



# THE THEOSOPHIST

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**Note:** Articles for publication in *The Theosophist* should be sent to: <[editorialoffice@gmail.com](mailto:editorialoffice@gmail.com)>

**Cover:** Partial view of the Krotona Institute of Theosophy (KIT) Library in Ojai, California. KIT's centenary in Ojai was celebrated from 15 to 22 April 2024. The Library holds around 8,000 volumes on comparative religion, philosophy, and science, as also literature, the arts, biographies, and history related to the spiritual life. Photographer: Susan Johnson, Krotona Library Manager.

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This journal is the official organ of the President, founded by H. P. Blavatsky on 1 Oct. 1879. The Theosophical Society is responsible only for official notices appearing in this journal.

# 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.

# Ten People

TIM BOYD

I AM told that J. Krishnamurti once made the comment that if there were ten people in the world like him, the world would be transformed. Regardless of one's opinion of Krishnamurti's history or status as a "World Teacher", the statement is worth considering. Coming from the mouth of an average person, a normal reaction to hearing such a statement would bring the idea of delusion or extreme boastfulness. "Who does he think he is?" is the question that would arise. Given the more than seven decades of Krishnamurti's life of teaching and speaking, and the numerous books by him and about him, we have some sense of who he was and what he might have meant. Clearly the ten transformative people he was talking about were not determined by their personalities, circumstances, or popular regard. Although these are the tags most of us normally use to identify ourselves, to him they were meaningless attributes. The "ten people" referred to something deeper. That something is consciousness.

The ability to solve and explain the processes and phenomena of the natural world is rightfully the pride of the scientific endeavor. However, its inadequacy to address the fact of consciousness has been a continuing problem. No one de-

nies its existence; that would not be possible. The act of denial itself is a function of consciousness. But how to explain it? Although the effects of consciousness can be measured, currently consciousness itself cannot. Acupuncture, therapeutic touch, and other energy-based healing modalities have been accepted and taught in universities of the Western world, not because they are understood, but because their measurable effects in promoting health have been repeatedly demonstrated. Meditation and mystical states have been examined in laboratory settings and found to have dramatic effects on the brain and the rest of the body. The inescapable conclusion is that activities of consciousness affect the material world. What is unseen influences what is seen.

From the point of view of the Ageless Wisdom everything is endowed with consciousness. Its expansiveness is what differentiates the mineral, vegetable, animal, human, and all the higher and lower kingdoms from each other. The factor that makes a human being human is a specific center of consciousness, the soul, which accompanies and, when allowed, directs the human experience. At the end of the little book, *The Idyll of the White Lotus*, "three truths" are given. The first is "The soul . . . is immortal, and its future is the

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future of a thing whose growth and splendor has no limit.” Sometimes called the spark of the Divine, the higher self, or inner self, it is the soul that associates itself with the body and personality in life after life. Because the soul is not separate from the Universal, or Divine, it is a center of genuine power. During their lifetimes most people have glimpses of its splendor, but they tend to remain in the background as fleeting reminders of an indwelling wisdom potential. Some find themselves so moved by these brief encounters with genuine “soul power” that they commit to finding some path that leads to the soul’s full expression in their lives.

Ultimately these ones find their way through religions, practices, ashrams, and orders, to the “temple of Divine Wisdom”, where truth, beauty, power, love, and freedom become their experience. Of these few, at various times in human history, one will emerge in the world, normally to attempt some “course correction” to humanity’s current misguided direction. Jesus, the Buddha, Mohammed, Krishna, Shankaracharya, and others are examples of this exalted consciousness. Their words and life story are the message intended to awaken us to our own deep potential — a shared potential which, according to them, is in every way equal to their own. They are the souls whose “growth and splendor” have moved beyond all limits with which we are familiar. Other disciples, outposts of their all-embracing consciousness, follow them to ground their vision in the human family. These

are the “ten people” to whom Krishna-murti referred — the rare flowering of generations of seekers who have learned to truly see.

There is an idea expressed in the book *Power vs Force* by David Hawkins MD, about the relationship between power and force. He makes the point that “power arises from meaning” and “always supports the significance of life”. Force on the other hand “always moves against something”. It “is incomplete and therefore has to be fed energy constantly” and “its effect is to polarize rather than unify”. David Hawkins developed a model, mapping the progression from the lower forceful states to the highest expressions of power. Whether or not one accepts his model, it is a useful mapping for something we already intuitively know; that love, joy, peace, and enlightenment are the highest, most powerful states for the human being.

When we read or are told words of wisdom that go beyond our personal experience we are faced with a choice. What to do with them? For many, it is clear that the message exceeds their grasp, but it is accepted because the source is deemed to be reliable. Often such things become a matter of belief, or blind faith. Buddha’s advice to his disciples was “Believe nothing, no matter where you read it, or who said it, no matter if I have said it, unless it agrees with your own reason and your own common sense.” The approach that H. P. Blavatsky prescribed was rooted in the Hermetic Axiom — an expression of the Law of Correspondences, or Analogy.

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The axiom is rooted in the idea that there is an all-encompassing, undivided consciousness within which “we live, move, and have our being”. There is no separation between high and low, near and far, caste, gender, species, or any other categories of difference we create. Its fullness is accessible at every point. The Hermetic Axiom is normally stated thus: “As it is above, so it is below. As it is within, so it is without.” It is a tool that can be applied to align our “normal” experience with that which is as yet beyond our grasp — hidden behind self-created walls of personal preferences.

Let me share a story that, for me, is an example of the Hermetic Axiom in action. During the time I was in college, outdoor concerts were a big thing. It was just a couple of years after the iconic Woodstock Festival, the “Three Days of Peace and Music”, that marked a generation. I was still living in New York and had bought a ticket to attend a “blanket concert” — no seats, no chairs, just bring a blanket and enjoy the music. Many of my favorite music groups of that time were scheduled to perform. The only problem for me was that I had been given medical advice that I should not attend. I had injured my knee and was awaiting surgery. Basically, I could not walk, but I could limp, and that was good enough for me; I was going.

Ten thousand people showed up for the concert. For some unknown reason the concert was delayed. Announcements were made to be patient; it would start soon. The delay continued and people in

the audience started getting impatient, restless. I was standing on the edge of the crowd nursing my knee. At one point, the way it appeared to me, the entire crowd suddenly turned and started running directly at me. It was a stampede. What started it? I don’t know. The next thing I remember, I was 100 meters down the road, having outrun everyone. As I came back to my senses I realized a couple of things. The first was that, like a leaf in a storm, the fear generated by a mass mind had overwhelmed me, literally it had propelled me to act in a way that was supposedly medically impossible. Surprisingly the crowd did not disperse, but went back to waiting for the show to begin. I, too, decided to stay.

The next realization for me was that the crowd was still restless and likely this stampede would happen again. Like the light bulb that shines above the head of a comic book character when he suddenly gets an idea, a thought came into my mind. This time I moved into the center of the crowd and waited. As expected, it happened again. The crowd turned and started running. This time I was ready. I grabbed the two people in front of me and shouted “Why are you running?” Somehow that broke the spell they were under and they stopped. Of course, they had no idea why they were running. They were running because everybody else was. The effect of them stopping was that the people immediately behind them had to stop, and the ones behind them. Although drones did not exist at that time, a drone’s view of the crowd at that moment would

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have shown a surging stream of people and in its center a small unmoving fan around which all of the rest were streaming.

That experience impressed me in important ways. At the time I was newly exposed to the Ageless Wisdom teachings. The power of thought and the capacity to be centered were a strong focus in those early days. Certainly now, I would not do what I did then. I mark it up to the excesses of youth, but that experience changed me. The deepest realization for me was that if in that crowd of ten thousand people there had been just ten people who were centered, present, and aware, no stampede would have been possible. The fear would not have been able to overwhelm them; the mass hysteria would have been calmed at its beginnings; hell could become heaven. It defined a direction for me, a path along which at ever-deepening

levels I could become one of the “ten”.

To get back to Krishnamurti’s statement: whether the number of people is ten, or twenty, or one hundred, some small number, functioning from the level of the unimpeded soul, can radically change society. The founding of the Theosophical Society was intended to address this need — the creation of a body of people who through “self-induced and self-devised efforts” enter into the soul’s orbit with all that means in terms of transformative, radiant power. We do not have to stand in the middle of fear-filled, stampeding people in the physical sense, but each of us has the power to refuse to be caught up and swept away in the stream of fearful, force-filled, destructive currents active in the world today.

In our homes, among our friends, in our communities, in every place we are present, we can be powerful. Even in silence.



**The right motive for seeking self-knowledge is that which pertains to *knowledge* and not to *self*. Self-knowledge is worth seeking by virtue of its being knowledge, and not by virtue of its pertaining to self. The main requisite for acquiring self-knowledge is *pure love*. Seek knowledge for pure love, and self-knowledge eventually crowns the effort. The fact of a student growing impatient is proof positive that he works for reward, and not for love, and that, in its turn proves that he does not serve the great victory in store for those who really work for pure love.**

H. P. Blavatsky, *Practical Occultism*

# Krotona Institute of Theosophy

LINDA OLIVEIRA

IT is a great joy to be with you all on this historic occasion of the centennial celebration. Today most people on our planet live in urban areas, with millions located in overcrowded cities where the natural world takes second place. Much noise is present, and at times life seems to be chaotic or even soulless in such places. Anyone with a reasonable level of sensitivity tends to feel the need to retreat into natural areas in order to recharge. Krotona is one of those special spots in which visitors and residents alike can feel the peaceful embrace of Nature.

