

Freedom of Thought

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasize the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher, or writer, from H. P. Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties. The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of the Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of the Society, and also fearlessly to exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

Freedom of the Society

The Theosophical Society, while cooperating with all other bodies whose aims and activities make such cooperation possible, is and must remain an organization entirely independent of them, not committed to any objects save its own, and intent on developing its own work on the broadest and most inclusive lines, so as to move towards its own goal as indicated in and by the pursuit of those objects and that Divine Wisdom which in the abstract is implicit in the title 'The Theosophical Society'.

Since Universal Brotherhood and the Wisdom are undefined and unlimited, and since there is complete freedom for each and every member of the Society in thought and action, the Society seeks ever to maintain its own distinctive and unique character by remaining free of affiliation or identification with any other organization.



THE THEOSOPHIST

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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The Theosophical Society is composed of students, belonging to any religion in the world or to none, who are united by their approval of the Society's Objects, by their wish to remove religious antagonisms and to draw together men of goodwill, whatsoever their religious opinions, and by their desire to study religious truths and to share the results of their studies with others. Their bond of union is not the profession of a common belief, but a common search and aspiration for Truth. They hold that Truth should be sought by study, by reflection, by purity of life, by devotion to high ideals, and they regard Truth as a prize to be striven for, not as a dogma to be imposed by authority. They consider that belief should be the result of individual study or intuition, and not its antecedent, and should rest on knowledge, not on assertion. They extend tolerance to all, even to the intolerant, not as a privilege they bestow but as a duty they perform, and they seek to remove ignorance, not punish it. They see every religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom and prefer its study to its condemnation, and its practice to proselytism. Peace is their watchword, as Truth is their aim.

Theosophy is the body of truths which forms the basis of all religions, and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any. It offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and which demonstrates the justice and the love which guide its evolution. It puts death in its rightful place, as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway to a fuller and more radiant existence. It restores to the world the Science of the Spirit, teaching man to know the Spirit as himself and the mind and body as his servants. It illuminates the scriptures and doctrines of religions by unveiling their hidden meanings, and thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence, as they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition.

Members of the Theosophical Society study these truths, and theosophists endeavour to live them. Everyone willing to study, to be tolerant, to aim high, and to work perseveringly, is welcomed as a member, and it rests with the member to become a true theosophist.

Multidimensionality and No Empty Space

TIM BOYD

ONE of the profound principles that was brought to the world by the reintroduction of Theosophy through H. P. Blavatsky, was the idea that we are “multidimensional” beings who inhabit a multidimensional universe. Great effort was placed on defining and describing the various planes of Nature in which we function. From a theosophical point of view our tendency is to think in terms of seven planes. The idea that our normal level of perception is just one of many is much easier for us to accept now than it was at the time that HPB was presenting these ideas — a time when the electromagnetic spectrum was just being discovered and defined.

Although it may not be uppermost in our minds, we are aware that the space around us is filled with various waves of different kinds. Anyone who has a mobile phone knows that when the phone rings, it is because a specific patterning of the energies of a particular type are the cause. These energies are surrounding us everywhere at every moment, but we only perceive the smallest part of that spectrum. We are most aware of a limited band of the physical dimension. If we burn our fingers, our attention becomes

focused on this physical body. Everything related to the sensations is what links us to the physical world — that is one level.

Similarly, with our feelings, when we are sad or happy, we are keenly aware of that emotional level of consciousness that is different from the physical. The same applies to the thoughts of various qualities — those rooted in concrete physical objects and those more conceptual and abstract. These are the planes of consciousness with which we are most familiar. Yet in the teachings of Theosophy it is said that there are dimensions, planes of being, on which we can and do function that are significantly beyond these.

Why are we not aware of these more extended dimensions of our being? HPB said: “Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, the only realities.” When we are very angry or sad about something, we forget about our body, we forget to eat, or to sleep. If our mind is centred in the emotional realm, only the emotions are real to us — nothing above or below. The plane of consciousness on which our awareness is centred, will determine,

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for us, what is real at any given moment.

An important application of this principle involves acquainting ourselves with the various levels of consciousness on which we function. There is a familiar meditation that goes through this process. Sometimes it is described as a meditation on the bodies, where, in our meditation practice, we focus our attention first on the sensations of the physical body. As we are sitting, we become aware of the pressure of the seat, of the air around us, the lights that we see, we become aware of the physical realm and the sensations crossing through our consciousness. As we deepen in this state of attention, people can begin to become aware of the beating of their heart, they can feel the coursing of their blood, often even feeling the movement of the nerve energy through the body, which is happening all the time, but generally beneath the level of our awareness.

We observe these sensations and through that process the recognition arises that because we can see and observe these sensations, we are something more. We are not this physical body. This process is then repeated with the emotions, with the thoughts of various types, and with the mind itself. The process involves attention, observation, and recognition that this is not all that there is, that there is more. The object of this type of exercise is that we become familiarized with the various levels on which we are capable of functioning. This familiarity provides for the opportunity to be effective in utilizing the

various aspects of our being. This multidimensionality directly relates to the principle of “No Empty Space”.

The idea about “No Empty Space” is that this is an intelligent universe, and everywhere there is intelligence. Intelligence adopts various forms, some of which we see, most of which we do not. There is a wonderful phrase in the Mahatma Letters which speaks about our interaction with the surrounding space and the forms that inhabit that space. In KH’s first letter to A. O. Hume, he says, “man is continually peopling his current in space with a world of his own, crowded with his offspring of fancies, desires, impulses, and passions.” Each thought goes out from our mind, assumes a form, a living thing that attracts others of its kind. According to the power of our thought, this entity lives, and moves, and circulates within the shared environment of thought for a longer or lesser time, according to the power of our thought.

Speaking about things beyond our normal range of perception can sometimes seem strange or other-worldly. One of the advices that we are given in trying to come to grips with these more hidden dimensions is the Hermetic axiom: “As it is above, so it is below; as it is within, so it is without.” In other words, there is no break in the laws that govern this physical, emotional, or any other realm in which we exist. Taking the example of attracting different life forms to the thoughts that we produce, a helpful analogy might be: If we were to take a

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bowl of honey and put it outside the door, it would attract certain types of creatures: bees, butterflies, ants, and so on. This is not something that is mysterious to us, we witness it all the time. Similarly, if we were to put rotting garbage outside, it would also attract a different sort of beings. It would not be the butterflies or bees, but flies, maggots, and so forth. Similarly, the “fragrance” of our thoughts attracts a host of beings. In the words of the Mahatma, the current that goes out from us is continually populated in this very same way.

Likewise, if we have ever had the experience of sitting in the presence of someone who is depressed or angry — we do not have to know them, or converse with them, or to have eye contact with them — if we are not careful, we will be affected. In the presence of depression, we will leave feeling depleted, if we have not taken steps to avoid it. In the face of anger, we will feel uneasy or unsafe. There is an atmosphere, a population, that is drawn around every one of us. Our job is choosing the crowd that we will hang out with!

In the Ageless Wisdom tradition, or any spiritual tradition, we find many differences from place to place, but there is one thing that is consistent no matter the tradition involved. In the East, the term used to describe this is “mantra”. In the West, we know it as “prayer”. Every tradition speaks of the benefit and effectiveness of right mantra or right prayer. In part, it involves acquainting ourselves with other levels of being that are con-

tinually functioning within us and around us. Just as there are forces that are attracted to anger, hatred, and sadness, there are also those that are attracted to peace. There are peace lovers that will gather just like the butterflies gather around a flower. Different traditions have various names for them — angels, devas, and others.

We are aware of specific powerful mantras and prayers. When Muhammad was called to recite the first verses of the Qur’an, he could not read, as he was illiterate. When the Archangel Gabriel appeared before him and held up the tablet and asked him to recite what was written, Muhammad said: “I can’t recite; I can’t read!” The Archangel said: “Recite, read!”, and Muhammad read, and his recitation became the Qur’an, which is the recitation of all of the many truths that were communicated to him in this manner.

In *Light on the Path* we find a fascinating passage which refers to reading. It says: “To read, in the occult sense, is to read with the eyes of the spirit.” If you ask, you will have. Then the question is asked as to why ordinary people are asking all the time, but they receive nothing. The response is that ordinarily, when we ask, we ask with the mind, and the response we are capable of receiving does not go beyond the boundaries of our limited mind. But to *really* ask is not just to look for information, that asking comes from a hunger that we have inside us — a hunger born of a spiritual aspiration. Only then do we

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receive an answer, and then we see, read, recite. But until that point, we are only asking with the mind, and will receive answers worthy of such a mind.

Prayer, or mantra, has its roots in this hunger for the Divine. Many mantras and prayers have a certain spiritual power just in the qualities of their sound. But it is only when a deeper intention, and the understanding that enables us to become linked with that prayer exist, that it becomes something capable of connecting us. A prayer from the Vedic tradition we are familiar with that is said to be very powerful is the Gāyatri Mantra. I. K. Taimni has much to say about it in his excellent book *Gāyatri — The Daily Religious Practice of the Hindus*. But there is a preliminary practice involved before we even enter the actual prayer. It involves our introducing ourselves to higher forces that operate at various planes of our being. It is associated with the several chakras as representations of fields of consciousness: Om Bhuh (root), Om Bhuvah (spleen), Om Suvah (navel), Om Mahah (heart), Om Janaha (throat), Om Tapah (brow), Om Satyam (crown). This is a regular practice that involves familiarizing ourselves with intelligence and powers that reside in Nature and within us. This is the initial practice of the Gāyatri. The practice is recommended to be done on a daily basis. For the rest, I refer you to Taimni's book.

Another prayer that I will share is an anonymous one from the Christian tradition. I first encountered it as part of the introduction to a little book on practical

mysticism, *The Cloud of Unknowing*. Because it is a Christian prayer, it speaks to God as the Divine:

Oh God, unto whom all hearts lie open,
unto whom desire is eloquent,
and from whom no secret thing is hidden;
purify the thoughts of my heart
with the outpouring of your spirit
that I may love you with a perfect love
and praise you as you deserve.

