

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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Cover: Full moon rising above the Topatopa Mountains as seen from the Krotona Institute of Theosophy Library front yard, Ojai, California. Photographer: Cor Overweg

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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 Difficult Truth

TIM BOYD

THERE are two phrases, one a prayer, and the other a statement with which members of the Theosophical Society (TS) are familiar. The prayer is known as the Pavamāna Mantra: “From the unreal lead me to the Real. From darkness lead me to Light. From death lead me to Immortality.” For those TS members who were not raised in India, often the first time this prayer was encountered was on the page after the dedication of the little book, *At the Feet of the Master* by J. Krishnamurti. It is a prayer that predates Jesus the Christ and the Buddha, being 2,600 to 3,000 years old.

The second phrase is the motto of the TS itself: *satyān nāsti paro dharma*. Various translations say: “There is no dharma (or doctrine) higher than *sat*, (Truth).” There is no law, no study, no sacrifice, no religion, no ritual, nothing that is higher than *sat* — Reality. The preferred translation adopted for the TS is: “There is no *religion* higher than Truth.” The focus has always been to point ourselves in the direction of Truth, and to try to understand whatever our capacity permits.

In *Isis Unveiled* H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) wrote about our desire to know the Truth.

She quoted Edward William Cox, then President of the London Psychological Society, saying: “There is no more fatal fallacy that we can embrace than that truth will prevail by its own force, that it has only to be seen to be embraced.” She continues the quote: “In fact the desire for the actual truth exists in very few minds, and the capacity to discern it in fewer still.” Yet, irresistibly we continue to reach for that which is necessarily beyond our grasp.

This unrelenting search for truth is perhaps one of the reasons why in the book, *At the Feet of the Master*, the first of four qualifications for the spiritual path is discrimination, or discernment. The initial focus being the discrimination between the unreal and the real, and between right and wrong. At the point in our unfoldment that we find the attempt to cultivate discrimination of some importance, a sense of right and wrong is already fairly well-rooted in us.

The language in which Krishnamurti expressed these four qualifications was the language of a fourteen-year-old — very direct, innocent, and untainted. However, the thoughts expressed in *At the Feet of the Master* were not the product

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of a mature and fully developed consciousness. Krishnamurti was reciting the words given to him while his body slept and he was being tutored by his Master. It was a repetition of the things that had been told to him during his youthful training at the feet of his Master.

HPB makes the point that in our quest for self-knowledge the very first requirement in any serious attempt is that we must become profoundly conscious of ignorance — not just the ignorance of the world, but we must become aware in every fiber of our heart, that we are continuously self-deceived. So it is not just the ignorance of the world.

Truth, in the sense of ultimate reality, is not something that we perceive. Although Truth is without limitations, our capacity to perceive it is profoundly limited. So we end up seeking “truths”, limited expressions of the greater reality, in our attempt to discover Truth. There seems to be no way around it.

If we look back on our own lives, we find that our perception of what is real and true has altered over time. There is the expression that “when I was a child I thought as a child”, but as our consciousness unfolds “we put away childish things”. Our perception and capacity to grasp what is true alters over time.

I can remember when I was first asked to give a theosophical lecture. As would

be expected, I prepared myself: I researched, went to the proper books on the subject, had note-cards on which I wrote my thoughts — the things that I would share with others. Then the time came to stand up in front of people and speak. I shared what I had written down, and it was apparently sufficiently well received that I spoke on the same topic in another place at another time. As I recall, the subject was Initiation — a very big subject. I could recite the different stages of Initiation, I could give the Sanskrit names, I related it to world scripture, and so on. All of it was true. However, I did not have the experience to speak with any degree of inner authority. It was based on the authority of those I believed had a deeper experience and understanding.

If I were asked to give that talk today, I could not do it — not because the facts would be different, but because it would no longer be true for me. The great mystic, Kabir, said that if we have not lived a thing, it is not true for us. No matter how well it is researched, until it is something that we have incorporated into our being, it falls short of truth.

Truth is very difficult to understand; truths are perhaps more within our grasp. Our continuing approach to Truth will necessarily be an effort of refinement that we engage in from moment to moment. ✧

To be sensitive is to feel your neighbor sitting next to you; it is to see the ugliness of the town with . . . its poverty, and to see the beauty of the river, the sea, the sky. If you are not passionate, how can you be sensitive to all that? How can you feel a smile, a tear? Love, I assure you, is passion.

J. Krishnamurti

“What Is Truth?”

H. P. BLAVATSKY

“*Truth* is the Voice of Nature and of time —
Truth is the startling monitor *within us* —
Naught is without it, it comes from the stars,
The golden sun, and every breeze that blows. . .”

Wm. Thompson Bacon¹

“. . . Fair Truth’s immortal sun
Is sometimes hid in clouds; not that her light
Is in itself defective; but obscured
By my weak prejudice, imperfect Faith
And all the thousand causes which obstruct
The growth of goodness.”

Hannah More²

“What is Truth?” asked Pilate of one who, if the claims of the Christian Church are even approximately correct, must have known it. But He kept silent. And the truth which He did not divulge, remained unrevealed, for his later followers as much as for the Roman Governor. The silence of Jesus, however, on this and other occasions, does not prevent his present followers from acting as though they had received the ultimate and absolute Truth

itself, and from ignoring the fact that only such Words of Wisdom had been given to them as contained a share of the truth, itself concealed in parables and dark, though beautiful, sayings.³

This policy led gradually to dogmatism and assertion — dogmatism in churches, dogmatism in science, dogmatism everywhere. The possible truths, hazily perceived in the world of abstraction, like those inferred from observation and experiment in the world of matter, are forced upon the profane multitudes, too busy to think for themselves, under the form of *divine revelation* and *scientific authority*. But the same question stands open from the days of Socrates and Pilate down to our own age of wholesale negation: is there such a thing as *absolute truth* in the hands of any one party or man? Reason answers, “There cannot be.” There is no room for absolute truth upon any subject whatsoever, in a world as finite and conditioned as man is himself. But there are relative truths, and we have to make the best we can of them.

In every age there have been sages who had mastered the absolute and yet

H. P. Blavatsky (1831–91) was co-founder of the Theosophical Society along with Col. H. S. Olcott and others in New York City in 1875. Reprinted from her *Collected Writings*, vol. 9, p. 30.

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could teach but relative truths. For none yet, born of mortal woman in *our* race, has, or could have given out, the whole and the final truth to another man, for every one of us has to find that (to him) final knowledge *in* himself. As no two minds can be absolutely alike, each has to receive the supreme illumination *through* itself, according to its capacity, and from no *human* light. The greatest adept living can reveal of the Universal Truth only so much as the mind he is impressing it upon can assimilate, and no more. *Quot homines, tot sententiae* — [“There are as many opinions as there are people”] is an immortal truism.

The sun is one, but its beams are numberless; and the effects produced are beneficent or maleficent, according to the nature and constitution of the objects they shine upon. Polarity is universal, but the polariser lies in our own consciousness. In proportion as our consciousness is elevated towards absolute truth, so do we men assimilate it more or less absolutely. But man’s consciousness again, is only the sunflower of the earth. Longing for the warm ray, the plant can only turn to the sun, and move round and round in following the course of the unreachable luminary: its roots keep it fast to the soil, and half its life is passed in the shadow.

Still each of us can relatively reach the Sun of Truth even on this earth, and assimilate its warmest and most direct rays, however differentiated they may become after their long journey through the physical particles in space. To achieve this, there are two methods. On the

physical plane we may use our mental polariscope; and, analyzing the properties of each ray, choose the purest. On the plane of spirituality, to reach the Sun of Truth we must work in dead earnest for the development of our higher nature.

We know that by paralyzing gradually within ourselves the appetites of the lower personality, and thereby deadening the voice of the purely physiological mind — that mind which depends upon, and is inseparable from, its medium or *vehicle*, the organic brain — the animal man in us may make room for the spiritual; and once aroused from its latent state, the highest spiritual senses and perceptions grow in us in proportion, and develop *pari passu* with the “divine man”. This is what the great adepts, the Yogis in the East and the Mystics in the West, have always done and are still doing. . . .

Now, since truth is a multifaced jewel, the facets of which it is impossible to perceive all at once; and since, again, no two men, however anxious to discern truth, can see even one of those facets alike, what can be done to help them to perceive it? As physical man, limited and trammelled from every side by illusions, cannot reach truth by the light of his terrestrial perceptions, we say: develop in you the *inner* knowledge.

From the time when the Delphic oracle said to the enquirer, “Man, know thyself”, no greater or more important truth was ever taught. Without such perception, man will remain ever blind to even many a relative, let alone absolute, truth. Man has to *know himself*, that is, acquire the

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inner perceptions which never deceive, before he can master any absolute truth. Absolute truth is *the symbol of Eternity*, and no *finite* mind can ever grasp the eternal, hence, no truth in its fulness can ever dawn upon it. To reach the state during which man sees and senses it, we have to paralyze the senses of the external man of clay. This is a difficult task, we may be told, and most people will, at this rate, prefer to remain satisfied with relative truths, no doubt.