The general tendency of a human being is to live primarily in the realm of the personal — immersed in the business of everyday life with its associated thoughts, concerns, expectations, worries, gains, losses, and so forth. Therefore, various veils are commonly superimposed over an individual's inner life.

On the other hand, a natural environment such as this can help us connect with plant and animal life forms. It helps provide a greater sense of the consciousness which is around and within us. It refines the senses while serving as a reminder of

our own essential state, which is marked by a profound harmony with Nature.

It is highly beneficial to give attention to the spiritual pole of our nature. This brings us closer to those realms of consciousness which are beyond the physical, yet which are just as real; in fact, even more so. Keeping such a balance in life may be the most fundamental determinant of whether or not we are harmonious for, whenever there is insufficient attention to the spiritual aspect of our being, there is some degree of fragmentation within our consciousness and we do not experience a sense of wholeness.

Krotona is the child of a vision of some prominent theosophists back in the early 20th century. Members of the American Section of the Theosophical Society wanted to create a theosophical centre for educational and other activities. Mr A. P. Warrington, who was to become the community's first Resident Head, wrote in 1912 that there was a long and patient search in various parts of the country. The community was envisaged as a centre for residence, study, and training similar to Adyar in India, the Theosophical Society's Interna-

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**Mrs Linda Oliveira**, President, Krotona Institute of Theosophy, was Vice-President of the Theosophical Society (TS) Adyar, National President of the TS in Australia, and editor of their magazine, *Theosophy in Australia*, for many years. Based on a welcome talk given during the Centennial Open House of the Krotona Institute of Theosophy in Ojai, California, on 21 April 2024.

## Krotona Institute of Theosophy

tional Headquarters. From the earliest time, there were plans for a School of Theosophy.

Originally a tract of land was found in the Hollywood area, Los Angeles. It was relocated to Ojai, however, in 1924, and here we are celebrating the centennial one hundred years later.

The Krotona Institute of Theosophy was named after Crotona in Italy, called the “City of Pythagoras” today, where Pythagoras had his famous school in the 6th century BCE. He was a philosopher, mathematician, astronomer, scientist, and more. The Pythagorean community observed rules such as vegetarianism and periods of silence.

Here at Krotona, California, the Ageless Wisdom is studied and lived. Situated in these beautiful surroundings, the Institute includes wonderful outreach activities in the form the Krotona Library and Research Centre, the Quest Bookshop, the Krotona School of Theosophy, and the online School of Theosophy which is organized in conjunction with the Theosophical Society in America.

Krotona is an international centre and has had many visitors from other countries over the decades. I first came here as an international student in 1981, so my association with this centre was put in place a long time ago. There was a very real sense of welcome, as well as the sense of an invisible source of protection here.

This is a place where residents aspire to live in mutual helpfulness, while also reaching out to the community to share the profound truths of Theosophy. These truths are centred on the fundamental unity of life. They can bring about inner renewal and harmony. With an emphasis

on meditation, earnest study, and inspired action, Krotona promotes the upliftment of human consciousness in a world which is full of daily suffering and challenges.

To live in the natural world extends well beyond an enjoyment of the magnificent beauty of our planet and our universe. Ultimately, it is to know ourselves as we really are when the mirror of the mind is dustless and tranquil. Krotona is one of those sacred places on the planet where there is an opportunity to connect deeply with ourselves, and find inner renewal. Its atmosphere can help recharge the soul. When we are inwardly refreshed, a light shines from within and it is possible to see many things more clearly, including what is real and lasting.

The following statement by Mr N. Sri Ram, fifth international President of the Theosophical Society and former President of this centre, speaks of our ultimate state, which was profoundly real to him:

Reality reigns within us in an area of being which like a mirror reflects what *is*, but is itself unchanged. When every element that modifies and distorts the consciousness has been shed, Reality manifests itself, for it is in the intrinsic nature of consciousness itself.

N. Sri Ram

*Thoughts for Aspirants*, Second Series

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the immeasurable service carried out at Krotona by residents and friends, during the last one hundred years. The Krotona Institute of Theosophy has had an untold influence on countless lives in the last century. May its light shine ever more brightly in the next one hundred years. ✧



# Krotona Centenary Celebration

DOUGLAS KEENE

IT is my pleasure to participate in the centenary celebration of the Krotona Institute of Theosophy (KIT) in Ojai. I have been coming to programs at this facility for nearly three decades and am always inspired and elevated by being on these grounds. This is a beautiful sanctuary nestled in the hills of the Ojai Valley that those of us who spend time here have come to love and cherish. I have many fine memories of coming to Krotona. Even though the travel was stressful, during the days I was in Krotona, I felt rejuvenated and uplifted.

The Theosophical Society in America (TSA) and the KIT relocated from North Hollywood in the early 1920s for a variety of reasons, with the TSA moving to Chicago, and later to Wheaton, Illinois. The Esoteric School of Theosophy established itself in Ojai, now a hundred years ago, along with the KIT, which has helped spread the message and deeper resonance of Theosophy and its fundamental principles to thousands over the years. The KIT has shared in the mission of the Theosophical Society (TS), which is to “encourage openminded inquiry into world religions, philosophy, science,



and the arts in order to understand the wisdom of the ages, respect the unity of all life, and help people explore spiritual self-transformation.”

The KIT and the TSA have had a sibling relationship for the last century. Like many siblings we occasionally disagree, but are always mutually supportive, encouraging, and have a deep devotion to each other. We share a message, which is to expand the teachings of the Ageless Wisdom, and to promote unity and compassion within our world today.

One place to find these enduring

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**Douglas Keene** is President of the Theosophical Society in America, Wheaton, Illinois. Based on a public talk given at the Krotona Institute of Theosophy in Ojai, California, on 21 April, 2024.

## Krotona Centenary Celebration

principles is within the theosophical tradition, as well as many others. When the news of daily events grind us down, when the pursuit of popularity feels empty, we crave a deeper connection, a profound sense of purpose in our lives. People are seeking light, as they do in all ages and places. Although no one can provide final answers, much can be learned and shared.

The teachings engender an attitude of altruism. When we recognize our unity with other human beings, and with all life, it is natural to wish to benefit in some way those who may be wanting in basic necessities, but further, struggling with spiritual confusion or alienation. Krotona is an oasis, but also a way station, where we learn to take our energies and abilities out into the greater world in an empathetic and practical sense. We each have something to share, even if it is only our own humanity, letting others know that they are not alone.

We must have eyes to look outward, to know what our place and work in the world is and will be. But we must look inward, to understand our inner nature, to sense our unity, and to see the divine path. We must know ourselves through self-reflection and self-evaluation. We must understand not only our desires and capacities, our instincts and intuition, but

the deepest aspects of our nature and our links to divine aliveness. When our vision becomes clear, looking inwardly and outwardly, these two must be assimilated, working in harmony, as we unfold toward our greater potential.

Let us remember what Annie Besant has written:

Never forget that life can only be nobly inspired and rightly lived if you take it bravely and gallantly, as a splendid adventure in which you are setting out into an unknown country, to meet many a joy, to find many a comrade, to win and lose many a battle.

Krotona in Ojai is about to embark on its second hundred years. There is an enormous aptitude here for creating deep and profound programming and providing connecting experiences. It can bring understanding, harmony, and resonance to us in our often chaotic lives. These teachers can gather fellow seekers together and can lift our consciousness so we can see and feel the oneness, the uniqueness, the intertwining of all of us. It is a valued treasure, a jewel, which radiates for us, and beckons us to come and find the peace and stillness we seek.

Congratulations and best wishes for the next century. ✧

**Love and Compassion are the true religions to me.  
But to develop this, we do not need to believe in any religion.**

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

# Theosophical Self-Study

KIRK GRADIN

Self-knowledge is unattainable by what men usually call “self-analysis”.  
It is not reached by reasoning or any brain powers. . . . It is the  
awakening to consciousness of the divine nature of man.

H. P. Blavatsky

Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child.  
*The Voice of the Silence*

EVERY thoughtful person has at one time or another in their lives been perplexed by the question: “Who am I?” or “What is my purpose in life?” Very often it is among the first questions toddlers will raise with their parents in wide-eyed sincerity, “Why was I born?” implying the broader question, “Why is anyone born?” This innate need and yearning of the human soul to understand “why” and “who we are” is also the root question which *philosophia* in its essential meaning, “the love of wisdom”, requires us to address. “Know thyself” was one of three maxims inscribed over the entrance of the temple of Apollo at Delphi, said to be the most revered center of oracular wisdom and healing in the ancient Greek world. It is as if to say, if we would propose to meet and converse with the divine, to enter that

temple in which the radiant deity of truth, wisdom, celestial music, and soul-healing is found, we must know ourselves. The human temple is the container of all the mysteries of Nature. And to know those mysteries, we must study. Just as the child naturally turns to its parents and guardians, so too must we also acknowledge our ignorance and turn to the wise and their teachings for guidance. We do not claim to know, but we earnestly wish to know. Hence, the importance of theosophical self-study — the study of the divine Self.

If we turn to modern science for an answer to “What is the Self?”, we find the mainstream largely captive to a materialistic Darwinian viewpoint. We are asked to accept the theory that we arrived at our current stage of evolution solely through random variation and natural

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**Mr Kirk Gradin** has been an Associate of the United Lodge of Theosophists in Santa Barbara since 1979, has written many articles for *VIDYA* magazine and other publications, given multimedia presentations in diverse theosophical venues, and co-founded *Studio Vach*, a series of podcasts and videos on core introductory themes of Theosophia. Published in the Spring 2024 issue of *VIDYA*.

## Theosophical Self-Study

selection, and that consciousness is an electrobiochemical by-product of that process. In this view, humanity had its birth in a primordial soup, a fortuitous concurrence of atoms.

