

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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CONTENTS

The Heart's Wisdom <i>Tim Boyd</i>	5
Looking Within To Reach Out <i>Deepa Padhi</i>	13
Annie Besant on Giordano Bruno	18
J. Krishnamurti <i>Radha Burnier</i>	19
The "Gift of the Gods" <i>Ali Ritsema</i>	22
Beyond Illusion <i>Clemice Petter</i>	27
There Is No Other <i>Pedro Oliveira</i>	31
Theosophy: A Way towards Universal Consciousness <i>Sabine van Osta</i>	35
Theosophical Work around the World	41
International Directory	42

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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.

The Heart's Wisdom

TIM BOYD

“WISDOM” is a subject that we dimly understand, but wisdom and the path that leads to it has been indicated by sages and saints throughout the generations to reside in the heart.

There are many terms that are incorrectly used interchangeably with the word “wisdom”. When we are loose in our thinking, we find that the line between terms such as information, knowledge, and wisdom gets blurred. We often find educated people substituting “knowledge” for “information” in the same sentence, but the two are not the same. The times we are living in have been termed as the “Information Age”. This refers to an exponential increase of information, or data. The current estimate is that every thirteen months the total sum of human information doubles, and even this rapid pace keeps on accelerating. No one has the capacity to grasp this.

Information is a basic building block; it is a fact. Knowledge gives meaning and is structured out of combinations of facts. The color of a shirt is a fact, so what? This is not knowledge, which arises when we apply a number of other facts, building a structure that endows the isolated facts with meaning. So there is information, and there is knowledge. Very often, even as

theosophists, we are of the opinion that the next step toward wisdom is merely the amassing of a certain quantum of knowledge. That is, after we have read the necessary poundage of the correct books, somehow we cross an indefinable line and we become wise. We also tend to believe that wisdom and age are related. So, having white hair adds to the impression of wisdom. But these are all false qualifications, having nothing to do with being wise. Wisdom bears no relationship to knowledge, information, or the number of years one has spent on this earth. It is of a completely different nature.

Wisdom is the perception of reality, the seeing of that which *is*, undiluted by the variety of illusions that we embrace, unfiltered by the host of identities we claim for ourselves: of nationality, gender, race, religion, and so on. The veiling quality of these identities dim the light of wisdom to the point that it is virtually inaccessible to us from moment to moment. It is ever-present, but, as a normal rule, inaccessible. When we speak about wisdom, it is a different order of things.

References to the heart abound in normal speech. When we look at music, movies, songs, literature anywhere in the world, they are filled with references to

The Heart's Wisdom

the heart. When one receives a letter that begins with “it is with a heavy heart”, one knows someone has passed on. We talk about those who are cold-hearted, open-hearted, closed-hearted, or who do something wholeheartedly, or half-heartedly. Our language is permeated with references to the heart. In some ways, the territory of human exploration at this time seems to be the challenging area of the heart.

At deeper levels we also have references to the heart. In the Bible there is a phrase: “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” In theosophical terms we speak of the “Doctrine of the Heart”. In Mahayana Buddhism there is an ever-present mantra: the *Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya Sutra*, also known as the “Heart Sutra”. Everywhere we look, at superficial levels and at ever-deepening levels, there is a focus on the primacy of the heart. This is something that should attract our attention.

Not too long ago, I was listening to a talk given in 1965 by past President of the Theosophical Society, N. Sri Ram. He was talking about the modern world as he saw it at that time. Being the utterly brilliant individual that he was, he focused on it at a depth that I will not be able to paraphrase, but some of the features of his analysis are worth noting. One of them was that the influence of contemporary science has come to pervade our lives in ways that we are not even mindful of.

At this stage in the development of science, it has looked into every material phenomenon that has come to its attention. Whether it is the expanse of the physical universe or the minutiae of the

atom. The biological, geological, and meteorological worlds have all been researched. There are information and descriptions related to every phenomenon that we are aware of. We must be clear that science now, and at the time of Sri Ram's talk, is related to the physical world. He also noted how the deepening awareness that science has brought has produced a host of technologies that are continually influencing human behavior.

The technological impulse that was taking place created previously impossible opportunities for global communication. One result was that globe-spanning organizations were forming which previously did not exist because there was no way to effectively communicate on a global scale. These organizations by their very nature seek our attention, and try to place claims on our resources of various types. Whether they are selling a product or an idea, they are all competing for our attention and our mind.

Around the time of the founding of the Theosophical Society, the great American transcendentalist, Ralph Waldo Emerson, made the perceptive observation that, “Society everywhere is in conspiracy against every one of its members. The virtue which is most requested is conformity. . . . Nothing is, at last, sacred but the integrity of your own mind.” That has not changed; if anything, it has intensified. One of the other things Sri Ram spoke about was that as a result of these many developments, the movement that takes place within human society has increased.

The Heart's Wisdom

Let us fast-forward to the present moment. Has there been a change fifty years from Sri Ram's analysis to now? If anything, the change has been that it has intensified. The technologies that are available are much broader, connecting us to information sources and people 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Recently I was in New York. A common way of travel there is riding the subway trains. Just looking around at my fellow passengers about 7 out of 10 people on every car of the train are hooked to the screen of a mobile phone. They are either playing a game on it, reading something on it, or have the earphones plugged into it, listening to music. This technology is continually at play within the normal population.

A further turn of events since Sri Ram's talk occurred in 2008 when, for the very first time in human history, the world became more than 50% urban. More than half the people in the world now live in cities like Chennai, New York, Mumbai, Delhi, Lisbon. The world has urbanized and it is on a track to continue at a very fast rate. So the concentration of people in close proximity to one another has increased dramatically. It has become a challenge to find a space to rest in our own aura or environment. It is almost impossible to find a space that is unoccupied by the presence or influence of other people within the normal urban life.

Travel has become a worldwide phenomenon now. In many ways the world is on the move. Another feature of the movement of human populations is that today the 25th largest nation in the world

is one that has no country, made up of refugees, uprooted, homeless, and on the move. This is a feature of the modern world of our time.

Another form of movement is that the ether which surrounds us has become populated with streaming energies of human creation. For example, patterns of energy in the radio frequency range used for mobile phones are continually passing through our bodies. So part of the condition of modernity is a continuous exposure to non-stable energy patterns.

One of the reasons why we feel renewed in Nature is because its patterns are stable. It is cyclical, regular. So people go to Nature to recharge. The human-created energy patterns typical to urban life are necessarily erratic. It has been said that one of the greatest inventions of all time was the light bulb. It has made it possible for us to effectively operate 24 hours a day, but has also completely disrupted the circadian cycles that had been the pattern for ever.

While the great sages remind us about the primacy of the heart, our normal existence has become dictated by the limits of the intellect and the organ of its use — the brain.

Early in the history of the Theosophical Society (TS) an important point was made about the TS and the Ageless Wisdom's relationship to science. Religion, science, and philosophy are the primary avenues of the human search for Truth that our second Object embraces. But we have had a strange relationship with science. H. P. Blavatsky (HPB), one

The Heart's Wisdom

of the Founders of the TS, in the early days had to continually correct and modify the limiting scientific assertions that tried to confine human knowledge and existence to the physical plane.

In one of the Mahatma Letters the Mahatma KH wrote that “modern science is our best ally”. The idea behind this was that science, by its very nature, is progressive. Everything that has been scientifically understood at one point will be expanded upon and perhaps even discarded at another point; it progresses. So it was assumed that the natural arc of this approach to studying the universe would come to verge on matters of the inner life, on the spiritual dimension of being. It has been with great anticipation that many theosophists have looked at the progression of scientific thought and study as the field of quantum mechanics has matured. Many of us have looked to quantum physics as that “best ally” in terms of focusing the popular understanding of the inner life.

Some of the foundational principles of this discipline involve innately theosophical ideas. The idea of non-locality — that electrons which have been in association with each other could be thousands of miles apart, and that what affects one, immediately affects the other, correlates directly with precepts of the Ageless Wisdom. The idea that thoughts are things, that they are not encumbered by space or time is as fundamental for any student of the wisdom tradition, as is the obvious experience common to everyone of becoming aware

of the sufferings of a loved one who is far away, without hearing about it or seeing the person, but knowing and feeling what they feel at a distance — telepathy, seeing/feeling at a distance, non-locality.

Another one of the bedrock ideas of quantum physics is known as “discontinuity”, or what is more popularly known as the “quantum leap”. Discontinuity describes the behavior of electrons. The observation was that when a certain quantum of energy is radiated into an electron, it jumps to a new orbit. In our normal way of thinking we would expect the electron to move to its new orbit by gradually traversing the space in between, but quantum physics has demonstrated that there is no passing in between; it is in one place, then there is a quantum leap to the next.

Anyone who has been graced with some level of mystical experience can attest to the spiritual aspect that is described by quantum physics. The basis of mystical experience is that at one moment we inhabit a normal way of seeing the world, then suddenly that “earth” melts, and we see with new eyes. So there has been great anticipation that this aspect of science was the ally that we had been looking for. Unfortunately, at this point it is not the one that is bringing in this new age of thought. First of all, quantum physics is not equally understood among the scientists themselves, and certainly not among those who are not scientifically inclined.

This “best ally” within modern science has come from a very unexpected direction, and it is something that indirectly is

The Heart's Wisdom

having a profound effect on the appreciation of these deeper ideas that Theosophy brings. It comes out of the realm of medical science. This is not to say that medical science has traced the outlines of the *ākāśa* or the inner world, but what has happened is as follows. In 1961, the cause of death of 50 percent of the people in the United Kingdom was heart attacks. At that time, in any hospital around the world, the best they knew to do was to give heart attack patients painkillers and place them with the general hospital population. Usually they died, or at best did not do too well.

In 1976 research demonstrated that the cause of the cardiac arrests was the fact that there were blood clots blocking the flow in the arteries. When the flow of blood stopped, life stopped. In 1977 the first heart surgery was performed to remove these clots. By the late 1980s they had developed clot-dissolving drugs as well. The result was that people who ordinarily would have died, did not.