But to approach even terrestrial truths requires, first of all, *love of truth for its own sake*, for otherwise no recognition of it will follow. And who loves truth in this age for its own sake? How many of us are prepared to search for, accept, and carry it out, in the midst of a society in which anything that would achieve success *has to be built on appearances, not on reality, on self-assertion, not on intrinsic value*? We are fully aware of the difficulties in the way of receiving truth. The fair, heavenly maiden descends only on a (to her) congenial soil — the soil of an impartial, unprejudiced mind, illuminated by pure Spiritual Consciousness, and both are truly rare dwellers in civilized lands.

In our century of steam and electricity, when man lives at a maddening speed that leaves him barely time for reflection, he allows himself usually to be drifted down from cradle to grave, nailed to the Procrustean bed of custom and conventionality. Now conventionality — pure and simple — is a congenital LIE, as it is in every case a “*simulation* of feelings

according to a received standard” (F. W. Robertson’s definition); and where there is any simulation *there cannot be any truth*. How profound the remark made by Byron, that “truth is a gem that is found at a great depth; whilst on the surface of this world all things are weighed *by the false scales of custom*”, is best known to those who are forced to live in the stifling atmosphere of such social conventionalism, and who, even when willing and anxious to learn, dare not accept the truths they long for, for fear of the ferocious Moloch called Society.

Look around you, reader; study the accounts given by world-known travellers, recall the joint observations of literary thinkers, the data of science and of statistics. Draw the picture of modern society, of modern politics, of modern religion and modern life in general before your mind’s eye. Remember the ways and customs of every cultured race and nation under the sun. Observe the doings and the moral attitude of people in the civilized centres of Europe, America, and even of the Far East and the colonies, everywhere where the white man has carried the “benefits” of so-called civilization.

And now, having passed in review all this, pause and reflect, and then name, *if you can*, that blessed *Eldorado*, that exceptional spot on the globe, *where TRUTH is the honoured guest, and LIE and SHAM the ostracised outcasts? YOU CANNOT*. Nor can anyone else, unless he is prepared and determined to add his mite to the mass of falsehood that reigns

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supreme in every department of national and social life. “Truth!” cried Carlyle, “truth, though the heavens crush me for following her; no falsehood, though a whole celestial Lubberland were the prize of Apostasy.”

Noble words, these. But how many think, and how many will *dare* to speak as Carlyle did, in our nineteenth century day? Does not the gigantic appalling majority prefer to a man the “paradise of do-nothings”, the *pays de Cocagne* of heartless selfishness? It is this majority that recoils terror-stricken before the most shadowy outline of every new and unpopular truth, out of mere cowardly fear, lest Mrs Harris should denounce, and Mrs Grundy condemn, its converts to the torture of being rent piecemeal by her murderous tongue.

SELFISHNESS, the first-born of Ignorance, and the fruit of the teaching which asserts that for every newly-born infant a new soul, *separate and distinct* from the Universal Soul, is “created” — this Selfishness is the impassable wall between the *personal* Self and Truth. It is the prolific mother of all human vices, *Lie* being born out of the necessity for dissembling, and *Hypocrisy* out of the desire to mask *Lie*. It is the fungus growing and strengthening with age in every human heart in which it has devoured all better feelings.

Selfishness kills every noble impulse in our natures, and is the one deity, fearing no faithlessness or desertion from its votaries. Hence, we see it reign supreme in the world and in so-called fashionable society. As a result, we live, and

move, and have our being in this god of darkness under his trinitarian aspect of Sham, Humbug, and Falsehood, called RESPECTABILITY.

Is this Truth and Fact, or is it slander? Turn whichever way you will, and you find, from the top of the social ladder to the bottom, deceit and hypocrisy at work for dear Self’s sake, in every nation as in every individual. But nations, by tacit agreement, have decided that selfish motives in politics shall be called “noble national aspiration, patriotism”, and so on; and the citizen views it in his family circle as “domestic virtue”. Nevertheless, Selfishness, whether it breeds desire for aggrandizement of territory, or competition in commerce at the expense of one’s neighbour, can never be regarded as a virtue.

We see smooth-tongued DECEIT and BRUTE FORCE — the *Jachin* and *Boaz* of every International Temple of Solomon — called Diplomacy, and we call it by its right name. Because the diplomat bows low before these two pillars of national glory and politics, and puts their masonic symbolism, “in [cunning] strength shall this my house be established”, into daily practice, that is, gets by deceit what he cannot obtain by force, shall we applaud him? A diplomat’s qualification — “dexterity or skill in securing advantages” — for one’s own country at the expense of other countries, can hardly be achieved by speaking *truth*, but verily by a wily and deceitful tongue; and, therefore, *Lucifer* calls such action a *living*, and an evident LIE.

But it is not in politics alone that custom

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and selfishness have agreed to call deceit and lie virtue, and to reward him who lies best with public statues. Every class of Society lives on LIE, and would fall to pieces without it. Cultured, God-and-law-fearing aristocracy, being as fond of the forbidden fruit as any plebeian, is forced to lie from morn to noon in order to cover what it is pleased to term its “little peccadillos”, but which TRUTH regards as gross immorality.

Society of the middle classes is honey-combed with false smiles, false talk, and mutual treachery. For the majority, religion has become a thin, tinsel veil thrown over the corpse of spiritual faith. The master goes to church to deceive his servants; the starving curate — preaching what he has ceased to believe in — hoodwinks his bishop; the bishop, his God.

Dailies, political and social, might adopt with advantage for their motto, Georges Dandin’s⁴ immortal query, “*Lequel de nous deux trompe-t-on ici?*” [Who is being cheated here?]” Even Science, once the anchor of the salvation of Truth, has ceased to be the temple of *naked* Fact. Almost to a man the scientists strive now only to force upon their colleagues and the public the acceptance of some personal hobby, of some new-fangled theory, which will shed lustre on their name and fame. A scientist is as ready to suppress damaging evidence against a current scientific hypothesis in our times, as a missionary in heathen-land, or a preacher at home, to persuade his congregation that modern geology is a lie, and evolu-

tion but vanity and vexation of spirit. . . .

To sum up the idea, with regard to absolute and relative truth, we can only repeat what we said before. *Outside a certain highly spiritual and elevated state of mind, during which Man is at one with the UNIVERSAL MIND, he can get nought on earth but relative truth, or truths, from whatsoever philosophy or religion.* Were even the goddess who dwells at the bottom of the well to issue from her place of confinement, she could give man no more than he can assimilate.

Meanwhile, every one can sit near that well — the name of which is KNOWLEDGE — and gaze into its depths in the hope of seeing Truth’s fair image reflected, at least, on the dark waters. This, however, as remarked by Richter, presents a certain danger. Some truth, to be sure, may be occasionally reflected as in a mirror on the spot we gaze upon, and thus reward the patient student. But, adds the German thinker, “I have heard that some philosophers in seeking for Truth, to pay homage to her, have seen their own image in the water and adored it instead.”

It is to avoid such a calamity — one that has befallen every founder of a religious or philosophical school — that the editors are studiously careful not to offer the reader only those truths which they find reflected in their own personal brains. They offer the public a wide choice, and refuse to show bigotry and intolerance, which are the chief landmarks on the path of Sectarianism. But, while leaving the widest margin possible for comparison, our opponents cannot hope to find *their*

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faces reflected on the clear waters of our *Lucifer*, without remarks or just criticism upon the most prominent features thereof, if in contrast with theosophical views.

This, however, only within the cover of the public magazine, and so far as regards the merely intellectual aspect of philosophical truths. Concerning the deeper spiritual, and one may almost say religious, beliefs, no true Theosophist ought to degrade these by subjecting them to public discussion, but ought rather to treasure and hide them deep within the sanctuary of his innermost soul. Such beliefs and doctrines should never be rashly given out, as they risk unavoidable profanation by the rough handling of the indifferent and the critical. Nor ought they to be embodied in any publication

except as hypotheses offered to the consideration of the thinking portion of the public. Theosophical truths, when they transcend a certain limit of speculation, had better remain concealed from public view, for the “evidence of things not seen” is no evidence save to him who sees, hears, and senses it. It is not to be dragged outside the “Holy of Holies”, the temple of the impersonal divine *Ego*, or the indwelling SELF. For, while every fact outside *its* perception can, as we have shown, be, at best, only a relative truth, a ray from the absolute truth can reflect itself only in the pure mirror of its own flame — our highest SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS. And how can the darkness (of illusion) comprehend the LIGHT that shineth in it? ✧

Endnotes

1. “Thoughts in Solitude”.
2. *Daniel: A Sacred Drama*, Part II.
3. Jesus says to the “Twelve”: “Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God; but *unto them that are without, all things are done in parables*”, and so on. (Mark, 4:11).
4. Principal character in Moliere’s comedy by that name . . . — *Compiler*

Beauty, the splendour of truth, is a gracious presence when the imagination contemplates intensely the truth of its own being or the visible world, and the spirit which proceeds out of truth and beauty is the holy spirit of joy. These are realities and these alone give and sustain life.

