

Freedom of Thought

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

Freedom of the Society

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

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



THE THEOSOPHIST

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Cover: During the pandemic lockdown, David Orr sent a weekly flower photograph to friends and colleagues. This image was the second in the series. The collection, titled "Fifty-two Flowers", was showcased as a video installation during his solo show, "Radiance+Reflection", at Tibet House in New York City, 2022. Artist: David Orr, <david-orr.com>

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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

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

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

Fire and the Matter of Balance

TIM BOYD

IN the Mahatma Letters, when speaking about the elements, it is said that there is really only one element, spirit/matter, which differentiates itself into four or five. These elements are described as the garment of the Deity. “This element then is the . . . one sub-stratum or permanent cause of all manifestations in the phenomenal universe . . . The ancients speak of the five cognizable elements of ether, air, water, fire, earth. . . . But these five are but the differentiated aspects of the one.” (<theosophy.wiki/en/Elements>) So our understanding and experience of the elements determine our experience of the Divine.

Most spiritual traditions divide the elements into four or five in number. In the tradition from which the theosophical approach derives, it tends to be thought of as five elements: earth, air, water, fire, and space, also called *ākāśa* or ether. These elements pervade the universe. Everything that we encounter, and our physical as well as psychological health, depend on how they are balanced within us. The most difficult thing for all of us is this matter of balance. St Augustine commented that for most people complete abstinence is easier than perfect balance.

A number of years ago I had an illness and did not know what it was. The doctors I consulted in the US could not identify a cause. Normal approaches like proper diet or exercise did not seem to have much effect. While I was in Singapore I went to see a traditional Chinese medical practitioner. His examination routine was different from Western doctors. There was no stethoscope, thermometer, or blood work. It was all based on “pulses”. According to the pulses he detected when he touched different places on the body, the diagnosis was that my system was out of balance. I had too much “cooling” in my system, so I had to stay away from foods that would cool me further, such as sweet fruits, refrigerated foods, leafy vegetables, and so on. He also gave me some combination of herbs that I was supposed to boil and drink regularly. I do not know much about the system or methods underlying his diagnosis, but I do know that in a very short time I came out from under the effects of the illness.

What are the qualities of the various elements? Earth: solidity, stability, centeredness — it relates to the body, particularly the bones, muscles, and physical structure. Water, which has the quality

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of flowing, ease, movement, affects the blood, the lymph, the fluids of the body. Fire: creative, passionate, transformative. Our digestion is ruled by fire. Then there is air: intellect, movement, and so forth. Finally space, which has no limits, surrounds and penetrates everything, and speaks of openness and expansion.

Each one of the elements in this tradition also has a color associated with it. In Tibetan Buddhism specific aspects of meditation relate to the elements. They think in terms of yellow for the earth, white for water, red for fire, green for air, blue for ether, *ākāśa*, or space. In terms of the spiritual life and its requirements fire demands special attention. For anyone who finds themselves engaged in a spiritual path or practice, that element is one with which we interact quite strongly. It is the symbol of transformation.

Fire changes substances from one condition or state to another. In the absence of the warming quality of fire water becomes ice. In the presence of fire ice becomes water. If it remains in the presence of fire the water turns into vapor, which then merges into the surrounding space. Anything solid when sufficiently exposed to fire changes from solidity to ash. And not just ash, but it also releases fragrance, smoke, heat, and light. It transforms. In spiritual traditions around the world fire is the focus in the process of self-transformation. The capacity of fire is this — it burns away everything that can be burnt, and changes the impure to the pure. In alchemical terms it changes the base metal lead to gold.

In H. P. Blavatsky's (HPB) *The Secret Doctrine* the question arises: What is the view of the esoteric teaching regarding fire? Then it says that: "Fire is the most perfect and unadulterated reflection . . . of the One Flame." Oneness is always the focus, the One Flame from which everything emanates. HPB goes on to say: "Fire . . . is life and death, the origin and ending of all material things, divine substance." Then she gives this example: "Procure a sixpenny lamp, keep it only supplied with oil, and you will be able to light at its flame the lamps, candles, and fires of the whole globe without diminishing that flame."

Often people speak of somebody having a fiery temper. Anger is a form of fire that burns at a low level. It expresses itself in energetic, but harmful ways. Because it is such a powerful motivating force, the mistake is often made of believing that the energy that arises with anger produces positive results. It has been said: "Speak when you are angry and you will make the greatest speech you will ever regret." Though the fire of anger moves us to act, it also clouds our judgment.

Most of us have known those who have the quality of uncontrolled temper. I have known people who say: "I have a right to my anger." Of course we do, but we equally have a responsibility to the consequences of that anger. It is something that burns away at relationships. The heat of anger drives people away, and stimulates the reactive anger of others. On a biological level it has the

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effect of burning away at us internally, at our organs and nerves.

When we think in terms of the fuel for the fire that drives someone toward a spiritual path, in the alchemical practice they think in terms of the fuel as being desire. It is said that “behind desire stands will”. The fire of will refines base desire into “aspiration”. Desire transforms in the fiery cauldron of our own consciousness. Aspiration drives us in the direction of the Ageless Wisdom.

I have known people who have adopted countless different religious practices, spiritual approaches, relationships, and jobs before arriving at the point where they recognize the work that they have to do, of burning away the dross that obscures the deeper, always present, one flame. Our role in this process is to cooperate, to do what we can to become aware, first, that there is something burning within us, that there is a power, and then to move closer to it.