We eventually crawled out of the slime and began swinging from tree limbs. Somehow in the process, the intelligence displayed by apes and monkeys finally blossomed into human intelligence, eventually giving rise to skyscraper designers and rocket scientists, as well as geniuses such as Nagarjuna, Socrates, Mozart, Einstein, and Gandhi. Thankfully, the support for the materialist dogma is waning with the Aquarian rise of quantum physics and the revival of interest in Eastern philosophy supporting the panpsychic viewpoint, now accepted by many brilliant contemporary astrophysicists and neuroscientists.

If we turn to institutionalized religion for an answer to “What is the Self?” we may be equally frustrated. Though Western religion has become considerably more diverse and eclectic in the last 150 years, the mainstream Abrahamic view is still one in which a new soul is created by God at each human birth and where a single life determines whether that soul will spend eternity in heaven or hell. This too, Theosophy points out, is not only illogical, but encourages our sense of separateness, our desire for personal salvation, and our fear of death. It stifles the human mind in its search for understanding and constricts our outlook regarding human potentiality.

When combined with the doctrine of vicarious atonement — the idea that simply

by confessing our sins to a priest we can be free of the karmic outcomes of our actions — this “one life” viewpoint undermines our sense of responsibility and the crucial importance of ethics. This is borne out by the ease with which many so-called Christian, Jewish, and Islamic peoples endorse oppression, violence, and warmongering as adjuncts to their faith.

Theosophy teaches that the metaphysical presuppositions of materialistic science and dogmatic religion positively stifle our innate intuitions regarding the nature of the Self. It is why in many human beings the moral and the metaphysical imagination is atrophied, if not altogether dead. At the same time, Theosophy affirms that guided by the esoteric wisdom of true adepts, seers, and sages through meditation and self-study, the two wings of the spiritual path linking metaphysics and ethics, theory and practice, true knowledge of our true Self and divine purpose on this Earth can be regained.

Dormant spiritual faculties, our innate goodness and peace, dauntless energy and courage, blissful joy and the sense of human solidarity as well as each person’s unique contribution to serve and uplift the community and the world, can be reawakened and fully activated. And it is with the aim of aiding this awakening that the ancient teaching regarding the Self and the sevenfold human constitution which had been kept esoteric for millennia, is explicitly detailed in modern theosophical teachings.

In the late 1800s, H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) explained that the threefold division of human nature found in Christianity,

## Theosophical Self-Study

the fourfold division found in Vedanta philosophy, and the five-fold division found in many Buddhist systems, are all rooted in the esoteric seven parts of the Trans-Himalayan system. This is one of the reasons she explains in *The Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled* why the numbers seven and ten play such a prominent role in all the archaic systems of theogony, cosmology, and mythology; of pyramid, obelisk, and temple design, in symbols such as the Pythagorean decade, the circle and cube, the cross, the Egyptian *ankh*, and the interlaced triangles. If used as a basis for study, she wrote, the sevenfold scheme will reveal a common substrate, a means by which to understand the linkages between every microcosm, no matter how small, and the universal macrocosm.

It is this understanding which will provide a proper foundation for the sciences of the future in which there will be a synthesis of mystic philosophy, cosmology, and human psychology. It will allow us to begin understanding with greater clarity, the various levels of human waking, dream, and dreamless sleep, the after-death states and the comprehensive logic of reincarnation. In time, we will be able to determine at each point of our daily experience, which of the seven principles, or combination of them, is operative. If properly understood and applied in these ways, such a study will open doors of perception and action we never thought possible, by means of which universal harmony, concord, and mutual service will be reestablished as the proper basis of the communities,

societies, and civilizations of the future.

The first distinction to be understood is that there is a higher, vast, invisible, and metaphysical cosmos which precedes and animates the phenomenal one — which corresponds to a higher and a lower self in each human being. This distinction is given in the philosophy as “three” and “four”, a higher, immortal, solar triad and a lower, transitory lunar, square. The immortal higher triad is our innate Buddha nature, the Krishna-Christos or inner God. It is the innately compassionate spiritual and moral genius within each of us and a boundless reservoir of all knowledge, peace and bliss, creativity, love, and wisdom. The lower quaternary or square is that which composes the human personality, what the Buddhists call the *skandha-s*, the periodical and ever-changing vestures of human incarnations, the temporary actor on the stage of earthly life.

Broadly speaking, the aim of human evolution is for the square to become a perpetual servant and ambassador of the triad, for the lunar to reflect the solar. When the incarnated human being mirrors the god-like wisdom and compassion of its divine parent on earth, it dispenses what the ancients called *soma*, the elixir of mystic vision and understanding, immortality and unity, elevating and transforming all the kingdoms of Nature. This is what the Bodhisattva and the Master of the Wisdom does, and the science leading to that capacity is the path of *Theosophia*.

The highest point of the triad corresponds to the seventh principle of human nature called *ātma*, a word meaning

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“self” or “spirit”. But this is not the personal I or self that most of us refer to. It is rather, the impersonal, Universal Spirit, omnipresent and boundless, One with the Self of All. Jesus called it the “Father in secret”, the Buddhists call it *śunyata* and the Hindus *brahman* or *parabrahm*. It is no individual property of any person, wrote HPB, but a boundless circle, a Divine essence or Unity with no body and no form. Beyond the coming and going of universes, yet embracing both Being and Non-Being, it is called the One Reality, the Absolute, or the One Witness. So sacred and undefinable is it, that the Pythagoreans passed over it in silence. While it may appear as a Void, unconsciousness, and utter darkness to the finite mind, it becomes a boundless plenum, Absolute Light, and Absolute Sound to the awakened seer or sage. Each human being, no matter how depraved, is said to unconsciously return to that primal boundless spiritual Self each night providing true nourishment and regeneration to the soul, without which it could not go on.

*Buddhi*, the sixth principle, is the vehicle of *ātma* and is likened to a mirror, reflecting absolute bliss. As a cosmic principle it corresponds to Universal latent Ideation, the highest *ālaya-ākāśa*, or *daviprakṛti*, the light of the Logos and the synthetic aggregate of the seven *dhyāni buddha-s*. As a human principle, *buddhi* is called the divine soul harboring the collective wisdom of all souls, the basis of our deepest intuitions, soul memory, and conscience, as well as the faculty of discrimination. Only in conjunction with *ātma*

does *buddhi* properly reflect divine omniscience, and only in conjunction with *manas*, the principle of mind and thought, of self-consciousness and self-awareness, does *buddhi* become discreet and active, rather than a latent and passive principle. Thus, the immortal human monad is said to be a triad, the three-in-one, called *ātma-buddhi-manas*.

Cosmically, *manas* is linked with *mahat*, the Divine Mind, the first principle of universal Consciousness and Intelligence pervading the cosmos as a whole, impressing itself upon each descending plane of substance as the laws of Nature. In humanity, *manas* is the mysterious individuated fifth principle, the self-conscious human soul. It is our capacity for self-knowledge, self-reflection and self-correction, for choice and responsibility. It begins to awaken at the midpoint of each great cycle of evolution and undertakes a vast cycle of periodic reincarnations for purposes of learning, service, and experience. At each incarnation, the higher *manas* emits a ray which descends into the fourfold earthly vestures, animating a given personality acquired under karmic law.

*Manas* is thus the link between the triad and the square, the immortal and the mortal self. Purified *manas* is capable of bridging Eternity and Time, Heaven and Earth, the boundless divine and its timely manifestation in thought, word, and deed. Because the higher triad is that which unites us with the highest purposes and forces in all of Nature, its full and proper awakening cannot occur except on behalf of all, in order to benefit all. This is why

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from the beginning, all selfish or self-seeking goals and aims must be renounced in favor of altruism. Called *bodhichitta* in northern Buddhism, this requirement for purity of motive brings us to a discussion of the fourth principle in human nature, that of *kāma* or Desire.

Like all other human principles, the fourth has its origin in the cosmic, called Divine Eros, or “universal love” by the Greeks and *mahā-karuna* by the Buddhists. Metaphysically, it is inseparable from universal perpetual Motion, wrote HPB, that sacrificial divine Will which propels the One Self to periodically manifest a cosmos. It is that same divine compassion which first propelled the higher triad to undertake the cycle of incarnations. On the human plane, however, desire and will are often opposed. When dropped on earth, the pearl becomes a speck of mire. By a process of inversion, divine love is converted to corporeal passion, called in Buddhism *tanha*, “thirst for life”, and is what keeps us magnetically bound to earthly attractions.

Corrupted by a sense of separate identity and self-interest, lower human desires often operate unregulated by natural law becoming blind and self-destructive. Theosophical self-study would reverse this downward trend. By self-restraint, by “guarding the lower gates”, while also consciously cultivating the highest aspirations and devoting ourselves to universal enlightenment, we can transmute iron into gold. We can begin to enter the *bodhi-sattvic* currents of noetic thought and soul-force. And it is through the use of such soul-force that great teachers such as

Krishna, Buddha, Pythagoras, and Christ have kept the wheel of evolution in motion, uplifting and redirecting the course of human history.

The Sanskrit word *prāna* means “breath”, “life wind”, or “life force”, and it is the third principle in the human constitution. It is said to be the vitality inherent in all matter and to have its origin in the sun of our solar system. It is likened to an invisible, electromagnetic ocean in which the earth floats, permeating the globe and every being on it, unceasingly pulsating against, around, and through us. Nowhere can any creature lose the benefit of *prāna*, nor escape its final crushing power. But in order for this vast field of energy to work properly through what we call physical matter, it requires a vehicle, a specialized instrument or form called the astral body.