James Joyce
The Critical Writings

The Yoga of Beauty: Developing Intuition — I

BERNARDINO DEL BOCA

Beauty is the splendour of truth.
Plato

IN Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga, the Kingdom of the Father found the methods to grasp the idea of natural forces; the Kingdom of the Son was characterized by Jnana Yoga, which was used by humankind for training with knowledge, only to later realize that everything is sensory deception. The Kingdom of the Holy Spirit — or the Age of Aquarius — will be characterized by the development of the Yoga of Beauty: yoga that teaches us to go beyond the mental plane in order to reach that of omniscient and omnipresent Nature.

The forms of religion that will continue to guide humankind until around 2275 (subsequently forms of religion will come crashing down and topple lots of mental superstitions and deceptions with them) will be reformed Sufism, the modified version of the Bahá'í faith, and various aspects of the other, old religions, which will evolve towards the Way of the Heart. According to the eighth of the ten principles of Sufism: “There is One Object of

Praise, the Beauty which uplifts the heart of its worshippers through all aspects from the seen to the unseen.”

In the new Age of Aquarius, when the Way of the Heart has completely taken the place of the Way of the Mind, people will realize that Beauty is the first quality of Love. Beauty gives rise to love, and love — in all of its forms — is beautiful for all those who manage to perceive displays of Beauty in the moment. Love is also goodness, patience, humility, understanding, generosity, honesty, benevolence and discernment, but, above all, it is perception of beauty. As the avatar Chaitanya prophesied, the time has come for humankind to become aware of Beauty in order to embark on the conquest of the new plane of consciousness.

For millennia, human beings have clambered to conquer ever higher planes of consciousness, because in all of humankind the sense of consciousness is constantly growing. From criminals to priests and from peasants to intellectuals, every-

Bernardino del Boca (1919-2001) was president of the “Besant-Arundale” TS Group in Novara, Italy, for many years. He was a great writer, lecturer, artist, and scholar of cultural anthropology. Translation from the Italian introduction to Laurence J. Bendit’s *The Yoga of Beauty*, Italian edition.

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one's consciousness is raised by ever higher levels of consciousness, which in some cases are nothing more than fleeting perceptions. Therefore, it was the instinctive, natural side of every person that — by individually perceiving new dimensions in life — made Frege and de Saussure discover semantics and structuralism, led Korzybski to outline general semantics, helped to make Teilhard de Chardin aware of the noosphere, steered Caycedo towards sophrology, and so on. All of these figures are unwitting “guides in time” who help us to open new windows in the great tower of consciousness. Unfortunately, instead of seeing the energetic, intelligent reality that is the mother of all, people today just see some of its infinite aspects, only those that have taken material form and are now lifeless.

All things exist by themselves. Humans are afflicted with anthropocentrism, so they only see the parts that affect them, and they even have a disjointed and distorted view of these. Sages, esotericists, and mystics all come to realize that nothing exists outside of our consciousnesses and that all of the things outside of our consciousnesses are just illusory means with which Life colours our existential sleep. All of the new Aquarian literature and the experiments with “E-Therapy” and the vital radiation from items such as plants and stones outline this new, previously overlooked aspect of Life.

By becoming aware of the new plane (which is known as the Age of Aquarius because it is believed that it is the Earth's new position with regard to the space in

the sky that will soon be influencing us), individuals must wake up to the “knowledge of things in themselves”, that is, rebel against the slavery of Maya, the great illusion. Without this “knowledge of things in themselves”, we will not be able to prevail over the complications of mental action. Undisciplined minds continue to be dominated by the senses, which only give us the capacity for extremely limited knowledge of what we call “reality”. Only the knowledge of the essence of things can free the mind from sensory slavery. And only the eye of the spirit can reach the plane of Essence.

The Yoga of Beauty by Laurence J. Bendit is a short guide to becoming aware of the idea of beauty. In other words, it steers us towards the discovery of the mental notions that can help us to sense a more profound reality. All of the forces of Nature — such as electricity, magnetism, light, and heat — are essentially just different manifestations of Universal Motion. Similarly, Beauty is just one aspect of the Trinity that counts the law of Universal Motion among its attributes. Study of Hinduism can help us to comprehend the infinite qualities of these attributes.

There is a crisis in international culture. New cultures are emerging, but all of them hark back to the ancient cultures whose origins lie in the first intuitions of the Archetypal Forms. Some of the values of these ancient cultures are rediscovered every century.

It is now fashionable to rediscover ancient traditions and mix them together

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— sometimes in a haphazard way — with new knowledge. This leads the mind to accept mystery, fantasy, science fiction, and the future. All of this gives rise to a type of thinking on whose crystallization the light of the new plane of consciousness can be reflected. Many Catholics today follow the practices of Sufism or accept theosophical traditions, while others follow the teachings of Zen Buddhism or take part in the different types of Yoga. Others still, on a sincere spiritual quest, accept the evangelism of Jesus Christ, Buddha, and Marx all at the same time. All spiritual and mystical teachings fuse with social theories or alternative cultures and are now accessible at the same time — and to the same type of people — all over the Earth. Individuals are thus pushed to seek sounder and longer-lasting values. Individuals learn to savour the joys of overcoming their mental limits and reveling in their own understanding and that of others.

While many people all over the planet can no longer live without practising yoga of some kind, for others “yoga” has become a term that is lacking in gravity. The latter see yoga as nothing more than a fashionable form of exercise. The Sanskrit term *yoga* means “union” and it refers to the union of the lower self and the higher Self, that is, gaining awareness of a spiritual reality of which the physical reality is but the shadow. The Light that makes the shadow is the creator of all of the Beauty that lights up creations everywhere.

Patanjali’s second Aphorism states: “Yoga restrains the mind from taking

different forms, or *vyrttis*.” These *vyrttis* are the waves of the pool of the mind. They help us to gain awareness of Life, but they can constrain us if we fool ourselves into believing that they are reality. What is known as “official culture” is the crystallization of these *vyrttis*: intellectuals, who pass judgement and deem themselves superior to others simply because they are ignorant of their ignorance, only seek out the things that their *vyrttis* have made them recognize as real. It is precisely when they think that they are being more efficient and intelligent that they fall into the constraints of conformism. Many magazines and newspapers everywhere are struggling right now due to a lack of inspiration. They have failed to avoid the pitfalls of conformism, hidden fears, and deceitful selfishness. Even more significantly, they are “ignorant of their ignorance”.

The issue of Beauty had not been taken into consideration until now, not only because its time had not yet arrived but also because conformist outlooks had labelled Beauty as a matter relating to aesthetic and artistic taste, without ever wondering why Nature makes stunning orchids in jungles where humans never tread, or why a beauty withers amid general indifference. A culture based on superficial factual knowledge will not even take into consideration certain realities that have been noted by anthropological research on a horizontal level, such as the existence of a class of young people who turn 17 years of age every day all over the world. Tomorrow they will be 17 years and 1 day old, and another group will turn 17. Other

groups are formed by members everywhere who are united by this unknown horizontal reality and who will be 13 years and 6 days old, or 2 years and 16 days old, and so on. I am part of the international group whose members are 57 years and 36 days old today, and *I know* what that means in the parallel world.

Who are the people that are exactly the same age as me and where are they? What do we represent in life? What do we represent in the ceaseless blooming of Beauty in our lives? What ties are there between me and a fluffy kitten whose soft, supple beauty I admire? Why am I entranced by the red suns of winter dawns? Why do the pensive eyes of a child have the capacity to make me feel purified and good? These are all questions that conformists are incapable of taking into consideration. Being able to understand these linear “other realities” in space and time allows us to break free from the frameworks of illusion, which are set out and kept alive by mental deception.

In 1971, a book entitled *Honest to Man* by Leroy Augenstein was published by Geoffrey Chapman in London. The author discusses human responsibility in the future biological revolution. Although he does so indirectly, he frequently touches on aesthetic issues for humans. All parents want to have beautiful children. That is an established part of our reality, but so is the fact that all parents think that their sons and daughters are the most beautiful children in the world. The book also discusses euthanasia. Why do some horrible old people continue to take up space

in the world and act as a burden for their relatives and society? An old grandmother might be toothless and haggard like an old witch, but people forget that her grandchildren will adore her and that in their eyes she will almost be more beautiful than their parents. Those who only see beauty in the shape of a car or the legs of a secretary often fail to realize that an “ugly”, old grandmother can offer invaluable, non-possessive love, which is made to shine by the light of the youthful beauty of her grandchildren.

Young people today are driven by unconscious rebellion to challenge the values of the conformist culture and they feel the desire to create. This unconscious urge to express something individually is channelled into different types of music, and above all into dance. Young people today have monopolized the field of singing. Music festivals are examples of how young people seek out their own forms of Beauty by themselves. Almost all young people are capable of expressing themselves with some art form. Artists were in the minority in the past, but they will soon be in the majority.

Before they are twisted and blurred by compromises driven by selfishness and fear, the consciousnesses of young people rebel against the injustices and vacuums in our consumer society. Using forms of sport-based and artistic expression, they strive to forget the things that eat at their consciousnesses. Nonetheless, sport, music, and art can never make them overlook the fact that two-thirds of the people on the planet still live in hopeless

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destitution; that the wheels of justice are almost always guided by power, prejudice, and money; and that people are closely guarded by the many aspects of organized illusions.

