isis Unveiled* is not only a document of Blavatsky's commitment to Mesmerism; it already begins to relate yogic meditation techniques to mesmeric concepts. We read:

The modern fakirs, as well as the ancient gymnosophists, unite themselves with their Âtman and the Deity by remaining motionless in contemplation and concentrating their whole thought on their navel. As in modern somnambulant phenomena, the navel was regarded as "the circle of the sun," the seat of internal divine light. Is the fact that a number of modern somnambulists being enabled to read letters, hear, smell, and see, through that part of their body to be regarded again as a simple "coincidence," or shall we admit at last that the

old sages knew something more of physiological and psychological mysteries than our modern Academicians?<sup>4</sup>

This kind of comparison was not new. The German mesmerists of the romantic era regularly drew parallels between Indian methods of meditation, Christian hesychasm and the mesmeric technique of centering the magnetic fluid in the pit of the stomach. The Theosophists knew about these cross-cultural studies mainly through different histories of magic—a genre that flourished in the middle of the 19th century: Ennemoser's *Geschichte der Magie*, published in English as *The History of Magic* (London 1854), or Colquhoun's *An History of Magic, Witchcraft, and Animal Magnetism* (2 vol., London 1851).

Even in Eliphas Levi's *History of Magic* (1860) with its negative attitude towards Indian magic, a passage from the *Oupnek 'hat* is quoted at length, describing a method of drawing off one's senses from the outer world to meditate on the syllable OM as a name of God.<sup>5</sup> For Levi, this form of meditation is a combination of lucid somnambulism and auto-hypnosis aiming at the production of ecstasy through exertion of willpower and the exhaustion of the nervous system.<sup>6</sup>

In *Isis Unveiled*, yogic meditation is understood as a practice that stimulates the senses of the astral body to work independently from the gross material body.

When this relation is such as to allow the most ethereal portions of the soul-essence to act independently of its grosser particles and of the brain, it can unerringly comprehend what it sees [...] This state is known in India as the Samādhi; it is the highest condition of spirituality possible to man on earth.<sup>7</sup>

For Blavatsky the seership of what she calls the “modern mesmerized subject” and the *samādhi* of the *yogin* are of the same nature and have the same cause, differing only in the degree of clairvoyance that is reached. According to *Isis Unveiled*, the arousal of ardent desire and willpower in any kind of concentrated prayer and contemplation causes magnetic emanations that produce self-magnetization and finally lead to ecstasy.<sup>8</sup>

It was the declared purpose of Blavatsky’s and Olcott’s passage to India to study “the ancient language of the Vedas and the manuscripts and wonders of Yogism.”<sup>9</sup> They expected that the “ancient science” of *yoga* would foster their understanding of occult powers and especially of the phenomena which appeared in spiritualist séances.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand they promoted Mesmerism as modern counterpart to *yoga*. Once they had arrived in India, Blavatsky and Olcott assiduously spread the good news of Mesmerism as a Western science that was able to prove the truth of the ancient *yoga* teachings and the mysteries of Hindu philosophy. In the first issue of *The Theosophist*, published in October 1879, Blavatsky writes:

Mesmerism is the very key to the mystery of man’s interior nature; and enables one familiar with its laws to understand not only the phenomena of Western spiritualism, but also that vast subject [...] of Eastern Magic. The whole object of the Hindu Yogi is to bring into activity his interior power to make himself ruler over the physical self and over everything else besides. That the developed Yogi can influence, sometimes control, the operations of vegetable and animal life, proves that the soul within the body has an intimate relationship with the soul of all other things. Mesmerism goes far toward teaching us how to read this occult secret [...].<sup>11</sup>

In a lecture on occult sciences held by Olcott in Sri Lanka and published in August 1880, Olcott recommends the study of mesmerism for anyone who wants to understand what *yogins* means when they talk about union with Brahman:

Let him study mesmerism and master its method until he can plunge his subject into so deep a sleep that the body is made to seem dead, and the free soul can be sent, wheresoever he wills, about the Earth or among the Stars. Then he will see the separate reality of the body and its dweller.<sup>12</sup>