In this particular example, we can analyse mentally, but the more important part is the connection with the spiritual aspiration within. This prayer begins with a recognition of that which is divine and limitless, and there is a certain freeing aspect to the idea of a recognition of God, Unity, Oneness, unto whom every heart is completely open and seen. There is a certain freedom in the sense that there is no need to defend ourselves against the Divine. All is open “from whom no secret thing is hidden”.

Anyone who has had the experience of living in this world for a certain number of years, has had the experience of behaving at some point in ways that probably they wish they had not. Very often a great deal of energy is expended in trying to hold these “secret” things in the heart, to keep them hidden. Perhaps it is not something good to go and tell your neighbour but, certainly, in the quiet of your own meditation, to be able to feel the openness is a freeing potential again.

Eloquence is a way of speaking that is persuasive. “Unto whom desire is

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eloquent” refers to that desire which persuades the Divine to visit with us, to live within us, to move from inside of us to outside. Our desire is to unite ourselves with the Divine, to have the experience of the Unity, of Oneness. This desire is persuasive to the removal of personal barriers. This is the recognition aspect of this prayer. The next part is an appeal, a request, to “purify the thoughts of my heart”, those thoughts that are coursing through my heart from moment to moment. Why? So that “I may love you”, so that I may express a love that is limitless, that is Divine, “with a perfect

love and praise you as you deserve”.

The question I will end with is: What is the praise that is deserved by that which is Divine, by that Oneness, and by all of its expressions? Does it mean we sing songs about the beauty of things, or say words to each other, or does it mean something else? I would suggest that perhaps the most profound praise that we can give is the recognition of the presence of this Divine in every one, in every thing, in all of the space that we seem to think is empty, that it is ever-present, ever-powerful, all-knowing. This is the best praise we are capable of giving. ✧

The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honours the servant and has forgotten the gift. We will not solve the problems of the world from the same level of thinking we were at when we created them. More than anything else, this new century demands new thinking: We must change our materially based analyses of the world around us to include broader, more multidimensional perspectives.

Albert Einstein

Theosophical Masters — Buddha and Buddhism

WAYNE GATFIELD

IN Galle, Sri Lanka, on 25 May 1880 Madame H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel H. S. Olcott “took *pānsil*”, that is they were formally acknowledged as Buddhists. In his *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. 2, Col Olcott writes: “We had previously declared ourselves to be Buddhists long before, in America, both privately and publicly, so that this was but a formal confirmation of our previous professions.” Later on, he adds:

I can say that if Buddhism contained a single dogma that we were compelled to accept, we would not have taken the *pānsil* . . . Our Buddhism was that of the Master-Adept Gautama Buddha, which was identically the Wisdom Religion of the Aryan Upanishads, and the soul of all the ancient world-faiths.

So why did HPB and Col Olcott proclaim themselves to be Buddhists? To understand this we have to look at the Theosophical Masters who gave us the teachings.

In *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* Master KH says that the “*Chiefs* want a ‘Brotherhood of Humanity’, a real Uni-

versal Fraternity started”. They had on several occasions proclaimed themselves to be followers of the Buddha. One of the Chiefs just mentioned, known to us as the Mahachohan, stated in a letter:

That *we*, the devoted followers of that spirit incarnate of absolute self sacrifice, of philanthropy, divine kindness, as of all the highest virtues attainable on this earth of sorrow, the man of men, Gautama Buddha, should ever allow the Theosophical Society to represent the *embodiment of selfishness*, the refuge of the few with no thought in them for the many, is a strange idea, my brothers.

Gautama Buddha was born around 621 BC and was just one in a long line of Buddhas. He was part of a spiritual lineage going back millions of years. It is clear that the Theosophical Society was started to continue the work of the Buddha in the sense that it was to follow the path of compassion that the Buddha taught. Later in the same letter the Mahachohan states:

Among the few glimpses obtained by

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Europeans of Tibet and its mystical hierarchy of “perfect lamas”, there is one which was correctly understood and described. “The incarnations of the Boddhisattwa Padma Pani or Avalokitesvara and of Tsong Kapa, that of Amitabha, relinquish at their death the attainment of Buddhahood — i.e. the summum bonum of bliss, and of individual *personal* felicity — that they might be born again and again for the benefit of mankind.” (Rhys Davids) In other words, that they might be again and again subjected to misery, imprisonment in flesh, and all the sorrows of life, provided that by such a self-sacrifice repeated throughout long and dreary centuries they might become the means of securing salvation and bliss in the hereafter for a handful of men chosen among but one of the many races of mankind.

Theosophy teaches that the duties of the Dalai Lama of Tibet are more temporal and political; he is said to be an incarnation of Avalokitesvara, whereas the Tashi Lama or Panchen Lama’s duties are more spiritual. They are said to be incarnations of Tsong Kha Pa, who reformed Buddhism in the 14th century AD. The perception of the outer world is the opposite. Also, the Panchen Lama at that time is said to have been in contact with the Theosophical Masters living in the Himalayas. Whether this is still true is open to conjecture, given the fact that the Chinese are reputed to have kidnapped the Panchen Lama and replaced him with one of their own choice.

Very little was understood during H. P. Blavatsky’s life regarding Bud-

dhism. Now times have changed, and there are many more Buddhist scriptures translated by actual practitioners, not just intellectuals as they were in Victorian times; and the translations are much more accurate and infused with spirit. The only book at that time that contained such a spirit was *The Voice of the Silence*, translated by H. P. Blavatsky. This book introduced the concept of the Bodhisattva to the West and taught the path of compassion and the means to reach it by following the *pāramitā* Path. This was nothing new, it had been known in the East for centuries, but H. P. Blavatsky was the first to bring it to the attention of the West.

It is accepted that the *pāramitā* Path is the one followed by those who wish to tread the Bodhisattva path in contrast to the self-centred Pratyeka Buddha path. These *pāramitā*-s are listed in *The Voice of the Silence* as:

1. DĀNA, the key of charity and love immortal.
2. ŚILA, the key of harmony in word and act, the key that counterbalances the cause and the effect, and leaves no further room for Karmic action.
3. KSHĀNTI, patience sweet, that nought can ruffle.
4. VIRĀGA, indifference to pleasure and to pain, illusion conquered, truth alone perceived.
5. VIRYA, the dauntless energy that fights its way to the supernal truth, out of the mire of lies terrestrial.
6. DHYĀNA, whose golden gate once opened leads the Naljor [a saint or adept]

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toward the realm of *Sat* eternal and its ceaseless contemplation.

7. PRAJÑĀ, the key to which makes of a man a god, creating him a Bodhisattva, son of the *Dhyāni-s*.

In Buddhism these are called the six perfections because the fourth, *virāga*, is not included in traditional Buddhist teaching. There are said to be ten of them for the committed priesthood.

The position given to Gautama Buddha by the Masters is a very high one and it is stated that he was a sixth round man and that even he in time would have to be reincarnated on a much higher level. In *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, Letter XVII, Master KH states:

He differed from other men as much in his physical appearance as in spirituality and knowledge. Yet even he escaped further incarnations but on this earth; and, when the last of the sixth round men of the third ring is gone out of this earth, the Great Teacher will have to get reincarnated on the next planet. Only, and since He sacrificed Nirvanic bliss and Rest for the salvation of his fellow creatures He will be reborn in the highest — the *seventh* ring of the upper planet. Till then He will *overshadow* every decimillennium (let us rather say and add “*has* overshadowed already”) a chosen individual who generally overturned the destinies of nations. See *Isis*, Vol. I, pp. 34 and 35 last and first para. on the pages.

And the Master KH wrote to A. O. Hume:

There never was a time within or before

the so-called historical period when our predecessors were not moulding events and “making history”, the facts of which were subsequently and invariably distorted by “historians” to suit contemporary prejudices. Are you quite sure that the visible heroic figures in the successive dramas were not often but their puppets? We never pretended to be able to draw nations in the mass to this or that crisis in spite of the general drift of the world’s cosmic relations. The cycles must run their rounds. Periods of mental and moral light and darkness succeed each other, as day does night. The major and minor yugas must be accomplished according to the established order of things. And we, borne along on the mighty tide, can only modify and direct some of its minor currents.

So we must remember that Gautama Buddha is not just a character from the past but a living entity still active in the world. He is the fourth Buddha in this round and the fifth spiritual teacher, as the first was a Dhyān Chohan as will be the last. The Dhyān Chohan will bridge the gap from one round to the next.

The important thing to remember is that spiritual teachers come to our aid periodically and there are cycles within cycles, wheels within wheels; there are the great teachers such as the Buddha and lesser ones. Theosophy tells us that there is a guardian wall that protects humanity from falling victim to even worse evils in this age of *Kali* or darkness. The higher teachers are able to overshadow certain individuals to influence them for the good of humanity, although they would

probably just plant ideas in their minds and leave it to the individuals or groups to put them into actual practice. So we have to realize that we are being helped and watched. A very high being is said to be the Silent Watcher who has voluntarily given up nirvana to be the fountain source of all lesser teachers. And Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavadgītā* says that he will appear whenever there is an increase of evil in the world. Kṛṣṇa is in one sense our Higher Self, and if we have trust and true faith it will always come to our rescue when we are facing danger of any kind. On a different level the same force will work for the good of the whole planet.

Buddhism is generally split into two divisions — the Mahāyāna and Hinayāna or Theravāda schools. The first is said to be more in tune with the heart doctrine that came from the Buddha's heart and the second from his head — more intellectually orientated. The Lotus Sutra, which was said to be one of his last teachings, introduces the idea of the *ekayāna* — the one vehicle — saying the other vehicles were just preparatory for the final teaching, which emphasises that everyone has the Buddha nature.

This is the keynote not just of Buddha but of all the great teachers throughout history. They came to awaken us to our true natures, and they all gave us hints as to how to achieve this — but not dogmatic rules which were created by man. I think we have to find our own way to reach the goal; the main thing is to become aware that we are spiritual beings and to begin to act as such.

We follow rules in religion and so on, but many of these are only what certain people have found to be conducive to their own development. It is really a do-it-yourself process, but guidelines are needed from those who have gone before. It is encouraging to know that there are those who have volunteered to come to earth to keep us in touch with who we really are, especially during difficult times. We also have our own guru when we begin to awaken; our own Higher Self. The Mahachohan wrote:

All of us have to get rid of our own Ego, the illusory apparent *self*, to recognise our true self in a transcendental divine life. But if we would not be selfish we must strive to make other people see that truth, to recognize the reality of that transcendental self, the Buddha, the Christ or God of every preacher.