Consequently, Nature creates rebels, who — consciously or unconsciously — stand up against evil and realize that the new forms of spirituality offer a way to leave behind materialism. However, if these rebels fail to find their sense of freedom and human dignity in the short period when their consciences are awake (when they are from 16 to 24 years of age), they fall prisoners of the empty frameworks of the words and symbols that the new forms of politics, sociology, spirituality, and religion use to express themselves on the mental level. A new form of yoga can thus help all of those who are attracted by the light of the new level of consciousness.

You say: “The quality of freedom is remarkable; if freedom exists at all, nothing can limit it. The body can be shackled, but nothing can diminish consciousness except ugliness. When we touch upon the heights of freedom, we must guard against ugliness. If we wish to exalt matter, we must think wisely about beauty.”

In Beauty will Infinity be manifested. In Beauty the teachings of the Seekers of the spirit are illumined. In Beauty we do not fear to manifest the truth of freedom. In Beauty do we kindle radiance in every drop of water. In Beauty do we transform matter into a rainbow. There is no ugliness which will not be engulfed in the rays of

the rainbow. There are no fetters which will not disintegrate in the freedom of Beauty.

How shall we find the words to approach the concept of the universe? How shall we tell about the evolution of forms? How to uplift the consciousness to the study of fundamentals? How to stimulate humanity to scientific cognition of the worlds? Each realization is born in Beauty. Know how to think radiantly, and nothing terrifying will touch you. Remember, We have no forbiddances.

(Leaves of Morya's Garden, p. 323).

For decades, scientific materialism has reigned supreme in Western civilization and people have become accustomed to taking a materialistic outlook on everything. For decades, research into the dimensions that are beyond our sensory perception was opposed, ignored, or scorned. Now discoveries have been made in the scientific world proving that love prevails throughout Nature, and unknown spiritual forces are behind all vital processes. The German psychiatrist Karl Jaspers said: “We are mortal when we are without love and immortal when we love.” Many people are now able to grasp the full meaning of this sentence.

In 1973, a book was published by two American writers called Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, who were attracted by “things that mark the way towards the new plane of consciousness”. It was entitled *The Secret Life of Plants* (translated as *La vita segreta delle piante* when it was subsequently published in Italy in 1975

by SugarCo Edizioni) and it documented all of the experiments carried out in the previous 100 years, in keeping with the theme proposed by the Theosophical Society (TS). In 1975, the centenary year of the founding of the TS, it was fair to say that the task given to the Society by the Masters had been performed successfully. Today, nobody can fail to be aware of the reality of the Spirit. If people do fail, it is because their minds constrain and limit their cultural heritage. Therefore, it is time to get back on the road towards new achievements, especially those on the way of the heart and wisdom. The Yoga of Beauty, in its dimension, in which all things are tinged with the violet Aquarian hue, is a trustworthy guide towards these achievements.

In the March 1913 issue of *The Theosophist* (vol. XXXIV, pp. 842–852), an article by the theosophist Lily Nightingale Duddington was published. It was entitled “The Place of Beauty in Human Life” and was inspired by an article by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky called “Civilization — The Death of Art and Beauty”, which appeared in *Lucifer* magazine in May 1891. In these two articles, Beauty was already being described as a dynamic spiritual force that offers the only way to steer humankind towards its highest form of evolution. The sacred fire of Beauty, which occultists believe is the root of the three, seven, and forty-nine fires, supports everything that is visible and everything that is invisible. There is no reason for esotericism to continue to exist, so the mystery of the

fires will gradually be revealed to those on the path towards the new perceptions. In the words of Duddington: “The Fire of Beauty follows the same rules as all fires, so the greatest heat comes from the whitest part of the flame.”

The flames of *bhaktas* (devotees of Krishna) burn on many altars, with varying levels of heat and purity. However, in many cases there is nothing more to be found than tepidness, which is mistakenly called *temperance* and praised as the beginning and the end of virtue and wisdom. People with wiser minds see things differently.

Leonardo da Vinci gave all of himself and his whole life to an all-consuming passion for knowledge, like an offering on the altar of Beauty. Dante had a sacred passion for Beatrice, a symbol of Divine Beauty. Giordano Bruno let his body burn for the truth of the vision of that Unity of All Things caught by his great mind. These three men live on because they died for love. Beauty is therefore at the same time the Sun of Life, the Law of Manifestation, and a double-edged sword: it can be the light of the God of Consuming Fire or the eternal splendour known as the Beauty of women. The symbol of the latter is Helen of Troy, for whom thousands of ships were lost and entire kingdoms were destroyed.

The blazing power of Beauty burns feebly in the world today, but the wind of renaissance is already rousing for the end of this 20th century. Hypocrisy, which is espoused by all Pharisees and all conceited people, is one of the plagues of our world

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and one of the most direct enemies of Beauty. The parable of hypocrisy and humility is as topical today as it was back when Master Jesus used it in two of his most sublime spiritual poems, about a man who was a tax collector and a woman who was a sinner. On the cross, he made one of his most sublime promises to a condemned man: “Today you will be with me in Paradise.” Till today, the Master repeats the words to us: “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

But who are the sinners? Those who believe that they are in the right and restrict the vital expressions of others; those who impoverish everyone’s lives because they are incapable of seeing Beauty; those who cause suffering everywhere because they do not realize that what counts in life is “that moment when the bird is not yet flying, but it is no longer still on the branch”. This is something that the Yoga of Beauty reveals to those who start to walk the way of the heart.

Many readers will already have asked themselves: “So what is this Yoga of Beauty?” However, it is not a question that will come up in the minds of those readers who already know how to take a psychothematic approach. Intuition has already allowed the latter to see the horizons that are opening up for humankind in its new era. They do not view the repugnant things that were presented as “Bachelor Machines” at the Venice Biennale art exhibition (in 1975) as works of art or expressions of beauty, but rather aberrant forms that bear witness to the decline of all of the overblown values of the past.

The readers who wonder what the Yoga of Beauty is will be those who have never asked themselves why incompetence and certain terrorist and mafia-like methods (which are used in almost all spheres — and everywhere — today) play a part in the running of art and culture events all over the world. They are the readers who have never worried about the artfulness and xenomania that has spread throughout much of humankind, nor about the ways in which consumerism casts a spell on unwary people, leading the Japanese to dress like Americans, Italians to dress like the English, and so on.

Customs and traditions are muddled together, which is something that can prove detrimental to spontaneous expression and fatal to craftsmanship. Furthermore, these readers do not worry about how the ignorance of technicians, scientists, and capitalists destroys the harmony of Nature by creating an artificial world in which Beauty can no longer show itself or no longer be perceived. These readers have befuddled ideas about Beauty.

They tend to be individuals who have never intended to “make their lives a work of art”. Instead, they follow the commandments of consumerism and conformism, setting off, on Sundays and holy days of obligation, towards the big motorways that claim victims every day in the name of progress. That is their idea of living: having fun and taking their minds off a form of life with no ideals, just a sad future of solitude and nothingness.

The Yoga of Beauty is the conscious search for the Spirit through development

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of the way of the heart. The exercises are interior, on the level of conscious and unconscious perception, and they are inspired by the harmony of the moment. The development of the sense of beauty (see the interesting talk given by Rukmini Devi in the Great Hall in Adyar, which was published in the June 1936 issue of *The Theosophist*) is an individual pursuit and a personal accomplishment. However, there is no real personality in artistic expression, and there can be no authority in Nature. There is only the eternal spirit, which reveals itself to those who seek it, inside themselves and in things. Those who manage to perceive the Spirit in its infinite forms reach the source of Beauty. Instinct and intuition are the guides that teach us to discover in Beauty the things that do away with ugliness, vulgarity and meanness. Those who learn to live in a

beautiful way bring happiness around them. The world needs happiness.

With the Yoga of Beauty, there is no need for the body to assume the positions used to unload or charge the *chakras*, which harmonize chemism and the functions of the organs. Rather than on the outside, it works on the inside, like a pure, spontaneous act of faith. It is not the body or the mind that takes action, but the spirit. It makes us perceive things that we had never consciously noticed: the transition from the intangible and mysterious beauty that brushes against all things, that gives values to the words of poets that were previously unknown to us, that enables musicians, painters, sculptors and dancers to sense the spiritual values that can raise people above the drabness of monotonous material existence.

(To be continued)

Love, like truth and beauty, is concrete. Love is not fundamentally a sweet feeling; not, at heart, a matter of sentiment, attachment, or being "drawn toward". Love is active, effective, a matter of making reciprocal and mutually beneficial relation with one's friends and enemies.

Carter Heyward
"Our Passion for Justice"

Master Serapis

DANIEL H. CALDWELL

SOON after the beginning of the correspondence between A. P. Sinnett and Master Koot Hoomi, Mr Sinnett had a remarkable encounter with the Master. Sinnett writes in a brief note:

I saw KH in astral form on the night of 19 October 1880, — waking up for a moment but immediately afterwards being rendered unconscious again (in the body) and conscious out of the body in the adjacent dressing-room, where I saw another of the Brothers afterwards identified with one called “Serapis” by [Colonel Henry S.] Olcott, — “the youngest of the chohans”.

