

The BIOSOPHICAL REVIEW

1977 BROADWAY, NEW YORK 23, N. Y.

TRAFALGAR 44323

DR. FREDERICK KETTNER, *Editor*

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August 25, 1944

AIRMAIL

Dr. Franklin Merrell-Wolff,
800 - 8th Street,
San Fernando, California.

Dear Dr. Merrell-Wolff:

Your book, "Pathways Through To Space", has been read with interest amounting to enthusiasm by our members. Dr. Frederick Kettner, founder of the Biosophical Institute, has also been profoundly impressed.

In your work we perceive a long-awaited synthesis of Eastern and Western thought. When your realizations become the possession of many, a radical transformation of the world, we sincerely believe, will assuredly take place.

It would be a privilege for us to share our thoughts with you. Our emphasis is placed upon the group - the expression of spiritual ideals in terms of action, and the development of group consciousness to supersede personality consciousness.

Descriptive literature has been enclosed. We should like to know what you think, and if possible, cooperate with you in the great work which is, as far as we understand it, our mutual concern.

With cordial good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Francis Merchant

Francis Merchant

P.S. We responded with especial interest to your poems. There are similarities, we believe, between your poetry and that of Dr. Frederick Kettner. Consequently, we are sending you under separate cover, a copy of his book of poems, *BACK TO THE NAMELESS ONE*.
Chicago Office: 624 So. Michigan Boulevard, Chicago 11, Ill. Tel. Harrison 9411

San Fernando, Calif.,
Sept. 7, 1944.

Mr. Francis Merchhant,
1977 Broadway,
New York 23, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Merchhant:

It is with very real pleasure that we received and read your letter, together with the enclosed literature and the book of poems, "Back to the Nameless One". We have read the general literature and the poems with care and are delighted, first and foremost, to become acquainted, through the written word, with one who reveals the indubitable earmarks of illumined Consciousness and, second, to know of a group effort presumptively oriented to the same consciousness, and certainly striving toward an increase of spirituality in a very dark world.

First, I should like to speak of the poems. The Awakened Mystical Sense naturally tends to poetical expression and this seems to be so in large measure even when the Awakened individual is more a philosopher than a poet, and, on the whole, I think the poetry reveals the inner depths of the man better than his more discursive doctrines. We have read "Back to the Nameless One" primarily in order to see the man who wrote the poems. I recognize him as One who has Awakened. The signs are clear for one who knows how to read. I supposed that the poems would be obscure to the quite unawakened consciousness but to one who has some acquaintance with the Way they are exceptionally clear. I was particularly impressed with the implications of the following verse:

"To plunge one's self into the eternal Ocean
"Brings wordless rapture.
"To swim and to dive therein
"Inspires to deeper rejoicing."

This implies a good deal more than mystical self-abandonment in "God-intoxication". One cannot "swim" and "dive" or, in other words, remain self-determined within the Ocean of Formless Consciousness without having achieved individual integration as well as mystical realization. The opening of the mystical door by no means necessarily implies this and it appears that most mystics merely succeed in "plunging". It requires distinctly heroic self-mastery to take the further step.

From the literature it appears that Dr. Kottner was a disciple of Spinoza. I, too, am a lover of the mathematico-rational spirit of Spinoza, though I cannot claim to have been a disciple. My personal sympathy is completely with the effort at a mathematical demonstration of transenconitReality. Unfortunately, the study of critical philosophy has convinced me of the impossibility of success in any such effort, since that which needs demonstration

from the standpoint of ordinary unawakened consciousness is simply taken as the originally given base from which deductive demonstration proceeds. Such Truth as there is in that given base is known otherwise than by means of the demonstration. The demonstration is valuable for rendering explicit that which is implicit in the transcendental insight, but cannot prove the authenticity of the insight to unawakened consciousness. The most that I see which we can do is to build a presumption for the Transcendental Reality sufficient to lead one here and one there among the unawakened to dare the Path of discovery. I have been forced, though rather reluctantly, to agree with the Oriental Proficients and with the implications of Plato's parable of the cave with respect to this subject.