I can remember the time when I first became acquainted with the existence of Theosophy. That was when I felt something awaken within me. Although I did not have the knowledge, or language to express it, the presence of this fire and the effects of the light it shone onto what was previously hidden inside of me became clearer. Also the power of the awareness that accompanied it, to burn through to essentials, became clear. My mind and my interest were sparked. My problem was that I had no knowledge. I was lacking any sort of background of how to describe what was the

garment of this body of wisdom. At that point I felt that the gateway to it was study. I needed to know more, to know at least something about the features of the Wisdom tradition.

At that time I was in New York City and I went to the Theosophical Society’s bookstore. I had no idea what to pick up from the shelves. I looked at the titles and thumbed through the different books. One that jumped out at me was Annie Besant’s *Thought Power*. Another book that struck me was Ernest Wood’s *Concentration*.

There was an older lady who was tending to the bookstore. I told her I was new to all of this and asked for her advice. I showed her the books I had chosen, and she said they would be good. Another book I was drawn to was an abridgement of H. P. Blavatsky’s *The Secret Doctrine*. Something about secrecy appealed to my mind at that time. She took this book out of my hand, put it back on the shelf and said: “No, I don’t think that’s for you right now.” I bought it anyway. Later when I tried to read it, it made absolutely no sense to me. She was right.

Two years later I became aware that this same lady was Dora Kunz, a lifelong member of the TS, author, and world-renowned clairvoyant who had known and studied with many of the people whose books I was purchasing. She had also founded and developed the Therapeutic Touch method of healing that has spread around the world. She was the one who advised me that some fuels would be better than others for the fire that was burning in me at that moment.

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There is a story about a man who regularly attended a temple, but for some reason he stopped coming. One day his guru decided to visit him at his home. The man opened the door and invited the guru to come in and sit down. Because it was cold outside the guru sat down by the fire without saying a word. After a while the teacher took the tongs, grabbed an ember, and placed it on the stone hearth outside of the fire. The ember glowed brightly, and they sat together, saying nothing. After a while he got up to go, but before leaving the ember had become dark. The teacher picked it up and placed it back in the fire. The man saw the darkened ember now glow brightly once again. As the guru was leaving, the man of the house said: “First of all, I will be seeing you at the temple again this week. Also I would like to thank you for that fiery sermon.”

The idea of this story is that as we

become aware of this internal fire, its potentials, and of our need for it, it is our responsibility to further that flame within ourselves. One of the ways that we do it is by placing ourselves in the presence of that which will give life to this flame. For many, at least for a time, it is strengthened in the presence of others who are earnestly applying themselves to the search for wisdom. Any activity that reminds us, or moves us closer to the source of the flame feeds us.

At those times when we are burning low we need to draw on the various means at our disposal to feed the flame — the company of others, placing ourselves in the presence of a spiritual friend, studying the thoughts of those great people who have come before us, the quiet that we experience in our times of stillness, reconnecting with the natural world. We are responsible for our own ignition. It is in our hands. ✧

When all outward appearances are gone . . . there is left that one principle of life which exists independently of all external phenomena. It is the fire that burns in the eternal light, when the fuel is expended and the flame is extinguished; for that fire is neither in the flame nor in the fuel, nor yet inside either of the two but above beneath and everywhere.

The Mahatma Letters, ML-127

Religion and Music — II

ANNIE BESANT

HARMONY is a science, and a difficult science, and a man who is a master of it has to know every note in relation to other notes, and to blend the notes in such a way and in such a sequence that the ear is utterly satisfied and content with the whole complicated mass of sounds. If a discord is introduced, as it often is, to make the chord yet richer, then it must ever be resolved, so that the momentary shock to the ear is followed by a yet more exquisite delight. Two notes that, apart from all others, would cause you to stop your ears if struck together, scientifically dealt with, yield a keener pleasure. The discord must never be left a discord, it must not close the phrase; it must be resolved into a harmonious chord, and add a new joy.

Nature, we find, in the composing of her music, knows well this value of the discord, and ever finally resolves it in a perfect chord. Although human nature is a higher product than animal nature, we see in its beginnings a disorder which among animals is never found. The growing will of man introduces clash and discord into the harmony of Nature,

asserting itself aggressively and defiantly against the order of the whole, but out of that stormy whirlpool of conflicting human wills shall emerge the strong current of unified wills in harmony with the divine, and out of the human discords shall come a note richer and fuller than the non-human monochord Nature could produce.

In the West, perhaps because natures there are more combative, more turbulent, more wilful, more aggressive, all these tumultuous qualities impress themselves on western music, and there are Niagara cascades of sounds, whirlpools and rapids of chords, storms of thunderous instrumental clashings, and then finally, when the breath is well-nigh strangled in the rushing waves of sounds, one is flung panting on to a flower-sprinkled meadow of peace, and a melody, exquisite, celestial, sweet, breathes a harmony more tender and serene than Eastern music knows. Another marked thing in Western music is that it stirs the passions, sometimes masters the intellect, but it does not touch the spiritual notes, which often thrill the nerves to a pleasure that touches pain

Dr Annie Besant (1.10.1847–20.09.1933), International President of the Theosophical Society, Adyar, during 1907–1933. This lecture was delivered on 7 March 1908 in Triplicane, Madras (now Chennai), India, and published by the Theosophical Publishing House (TPH), Adyar, India, in 1921.