Buddhists call this true self the true man or woman. It is who we are in reality when we have stripped away all the masks. Confucians prefix an adept's name with 'Real Human'. We become human when we take the stance of being spiritual beings when we act and work from that stance; even if we fail a hundred times we come back and *try* as the Masters say.

We are part of a hierarchy, while divorcing ourselves from the material idea of a hierarchy. It means that consciousness is stepped down through a whole host of Beings until it reaches us, but in our essence we are those Beings; we share the same spirit, it is just that they have awakened to it more than we have.

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There is only one consciousness and the idea of separateness is an illusion. There are only varying degrees of awakening.

I think we should take heart from the fact that the real part of us is untouched by all that goes on in the world around us. In the final analysis those on the side of the Good, the True and the Beautiful cannot be defeated. If there are those who kill the body they cannot kill the Soul. Conscience is the stirring of the Divinity within us; to stifle the conscience is to become soul dead. And so many in this world are encouraged to stifle their conscience and become hard-hearted.

Generally the world bases its thoughts and actions on wrong premises. People try to hang on to life and prolong life, not really knowing what life is. Life is life — it goes on forever and this earth is one of the most limited and constricted manifestations of it; what we call “death” is actually an expansion of life, a gateway to a greater existence. A step nearer to what we are in essence.

Buddha taught much about the

transience of this earthly life, but did that to urge us to find a wider understanding of what we are inwardly and to help to lead us onwards on the path to Immortality.

At the time that the Theosophical Society was founded, the Masters could see the way the world was going and they decided to try to continue the work that the Buddha started and that he had been periodically doing for centuries through many individuals and groups. So they initiated an organisation to do just that; they released a little more information about the constitution of man and the universe to help this process on. The motivation was always to enable members of the Society to gain the knowledge to help others. To bring about a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity regardless of race, creed, sex, caste or colour and not merely to gain knowledge for our own use. This work continues to this day and it is as important as ever to realize this and to continue to live and promote genuine theosophical teachings. ✧

The doctrine we promulgate being the only true one, must, supported by such evidence as we are preparing to give, become ultimately triumphant as every other truth. Yet it is absolutely necessary to inculcate it gradually enforcing its theories, unimpeachable facts for those who know, with direct inferences deducted from and corroborated by the evidence furnished by modern exact science. That is why Col HSO, who works but to revive Buddhism, may be regarded as one who labours in the true path of Theosophy, far more than any other man who chooses as his goal the gratification of his own ardent aspirations for occult knowledge. Buddhism stripped of its superstitions is eternal truth, and he who strives for the latter is striving for Theos-*sophia*, Divine Wisdom, which is a synonym of truth.

Maha Chohan

Of Enemies and Friends — II

PRADEEP TALWALKER

LET us now consider the other five enemies. The first of these is the sex urge, *kāma*. Why do we call it an enemy? If the sex urge vanishes there would not be a future generation. Sixty billion souls are eagerly awaiting their next birth; what would happen to them? Why, what will happen to *us* if we do not get a chance to reincarnate and improve ourselves? Call it an enemy or what you will, the end of the sex urge passion, *kāmarāga* (*rāga* = passion), will never do. Another positive side of the sex urge is that because of it a person gives up the vagrancy of bachelorhood and tries to be “cultured”, in order to impress the opposite sex. From coarseness he turns to refinement. Of course, many lives pass in this education; but afterwards, as his own family grows, he also learns unconditional love. He loves his children unconditionally; but with time he also begins to love society at large in the same manner. It is reciprocated, which is very pleasing.

He willingly starts spending an increasing part of his wealth and time on the needy. The seed planted by the sex

urge grows into a tree that supports all. Thus, *kāma* is the promoter-builder of the householder stage (*grhasthāśrama*), which is considered the most important of the four stages of life (*āśrama*-s), as it feeds the other three. If there was no householder (*grhastha*) around, who would sustain the celibate, the retired, the hermit, the guest, the mendicant? *Kāma* is the ladder that leads to the “unconditional love for all”, an elegant emotion that gets generated in the whole process. The self-engrossed person turns his attention outward, first to a few near ones, then to society at large, out of *kāma*. It is true that under the sway of *tamas* and *rajas*, a man turned blind with *kāma* commits blunders of all kinds; but with evolving higher pride he learns to control the irrepressible sex urge. Besides, with the rise of loftier emotions, the urge itself gradually diminishes.

We are told that by the fourth Great Initiation *kāmarāga* is fully under control; but even before the first Initiation, the sex drive is restrained due to the compulsions of one’s public image under *rajoguna*. If we keep a hold on our desires, *kāma*

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can be a very important aide in spiritual progress. Gradual development of such restraint seems to be built into the divine scheme and it gets sublimated into unconditional love for the entire Creation. That should go to show the special place of *kāma* in the Grand Design. *Kāma* being a partner of pride, it helps the “self” become all-inclusive.

The next “*ripu*” (enemy) is *krodha* (anger). On a personal level, anger awakens more under *tamas*, and even more under *rajas*, when we have a grievance. It spurs us into action to seek redress. As personal considerations subside, anger also subsides. Anger getting aroused for the sake of others (for example, when the defenceless are unjustly treated) has a more positive role. Controlling evil peacefully in the society is best, but that takes great spiritual strength. When a man does not have such strength, anger lends him the courage to stand up to evil. Mighty powers kneel before righteous indignation. Weaklings look upon such an individual as their saviour, gather hope, and unite under him. British trade unions got formed to face the injustice of industrialists and mine owners. The movement spread due to its effectiveness, ignoring laws that sought to curb it. This may not have been possible without someone getting angry; workers would probably never have got justice otherwise. Of course, anger has to be handled wisely by the new leader, in his newfound strength. He must be equally just to both sides.

Krodha is likened to fire; so long as

fire is under control it can be of service: from fixing our daily cup of tea, to running a train — or even bigger tasks. Care has to be taken to see that it *remains* under control. Otherwise it can lead to disaster. Even so, no one looks upon fire as an enemy. If fire is allowed to get out of hand, it is not the fault of the fire. So also with anger: it should not awaken for selfish motives; should not run away with our senses. If we go on working with a good motive, we slowly develop the ability to achieve success without awakening anger; we shall now see how.

As a man progresses spiritually, his mental strength increases. He is able to solve problems peacefully, without getting angry. True; but before that his inner mind has to become tranquil. When this is achieved, the mind is no longer agitated, anger does not get aroused. Looking at this from the other side, as long as anger *is* getting aroused, it shows lack of inner peace — a lot of spiritual work has still to be done. This is another useful aspect of *krodha*. This is a reason for even being *grateful* that we have anger. A thermometer shows fever rising; but would that make the thermometer our enemy? Anger points to a hot head. It is an indicator of our inner agitation, a shortcoming in our spiritual progress. But we can also use it positively, wisely. Once we do this, peace will reign in our heart: *krodha* will not go out of control.

Lobha (greed), the opposite of desirelessness, is our “enemy” number three. But if we are to be desireless right from the beginning, how are we going to make

material progress? How can we support our family? It is very much our duty to fulfil the needs of those who depend on us for their livelihood, to provide amenities according to the needs of the time that we live in. Without meeting worldly responsibilities we cannot be free to pursue spiritual progress. *Lobha*, like *kāma*, is essential to the householder. He cannot function without either. Of course, greed must not lead us to bad ways. We must not rob others; not yield to cupidity; not feel ownership for our wealth; not forget society at large.

But a householder *has* to earn sufficient means. Only after enjoying the experience of material progress (and crossing the pitfalls) in the high activity of *rajoguna*, do we feel the need for the spirituality of *sattvaguna*. For an all-round progress it is essential for the soul to go through the experience of material progress. Only after passing all the grades can we appear for graduation. No grade can be omitted. In the early grades, when the mind is undeveloped and knowledge limited, we are taught simpler lessons that we can assimilate at that stage. The rest of the learning follows in its turn. Greed is a part of the curriculum of the earlier grades. It is not only useful, it is basic — indispensable. It would be ingratitude to feel contempt for the earlier grades after reaching higher grades. When these grades are cleared, the *jivātma* (the “Ego”, the higher self that does not die, but grows in successive lives) of its own accord will give up *lobha* — we need not be too concerned about that.

The fourth enemy is delusion, *moha*. Literally *moha* means fainting. In the science of the Spirit, it means taking *māyā* (illusion) for the real. *Everything* that has been created by Brahman (the Absolute), is *māyā*. All planes, from the grossest to the subtlest, constitute *māyā*. The myriad veils of *māyā* hide the ultimate reality. It entices us and fascinates us. The infinite diversity in *māyā*, wealth of all types yielded by it, its insoluble riddles, tantalise our curiosity and desire. Enchanted by the deception caused by *māyā*, we go on lifting one veil after another. Falling more and more in love, developing deeper and deeper devotion for the *Creator* of *māyā*, ultimately we remove all the veils and transcend *māyā* once and for all, reaching Brahman. The Path is arduous, long, and slippery, with no latitude for error. It is filled with thorns; but it is also fragrant with flowers never smelt before, sweet with fruits never tasted before — all provided by *māyā*. The thorns discipline us, flowers give us joy, and fruits sustain us: help us stay on the Path braving all hazards. We plod to the Destination keeping balance, eyes wide open, one step at a time — *holding on to māyā’s hand*. Are we going to call *māyā* an *enemy*?