Second, as to the objectives of the Biosophical Movement. You have kindly asked me for what I think, and I am happy to say that I think well of them, very well indeed. There is nothing to which I would take exception in what I have seen. To be sure, it is not difficult to formulate noble ideals, the difficult part is in the actual working. But with respect to the latter you have the testimony of several well-known men of ability and character and so I judge you must have had considerable success. We should like to know more of this part of your work.

As I see it, in movements of this kind, the primary significance of the group activities is to serve as an expedient means, favoring the arousal of the Awakened Consciousness as extensively as may be among men. While no objective condition is causally adequate, yet some conditions of life and certain mental attitudes are more favorable than others. The difficulty is that individual variants are great so that the favorable complex for one individual or type of individuals may diverge radically from that which is best for others. Here, even the Great Ones have been unable to provide an universally valid formula. So we are forced to judge expedient means pragmatically. I would say that with respect to the objective of the Awakening any means that works, be it painful or pleasant, is good in so far as it works. It is an unhappy commentary upon human nature that the historic record seems to indicate that the painful seems to arouse men to the Search more than the happier phases of objective life. Perhaps through this horrible war there will be numbers of men and women who will be brought to such despair with external life that they will begin the Search for Emancipation. In that case there will be some good harvest.

The secondary significance of such movements has a practical bearing upon the objective way of life in human society, the aim being melioration. I suspect that you find it easier to arouse interest in this sense than in the former. Most would find it more comprehensible. In this sense you indubitably have selected objectives of prime importance. The only problem is, how to do it effectively. And to resolve this problem calls for a most comprehensive knowledge of the nature of man both as to his unconscious depths as well as with respect to his surface. The "Yea" of the conscious surface all too often is nullified by the "Nae" of the unconscious psyche, or visa versa. The world picture before us today reveals very little that is encouraging. At least

throughout the Occident, the "scape-goat" psychology prevails in shocking degree. The German projects the dark in his soul upon the Jew and says "all evil abides there in that other race". But the western allies project their dark soul upon the German and also say "all evil abides in that other race." This, though, is simply very primitive psychology of the sort one is not surprised to find in the Australian bushman. Talk of peace while retaining the "scape-goat" psychology is simply pharisaical. And so much of the current talk of peace is ~~not~~ of this sort. It is not the real thing. As I see it, real peace requires the renunciation of the will to impose my will upon the other fellow whether in the individual, group, national or racial senses, and most especially is this true in the sense of imposing will by the instrumentality of material force. Over-powering material force under the command of any entity can stop visible war in the obvious sense, but it does not bring peace. It merely drives the conflict into the dark hidden places of the soul, where it will may be more deadly. Yet much of the current talk of peace means no more than this.

I agree most emphatically with your emphasis of peace education. But I wish simply to make note of some of the complexities of the problem. We should like to know more of this part of your program.

What do you mean by democracy? This is a word peculiarly subject to semantic difficulties. For many it embraces the ideal of maximum freedom, for others it means the tortures of the Procrustean bed. For Jefferson it seems to have meant the removal of artificial barriers so that the real aristoi might rise to the top, but for many collective movements it means the control of real superiority by massive inferiority. And, unfortunately, the etymological meaning of the word lies closer to the more negative meaning. For my part, I agree fundamentally with Plato, if by "Sages" we understand Buddhas or near-Buddhas, i.e., Men of Enlightenment. I see no effective solution of the governmental problem until the ultimate power rests in the hands of such Men. But these are the aristoi par excellence. Such a government would be in the larger sense aristocratic though it might be and, I believe, should be combined with democratic determinants in lesser details.

It has been my good fortune to have known the writer of one of your enclosures, namely, Dr. Paul RL Radosavljevic. He was pursuing graduate studies at Stanford about 1911 and 1912. He was a valued part of our philosophical club which a few of us had organized shortly before. His enthusiastic tribute to Dr. Kettner particularly impressed me.

With every good wish for your work,

Sincerely yours,

Franklin Morrell-Wolff

The BIOSOPHICAL INSTITUTE

Devoted to Character Education and Spiritual Values

1977 BROADWAY, NEW YORK 23, N. Y.

TRAFALGAR 44323

DR. FREDERICK KETTNER, Founder-President

BERNARD V. HALL, Executive Vice-President

EDITH MONTLACK, Vice-President

FRANCIS MERCHANT, Director of Programs

September 29, 1944

Dr. Franklin Merrell-Wolff
San Fernando, California

Dear Dr. Merrell-Wolff:

Thank you deeply for your letter. It was most inspiring; it was as if we had at long last met someone who spoke in familiar accents.