Until a couple of decades ago, the definition of “death” was that people were declared dead when their heart stopped beating. But suddenly, medical science was able to bring these people back to life *after* the heart stopped beating. And what it resulted in was an explosion in the number of people who had “died” and then had a near-death experience (NDE). These NDEs did not only happen to a particular class of people, such as construction workers, one gender or another, to college graduates more than high school graduates, or

to those who had never been to school; it was very democratic.

Across the spectrum, there were people who were having and then reporting their experience of conscious existence being completely removed and apart from the body. Consciousness was not in any way dependent upon the physical vehicle that it inhabited. Of the many estimates, some go as far as saying that one in every eight people has had an NDE.

The features found in common among the NDE experiences have been an awareness of being out of the body. Many could see the body lying on the table and report about what the doctors were saying. There was the experience of going through a tunnel or going up a staircase toward a light, meeting with beings of light or deceased loved ones; or that of finding oneself bathed in an intense and unconditional love. Then there is always the life review and the imparting of knowledge about oneself and the universe. These are the shared experiences of those who have had the NDE, and then they would come back, sometimes quite reluctantly. They did not want to leave where they were, but had to return for various reasons.

Part of the after-effects of these experiences which millions of people worldwide have now had, is that they come back with a sense of purpose. There is a sense of the capacity for a self-effacing love that perhaps was not there before, a compassion, an appreciation for life. When we talk about the higher dimensions of the heart, these are the very

The Heart's Wisdom

qualities that are spoken of by the great spiritual teachers throughout history. In some way, the higher reaches of the heart are experienced in the absence of the blinding influence of obsession with the body.

HPB made a striking statement about the experience of the spiritual; and how it is done. One of the things she said was that in order to experience a genuine spiritual life, you must “paralyze the personality”. The veiling, blocking influence of our constant desiring mind, of the sensations that we are ever in search of, and the bodies with their aches and pains and demands has to be “paralyzed”. Clearly, there is no stronger paralysis than dying, and so with the NDE the hint of a deeper spirituality becomes available.

Countless people now have had NDEs, so when we hear someone talk about it, even if it is not *our* experience, it minimally plants a certain seed of doubt about the firmness of this reality that people insist upon us accepting. The idea that this is a physical world with physical objects, that consciousness is generated by the physical organ of the brain, starts to become a little bit doubtful and, to the person who has had the experience, the assertion is utterly ridiculous. This is something where modern science has certainly been a huge ally, but in an indirect fashion.

HPB said there were three centers in the body: the navel, or center of the desire nature; the brain, center of the psychic, or “psycho-intellectual nature”; and the heart, center of the spiritual conscious-

ness. What heart was she talking about? It is very easy to think that it is this beating, pumping heart of ours. But it is not. In the Gāyatri Mantra, relating to the solar consciousness one translation reads, “Unveil . . . that face of the true sun, now hidden by a vase of golden light”. The clear idea in the mantra is that the sun that we see, that gives life to *all* physical organisms, is just a covering of the deeper, spiritual sun. In a similar way, the heart that we are familiar with, is the covering of a deeper heart, but still has its connection.

There is a place in California called the HeartMath Institute, whose experiments have been replicated in many places. They performed an experiment where they took a computer and programmed it to present photographs randomly. There was no way to tell what photograph would come up next. The people participating in this experiment were wired so that the electrical responses of their heart and brain could be observed.

What they were looking for in the heart is something called “coherence”, or heart-rate variability. The pictures which were randomly displayed were of two types: one was of lovely natural scenes, babies, kittens, and so on, something that would generate a warm and pleasant feeling. The other type were photos of war scenes, car accidents, violence, as graphic as possible. These images were shown to the subjects, and the reaction of brain and heart would be recorded.

They found that when the image of whichever category was coming up, just

The Heart's Wisdom

a slight moment before the picture came up, the brain was responding in the way that you would anticipate for that image. But almost five seconds before the image was presented the heart was responding in the appropriate way for those photographs. The heart was the organ that reflected the intuition of the future event well before the picture appeared. So this is a scientific recognition of the age-old teaching that the heart is the center of spiritual consciousness.

Following are some quotes about the heart that we might be able to apply. They are drawn from either HPB's *Collected Writings* or one of the Mahatmas. She says that:

The heart is the abode of the spiritual man, whereas the psycho-intellectual man dwells in the head, with its seven gateways. In the heart there is a spot which is the last to die; a spot marked by a tiny violet light. . . . The heart is the center of spiritual consciousness as the brain is the center of intellectual consciousness, but the spiritual consciousness cannot be guided by a person, nor can its energy be directed by him until he is completely united with his *buddhi manas* [higher self]. Until it guides him, if it can, that is to say, it makes efforts to reach him and impress the lower consciousness. Those efforts are helped by his own growth in purity. . . . The effort however should be continually made to center the consciousness in the heart and to listen for the promptings of the Spiritual Consciousness, for though success be far off, a beginning must be made, and the path opened up.

So by “continually” would be meant, even now, to locate in ourselves that which we would regard as our heart center, and to center our consciousness there, and to listen for the promptings of the spiritual consciousness. A certain concentration is needed at first, so that the still small voice of the spiritual consciousness is protected from being drowned out by the heavy noises that surround us, some of the heaviest being our own thoughts. Listen for the promptings of the spiritual consciousness, for though success will most likely be far off, if we do not start, we will never succeed. A beginning must be made, only then the Path opens up.

She then gives a specific practice, and it is something that is much better suited to someone who has a theosophical background. She writes that “with regard to concentration, the blessed Master Koot Hoomi writes: ‘Your best method is to concentrate on the Master as a living man within you, as a living presence within us; make his image in your heart, and a focus of concentration so as to lose *all* sense of bodily existence in that one thought.’” To become so absorbed in the presence of this living Master in the heart that it becomes undisturbed within us, is the advice of the blessed Koot Hoomi, as HPB describes it.

It is a wonderful thing for us to share, to sit, to listen, to think, all of that is great, and it probably has benefits for us as individuals, but the fact of the matter is that the Theosophical Society — this movement with which we have affiliated ourselves, did not come into being for

The Heart's Wisdom

mere personal benefit. Personal happiness is wonderful and necessary, but we live in a world, and for whatever reason all who are here were born at a time when the world has taken a particular turn, when there is an energy of *separateness* that has become quite dominant in our world. What do we do about this?

Obviously, as individuals, we can feel rather small, powerless perhaps. Dr Albert Schweitzer once made the wise observation that “example is not the main way to influence others, it is the *only* way”. In the absence of an applied Theosophy that

bears fruit, then it is merely a nice study like many others. The advice from HPB was not just to center ourselves in the heart, but to *listen* for the promptings of the spiritual consciousness that is ever-whispering, and to act. There is not a moment when it is not whispering. Equally, there is hardly a moment when we are not blocking it with our noise.

The sun is always shining, but too often there are clouds *of our creation* blocking the reception of its healing rays. That is what is before us, the hope for this organization, and for this world. ✧

Those who have read *The Voice of the Silence* will know that it consists of three treatises which convey the essence of Mahayanic thought in a very clear form. They are couched in the form of discourses, in which the pupil asks the teacher for guidance and light, and the teacher tells the pupil about the aims on the Path, the various virtues to be developed, the weaknesses to be avoided, and truths relating to all this. The teacher also makes clear that he can only point the way, he cannot carry the pupil to the intended destination. The pupil has to use his own intelligence at every step, summon all the energies of his nature, and apply himself seriously to the task. If it were merely a question of finding a teacher who would conduct one to the proper goal, the difficulty would lie only in finding the right person, and thereafter the pupil would have no responsibility. But that is not the case. The disciple must make the journey by himself, facing all difficulties, guided by his own understanding.

N. Sri Ram
Seeking Wisdom

Looking Within to Reach Out

DEEPA PADHI

IT is a paradox that what we know as real outside of us, is not real. It is like Socrates' paradox: "All I know is that I know nothing."

Human beings live in two worlds, visible and invisible, the outer and the inner. But unfortunately, most of us are aware only of one world, the one that is visible — a gross material world experienced by our sense organs which are outward-oriented. Importance is given to things, beings, and happenings in the outer world, and we are made to believe that the solutions to all problems and challenges lie outside of ourselves. We expect joy, happiness, peace of mind from the outside by acquiring, possessing, indulging, and enjoying the objects of the world. Most of us are contented with our life "as it is" and identify ourselves with our "artificial personalities", that is, name, form, position, qualifications, wealth, and so on. But when we are faced with challenges, when something adverse happens in our lives, when we find that science, religion, rituals cannot solve our problems, we feel depressed, dejected, frustrated. We feel cheated by the outer world.

Our unhappiness and insecurity in the world are due to our erroneous and limited perception of ourselves and the world outside. Whatever has a boundary is limited. This piece of life which we are living now is limited, as it has its physical boundary. But there is something within every one of us, of infinite nature, that does not like the boundary and yearns to go beyond it. The physical body, which is finite and limited, belongs to "me" but it is not "me" or "I". The deep desire to know the real "I" makes us look within, into the inner world, to search for our real identity. In fact, it is the native urge we are not aware of to know our true identity, for which no qualification is required, nor is there the need to pledge ourselves to any religious denomination. We just need to go within.

When the will to know the true self is intense, we look for some kind of spiritual guidance or a master who has already trodden the path. Madame H. P. Blavatsky suggested three methods, recognized as the three limbs of the theosophical life — study, meditation, and service. Study does not merely consist in acquisition of

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Looking Within to Reach Out

knowledge from books or lectures. One has to go beyond written and spoken words, to the level of insight.

It is known that the main characteristic of the mind is externalization. But the mind can turn inward by withdrawing its focus from the senses and the external environment. Before practising meditation which is the main technique, one needs to clear the mind of all negative contents, that is, in the words of Patañjali, *chittavrtti nirodhah*, and according to HPB “slaying the slayer”, (the lower mind). One needs to unlearn all that one has learnt over the years.