The astral journey hinted at in these lines was the most important aim of spiritual practice in the early days of Theosophy, as John Patrick Deveney has shown.<sup>13</sup> The Theosophists inter-

preted the higher stages of yogic meditation as a deliberately performed astral projection which allows journeys of the astral body to different cosmic spheres, including Spirit worlds and the ultimate source of all being.<sup>14</sup>

Olcott gave introductions into Mesmerism for new Indian members of the Society. “In attempting to teach our young Indian members the meaning of Indian philosophers,” he says, “we have begun by showing theoretically and experimentally what Magnetism is.”<sup>15</sup> This should have been a preparation for the teachings of Swami Dayananda, whom Olcott and Blavatsky thought to be a true adept of *yoga* and who was supposed to function as teacher of genuine yogic methods. But this hope has not been fulfilled and the lack of training in practical occultism caused a lot of frustrations among the members of the Society.<sup>16</sup>

In this situation something interesting happened. Indian Theosophists started to write articles on yogic meditation in *The Theosophist* and encouraged practical experiments. The first two contributions both called “Hints to the Students of Yog(a) Vidya” were probably written by the same man from Lahore called Lalla Ruttan Chand and Ruttun Chund Bary.<sup>17</sup> The first article emphasizes the sanctification of the mind through concentration on one single object. The repetition of the syllable OM is recommended to cultivate this concentration. The purpose of the exercise should be the realization of OM, which means the “infinite One,” in the soul. Occult powers are a byproduct. The

author concedes that for a beginner this exercise appears to be dry and unattractive, “but few months practice [...]” he continues, “is sure to secure for its devotee a comfort and bliss which he could not have obtained in years, from any other source.”

His second article describes the limbs of Patañjali’s famous eightfold path. The author assumes that the state of *samādhi* is difficult to enter “but Dhyāna, I am sure, is a stage that can at any rate be reached by a beginner.” He warns not to practice *prāṇāyāma* without guidance of an experienced Yogi, as it could endanger health and life. Again he recommends the recitation of OM, now along with other “ineffable names of the Deity” like “Soham,” “Hans-Hans,” “Tut-Sut.” An alternative method would be to search directly for the Eternal Light that manifests itself in the inner chamber of the heart. In *dhyāna* the student of *yoga* starts to hear the secret music or sound called “Anāhad Shabd.”<sup>18</sup>

In February 1882, an article of the Indian surgeon N. C. Paul treats at length the meaning of OM (and *om maṇi padme hūṃ*) and how it should be meditated upon.<sup>19</sup> One should sit in Padmāsana and silently recite it whereby one slows down and finally stops breathing. He also describes the combination of deep breathing and the recitation of “*soham*” and “*hangsha*.”<sup>20</sup> Paul uses medical arguments to support the connection between a calm breath and a calm mind.

In December 1882 Kaler Mohun Dass, a lawyer from Calcutta, explains the yogic sitting

postures that were recommended for meditation in a mesmeristic way: The purpose of *padmāsana* and *siddhāsana* seems to be “to retain and converge the forces of electricity and magnetism existing in the human body with a view to concentrate the mind. The legs and the hands are in almost all these Asans required to be placed in positions most favourable to the retention of those forces. [...]. They are of considerable use to beginners, as the body is thereby rendered impervious to external atmospheric influences of cold and heat, chiefly by reason of the magnetism generated and retained in the system, and the regulation of the acts of inhalation and exhalation which they necessitate.”<sup>21</sup>

Parallel to the recommendation of yogic meditation based on the repetition of *mantras*, another important development took place: the Theosophists discovered *kuṇḍalinī yoga*, and once again this was mainly thanks to Indian Theosophists.