Envy is the sixth enemy (*matsara*). The word *matsara* in today’s usage is rather harsh, and indeed supports this translation. But it is a word with several shades of meaning. Like *lobha*, *matsara* also has its positive side. The earliest shades of the word (as they appear in the *R̥g-veda*) were close to joyfulness. It would imply only the contest created

by one person going ahead of the other. The baser shades came later. It need not make us wince. Everyone is not taken by jealousy when someone goes ahead; a few *are* like that, but the majority take it in their stride. If the negative side of *matsara* is covetousness, the positive side can be healthy competition. If *matsara* is going to make us compete and goad us ahead, what is the harm in it? If in the infancy of our divine spirit, the *jivātma*, we are able to make progress by comparison, surely at a later stage we can set our own pace. Of course, *matsara* has to be kept in check, limited only to healthy contest. Evidently, we must not be covetous. The Ramāyāna and Mahabharata (and even the European mythologies) abound with examples of what catastrophes can be brought on if *matsara* goes out of hand. (Perhaps that is how the word acquired its present unhealthy meaning.) So we must be careful. If we are able to make progress without being aided by *matsara*, fine; but that does not happen in the less evolved person's life. *Matsara* is also an experience that the *jivātma* has to go through. This also is an inseparable part of God's scheme of things. It would be ignorance to look on it as an enemy. As the *jivātma* evolves and the illusion of separateness vanishes, he will not *wish* to go ahead of others. He will do his best to take *everyone* along. Once he is so developed, he will be free not only of covetousness, but even of competition. *Matsara* will be sidestepped altogether, effortlessly.

That is the long and short of the six

enemies (*shadripu*). If anyone can achieve the Goal without their help, nice; but that does not happen. The spiritually weak, in the infancy of human births, need these props; it may be why they have been so arranged by God in his infinite wisdom. We have to climb the heights of spirituality by using these stairs. It would be wrong to keep loitering on the stairs for the fun of it — that will delay our progress; but it will be ingratitude to look on them with disdain when we come to a higher storey of the Great Edifice. Even a slight trace of an emotion like ingratitude will greatly harm our progress! There are still many heights to be scaled. These props had been used by the Adepts when they were struggling; and those who are using them today (which really includes all of us still stuck in rebirths) will one day *be* Adepts. So, what are disparagingly called the six enemies are really not *shadripu*, they should properly be called the six teachers, *shatsikshaka*, or the six steps, *shatsopāna* even more aptly; but it is not our aim here to change the language. So we will continue with the old epithet — the enemy (*ripu*). As long as we cleanse our point of view, that should be plenty.

As a person rises above the six enemies he is no longer under the sway of the *tamoguna* or the *rajoguna*. He has graduated to the *sattvaguna*, the quality of goodness, reality, truth. (The Sanskrit adjective *sat* variously means “good, real, true”; *-tva* is a suffix like “-ness”; *guna* is quality.) Those ruled by the *sattvaguna* are no longer grasped by the lower

emotions. They are benign, living for others — an exemplary state. But we must not get stuck even in this stage. There is more progress to be made. As we go on working for the good of others, we come to realize that we are being aided by very able powers. We get success disproportionate to our effort. Evidently, we are only an instrument in his hands for execution of the good deeds — the real doer is God. This naturally is a very humbling experience. Our hearts are filled with gratitude. Total surrender to his Will follows. We are freed of all responsibility for whatever we do or whatever result we get. We are also freed of the last vestiges of pride for being the doer of deeds, that make us look for the reward of “our” good deeds. We do not have a separate will of our own any longer. This way we transcend *all three guna-s*, and become *gunātita* (beyond the *guna-s*).

The saints have illuminated this Path. They were all far above insults and tortures. Jesus Christ comes to mind: an epitome of forgiveness, feeling compassion even for those who crucified him.

So far so good, but what about mosquitoes, bedbugs, cockroaches, and others? They are a real nuisance. If there is any letup in cleaning up after supper, cockroaches and ants complete the job. Unwanted service, of course; but Nature does not permit us to slacken. If we and our neighbours keep the floors clean, the drains closed, the problem of cockroaches and ants is tackled.

Mosquitoes, eye flies, and houseflies

are, however, a different story. Settle down to meditate, and you hear the familiar hum. Eye flies go for the moisture in our half-closed eyes. Houseflies think the time just opportune to explore our skin and hair. It is mealtime for mosquitoes. What can be a sweeter menu than a man sitting quietly, eyes shut? So much for meditation. The world would have been a better place without these fellows, we are sure. Pest control companies thrive.

But then we remember the story of Yogananda Paramahansa in *Autobiography of a Yogi*. At the place of Sri Yukteswar, Yogananda’s guru, mosquitoes were in copious supply. Yogananda was permitted the use of a mosquito net, since he was used to it; but, seeing that Sri Yukteswar did not use a net, Yogananda also gave it up and found that mosquitoes no longer worried him. Mosquitoes are also said to have stopped biting Sri Aurobindo after he took to yoga. Nature is not partial. The rule that applied to these yogis must apply to everyone. Ramana Maharshi gave up his clothing and started his search for the Self at the age of sixteen. In the Himalayas and elsewhere innumerable aspirants meditate bare-bodied hours on end. These people do not use mosquito creams. Free of fear, they do not seek protection even from snakes or wild animals in jungles. We have read accounts, seen pictures of snakes and tigers sitting docilely at the feet of yogis. These cannot be figments of imagination. Had it not been the reality, yogis would never have been able to pursue their chosen course. Had *rshi-s*

been eaten up by animals on their entry into jungles, we would never have received the spiritual treasure left by them — they themselves would not have got it, to start with.

There is a message here for us. The attitude of being the “doer” of deeds (the so called *kartr bhāva*), or experiencer of deeds (*bhoktā bhāva*), generate agitation in our inner mind. The attitude of being a detached, dispassionate observer of whatever happens (the *sākshi bhāva* or *drashtā bhāva*) stills the agitation and makes the mind serene. Such is the experience of many.

This serenity seems to be very dear to the Invisible Powers. We get to see this even on the road. When we are calm, the traffic does not bother us. We are able to reach our destination without a problem — and faster. But if we are hurried and get annoyed with the traffic, it gets worse. People get in our way — and do things that annoy us more. Not just people, even Nature seems to harass the angry and the impatient. Dust in the wind, shingle spilled on the road, birds perched in trees sending down their droppings, all seem to lie in wait for our arrival. Traffic lights seem to be timed to turn red just when we are about to pass. The problems seem to be directly in proportion to the degree of (and contributing to) our agitation. Not being clairvoyant, one cannot say if there are any invisible causative forces behind this seeming conspiracy, but the experience is very telling. If you are one of the sufferers, try being a witness (assume *sākshi bhāva*) as an experiment (this is

possible in a second). Be a detached observer. The problems melt away.

Even mosquitoes vanish if we become a detached observer. The humming stops instantly. Normally, when we sit for meditation, in our enhanced awareness we start hearing even the minutest sounds which we would not hear otherwise. Even with this heightened hearing, the sound of mosquitoes is stilled. With an unsteady mind it is hard to retain this placid state, but actual experience will prompt us to work with a steady mind. What can be done for five seconds, can with continued effort be done for five minutes, five hours. People have done it. They have even explained how. We can follow their example. Insects do not come to us benevolently to calm our minds, but they also do not come to settle a vendetta. They come to feed. Still, it is a confirmed fact that they do not linger near a person with a calm mind. Anyone can try it. The science behind this may not be known to us at this stage. Is it due to any emanations in this state? We do not know; but we can benefit gratefully.

A mango is just as sweet without knowing the chemistry of its ripening. It just seems to be Nature’s clever design. An insect is neither our foe nor friend, but has a lesson for us (more teachers!) The lesson is before us, waiting to be taken. Meanwhile, we can develop gratitude and love for all creation including bugs, as a part of the creation. This gratefulness is itself soothing, and has a salutary effect on mind and body. It also brings joy back into our life. Not

being full of joy at all times is a crime against God.

A serene loving mind makes for a healthy body: germs of diseases seem to turn harmless. Love for all creation is our best armour. Even the most contagious epidemics do not affect the entire population, although all drink the same tap water, breathe the same city air. With a healthy body, we are very likely to remain unharmed (and also be able to help the victims).

Surely, we *will* sometimes fall ill, in keeping with that part of our karma which we are expected to deal with in *this* lifetime (our *prārabdha*); but now our tolerance is improved, and even the bedridden period will be spent serenely and joyfully. This being an experience necessary for our all-round growth, we shall feel gratitude even for the illness (or the accident) that keeps us in bed.

We should not resent any human being, animal, or even the six enemies. The resented person *may or may not* suffer by our hatred, but it is a *certainty* that *we* will suffer — the very attitude of hatred causes great attrition in us by its constant presence. *And we form a karmic bond with that person (which ensures continued suffering for both)*. As regards “attached” love, it retards our progress by keeping us stuck in the emotion. Here also, a karmic bond is created. Whether a bond is of attachment or resentment, the result is the same: it keeps us stuck in the rut of births and deaths. Attachment and resentment are two sides of the same coin. We do not want this coin. We want

freedom from both sides. What has been said in *Light on the Path* about friend and foe being alike, is also there in the *Bhagavadgītā* (XII.18,19) where telling Arjuna of the qualities of the devotee dear to him, the Blessed Lord (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) says: “Alike to foe and friend . . . that man is dear to me.”

Every situation in life, every happenstance, is for teaching us the secret of living. There are teachers all around us, and a lesson at every step. We have to take the full benefit, without hesitation. Benjamin Franklin, in his wisdom, wrote in *Poor Richard’s Almanack* (1757): “God helps them that help themselves”. How true! Let us help ourselves with the teachings of all human beings, animals, plants, minerals, situations, and happenings. Divine help is always there: either open, or waiting to be discovered. When we discern it, our hearts are filled with gratitude and love for all. We want to repay him for all that He did for us. The only way to repay is to become an instrument in his hands. Let him use us for whatever, whenever He deems fit. And as Milton said, “They also serve who only stand and wait.”

Resentment wears us out. Gratitude and unconditional, unattached love heal and nourish us from within. The benefit of gratitude and love is all around, but the person who spreads these, benefits many times over. His life on earth is one joyful excursion. Everything stated in this discussion is already known to all of us. The choice is clear. Nature has not left anything to be decided. Let us all benefit. ✧

Yantra Meditation and the Emblem of the Theosophical Society

PEGGY HEUBEL

Dhāraṇa, Sanskrit — defined as concentration; support, single-mindedness, “holding, bearing”; to keep in remembrance. It is the sixth limb of the yoga discipline. It is the concentration of the mind (*chitta*) on some object [seed] with fixed attention; a technique for centring the mind and preparing it for true meditation (*ashtāṅga-yoga*).

For the purposes of this essay, it is assumed the reader is familiar with the general concept of meditation as it pertains not to its health benefits such as stress reduction, but to the spiritual practices leading to *nirvāna-moksha*.¹ This objective is the same for all in the course of time, the means varying with the temperament of each practitioner.