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in its keenness, well-known in Indian music. And I have sometimes noticed that where the Indian music is appealing to the passion of love, where the songs are love-songs, even then they tend to pass beyond the passional into the emotional, from the coarser to the subtler forms of the master-desire. The music stirs the more delicate shades of love, the finer chords, the unsatisfied yearning of it, the ever-frustrated longing for utter identity, so that it is not an appeal to passion but rather of lifting passion into emotion, purifying and refining, with an ever-elusive suggestion of the underlying meanings of the physical, of the regions where Spirit is the lover, where God is the beloved.

There is a well-known use of music for the rousing of passion, alike in East and West, the use which is made of it in war. We read in the *Bhagavadgītā* of the use of the conch by the leaders in the great battle, sending out the conch-note like a lion's roar, and how the mighty sounds enheartened the combatants, ringing across the embattled hosts in challenge and reply. How far in later times in the East, music was used by contending armies to rouse the passions and to drive men mad with furious excitement, I do not know, for unfortunately I am not well read in the story of your later part. But in Europe music is continually used in war, to stir men up to deeds of desperate valor when the pulses are throbbing wildly under the piercing notes of the war music. You will have heard of the Highlanders and their

bagpipes, even if you do not happen to have seen and heard them over here. The Highland bagpipe has a strange, long, droning, throbbing note which is continuous, like the undernote kept sounding from the *vinā*, but of a quite different character. Woven on this continuous muffled growl, embroidered on that, is a tremendous cataract-like medley of shrieks and screams, yells and shouts, ear-piercing but thrilling the passions, and right into the hail of bullets, beside or behind the charging men, goes the Highland piper with his bagpipes, the sounds rising high above the rattle of rifles, the tramp of the cavalry. Where the skirl of the pipes is heard, the men will go to the death, their blood on fire, their hearts leaping in reply. Sometimes the piper may be a lad, scarce strong enough to fight, but able to blow the pipes, and proud indeed is the boy-piper who marches into battle and sends ringing out over his elders' heads the war-clarion cry that every Highlander knows. Some of you may have read the pathetic story, in the war in South Africa, of a lad only sixteen years of age, who was struck down, his legs broken, and who got his comrades to prop him up against a rock, and who, through the agony which ended in death, blew the bagpipes for his regiment and sent it onwards to victory. The pipes lift the Highlander into his stormiest frenzy of courage, so mighty is the power of their music on the passions.

Let us pass on from war music and pause a moment on the use of music in rousing another elemental passion — the

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passion of sexual desire, which in its higher form, refined into emotion, is love between man and woman. Like the raging fury of combat, it is simple, broad, massive, this great outrush of animal sexual passion. In many Western operas, music is the expression and inspirer of passion, each containing love songs, grosser or more delicate as the case may be, but stirring desire as a passion rather than love as an emotion. If you watch the effect of such music on the audience you will see that a certain excitement begins to stir the blood; cheeks flush, eyes sparkle, the whole body thrills. Hence many people say, and say rightly, that it is not wise to take the young to operas, because it stirs passion, and ere they are aware of it, the music has roused passionate feeling without their will or consent. Wise fathers and mothers keep young lads and young girls away from the operas that deal with love as a passion, because such music stirs the passionate nature, and may rouse an excitement which slips easily into evil act. But there are other operas wherein the theme is not animal passion but human love, love in its higher and nobler forms, love which flowers into self-sacrifice, for self-sacrifice is the natural blossom from the root of love.

In one of the earlier operas of Wagner, *The Flying Dutchman*, music is used for the expression of such love. Let me outline the story, as it is probably unfamiliar to you. The Flying Dutchman is a man who has done much evil, and he is condemned to live in the body, century after

century, as captain of a vessel which brings misfortune in its wake. Never might he be set free from the burden of the body and find rest through its death, until a woman should love him faithfully, even to death. A love that was self-sacrifice might alone redeem him. He meets a girl whom he had seen in a dream, a girl who had been fascinated by the story of the curse upon him, the story of his well-nigh irretrievable sorrow and doom. In the sanctuary of her pure heart, she had vowed herself to his redeeming, praying that she might meet him, and vowing that if they met she would be faithful to him unto death, and thus lift the curse of woeful life that was upon him. There is a youth who loves her passionately, and woos her as bride, but steadfastly and gently she puts aside the love that offers her a happy home and the protection of a husband, and, fixing her heart on the supreme Love, she gives her maiden love to this miserable, despairing soul that only by love may find redemption.

The Flying Dutchman is won by the purity and sweetness of the young girl, and feels his hard heart melting under the gentle sunshine of her pure tenderness; but he hears of the wooing of his younger rival, and fearing that his youth may win the maiden's love, he is furiously angry, maddened by the fear of losing his newborn hope of freedom. Then, purified by his love, he rises above selfishness into self-sacrifice, determines to set the girl free from her vow to save him, and to yield her to the fairer life opening before

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her; he renounces the salvation tendered him by her love, and leaps on board his ship, sets sail, and leaves the shore. The girl breaks from the detaining grasp of the man who fain would wed her, rushes towards the departing ship, and flings herself into the sea, that her love, faithful unto death, may save the despairing soul. The music which has expressed the purity of love, its anguish, its renunciation, its despair, rises higher and higher, becomes ever more poignant, more triumphant, until the clouds roll asunder and the love that redeemed and the sorrow which renounced are seen together in heaven, and the final burst of melody tells of the joy that followed pain. Where music illustrates such a theme, and makes all hearts throb responsive to the sentiments portrayed by the singers, it can but purify and refine the emotions of all who listen. Such music ever renders more compelling the inspiration of the legends of the elder time, the themes that have for their central ideas Love, Sacrifice and Death.