Once a gentleman came all the way from Germany to meet Ramana Maharshi in India and said that he wanted to learn from him. The Maharshi replied:

Sorry. You have come to the wrong place. Here we teach how to unlearn. There are many universities where you can learn, but ours is a university for unlearning — a university to create no-mind.”

In fact, the process of inner growth is through unlearning to relearning in the form of transformational changes.

Only a mind free of all preconceived ideas, blind beliefs, superstitions, can meditate. In ancient India, children were sent to *gurukula* ashram at a very early age to learn the technique of meditation along with the pursuit of empirical and spiritual knowledge. It is advised that meditation should be practised from early childhood when the mind is like a blank slate (*tabula rasa*), an empty pristine state, before getting strong outward impres-

sions. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has emphatically said: “If every eight-year-old in the world is taught meditation, we will eliminate violence from the world within one generation.”

Annie Besant outlined a very simple and practical method, that is, to meditate on a virtue or quality, like compassion, love, kindness, simplicity, and live it in our daily life. This brings, as she says, definite progress in the inner journey.

There are different levels of meditation as instructed by HPB in “The Diagram of Meditation”. To begin with, she states, one needs to “first conceive of unity by Expansion in space and infinite in Time”. The practice of conceiving it “turns and expands our consciousness towards the very heart of our real nature and can help us recognize our true self in a transcendental divine life because it is based on what is already inherent in our real nature”. In meditation proper, one can go to the deeper layers of consciousness. The deeper one goes within, the clearer becomes the perception of our true identity, the Self — a dimension beyond physicality, that is, Pure Consciousness.

The Ageless Wisdom states that the process of transformation through meditation occurs in three stages of unfoldment. In the first stage of transmutation, the soul of the aspirant is not yet fully aware of itself on its own plane, but is aware and sensitive to the subtler levels of realities. At this stage, creative people actively transmute the vital forces of their personalities into service, particularly for bringing changes and enhancing the lives of

Looking Within to Reach Out

others. In the second stage, the material force and spiritual energy are mingled into a single unit so that it can function smoothly and the aspirant gets transformed into a vehicle to serve the purpose of the soul. In the final stage of transfiguration, the soul completes the process that began with its awakening. Though the aspirant is in the human form, he transforms himself into an instrument of divine expression in the world to render service. It is the highest state which is attained by the very few.

With this awakening which is absolutely experiential, one undergoes a magnificent transformation like that of a caterpillar into a butterfly. In the words of Dr Deepak Chopra, a scientist and a New Age thinker, “when the consumption exceeds its metabolic needs, [the caterpillar] . . . starts to die. . . . A gene that was lying dormant in the caterpillar wakes up . . . [as] the butterfly . . . with the flight to freedom.” Similarly, there is a “Seed imperishable” — *bijam-avyayam* as the *Gita* says — that is hidden inside every human being. When there is a longing for freedom or expansion from within, it gets unfolded as the “Self” — all encompassing, all embracing. Our limited finite individual consciousness merges with the infinite consciousness like a wave settling down in the sea.

Once the Indian mystic saint Ramakrishna Paramahansa was seen seated in the temple in a meditative posture before the idol of Goddess Kali, putting the flowers on his own head which were meant for the Goddess. When

there is the realization of Oneness, there is no distinction of “you” and “I”, “subject” and “object”, “worshipper” and “worshipped”. Both become one — merged in consciousness.

All great spiritual and religious teachers, saints, adepts have gone through this process. By looking within, Ratnakara, the dacoit, was transformed into the great sage Valmiki, who wrote the epic *Ramayana*; out of Narendra came Vivekananda; Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi emerged as Mahatma Gandhi; Siddhartha became the Buddha. This is no new theory, no new process. The human mind is the same “old fields”, but the transformed perceptions of those great persons are like the “new corn” after harvest.

J. Krishnamurti says: “Look within, you are the world.” It means the whole world exists in the individual consciousness as a perceptual experience. A similar tone is found in the Sufi saint Rumi’s statement when he says: “Do you know what you are? You are a manuscript of a divine letter. You are a mirror reflecting a noble face. Look inside yourself; everything that you want, you are already that.” One gets the experiential knowledge that the self, or consciousness, that is within me, is the self that is within every being — within a beggar, a rich man, a saint, a thief, a dog, a fly, and a plant as well.

The *Īśāvāsya Upanishad* declares that when the seeker has identified himself with all beings, that is, when he sees Oneness everywhere, there can be no grief or delusion (verse 7). Delusion, grief, fragmentation, separation are the language of the

Looking Within to Reach Out

outer world. At the circumference, there is diversity, multiplicity but at the centre all is One.

The question may arise: Is it necessary to look within in order to reach out? For a theosophist the answer is “Yes”, because the inner foundation needs to be strong to hold the outer weight. As Annie Besant states: “It is impossible to help others until you have obtained some certainty of your own. If you want to lift a person out of stormy waters your own feet must be on the rock.” (*Talks on the Path of Occultism*, vol. III — *Light on the Path*, p. 419) A theosophist is an altruist above all, says HPB. There are people who do a lot of charitable work and show compassion. But that may not always be one’s real intent. There may be a hidden agenda behind what one does. But with the awakening of Oneness from within, when the hands are extended to render service, it becomes purely selfless. In fact, the journey from “looking within to reaching out” is a movement from selfishness to selflessness, from exclusiveness to inclusiveness.

Once the individual is transformed, love, compassion, caring, generosity come spontaneously.

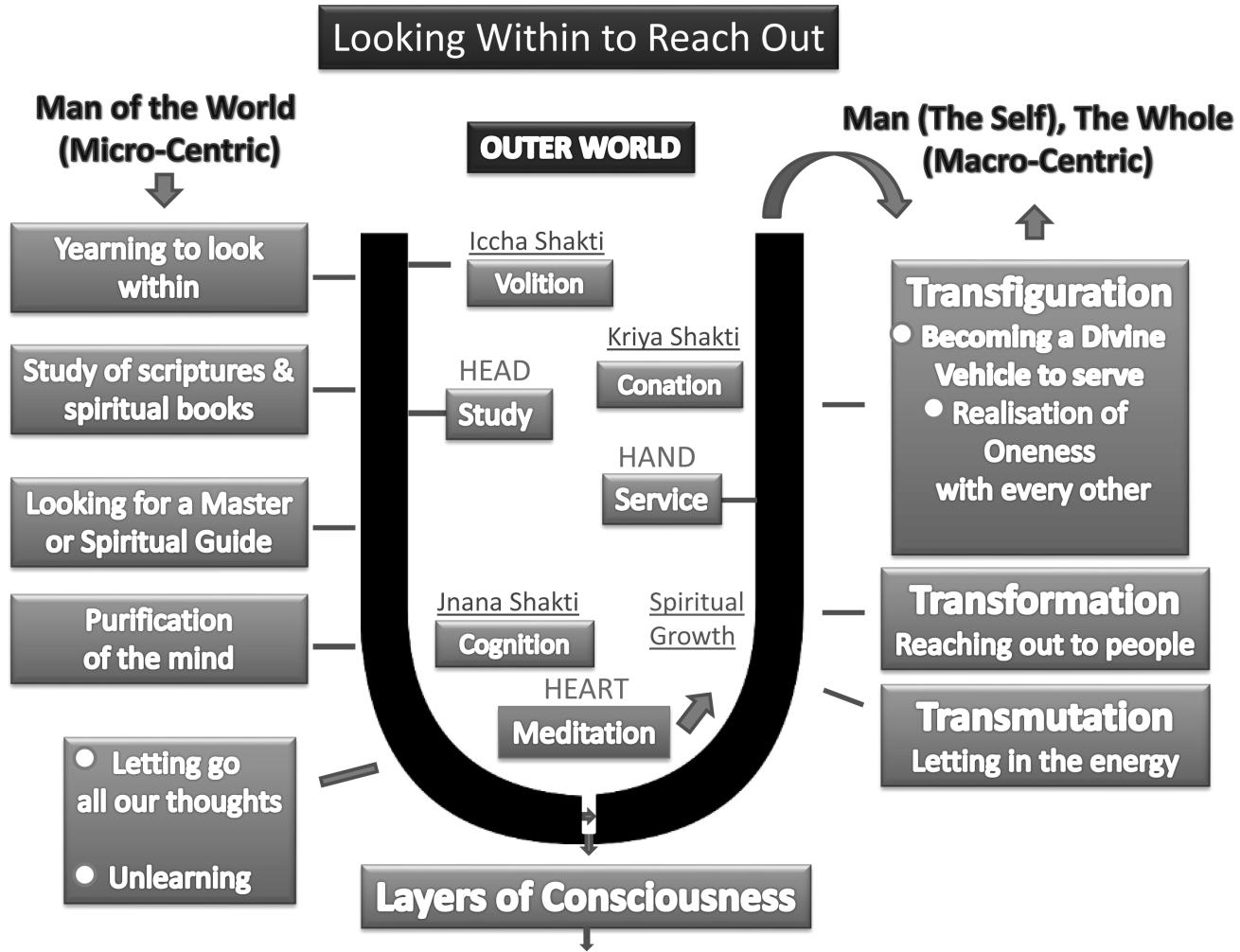
Our growth, the transformation that happens within, is not self-centric but other-centric. A tree grows until it becomes large enough to provide shelter to whoever comes under it without discrimination. A flower exudes fragrance for others. Annie Besant’s challenging advice on service implies “a shift from intellectualizing about it, to feeling the reality of the action — a shift in consciousness, a soul-to-soul connection”.

Great Masters, even after their liberation from the cycle of birth and death, choose to live in this world out of their own volition to serve and protect suffering humanity with love and compassion. Therefore, it is essential for each one of us to “look within” for self-transformation, which is the need of the day, because the centre, the heart only connects us with one another and that will establish the nucleus of Universal Brotherhood in the true sense. ✧

Note: See the diagram on the following page.

Nobody even dreams how hard is the task of self-conquest, the subjugation of passion and appetite, the liberation of the flesh-prisoned Higher Self, until he has tried. Every such struggle is a tragedy, full of the most painful interest, and provocative of sympathy in the hearts of "good men and angels".