A few days after your letter came, Dr. Kettner returned to the City. He enjoyed it tremendously. That evening many of the members of our group were together, and Dr. Kettner spoke to us. Some notes were taken and we felt you would be interested and are therefore enclosing them.

Truly spiritual men, as we see it, are the real riches of a country, and those who strive to live in the light of wisdom merit our whole-hearted esteem.

The spiritual keynote of your work and ours is similar; of that we feel certain. Our development of the main theme is through the medium of the group. It is our belief that the association of individuals, that is, strivers, who endeavor to infuse into their lives the impelling power of an integrating ideal, can do much to give the electric energy of the spirit a greater human channel of expression. The togetherness of the individuals is significant for us. It is our way of enabling the individual to advance from "I-hood" to "We-ness."

Of course the multitudinous problems of the personality constantly confront us and we have sought to devise techniques to meet them. We have a community -- all our members live on the fourth floor of a fine old hotel in the mid-town area of New York City. Dr. Kettner believes that spiritual ideals can be tested and applied in the lives of those who find themselves in the midst of the tumult of city life; the very difficulties constitute a challenge which can be met.

Your study of Dr. Kettner, as indicated by your interpretation of his poems, is remarkable. You have touched upon much that is only understandable to one who has passed through similar experiences.

Yesterday we had occasion to visit Professor Paul Re. Radosavljevich at New York University. He remembers you well, despite

the years that have elapsed since he last saw you, and asked us to convey to you his special regards. He reminisced with us about the philosophical club which you mentioned in your letter and told us of your striking capacity to fuse the East and the West in your thinking. You may be sure that he was delighted to know of your book, which heretofore had not been called to his attention.

The latest issue of the Biosophical Review, our magazine, has just come from the press, and we are sending you a copy under separate cover. I have had the pleasure of reviewing your book in its pages. It also contains several articles on biosophy which we especially recommend. They are designed for the public, however, and therefore do not reveal aspects of our work which are less readily comprehensible. From time to time we shall send you additional material which indicates more clearly the nature of our work.

We are grateful to you for your generous response and certainly look forward to an interchange of thought.

With our very cordial greetings,

Very sincerely yours,

Francis Merchant

Francis Merchant

MEETING WITH DR. KETTNER - Sept. 19, 1944

I am happy that you have created a social-spiritual atmosphere and that you make it possible for me to share with you a very rare thing. It is a rare thing in my personal life and I hope it will become a rare thing in the life of the Group also. And although it has to do visibly with only a book and a letter, it is a letter which can make us all alive because there is spirit in it.

Here is the letter. It came about through the discovery of a book. One day I read in the "New York Times" the title of a book called "Pathways Through To Space". If you take these four words, you may not immediately get out of them a square deal or a square meal, but if you look into them, like into a menu, then "Pathways" looks like a fine fruit cup. "Through" - if you get through with your fruit, you want something else. And "To" - after you are finished with the soup, you want to come to something. And then you find it out - "space". Space has a relative meaning and an absolute meaning. Relatively speaking it has to do with physics and mathematics. But in the absolute sense, you can think of space as God.

I read that title and then read further "A Personal Record of Transformation in Consciousness". You know I like the word consciousness very much, and the word transformation even more. If we transform our consciousness, we come to the awareness of experiences which have an impersonal-personal meaning, value and destiny.

When I came to New York not long ago and shared this title with our friends, they ordered the book and I began to read it. And what do you think, - I suddenly discovered a poem in it called "The Nameless".

Besides that, I found a definition of mysticism, occultism, poetry, even science, and said to myself, the author must be one of the most normal human beings who has contacted his own soul and knows how to live within by the spiritual best. And so, after reading the book, I was anxious to know something about the author, Franklin Merrell-Wolff. We called the publisher in New York, Richard R. Smith, for the address.