Now to what part of man's nature does such music appeal, for it certainly does not rouse passion, but rather lifts man above it? Beyond your dense physical body — the Sthula Sharira — is your subtle body — the Sukshma Sharira — a body made of matter finer than the phys-

ical, matter which vibrates in shorter wavelengths, swifter repetitions, than those of the grosser, coarser, physical material. Into this subtler body enter various grades of the subtle matter — for subtle matter has its grades just as grosser matter has its solids, liquids, gases, ethers. These various grades answer to the waves caused by the vibrations that are musical notes, and the coarser grades answering to the vibrations that express animal desire, and the finer to those that express human love. As vibrations of matter and changes in consciousness correspond, each to each, the vibrations of the subtle matter are answered by changes in the embodied consciousness, and the hearer feels the passions, the emotions, represented by the music. Hence the power of music to stir up passions and emotions in the hearer, and this play of vibrations may be watched by the evolved vision, while the physical ear is responding to the vibrations in the coarser matter of the gases which form the air. Great masses of vibrations are formed by many notes struck together, as by the chords of Western music, and these are reproduced chiefly by the coarser grades of matter in the subtle body, while single, sweet or piercing notes are more readily answered by the finer grades.

(To be continued)

Music expresses that which cannot be put into words.

Victor Hugo

Resonance and Responsibility

RAGHAVAN N. IYER

Sickness does not depart by speaking of medicine unless the medicine be drunk; liberation comes not through speaking of the Eternal without immediate experience of the Eternal.

Shankaracharya

THERE is a vital relationship between modes of resonance and the potencies of emanations. One can readily see that if resonance and purity of tone have some connection with *ṛta* and *dharma* — cosmic order and moral solidarity — much depends upon the level of conscious awareness with which any sound is uttered. Every human being who emits any sound at any level of awareness releases a chain of consequences for which one is responsible, affecting monads, atoms and gods, all sentient points in Nature.

The Voice of the Silence teaches: “Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.” This sacred injunction presupposes a sublime philosophy of Nature. Perfected human beings have trained themselves over myriad lives in the masterful use of everything that Nature provides, including their own vestures. They work for the good of the whole and on the invisible plane, producing reverberations in the visible world. Surely this conception must be based upon a very

different view of Nature from that which is found in materialistic science or in conventional religion.

The term “nature” is derived from the root *nasci*, “to be born”. All things are born in space and in time. They must grow, decay, and die in time and in space. Just as the searing and decaying of a leaf into autumnal yellow suggests a mellowness in Nature, so Nature is meaningful at every level and in all its processes. The vital part of its ceaseless activity is hidden. Even though the invisible side of Nature cannot be seen by the naked eye, nevertheless by watching how Nature works, one can work with Nature and trust in the Law — this is the ancestral wisdom of humanity.

If Nature is everything that is born and everything that exists, then even etymologically Nature is a vaster whole than is conveyed merely by visible phenomena. Science has evolved because human minds penetrated the veil of the visible and formulated theories, equations, and models that pertain to the invisible

Prof. Raghavan N. Iyer (10 March 1930–20 June 1995) was educated at Oxford and taught at UC Santa Barbara for over 20 years. He also co-founded the United Lodge of Theosophists (ULT) in Santa Barbara.

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mathematics of Nature. In the twentieth century science came to recognize the limitations of traditional mathematics as well as its own limitations in the use of mathematics. In quantum mechanics a shift from mathematical certainty to statistical generalization permits probabilistic explanations that encompass a great deal of what goes on invisibly in Nature and which can be tested under controlled conditions.

Experimental science is very young, going back to the seventeenth century and the founding of the Royal Society. Science is growing, evolving, and it has the discipline of its methodology as well as an increasing awareness of its own methodological limitations. It was initially handicapped because it inherited a conception of matter which came from traditional religion, specifically from the narrow theological view of biblical cosmogony which declared that matter is inert. This static conception of matter is associated with the dogma that the world was created out of nothing.

Unlike the ancient Greeks who had a subtle metaphysical concept of Chaos, modern science inherited a view where “nothing” simply meant the absence of any visible world. This unphilosophical view arose because people took literally a mythic statement in the New Testament and thus missed the mystical power and evocative meaning of the text: “In the beginning was the Word.” Whenever a mystical statement is translated into a literal proposition or a dogmatic belief, its inner meaning is lost. Scientific meth-

odology distorted by philosophical crudity reinforced the view of matter as inert, which in theology needs to be acted upon by an external animate being of which there was only one.

The problem became ontological in that this animate being — of which there is only one — was held to be everywhere and simultaneously in an anthropomorphic form. This raises the insoluble problem of assigning the authorship of the entire visible world to a superhuman entity with an inscrutable will. This materializes the concept of Godhead and destroys the ethical foundations of Nature and man. Even today many people continue to be influenced by facile concepts picked up in casual conversation and especially in the vast array of sensory images. In general, owing to mental laziness and for lack of contemplation, people cannot cut through the chaos, let alone consciously initiate a series of emanations out of deep meditation upon the Soundless Sound.

