

A PROPHECY in *The Secret Doctrine**

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In 1891-92, W.Q. Judge published a series of articles in *The Path* entitled "Hidden Hints in *The Secret Doctrine*." The first passage in these articles is entitled "A Prophecy" and reads as follows:

In the 20th century — 1900 — the scholars of our era will begin to recognize that *The Secret Doctrine* has neither been invented nor exaggerated, but simply outlined (Vol. I, intro. p. xxxvii). In other places the author hints at surprises in store in the way of **manuscripts**, etc. It would seem that by 1900 some "**discoveries**" will be made by scholars that will support our author. "Once the door is permitted to be kept a little ajar, it will be opened wider with every new century. The times are ripe for a **more serious knowledge** than hitherto permitted" (Vol. I, xxxviii, footnote). "We have not long to wait, and many of us will witness the Dawn of the New Cycle, at the end of which not a few accounts will be settled and squared between the races." (Vol. I, xlv.)

Manuscripts

In the beginning of the twentieth century, several expeditions to Central Asia led to the discovery of a large number of valuable Gnostic texts. At present only about one-fourth of this material has been published (Klimkeit).

In the middle of the century, two important discoveries were made in the Middle East: the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codex. While the complete text of the Nag Hammadi find has been published, the Dead Sea Scrolls have not been translated and published in their entirety even at this late date due, at least in part, to conflicts and jealousies that have arisen between the scholars and governments involved.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, believed by some to be the library of a colony of Essenes, provide evidence that "gnostic" elements were a part of Jewish thought and practice before similar elements were imported into Christianity from Greek sources. They have provided insight into the spiritual life in Palestine during the centuries which preceded the Christian era.

The Nag Hammadi scriptures provide material which may help us gain a deeper insight into Gnostic Christianity and Orthodox Christianity as well. Some of the scriptures found there were clearly referred to by early Church fathers. Others were previously unknown but provide clear evidence of the

relationship between Christianity and other traditions of the Mediterranean world. We may question how much superficial scholars can ever understand about all this material without initiation into the mystic theosophical wisdom which makes sense of it all. Some modern scholars have said that the author who wrote most lucidly on the Gnostics was G.R.S. Mead, the pupil and literary assistant of H.P. Blavatsky (Hoeller).

Discoveries in the Physical Sciences

Judge refers to the following words from *The Secret Doctrine*:

We are at the very close of the cycle of 5000 years of the present Aryan Kali Yuga; and between this time [1888] and 1897 there will be a large rent made in the Veil of Nature, and materialistic science will receive a death-blow. (*S.D.* I: 612)

Just on schedule, several important scientific discoveries did, in fact occur. These include the discovery of x-rays by Roentgen (1895), radioactivity by Becquerel (1896), and the electron by Thomson (1897).

The discovery of x-rays led to new non-invasive ways to visualize the structure of the body. Today we take for granted that a radiograph can be taken to see if a bone is broken or a tooth decayed but in H.P.B.'s time none of this was, of course, available.

Radioactivity, likewise, was quickly utilized for medical purposes and the emissions of radioactive isotopes are still used for many forms of radiation-based cancer therapy. Radioactivity also provided a tool to probe matter in an attempt to understand its underlying components. Our current understanding of the atom and its nucleus goes back to scientists of the early part of this century bombarding matter with radiations from radioactive elements.

The discovery of the electron permitted us to understand the nature of electricity and to turn it to countless practical purposes. Electrons flow in wires and cables all around us, making possible the operation of nearly all the tools of modern life.

These three discoveries, and others which were to follow, did indeed change the face of science forever although it may be argued if they have given a final death-blow to materialism. What they have done is,

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in a sense, to de-materialize our conceptions of matter, and maybe that is what H.P.B. meant. After these discoveries and the further discoveries to which they led, it was no longer possible to think of solid objects or a static world. All is energy in constant motion and transformation. These fundamental discoveries were anticipated in *The Secret Doctrine* and in other theosophical writings of the nineteenth century in which the divisibility of the atom, the particulate nature of electricity, and the behavior of charged particles in magnetic fields were clearly described.

After the turn of the century, discoveries continued to occur at an astounding rate and new theories were evolved to account for them. It has been stated by many writers that the two most far-reaching physical theories of the twentieth century were quantum mechanics and the theory of relativity.

Quantum mechanics came about in an attempt to understand the nature of radiant energy. Older theories which regarded energy as a continuum failed to account for the radiation emitted by hot objects. Only when it was considered to be composed of discrete packages or “quanta” did the picture begin to make sense. But the picture which emerged also got stranger. Not only did light energy have a particulate or grainy nature but material particles such as electrons had a mysterious wave-like nature. The new theory provided a means of calculating in a perfectly deterministic way the propagation of waves of something through time and space which, in their turn, specify only the probability of future events such as a collision of particles or the emission of a particle of radiation. Actual events are particulate interactions while, between events we have a kind of potentiality which propagates itself as a wave. As a result of this strange way of looking at things, an element of indeterminism creeps into the picture which seems to many modern thinkers an inherent feature of the universe. Others argue that there are hidden variables at work and acting in a deterministic way which we do not yet understand. If this is true, it has been pointed out by yet others, then such variables operate in a non-local way which is counterintuitive and perplexing to time-honored modern notions, although perfectly acceptable to traditional cultures and apparently supported by the facts (See Gribbin).