There are many kinds of meditation, broken down into two primary categories: meditation with seed and meditation without seed. Meditation without seed is impossible for the beginner unless, of course, the beginner has reincarnated in this life with the results of many lifetimes of accumulated meditative experience and has merely to recapitulate or familiarize himself or herself with the processes already mastered.

This being so, meditation with seed is customary and usual. In *The Science of Yoga*,² Section I — “Samādhi Pāda”, Sutra 18, page 42, the commentary states: “*abhyāsa-purva* means ‘preceded by practice’. Practice of what? Practice of holding in the mind the ‘seed’ of *samprajñāta-samādhi*.³ This phrase serves to emphasize the fact that *asamprajñāta-samādhi* [without seed] can be practised only after the prolonged practice of *samprajñāta-samādhi*” — or meditation with seed.

Inherent in any seed is the possibility, if conditions are right, of bringing to fruition that which is its destiny to become. When speaking of meditation with seed, a seed is chosen that has deep meaning within it and resonates with the intellectual or devotional tendencies of the aspirant or *sādhaka*;⁴ a seed that represents a reflection or reflections of the primary *One Causeless Cause* which may be termed the DIVINE SOURCE OF ALL — or SAT⁵ — THAT which is *beyond* space and time. There is no symbology extant that is representational of THAT. Perhaps the most we can hope for is to develop the strength of devotion and

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intentionality toward becoming one with the ONE by whatever concept is individually meaningful; that concept being itself a seed.

Having used a seed-symbol, -emblem, or -concept, *any* seed (no matter how high or how mighty) must be finally dropped if the meditative goal is oneness with the ONE — for ONE is all there is in the manifesting UNIVERSE and nothing can exist as a “thing” (seed) outside of THAT. The meditator aims to unite in complete identity with the REALITY *behind* or at the root of every seed.

Symbolism is the “expression of ideas by any other instrumentality [but speech]”⁶ and is “the mystery language (pictorial and sacerdotal) of prehistoric ages”. While used increasingly in ordinary life, esoteric symbolism, i.e., symbols of universal abstract Nature, have never changed over the course of time, although attributes have been brought to light as mankind develops. These can be used as highly effective meditative tools to concentrate the mind on sacred and holy concepts.

Esoteric symbolism (as ancient as mankind), including emblems with multiple symbols representing a process, have innate power because they are archetypal,⁷ that is, the inner sense is holy and divine in its abstraction, and, as such, can be the direct means to the realization of *moksha* through concentrative/contemplative effort. In addressing one symbol alone, the Mahatma KH, in Letter # 111 (formerly # 59) of the *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* (chronological

edition), says of the interlaced black and white triangles⁸ “of the Parent Society’s seal” (seal of the Theosophical Society) that it is “the *sri-yantra* of the archaic Aryan Temple, the ‘mystery of Mysteries’, a geometrical synthesis of the whole occult doctrine”. Furthermore: “The *chela* [student of a teaching adept] who can explain this sign from every one of its aspects — *is virtually an adept*.”

Archetypal forms as representational symbols of divine universal concepts may be characterized as “thought-forms” produced by Kosmic (or Cosmic) Ideation generated by the EVER-UNKNOWN ONE at the dawning of the evolutionary process — whether of the development of a universe, a galaxy, or a solar system. Inherent within these archetypal thought-forms are necessarily the Life, Consciousness, and Power of the ONE that ideates them. Within any such representational symbol of those forms a certain spiritual resonance or magnetic influence is always present to a greater or lesser degree; its influence strengthened by eons of esoteric and, at times, consecrated use for spiritual or sacerdotal purposes. Spirit cannot be divorced from any form of matter (*prakṛti*). It is concentration upon such “seeds” or “tools” that can help train and control the mind for purposeful meditation as long as it is understood that any such tool is merely a reflection of a far greater truth.

Aside from ritualistic practices, there is a widespread meditative technique addressing such use. Though known in parts of Asia for centuries and in India

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for puja worship — the yantra as a technique is a relatively new idea to the Western world. However, seed meditation is not a new idea and yantra meditation is meditation with seed. The word yantra is from Sanskrit; from the root *yam*, which means supporting or holding the essence of an object or concept, and the syllable *trā* which comes from *trāna* or liberation from bondage; and is further defined as “an instrument, apparatus, talisman or mystical diagram encapsulating energetic spiritual vibrations” and is an “abstract geometrical design or archetypal form or structure intended as a concentrating ‘tool’ and touchstone for meditation and increased awareness of some facet of reality.” Its mandatory feature or features are strictly symbolic and sometimes involve deific (angelic, spiritual) icons referring not to itself, unless used as a talisman, but to the intrinsic conceptual thought-form that is said to become activated or spiritually dynamic with devotional aspiration. Universal and fundamental diagrammatical symbols most often used are the point (dot or *bindu*), the circle, triangle, cross, and the square. In addition, pictograms and ideograms are frequently used to represent any of the pantheons of divine beings or of aspects of DEITY itself.

These geometrical archetypal diagrams are designed to train the mind and channel spiritual or divine forces by concentrating (focusing) them on the abstract concept behind the pattern so that it becomes reproduced or visualized effectively by the devotee’s or aspirant’s

faith, the degree of understanding of the symbology used, and the strength of visualization. They are generally classified into two types: devices for protection and devices for devotional and ritualistic worship. Perhaps not wisely, those most often used are used for protection or personal gain; though yantras as the medium through which invisible forces of divinity may act have generally proven grossly ineffectual because they have been practised as a matter of routine and habit without the prolonged reverence and spirit of devotion required. It must be stressed that such “pleas for personal gain” and/or “for intercession” of any kind have negative karmic consequences and can attract attendant negative elementals even if used unconsciously — or can have no influence whatsoever. Motives and sustained purpose, method, correct understanding, and devotional practice are everything.

Yantras can be divided into those used for devotional adoration or worship and those for facilitating meditation. In facilitating meditation (to aid in becoming familiar with states of consciousness such as concentration, compassion, correct understanding, patience, humility, perseverance, and so on), yantras aid in gaining liberation (*moksha*) from the cycles of death and rebirth; to withdraw consciousness from the outer world and help the aspirant go beyond the normal framework of mind — beyond the states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep — to the underlying substratum to *turiya*,

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the consciousness that is the real Self beyond the changing modes of existence.

Yantra meditation works well and is particularly effective when combined with the classical techniques of yogic meditation (referencing Patañjali). Perhaps one of the most important considerations in theosophical language is that the sustained use of a yantra can focus an aspirant's consciousness within the higher mind (*manas*) and evoke intuition (*buddhi*) the expansion of which can lead to direct spiritual knowledge, ultimate self-realization and spiritual enlightenment.

Use of a mantra is necessary when using a yantra. A mantra is a sacred word or phrase of spiritual significance and is further defined as “that which saves the one who reflects” — and this is important: it is protective against negative influences if pronounced at the beginning and again at the end of meditation. Mantras are sounds, and are degrees of, and associated with, the vibratory nature of *vāch* — that which transcends speech and in which speech (vibratory activity) resides. It is the activity of the divine essence which pervades, permeates, animates, and informs all things.

Just as there are many examples of yantras, there are many corresponding mantras, and each is dependent upon the meditative objective/goal, whether the basis for such is intellectually or devotionally evocative of the highest within us. While some of these are effective, most are not. The persistent spiritual and/or sacerdotal uses of universal symbols over eons have strengthened the effectiveness

and potency of mantras in general meditative and yantra practices; they are the parentheses in which the yantra is contained — the vibratory protection.

To summarize, for the effective use of any particular yantra, all of the following is necessary:

1) Externally, an objective form or diagram for ‘housing’ a universal symbol or emblem holding significant meaning for the meditator, that is, picture, physical object, drawing, and so on;

2) Internally, a mantra associated with that symbol or emblem;

3) An intellectual ‘right understanding’ of the deific power, force, or process represented by the symbol or emblem and the mantra;

4) The sincere persistent and sustained single-mindedness of purpose in its use;

5) An attitude of humility and gratitude;

6) Right motive.

While not called yantras in the Western world, iconic symbols and emblems are in use every day in religious, spiritual, and meditative practices. One such is familiar — the seal (or emblem) of the Theosophical Society. One of the most concise descriptions of all its elements is as follows:⁹

The emblem or seal of the Theosophical Society is composed of a number of symbols, all of them having been used from ancient times to express profound spiritual and philosophical concepts about humanity and the Universe. They may be found in a variety of forms in the great religions of the world and their universality is

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further shown by their appearance in widely separated cultures. Taken together as in the Society's Seal, they represent a unity of meaning, suggesting a vast evolutionary scheme embracing the whole of Nature, [both] physical and spiritual. Study and contemplation of the emblem as well as its several component symbols will lead the serious student to an awareness of some of the deepest Mysteries of Existence. . .

*AUM*¹⁰ — Above the Seal, in Sanskrit characters, is the sacred word [*pranava*] of Hinduism, *aum* or Om, a word of profound significance. It may be said to stand for the creative Word or Logos, the ineffable Reality which is the source of all Existence. . . “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Om is a word of power and should be uttered only with the greatest reverence. [Note that *aum* can be used as a mantra wholly or in part with the Theosophical Society's motto.] . . .

SWASTIKA — The Swastika, placed in the emblem at the Head of the Serpent, is the fiery Cross, with arms of whirling flame revolving clockwise [around a central point] to represent the tremendous Energies of Nature incessantly creating and dissolving the forms through which the evolutionary process takes place. In religions which recognize three aspects of Deity, the Swastika is associated with the Third Person of the Trinity, who is at once the Creator and the Destroyer: Shiva in Hinduism and the Holy Ghost in Christianity. . . .

SERPENT [OURO- or UROBOROS] —

The Serpent is the timeless symbol of the Highest Spiritual Wisdom. Swallowing its tail, it is a symbol of Regeneration. It is the self-born, the circle of Infinite Wisdom, Life and Immortality. The circle itself is an ancient symbol of Eternity and represents the Absolute, the [as yet] Un-Manifested Universe containing the potentials of all form. As representative of the Infinite Sphere, the “World Egg” of Archaic Cosmology, this symbol is found in every world religion and philosophy. [In the center of this stylized circle is, once again, the point.] . . .