H. S. Olcott
“Asceticism”, *Applied Theosophy and Other Essays*



Annie Besant on Giordano Bruno

GIORDANO Bruno cried out . . . with a triumph and a transport of joy that seemed diabolical to the alarmed Church:

Yes! Yes! The earth with its inhabitants revolves and moves in space; the worlds are innumerable, the universe illimitable, life incarnates everywhere in forms. Therefore life is universal, and on all sides creates living beings. This life, universal, omnipresent, infinite, is the Universal Being whom men have called God. On all sides inhabited worlds, everywhere living beings! Then death can only disintegrate bodies; it cannot touch life. Hence, the body has no value except as an instrument for a life which is deific, a life noble, loving, heroic, worthy of being a part of the life universal and divine. Fear, falsehood, baseness, these are the real ills of life.

Such was the new moral basis, corresponding to the new thought, that Bruno offered to Christianity with a certain naive expectation of friendly response: the Immanence of God, the Life Universal animating all bodies; the eternity of the Spirit, since by his very nature he is part of the Life Universal; based on these two natural and irrefragable facts, the cult of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, the life heroic, the only way in which the specialized life could

be made worthy of the Life Universal.

This was the thesis upheld by Giordano Bruno in all the countries of Europe visited by him, in all the universities which opened their doors to him, in all centres of thought. It was this view of life which fanned his eloquence into flame. Science for him was not arid and sterile, a mere set of categories; it was a religion, fruitful and inspired. He loved science, he preached science with all his fiery energy and ineffable enthusiasm; he was the apostle of science, its fervid defender, and he became its martyr. For, to him, science meant occultism, the study of divine mind in Nature, the study of divine ideas embodied in material objects. By studying objects, then, it was possible to read the language of Nature, and to learn therein the thoughts of God.

But Christianity utterly refused his message. Had it accepted it, the bitter conflict waged from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century between religion and science would never have broken out. The Church imprisoned the Messenger; then burned his body to ashes, and scattered the ashes to the winds, which carried them as seeds of truth over Europe. . . .

His thoughts have winged their way to immortality, and they are spreading over the modern world; they are *Theosophy*. ✧

Annie Besant was the second international President of the Theosophical Society from 1907 to 1933. Extract from *Giordano Bruno: An Apostle of Theosophy*, pp. 32–35.

J. Krishnamurti

RADHA BURNIER

THE connection between J. Krishnamurti (Krishnaji as he was affectionately known) and the Theosophical Society was broken, not because he left — as many members believe — but because people were not ready to listen to a profound message given in terms they were not accustomed to hearing. It is not the first time that this has happened. The Jews would not listen to Jesus when he came to teach. The majority of Hindus did not respond for long to what the Buddha had to say. Most people like to revert to their accustomed thoughts, their habits, their convenient theories and ideas even when they are shaken up, for radical change is both difficult and “inconvenient”. But everything which is profound is radical. Truth cannot temporize and compromise, and we like to compromise and to have the best of both worlds. In *The Mahatma Letters*, it is made very clear that one who is in earnest about the Path must abandon all his accustomed modes of thinking and ways of action. So members of the Theosophical Society should have been prepared to hear a new message. But when Krishnaji began to speak in a radical way,

there were many who could not listen.

The very fact that he denied to himself all authority was radical. Those who expected the “World Teacher” to manifest through Krishnamurti had, as he himself declared in 1927, a picture in their minds of what would be said and what the function of Krishnamurti would be. A picture is a static, material form projected by the mind, and Krishnaji pointed out that as long as the picture was static, people were happy and satisfied. When the picture came alive they were disturbed. Obviously, it is so much more convenient to deal with something which does not speak or act, except as the person wants. An image can be made to play a role which satisfies. It was expected of the “World Teacher” that he would tell people what to believe, define the “truth” and the role his followers were to play. Many may have liked an important role for themselves as followers and interpreters. But when the teaching came and Krishnaji denied his own authority, repudiated all following, refused any interpretation, it deflated the ego-sense of some would-be followers and dismayed others.

Mrs Radha Burnier (1923–2013) was the seventh international President of the Theosophical Society. Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, March 1986.

J. Krishnamurti

Krishnaji made clear from 1927 that he was not going to say what he had discovered. In those days, people asked: What is the Beloved that you speak about? And he answered: "I am going to be purposely vague because, although I could quite easily make it definite, it is not my intention to do so. Once you define a thing it is dead." People would have revelled in wonderful descriptions of the Beloved, or whatever he discovered. In his *Notebooks* and *Journal*, there are glimpses of an immense, unnameable something which he sometimes called the "other" because it had nothing to do with the this-ness of our world. The Upanishads, too, refer to "That" which neither mind nor words nor thought can touch. What is heard with the ears — words remembered and repeated — are all part of the material brain. Memory belongs to the region of no more. But people enjoy descriptions and become attached to definitions and labels. They would have liked him to label himself. If he had been labelled they would automatically have been "disciples", "apostles", or whatever they fancied themselves. But he said: "When I began to think, I wanted to find out what was meant by the World Teacher . . . and what was meant by his manifestation in the world." Perhaps the manifestation was not what people talked about, but something which cannot be put into words. Anyone who wants to find the truth has to learn to think and discover for himself and not accept descriptions, definitions, other people's words.

Krishnaji did give a little indication of what his Beloved was: "My Beloved is

the open skies, the flower, every human being." In his life this was the truth. This was not just a grand statement; his was a life which at no moment showed any thought of something being important and others not; a feeling that some are low and others high. He said it was his practice to listen to everybody always. 'I desired to learn from the gardener, from the *pariah* [untouchable], from my neighbour, from my friend, from everything that could teach, in order to become one with the Beloved.' To the end, he listened carefully, with attention and with affection, to everyone, without distinction of high or low. He responded with what might have appeared to others as impractical generosity. Watching and listening to the scientist, the intellectual, the politician, everybody, he saw into the core of things, as a reading of his *Commentaries on Living* and other writings makes clear. He had an enormous, perhaps boundless, capacity for affection. People use the word 'love' with little meaning. Ordinary love admits of jealousy, attachment, pettiness, and so on. But his love was profound, overflowing, attentive, compassionate, utterly different from that of others.

Many of those who listened to him over the years felt the extraordinary power and upliftment which came through him in his talks, discussions and personal conversations. Most people like to have influence and use it, but he frequently warned: "Do not be influenced by me." Under his influence people thought they understood, but it was often a passing thing. When someone understands truly through his

J. Krishnamurti

own listening, learning and observing, then there is a steady light and that is what each one has to find.

So right from the beginning, when he began his work, he made it clear that he was not trying to convince or persuade anybody. All that he did was to try to awaken perception and the desire to seek out the truth without holding on to authority, repeating statements or quoting books — even his own. When there is real desire to seek for the truth, then each person becomes free. When there is authority, there is bound to be fear. Authority is shaky; it creates insecurity, fanaticism, dogmatism.

He was like a flower which sheds its fragrance around, not concerned with who is passing by or what the passers-by think of it. This is the quintessence of the action without seeking results that the *Bhagavad-gītā* refers to. Numberless people have talked about it, memorized the words and ideas in great books, but the truth is far from their lives. When someone knows the truth he may or may not talk; but his life is filled with beauty and fragrance.

Krishnaji said that when there is no attachment, the border between death and life is very thin. He showed life and death in a different light. The death of the body is generally thought to be tragic, something to talk about for a long time. Physical distance also is taken as “separation”. Krishnaji said that when he was away he missed nobody. He may have been near to everybody all the time because he was one with the immensity and timelessness of all life.

Some ask: “Was not his teaching abstruse, removed from the life of the ordinary man?” It was just the contrary. His teaching was profound but not abstruse; it concerned the lives of ordinary people for it threw light upon the ego-problem which is the only problem which exists, and which produces fear, love of power, disappointment, hope, attachment, the desire for continuity. So his was a message for the everyday life of every man, woman and child, but it was also a message which could take one beyond the everyday life to the very heart of existence, its truth, its beauty and its peace. ✧

**Any love, any affection, which has a motive, which has a purpose,
is no love at all; and we only love when we have no motive.**

J. Krishnamurti

The “Gift of the Gods”

ALI RITSEMA

THE “gift of the gods” is a beautiful expression used by Koot Hoomi Lal Singh (KH) in *The Mahatma Letters (ML)* 11/28, 3rd chron. rev. ed., adding that this gift is the most precious relic of all. KH is talking about “the new civilization”, stating that it will be the child of the old one, and that the eternal law will take its own course. We have the weakness, he says, to believe in ever recurrent cycles and hope to *quicken* the resurrection of what is past and gone. The revival of our ancient arts and high civilization are sure to come back in their time and in a higher form. We *could not* impede it even if we would, yet we are anxious to hasten the welcome event. Fear not; our knowledge will not pass away from the sight of man. It is the “gift of the gods” and the most precious relic of all.

This expression in the *ML* really appeals to me, especially so because the world is in need and, in my view, can only be properly helped when we do everything we can to get it into a better state. This is only possible when humanity in general will grow towards a more spiritual level of consciousness. Maybe the time for a revival

of the ancient arts and high civilization in a higher form has come.

In the same letter KH also states: “We will always find volunteers to replace the tired sentries, and the world, bad as it is in its present state of transitory period, can yet furnish us with a few men now and then.” Therefore, let us try to find out what we, students of Theosophy, can do to hasten such a possible and most welcome event and, even better, become volunteers for their work.

It is clear from this fragment that *their* knowledge, “the gift of the gods”, is always available in every so-called “civilization”, and it is often referred to as Divine Wisdom, or Truth. It is very likely that the founding of the Theosophical Society (TS) and the publications of H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) such as *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Key to Theosophy*, *The Voice of the Silence*, the many articles from her pen — often in cooperation with the Masters — and the publication of *The Mahatma Letters* are part of the quickening of the resurrection of what was in the past.

When we are serious in our intention

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The “Gift of the Gods”

to help humanity towards a more spiritual consciousness, we are greatly helped by the available teachings to get some feel for and understanding of the gods and this precious gift, *their* knowledge.