(*The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, Letter No. 3A, chron. ed. (1998).

Some three-and-a-half years later, while William Q. Judge was in London (March 1884) and on a visit to Mr Sinnett’s home, an interesting conversation arose in regards to Mr Sinnett’s above experience. Judge relates the following:

I asked him [A. P. Sinnett] about his sight of KH and he related this: He was lying in his bed in India one night, when suddenly awakening, he found KH standing by his

bed. He rose half up, when KH put his hand on his head, causing him to fall at once back on the pillow. He then, he says, found himself out of the body, and in the next room, talking to another adept whom he describes as an English or European, with light hair, fair, and of great beauty. This is the one [adept] Olcott described to me in 1876 and called by name____. Please erase that [name] when read. . . . S[innett] says he [the adept] is very high.

(Letter from W. Q. Judge to Mrs Laura Holloway in *Letters That Have Helped Me*, Theosophy Company ed., p. 196.)

Notice that this adept is described as “English or European, with light hair, fair, and of great beauty.”

In 1883 in India, Colonel Olcott was healing people with his mesmeric “power”. He relates the following experience:

On the day in question, while under treatment for his eyes, upon which business my thoughts were closely concentrated, he [Badrinath Babu, the patient] suddenly began describing a shining man whom he saw looking benevolently on him. His

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clairvoyant sight had, it seemed, become partially developed, and what he saw was through closed eyelids. From the minute description he then proceeded to give me, I could not fail to recognise the portrait of one of the most revered of our Masters . . . [Badrinath] described to me an individual with blue eyes, light flowing hair, light beard, and European features and complexion . . . [T]he description . . . fitted accurately a real personage, the Teacher of our Teachers [Koot Hoomi and Morya], a *Paramaguru*, as one such is called in India, and who had given me a small colored sketch of himself in New York, before we left for Bombay.

(*Old Diary Leaves*, 2nd Series, pp. 430–1.)

Concerning the “small colored sketch” mentioned by Col. Olcott, C. Jinarājadāsa in *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Second Series, writes:

. . . a picture of the Master Serapis . . . is among these early letters [of Serapis]. It is painted on thin paper, and its size is 3-1/2 by 2-5/8 inches. It is drawn in pencil, and painted with a brush in a brown which is now faded. The background is blue. The picture shows an ascetic face, somewhat resembling Cardinal Newman’s, with brown flowing hair and short rounded beard. The Master wears a triangular jewel, within it a radiating sun surmounted by a cross, and at the apex of the triangle a crown and stars.

Concerning Col. Olcott’s mesmeric healing, Master Koot Hoomi writes to

A. P. Sinnett: “This [healing by Olcott] is all done thro’ the power of a lock of hair sent by our beloved younger Chohan [Serapis] to HSO.” This is KH’s comment on a newspaper article titled “Cures Effected by Colonel Olcott in Calcutta by Mesmeric Passes” that was published in the Calcutta *Indian Mirror*. (Reprinted in *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*, Appendix III.)

Confirmation that the superior, or master, of both Masters Koot Hoomi and Morya was Serapis, is again found in this statement by Col. Olcott:

One of the greatest of them, the Master of the two Masters [KH and M.] about whom the public has heard . . . , wrote me on June 22, 1875: “The time is come to let you know who I am. I am not a disembodied spirit, Brother, I am a living man; gifted with such powers by our Lodge as are in store for yourself some day. I cannot be with you otherwise than in spirit, for thousands of miles separate us at present.”

(*Old Diary Leaves*, First Series, p. 237.)

This letter Olcott is quoting from is found in part in *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, 2nd Series, Letter 9 from Serapis.

Furthermore, in Letter 27 Master Morya writes to Col. Olcott about “the direct orders of our beloved Lord and Chief — him whom you know under the name of S. — and Maha Sahib”.

This further confirms the high place in the Adept Hierarchy occupied by the Master Serapis. ✧

Harmony and Brotherhood

SHIKHAR AGNIHOTRI

BEFORE we try to study the science of making harmony and brotherhood a reality in our lives, let us first try to refresh our understanding about these two words and their usage in theosophical literature because, as is always the case, the same word can carry different meanings for different people. Also we will try to look at how these two states of Consciousness — and not just the words — are related to each other, the way in which each affects the other, and how if one is realized the other follows naturally.

Let us take “brotherhood” first or, to make it simpler, let us take the word “brother”; what does it mean? There may be many meanings given to this word based on the prejudices of the particular culture, but the basic idea behind it is that two entities have a common origin. Thus when a group is called a brotherhood it means that the entities in it have a common origin. Theosophy talks about Universal Brotherhood implying that everything in the universe has a common origin.

This, in itself, was one of the most revolutionary ideas of the 19th century. It implied that, let alone the differences

between humans based on colour of skin, religion, or nationality, even other cohabitants of the Earth like minerals, plants, animals all are alive and share a common origin with humans. Still, humans are considered to be the top creation on this planet by the sheer egoism and selfishness of a few thinkers.

But let us leave aside the other kingdoms of Nature for now and limit ourselves to humans only. Now, will it ever be possible, to realize this brotherly feeling, if we look only at the physical body, emotions, and thoughts of the other person? I doubt it, because based on physical, emotional, or mental expression, the normal perception, at least by a non-enlightened person, is that such infinitely diversified individuals cannot possibly have the same origin.

So, the first thing to understand is that this brotherly feeling can only dawn upon us when we try to look at something deeper than merely the body (the colour of the skin and the gender), likes and dislikes, thinking processes — collectively named the personality.

It is only when we try to look at the

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source which keeps this personality running, the source that is common to all — a field beyond the mind — that we begin to see the glimpse of the brotherhood that Theosophy talks about which is UNITY OF ALL LIFE, and not similarity of the form or thoughts, or uniformity, as is being understood by many. There is no uniformity in Nature. Even two leaves on the same branch of a tree are not uniform.

But, what is more significant to realize is that, this looking at the deeper aspect in the other is not possible unless we have seen it within ourselves. That is a simple, natural fact. What is inside is outside — we project whatever is within us on to the screen without, called the world. If I am a liar, I will look upon everyone as a liar. If I am egoistic, every other person will seem to be egoistic to me. If I think I am a spark of Divine Flame, then everyone will be a spark of Divine Flame to me.

So, unless there is a deeper understanding of our true nature, of our origin, we will not be able to see *that* in the other, and till then the world will remain the same. Maybe that is why Confucius said:

To put the world in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right.

And when we set our hearts right, there is harmony within. And when there is harmony within, it inevitably finds expression in the form of love and compassion in all our relationships, which is

nothing but brotherhood in practice, and it is not limited to just humans, but includes the whole of existence.

Similarly, when brotherhood is practised outside, there is no fear, insecurity, envy, greed, pride, or sense of separateness within, which means there is harmony within, and this cycle of goodness continues and strengthens itself. So we can say that harmony is brotherhood in potential form, and brotherhood is harmony in action. So, before attempting to harmonize without, inner harmony must be established at least to some extent, if not perfectly.

The more significant question is, how can this harmony be established within? For this we must know what is disharmony and what causes it. Normally it is believed that when everything is going on in a smooth manner, in a calm way, there is harmony, and when there are differences or friction, in any form, there is disharmony. In other words, it is believed that good is harmony and evil is disharmony. Virtue is harmony and vice is disharmony. Right is harmony and wrong is disharmony.

There is no doubt that a discrimination between the relative dualities of good–evil, right–wrong, virtue–vice is necessary on the path of evolution, but there comes a stage when it becomes incumbent on the traveller to enquire into the root of disharmony and question the basis of this differentiation. All this effort must be done to find out, *what* in reality is good and what actually is evil: is it the act itself, or something deeper than the act that creates this disharmony? And *Light on the Path*

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clearly indicates that the root of all evil is the sense of separateness. This is not just a philosophical answer, a way of avoiding the problems in the world. Instead, more and more scientific minds are beginning to realize this, and one of them, James Gustave Speth, a US advisor on climate change, said:

I used to think that top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. I thought that thirty years of good science could address these problems. I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed, and apathy, and to deal with these we need a cultural and spiritual transformation. And we scientists don't know how to do that.

This implies that good, virtuous, or right, equally binds as evil, sinful, or wrong, for the simple reason that the disharmony lies in the sense of separateness.

The moment we think ourselves as separate from the rest of the universe, there comes into existence a centre of activity, a centre of “I-ness”, and immediately an interaction starts between this centre and the rest of the universe. Any energy, be it mental, emotional, or physical, that is released through this centre into the universe, will create disharmony, and the universe will respond to this energy, to harmonize as per the law of harmony, which is often known as law of cause and effect, law of karma, law of retribution, and so on — the law on which the whole universe is founded — and the consequences will have to be faced by

that centre, whether pleasure or pain.