It all began with an anonymous letter from a European Member—calling himself Truth Seeker—published in January 1880 in *The Theosophist*. The writer referred to a fascinating book: *The Dream of Ravan: A Mystery* written by an unknown author and published in the *Dublin University Magazine* between 1853 and 1854. Among stories from the Rāmāyaṇa and other texts it contains a translation of longer parts of Jnānadeva’s *Jnāneshvarī* dealing with the awakening of the “Power.” A footnote which is quoted in *The Theosophist* explains: “This extraordinary Power, who is termed elsewhere

the ‘World Mother’—the ‘Casket of Supreme Spirit,’—is technically called Kundalini, which may be rendered serpentine, or annular. Some things related of it would make one imagine it to be electricity personified.”<sup>22</sup> This quotation from *The Dream of Ravan* is the first appearance of the famous serpent power on the stage of Theosophy. From here its career in modern popular religion starts. Truth Seeker ends his article with several urgent questions about the *Jnāneshvarī*, Patañjali’s *Yogasūtras* and Buddhist meditation. He addresses in particular the Indian correspondents of *The Theosophist* in particular and urgently asked them to provide more information about Indian spiritual practices.

This letter brought about a whole series of answers in the following issues of *The Theosophist*. Most of them came from Bengali members and are concerned with Tantrism and tantric *yoga*. That is not astonishing, Bengal being one of the traditional centers of Tantrism. In these letters, the *Jnāneshvarī* is identified as a Tantric text. Swami Dayananda’s disclaimer of Tantrism is criticized resolutely and outlines of tantric philosophy are given. In July 1880 an article on tantric occultism written by Barata Kanata extensively quotes descriptions of the *cakras*, the *nāḍīs* and the awakening of the *kuṇḍalinī* from a book which in the article is called *Shat Chakrabhed* and that is obviously identical with the *Ṣaṭ Cakra Nirūpaṇa* of the Bengali *yogin* Purnananda Swami, which 39 years later was translated, commentated and published by Sir

John Woodroffe in his famous *The Serpent Power* (1919). Most of today's popular descriptions of the Cakras are derived from it.

In a footnote added to this article Olcott comments that one has to read between the lines to understand the symbolism of the tantric text, which

is full of profound philosophy and proves that its author or authors were intimately acquainted with the hidden energies of nature. The significant feature of the present essay is that the Tantric Yogi from whose work the extracts are translated, knew the great and mysterious law that there are within the human body a series of centres of force-evolution, the location of which becomes known to the ascetic in the course of his physical self-development, as well as the means which must be resorted to bring the activities of these centres under the control of the will. To employ the Oriental figurative method, these points are so many outworks to be captured in succession before the very citadel can be taken.<sup>23</sup>

With this commentary the doctrine of the Cakras and the ascent from one centre to the other on the road to enlightenment became part of the body of occult truths that Theosophy officially acknowledged.

In his introduction to the Theosophical edition of the *Yogasūtras* from 1882, Olcott interprets *yoga* and especially *kuṇḍalinī yoga* in a mesmeric way. He says: "Yoga is 'selfmesmerisation'. It differs from the practices of the ordinary

mesmeric operator, in that the 'subject' in this case is the mystic's own body, instead of another person."<sup>24</sup> The *yogin* first vanquishes the restlessness of the body and the supremacy of the physical appetites. Having done this his body is passive like a mesmeric medium. Then he activates the "current of nerve aura" which is also used in ordinary mesmerisation but in this case directing it through the different vital points of his own body. In the end he reaches "a self-induced extasis in which unlike the extasis of the somnambule [...] there is not only consciousness but also self-control. The ecstatic *yogin* can return from the highest flight into the supernal spheres by an effort of his will and terminate his 'Samadhi' whenever he likes."<sup>25</sup> Here Olcott describes the Yogin as an occult adept, who in Theosophy functions as positive counterpoint to the unconscious trance medium traveling in the astral world without self-control under the guidance of an operator.

The term "highest flight to supernal spheres" again demonstrates that the ecstasy of the *yogin* is conceived as astral projection. In the early days of Theosophy no detailed explanations or instructions concerning Astral projection existed. Now *kuṇḍalinī yoga* fills this gap. It is the ascent through the *cakras* that liberates the astral body from its earthly burden. This practice comprehends the practice of mental concentration, the focusing and directing of the magnetic aura and moral purification.