Thus, everything physical has its corresponding astral form, also called the *linga-śarira* meaning “design body” because it provides the ethereal architecture around which the more material life atoms aggregate. The astral body is a self-luminous, electromagnetic form of tremendous tensile strength that is colored by every thought, feeling, or intention, conscious or unconscious. The astral light of which it is formed is also called the great “picture gallery of eternity” and the “memory of God” for it carries an exact record of every visible and invisible event in the most minute of detail, of this and of every past life, as well as the entire history of the great globe itself. Because of this fact, the astral body is the instrument by which the adept can see and

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know all that is, has been, or is to come. Not only can he or she know the past lives of others, as well as what is currently in their hearts and minds, but such a person can also hear and see what is passing in the mind of an ant.

The astral is the means of all telepathy, clairvoyance, and clairaudience, and asserts itself in the phenomena of psychometry and of mesmerism, what was once known as the healing art of magnetism. All of these faculties, hidden sciences, and arts, wrote W. Q. Judge, will be humanity's possession in the future and would be ours today were it not for past misuse, "blind dogmatism, selfishness, and materialistic unbelief". There are also many unknown dangers connected with the polluted astral. In that sense, H. P. Blavatsky called the lower astral light the "great terrestrial crucible", in which the lower thoughts and immoral emanations of humanity "are all converted into their subtlest essence", and radiated back intensified, thus creating cataclysms of Nature and epidemics — moral, psychic, and physical.

The physical body, in the Vedanta tradition called the *annamaya kośa* or "sheath of food" is the most dense, transitory, and illusory of the seven principles. But it too harbors many mysteries yet to be discovered. Chemistry and physiology are said to be the two great magicians of the future which are destined to open the eyes of humanity to great physical truths. Every moment we are throwing off and attracting to ourselves

the countless infinitesimal life atoms which compose the physical sheath, and which undergoes a complete alteration every seven years. The quality of the elementals we attract is determined by our line of life's meditation, by every thought, emotion, feeling and act, including the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat.

But the purest of diets will not in itself create health or wholeness as long as we cling to a sense of separative identity. The inner life must be nourished by the *ākāśic* waters, by high thinking, by meditation on the true Self and its logocic radiance, by deep reflection upon universal ideals and aspirations, and their benefit for all. When done in conjunction with other students, with right philosophy and the cultivation of all the highest soul qualities and virtues, this in turn will purify the *prāṇic* winds, transforming and elevating the electromagnetic currents in the astrophysical constitution.

Over the course of a seven-year period it is said, this mental and ethical theurgy will renovate and stabilize the ever-moving life-atoms of the lower vestures, increasing their porosity and receptivity to divine influence. In doing so, we will also begin to enter into conscious alignment with the great Brotherhood of Bodhisattvas, those Mahatmas and Adepts whose every thought, word, and breath is a means of bestowing spiritual illumination and aid, solace and benefit to all sentient beings throughout the shoreless corridors of universal space. ✧



# Krishna — Christos

DAVID M. GROSSMAN

“KRISHNA” and “Christos” or “Christ” are names that reverberate across countries and civilizations deep into the fabric of human history; names that today resonate in the hearts and minds of millions upon millions of people, east and west, names that represent divine incarnations to many, names that bring peace, inspiration and meaningful direction to people’s lives.

We know two of the world’s great religions revolve around Krishna and Christos, the latter referred to as “Jesus the Christ” or “Jesus Christ”. The term “Christos” was around long before it was conflated and made synonymous with Jesus. Some Gnostics spoke of Jesus as a great prophet who was overshadowed or illuminated by the Christos.

As Jesus answered the Pharisees in Luke 17:20 when asked when the Kingdom of God would come, “God does not come with observation . . . for indeed the kingdom of God is within you.”

In *Isis Unveiled* H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) writes:

The ancients never entertained the sacrilegious thought that such perfected entities

were incarnations of the One Supreme and forever invisible God. No such profanation of the awful Majesty entered into their conceptions. (Volume II, p. 153)

Christianity is the largest in numbers of all the religions, and Hinduism which Krishna is connected with is the third largest and considered the oldest religion. Within both religions there are those that see them respectively as God, having more or less the personal God idea, which, as is pointed out so well in theosophical writings, limits or dwarfs the real majesty of the unnameable, unspeakable essence of life. In terms of what these beings represent, the inspiration and teachings they have given us are synonymous in purpose and intent. Great beings are often connected with the winter solstice, the time of the yearly rebirth of the sun, Surya, the central life-giving force of our solar system, which represents the source and sustainer of life, the power of being, and the illuminating flame of consciousness. These great beings, teachers and inspirers of mankind, are truly solar beings who come onto the scene from time to time to illuminate the rest of us, to encour-

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age us as Krishna encouraged Arjuna to carry on even or maybe especially, in the darkest of times.

The winter solstice, which is the darkest time of the year in the northern hemisphere also represents the hope of a new year, a new cycle of life, manifesting so beautifully in Nature during the arrival of spring. On the occult or interior side, it is the time we learn when the astral light is young. It is no coincidence that the new year is a time to make resolutions, start new impulses because between now and the vernal equinox, spiritual, mental, and psychic energies put forth have an added force to them. This is an example of working with the laws of Nature on the inside. HPB pointed this out in the January 1888 issue of *Lucifer* where she stated:

Let no one imagine that it is a mere fancy, the attaching of importance to the birth of the year. The earth passes through its definite phases and man with it; and as a day can be coloured so can a year. The astral life of the earth is young and strong between Christmas and Easter. Those who form their wishes now will have added strength to fulfil them consistently.

We all know 25 December is celebrated by Christians as the birth of Christ the Savior. HPB points out in the same article:

It is also on December the 25th, Christmas, the day with the Christians on which the “Saviour of the World” was born, that were born, ages before him, the Persian Mithra, the Egyptian Osiris, the Greek Bacchus, the Phoenician Adonis, the Phrygian Attis.

We can and should go further and link other names, such as Buddha, Mohamed, Quan Yin, Lao tzu, Pythagoras and others who have been and still are teachers and inspirers of humanity along its journey into higher realms of being, collectively and individually. As we are uplifted by these shining ones, we help, or should we say are capable of helping, to uplift the lives that make up the lower kingdoms evolving towards the human state in the somewhat distant future. There is a reciprocity at work between all beings and kingdoms. We as humans are supported by the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms as they make up and support our physical instruments, sometimes referred to as the “temple of the soul”.

Aside from much darkness that seems to surround the life on our planet, we also live in a time full of knowledge and uncountable possibilities. To think just a few centuries ago most people were illiterate and now we have the power to communicate with our fellow beings instantaneously, where not only language but also time is less and less a barrier.

Even more wonderful is the fact that we have the teachings from a succession of these great ones available to us from different eras and cultures, and thanks in part to the second object of the modern theosophical movement, we have a key that shines a light on the fact that there is the selfsame spiritual river that flows beneath and within the great religions, philosophies, and sciences, sometimes referred to as the perennial philosophy.

Let us take arguably the best self-help

book ever written where we are introduced to the *Bhagavadgītā*, the wisdom of Krishna himself, a treatise thousands of years old but only available in the English language since 1785, thanks to the typographer and orientalist Charles Wilkins who translated it. It was he who introduced it through publication to Emerson and Thoreau who then helped spread the word concerning this philosophical gem.

About a century later W. Q. Judge rendered the *Gītā* into English in a very comprehensible form with valuable notes to accompany it which has also helped to spread its wisdom within theosophical circles and beyond.

An awareness of this amazing and beautiful reciprocity, interconnection, and single-rootedness of all humanity and life, *expressed in the ever-present Wisdom Tradition*, can only help to heal the psychic wounds and distortions caused by what HPB called the dire heresy of our time, “separateness”. We forget at times just how interconnected we really are even with those we least relate to. We are reminded in *The Voice of the Silence*:

Thou shalt not separate thy being from BEING, and the rest, but merge the ocean in the drop, the drop within the ocean.

So shalt thou be in full accord with all that lives; bear love to men as though they were thy brother-pupils, disciples of one Teacher, the sons of one sweet mother.

Fragment III,  
“The Seven Portals”,  
verse 219–220

W. Q. Judge in his *Letters That Have Helped Me*, makes the statement:

... a long chain of influence extends from the highest spiritual guide who may belong to any man, down through vast numbers of spiritual chiefs, ending at last in the mere teacher of our youth. Or, to restate it in modern reversion of thought, a chain extends up from our teacher or preceptors to the highest spiritual chief in whose ray or descending line one may happen to be. . . . This chain of influence is called the *guruparampara* chain. (Volume I, Letter 12)

At least in a relative sense Krishna-Christos represents the top of the chain, the bright fully unfolded human Soul illuminated by *ātman*, our Spiritual Center. They are not meant to be objects of worship but rather subjects of inspiration.

It is through the collective memory of evolving humanity that we find the stories of these shining ones whether symbolic or actual, mythic or historical, expressing a pattern of truth sometimes referred to as the Savior Archetype.

Unfortunately, there seems to be a kind of flaw in the lower human psyche that basically says: “My truth is better than your truth. There can only be one true expression of what is real. Others must be false.”

We lack the moral imagination all too often to realize that from the one white light comes all the colors of manifestation. We feel we need to have a corner on truth, meaning: “We have the only true teaching.” “We have the only true way.” What we don’t realize is, that the central

teaching and teacher or Messiah shows more depth not less, through the same or parallel expressions in other religions, myths, and philosophies. We could argue that there are no singular events in Nature. Life unfolds through cycles, this day the result of a previous one, and this life the result of previous incarnations.