TWO TRIANGLES — The Interlaced Triangles, one (Lighter) pointing upwards and the other (Darker) pointing downwards, symbolize the descent of Spirit into Matter [black triangle] and its re-emergence from the confining limits of form [white triangle]. They also suggest the constant conflict between the Light and Dark forces in Nature as well as the inseparable Unity of Spirit and Matter. When depicted within the Circle of the Serpent, the figure represents the Universe and the Manifestation of Deity in time and space. The three lines and three angles of each of the two triangles may remind us of the triple aspects of Spirit: Existence, Consciousness and Bliss, and the three aspects of Matter: Mobility, Resistance and Rhythm. The glyph can also be seen as the six-pointed star, embracing Spiritual and Physical Consciousness and viewed by the Pythagoreans as the symbol of Creation. [Refer to Letter 111 of the Mahatma Letters as referenced above.] . . .

Yantra Meditation and the Emblem of the Theosophical Society

ANKH-SYMBOL — In the centre of the seal is the Ankh or Crux Ansata, an ancient Egyptian symbol of Resurrection. It is composed of the Tau or T-shaped Cross surmounted by a small circle and is often seen in Egyptian statuary. The Tau symbolizes matter or the world of form; the small circle above it represents Spirit or Life. With the circle marking the position of the head, it represents the mystic cube unfolded to form the Latin cross, symbol of Spirit descended into matter and crucified thereon, but risen from Death and resting triumphant on the arms of the conquered slayer. So it may be said that the figure of the Interlaced Triangles enclosing the Ankh represents the human triumphant and the Divine triumphant in the human. As the Cross of Life, the Ankh then becomes a symbol of Resurrection and Immortality [— of Life Itself]. . . .

MOTTO — Around the Seal appears the motto of the Theosophical Society: “THERE IS NO RELIGION HIGHER THAN TRUTH”. Truth is the quest of every theosophist, and every great religion reflects in some measure the Light of the one Eternal and Spiritual Wisdom. Each points a way toward the realization of Truth. The word Religion in this statement is a translation of the Sanskrit Dharma, which among other things means practice, way, virtue, teaching, law, inherent nature, religion, and that which is steadfast or firm. The word Truth in the motto is a translation of the Sanskrit Satya, meaning, among other things, true, real and actual. It derives from the root *sat*, translated as Boundless Unconditioned Existence. . . .

The [very powerful] Seal speaks to an inner perception, to the intuition and to the heart, calling forth the Divine in each individual who contemplates it. In its totality, it represents a synthesis of great Cosmic Principles operating through involutionary and evolutionary cycles, bringing us all, in the fullness of time, to the realization of our Divine Nature.

Since yantras invariably have an associated mantra, the theosophical motto can be used as a mantra: “THERE IS NO RELIGION HIGHER THAN TRUTH”, or the original Sanskrit “*satyān nāsti paro dharmah*”, preceded by and closed with “*aum*”.

The point of any meditative practice is to find the way that “calls” or finds resonance within and draws us to it by a certain magnetic or attractive quality — “the still small voice within”. Finding the way is to become aware of this — of finding the right and best method to search for THAT which is waiting just beyond our mental vision. Beware of anything that tends to uphold or develop separateness, inequality, or strengthens egoism. Over all, unity, harmony, and compassion must be the criteria upon which any meditative process is judged — and discarded if found lacking.

Yantras can become individualized as an aspirant advances on the Path deeply involving physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. In fact, advanced spiritual progress requires initiation into the use of a particular yantra specifically selected by an adept teacher for the student’s continued progress.

Yantra Meditation and the Emblem of the Theosophical Society

As one becomes meditatively familiar with the use of yantras (or even general seed meditation), striking out on one's own without explicit overt adept guidance is dangerous and can form the basis of unconscious black magic and sorcery. Overall, meditation with seed is a relatively "safe" practice and most of us

are already using yantra/mantra concepts. Note, too, that any object such as a cross, Solomon's seal, the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, an image of the *sri-yantra*, or anything that holds significant spiritual meaning for the individual, can act as a yantra — and the heart and mind will respond accordingly. ✧

Endnotes

¹ *nirvāna* — the state of perfection; *moksha* — liberation, spiritual freedom, release, the final goal of human existence.

² *The Science of Yoga*, a translation with commentaries of Patañjali's *Yoga-Sutras*, by Dr I. K. Taimni.

³ *samprajñāta* — an early stage in samādhi wherein the mind functions while concentrating on an object of knowledge; samādhi has several stages or states involving one-pointedness, concentration, absorption; union; and a calm, desireless fixity or meditative union with the One Unknown; of these *samprajñāta-samādhi* is one of the earlier stages or states (one of intense sustained concentration on an object).

⁴ *sādhaka* — one who practises spiritual disciplines (from the Sanskrit verb root *sādh* = "to go straight to the goal").

⁵ *sat* — *parabrahman*; per HPB ". . . a Sanskrit term, used in the philosophy of the Vedānta; it is an adjective untranslatable into any language; neither substance nor pure Spirit, nor even *any thing*, *sat* is the infinite All, LIFE, or ABSOLUTE Existence".

⁶ *The Secret Doctrine*, volume I, Part II, "The Evolution of Symbolism in Its Approximate Order — Explanatory Sections".

⁷ Archetype — the original or primary prototype upon which all reflections proceeding from it are based.

⁸ Refer to *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, Chapter VI for much more of an explanation of the powers of the upper triangle and the "space surrounding it".

⁹ This description of the esoteric meaning of the symbols within the theosophical seal is one of the best found. For full credit go to: <<http://chaosophia218.tumblr.com/post/130867978142/the-seal-of-theosophical-society-the-emblem>>.

¹⁰ The three letters (mātra) — A, U, M — represent, respectively, the outer, the inner, and the super conscience states of consciousness and the waking, dream, and deep-sleep states. Beyond these is the modeless fourth (*a-mātra*), which is the Self, according to Advaita Vedānta.

Religious Intolerance and Sectarian Violence

KRISTA UMBJÄRV

A few years ago I had occasion to meet a person who was representing one of the main world religions at an inter-religious conference. By that time, he had been participating in these conferences for a few years. At a certain point, when he saw that participants were just repeating the same things all over again and that everything was discussed at a very superficial level, he suggested that maybe there were better ways to spend one's time. Maybe it sounds a bit strong, he said, but each one was trying to tell others that his religion was the best one.

So if people with knowledge and some experience act this way when they are invited to represent their religion at such events, then it makes one think. At least it made me think. Why and how does such an attitude arise? Of course, it is very good and natural that we follow a path that suits us best and is in harmony with our tendencies. Yet, there is a difficulty that comes from the fact that if we follow a path that we believe to be the best for us, there is a tendency to think that it is not only the best for us, but that it is also better than all other paths.

Being different or seeing life from another angle is not a problem. The problem is identification. If we observe life closely, we can see that although the self has the capacity to identify itself with everything, there are nevertheless some aspects with which we are more identified. Interestingly, the most evident ones on the physical level are the distinctions mentioned in the first Object of the Theosophical Society (TS). Or maybe that is the reason why these distinctions are mentioned in the first Object.

So we could say that there exists — certainly in various degrees — identification with one's race, creed, sex, caste and colour. When we are among those who are of our race, culture, creed, and so on, it is more difficult to see the process of identification. It becomes more apparent when we are seemingly confronted by somebody who is different. I said "seemingly" confronted, because in fact we are not confronted. But psychologically it seems that way because we identify with our own creed, race and so forth. It is as if our religion, culture, nationality and so on become extensions of ourselves.

Ms Krista Umbjärv is Secretary of the European Federation of the TS. Talk delivered at the international Convention, Adyar, 2 January 2016.

Religious Intolerance and Sectarian Violence

When somebody or something — be it a person, an object, even an idea — harms the self's notion of permanence, the negative qualities of the person or the object are exaggerated. For instance, when we do not like somebody we tend to see only the negative aspects of this person and discard the positive ones. The exaggeration applies also when we are attached to somebody, but in this case we only see the positive qualities of the person and discard the negative ones. So when somebody harms the self's notion of permanence, the first, usually unconscious and subtle reaction is fear; then aversion will follow, and after this, rejection. We can observe that when there is a strong grasping of the self, things around us are perceived as a personal threat. Somebody says something not so nice about our nationality, culture, religion, or maybe even the TS, and we are likely to react negatively, maybe not verbally, but psychologically, on a subtle level.

It is often not easy to distinguish the intention behind actions or words. From the outside, actions or words arising from a feeling of personal threat or a genuine sense of responsibility might seem the same. The difference in intention is often not easy to distinguish because in both cases we can sense there is a strong engagement. For instance, somebody might say something not so nice about the TS, and we might decide that a response is needed. Do we respond because of a deep sense of responsibility — as 'a brave declaration of principles' and be personally detached about it —

or do we respond because we are so identified with the organization that we feel personally insulted and harmed?

One might wonder why I talk about all this. It might sound, at best, some nice theory. How does it answer the problem, because there should be something practical that we could do. And yet it is also practical, because as long as we consider our path, view, or interpretation of Theosophy, and so on — the list is long — better than those of others, as long as we relate to those different from ourselves with suspicion and rejection, we are part of the problem. We do not have to harm the other physically — this is just an extreme and outer manifestation of the same inner attitude.

As long as these distinctions mentioned in the first Object of the TS persist in us, we are also upholding the whole process of intolerance and violence. J. Krishnamurti described the same thing from the standpoint of selfishness — he said that we are either selfish or unselfish; even those who are less selfish are still selfish.

And this leads us to compassion. Can there be true compassion when there is still even a bit of selfishness or when even-handedness or equanimity is lacking? Not equanimity in the sense of acting the same towards everybody, but equanimity such as what H. P. Blavatsky described in her Meditation Diagram as being "different in external activity to each, because in each the capacity alters. Mentally the same to all."

If compassion is based on friendship,

Religious Intolerance and Sectarian Violence

kindness, and affection, its nature cannot be stable nor far-reaching. Friendship and affection are extremely important, and yet I believe that most of us, if not all, have had the experience that friends have one day ceased to be friends and people towards whom we might not have had sympathy, have in time turned out to be good and reliable friends. How does one overcome this distinction between friends and people whom we do not appreciate very much?