Olcott knew about *kuṇḍalinī yoga* not only through texts but also through a talk with Sab-

hapaty Swami, an English-speaking *yogin* who had written a booklet about it published by the Theosophical Society.<sup>26</sup> Obviously inspired by Theosophy and ten years before Vivekananda's success in the West, Sabhapaty Swami developed the vision of a universal religion based on *vedānta* and what he called Indian Mesmerism *kuṇḍalinī yoga* included.<sup>27</sup> Vedānta Śiva Rāja Yoga Societies were to be created all over the world with meditation halls as their centers. The Swami was too far ahead of his time—and probably not astute enough either—and his plans failed.<sup>28</sup>

To sum up: In the early phase of Theosophy in India, practical instructions for yoga-inspired meditation written by Indian Theosophists have been published in *The Theosophist*. We find the recitation of the syllable OM and other mantras as well as the search for the Eternal Light in the inner chamber of the heart without the use of *mantras*. The perception of mystical sounds is mentioned. In connection with recitation practices, some texts recommend *prāṇāyāma* techniques whereas others warn that they should be practiced only under the guidance of a *yogin*. Thereby indirectly the search for *yoga* masters is approved. Yogic sitting poses are recommended. *kuṇḍalinī yoga* becomes an accepted form of *yoga*, but as far as I see no text hints at practical experiments with that form of meditation. Maybe it was seen as a too advanced practice to propagate it publicly. Mesmerism combined with the concept of astral projection provides the theoretical frame-

work to understand yogic practices and experiences.

Already around 1881, doubts existed as to whether the attempt to establish Theosophy as a school of practical occultism made any sense at all.<sup>29</sup> In the beginning of 1882 the Society cut its ties with Swami Dayananda, and the hope to get teachings from a *yoga* initiate ultimately vanished. Now the hidden masters of the White Brotherhood increasingly function as spiritual guides through their letters. In the name of the Masters, a new concept of meditation is introduced by Godolphin Mitford and Damodar Mavalankar.<sup>30</sup> It has a very Western outlook and does not refer to any *yoga* practice. Non-discursive methods like concentrating on a certain object or on different regions of the body, the passive emptying of the mind and mesmeric approaches are now downplayed or rejected.

What is now recommended as meditation practice?

1. the pursuit of moral perfection through thought control in daily life
2. to reflect intellectually on Theosophical doctrines and connect them with one's own life. This causes
3. a yearning for infinity caused by the study of the doctrines that leads to a gradual absorption into infinity.

In December 1882 a member of the Theosophical Society of Bengal writes about negative experiences with *prāṇāyāma* instructions



that he had received from a *yoga* master. The exercises caused pains in the heart and lungs, ultimately leading to bleeding in the lungs. The author emphasizes that he has been warned by Blavatsky and Olcott and that his temporarily Guru has had no connection whatsoever to the Theosophical Society. This report reinforced the growing critical attitude towards breathing exercises and other forms of body-oriented *yoga* methods, which the Theosophists summarized under the term “*hatha yoga*.” It also shows that Indian theosophists actually contacted Gurus to learn yogic techniques. These contacts are now viewed very critically, and the leaders of Theosophy attempt to stop them, wanting to establish Blavatsky and her Masters as the only spiritual authorities of the Society.

If a certain Mahatma letter from Koot Hoomi to Allen O. Hume (probably written around 1882) is authentic, then at the time an instruction was given to meditate by creating an image of the Master as a living human being within one’s own heart.<sup>31</sup> This fits into the centralizing of spiritual authority. But it could well be that this form of meditation belongs to a later period in which the master cult had become more elaborate.

In conclusion, allow me to add a few words about the further developments of meditation within Theosophy. Although in the beginning there was some resistance from Indian Members, Mitford’s and Mavalankar’s form of meditation remained the foundation of Theosophical meditation in the following years. At

the end of the 1880s, Blavatsky founded the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society. For its members, she taught a kind of neo-*kuṇḍalinī yoga* connecting the *cakras* with her own very complicated system of analogies between micro- and macrocosmos. We know from critical remarks of the members of the Esoteric Section, which have been handed down to us, that it was very difficult for them to follow her instructions and put them into practice.