In the *Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett (LBS)*-Appendix II of *ML* it is stated that there are two different kinds of knowledge: real and unreal. Real knowledge deals with eternal verities and primal causes, standing independent of our belief or unbelief, but unreal knowledge deals with illusory effects and requires faith — it rests on authority. It is the adept alone who possesses the real knowledge, his mind being en rapport with the Universal Mind. The adept has made the perfect junction of his soul with the Universal Mind in fullness.

The Universal Mind is the aggregate of all the minds of the Dhyān Chohans, the highest gods; they are Divine Intelligences charged with the supervision of the Kosmos. They answer to Divine Wisdom.

Thus real knowledge is the “precious gift of the gods” and it is available for those who are able to bring their mind in tune with the Universal Mind, like the adept is able to do. The adepts have kept and still are keeping their knowledge accessible for humankind: They are the link between men and the gods and are a necessity in Nature and super-Nature, according to *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings (CW)* VIII, p. 401. The continuity of this link is unbroken.

Every student of the Theosophical teachings is seeking for / interested in this real knowledge, but KH makes it clear in

ML 126 / 62 that their *Knowledge and Science* have to be earned by ourselves. “Is any of you so eager for knowledge and the beneficent powers it confers as to be ready to leave your world and come into ours?” KH asks in *ML* 2 / 2. Here we also find: “True, we have our schools and teachers, our neophytes and shaberon (superior adepts), and the door is always open to the right man who knocks. And we invariably welcome the newcomer; only, instead of going over to him he has to come to us.”

Now the question arises whether we are eager enough to become a beneficent power in and for the world, which, in my view, means whether our motive is the right motive and whether our drive, and thus our effort, is persistent enough to earn *their* knowledge and science. And if so, how can we earn this knowledge and science in order to become a beneficent power in and for the world? For, “the iron rule is that what powers one gets *he must himself acquire*”. (*ML* 65 / 11)

And when we do want to enter *their* world, what then is the difference with “*our* world”? What are the qualities or nature required of the “right man”, for whom the door is always opened?

Let us try to get a clearer picture of what is required. What strikes me and what seems of utmost importance for the Masters is the sense of duty. This is what KH states: “But my first duty is to *my* Master. And duty, let me tell you, is for us stronger than any friendship or even love; as without this abiding principle which is the indestructible cement that has held together

The “Gift of the Gods”

for so many millenniums the scattered custodians of Nature’s grand secrets, our Brotherhood — nay, our doctrine itself — would have crumbled long ago into unrecognisable atoms.” (*ML* 126/62)

And in the same letter we find: “You have not the faith required to allow your Will to arouse itself in defiance and contempt against your purely worldly intellect, and give you a better understanding of things hidden and laws unknown.”

Master KH makes also clear in this letter that the path to occult or secret science is difficult: it “has to be trodden laboriously”, he states, “and crossed at the danger of life; every step in it leading to the final goal is surrounded by pitfalls and cruel thorns; the pilgrim who ventures upon it is made first to confront and *conquer* the thousand and one furies who keep watch over its adamantine gates and entrance — furies called Doubt, Scepticism, Scorn, Ridicule, Envy and finally Temptation — especially the latter; and . . . he must be possessed of a heart and soul clad in steel, and of an iron, never-failing determination, and yet be meek and gentle, humble, and have shut out of his heart every human passion, that leads to evil”.

Every student of this real knowledge will experience that the teachings are sometimes inconceivable and mind-boggling. Therefore KH gives the advice that “for a clearer comprehension of the extremely abstruse and at first incomprehensible theories of our occult doctrine, never allow the serenity of your mind to be disturbed during your hours of literary

labour, nor before you set to work. It is upon the serene and placid surface of the unruffled mind that the visions gathered from the invisible find a representation in the visible world. Otherwise you would vainly seek those visions, those flashes of sudden light which have already helped to solve so many of the minor problems and which alone can bring the truth before the eye of the soul. It is with jealous care that we have to guard our mind-plane from all the adverse influences which daily arise in our passage through earth-life.” (*ML* 65 / 11)

From the above, the impression might arise that coming to real knowledge is very much about head-learning, but when we take a closer look it becomes clear that it is about “inner tuition” — intuition, “seeing” with the “spiritual eye”. For a clearer comprehension of the occult doctrine it is necessary to come to an understanding from within, to see things as they are, with the eye of the soul, in a clear way, unveiled.

KH puts it as follows in *ML* 126/62: “Unfortunately, however great your purely *human* intellect, your spiritual intuitions are dim and hazy, having been never developed.”

However, every one of us possesses the faculty, the interior sense, known as *intuition*, says H. P. Blavatsky in her article “The Beacon of the Unknown”, “but how rare are those who know how to develop it! It is . . . the only faculty by means of which men and things are seen in their true colours. It . . . grows in us in proportion to the use we make of it, and

The “Gift of the Gods”

... helps us to perceive and understand real and absolute facts with far more certainty than can the simple use of our senses and the exercise of our reason.” (*CW XI*, p. 253) This faculty, intuition, is a power by which we can gain true knowledge, it is a power of the perception of truth, which makes it possible to deal with universals and then proceed to particulars. (*CW X*, p. 349–350)

It seems that vanity often blinds what was at first a strong intuition, closing the mind effectually against the admission of a new truth and making us jump to a conclusion without having studied the subject fully and before the teaching has been fully expounded, listening only to the voice of self-adulation and clinging to views, whether right or wrong. The Lord Buddha particularly warned his hearers against forming beliefs based upon tradition or authority, and before having thoroughly inquired into the subject. (*CW X*, p. 129)

In *CW IX*, p. 400-G, in an article on “Conversations on Occultism” between a student and a sage, the student asks how one is to know when he gets real occult information from the Self within. The sage, in his answer, points out: “Intuition must be developed and the matter judged from the true philosophical basis, for if it is contrary to true general rules, it is wrong. It has to be known from a deep and profound analysis by which we find out what is from egotism alone and what is not. . . . The power to know does not come from book-study nor from mere philosophy, but mostly from the actual practice

of altruism in deed, word, and thought; for that practice purifies the covers of the soul and permits that light to shine down into the brain-mind. As the brain-mind is the receiver in the waking state, it has to be purified from sense-perception, and the truest way to do this is by combining philosophy with the highest outward and inward virtue.”

This leads us to the same question the student asks: “Tell me some ways by which intuition is to be developed.” The answer of the sage is as follows:

First of all by giving it exercise, and second by not using it for purely personal ends. Exercise means that it must be followed through mistakes and bruises until from sincere attempts at use it comes to its own strength. This does not mean that we can do wrong and leave the results, but that after establishing conscience on a right basis by following the golden rule, we give play to the intuition and add to its strength. Inevitably in this at first we will make errors, but soon if we are sincere it will grow brighter and make no mistake. We should add the study of the works of those who in the past have trodden this path and found out what is the real and what is not. They say the Self is the only reality. The brain must be given larger views of life, as by the study of the doctrine of reincarnation, since that gives a limitless field to the possibilities in store. We must not only be unselfish, but must do all the duties that Karma has given us, and thus intuition will point out the road of duty and the true path of life.

In *The Secret Doctrine* vol. I, p. 46fn,

The “Gift of the Gods”

HPB explains that the inner spiritual eye and the faculty which manifests through it is not clairvoyance as ordinarily understood, that is, the power of seeing at a distance, but rather the faculty of spiritual intuition through which direct and certain knowledge is obtainable.

How to obtain knowledge was also made clear in a statement attributed to her:

Knowledge comes in visions, first in dreams and then in pictures presented to the inner eye during meditation. Thus have I been taught the whole system of evolution, the laws of being and all else that I know — the mysteries of life and death, the workings of karma. Not a word was spoken to me of all this in the ordinary way, except, perhaps, by way of confirmation of what was thus given me — nothing taught me in writing. And knowledge so obtained is so clear, so convincing, so indelible in the impression it makes upon the mind, that all other sources of information, all other methods of teaching with which we are familiar, dwindle into insignificance in comparison with this. (*CW XIII*, p. 285)

To render active the inner vision, the student must purify his whole nature, moral, mental, and physical. If the Mind is not perfectly pure, it cannot preserve recollections coming from a higher state. An act may be performed to which little or no attention is paid and is of compara-

tively small importance. But if thought of, dwelt on in the Mind, the effect is a thousand times greater. Therefore it is above all things of importance that the thoughts should be kept pure. Our lower nature must so be purified that it vibrates in unison with the higher nature, and this is not easy. Even an Adept, when in a new body, has to do the same and finds it difficult. (*CW XII*, p. 692)

To be able to get glimpses of real knowledge, *their* knowledge, from within through our inner eye, requires hard and strenuous inner work. We are greatly helped and supported by the available teachings so that we do not lose our way on this journey inward. It depends a great deal on our determination and zeal how successful we shall be, but if we persist, our understanding will grow gradually, and to the measure of our understanding we can pass it on to others. The portion of this gift of the gods, of this precious relic, which humanity received through the teachings passed on by HPB and the Masters, has not been given for no reason. It is an attempt to quicken humanity’s evolutionary journey towards a more spiritual level of consciousness. If we are serious about becoming a beneficent power in and for the world, let us try to join the higher forces and not forget to keep a constant eye to the human progression and perfection that the Secret Science depicts. ✧

The sacrifice or surrender of the *heart* of man *and its emotions* is the first of the rules; it involves "the attaining of an equilibrium which cannot be shaken by personal emotion."

H. P. Blavatsky, *Practical Occultism*

Beyond Illusion

CLEMICE PETTER

Much has been said and written about Truth. Many feel that they know what it means to live a spiritual life, that they know the way, the “practices” that are required, and how to come to Truth. We easily forget what teachings have pointed out; it has been said in the Upanishads, by Jiddu Krishnamurti, and by H. P. Blavatsky: those who say they know, do not know. The assumption that we know may be the greatest illusion of them all. If we look closely into the history of humanity, we will see that those who thought they knew, who were sure and created formulas and moulds for life, who thought they knew, and so put themselves into the position of dictating how others should live; those are the people who bring misery and corruption.