Aside from the universal teachings connected with both Krishna and Christ, such as in the *Bhagavadgitā* and the “Sermon on the Mount” found in the *Gospel of Mathew*, there are many stories about them, the mythoi built around them, if not identical, are very similar as if to let us know there are layers of meaning within them. The fact is stressed in theosophical writings that all truly universal symbols actually have seven keys to them.

One parallel that has caused partisan arguments between the two religions of Hinduism and Christianity from time to time is the similarity in the two names. Since Krishna was around long before Christ some have always said early Christians built the Jesus story around Krishna. And there have been Christians who tried to show Krishna to be much more recent than he was and that he took the name from Christ. This has been disproved as mention of Krishna, is to be found in the sixth century BCE, in the *Chandogya Upanishad*, referring to Krishna as a sage and a preacher among other BCE references. The most agreed upon scholarship today points out that the two names are derived from two distinctly different languages; Christos and

Christ from Greek, and Krishna meaning dark or dark-blue from Sanskrit.

In *Isis Unveiled* H. P. Blavatsky has other thoughts on the subject. But since most theosophists do not tend to believe in coincidence it might be better to call it an interesting kind of synchronicity for the moment.

The biographical parallels of these two avatars, benefactors of humanity, during the *kaliyuga* cycle we find ourselves in, are quite interesting. Below are a few comparisons:

1. Both are considered divine incarnations by the adherents of Hinduism and Christianity. Hindu philosophy teaches about the periodic incarnations of avatars, Krishna being one. Many Hindus today treat Jesus as one also.

2. Each is a divine incarnation from a triune God. Both represent the second place of their respective trinities, Krishna the eighth incarnation of Vishnu, as in Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, and Jesus, The Son, as in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Hinduism teaches the doctrine of the periodic incarnations of avatars, who come to help along evolving humanity.

3. Both Krishna and Jesus are said to have had miraculous births and both were predicted to come.

4. Both Krishna and Jesus were under threat of being killed as infants, Jesus due to Herod’s fear that this “King of the Jews” would usurp his power, and Krishna as it was predicted that Devaki’s eighth child — who was Krishna — would kill the wicked Kamsa who was also his uncle. Both were hidden and survived.

As an aside, we learn in the *Torah*, that Moses too was hidden at birth for three months due to the edict by the Pharaoh to kill all Hebrew male babies at the time. The rest is Jewish history, so to speak, with Moses as a key spiritual teacher and channel from the highest, delivering the Ten Commandments as well as the first five books of the Hebrew Bible.

5. There are stories of both Krishna and Jesus being challenged and attacked by Satan and demons respectively. There is the well-known biblical event when after his baptism, then fasting on the desert for 40 days Jesus is confronted and tempted with the proverbial three temptations by Satan. Krishna was confronted and attacked by various demons during his life coming out victorious each time. The earliest when just a baby, Putana a demoness who was sent by Kamsa to appear in the form of a beautiful woman to kill baby Krishna by breastfeeding him poison, but who was killed by him when he sucked her life-force out, and was granted liberation. There are many other stories of the young Krishna warring and being victorious with a number of demons.

6. Each of these avatars performed what are referred to as miracles. Students of Theosophy would say they performed unusual acts that are actually explainable with an understanding of the occult laws reflected in the various inner planes of Nature beyond the gross physical one that we are most familiar with and often ignorantly accept as ultimate reality.

7. Both Jesus and Krishna predicted their own deaths.

Some of the parallels just mentioned and more can be found in an interesting chart in *Isis Unveiled*, Volume II, pp. 537–539 titled “The Legends of Three Saviors”. Here Krishna, Gautama Buddha, and Jesus of Nazareth are compared.

Next to other parallels we could list, without a doubt, the most important are the teachings themselves, attributed to both Krishna and Jesus through their words and lives that are still with us today.

Each teacher comes at a particular time and to a particular culture to begin with, their teachings having a certain emphasis and form of expression deemed to be most needed and helpful to people at the point. There is also an underlying universal aspect that is powerful and useful to evolving humanity across time.

As mentioned previously, although the *Bhagavadgītā* has been around for thousands of years it has only been available to the English-speaking world, for a mere 200 plus years. It has an amazing impact really when one realizes that there have been nearly 300 English translations and the *Gītā* is now printed in over 75 different languages. And the *Mahabharata* as a whole was only translated into English in the late 19th century.

Here are a few parallels from the teachings of Christ found in what is usually referred to as the *New Testament* (NT), King James Version, and the teachings of Krishna found mainly in the *Bhagavadgītā* (BG), translated by Annie Besant, and *Anu Gita*, both hidden pearls within the epic *Mahabharata*:

*BG* 10.20: “I . . . am the Self, seated in the heart of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle, and also the end of all beings.”

*NT*: Revelation 1:8: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”

*BG* 8.17: “The people who know the day of Brahmā, a thousand ages (*yugas*) in duration, and the night, an thousand ages in ending, they know day and night.

*NT*: 2 Peter 3:8: “Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

*BG* 6.30–31: “He who seeth Me everywhere, and seeth everything in Me, of him will I never lose hold, and he shall never lose hold of Me. He who, established in unity, worshipeth Me, abiding in all beings, that Yogi liveth in Me, whatever his mode of living.”

*NT*: John 17:21: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

*BG* 2.57–58: He who on every side is without attachments, whatever hap of fair and foul, who neither likes nor dislikes, of such a one the understanding (*prajñā*) is well poised. When, again, as a tortoise draws in on all sides its limbs, he withdraws his senses from the objects of sense, then is his understanding well poised.

*NT*: An echo of this is found in Matthew 6:6: “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut

thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”

There are those who can’t understand, at least at first, why the spiritual teachings of a great avatar like Krishna, an example of love and compassion, would be delivered on a battlefield, to encourage his disciple to slaughter the nearest and dearest to him; it can seem contradictory to a spiritual vision. Likewise, we hear the distraught words of Arjuna at the opening of the *Bhagavad Gita*:

*BG* 1.31–32: “Nor do I foresee any advantage from slaying kinsmen in battle. For I desire not victory, O Krishna, nor kingdom, nor pleasures . . .”

*BG* 1.36–37: “Slaying these sons of Dhritarāshtra what pleasure can be ours, O Janārdana? Killing these desperadoes, sin will but take hold of us. Therefore, we should not kill the sons of Dhritarāshtra, our relatives . . .”

We know later on Krishna tells Arjuna to “fight” for the higher life.

Similarly there is the statement by Jesus that has been very confusing to many Christians coming from the one who tells us to turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:39) and to “love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matthew 22:39). And rightly so if we take the words of Jesus always literally. As in the *Gītā* we need the key which shows this war to be within every person on his or her own Kurukshetra, the battlefield of form and duality, of personality versus spiritual individuality.

Matthew 10:34–39 KJV:

(34) “Think not that I am come to send

peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.”

(35) “For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother . . .”

(36) “And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.”

(37) “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: . . .”

(38) “And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.”

(39) “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.”

The irony in both cases can be, to a great extent, resolved by the attempt to understand the dual nature of the mind (*manas*) in the human being. The “lower mind” identifies with the material evanescent life of the senses while the “higher mind” or higher consciousness is illuminated by and aligns with the “monad” our true spiritual identity.

Yet the fact remains: “When we call for the light we also call on the darkness.” Another way to put it; when truth is declared, the status quo, the false structures, both personal and societal, based on materialism and personal self-interest, are threatened and hold on for dear life.

A case in point: when H. P. Blavatsky made her first major theosophical foray into the world of contemporary thought, religious, philosophical, and scientific with the publication of *Isis Unveiled*, she could see the storm clouds forming around her and the inevitable backlash, when the entrenched ideas of the day

were challenged. And thus she ends the preface to *Isis Unveiled* with the salute of the Roman gladiators to Caesar: *Morituri te salutant!* “We the dying salute you” or “Death, we salute you”.

Just as HPB challenged many of the orthodoxies of the day, then and now, Krishna-Christos challenges us with the vision of what a human being can be and with an inspired alternative for conducting ourselves with our fellow beings.

Although to some degree, life is suffering, as the Buddha tells us, mostly we suffer from ourselves and we have the power to alleviate it.

One can think of no better example than someone who embraced the spirit of Krishna-Christos than Mohandas Gandhi known as Mahatma Gandhi. He embraced both the teachings of Jesus and Krishna. He tells us the powerful effect the Sermon on the Mount had on him: “The spirit of the Sermon on the Mount competes almost on equal terms with the *Bhagavadgītā* for the domination of my heart.” His philosophy of *ahimsa* (non-violence) which includes thought as well as action was greatly influenced by the teachings of Jesus and he felt the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew:5–7) should be applied by all in everyday life and were not meant just for the disciples gathered there.

The *Gītā* presents a spiritual path for the common man in the world and shows that one does not have to abandon the world and go to “the mountain top” to cultivate the spiritual life. This is, as has been pointed out by various *Gītā* com-

mentators, part of the great gift of the *Bhagavadgītā*; it presents those truths that we can each cultivate and apply wherever we find ourselves in life.

### A young Gandhi

Gandhi's long practice and application of the teachings presented by Krishna in the *Bhagavadgītā* are well known; but although born to a Hindu family, Gandhi did not know the book as such until, as a young man in England, he began to study it with theosophical friends and was thus guided by its teachings from a relatively young age during his active and tumultuous life. Gandhi was a quiet warrior in the spirit of Krishna-Christos and has had a continuous positive impact in the world by way of example, and the teachings he left us.

Krishna-Christos is essentially the Spiritual Soul, the *ātman*, the shining light deep within every human being, gently pressing forward to manifest itself in each of our lives. If we take the theosophical vision that all beings throughout all the kingdoms of Nature, visible and

invisible, are on a spiritual journey, and that a point comes when each individual begins to take up this path consciously, it is then that the neophyte, the disciple, begins the process of transformation and initiation into the Christos, like when after throwing down his bow and arrows, Arjuna picks them back up once more and works toward becoming one with Krishna.