Given any cogent doctrine of ethical responsibility, we are truly thrown back upon ourselves. Human beings can always make a difference by the power of choice in the use that they make of what they know at any level and by translating what they know into practice. What is it, then, that blocks an individual who knows all of this from putting it into practice? The question could be framed in specific terms: Why is it that when somebody sincerely wants to meditate upon the OM, he is repeatedly obstructed? This is due to the accumulated karma of misuse, non-use, and incompleteness.

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When a person wants to meditate deeply, the level of consciousness becomes critical. Pure consciousness arises in *manas* and is rooted in the *buddhic* light of eternal motion, the universal consciousness of the *ātman*. Filtering down, no doubt slowly, it can be focussed intensively by concentration, and when practised with continuity, it can arouse the intuition, insight, and illumination of *buddhi*.

Every human being has all of these available within his own nature, and, therefore, can self-consciously release the spiritual will. A person must initially allocate time not only for meditation but also for deliberate planning and calm contemplation, and also show a continuing care of thought-patterns that emerge and which can be modified by deliberation and discrimination. This can be done with an authentic sense of the sacred in a deepening silence that increasingly controls the use of words.

The greater calm arising through a stronger sense of the sacred helps one to move beyond sound — toward the Soundless Sound — from an initial level of consciousness to higher levels of universal self-consciousness by degrees and by a slow ascent. This persistent process also makes a decisive difference to one's relationship to invisible Nature, to one's appreciation of physical Nature, and one's capacity "to help Nature and work on with her". One is everywhere and nowhere in one's deepest Self, and yet one is helpless if one has created a false identity out of ever-moving tendencies.

Rather than experiencing the living stasis of universal consciousness, people cling to a false, static conception of self because they cannot control the mind and still their thoughts and withdraw into the inmost silence, the sanctuary of which Krishna speaks in the ninth chapter of the *Gītā*. How, then, can continuity and steadfastness be discriminated from inflexibility? Such queries point to a more fundamental question: How can one determine what is an adequate idea?

If one has an inadequate idea of the Self or an inadequate idea of mind, can one have an adequate idea of anything? Obviously not, for the ordinary mind is not only ontologically limited by finitude but also psychologically limited by lethargy. It is limited by seizing upon tokens of something larger. Here we have the basic distinction between *kāma manas* — desire-mind — and pure *manas*, the true principle of creative thought.

The ideas that people have are inadequate because the power of thinking is not freed from fixed preconceptions, fleeting sensations, and partial perceptions. The great hope of spiritual growth lies in that just as the inexhaustible wealth of manifestation is itself only like a drop in the ocean compared to what is beyond — TAT — so, also, for a human being the whole of a lifetime, the succession of lifetimes, is like a drop in the ocean of the potential power of the *ātman* that is focussed through *buddhi* in *manas*. Meditation is the perennial source of hope for the whole of humanity.

But what hope is there for a particular

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individual? There is hope according to the degree to which that individual puts to work such powers as he or she has already developed. Take an idea that is adequate at one level, say, a relatively restricted idea of space, time, or self. One may initially think of space in one's room. Then one can go beyond as far as one can, so what seems adequate at first can be replaced by something more adequate. One can keep extending one's concept of space, keep extending one's concept of time, keep extending one's concept of selfhood. There is the danger that one might still remain narcissistic and selfish.

One might be deluding oneself, which is one of the hazards of transferring higher knowledge to the lower plane. The whole point of expanding one's view of space and of time is to go beyond the personal self. Inadequacy of ideas is due to the inadequacy of selfhood when rooted in personality, which is synonymous with limitation. Any persona is limited, and in fact illusory and ever-changing. How can the personal mind have an adequate idea of Absolute Space, or Eternal Duration, or Unconditioned Consciousness?

Therefore one has to concentrate calmly when one studies, gradually gaining the powers of attention, contemplation, and meditation. Though this may require a lifetime to accomplish, one must repeatedly begin at some point where one can forget narrow perspectives and the illusion of false knowledge and be willing to confront the abyss, the Divine

Ground, the *Mysterium Tremendum*.

The Law ceaselessly moves towards greater good, deeper harmony, and towards ever-widening expansion of the possibilities of consciousness. The wheel of the Good Law moves swiftly on, and as it moves it sifts. Nature is on the side of every human being. Nature mercifully sifts through sleep every night and through death. Since this is taking place already with the help of Nature, one needs only to assist the process. Even though people make a mess of living, the fact they are still alive means that Nature wins. That is the Law, which works on behalf of every monad and of every human being, of every atom, and of the entire solar system. It is not supportive of the shadowy "I" which does not really exist. It is not on the side of the false identity that is bound up in a changing flux with seeming fixities. Nature cannot do anything for one if one has already decided to be one's own enemy.

Some people, alas, made such a decision through soul-perversity in former lives. Perhaps their conception was inflexible to start with; maybe they had an inflexible view of who they were; and maybe they foolishly fixed their minds upon some false image of the goal. They may have tried to do some figuring out on their own, but only on behalf of the shadowy self. They may have thought they were an exception to the laws of Nature. That is where the tragedy begins.

Once one imagines one is an exception to the laws of Nature, one can do oneself a lot of harm and become one's own enemy.