Just to understand this through a metaphor, the moment something is thrown in a pool of water, ripples are created. Now, does it matter what is thrown in the water to determine whether the ripples will be created? Yes, the size of the object does matter, but only in determining the size of the ripples. Does it matter whether we throw a diamond, or a piece of iron, silver, stone, coal, wood in the water? Of course not! As long as energy is spent through a separate centre, there will be ripples, there will be disharmony, and it is equally true that when this centre of sense of separateness disappears, the action does not bind anymore.

The cause of disharmony, thus, is not the action itself, but the actor, the doer, the I-ness, the sense of separateness, which is the opposite of brotherhood. So, we can go around acquiring virtues, doing good deeds, but all that will not be enough if this sense of separateness does not diminish and is gradually replaced by love and compassion for all.

This is what is indicated in *At the Feet of the Master* too — if love is there, everything else comes, and if love is not there, then nothing else matters. A very effective way of uprooting this foundation of egoism and sowing the seed of love, that I feel worthwhile sharing, is to *stop complaining and start accepting everything with gratitude on this path of service and sacrifice*. This is because all personal complaints and personal discontentment are the fruits of the tree which has this egoism as its root.

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There are times in life when we feel wronged, betrayed; we feel that injustice is being done to us; that is exactly the time to implement this statement which is nothing but “a courageous endurance of personal injustice” in the words of H. P. Blavatsky in “The Golden Stairs”.

Another aspect of harmony comes into the picture when we have to work in a team. One can assume oneself to be very amicable and brotherly, but the real test takes place when one has to work in a team or organization, be it a family, a company, a government, or even a spiritual organization. The more the sense of personality, the more the disharmony because there will always be differences of opinion as to what is the best thing to do in the interest of any group. If the approach is of love and brotherhood, then the differences of opinion will not be looked at as a threat or opposition; instead it will be taken as an opportunity to grow, to understand our brother in a better way, thus making the circle of our love larger. Blavatsky says in *Practical Occultism*:

The *upasaka* while studying must take care to be united as the fingers on one hand. Thou shalt impress upon their minds that

whatever hurts one should hurt the others; and if the rejoicing of one finds no echo in the breasts of the others, then the required conditions are absent, and it is useless to proceed. . . .

Collectively they must form a keyboard answering in all its parts to . . . the touch of the Master. Thus their minds shall open for the harmonies of Wisdom . . . So shall Wisdom be impressed for ever on their hearts, and the harmony of the law shall never be broken.

Often, even when trying to do good or trying to help someone, or to make things harmonious, we end up creating disharmony. A significant direction to test oneself is given in *At the Feet of the Master* as to the kind of approach that is expected from an aspirant — love that inspires the will, will that directs the wisdom, wisdom that enables to help.

The whole purpose of the three aspects of the theosophic life, namely study, meditation, and selfless service, is to create a fertile soil in which the flower of harmony can bloom and the fruit of brotherhood can be tasted in its natural sweetness. Thus the valley between theory and practice can be bridged. ✧

**“Brotherhood is my father, harmony is my mother
and peace is my wife.”**

Abhijit Naskar
Fabric of Humanity

Fragments of the Ageless Wisdom

Who gave thee, O Beauty!
The keys of this breast,
Too credulous lover
Of blest and unblest?
Say when in lapsed ages
Thee knew I of old;
Or what was the service
For which I was sold?
When first my eyes saw thee,
I found me thy thrall,
By magical drawings,
Sweet tyrant of all!
I drank at thy fountain
False waters of thirst;
Thou intimate stranger,
Thou latest and first!
Thy dangerous glances
Make women of men;
New-born we are melting
Into nature again.
Lavish, lavish promiser,
Nigh persuading gods to err,
Guest of million painted forms
Which in turn thy glory warms,
The frailest leaf, the mossy bark,
The acorn's cup, the raindrop's arc,
The swinging spider's silver line,
The ruby of the drop of wine,
The shining pebble of the pond,
Thou inscribest with a bond
In thy momentary play
Would bankrupt Nature to repay. . . .

Fragments of the Ageless Wisdom

The heaven high over
Is the deep's lover,
The sun and sea
Informed by thee,
Before me run,
And draw me on,
Yet fly me still,
As Fate refuses
To me the heart's Fate for me chooses,
Is it that my opulent soul
Was mingled from the generous whole,
Sea valleys and the deep of skies
Furnished several supplies,
And the sands whereof I'm made
Draw me to them self-betrayed? . . .

Thee gliding through the sea of form,
Like the lightning through the storm,
Somewhat not to be possessed,
Somewhat not to be caressed,
No feet so fleet could ever find,
No perfect form could ever bind.

Thou eternal fugitive
Hovering over all that live,
Quick and skilful to inspire
Sweet extravagant desire,
Starry space and lily bell
Filling with thy roseate smell,
Wilt not give the lips to taste
Of the nectar which thou hast. . . .

Queen of things! I dare not die
In Being's deeps past ear and eye,
Lest there I find the same deceiver,
And be the sport of Fate forever.
Dread power, but dear! if God thou be,
Unmake me quite, or give thyself to me.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Ode to Beauty”

The Search for Truth and Glimpses of Beauty in the Spiritual Life

ABRAHAM ORON

THE essence of Theosophy is the journey from the unreal to the Real and from illusion to Truth. In this journey we must face and deal with many illusions that we have come to think of as the truth. In the study of the theosophical and other spiritual traditions, the goal of the spiritual path can be presented as the realization of our oneness with the One Reality, or One Life, the universal principle vibrating in every atom, shining in every creature, and embracing all in oneness.

Sages and mystics have written the following statements about this universal principle:

There is a reality that sees everything in its light, and it is not seen; it grants intelligence to consciousness and intellect, but there can be nothing other that illuminates it; this reality overshadows the universe . . . it is the source of light, the universe is illuminated by its light.

Śankarāchārya — *Vivekachudāmani*

Solomon ibn Gabirol expresses his wonder about this reality in his poem “Royal Crown”:

Thou art One, and at the mystery of thy Oneness the wise of heart are struck dumb, For they know not what it is. . . .

Thou art One, but not like a unit to be grasped or counted, For number and change cannot reach thee.

Madame H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) says in *The Secret Doctrine*:

There is but one indivisible and absolute Omniscience and Intelligence in the Universe, and this thrills throughout every atom and infinitesimal point of the whole finite Kosmos, which hath no bounds, and which people call SPACE

Let us pause for a moment and consider what feelings or thoughts arise in us when we hear these sublime statements about the hidden reality or absolute intelligence. In some of us the thought that we already know these ideas will arise. But do we really know? And there may be some among us who will immediately see that each statement tries to describe in words some aspect of truth or reality, but this is only a verbal des-

Mr Abraham Oron is President of Covenant TS Lodge in Israel and Editor of the Hebrew Magazine, *Ohr* (Light). Talk delivered at the international Convention, Adyar, on 1 January 2019.

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cription and not truth or reality itself. And perhaps there will be a few among us in which these ideas will raise a strong yearning for THAT which is beyond the MIND and the barrier of words.

During a moment of meditation the following thoughts flashed in my mind:

- ◆ How come this reality, which is closer to us than our breath, seems so remote and difficult to realize?
- ◆ The great teachers say that this essence is our true nature, so how come we are still in the illusion that we are cut off from it?
- ◆ They teach that it is our spiritual heart and soul, but we still do not really believe in its existence in us. Is something wrong with us? Could it be that we search for truth in the wrong place?

In my quest for truth about life, self, God, and so on, there was a time when I thought that I only have to find the right book or the right teacher to reveal the truth to me. Like me there are so many seekers who hope to find the final truth about Life in learning or maybe in prayers, fasting and rituals, while others search for it in ashrams at the feet of revered teachers.

Here is what the Indian Sufi poet Kabir says about the search:

O Servant, where dost thou seek Me?
Lo! I am beside thee.
I am neither in temple nor in mosque:
I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailash:
Neither am I in rites and ceremonies,
nor in Yoga and renunciation.

If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt at once see Me:

thou shalt meet Me in a moment of time.
Kabir says, “O Sadhu! God is the breath of all breath.”

In a long process that includes many disappointments we begin to realize that there is indeed no paved road to Truth and to quote *Light on the Path*: “Each man is to himself absolutely the way, the truth, and the life.” But the mind still finds it hard to accept that all the countless truth-seekers over thousands of years have not left us with a clearer guidance to help us in the search process. There are instructions that can be found in many traditions, but they say in different words what *Light on the Path* and J. Krishnamurti say: “Truth is a pathless land.”

Let us examine some of these teachings, and start with HPB:

. . . our eyes are downcast and riveted to the earth, with all its physical and grossly material manifestations. If instead of that, man, proceeding on his life journey, looked — not heavenward, . . . — but *within himself* . . . he would soon escape from the coils of the great serpent of illusion.

And if we still have doubts as to where we should direct our search, here is a clarification by Rumi, the Sufi poet:

Far away from here after God you searched
But what you are looking for is in you,
have you forgotten?
Why look for a treasure that you did not lose?
The book, the names, the letters — are in
your heart.

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And in the words of Ken Wilber, the American philosopher:

Because of the fact that we are “the Self”, every search for him is not only doomed to fail, but creates the impression that we lack it! By the very act of searching it, we keep it away from us.