In Theosophy we talk about oneness and unity. We say that the inner nature of each and every one is divine, that there is no distinction between ourselves and others because we are all part of the Spirit. And yet there is another kind of oneness, a kind that is simpler to accept and realize in daily life. It is the fact that we are sharing the same human experience, the same sorrow, attachment, anxiety, and so on. No matter what the religion, nationality, colour, or sex, the experience at its foundation is the same for everybody. As Shantideva said: “Although living beings wish to be free from suffering, they run straight towards the causes of suffering; and although they wish for happiness, out of ignorance they destroy it like a foe.”

Most of you know that in November, Paris, where I live, suffered several attacks. I remember watching the news with my friends when with every hour the scale of terror became more and more evident. What followed was a public

debate where politics, religion, and so forth, were discussed in detail. Many experts delivered their opinion about the situation and described what should be done to avoid such atrocities from happening again. Among them was a lady who runs an association that deals with radicalized youngsters. She was asked: “What is the method used to bring those young people back to society?” The lady noted that her organization had tried various methods, but the only truly effective way to help these young people was to try to give them back the sense that other people are human beings. Apparently, all religious discussions or using reason had proved useless, because these young people thought that they knew better, had the purest understanding, and were superior to others. So it made no difference what they were told. She said that radicalization and violence take place because there is dehumanization of others, so that others become only senseless objects. Reversing the process means the opposite — evoking the good memories of childhood, bringing back the warm feeling of family ties, and showing that others have feelings, that they suffer; showing that they are basically the same despite distinctions of religion, culture, and so on.

Finally, ever since reading the Mahachohan’s letter for the first time, I remember his saying: “To be *true*, religion and philosophy must offer the solution of every problem.” ✧

Fragments of the Ageless Wisdom

Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself.

Let thy Soul lend its ear to every cry of pain like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun.

Let not the fierce Sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye.

But let each burning human tear drop on thy heart and there remain, nor ever brush it off, until the pain that caused it is removed. . . .

Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance. . . .

Mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects. It needs the gentle breezes of Soul-Wisdom to brush away the dust of our illusions. Seek O Beginner, to blend thy Mind and Soul. . . .

The wheel of the good Law moves swiftly on. It grinds by night and day. The worthless husks it drives out from the golden grain, the refuse from the flour. The hand of Karma guides the wheel; the revolutions mark the beatings of the Karmic heart. . . .

Sow kindly acts and thou shalt reap their fruition. Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin. . . .

Shalt thou abstain from action? Not so shall gain thy soul her freedom. To reach Nirvana one must reach Self-Knowledge, and Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child. . . .

To live to benefit mankind is the first step. To practise the six glorious virtues is the second. . . .

Behold, the mellow light that floods the Eastern sky. . . . ALL NATURE'S wordless voice in thousand tones ariseth to proclaim: . . . A PILGRIM HATH RETURNED BACK "FROM THE OTHER SHORE". A NEW ARHAN IS BORN. . . .

H. P. Blavatsky
The Voice of the Silence

The Secret Doctrine

HENRY S. OLCOTT

THE personal relations existing between the authoress of this splendid production — one of the towering pinnacles of modern literature — and this magazine, make it more seemly that we should copy the criticisms of third parties rather than put forth our own. But we may at least say that, however opinions may differ with respect to the philosophical and metaphysical value of the ancient esotericism, the unanimous verdict of our age must be that *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* are works of a phenomenal character.

Whether we consider the advanced years of the authoress, the comparative rapidity of its composition, the varied erudition, and the boldness and originality of thought they display, the sparkling of their literary style, the strong light thrown upon some of the most recondite problems of symbology, mythology, and comparative theology, biological and psychological science, and evolution, the reader is struck with amazement at the several features of this intellectual “efflorescence” of our times. To the intimate friends of Madame H. P. Blavatsky,

who have been near her at the time [1876–7 and 1886–8] when the two books were being written, their production has been clothed with all the interest of psychic phenomena of a class infinitely higher than the vulgar wonders of physical thaumaturgy. Enfeebled by disease, and on several occasions pronounced moribund by the physicians, forced by them to leave India under warnings of probably sudden death by apoplexy, she has yet worked at her desk on *The Secret Doctrine* an average of about twelve hours daily, from 6:30 or 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and, while the work was passing through the press, often read fifty pages of proof a day.

To see the hundreds of references to other authors one might naturally suppose her possessed of a very extensive library, whereas, in point of fact, neither for *Isis Unveiled* nor *The Secret Doctrine*, had she access to more than comparative handfuls. Her quotations have often been called in question by friends who had been permitted to read her MSS, but when they searched in the British Museum and American Libraries her accuracy was

Col Henry S. Olcott was Founder-President of the Theosophical Society, Adyar, from 1875 to 1907. Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, January 1889.

vindicated. A case in point: For a title-heading in one of her essays she wrote a certain verse and credited it to Tennyson. Two persons, one an authoress of repute, who thought themselves familiar with every line that Tennyson has published, vehemently protested against her committing such a blunder, one sure to be detected at once. On Madame Blavatsky's persisting that it had so come into her mind and must be right, a gentleman of great literary experience — Dr C. Carter-Blake — made a long search in the British Museum, which resulted in finding the verse verbatim and literatim in a magazine of the year 1831, *The Gem*, long since dead and forgotten. For some reason or other the poet had not cared to include it in any edition of his works.

Opponents of a calumnious diathesis have not scrupled to charge Madame Blavatsky with interested motives in her Theosophical work. To such, the following circumstances should be interesting. The first edition of *Isis Unveiled* was, to the pleased surprise of its publisher, Mr J. W. Bouton of New York, exhausted within ten days or a fortnight of its appearance, and a second edition was demanded. Mr Bouton came to Madame Blavatsky's house and, in the presence of the present writer, made her the following liberal offer. If she would write another book, in a single volume, which should unveil Isis a little more, just enough to satisfy the mystical class of minds, he would bring out an edition of one hundred copies, sell them at \$100 (about £20) each, and give her \$50 per

copy as author's copyright: in short, pay her a splendid literary fee of \$5,000 (say Rupees 15,000) for a work which she could easily finish within a year. She refused on the ground that it was not permitted at that time to reveal more of the esoteric philosophy than had been given out in *Isis Unveiled*. Yet just then she had not the money to pay her passage out to India!

There are some who say that the *Book of Dzyan*, upon whose majestic stanzas her work under notice is based, has no existence, that it is a literary fraud. Well, whether so or not, it is at least one of the most striking compositions in literature; its tone solemn and grandiose, like the organ-peals through a cathedral, or the rhythmic tone of Nature upon which ancient music is said to be founded. If it was written by her indeed, then a Hindu might be inclined to suspect that she is a reincarnation of some such sage as bequeathed to an admiring world the *Bhagavadgitā*, the *Rāmāyana*, or other archaic classical works. It is not of the least consequence per se, whether there is or is not a *Book of Dzyan* preserved in the hidden libraries of the sages, whether or not there be any such libraries (though the writer has personal knowledge of the latter fact, and could, if he chose, point out the very spot of one of them from a railway carriage in passing). The book stands upon its own merits, and so solidly that it will take a mighty adversary to upset it. If there is one thing more hateful than another to the independent thinker, it is to have a book put forth as

specially entitled to reverence because of its alleged infallible parentage, and apart from its intrinsic merits. A book is good or bad, sound or unsound, instructive or silly as a book, and all the gods of Olympus, and recluses of all the holy mountains or deserts, cannot make falsehood truth or imbecile nonsense divine revelation. This is clearly Madame Blavatsky's opinion also, as the special disclaimers of authority in her *Secret Doctrine* amply show.

The value of this book is so great to would-be Theosophists that if a single chapter, or portion of a chapter, were read at each meeting of a Branch, by some one who can read well and understand the text, they need seek no further for teachings or teachers in theoretical Occultism. It is a library in itself, unique, in the sense of a dictionary or an encyclopedia, and if the Theosophical movement had produced only the two books of this authoress, it would, in the eyes of posterity, be regarded as an epoch-marking phase of human thought.

As no stress is sought to be laid upon the supposed primal source of Madame Blavatsky's inspiration — the school of Eastern sages — so her friends are not disposed to excuse her for any of the literary faults of her books; her discursiveness,

unmethodical jumbling together of various topics, plethora of proofs adduced in support of a given proposition after her ground has been covered, so to say, three layers thick; her frequent lack of exactness in presentation of scientific theories and conclusions, and her sometimes contradictory language. Conceding all these, it is still most certain that she is one of the most brilliant conversationalists, most graceful and interesting writers of modern times, whether in her own Russian vernacular, or in French or English — in all which three languages her pen seems equally facile. The critics of 1877 said that the prototype of *Isis* was the *Anacalypsis* of Godfrey Higgins, but while the magnum opus of that erudite yet neglected author never reached its complete second edition, and Mr Bouton and Mr Quaritch have still many unsold copies in stock — fifty years after its appearance in 1836 — the first edition of *Isis Unveiled* was sold within a fortnight, and the first of *The Secret Doctrine* (of 500 copies) sold actually in advance of publication. The times are certainly changed for the better, and the number of minds capable of grasping these high themes much larger than in the generation which not only misunderstood, but socially persecuted Godfrey Higgins. ✧

Olcott and Blavatsky were alike in their total commitment to the work of the Masters. Blavatsky's lifelong devotion to the Masters was the theme of everything she did. Of Olcott, the Master KH wrote: "He is one . . . who esteems the sacrifice of comfort and even life something to be cheerfully risked whenever necessary".

John Algeo

THE 141ST INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Theme: *Beyond Illusion: A Call to Unity*

The 141st International Convention of the Theosophical Society will be held at the International Headquarters, Adyar, **from 31 December 2016 to 5 January 2017**. All members of the Theosophical Society in good standing are welcome to attend as delegates.

Non-members may attend by obtaining permission from the President. Requests for such permission, together with a recommendation from an officer of the Federation or the Section, should be sent to the Convention Officer (CO) before 22 November 2016.

REGISTRATION FEES

	India (Members)	India (Non-Members)	Other Countries
Delegates	Rs 150	Rs 300	US\$ 70 *
Delegates under 21	60	200	...