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All learning will be painful because of the perverse unwillingness to learn. And one reason why one will not learn is because one refuses to be flexible. One mistakes the shadow of truth for the substance, the distorted semblance for the reality, and that makes one inflexible. Trapped by static conceptions, the mind becomes ritualistic, and one is trapped by forms, colours, and limitations.

Since this tendency can assert itself in each and every one at any moment, it must be understood properly. Understanding begins with pondering the instruction of Jesus: "Judge not, lest ye be judged." Any attitude which implies judgment upon the human race snares one in inflexibility. The occult law of responsibility suggests that if one harshly judges a human being, one transfers that presumed or actual evil to oneself. Being judgmental makes one inflexible and this makes one's steadfastness rigid, one's conduct ritualistic.

One really needs a deeper continuity that is based upon inward contentment, spiritual wakefulness, a readiness for everything, but also a sheer joy in learning. The wise person recognizes that it is educative and edifying to live in a universe under Law. One is fortunate that it does not depend upon votes as to whether there would be sunshine tomorrow. One is fortunate that it does not depend upon the whim of any personal self as to whether there will be night, the night that is needed, the night of non-manifestation that is called sleep. Nature works rhythmically and yet flexibly, for each day and

night and every hour of each day or night is not the same as any other. And it can be coloured, given a tone and texture by the way in which one uses it by withdrawing into one's inmost, deepest self. There is flexibility in the very attempt to keep pace with the Law, even though one does not understand it but only senses its direction. If one respects that Law, one can take proper advantage of it and thereby develop a cheerful, creative flexibility, which is meaningful if it is accommodated within a self-chosen discipline.

Using what one already has allows magic to take place, but not using it will have its own unnecessary karma, which means one has made oneself unworthy by non-use of what one has. What can be done about this? Nothing in terms of the restless mind. The restless mind is constantly trying to figure out shortcuts and diversionary tactics, which are inefficient because illogical.

One must necessarily return to where it all starts and ends in the realm of manifestation, the problem of the mind. The mind must be stilled. The mind must be subdued by the power of attention that is called concentration, by the power of meditation that is called continuity in contemplation and which results in inner calmness. It is not as difficult to accomplish as it seems, because in some significant degree one has done it before and others are doing it right now. At some level one has to face oneself.

One has to take an honest inventory and at the same time purge oneself of the consolidation of the false shadow by

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turning to the light with the whole of one's being. When this is done, there is no room for separation of oneself from other selves, from the Bodhisattvas, from Nature and its transcendental Source. One can overcome separateness, arising in the mind through false identification with a form, at the very core of being. One has seen wonders done by people; one can do a number of things oneself. But one cannot change everything suddenly overnight by means of a miracle. Any magic that works under laws must not be mistaken for miracles that cannot really happen. Miracles do not even occur in fairy tales except when they are earned by moral and spiritual worthiness.

Real magic can only work through the higher principles for those who meditate by the light of the *ātman* and the love of *buddhi* and through the lens of *manas*. These must be brought in line with the creative Logos in Nature and in man, that which lights up every being and illumines the world. Insight has to be earned by the power of the whole of one's attention over a period of time. If one's concepts of creation and of emanation are philosophically continuous, and if at the same time detachment is psychologically possible without discontinuity, then truly one can work with the ordered harmonies of Nature, the whole of life, and everything generated in and through

one's sacred vesture, the temple of the living god within.

This is a very beneficent teaching, and as Krishna stated in the second chapter of the *Gita*: "In this system of Yoga no effort is wasted, nor are there any evil consequences, and even a little of this practice delivereth a man from great risk." Krishna also declared, "The duty of another is full of danger", and "a man enjoyeth not freedom from action from the non-commencement of that which he hath to do".

Even a little of this wisdom can deliver a man from great risk when it is put to use. One must begin to think in terms of a micro-approach if one wants to make a break with the pseudo-philosophy of a dying culture. The micro-approach applies every day and was known in the beginning of human history. One can find golden opportunities at the present moment.

Continuity generated by concentration, fused with a recognition of responsibility in a universe of Law, opens a glorious vista of possibilities before the intuitive individual in becoming a creative artist who merges his or her own sphere into "the mighty magic of *prakṛti*". Such "fortune's favoured soldiers" rejoice in the service of the Brotherhood of Bodhisattvas who self-consciously radiate the harmony which is the root of Nature, the energy of evolution, and the resonance of the Soundless Sound. ✧

"Someone ought to do it, but why should I?" "Someone ought to do it, so why not I?" Between these two sentences lie whole centuries of moral evolution.

Annie Besant

No Other Path to Go

KRISTA UMBJARV

I WOULD like to take a moment to reflect on what is it that we actually want in life. Generally, our life is defined by different wishes and wants and often they are quite contradictory. Related to our well-being in various aspects, we may wish to be more centered and calmer, but at the same time, we pay little attention to our environment and the inner workings of our mind. We may wish to be in good health, but we neither eat healthily, nor exercise enough, nor have good sleep patterns. We may wish to have harmonious relationships with others, but at the same time, through our actions, we create disharmony. We may say we love animals and at the same time we very much love to eat them.

We are living in a more or less contradictory and fragmented way. And when I say we, I mean human beings in general. The mind works in the same way in everyone. There may be slight variations, but fundamentally all basic emotions and thought patterns function in the same way. This is also why everything on which we have thrown light in our being we will be able to see in others.

Everything that has been truly recognized in ourselves can be read like an open book in others.