Truth, Self, and Reality are hidden in the innermost dimension of the universe and in all living beings. This is the treasure for which we unconsciously search in the outside world. We cannot feel whole so long as we believe it is separate from us. This separation creates in us an inner void which we try to fill unsuccessfully with material objects. The Reality which is beyond form and thought is indeed hidden within us but it can be felt only when the mind is silent and there is awareness without thought. Every moment we can choose to be awake and accept *what is*, truth, or reality as it is, be it pleasant or not, or fight reality when it does not match our expectations, and fall back to the virtual reality which our ego and thought patterns create for us.

By seeking to see life situations and ourselves as they *are*, without the addition of mind and ego, our vision will clear up and we will be able to have more glimpses of the true and the beautiful in the life around us. Beauty is not separate from the inner truth, and all the beauty that we encounter around us originates in that essence which is truth, beauty, and love.

Here I would like to relate an instance early in my spiritual journey in which I was lucky to have a glimpse of the

hidden beauty which can be seen when the veil of illusion is lifted from one’s eyes.

After two years of regular meditation, while I was swimming in a pool, I suddenly felt a sense of lightness and joy I had never experienced before. All the time I was swimming I felt lightness and unity with the water that carried me, effortlessly enjoying the beauty of the bubbles and the shapes formed in the water with every movement and the dance of light at the bottom of the pool.

When I finished and walked out of the pool, I felt as if a veil had been removed from my eyes, and for days and weeks I saw beauty in everything in Nature. Nature seemed radiant to me, every leaf, flower, or tree was radiant, and the whiteness of the clouds seemed so beautiful against the deep-blue background of the sky. Beauty was everywhere, in the play of wind and waves and the joyful movement of the treetops. Gradually, I returned to my normal vision, but the memory of the experience accompanied me, and from time to time, after meditation where I experienced deep silence, the eyes would once again open up to a glimpse of the radiance and beauty emanating from the invisible dimension of reality.

Every sincere search for truth involves repeated failures to set ourselves free from illusion and errors. These glimpses of beauty motivate and give us strength to continue on the journey up the steep path leading to the temple of truth in the depth of Life and our consciousness. In the Hebrew Psalms we

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find this beautiful passage about the qualifications for entering the temple of truth:

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord,
or who shall stand in his holy place?
He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart,
who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,
nor sworn deceitfully.

Annie Besant suggests the following practice that can lead to the portal of the temple:

. . . it is in the practice of truth in thought, in speech, and in act, that there gradually wakes up that spiritual insight which pierces through every veil of illusion, and against which there can be in Nature no possibility of setting up a successful deception.

In order to practise truth in thought, speech, and action, we need to be constantly aware of the fact that whatever situation, person, or thing we come across, life presents to us only the outer form or garment, which hides the inner entity, energy, or meaning. For most of us, the tendency of the mind is to focus on the externalities of things, while the search for truth requires that we not lose ourselves in the outer form and consciously open ourselves to impressions or intuitions about the hidden essence that arises in us from within. Here, the training of the mind to listen carefully is required, and never should we regard the external impression as the ultimate truth.

Maybe the following statement from *Light on the Path* can inspire us in this

kind of inner listening. It starts with the words, “Listen to the song of life”, which can be expressed also as “Listen to the inner truth of life”.

Look for it and listen to it first in your own heart. At first you may say: “It is not there; when I search I find only discord.” Look deeper. If again you are disappointed, pause, and look deeper again.

The instruction is to look or listen within more and more deeply, without being discouraged when for a long time we glimpse only discord. Are we willing to accept the disharmony or discord we find within ourselves as our true state at the moment? Willingness to accept and investigate the discord within is the only way to move towards harmony or inner truth.

In a letter to one of his *chelas*, Master KH directs our attention to the goal of the search as follows: “If he wearies not of trying, he may discover that most noble of all facts, his true Self.” Is what the Master calls “true Self”, or “that most noble of all facts”, identical with the “song of life”? Is this sentence directing us to focus our personal search for truth on the awakening of our consciousness to itself, to its true nature, to the light within it?

According to HPB our true self is a God, about whom she writes in *Practical Occultism* the following:

The “God” in us — that is to say, the spirit of Love and Truth, Justice and Wisdom, Goodness and Power — should be our

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only true and permanent *Love*; our only reliance in everything, our only *Faith*, which, standing firm as a rock, can for ever be trusted; our only *Hope*, which will never fail us if all other things perish; and the only object which we must seek to obtain, by our *Patience*, waiting contentedly until our evil Karma has been exhausted and the divine Redeemer will reveal to us his presence within our soul.

So if we want to find our true self, we have to look deep within, to look deep into our mind, our inner world. Here reside the beliefs and illusions that originate from the ego — the fears, the conditioning, and the prejudices that prevent us from awakening to our true nature. It is the selfish desires, that perpetuate the illusion, and it is the revelation of the inner will — the will of the soul — that makes it possible to move toward the true self, and enter into our innermost temple.

Rabindranath Tagore writes in his book *Sādhana*, on the approach and practice that leads to the entrance gate of the temple of beauty and truth:

When a person acquires the knowledge to look at things without asking for pleasure for himself, when he is not a slave to instincts, and when desires no longer impair his ability to see, then the beauty that is inherent in all is revealed to him, and his eyes see beauty everywhere and in everything.

To conclude, here are the words of a person who realized in his life this true self — Ramana Maharshi:

Know that you are truly an infinite, pure Being — the Self Absolute. You are always that Self and nothing but that Self. Therefore, you can never really be ignorant of the Self. Your ignorance is the fruit of your imagination alone . . . Know that true knowledge does not create a new being for you, but just removes your ignorance. The only way to get free from your suffering is to know and be the Self. How can this goal be unattainable?

May the holy Ones lead us from the unreal to the Real and inspire us to know the Self and be Self. ✧

The pursuit of truth and beauty is a sphere of activity in which we are permitted to remain children all our lives.

Albert Einstein

Dolores Gago — In Memoriam

ON 24 March 2019 the niece of Mrs Dolores Gago, Cristina Gago, informed the Adyar Theosophical Society (TS) that on that day her aunt had passed away in her sleep, peacefully and quietly. Being from Uruguay, Dolores served the TS in countless ways in her country as well as all over Latin America and at Adyar, where she served for over ten years, first as international Secretary, and then as Secretary of the School of the Wisdom.

For most of her adult life Mrs Gago was gifted with diverse qualities, which ranged from an apparently feisty resourcefulness to a deep dedication to theosophical work, the Co-Masonic Order, and devotion to other forms of altruistic service.

What follows summarizes two of the messages about her life and work received after her passing:

“The indelible memory of Dolores will remain with many who worked with her. She would do from the most humble to the most delicate work for the Society. I met her while she was sweeping the halls of the San Rafael Theosophical Center in Argentina; later I learned that she had a post in the Inter-American Theosophical Federation and was a distinguished translator, among other duties. She helped the TS in Chile, Cuba, and other countries, doing what was necessary to get their work off the ground during difficult times.” *Perla Ramirez*



(From l. to r.): Mrs Dolores Gago with Ms Mary Anderson, the late Ms Joy Mills and the late Mrs Radha Burnier at the International Theosophical Centre, Naarden, the Netherlands, 1997

“Dolores was full of energy, dedicated to service, always ready to do what was best for the TS. She was with us at the founding of the Inter-American Federation, in Melgar, Colombia. Her friendliness, leadership, and sense of humor were always present. She left us as a true theosophist should: in PEACE. We accompany her with immense affection and gratitude.” *Julia Ballesteros* ✧

Traveling with Radhaji in Latin America

DOLORES GAGO

I became acquainted with The Theosophical Society (TS) at a very young age. Although I am a graduate from an American School in Uruguay where the majority of the subjects were taught in English, it is one thing to know some English, but quite another to translate a theosophical lecture. My first experience of this sort took place “by chance” during the first visit to Uruguay of Mr N. Sri Ram, fifth international President of the Theosophical Society (TS). He was accompanied by my theosophical mentor from Colombia, Mr Walter Ballesteros, who was going to be the translator, but when they arrived at the local Montevideo airport, the latter suddenly lost his voice.

Sri Ram’s lectures were going to take place in the main auditorium of our central University. Ballesteros asked me to take his place as translator, and added that he would stand just behind me in order to help me if necessary. It was an unforgettable experience. From that moment on I became the translator of the theosophical lecturers who visited many countries in South and Central America. This is how

I became the translator of Mrs Radha Burnier, seventh President of the TS and daughter of Sri Ram.

I remember Radhaji’s first visit to a South American country. The lecture was taking place in a renowned library and the majority of the audience was composed of students. After some time I saw that one of our members was trying to tell me something using his hands. At the same time I was worried because I saw that some persons were leaving the room. Radhaji had started using Sanskrit terms, which are, as is well known, very difficult to explain, so I mentioned to her in a subtle manner to use an easier language. At the end, the audience welcomed her decision and the member who was trying to communicate with me was grateful. The place suggested a more erudite audience, but the principal tenets of theosophical thought were still new to Western university students.