ACCOMMODATION CHARGES (SHARING) (From 29 Dec. 2016 to 6 Jan. 2017 inclusive)

	India (Members)	India (Non-Members)	Other Countries
Leadbeater Chambers (LBC) (including service, furniture, bedding, & mosquito nets, no blankets).	Rs 5,000	Rs 7,000	US\$ 200 *

Meals for all in LBC: Rs 3,000

* (or Euro or Pound Sterling equivalent)

Other accommodation (including mat/cot/or mattress). Meals from 30 Dec. (dinner) to 6 Jan. (breakfast).

Rs 350 Rs 500 ...
Meals at the Canteen: Rs 1,000

(Half rates charged for children under ten. No charge for children under three. See Accommodation Considerations below.) Canteen will be run by the Karnataka Federation.

ACCOMMODATION CONSIDERATIONS

Factors considered in allocating accommodation are active membership, health, age, priority of registration, size of family, etc. Rooms and bathrooms cannot be made available for anyone's exclusive use. Non-members and young persons should be prepared to stay in dormitories. No special facilities can be provided for members who are ill or for women with babies. No kitchens are available. Ordinary medical attention will be available for minor complaints but there will be no provision for serious illness. Since accommodation is limited, especially ground floor, availability will be subject to confirmation by the CO.

REGISTRATION AND PAYMENTS

Registration period: **from 5 September to 1 December 2016.**

Cancellation: last date 15 Dec. 2016. There will be no refund of the Registration fees.

Delegates from India: Send both registration and accommodation charges together, along with the details as per the Registration form (available at <www.ts-adyar.org>), to the Convention Officer before 1 December 2016. Remittance by **bank drafts, duly crossed**, should be made **payable to The Treasurer, The Theosophical Society, Chennai**. For online bank transfers contact the Convention Officer.

Overseas Delegates: Contact, preferably by email, the Convention Officer about registration, accommodation, payments (particularly online fees remittance), and any other details.

Convention Officer, The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai 600 020, India or email: <adyarconvention@gmail.com>.

Ms Marja Artamaa, *International Secretary*

Theosophical Work around the World

Italy

The attendance figures were high and there was a significant number of young people attending the Italian Theosophical Society's **102nd National Congress**, this time held in Perugia from 2 to 5 June 2016. Delegates and members came from all over Italy and accomplished much during the Congress, which had as its theme “Jiddu Krishnamurti and Theosophy”. The event was also attended by the international Vice-President of the TS, Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy, who gave an interesting talk on “Where Theosophy meets Krishnamurti”.

During the Congress, two books recently published by Edizioni Teosofiche Italiane were presented: *J. Krishnamurti and psychoanalysis* by Edoardo Bratina, presented by William Esposito, editor. Before his talk, the President of the Trieste Theosophical Group, Diego Fayenz, shared some deep memories of Mr Bratina, who was a theosophist from Trieste and the General Secretary of the Italian TS from 1971 to 1995. The second book was an Italian translation of *A Jewel on a Silver Platter: Remembering Jiddu Krishnamurti* by Prof. Padmanabhan Krishna, presented by Olga Fedeli, who translated it from the English language.

A serene, vibrant atmosphere prevailed at the event in Perugia, underlining the work of the TS in Italy on

all-round research inspired by Universal Brotherhood.

After the Congress, Dr Satapathy visited the Lodges in Vicenza and Trieste, where he gave public lectures on “Introduction to *Light on the Path*” and “Is *The Voice of the Silence* only for mystics?” respectively.

Slovenia

During the last six months two schools were organized. First, **Adyar Day and Winter School** was held from 19 to 21 February 2016 in Soncek, near Koper, with the theme “Theosophy Calls to Dignity”. It was organized by Surya Lodge in Koper and the speakers were Damjana Gec, Ljuba Sunanj, Blanka B. Borntnar, Branko Stariè and Breda Zagar. Also J. Krishnamurti’s talk “The Brain Is Always Recording” was viewed, inspiring the 24 members present. The recording of Ms Jaishree Kannan, from Adyar, singing the “Adyar Song” created a special atmosphere full of joy and sacredness.

Then the **Summer School** took place from 10 to 12 June 2016 in the town of Kranjska Gora, with the theme “Love and Compassion — the Essence of Theosophy”. The two guest speakers were international Vice-President, Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy, whose talks included “Theosophy and Altruism” and “Compassion in Different Spiritual Traditions”;

Theosophical Work around the World

and Mrs Femmie Liezenga from International Theosophical Centre Naarden, whose talk was on “The Theosophical Approach to Life” in two parts. Both speakers inspired the participants, creating a beautiful atmosphere. Krishnamurti’s video talk on “What Kind of Brain Is Needed for Meditation?” was also viewed. On 14 June Mrs Liezenga gave an inspiring public lecture in Celje.

Spain

The Spanish TS Section had the honour of welcoming the international Vice-President, Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy from 13 to 18 June. He delivered two lectures in the Lodges of the main Spanish cities. In Barcelona he addressed Arjuna Lodge on “Theosophy and Krishnamurti”. It was a well-attended, thought-provoking lecture and many questions were raised. The lecture was recorded and it is now available in our web page. He then went to Madrid, where he spoke at Hesperia Lodge on “Compassion in Different Spiritual Traditions”, which was also well attended, with lively participation of the members gathered. This visit was fully rewarding for all the members who were able to meet him. They also had some time to show him several emblematic sites around both cities, such as Segovia and Montserrat.

Portugal

The international Vice-President, Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy, visited Portugal from 18 to 23 June and gave three talks on “Theosophical Teaching and Krishna-

murti’s Message”. On 19 June he delivered his first talk in Lisbon, in the new premises of the Portuguese Section of the TS. The hall was practically full and the members and sympathizers present felt a wonderful atmosphere of peace, serenity and upliftment. Everybody enjoyed meeting the Vice-President and what he had to say. A light vegetarian dinner was then served, which he said he liked very much.

The next day he delivered his second talk in Évora, located south of Lisbon, which was also well attended. On the 21st, after a short visit to Évora and its World Heritage monuments, he travelled to Porto, the second largest city in Portugal. In the evening he gave his third talk at the premises of Porto Lodge, with good attendance as well. During the whole stay he always had a member accompanying him.

The General Secretary, Mrs Ana María Coelho de Sousa, reports that the Section is deeply grateful to the international Vice-President for his visit, for the interest he displayed in his addresses to the members, and his ability to listen.

France

The **National Convention** of the French Section took place on 25-26 June at their Headquarters in Paris. The guest of honour was the international Vice-President, Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy, who completed his fruitful European tour meeting enthusiastic French members and sympathizers.

The theme of the Convention was



Participants in the Winter School of the TS in Slovenia, which took place near Koper, from 9 to 11 February, after an evening programme with a harp musician (holding flowers)



The international Vice-President, Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy (front row, centre) with participants in the Summer School of the TS in Slovenia, held from 10 to 12 June in the town of Kranjska Gora

Theosophical Work around the World

“Theosophical Teaching and J. Krishnamurti’s Message”. Saturday morning was consecrated to the Members’ General Assembly, where the Board of the Section, especially General Secretary, Mrs Nano Leguay, gave an overview of the previous year’s activities. After the Assembly, there was an interesting session with the Vice-President, where he answered questions about the work and activities in Adyar. In the afternoon, Mrs Leguay, together with Ms Karin Berdah, Treasurer of the Section, gave two fascinating symposium talks on the theme of the Convention.

On Sunday morning, members and sympathizers watched a video of Krishnamurti’s talk on “What Brings about Disorder in Relationship.” The Convention culminated with a public lecture by Dr Satapathy on “Theosophical Teaching and J. Krishnamurti’s Message”, during which he compared some basic theosophical ideas and Krishnamurti’s thought. The programmes with the Vice-President were translated into French by the GS of the Belgian Section, Mrs Sabine Van Osta.

Lively discussions took place in the garden of the TS and during the lunches, prepared by the members. A harmonious atmosphere of unique inspiration prevailed throughout.

Nepal

Mr Raphael Langerhorst, a young

Theosophist active both in the TS in Austria and in Nepal, writes that a theosophical library has been set up in Nepal with the idea of starting a study group. Initially, 204 books were received from TPH Adyar in June. Multiple copies were also ordered of some important books, totalling 255. In addition, a few books in Nepali, bought in Kathmandu, as well as some basic books, such as for learning English (the famous *Grammar in Use* series), or learning Nepali (*Complete Nepali*) have also been added. The library is located near Trisuli, about 70 kms north of Kathmandu and 40 kms south of the Tibetan border.

The costs for the TPH books were kindly covered by the TS Lodge in Linz, Austria, of which Mr Langerhorst is also a member. The latter went to Nepal in December 2015, mainly to help with reconstruction of houses after a major earthquake, with materials from Austria. The library is being set up in one of the larger buildings.

Latest Changes

In March there was a change of General Secretary (GS) of the TS in Iceland, when Mr Halldor Haraldsson, who held the post for eight years, was succeeded by Mr Kristinn Agust Fridfinnsson. Also in March, the TS in Greece elected a new GS, Mrs Eirini Kefaloudi, following Mr Antonios Papandreou. ✧

Theosophy is not a “religion,” but religion itself, the very “binding of men together” in one Universal Brotherhood.

H. P. Blavatsky

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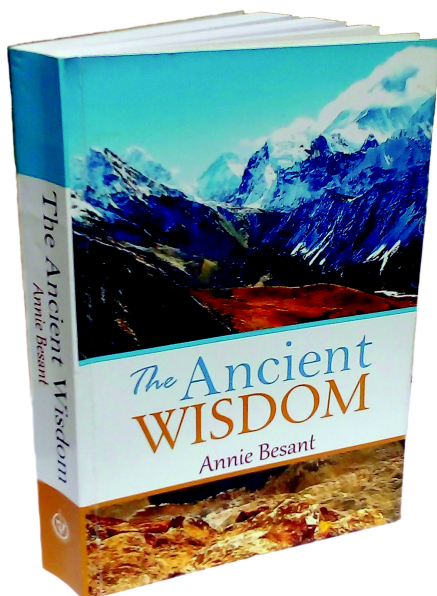
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