To conclude, an excerpt drawn from the opening page of *The Secret Doctrine*, Volume 1, Part 1, entitled “Cosmic Evolution”, quoting from the ancient *Rig Veda*:

Who knows the secret? Who  
 proclaimed it here?  
 Whence, whence this manifold  
 creation sprang? —  
 The gods themselves came later into being.  
 Who knows from whence this great  
 creation sprang? —  
 He from whom all this great creation came,  
 Whether his will created or was mute,  
 The Most High seer that is in highest heaven,  
 He knows it — or perchance e'en  
 He knows not.                      ✧

**It is the marriage of the soul with Nature  
 that makes the intellect fruitful, and gives birth to imagination**

Henry David Thoreau



# Some Thoughts on Human Regeneration

K. DAMODARAN

THIS article is about the theosophical concept on individual and group work as reflected in the book, *Human Regeneration*, authored by Radha Burnier, long-time international President (1980–2013) of the Theosophical Society (TS). The book is a compilation based on the outcome of two seminars organized by the International Theosophical Centre, Naarden, Netherlands, in July 1990, with participants from several countries including India. Of course, the illuminating factor of these seminars was the graceful presence of Mrs Burnier herself, in her capacity as the international President.

Obviously, the topic was close to her heart as even prior to 1990 she had initiated work in this direction, while being the General Secretary of the Indian Section (1960–1978). For a layman's understanding of the term "regeneration", I would like to attempt defining it in simpler terms as "creating something new", "bringing about a momentous change in the existing perception", or "instilling a spiritual way of life in mankind and

a sense of Brotherhood and Oneness".

It is difficult to bring about group or societal regeneration or transformation without individual regeneration through an inner awakening, just as the saying that goes: "Charity begins at home". Yet both aspects are concurrently important, for achieving the objectives of Theosophy, the religion of wisdom and truth. The primary goal, as we all know, is Universal Brotherhood, without discrimination on race, creed, caste, sex, or colour. It is expected to lead to the establishment of a global order of humanity, without geographical borders, a world of Oneness and unity, where there would be altruism in letter and spirit. The motto says, "There is no religion higher than truth."

But the question, at this moment of time, of evolution, of regeneration, of awakening, or whatever we may call it, is whether we are witnessing a harmonious atmosphere of unity or narrow, parochial, watertight compartments of separateness. Let us for a moment look within ourselves, and see whether there exists a non-distractive movement in consciousness,

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## Some Thoughts on Human Regeneration

between the lower mental level and higher triad, the *ātma-buddhi-manas*. This is the moot question to be addressed at the individual level, as the entire world today is at its peak of suffering arising out of external factors such as pandemics, climatic change, disease, overpopulation, terrorism, and conflicts between nations. Theosophists are of course aware that the external is only a reflection of the internal turmoil.

The idea of regeneration or human evolution has been sacrosanct along with the objectives of the TS from its very inception. That theosophists had already gone a long way in exploring this aspect is evident from their literary and social activities through the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS). The time has come for advocating to humankind that there is no other option except to “transform or perish” as we have almost reached the most *tāmasik* (darkest) period of our existence. However, several theosophists have asked how we could put this idea into action, and what the practical expectation is in terms of group activity through Lodges or other forums.

First of all, it is important to recognize what we are working for. It should be clearly understood that there is no quick or easy way to regeneration. If such a ready-made, uniform prescription was available, then the whole of humanity would have been regenerated or fully evolved by now and our search for peace within as well as without would have ended.

We can more or less say that the mind has to become new — in terms of fast

deteriorating purity in inner *samskāra-s* (virtuous accumulations) — and learn to look at everything from the point of view of unity or Oneness, totally free from its divisive nature. This should not be a mere intellectual concept, but a growing awareness percolating deep from the individual consciousness to the collective consciousness, at least up to a critical mass of the entire world population, for which the existing spiritually evolved people should continue to be the torchbearers showing the light to others, who are still groping in darkness. By “critical mass of population”, I mean the sort of morphogenic field that can be generated to affect thousands of people by just one enlightened person, like Sri Buddha, Sri Ramana, Jesus Christ, and so on. Sri Ramana Maharshi said: “Your own self-realization is the greatest service you can render to the world.”

Thus, after the first step was taken in July 1990, further steps became imperative. Here I recall what J. Krishnamurti said: “The first step is also the last step, and the direction taken with the first step is what really matters.” In other words, once a healthy seed is sown in a fertile atmosphere with an auspicious intent (*sankalpa*), then its growth is going to be unimaginably fast. If a vast majority of the TS community feels wholeheartedly, and concurrently sends out powerful, meditative thought vibrations that regeneration is the need of the hour, it would impact a great deal at the visible human psychic level. Let me summarise the points for consideration as follows, in

## Some Thoughts on Human Regeneration

the context of Chapter Five of *Human Regeneration*:

1) In the path of regeneration, we can push hard with our intent, only if we are aware that the nature of change shall be put into motion both in the direction of individual as well as global awakening.

2) TS members should be able to renounce feelings such as “my group”, “my Lodge”, “my Federation”, and so on, and adopt a holistic approach keeping in view the avowed objectives of the TS. I would hasten to add further that the mission statement of the TS dated 2 July 2018 is very much reflective of and relevant to the seminars held in July 1990. The mission statement says:

To serve humanity by cultivating an ever deepening understanding and realization of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual self-transformation, and unity of all life.

3) We need to always keep regeneration in the background of our mind in order to make our study fruitful. As the *Upanishads* say, this is the truth of all truths, the unity of all life; after all there is only one Mind and only the connectivity wavelengths need recalibration.

4) Just as trees shed their leaves in winter and renew themselves, the mind can shed its opinions, prejudices, barriers, and so forth and renew itself, so that it can be replaced with cooperation, affection, and meeting of the hearts in all the TS forums.

5) Become aware that even with all comforts and technological advancements, basically the human psyche has not

changed; obviously we have not gone to the root of the problem and have not met the human challenges fully. We have only looked on the outside and not realized that the outside has to come from the abundance of inner power latent in man.

6) Technology has played an amazing role in pandemic situations and the results are quite encouraging. The number of events and the quantum of participation have increased manifold. This has naturally emboldened the organisers of various theosophical events to continue the use of virtual platforms for more frequent events with larger participation and go deeper into the ageless wisdom. Practically, technology has proved to be a boon, although physical interactions cannot be undermined too.

Our observations are based on studies undertaken in 1990, that is, over thirty years back, and there are bound to be changes in perception as evident in the manner TS is thriving as a global spiritual lighthouse showing us the pathless spark within. The Lodges can become more responsible and motivational to mould every member, especially the young ones, towards higher growth and contribution.

7) We should consider all matters on their merit and not based on one's own repudiation or acceptance of prejudice or authority. There should be an attitude of open-minded, serious enquiry, particularly into important questions. If we cannot be open-minded with regard to even small questions, we may not be the same about bigger questions too. The spirit of inclusiveness and participation

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shall be the key for generating qualitative and productive members.

8) An adept stated that if religion is true, it should provide the answer to all problems. Theosophy is the wisdom religion. Madame Blavatsky, a co-founder of the TS, said that Theosophy must be a living power in one's life, and applied in all relationships whether personal, societal, or business. The Mahatmas said that their teachings are at the same time profound as well as practical. We should address the question as to what is that practical element. How do the truths we try to understand relate to the problems of present-day humanity, individual, national, and global? How effectively are we communicating our perceived goal to future generations?

9) The work in the TS is not merely to talk about Universal Brotherhood, but to demonstrate to the world that it can, in fact, be a reality. This is important. It means not being superficial, and examining all the implications of Universal Brotherhood without distinction. We must find out what is the nature of the mind without any barrier, prejudice, or any feelings of the "other". We may not become enlightened instantly or immediately, but we must be earnest enough about journeying patiently and calmly in that direction.

10) I would like to add that one of the worst barriers for regeneration appears to be FEAR. The modern man fears the crumbling of stock markets, losing personal identity or loss of business data due to cyber threats, name and fame fading

away due to competition, in fact, existence itself due to natural calamities and wars, and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction. How do we overcome these fears? Through a collective human effort by way of meaningful dialogues or through a choiceless awareness at the individual level? I think both can play a role. In this context, I feel it would be appropriate to quote the famous Lebanese poet Khalil Gibran, paraphrased as follows:

Before entering the sea, a river trembles with fear. She looks back at the paths she travelled — from the peak of the mountains, the long winding road crossing forests and villages. And in front of her, she sees an ocean so vast, that to enter it seems nothing more than to disappear forever. But there is no other way. To go back is impossible in existence. The river needs to take the risk of entering the ocean because only then the fear disappears, because that is where the river will know, it is not about disappearing into the ocean, but of becoming the ocean itself.

Here, we can consider the river as the individual and the ocean as the group, the symbol of Oneness. Do not be scared when death knocks at your door because what seems like the end of a journey, is the act of merging back into the source from where we all originated and no one can escape that. Do not be too attached to your worldly accomplishments and possessions. You do not even have to wait for the moment of death to achieve the state of Oneness and detachment.

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You can practise what Dr Wayne Dyer often referred to as “dying while you are still alive”. We often call it as *jeevan-mukta* or *sthitaprajña* state, practising detachment and merging our identity and ego with the Supreme Source. Then, as the *Bhagavadgītā* says, “everything will be yours, you will belong to everyone”.