Our social structure is built on moulds of ready-made answers to the challenges of life. Our educational systems are directed to shape the child’s mind in a pre-established direction. We assume we know what the correct way of life is, and so, we train our children to be as miserable as we are. We do not know freedom, therefore we are afraid to let it flower;

human beings live in the darkness of a prison, and so we are afraid of the shining Sun outside the walls erected by our own mind, the walls of belief and prejudice, the walls of “knowledge”.

Because we have been moulded in a certain pattern, we think that to follow a pattern is the way of life. Each one has his own formula about what others should do or be. Of course, we do not apply our theories to ourselves, in our own life; but we want others to apply them in their lives. We are sure about what is wrong in the world and how it has to be corrected, but we are helpless in our own home. We do not know how to end our sorrow, our daily uncertainties, and deep fears, nor do we know how to talk with our children when they ask the simplest and most innocent questions. The fact is that we do not know how to relate, how to live together in harmony and cooperation. Division and competition has been the way of human beings on this earth.

So, what is it that we really know, not what we think we know? We have read many things in books and listened to people’s conclusions, therefore we think we

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Beyond Illusion

know. The more we read, the more we think we know. The more we think we know, the less we understand. Knowledge closes the door to understanding; this is very easy to see, if one is willing to look. Therefore, the great enemy of humanity in its present stage of ignorance is knowledge. This may sound contradictory, but it is not, because ignorant is he who does not know himself. It does not matter how many books one has read, whether these books are holy or mundane, or how many titles one carries in front of one's name — if one has no self-knowledge, one is an ignorant man. If one is aware of what is going on in the world, one will see that the present social structure is the outcome of human ignorance.

Science has advanced tremendously in the last century, but has not been able to solve the most basic human problems; on the contrary, our problems are increasing. We live in the era of information — never before in the history of humanity have we had so much knowledge — and yet, we are facing the biggest crises ever. We know so much, but we understand so little . . . Knowledge is not helping man to awaken human nature — kindness, compassion, and responsibility — which remains hidden. And to come upon it we need to understand ourselves. Self-knowledge is the key that opens the gates of this self-imposed prison, it is the way to freedom, and this freedom is freedom from the “me” and the “mine”. Without freedom, to acquire more and more knowledge inevitably leads to self-destruction, as one can see happening right in front of one's

eyes: the insane destruction of the environment, pollution of water and air, and deliberate poisoning of our own food. We are destroying our own home and are incapable of seeing it; therefore we cannot change.

To go beyond illusion we first need to understand the world created by it. The world in which we live, a world that knows no compassion, that is becoming more and more violent, brutal, and competitive. There are those who say that competition is the way, that we need to be competitive in order to progress. And this only shows how little we understand. We need to question what we call progress and civilization. To teach a child in school to be competitive is a crime against humanity, for, competition kills the cooperative spirit, and to teach children a formula for life, telling them what they should feel, how they should love, or even worse. To tell them what love is, is to kill innocence and make the mind dull. Real education is to allow the child to think for herself, not to teach her what to think. So far we have not understood this simple and obvious fact.

Blavatsky warned about the need to understand the ways and means of the mind, so that we are no longer slaves of it. In the very first page of *The Voice of the Silence*, she wrote: “The mind is the great slayer of the Real. Let the disciple slay the slayer.” She said that we must “seek out the raja [the king] of the senses, the thought producer, he who awakes illusion”. She wrote it more than one hundred years ago; how many of us have

Beyond Illusion

really given attention to this basic teaching? very few, it seems.

Krishnamurti travelled the world over for more than sixty years explaining in a thousand different ways these short and deep statements made by Blavatsky. How many of us are capable of listening to him? No teacher before Krishnamurti has gone so deep and explained in such a detailed way the awakening of illusions and the means and ways of the mind — the great slayer of the real. But because his language is simple and he does not present himself as an authority figure and does not promise anything, very few are capable of listening.

Krishnamurti does not claim to know, he invites you to travel with him, to find out for yourself, to walk together as friends; and walking together is very difficult for us, because we are used to authority, we worship authority, the authority established by the mind. We are incapable of seeing the destructive nature of authority in the psychological realm.

To go beyond illusion we need to feel the urge, to be serious about it, and be able to stand alone. So the first thing to realize is our own ignorance; again Blavatsky had warned about it. But we like to think that we are great people and that we know. It is vanity that makes us blind, and instead of starting with the first step we think that we can jump to the last one; instead of starting to walk, we think that we can begin with arriving. But there is no shortcut or miracles that can make us understand the mechanism of our illusion-maker, this thinking machine called “mind”.

It may appear to be possible; after all, the mind is expert at make-believe.

There is no way out of this self-imposed prison in which human beings live. Self-knowledge is the key, and this was made clear by Blavatsky when she wrote in the Preface of *The Voice of the Silence*:

The Book of the Golden Precepts — some of which are pre-Buddhistic while others belong to a later date — contains about ninety distinct little treatises. Of these I learnt thirty-nine by heart, years ago. To translate the rest, I should have to resort to notes scattered among too large a number of papers and memoranda collected for the last twenty years and never put in order, to make of it by any means an easy task. Nor could they be all translated and given to a world too selfish and too much attached to objects of sense to be in any way prepared to receive such exalted ethics in the right spirit. *For, unless a man perseveres seriously in the pursuit of self-knowledge, he will never lend a willing ear to advice of this nature* [italics added].

Those who have been studying *The Voice of the Silence* understand that Self-knowledge is at the very beginning; it is the first step. Without it one is blind and deaf in spiritual matters. So it is worse than useless to keep reading books if one is not willing to take up the inner journey that will reveal the illusions projected by the mind.

Many say that to go beyond illusion is only for the few, that it is not for everybody; we would rather say that it is for those who are serious, for those who are

Beyond Illusion

interested in Truth, no matter what it takes to come upon it. It is for those who are no longer enchanted by the sweet song of illusions awakened by the desire for comfort, either physical or psychological. So the real difficulty in this matter is how much one is willing to let go — how much one is willing to look at, to go into oneself. Teachers have said that the “me” is the primary illusion. Intellectually, we know this, but we cannot understand or see it. We fail to understand that this “me” is the creation of the mind, and as long as we do not understand its ways and means we cannot see the illusions that are its products.

The mind is a blind tool meant to be used by intelligence, the difficulty of which is that human beings have made a blind tool into the supreme king — a blind king worshipped by ignorance. The delusion that there is intelligence in the mind is created by the false impression that because we have developed a great deal of technology, we are intelligent. But technology is basically the knowledge of the mechanical process of things, whereas intelligence is far beyond the mechanical. For intelligence to come into being it requires the development of the mind and the heart; intelligence means Love, Compassion, and Responsibility. Responsibility is in the sense of being able to respond, and, for that, we need first to be capable of listening. To listen, we need to be sensitive, therefore, for intelligence to come into being we need to work hard; it is not a job for a lazy mind, a mind that

is put to sleep by beliefs. The mechanical mind without the light of intelligence is bound to create more and more misery, as it has been happening in the world.

It is the illusion of separateness, which has divided us into “me” and “you”, my country and your country, that is destroying the house in which we live — the Earth. The power of this illusion is such that it makes us blind and incapable of seeing that we are destroying the very womb in which we are developing. In the last 50 years, in the name of this that we proudly call “progress”, we have destroyed the environment at an unbelievable speed. We are blind and think that we are intelligent and civilized people, but reality shows the opposite; we are as barbarian as we were two thousand years ago or even more. We have to change now, not in the future, because human behaviour has become a threat to life on this planet.

To transform society, we need to transform ourselves, and this is very obvious; we cannot have a different society with the same kind of mentality that has created this mess. To bring order into the world we need to bring it into ourselves first. To think that we can help humanity out of our disorderly and conflicting thinking, feeling, and behaviour is the same as to believe that it is possible to clean a house making use of a dirty mop and muddy water.

To go beyond illusion is to end the “me”, the birthplace of all human misery and degeneration. ✧

There Is No Other

PEDRO OLIVEIRA

IN her Blavatsky Lecture delivered at the Centenary Convention of the English Section of the Theosophical Society on 30 July 1988, Radha Burnier said:

The tradition of yoga, contrary to common belief, is not confined to India, and it is not an esoteric activity into which only a few can gain entry. It is related to a universal stream of enquiry and understanding which flows across the ages in the diverse schools concerned with the transcendence of man. In Egypt and Greece, in Sufi lore, in the teachings of the Buddhists and Taoists, in the Christian tradition, in the Tantra and Vedanta, at the heart of the outer teachings there is a way of life and a training appropriate to the inner quest and direction signified by the word “yoga”.

She seems to suggest that a genuine teaching which springs from Wisdom and not from speculation is like a vast stream that always moves forward, renewing itself, never stationary, but taking the student to deeper and deeper levels of realization and true understanding. As Origen suggested, a teaching has a body, a soul and a spirit. The body may be the

literal meaning, the soul a realization of what the purpose of human existence is and the spirit a dimension of freedom suffused with a profound sense of oneness with all that is.

Those who are trying to understand Theosophy at a deeper level and therefore live it, may be in the position of the samurai who visited a Zen Master and asked him to be shown the way to Heaven. In the first visit instead of answering the question from his visitor the Master offered him some tea. And also in the second visit. Needless to say that the samurai was growing impatient.

Tradition says that in the third visit and after the Master once again offered him tea, the samurai, just for a fraction of a second, and without moving his head, glanced at his sword which he had left at the door of the house, as a sign of respect. He did not realize, however, that he was in the presence of a fully attentive and sensitive person. At the very second he glanced at his sword the Master laid his head on the small table in front of him and said, pointing to his neck: “This is the way to Hell. Strike.” The shock to the

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There Is No Other

samurai consciousness was so intense that he understood his situation and himself so completely and attained enlightenment.