H.P.B. seems to have anticipated some aspects of quantum mechanics although she did not go into much detail. Impatient with the arguing back and forth on the part of the advocates of “wave theories” and “particle theories” of light she wrote the following:

Undulatory or corpuscular theory — it is all one.
It is speculation from the aspects of phenomena,

not from the knowledge of the essential nature of the *cause* and *causes*. (S.D. I: 528)

She also said that “atoms are called ‘Vibrations’ in Occultism” (S.D. I: 633) and spoke of the “wave motion of living particles”.

The special theory of relativity changed our notion of space and time and gave us a new yardstick to measure the universe in four dimensions, notwithstanding the apparent denial in the *S.D.* (see Vol. I, p. 252) and discussed by Mr. Judge in “Hidden Hints”. But these dimensions (three spatial dimensions and one dimension of time) are not on an equal footing and the mysterious square root of negative one which enters into the equation when time is considered makes all the difference in the world. Was this what H.P.B. was getting at? We can only wonder. The fact remains that H.P.B. gave a wonderful description of a “world line” when she wrote:

The real person or thing does not consist solely of what is seen at any particular moment, but is composed of the sum of all its various and changing conditions . . . things . . . dropping out of the . . . future into the past — present momentarily to our senses a cross-section . . . of their total selves . . . on their way from one eternity to another. (S.D. I: 37)

She also verbalized in her private letters to A.P. Sinnett an idea which is only now beginning to get serious scientific consideration. She described our world as a compound of two worlds. One (the Loka) is a world of evolution (forward causation carried by what would today be called retarded waves) and the other (the Tala) is a world of involution (reverse causation carried by what are called advanced waves). This is what she says:

The 14 Brahma-lokas are 7 worlds *within* ours. . . Now where are *the words* for me to explain you this? . . . in the evolution through seven planets and *seven* Rounds, two out of the 14 must be always intermingled, so to say, within each other progressing towards spirit . . . and retrograding towards Matter also. . . In this double progression *our World* — the only one we can judge by objectivity is no *one* distinct world, but a compound of two on each planet from which radiate the others from which our world or Earth radiated in her turn. (Barker, 250-2)

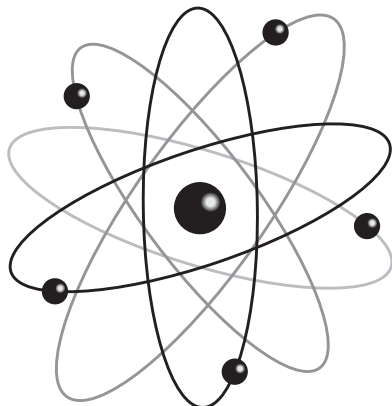
Here is a quote from a modern author who seems to be saying much the same thing in describing:

. . . a double wave linking the emitter and the absorber, made up of half of a retarded wave carrying positive energy into the future and half of an advanced wave carrying negative energy into the past (in the direction of negative time). (Gribbin, 238)

It is hoped by some scientists that this kind of model will provide a new understanding to the puzzles and paradoxes of quantum mechanics. If it is true, what

happens now is affected not only by the past but by the future as well!

The general theory of relativity provided a new way of understanding gravity. Space-time itself is apparently warped or distorted by the presence of matter and this distortion is apparent in the accelerating motion of material objects such as the planets in the solar system orbiting around the sun. This explanation of the gravitational field is somewhat different from the conventional notion of a push or pull although it acts in the same way.



The general theory provided the tools for studying cosmic mysteries such as black holes and the expanding universe. Being originally prejudiced towards a static universe, Einstein introduced into his early cosmological calculations a “cosmological constant” describing a mysterious repulsive force. When the astronomer Hubble demonstrated that the universe was, in fact, expanding after all, Einstein repudiated his “cosmological constant” as “the greatest mistake of my life”. Curiously enough, recent observations of distant supernova explosions have led to the conclusion that the expansion of the universe is speeding up. One way that this phenomenon — if it really exists — can be explained is by re-introducing a force of “cosmic repulsion” (Begley, 54).