You know, I have travelled a great deal and have contacted so many writers of different calibre, all kinds of personalities. So many, many times I expected, according to the books they wrote, to find a great soul in reality, not only in the book. But there were many who seemed to imagine that the book is in heaven while they are on earth. If the author doesn't become more visible as the one who represents what he writes about, naturally we cannot think of him as a friend from the point of view of biosophy. I felt that Dr. Merrell-Wolff would be one of those rare friends who will respond. I asked Frank to write him a letter and to send him a book of poems since I felt we speak the same language.

When I came two days ago and heard from Frank that a letter from Dr. Merrell-Wolff had come, I was thrilled. If someone had said,

he had two things for me, a thousand dollar check and the letter from Dr. Merrell-Wolff, I would want the letter from Dr. Merrell-Wolff, and if the money goes away, let it go away. I felt the letter must be tremendous. Before reading it, I had to think of the cosmic relationship, the mystery in it. I felt it was full of coenjoyment -- that he is a soul who has experienced the Great Laughter, and that there was a possibility to be with him in the Great Labor. And so, I began to read. As I went on reading, I felt better and better. The first thought I had was that you should not read this letter alone as you may not understand what it is all about since you have not yet read the book.

But coming to your meeting now, I felt that your silence was so wonderful that I could share some of this great experience with you, which will become greater and greater for you if you will grow in spiritual greatness. And spiritual greatness has nothing whatsoever to do with the "big shot" business. What we call spiritual greatness is another word for spiritual growth in awareness of Reality, and as our new and unusual friend Dr. Merrell-Wolff represents the spiritual greatness, I wanted to introduce him to you first in this friendship way.

I think we should get as many copies of the book as possible, and those who will become more interested in the book, should let me know. And even if after twenty-five years you will begin to love this book, believe me it will be a great victory for us. But if some of you will love it in twenty-five months, weeks or days, at least parts of it, then I am sure it will be a blessing for your individual souls and for the whole Group as a part of the New Humanity.

I am very thankful and happy that through the silence atmosphere you had created, you gave me the opportunity to share all this with you.

As Dr. Merrell-Wolff is a biosophic thinker, he will enrich us not only with his books but, we hope, also with his presence some day. It will be one of the most unusual moments of my life not only to meet him spirit to spirit as I think I met him, but also face to face.

Let our best thoughts in deepest silence now go through space, through this mysterious pathway to San Fernando, California, where our two friends live, Dr. and Mrs. Merrell-Wolff.

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(These are sketchy notes taken during the meeting at which Dr. Kettner read different passages from "Pathways Through To Space" and explained them to us. We all discussed the thoughts brought out by him.)

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FRANCIS MERCHANT, Director of Programs

October 4, 1944

Dr. Franklin Merrell-Wolff,
800 - 8th Street,
San Fernando, California.

Dear Dr. Merrell-Wolff:

I am taking the liberty of writing to you in partial answer to your letter addressed to Mr. Francis Merchant.

In our group we often use the words "coenjoyment" and "sharing." That is, the joy of others increases our own, and the realizations we have take on new meaning when we share them with those who understand. Consequently, your unusual letter was "shared" with a number of our friends who are wholeheartedly devoted to the way of life for which we stand.

One of our friends, and the Vice President of the Biosophical Institute, Edith Montlack, was inspired to express herself in writing. We thought you would like to read her thoughts on your letter and I am therefore enclosing a copy of what she has written.

One of the disciplines our group practices, involves writing our own interpretation of the poems to be found in "Back to the Nameless One." Miss Montlack thought that your penetrating remarks concerning the poem "The Glory of Illumination" constituted the practice of this discipline in which we ourselves indulge -- and that made her feel as if you were one of us.

Please be assured of our very deep esteem.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Leona F. Macy

Leona F. Macy.

LFM:bf
encl.



THE INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUES

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Nov. 1, 1944

Mrs. Franklin Merrell-Wolff
800 - 8th St.
San Fernando, California

Dear Mrs. Wolff:

I should like to let you know about the next issue of our magazine *The Biosophical Review*. It will be devoted to the synthesis of Eastern and Western thought. We should of course be delighted to include whatever Dr. Merrell-Wolff would care to write along this line. The article need not be long (1000 words would be welcome) but we would like to have him represented because we feel that he is an outstanding achiever of synthesis and has much to convey to our readers. Won't you let me know whether this would be possible?

With cordial good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Francis Merchant

Francis Merchant

Sent Nov 14-44