If we remain fixated on the body of the teaching and thus develop a mere intellectual rapport with it, we miss a great deal. The history of religions and spiritual movements bear testimony to the endless — and heated — divisions caused by a literal grasp of the teachings. Such divisions are essentially based on a bitter dispute for the source of scriptural authority as well as the tyranny of “the only valid view”. Such an attitude can never reach the living stream of truth that lies always above mental representations of any kind. As stated in the little booklet *Madame Blavatsky on How to Study Theosophy*, “no picture will ever represent the TRUTH”.

The Theosophical Glossary defines the word “psyche” as “the animal, terrestrial Soul; the lower *Manas*”. The soul of the teaching has to do with profound and mind-stretching metaphysical principles and concepts. They are not concepts that can be found attractive by a worldly mind. Some of the principles presented to us are clothed in the language of paradox. In her article “The Great Paradox”, HPB warns us that “the paradoxes of occultism must be lived, not uttered only. Herein lies a great danger, for it is only too easy to become lost in the intellectual contemplation of the path, and so to forget that the road can only be known by treading it”.

The risk inherent in this deeper level of the teaching is that the mind may become so utterly satisfied and dazzled with concepts only, thus failing to realize

that the concepts — ideas in the Platonic tradition — are offered to the student in order that he or she may assimilate their liberating essence which lies in the depths of the Universal Mind. Theosophical study, HPB suggested, is a form of Jnana Yoga, a transformative enquiry that leads from Being into Be-ness.

More than twenty years ago, in a talk held at the Headquarters Hall at Adyar, Radhaji said: “We aspire to tread the Path because we have heard a call. And to tread it means to move closer and closer to the Source of that call so that it can govern our lives completely.”

However, the *svarupa* of Theosophy, or the Wisdom in its very essential and pristine form, lies at a dimension which is completely free from representation, ideation, and conceptualization. All genuine Theosophical teachers, from the infancy of humanity until now, have emphasized that the uncreated Spirit of Theosophy is the undivided Oneness of all existence, in the words of HPB, “that which binds not only all MEN, but also all BEINGS and all things in the entire Universe into one grand whole” (“Is Theosophy a Religion?”, *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. X).

Let us see how several traditions, infused with a true Theosophical spirit, describe the path that leads to that fundamental experience, which is referred to in the Sanskrit language as *sākshātkara*, “to see with one’s own eyes” — a direct, unmediated, untranslatable realization that the entire, boundless existence is One.

The Christian mystical tradition speaks

There Is No Other

of *via purgativa*, *via illuminativa* and *via unitiva*. The first stage is to purge the consciousness of the grosser forms of the sense of self-attachment, self-delusion, self-importance, separateness. The second stage is to bring clarity to the mind by pondering on essential, universal truths. In the third stage the mind, merged with the larger consciousness, becomes a pure vessel for the truth of truths — the Unity of all life.

The Buddhist tradition mentions *śīla*, *samādhi*, *prajñā* — harmonious and responsible conduct, the education and purification of the mind, and wisdom. In all traditions one's actual conduct is the starting point. There can be no other. Former Śāṅkarāchārya of Kanchipuram Swami Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Mahaswamigal, once wrote: "Self-Knowledge is the longest journey to the nearest place." The journey is long because we very often get lost in the labyrinth of our own mind. The *Viśvasāra Tantra* pronounces the same truth differently: "What is here is there: what is not here is nowhere."

In this stage harmony is an imperative for one to proceed further. When that is done with some degree of success one can move further in order to understand all the mental currents and habits and begin to educate the mind towards quiet awareness. The last stage is beautifully described in the Third Fragment of *The Voice of the Silence*:

The Dhyāna gate is like an alabaster vase, white and transparent; within there burns a steady golden fire, the flame of Prajñā that radiates from Ātman.

It is difficult to find a more precise and eloquent definition of meditation: "like an alabaster vase, white and transparent". In the depths of real meditative practice hardly anything personal is left and all chromatic reactions have disappeared.

The Upanishads state that in order to know Ātman, the true Self, which is identical with Brahman, the Boundless Reality, one should proceed through three stages: *śravana*, *manana*, *nididhyāsana* — listening, reflecting, meditating. We can see for ourselves the truth that real listening brings about both order and sensitivity in our consciousness as it has the capacity of ending every form of noise that the personal mind, in its unawareness, produces. To reflect in a deeper sense is to seek to contact the essential meaning of that which we ponder upon. When such reflection reaches a level of inner maturity and quiet it morphs into a meditative state of awareness that may be a prerequisite to move further towards the truth of existence.

The source of such exalted teachings, one would hesitantly venture to say, lies in a consciousness suffused with Wisdom and Compassion. For it seems to fully acknowledge the fact that the human mind suffers from age-old limitations and that spiritual progress and spiritual evolution proceed rather slowly, although traditions speak of advanced souls who can move swiftly through these stages into the field of unconditioned awareness and insight.

The Wisdom-Teaching approaches the human condition with objective and yet compassionate eyes, putting before us a path that begins in our daily life and eventually

There Is No Other

helps us to see it anew — not as a field of pleasure, achievement, power-seeking, self-aggrandizement, and pride. But as a field of learning, of constant service, of multiple opportunities to be of help.

One of the Custodians of true, perennial, unsectarian Theosophy, shared with us his insight into the extraordinariness of life:

Believe me, there comes a moment in the life of an Adept, when the hardships he has passed through are a thousandfold rewarded. In order to acquire further knowledge, he has no more to go through a minute and slow process of investigation and comparison of various objects, but is accorded an instantaneous, implicit insight

into every first truth. (*Mahatma Letters*)

In the Eleusinian Mysteries in Ancient Greece, the final stage on the Path was called *epopteia*, “to see things as they are”. Another definition of the same Greek word is “the vision of eternal truth, goodness, and beauty”. This discovery is indeed a rediscovery — a remembering — in the language of Plato, of that we have always known at the very core of our consciousness: that in this world, in this planet, in the vast solar system and in the boundless universe there is no other.

In the words of that great master-builder, St Paul: “. . . we are members one of another.” (Ephesians 4:25)

Is this not the great open secret? ✧

**I am all orders of being, the circling galaxy,
the evolutionary intelligence, the lift, and the
falling away, what is, and what isn't. You who
know Jelaluddin, You the one in all, say who I am.
Say I am You.**

The Essential Rumi

Translations by Coleman Barks

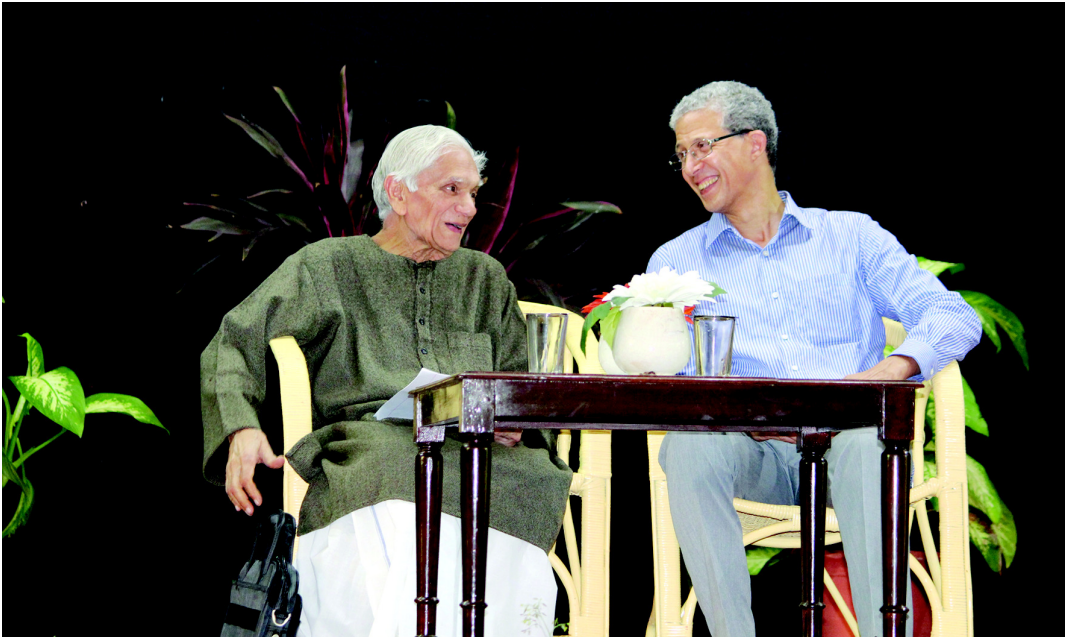


General Secretary of the TS in India, Mr Pradeep Gohil, lights the lamp prior to the opening of the International Convention at Adyar (31 Dec. to 5 Jan.)
Front row from l. to r.: Mrs Linda Oliveira, General Secretary of the TS in Australia, Mrs Lily Boyd, and international officers Ms Nancy Secrest, Treasurer; Mrs Deepa Padhi, Vice-President; Mr Tim Boyd, President; and Ms Marja Artamaa, Secretary

Theosophical Work around the World



Thiru Banwarilal Purohit, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, receiving gifts from Ms Marja Artamaa, with Mr Pradip Gohil to her right, after the Governor's address to the international Convention in the morning of 1 Jan.



Prof. Lokesh Chandra, President, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Delhi, with international President Tim Boyd, prior to the former's Besant Lecture on "Tamil: The Glory of India" in the evening of 1 Jan.

Theosophical Work around the World

Impressions of a first-timer at Adyar

I just wanted to give you all my heartfelt thanks for being so sisterly and brotherly to me — and to Tim Boyd for having the confidence in me to give me the opportunity to speak. More important than speaking, though, is that I have really come here to learn — and learnt I have. It is simply unfathomable, the depth and the wonderful wisdom of this place: walking around these grounds, listening to the birds, seeing the wonderful sunlight as it filters down through the trees, and going to the ocean to see the sun come up. One morning at the beach, there was a dense cloudbank totally obscuring the sunrise. It was just about as opaque and solid-seeming as the great Himalayan range. I thought, “Okay, well, the invisible sun is more important.” But just before 7 am, the clouds opened up and this incredible, big, orange sun came through. Then it became veiled again; then it came through again. This happened three times.