At the same time, a member of the Esoteric Section—William Quan Judge, the leading figure of the Theosophical Society in the United States—was forced by incessant requests of members of the Society to give instructions concerning meditation methods. He reintroduced elements that had been excluded for years in a much more practical way than Blavatsky. Judge encouraged meditations that followed Patañjali’s eightfold path, and concentration on the top of the head where, as he says, the *sūṣumṇā*-nerve ends—a reference to *kuṇḍalinī yoga*. In his Letters that have helped me the concentration on the top of the head and other centers of the body is explained in mesmeric terms.<sup>32</sup> Not only constituents of yogic meditation are reinforced in later Theosophy; one can also observe borrowings from New Thought meditation; and from the era of Annie Besant onwards, influences from Christian traditions. At that point in time, the innovative power of Theosophical Spirituality was already on the wane, and other movements were now leading forces in the development of modern meditation. Neverthe-

less, Theosophy had left an indelible imprint of its own in this still-evolving history.

Paper read at the IAHR [International Association for the History of Religion] Conference Toronto 2010, August 20.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> H.P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. I and II (cited as *Isis I and II*), Pasadena, 1998 (reprint of the 1877 ed.), Vol. I, 129. See also Vol. II, 589: “The corner-stone of MAGIC is an intimate knowledge of magnetism and electricity [...].”

<sup>2</sup> H. P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings* (cited as *BCW*) (Wheaton, Madras, London 1966–1991), Vol. I, 403.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Prothero, *The White Buddhist. The Asian Journey of Henry Steel Olcott* (Delhi 1996), 22–24.

<sup>4</sup> *Isis I*: xxxix.

<sup>5</sup> Éliphas Lévi, *The History of Magic*. Transl. by A.E. Waite. Foreword by Donald Weiser (Boston 2001), 76–77.

<sup>6</sup> For Levi the effects of this kind of meditation resemble those gained by the use of narcotics and the practice of color scales in occult freemasonry. In respect to the color scales Levi refers to Jean-

Marie Ragon, *La Marconnerie Occulte* (1853). Ragon describes the use of magical discs in certain colours which correspond to the planets.

<sup>7</sup> *Isis II*, 590.

<sup>8</sup> See *Isis I*, 434.

<sup>9</sup> H.P. Blavatsky, *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan* (London 1892) [repr. 1908], 23.

<sup>10</sup> H.P. Blavatsky, “The Drift of Western Spiritualism,” *The Theosophist* (October 1979): 7–8 [7]: “To comprehend modern mediumship it is, in short, indispensable to familiarize oneself with the *yoga* philosophy; and the aphorisms of Patañjali are even more essential than the ‘Divine Revelations’ of Andrew Jackson Davis. We can never know how much of the mediumistic phenomena we *must* attribute to the disembodied, until it is settled how much *can* be done by the embodied, human soul, and the blind but active powers at work within those regions which are yet unexplored by science.”

<sup>11</sup> H.P. Blavatsky, “The Magnetic Chain,” *The Theosophist* (October 1879): 29–30 [29]; *BCW II*, 135–136: 135.

<sup>12</sup> H.S. Olcott: “The Occult Sciences,” *The Theosophist*, (August 1880): 264–265 [265].

<sup>13</sup> John Patrick Deveney, *Astral Projection or Liberation of the Double and the Work of the Early Theosophical Society* (Fullerton, 1997) [Theosophical History Occasional Papers, Vol. VI].

<sup>14</sup> The combination of the motive of the astral journey with mesmeric concepts was introduced in Heinrich Jung-Stillings’ *Theorie der Geisterkunde*

(1808). The English translation, *Theory of Pneumatology* (1854), was well known among American spiritualist and occult circles.

<sup>15</sup> H.S. Olcott, "The Baron du Potet, Hon. F.T.S," *The Theosophist* (February 1880): 116-117 [116].