Let me also refer to the great Indian saint, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa who said:

Spirituality automatically leads to humility. Like when a flower develops into a fruit, the petals drop off on their own; when one becomes spiritually awakened the ego vanishes gradually on its own.

A tree laden with fruit always bends low. Humility is a sign of greatness.

So now the question to contemplate is whether we are ready to plunge into the mighty ocean in order to die and vanish, while still alive. Let me conclude with a quote from our past international President N. Sri Ram (1953–1973) in his article on “Human Regeneration”:

Forget yourself only to remember the good of other people. We cannot have better advice than that. But how to forget ourselves? All of us are so preoccupied with ourselves, with what we want, what we aim at, the position which we should hold, the estimation which other people should have of ourselves, what we may lose, so many things, so many thoughts and interests, centred in what we call ourselves. If we can forget ourselves, we will find that our progress will become easy, it will take place swiftly and naturally, because it then becomes a process of unfoldment from within. Then we will be able to realize the truth of that saying in *Light on the Path*, “Grow as the flower grows, unconsciously”, but open to all that is good and true and beautiful. We can have the most perfect assurance as to our goal and progress. Why should we be concerned with our progress? It takes place by itself. Our only concern is with how we should live and what we should do now. ✧

**What the Masters want, in addition to anything useful that we may be doing or may be able to do, is this regeneration, beginning with ourselves. The possibility of such regeneration, even the predestination of it, is perhaps the most inspiring truth of Theosophy.**

N. Sri Ram,  
*Human Regeneration*

## *Fragments of the Ageless Wisdom*

The Venetian [a great Adept] has for some centuries lived in Italy. He is not an old man; it was he who, giving the world the Rosicrucians — who are still active — taught the world through them, as an Egyptian might, the wonder of eternal youth, of deathlessness, of the Fountain from which flows everlasting youth. For centuries yet he will remain the Venetian, embodied as he is today. But though you would never have surmised it, he is by birth of body a Fleming and not an Italian. By adoption and centuries of training, and by present affiliation and adoption, he is Italian; but Flanders and the Netherlands at large owe their especial blessings to his affection.

Born in Flanders of parents of his own choosing, dearly beloved ones whose karma set them there, in modest circumstances, he and his blood-brother, Vaivasvata Manu of the Fifth Root-Race, took incarnation together long ago there, just as the Lord Maitreya took his last body in Ireland. And just as the Bodhisattva journeyed to India as a young man, so did the Manu; and these two now live side by side. And, when the Flanders home was broken up, I do not know quite how, he who was to continue in the Flemish body his labors for the culture of men in the sacred pageant of everyday human life, traveled to Italy.

History called him Paul Veronese, because he was thought to have been born in Verona, but he has always been a master of mysteries, and it was no great task for him to seem to have been born there and to live naturally under the name of Paul. And in that name he was a very great painter. Moreover, he it was who, with his Brother's aid, poured Italy's cup full to overflowing with the golden glory of the

## Fragments of the Ageless Wisdom

Arts during several centuries. You can read in the history of art what he did, where he lived, how he bore himself among men, and how he is said to have left the body at a certain time, though he did not, at all.

I urge you to get reproductions of his works and to study them. When we have penetrated their glories, we shall find in them many mysteries, uncover many wonderful facts, as is now being done by many who are studying the works of Roger Bacon and of Francis Bacon, who was his pupil. In one of these paintings, he leaves a wonderful portrait of himself in the physical body, although he has hidden his glory from us in many ways.

Weller Van Hook

*The Theosophist*, Dec. 1921, pp. 277–78

(Dr Weller Van Hook, National President of the Theosophical Society in America for 5 years, was viewed as a possible vehicle for the World Teacher until Charles Leadbeater decided to cast Jiddu Krishnamurti in that role.)

**Are we related? Relationship means to be together, to be in immediate contact with others, to know their difficulties, problems, and anxieties, which are our own. . . . But it is one of the most difficult things to communicate with another . . . because most of us do not listen at all. . . . If one is to listen, one must be attentive. And there is no attention if one is occupied with one's own thoughts, conclusions, opinions, and evaluations. . . . We rarely are aware of this fact. One has to put aside one's own thoughts, conclusions, and opinions, and listen — only then is communication possible.**

Jiddu Krishnamurti

“What is Relationship?”, Bombay 1st Public Talk

# Objects of the Theosophical Society — A Musing

GANESH KUMAR

IT is said that Theosophy is the “Ageless Wisdom” brought back to humanity at the appropriate time. One may ask whether the Ageless Wisdom is *relevant* at the present — modern times — with so much advancement in science and technology. It is a valid question when humanity already knows so much about the furthest stars and galaxies, their composition, and activities and the darkest recesses of our deepest oceans.

We may not have a direct answer to such a question. No one can refute the fact that we are the most comfortable generation in human history, be it in communication, transport, physical comforts, and so on. But are we at all the happiest and most fulfilled generation in human history? Perhaps the answer is an emphatic “No”, considering that a mental pandemic has been predicted by well-recognised, world psychological and neurological organizations. Why is it so?

Though science and technology have made our physical life the most com-

fortable and the easiest, it has contributed minimally to our emotional and mental qualities of *happiness and fulfilment*, which are the result of first-person experiences. Of course, one may say that drugs and intoxicants can provide such experiences, but they are known to be short-lived, and eventually cause more harm than good.

Though we know so much about the external manifested world, our knowledge about ourselves, our first-person knowledge about our *inner self*, is minimal. Do we know everything about the working of our inner physical body, leave alone our emotional and mental aspects? When we buy any new appliance, we always refer to the operating manual, for the appliance to be utilized to its *full potential*. Do we have any access to any service / operating manual for our human system or are we operating it on a trial and error basis? Does the *ageless wisdom* provide a solution to human happiness and sense of fulfilment?

One of the ancient texts of India,

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Mr Ganesh Kumar is a member of HPB Lodge of the Theosophical Society in Auckland, New Zealand. He joined the TS in Zambia in 1980.



## Objects of the Theosophical Society — A Musing

*Taittiriya Upanishad*, Part II, Verse 1, states: “The knower of *brahman* attains the highest”. Here “*brahman*” refers to Ultimate Reality or the Absolute, and the “highest” refers to the fulfilment of human desires, aspirations, happiness, and so forth.

We may say that Theosophy has no stated, specific mandatory rules and regulations or prescribed methods for one to realize the Ultimate Reality unlike many religions or organizations with “dos and don’ts”, thereby maintaining its dominant principle of “freedom of thought”. But, in my understanding, Theosophy provides the ways and the means to realize the highest. This is embedded and hidden in the stated Objects of the Society, like a parable, which may be worth pondering.

Theosophy stresses the Unity of all Life or Consciousness, which is denoted as *brahman* in the above *sutra*, and each one of us can realize *brahman*, if we “self-realize” that we are, and everything else is, *brahman*. This realization, rather self-realization of the Unity of Life, is the manual, which can be accessed and

realized by human beings alone, the only species of living things denoted as “beings”.

The first and foremost requirement for such self-realization is the burning desire or intention to know about ourselves as stated in the third Object of our Society — “To investigate the unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in human beings”. This requires the aspirant to seek and investigate the means and proven methods used by our past and present seekers and investigators for millennia in this field of endeavour, by following the second Object of the Society — “To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy, and Science”. The devoted study, dialogue, contemplation, and meditation of such truths will ultimately lead us to the realization of the first Object of the Society — “To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity (with in each one of us) without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour”. When one realizes the self, one gets to realize the *brahman*, the Ultimate Reality, and one attains Ultimate Bliss or fulfilment. ✧

**The nature of the one reality must be known by one’s own clear spiritual perception and not through a pandit (learned person); the form of the moon must be known through one’s own eye, how can it be known through (the medium) of others?**

Sri Sankaracharya  
*Viveka-Chudamani*, v. 54

# Krotona: 100 Years in Ojai

ELENA DOVALSANTOS AND ANANYA SRI RAM

“IT is one of the beauty spots of the world”, Annie Besant said. It was October 1926 and she was making her first visit to the Ojai Valley to see the Krotona Institute of Theosophy (“Krotona”). Immediately, she was enamored by the majestic hills and serenity of the place. She added: “I find that your Valley has an atmosphere of peace, tranquility, and spirituality that is more reminiscent of India in these respects than any other part of the globe that I have visited”. She was traveling with her protégé, J. Krishna-murti, who also stated: “I know of no other place in the world where there could be found the peace and beauty combined with the ideal climate and living conditions here.”

Besant became the first President of Krotona when she was International President of the Theosophical Society (TS) in Adyar, India. It was thanks to her and future international TS Vice-President A. P. Warrington, along with some early theosophists, that Krotona came to be born. Warrington and

several groups of American theosophists had been independently planning to establish centers in different parts of the United States (US).

When Besant was consulted, she decided that a center should be established in the Southwestern US. Following a search for possible locations, the various groups agreed to combine forces and chose Hollywood, California, to be the site for the new center. Warrington envisioned a place that could be a refuge from the noise and chaos of the outside world — a place where all who are so inclined could come to study what could fill their souls’ longings, understand life, learn the cause of suffering, how to bring an end to it, and how to arrive at lasting peace and happiness. It would also be a training ground for future leaders of the Society and would have a School of Theosophy.

## **Krotona**

Founded in 1912 in Hollywood, Krotona as a theosophical center was named by Warrington after Crotona, the community established in 530 BCE by the

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**Dr Elena Dovalsantos**, Vice-President and Resident Head of Krotona Institute of Theosophy (KIT), has an MBA and PhD in Chemistry, residing at KIT for many years. **Ananya Sri Ram** is a long-time member of the TS and assistant director of the Krotona School of Theosophy in Ojai, California.