In *The Round of Experience*, Hugh Shearman noted that no writer can create a character whose psyche is deeper or surpasses the psyche of the writer. In the same way, we can say that no astrologer or psychologist can truly see the inner workings of the person who comes to consult them unless they have recognized the same in themselves. Obviously, it is possible to learn theoretically how certain patterns function and apply them in consultation, but to be of true help and to see these patterns in work, they should have been recognized in and by the person who is trying to help.

So, as human beings, we all function fundamentally similarly. We want all these contradictory things, which is why our energy and life flow in all these different directions. And because our energy and life flow to different and often opposite directions, the direction of our life is actually all these various directions and hence life often just seems to randomly happen to us. We slip or

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glide into situations, experiences, and relationships because fundamentally we don't have any one direction and we don't understand how karma works.

Often, from afar, we see some situations coming in our direction like a huge truck. Instead of taking a step aside or another direction to avoid it we often start to run towards it at full speed to be hit with this truckload of karma. Sometimes we may shout along the way that it is our karma or destiny. Why do we not step aside or take another direction? Something in us often knows where it will lead. Why is it that we do not choose differently? In a way we can say that this something, this karmic pull, is stronger than us, and there isn't anything in us that can resist it, so we are drawn to it.

This matter will lead us again to the question: what do we want in life, fundamentally? It seems that the main reason why we go into all these different directions and end up in various situations is that we have not sufficiently defined for ourselves what is it that we truly want in life. When we observe our life and actions, we can see that we want a bit of this and then a bit of that: a bit of spirituality, a bit of entertainment and, generally speaking, staying in a good and comfortable situation in which we will not be disturbed much.

According to Patanjali, there are two paths to realization. In his *Yoga-Sutras*, he explains in great detail the workings of the path through self-knowledge and self-mastery, but suddenly adds a sutra saying that "Samadhi can be attained by

self-surrender to God." (I.23) So, according to him, this path of devotion and love can lead to the Divine in the same way as the path of self-knowledge. But what is this idea of God? Should it be any specific idea of God or the Divine so that devotion would work, and Samadhi could be attained at some point? Vivekananda, in his book, *Bhakti-Yoga*, notes that if an aspirant has full devotion to their guru, then even if the guru turns out to be a fake guru, this devotion and love will lead the disciple to self-realization. Obviously, it does not mean that an instructor or a teacher (if there is one) should not be observed for their actions and behaviour, but it shows that fundamentally it is not the object of devotion and love that makes the difference, but the acts of devotion and love themselves that will lead to realization.

Why are devotion and love so powerful that they would lead the aspirant to realization despite the object? On the path of self-realization and self-knowledge, one drops things, using mainly the capacity to reason and to discriminate, and using one's will-power. On the path where the emphasis is on devotion, the aspirant does not so much move away from something, but rather moves towards something, and through this act, old patterns and habits drop away more naturally.

It is an effective approach because something else becomes more precious than our little ego, the "I", the source of all our problems. Something other than the concern about this "I" is being put on the pedestal. We learn to love and to

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choose something else, and by this unique act we already loosen its shackles.

But how do we learn to love this Divine, or higher ideal or whatever it is we choose to devote ourselves to? Unless we learn to know it, want it, and we accustom ourselves with it, it will stay just a theory and will not have any impact on our approach to the spiritual life. This again brings us to the question of what we really want in life. It is important to ask this question, because fundamentally we are unable to want anything that we don't value.

Talking about devotion and love on the spiritual path does not mean that we should choose one path or approach over another, because it would be somewhat simplistic to say that it is either this or that. The path includes various aspects and at different times we might have to use different methods, as was well-pointed out by Mabel Collins in *Light on the Path*.

Yet, even a pinch of devotion helps enormously when we wish to start to actually let go of our unhealthy habits and change our behaviour because it will lead us to renunciation. Renunciation is a very difficult matter on the spiritual path. Even in theory: everyone talks easily about love and compassion. We like compassion very much and we wish to attain wisdom and understand life, but renunciation is a difficult matter. Why? Because with compassion, wisdom, understanding, and so on, we feel as if we gain something. We can add to what we already are and have. With renunciation we feel as

if we are being deprived of something. Yet, for instance in Buddhism, it is considered that the true spiritual path begins only with renunciation.

How is true change possible, if we just add to our character, behaviour, understanding, and so forth, without removing that which is unhealthy? There is no way that any actual change can take place in these conditions. So, to make this process simpler for us, we should not approach it from the wrong end. Instead of feeling that we are being deprived of something, we should learn to see that we are moving towards something even better, so that the unhealthy patterns and so on, could drop off more naturally.

In *The Mahatma Letters* it is said that the true path is like a jealous mistress. It does not allow any others next to it. When we are completely in love with somebody, it is as if our mind is constantly flowing towards the person without any voluntary action from our side. It just fills our mind and nourishes us. Fundamentally, we should learn to love spirituality so much so that it would fill us in the same way and become the defining paradigm of our life.

Probably we are not doing too bad. We may study and meditate and do some service, but we can certainly do better. It does not mean looking at life and ourselves as having a glass half empty and being dissatisfied, but it means recognizing that we can always improve. It is probably good to occasionally observe our life to see whether we are drifting slowly or whether we are making a true effort.

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So, what is it that we want in life? Asking this question regularly from ourselves does not mean that we are in a perpetual life crisis, but it helps us to really see whether what we want is reflected in what we do in daily life. Is what we do and the way we act in harmony with what we want?