H.P.B., for her part, always maintained that gravitation was only one side of a greater force she called “attraction and repulsion”:

That such magnetism exists in nature, is as certain as that gravitation does not; not at any rate, in the way in which it is taught by Science, which never took into consideration the different modes in which the dual Force — that Occultism calls attraction and repulsion — may act within our solar system, the earth’s atmosphere, and *beyond* in the Kosmos. (S.D. I: 497)

So maybe there is something to this business of “cosmic repulsion” after all and maybe you have to observe the universe on a very large scale in order to see it at work. Madame Blavatsky gave a beautiful description of an expanding universe although she emphasized that it was not an expansion as we ordinarily understand it. There is a metaphysical dimension involved which is not taken into account by materialistic thinkers:

The expansion “from within without” of the Mother, called elsewhere the “Waters of Space”, “Universal Matrix,” etc., does not allude to an expansion from a small centre or focus, but, without reference to size or limitation or area, means the development of limitless subjectivity into as limitless objectivity . . . a change of condition. (S.D. I: 62-63)

This is partially but only partially recognized by scientists who maintain that what is expanding is space itself and not matter within space conceived as a stationary background.

The expanding horizons of physics made it possible to understand chemistry at a deeper level than was possible in the nineteenth century when chemistry was primarily a practical or technological science. The twentieth-century model of the atom with its positive nucleus and its negative electrons in surrounding shells and subshells made it possible to understand what made the atoms of the various elements different from one another and to understand the forces binding chemical elements together. The study of the atomic nucleus made it possible to understand the even stronger forces holding together its components (the protons and neutrons) and to ask further questions about the composition of these subatomic particles. Today we hear about quarks and gluons and strings and we can only wonder where it all will lead. Some of the bolder scientists speak glibly of a “final theory” or a “theory of everything” but we may advisedly view such remarks with a healthy skepticism. What is important, however, is the search

for simplicity at the root of the complexity we sense around us.



This is a search which has continued for centuries and which always has the sympathy of theosophists who see it as confirmation of their fundamental belief in underlying unity.

Just as physics underlies chemistry so chemistry in turn underlies biology. The twentieth century saw fantastic progress in biological science made possible by an understanding of the molecules composing living tissues and organisms. Biochemistry has given us an understanding of the life processes which occur at a molecular level and has made it possible to develop new techniques for the alleviation of pain and suffering. The discovery of the DNA molecule — called in Blavatsky’s day the “germ plasm” without understanding either its nature or composition — has made it possible to fathom some of the mysteries of heredity and to identify the genes which contribute to different physical and psychological characteristics including the disposition to certain diseases.

Biotechnology has made it possible to clone living organisms and has led us to the brink of cloning human beings. In principle, none of this is very surprising to students of occultism and it is no wonder that H.P.B. called chemistry and physiology the great magicians of the future (S.D. I: 261).

Despite all this wonderful progress, what is missing is the sense of soul and spirit and guiding intelligence back of it all. And so we can have a brilliant scientist such as the Nobel laureate Steven Weinberg commenting that “The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless” (144). *The Secret Doctrine*, on the other hand, teaches a meaningful, god-filled cosmos. It teaches a mystical pantheism and speaks of a universe which is the manifestation of cosmic intelligence:


Pantheism may be “physically rediscovered.” It was known, seen, and felt by the whole of antiquity. Pantheism manifests itself in the vast expanse of the starry heavens, in the breathing of the seas and oceans, and the quiver of life of the smallest blade of grass. (S.D. I: 533)

Rejecting the evolution of physical man from the animal kingdom, it proclaims, nevertheless, a law of progressive development throughout the kingdoms of nature (S.D. II: 260) and this law is overtly teleological. The idea of intelligent design was unpopular among the biologists of the twentieth century but began to gain a degree of respectability during its final years (Behe).

An Unexpected Opportunity for Those Seeking More Serious Knowledge

While the Chinese Communist occupation of Tibet was one of the greatest tragedies of the twentieth century, the exile of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and

many other Tibetans has led to an increased understanding of Tibetan culture among Westerners. A great deal of information has been released and competent lamas of all schools have made themselves available to train Western disciples in the teachings and practices of their various traditions. Europeans and Americans have become monks and teachers and quite a number of Westerners have received initiation into the various Tibetan religious practices. Not only this but Tulkus or reincarnated lamas have been found in Western families and are being educated in the traditional systems of thought and practice. Westerners have gone into long retreats and, who knows, maybe some of them will emerge as Enlightened Beings. All of this would have seemed impossible a hundred years ago.

The Kalachakra Tantra is a system of knowledge and practice which was taught by the Lord Buddha at the request of the King of Shambhala himself. It represents some of his most arcane and profound teachings and has been shown to be intimately related to the Book of Dzyan and *The Secret Doctrine* (Reigle). In recent years, the Dalai Lama has been giving the Kalachakra Initiation all over the world as have other great lamas. While this initiation is given in large public ceremonies and may be observed as a cultural event, the participants may — if they are motivated by the altruistic desire for enlightenment and if they are willing to commit themselves to certain vows and practices — actually enter on the Path and “become a yogi of Time’s circle” (H.P.B., *Voice*, 32). Certainly, this is unprecedented in our Western world. The last public Kalachakra Initiation to be conducted in North America during the twentieth century took place during the last two weeks of August 1999 in Bloomington, Indiana. In May of 2004, His Holiness performed the Kalachakra Initiation in Toronto. 

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