I have enjoyed all of the one-on-one conversations; there is so much happening in them. I have enjoyed all of the heartfelt lectures, symposiums, and question-and-answer periods; and also the beautiful music, such as the hymns sung in the Liberal Catholic Church. I have enjoyed the Indian music and meeting the Indian brothers and sisters here. I was very much moved last evening by the wonderful play that was put on about the life of the Buddha in

Damodar Gardens, and by the discipline and devotion of those KFI schoolkids. There have been a lot of people from the United Lodge of Theosophists (ULT) watching the live stream of this conference. I have been getting many joyous emails. There has been a real healing happening within and between the theosophical organizations through the vision of my father, Jim Colbert, Jan N. Kind with *Theosophy Forward*, and through many people feeling in their hearts that we really *are all* brothers and sisters.

I checked on something this morning from “The Great Master’s Letter” where it says that the Theosophical Society (TS) was chosen as the cornerstone of future religions. I have always wondered how that could be, how a society could be a cornerstone of something so important to the future of humanity. The magic of this place, the open-heartedness, the incredible coherence of heart — it isn’t all sameness. Like the varieties of flora and fauna observable on the grounds, there is also abundant diversity of approach to wisdom here. Yet, I think I have found in the mystery of Adyar, something of why the Great Master could have said what he said about the TS. Like the sun itself, it is generous, magnanimous, and magnetic. Thank you for allowing me to partake of the profound process of the heart that pervades this place.

JONATHAN COLBERT
ULT Santa Barbara, CA, USA

Theosophy: A Way towards Universal Consciousness

SABINE VAN OSTA

PONDERING upon the theme of this edition of the European Congress of the Theosophical Society, “Theosophy as a Way towards Universal Consciousness”, many symbolical images can come to one’s mind, one of them being the image of the fire and the spark. This is one of those images that seem too simple to even be mentioned and yet because of that simplicity they are often as profound as the ocean or as wide as boundless space. One could easily say a symbol like that does not need an explanation, everybody understands mentally what is said here and what the image stands for: the identity of essence between the fire and the spark and all the possibilities and potential that are implied by that identity, including and foremost the return of the spark into the fire and the conditions to let this return happen.

It is indeed so; an explanation is not what is needed if we wish to go further than mere mental understanding. To come to realize what the image really stands for, to live it as profoundly as possible, to become it, this needs openness of the heart, clarity of vision, inner realization, merging

into the driving force of the symbology. And that is what is so theosophical about the theme of this Congress.

Because of the universality and the power of this symbology, once we get the touch and feel of it, we can recognize it in whatever domain of expression or life around us, and foremost in those domains that we do not necessarily think of when we busy ourselves with a subject like timeless wisdom. Connecting timeless wisdom with the grocery store at the corner, a classroom, an office, a science lab, a production site, a fashion show, a starving child, or even war, seems more difficult. And yet, the symbology, the play of energies of Universal Consciousness, can potentially be found in all those situations and places, through all their joy and sorrow, and we could discern the way to Universal Consciousness articulated in often unexpected, bizarre, authentic ways if we are only willing to look, if only we come to the said openness of the heart and clarity of vision.

But unfortunately, we often fail to see the ways of divine Nature because of a

Mrs Sabine Van Osta is General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in Belgium. Talk given at the European Congress, Barcelona, Spain, August 2017.

narrowed view and heart despite all the good efforts of many thinkers, scientists, yogis, sadhus, saints, religious practitioners and meditators of all traditions. One of the more contemporary formulations of the ways of divine Nature, considered more acceptable by a broader audience of today are for example the four laws of ecology as formulated by Barry Commoner (considered to be the father of the ban on atmospheric nuclear testing). — 1917-2012:

1. Everything is connected to everything else. There is one ecosphere for all living organisms and what affects one, affects all.
2. Everything must go somewhere. There is no “waste” in Nature and there is no “away” to which things can be thrown.
3. Nature knows best. Humankind has fashioned technology to improve upon Nature, but such change in a natural system is, “likely to be detrimental to that system”.
4. There is no such thing as a free lunch. Exploitation of Nature will inevitably involve the conversion of resources from useful to useless forms.

These laws are theosophical to the bone. We could consider them a contemporary rephrasing of what Theosophists call the Universal Brotherhood, which has, as one of its key elements, the interconnectedness of all things, regardless of whether we consider this element from the consciousness or the material point of view. And with that interconnectedness comes also the importance of finding the right balance and respectfulness. Whatever we do, in whatever process that is realized in

our community, on our planet, in the entire Universe, the right balance and respect are paramount.

The right balance is heavily guarded by that one universal law, the Good Law, or, as H. P. Blavatsky calls it, the law of cause and effect. Every disturbance in a balance will result in a new balance on the basis of that law.

Looking again at the many domains of human activity on the planet, it is obvious that often the balance is far away from a sustainable equilibrium. We see this for example on an economic level in many, if not all, societies, among the genders, among communities defined on the basis of all sorts of criteria. We see the consequences and often feel powerless to change something about it, however much we would like to do so. So, there is the example of the blatant economic imbalance in the world, ridiculous concentrations of power and means and riches on the one hand, and ridiculous, inhumane poverty on the other. Despite this deplorable situation, the spark of a world order without poverty and a more even and just distribution of the riches of the planet has still not been extinguished and inspires a fair number of people to undertake initiatives that are the seeds of the economic structures of tomorrow, like all types of sustainable economies. An ever-growing number of these initiatives see the light of day: they have as a common ground the understanding that our current, purely competition-based system, that completely misses out on the earlier mentioned four laws of ecology, will ultimately destroy the planet and its inhabitants. Instead are positioned systems which base

Theosophy: A Way towards Universal Consciousness

themselves on sharing, caring, recycling and an intelligent use of the world's resources and make them available to the many in a sustainable way. And with these come lifestyles that encourage a more conscious, respectful way of living. We could consider this process, towards a sustainable economic future for all, as part of the way to Universal Consciousness, a way that also our planet as a living entity is supposed to be going. And every effort, however small, that matches this frequency of sustainable and respectful activity and energy inevitably and undeniably helps ourselves and our planet in achieving the goal which is Universal Consciousness.

The narrowed view and heart which was mentioned earlier, also causes us to underestimate the power of the many and the diverse. However, their value and meaning should not be taken too lightly. Theosophy as the way to Universal Consciousness implies respecting the ways of Nature which is the way of planting seeds, as many seeds as possible. This is so for the outer side, which is not really the outer side, and this is also so far the inner side which is not really the inner side either. Planting as many seeds in us as well as in our communities, seeds of light in all directions, in all circumstances and all conditions. It is a process that can only be obstructed temporarily, that might be deviated from its course for a while, but that never can be deviated forever let alone be wiped out. The driving force here is identical to the force that propels the many back to the One, like a kind of return home.

Many artistic expressions, almost despite themselves, depict the way the hero needs to go "back home" while in the act he needs to overcome many obstacles, outer obstacles but even more inner ones.

What can we say about exact, material science — of whatever domain of investigation it might be — that is ever looking for the One Element that is substantial to all that exists, or for the One Cell out of which all cells can be created, or that One Cure that can cure all diseases, or that One Power or Energy out of which all other powers can be generated. Call it what we like, but in essence science is looking for ways towards Universality and, instinctively without knowing or admitting it does this, it is looking for the source of Consciousness which is Universal Consciousness.

This itinerary towards Universal Consciousness was uniformly sought out by the different religions humanity has received. The essential message of any religion is that of the reunion of the spark with the fire, the merging of the spark into the fire. Unfortunately, many beautiful religious expressions of this truth were forced out of balance, into unimaginable twists and turns, to convert these tools for self-development we call religions into tools for submission, abuse and terror, exactly the opposite of that for which they were given to humanity. Also in this case, the way forward for many of the problems that arise out of religious gridlocks on our planet consist again in the respect of the power and the value of the many and the diverse. And to do that, religious

Theosophy: A Way towards Universal Consciousness

practitioners are better off with an adaptive inner and outer behaviour, rather than with crystallized scriptures or rituals, of which they have lost the symbolical meaning; they are better off with catching the spirit and inner attitude rather than staying trapped by or hooked to fixed formulations. For those who by their tradition are inclined to personify a creator, God or whatever they call this all-powerful entity, even for them there might come a moment for dropping the personification which till then had helped them so much, and going directly to and merging into THAT, the Universal Consciousness — going home.

We might very well find out, that all the time, home was not that far away at all. That apart from some useful inner exercises, it was mostly a matter of finding the right switch deep in us. Many of us are familiar with the teachings of J. Krishnamurti: they deal with just that, preparing us to find the switch and the insight to go beyond our own limitations and conventions. The same principle of going beyond limitations and conventions was poetically formulated by Henry David Thoreau in his *Walden*:

However mean your life is, meet it and live it; do not shun it and call it hard names. It is not so bad as you are. It looks poorest when you are richest. The fault-finder will find faults even in paradise. Love your life, poor as it is. You may perhaps have some pleasant, thrilling, glorious hours, even in a poorhouse. The setting sun is reflected from the windows of the almshouse as brightly as from the rich man's abode; the

snow melts before its door as early in the spring. I do not see but a quiet mind may live as contentedly there, and have as cheering thoughts, as in a palace.

Once all the elements are in place for the seed to germinate wherever it is, in whomever it is, the seed will inevitably germinate because that is the innate mechanism in the Universe: anything is possible if the conditions are right. No effect without the right set of causes; no set of causes will remain without its corresponding effect. Together with Universal Consciousness and our connection to it, this law is the very ground for the reality of Universal Brotherhood And all that can be found here and now. For insight and consciousness to emerge, it is never too late.

I would like to conclude with the translation of an ancient Sanskrit poem by one of the greatest classical Hindu writers, Kālidāsa, a poem that says it all:

Look to this day:
For it is life, the very life of life.
In its brief course lie all the verities
and realities of your existence.
The bliss of growth,
The glory of action,
The splendour of achievement
Are but experiences of time.
For yesterday is but a dream
And tomorrow is only a vision;
And today well-lived, makes
Yesterday a dream of happiness
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well therefore to this day;
Such is the salutation to the ever-new dawn!

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