

**THOUGHTS ON "AT
THE FEET OF THE
MASTER"**

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Thoughts on "At the feet of the master" by George S. Arundale

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UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA

BY

GEORGE S. ARUNDALE

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE following chapters are reprinted from a series of Correspondence Studies on *At the Feet of the Master* which I have been writing for the last two years on behalf of members of the Order of the Servants of the Star.

I have left the studies practically as I originally wrote them—permitting myself only a verbal alteration here and there. There may be a certain amount of repetition, since I began writing the series in Bude, Cornwall, in 1914, and only finished them in Adyar, Madras, in 1918. And there has been no time to rewrite them or even to submit them to a thorough revision.

But some of my friends think them helpful, and at least they may draw the attention of their readers to the wonderful book which inspired them. For myself, I can truly say that *At the Feet of the Master* is my constant companion, guide, and mentor. Ever by my side is the little copy given me by my young teacher. That which he heard, I am trying to understand; and I find in the priceless words in which the teaching is clothed all that, indeed far, far more than, I need for discipline and training. *At the Feet of the Master* has an appropriate message for every human being who at all strives to lead an unselfish life.

I earnestly commend it to teachers and students of all faiths and of all races. With the companion volume *Education as Service*, a teacher or student has a complete guide for daily life. And the truths these two great volumes enshrine are the truths upon the recognition and following of which all true citizenship depends. *At the Feet of the Master* and *Education as Service* are Heralds of the New Age, Signs of the Coming Times, and should be carefully studied by those who seek to co-operate with the future, and who are not slaves of prejudice and custom.

Adyar, Madras, S.
1918.

GEORGE S. ARUNDALE

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CHAPTER I

THE GIVING OF THE TEACHINGS

In many ways the little book we are going to study together is the most important gift the world has received for hundreds of years, for the words are from the lips of a mighty Teacher, known to the world as Pythagoras and to some of us as the blessed Master Koot Hoomi, the Master K. H., as He is generally called in Theosophical literature. I must take for granted that you know who Masters are—if not you will find plenty of information in such a book as Herbert Whyte's *The Great Teachers*, or Mrs. Besant's *The Masters and the Way to Them*. Let us proceed to see how these instructions apply, so that we may follow them intelligently.

In the Preface, Mrs. Besant writes: "The teachings . . . were given to him by his Master in preparing him for Initiation." Several questions arise here: How were they given to him? Where were they given to him? What is Initiation?

HOW THE TEACHINGS WERE GIVEN

Question No. 1. You probably know that some people are able to be quite useful on the astral plane—I must leave the explanation of this term to some friend, if you do not understand it—and try to help in all good work as much as they can. Many of you who are reading these lines probably help very much when the physical body is asleep and the astral body is the vehicle in which for the time you are living and working. But there is quite as much learning as helping, and many young people, or those who are not yet very far advanced, gather round some one more advanced and learn much that is not only useful to them on the astral plane but helpful on the physical plane also. These elders in turn sit

at the feet* of someone who knows yet more, while a few will be receiving instructions from the Masters Themselves.

Now Alcyone—to give the name used to mark the soul apart from the various bodies he has been wearing life after life—is one of these elders, “young in body verily, but not in Soul,” as Mrs. Besant tells us in the Preface. Marked out for a special destiny, he is privileged to receive instruction direct from the Master’s lips, and he is told to write down each morning the phrases which sum up and express the teachings he has received during the night. Alcyone is in a special position because he was already a pupil of the Master when these particular teachings were begun, and they were, therefore, intended to help him to reach quickly the next stage of his spiritual journey—Initiation. The language, it will be noticed, is very simple, for the Master was, in this case, addressing Himself to a physical brain which was still very young, and so was careful to speak in such terms that the young brain might remember and understand the next day. Every sentence, indeed, is exceedingly clear, because Alcyone did not then know much English—the teachings were given in the autumn and winter of 1909—and only a very little was taught at a time, partly in order that he might remember all that was said and partly in order that he might practice each suggestion as it came. Out of the body he knew much more, of course; but each lower body is a limitation of the one next above (of less dense matter, perhaps I should say, as there is no “above” or “below”), and the teaching had to be adapted to the needs of the lower bodies, so that they might be brought under perfect control.

I do not know whether the Master’s physical body was asleep when He gave the teachings. Probably the Master retires early, for He can use all His bodies perfectly, and therefore, functions as easily out of the physical body as in—perhaps more easily, since the matter of other bodies is less dense. If so, as Alcyone would not be at the Master’s house until, perhaps, nine or even later, the teaching would be

* An expression which figuratively expresses “learning from” and in the East is literally true.