

December 2008

## A COURAGEOUS ENDURANCE

Theosophists are familiar with The Golden Stairs,\* a list of precepts for living the spiritual life written by H. P. Blavatsky, one of which is “a courageous endurance of personal injustice.” We often recite such lofty phrases without fully realizing their implications, without considering how we might react should a great injustice be perpetrated against us. When confronted with minor injustices, we may even question whether it is possible for us to live up to such high ideals in this imperfect world.

Therefore it helps to see living examples of men and women who have translated some of these spiritual guidelines into action. Occasionally, these exemplars show up in unexpected ways.

A couple of years ago, the *Chicago Tribune* carried a front-page story describing how a 49-year-old man accused of rape and sent to prison had been exonerated by new DNA evidence after being incarcerated for ten years. I found myself wondering how I would have fared had I been in that unfortunate man’s shoes. Would not such an experience have left me completely embittered and full of despair?

What impressed me about the *Tribune* story was the man’s reaction to this tragic injustice. Initially, he responded to the situation with bitterness and anger. What normal person wouldn’t? But after spending a few years in prison, he began to find solace and healing through his religious faith. “Gradually, I let it go. I put it in the Creator’s hands and I became at peace with my surroundings.” Although he continued the legal fight to prove his innocence, this man found inner peace before he knew that DNA evidence would exonerate him. He endured years of incarceration with grace and gentle grace and unrelenting courage.

This man may not be familiar with H. P. Blavatsky or The Golden Stairs, but I think HPB would be proud of him.

David P. Bruce  
Director of Education

---

\* <http://www.theosophical.org/resources/articles/GoldenStairs.pdf>