<sup>16</sup> See the letter of a disappointed member in Allan O. Hume, *Hints on Esoteric Theosophy. No. One: Is Theosophy a Delusion? Do the Brothers Exist?* (Calcutta 1882), 6-7.

<sup>17</sup> Lalla Ruttun Chund, "Hints to The Students of Yoga Vidya," *The Theosophist* (November 1879), 46; Ruttun Chund Bary, "Hints to the Students of Yog Vidya," *The Theosophist* (April 1880): 175-76.

<sup>18</sup> These sounds are already mentioned in the earlier article in *The Theosophist* (January 1880): 87 on the Book of Ravan, and our author refers to this article. The description is identical with the passage of the *Oupnek'hat* quoted in Eliphas Levi's *History of Magic*.

<sup>19</sup> N.C. Paul, "'OM,' and its Practical Significance," *The Theosophist* (February 1882): 131-134. N. C. Paul's book, *A Treatise on the Yoga Philosophy* (Benares 1851), was one of the major sources of information about *yoga* for Blavatsky during her initial years in India.

<sup>20</sup> This exercise is already mentioned in several Upaniṣads and has become a common practice in Tantrism. In the meditation movement of the 20th century, it was popularized by Swami Muktananda.

<sup>21</sup> Kaler Mohun Dass, "The Utility of Asans," *The Theosophist* (December 1882): 75.

<sup>22</sup> *The Dream of Ravan. A Mystery*, reprinted by the Theosophical Publishing Society, London (New York, Madras 1895), 190. See also Truth Seeker, "Yoga Philosophy," *The Theosophist* (January 1880): 86-87 [86].

<sup>23</sup> *The Theosophist* (July 1880): 214.

<sup>24</sup> *The Yoga Philosophy: Being the Text of Patañjali, with Bhojarajah's Commentary*. Ed. Tukárám Tātiá (Bombay 1882), ii.

<sup>25</sup> *The Yoga Philosophy*, iii.

<sup>26</sup> Sabhapaty Swami, *Om: a Treatise on Vedantic Raj Yoga Philosophy*. Ed. by Babu Siris Chandra Basu F.T.S (Lahore 1880). According to "The Madras Yogi Sabhapaty Swami, by an Admirer," *The Theosophist* (March 1880): 145-46 the Swami had been educated in a Christian Missionary School and worked as a civil servant before starting life as the disciple of a *yogin* in the Nilgiri mountains. After nine years he left the mountains and started a pilgrimage to different holy places in India during which he also gave lectures in the major towns of India.

<sup>27</sup> See Sabhapaty Swamy, *The Cosmic Psychological Spiritual Philosophy and Science of Communion with and Absorption in the Holy and Divine Infinite Spirit or Vedhanta Siva Raja Yoga Samâdhi Brumha Gnyana Anubhati*, (Madras 1884).

<sup>28</sup> Interestingly enough, Aleister Crowley later claimed to have been a disciple of Sabhapaty Swami.

<sup>29</sup> *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. Ed. A.T. Barker. Letter No. CCVIII (1881?), 207-217 [209-

210]. See also Deveney: *Paschal Beverly Randolph*, 261-62 for a comment on this letter.

<sup>30</sup> G...M..., "The 'Elixir of Life,'" *The Theosophist* (March 1882): 140-42; (April 1882): 168-171. Damodar Mavalankar, "Contemplation," *The Theosophist*, Vol. 5, No. 5 (February 1884): 112-114.

<sup>31</sup> The letter was first published in 1889. Compare *The Inner Group Teachings of H.P. Blavatsky to her personal pupils* (1890–1891). Second, revised and enlarged edition edited by Henk J. Spierenburg (San Diego 1995), xxiii; 173-174; *BCW XII*, 696: "Your best method is to concentrate on the Master as a Living Man within you. Make his image in your heart, and a focus of concentration, so as to lose all sense of bodily existence in the one thought."

<sup>32</sup> William Quan Judge, *Letters That Have Helped Me*, (Bombay 1930), 34.

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