## Krotona: 100 Years in Ojai

great sage Pythagoras in what is now the southern region of Italy called Calabria. It is said that Crotona was set “upon a hill just outside the city”, no differently than Krotona in Hollywood, and later, Krotona in Ojai. Warrington went on to state that the “founding of the Center is a Heart offering to the Masters’ Cause”.

The Krotona property located under the Hollywood sign in Los Angeles quickly expanded from ten to twenty-three acres. Beautiful buildings of unique architecture were erected to accommodate the influx of new residents. There was great excitement at the time as Theosophy, aka Divine Wisdom or Ageless Wisdom, inspired a new way of thinking about oneself, the role of the individual, and humanity. There was a School of Theosophy to understand the deeper mysteries of life, a printing press, a center for the arts, a science building, gardens, and retreats. The Krotona community brought together artists, writers, academics, and many thinkers of the time.

When Hollywood became too busy, a quieter area was needed in an idyllic country setting that could be something of an ashram to facilitate the inner quest and to seek that which is eternal in oneself. Thus was the first Krotona site divided and sold to different people. Hollywood stars Charlie Chaplin and Mary Astor were among the celebrities who first bought homes in the complex.

### **Krotona’s Move to Ojai**

The story of how Krotona ended up in Ojai is an interesting one and just one of

the strands that will always intertwine theosophists with J. Krishnamurti. Mrs Besant’s absolute trust that her adopted son, Krishnamurti, was to be the World Teacher pushed her to find a place for Krishnamurti’s work. But it was the recommendation of Warrington, who was looking for a new home for Krotona, that drew Krishnamurti to Ojai. Nitya, Krishnamurti’s younger brother, suffered from tuberculosis, and Warrington had heard the dry air of Ojai was beneficial for such patients. It was Warrington who put the brothers in touch with the family who owned Pine Cottage on the east end of Ojai in 1922. During this time Warrington also found the Kerfoot Ranch on the western end of Ojai for Krotona’s new home. Besant eventually bought Pine Cottage to share as a home with the brothers who renamed it “Arya Vihara”.



*Nitya, Warrington, and J. Krishnamurti.*

The Krotona property in Ojai was purchased with half of the proceeds of the sale of the Hollywood site along with

## Krotona: 100 Years in Ojai

generous donations from the members. Several structures were quickly built starting in 1924 on the Kerfoot land that is now known as Krotona Hill. These included an administration building, a library, community garage, houses for the workers, and a water tower, all of which still stand today. It is said that the tower could be seen throughout the whole valley at that time.

In the years that followed, an auditorium, more residences, and guest accommodations were added. Aerial photos taken during these early years show a wide stretch of open land, a stark contrast to present-day Ojai. Downtown Ojai was set two miles away down a dirt road without a building in between. Krotona was very much on the outskirts of town! Today, Krotona's wide open lower meadow is a gateway to a beautiful Ojai, a welcome sight to locals and visitors alike.

### **Influence of Besant and Theosophy on Ojai**

Speaking from Krotona's library veranda on her first visit, Besant addressed the more than 150 Ojai citizens who had gathered to learn about Theosophy. The city had been incorporated only three years earlier and had 500–700 residents. They were naturally curious about the group that had descended to their little town from the Hollywood Hills. This was their first opportunity to hear what Theosophy was about. She summed it up simply as "Brotherhood and Friendliness: a friendliness based not on agreement or similarity, but on something

far deeper, a sharing in a common spiritual inheritance".

To Besant, diversity is essential to life and our differences should not affect the feeling of kinship we must have with one another. She stressed that even a partial recognition of the truth of our interconnectedness would bring a tremendous change in the world. "Wars would cease. Mutual sympathy and help would replace criticism and condemnation. Selfishness would become the only sin," she stated. It is the solution to much human misery and her message is as true today as it was a century ago.



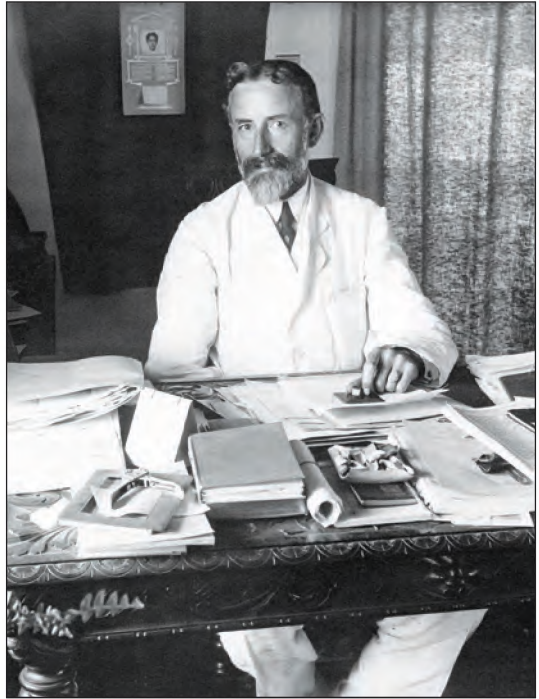
*Annie Besant leaving the Krotona library veranda after giving her first talk in Ojai on her birthday, 1 October 1926.*

Two months after her first visit to Krotona, Besant returned in December and stayed for a few months at Arya Vihara. Winter in Ojai is magical when

## Krotona: 100 Years in Ojai



Annie Besant first visited Krotona with J. Krishnamurti. She had the vision that Ojai would become the birthplace of a more spiritually awakened humanity. (The first five photos are from Krotona's Historical Scrapbooks)



Albert Powell Warrington established Krotona in Hollywood in 1912 with a group of wealthy theosophists. Twelve years later, he found the Kerfoot Ranch in Ojai that is now home to the Krotona Institute of Theosophy.



Krotona Court was located under the Hollywood sign in Beachwood Canyon. It was the first building established in Krotona Hollywood. Behind it to the right is the Temple of the Rosy Cross which was added later as a venue for masonic rites and large gatherings.

## Krotona: 100 Years in Ojai



The Ternary consists of a series of three buildings. Built in 1915, it was just one of the magnificent structures in Krotona Hollywood incorporating Spanish and Moorish elements. It housed important members of the Krotona community.



The Krotona Tower shortly after it was built in 1924. Once used as a water tower, it sits on the highest part of Krotona Hill in Ojai, in the heart of the upper residential loop.

## Krotona: 100 Years in Ojai



The Krotona Library is the most well-known and visited structure on campus. Designed by Robert Stacy-Judd in 1924, it was among the first seven buildings established on the property in Ojai. Its east-facing veranda is a favorite sitting area for meditation, gazing at the hills, and watching the sunrise or moonrise.

Photo by Elena Dovalsantos



The labyrinth is a favorite spot for walking meditations, epitomizing the spiritual path leading to one's own center. Drone photo by Chris Bolger



Krotona: 100 Years in Ojai

The Krotonians are an international community of volunteers hailing from eleven different countries. Krotona Board members in this photo are: Linda Oliveira, Krotona President (2nd row, 5th from left); Elena Dovalsantos, Krotona Vice-President and Resident Head (2nd row, 4th from left); Maria Parisen, Krotona School Director (2nd row, 4th from right); Guru Prasad, Krotona Treasurer and former Vice-President (2nd row, 2nd from right). Martin Leiderman, Board member, is not pictured.



## Krotona: 100 Years in Ojai

the brown hills suddenly turn verdant after the season's first rain. When such natural beauty moves one deep within, wonders happen.

She awakened one bright morning, looked out to the valley, and saw it as a place where the seeds for spiritual awakening could flourish. In her mind's eye, she had the vision of Ojai as a birthplace for a new civilization. Towards this view, she decided to buy large tracts of open land in the valley. More than 460 acres were procured in Upper Ojai. Theosophists from all over the world donated three quarters of the funds used to buy the land and the first board members were all theosophists. In May 1930, the Happy Valley Foundation was formed to manage the property where Besant Hill School now stands. Adjoining Krotona, additional land was purchased for Krishnamurti's Star Camp Talks.

In 1927, Besant also purchased the local newspaper *The Ojai*, now *Ojai Valley News*. The paper provided information about the goings on in the valley and in Krotona. She retained Frank Gerard, a theosophist and follower of Krishnamurti, as the paper's editor. It was Gerard who wrote in *The Ojai* about Besant's vision that has played a key role in what Ojai has become.

Many of the practices followed by the

ancient Crotonian community such as a vegetarian diet, reverence for all life, periods of silence and meditation, the abstention from any form of tobacco, alcohol, or recreational drugs are followed by residents of Krotona today. Theosophy acknowledges that all life is one and that everything holds consciousness. Whatever harm or help we do to one, we do to all.

Such a lifestyle has been shown throughout the ages to create a greater sensitivity in the body, mind, and spirit. It contributes to the cultivation of serenity. Visitors to Krotona comment on how they appreciate coming to the campus for walks, relaxing in the gardens, enjoying the library and bookshop, attending classes, or being on a personal retreat.

### **The Dream Lives On**

A hundred years have passed since Krotona's move to Ojai. Many spiritual organizations have taken root in the Ojai Valley. Meditation and yoga are now common practice. The area is marked by a strong orientation towards health and wellness, creativity and the arts, kinship, and cooperation with Nature.

Quietly the theosophists' vision of the spiritual awakening of humanity lives on, perhaps to find enduring expression in some not-too-distant future, one perfect day at a time. ✧

**No sacrifice is worth the name unless it is a joy.  
Sacrifice is "making sacred".**

Mahatma Gandhi

## INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY

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Date refers to the date of formation

\* Regional Association

† Presidential Agency

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