On another occasion, our host warned me that sometimes a particular gentleman from the audience, at the end of the meetings, would stand up and start speaking

Mrs Dolores Gago worked at the TS Adyar international headquarters since 1999 for more than ten years as international Secretary, and then as Secretary of the School of the Wisdom.

Traveling with Radhaji in Latin America

with the obvious desire of showing off his knowledge. I informed Radhaji and she gave me an immediate suggestion: “Just listen to his remarks and take your own decision.” She delivered her lecture, the audience thanked her with applause, both of us sat down, and suddenly the said gentleman stood up and started speaking. I also stood up and looked at Radhaji, who with her eyes was telling me to go on with our plan.

I did not interrupt the gentleman, but waited until he finally stopped speaking. Then I thanked him for his input and added that, as it was not related with the main subject of the lecture, the lecturer had no remarks to make. The audience stood up with a heavy round of applause and it became difficult for us to leave the room. After some time I was informed that the gentleman stopped visiting the theosophical premises.

On another occasion, in a country north of Uruguay, we were picked up by some members of the TS who introduced themselves as responsible for the program of our visit. We were taken in a car to a place which I thought was very far away from the local theosophical headquarters of the TS. I mentioned this fact to our driver and he told me the lecture was going to take place in a “very special location”. Finally, we arrived at the place and our surprise was unthinkable. We found a huge, beautiful garden with some nude statues whose private parts had been covered with colored pieces of cloth. At the end of the large garden there was a huge swimming pool filled with clean

water. We were told that lunch was going to be served before the lecture and that the audience could listen to it seated on some of the available chairs or just cross-legged on the floor around the swimming pool.

By then, Radhaji and I were having doubts about our destination. She asked me, “Dolores, are you sure we are in the Theosophical Society?” to which I replied that I had my own doubts but I would investigate. So I found a chair for her and begged her not to move from there until I returned. (By the way, the chairs were very sophisticated, real pieces of art, beautifully carved with mother-of-pearl encrustations and fine gold painting.)

Going around I found two or three persons preparing the food, so I asked if they were preparing vegetarian food, an important requirement for both Radhaji and me. The answer was in the affirmative, so I thought that at least one doubt had vanished, and I continued my investigation. The gentleman who brought the chairs looked like an Indian. I decided to talk to him and found out that he was an employee of the Indian Embassy in that country, so I asked another question — the most important one for us — “Where are we?”

I was told that the place, at that time, belonged to the Indian Embassy, which was trying to create a cultural center. He continued that, earlier, the gorgeous mansion had been the private property of one of the local drug barons, and had been confiscated by the national government and offered for sale at a public auction

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at a very convenient price. And there we were, trying to deliver a theosophical lecture! But the adventure continued. Lunch was very much delayed, after which the lecture started, with most of the audience sitting around the swimming pool. . . .

Finally, we were taken to the place where we were supposed to sleep and have our daily breakfast. It was a flat with a small sitting room, one bedroom with a double bed, a bathroom, and a kitchen where we found the indispensable utensils for our breakfast. It was evident they thought we would share the double bed, something I knew Radhaji would not appreciate, nor would I permit it. I then went to the sitting room and tried to make a bed out of a kind of sofa that I discovered could be slightly lengthened. I had in my suitcase a sheet and a pillow, and these, along with my own poncho, came to my help. Both of us could then rest quite well.

We had different flights for leaving that country and I had deliberately informed our host that the first of our flights was scheduled an hour earlier than the actual departure time. We were picked up more or less on time, but the driver decided to take what he thought was a shorter way, one of the city tunnels, but it happened that after a short time we found ourselves stuck in a traffic jam, so the car was moving very slowly. After some long moments of real distress, we finally arrived at the airport, where Radhaji's name was being heard through the loudspeakers saying that it was the last call to board the plane!

A country facing many difficulties

also had to be visited and Radhaji and I were prepared to go there. When traveling, it is difficult to carry food, but we managed to buy chocolate and different kinds of biscuits, and there we landed. We were picked up by one of the TS members, a lady who was a medical doctor and had the official right to drive a car. But even if someone could afford a car, fuel was very difficult to obtain, so when I was placed in the front passenger seat, I was warned to be careful because in front of that seat the doctor was carrying a large glass container of extra fuel for the car! The doctor's contribution to our visit was transporting us from the theosophical headquarters to the place where we were going to sleep.

Our hostess was a retired lady professor who lived on the second floor of what had been a comfortable building. The flat had a bedroom with a double bed, a small study room, a comfortable dining room, a kitchen, and a bathroom. The political situation of the place at that time was very difficult. The Theosophical Section was formed by members living in many other cities in addition to the place where we were staying, and all were eager to listen to Radhaji. But what about the problem of staying in the capital city, and what about the meals?

Sometimes courage and goodwill bring about miracles. Our hostess had asked for help quite in advance. Over a period of months, members used their ration cards to stand in long queues to buy whatever food was available that day; and whatever was obtained was stored at the house of

Traveling with Radhaji in Latin America

our hostess. In this way, the problem of meals was solved. But where could the members coming from other cities be accommodated? The Liberal Catholic Church in that place was very important, and being an organization allied to the TS, they decided to help. The benches of the Church became the beds for all the visiting members.

Radhaji informed the officers of that Section that she had brought in a considerable amount of money as a donation that they could use to repair their headquarters. They replied that they could not accept the money because the government of the country would notice the repair work and this would give them an excuse to start investigating all the theosophical meetings; therefore the Section officers preferred to continue to share the theosophical ideas in poverty.

Radhaji was leaving that country and traveling to the Krotona Institute of Theosophy in Ojai, California. Before she left, I grasped her subtle suggestion, "Perhaps you could stay for some more days", and so I did. I was not given permission by the national government to visit other places, so I stayed in the capital city. I was able to deliver some lectures, but after some days, I started suffering from very high fever. Fortunately, the lady doctor that had been our driver a few days earlier came to my rescue. When I was able to travel again, I left the country leaving behind many friends.

Apparently, the work of a traveling theosophical lecturer has other charms, such as standing on a platform to share thoughts with those who are seeking answers to the riddles of life. But for Radhaji, it was simply a duty she felt in her heart.

The night, it is deserted
from the mountains to the sea.
But I, the one who rocks you,
I am not alone!

The sky, it is deserted
for the moon falls to the sea.
But I, the one who holds you,
I am not alone !

The world, it is deserted.
All flesh is sad you see.
But I, the one who hugs you,
I am not alone!

Gabriela Mistral
"I Am Not Alone"

Theosophical Work around the World



International President Tim Boyd (nearest to the door) and his wife Lily (in gray dress) visiting the national headquarters of the Mexican Section of the TS on 8 March 2019



President Boyd receiving a welcome gift from the organizer of his visit to Mexico, Mrs Lissette Arroyo

Theosophical Work around the World



President Boyd along with his wife Lily, daughter Angelique, and sister-in-law Stella Fernandez (*to his left, in that order*)

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ATA poster



Mrs Sonal Murali has been entrusted with setting up the Adyar Theosophical Academy (ATA) slated to open in June 2019

Theosophical Work around the World

Mexico

The TS in Mexico reports that on 8 March 2019 they were happy to be visited by international President of the TS Tim Boyd and family at its National Headquarters. Over 80 people attended this event, including the National President of the Mexican Section of the TS, Mr Enrique Sánchez, as well as Presidents of Lodges, directors of study centers, and members and supporters of Lodges and study centers in the country.

The event was organized by Mrs Lisette Arroyo, Vice-President of the Inter-American Theosophical Federation. Mr Boyd was welcomed with two songs, entitled “Mexico en la Piel” (“Mexico on the Skin”) and “Este es el Momento” (“This is the Moment”), interpreted by Héctor Arroyo. After a short tour of the headquarters, a meditation was conducted by Mrs Lily Boyd. Then Mr Boyd gave an inspiring conference oriented toward awakening and raising our consciousness entitled “Overcoming Fear”, which was translated by Mrs Georgina Téllez. The function ended with an interesting question-and-answer session.

Adyar Theosophical Academy

Mrs Sonal Murali, who has been entrusted with the task of setting up the Adyar Theosophical Academy (ATA) in the Besant Gardens of the Theosophical

Society (TS) campus, spoke on “transformative education” at the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation in Chennai on 3 April. The event was covered by the media and below are some of the highlights of her presentation as covered mainly by *The Times of India*.

“The physical environment is important when it comes to an early childhood programme, which is referred to as the ‘third teacher’. A child learns through hundreds of languages, through drawing and sculpting, dancing and painting. These ways of learning, are all a part of the child. Learning and playing are not separate because learning happens at subliminal levels. So when a child plays, it has to be taken seriously”, Sonal said.

“Respect and reverence for the world around us brings about the sense of self-awareness, the first step towards self-mastery, and in turn will result in self-culture, which will have respect and empathy built into it. ‘The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but brings our life in harmony with all existence’”, said Sonal, quoting Rabindranath Tagore. She has been a member of the TS for 40 years. After completing her post-graduation in English, she came to Adyar and worked here during 1983–97. Since 1999, she explored alternative education based on Krishnamurti’s educational philosophy for a decade. ✧

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