When we have defined what we want in life, we should go for it and not live in constant conflict, wishing one thing but acting in a way that will bring about something else.

It is nice to talk about these things, but how to do it? How to turn our life truly in the direction of spirituality so that it would not just be a pastime (if we wish it to be more than a pastime)? How to create or consolidate this firm ideal towards which we could direct our life?

This brings us back to learning to know and accustom ourselves to the Divine and spiritual. It seems that we often go into spirituality in the same way we go into other situations and experiences in life, meaning more or less blindly. We do not take the time to get to know it or understand it, we just jump headfirst into it.

As human beings, endowed with a mind or *manas*, we will need to truly learn to use the capacity to reason and to discriminate and to use it in our benefit in its deepest sense. Hence, we should not just try to approach spirituality, but we should first think and reason, and come back to it again and again to try to understand what is the most intelligent, effective approach to spirituality in terms

of energy and effort, and then apply it. We usually do the opposite. We just try something, be it a meditation or any other particular method or technique and then often hit our head against the wall not understanding why it does not work.

What is taking months or even years to clarify what we want compared to the length of our life? When we have used reason to work through all these various aspects, we will have these ideas as a vision and reasoning is no longer needed. We will then just need to bring our attention to it, and we will see it clearly and fully.

When what we want in life has been defined clearly, we will learn to walk away from situations, even if it is painful. It is not necessary to tread all paths even though they are there as possibilities. We do not need all experiences, because many of them we have already had in the past (be it in this or past lives). We can also learn from observing and reasoning at first and by intuition later.

Seeing clearly what is important, defining our ideal or paradigm in line with spiritual life does not take away problems from our life. It does not remove difficulties or disharmony from our relations that are not harmonious. But what it does is that it removes conflict and fragmentation from our heart, bringing with it a certain kind of inner peace.

When quite young, I asked a person who was teaching extensively about the spiritual path and working on various social projects while travelling frequently,

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how he had the capacity to work so much. His answer was that “resilience comes with practice”. Everyone can increase one’s capacity of resilience and effort. I consider this as one of the most precious advices I have ever received.

If we find changing ourselves difficult, then we should maybe approach the matter from a different angle: do we wish to be reborn with the same tendencies again and again, having to go through childhood and then facing life from the same standpoint where we are now? Or can we try to make the effort to change something, not in a month or a year, but probably in a decade or in a few decades. In the words of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, “The mind is hard to curb and restless; but it may be curbed by constant practice and by dispassion”. (6.35)

If we embark on this road, it is important to realize at first that everything that we see in ourselves can be fundamentally changed. It is just a question of time and the right method. When we realize the karmic process through which the personality has been constructed, how our habits and tendencies have been created, we will also see their impermanence. Understanding this impermanence gives us fundamental power and courage because we can look at the darkest corners of our soul without being

afraid of them or trying to hide them or from them. If we fail to realize this impermanence, we are continuously escaping from them as we see tendencies, emotions, thoughts, and so on as something solid, falling on us like a big, hard rock that crushes us.

Our approach to spirituality and its strategy should not only concern this life but foreseeing the lives to come. We should ask ourselves: What qualities do we wish to be born with next time? What are the qualities that would really help us to bring about a fundamental change? Even if we fail many times, but if we develop resilience, perseverance, and the capacity to put effort, then there is no way we cannot advance in life because we will always get up after falling. If we have a good method, we apply it correctly (we might have a good method, but apply it incorrectly), and we don’t expect to have the result sooner than when we will have created its causes, then there is no doubt that what we do will bear fruit.

The sooner we understand that there is no other path to go but forward, the sooner we will heal all the different conflicts and fragmentation in our heart. When we understand that there is no other path, then the question is: What are we waiting for? ✧

We cannot keep it [human regeneration] alive if it is only a mental concept. It must be a reality, a growing reality.

Radha Burnier, *Human Regeneration*

Perceptions, Prophecies, and Predictions: Are There Answers in the Light of Ancient Teachings?

MARCELLO R. SERINI

Abstract

This article was first written in 2012 to inform people of the inevitable changes that are ahead of us as a global community. It seeks to make apparent the social forces that are at work through the analogy of “systems thinking”¹ and reflects on the irreversible and interactive outcomes of globalisation. It looks at what Ancient Traditions have to say about our age and concludes by alluding that the solution is to regain that inner equilibrium found through the spiritual side of our nature and thus facilitate the required conversion to a peaceful economy and a sustainable society. This is an undertaking that the Theosophical Society (TS) and every theosophist should earnestly seek to promote on a worldwide scale.

Introduction

In the second decade of the 21st century a convergence is taking place: Climate change, world economy, urbanisation, environmental issues, government outlooks, cultural changes, population growth,

the internet, shifts in values, and others. All of these interacting factors have begun to affect our lives. Will these events bring about a change in our thinking and the way humanity operates? Will we be “forced” to resolve the impending issues, to *rise to a higher level of technological and social performance and consciousness?*

What can Theosophy and ancient traditions offer for the immediate future? Are we at the dawn of a New Age? May some of the “Mesoamerican prophecies” carry weight? Are there other useful sources that may assist us all during this time of transition?

Part 1: Perceptions

As we move forward into the second decade of the 21st century seeking to understand world events, we note that our global situation may be said to mimic what is termed in the terminology of Systems Dynamics, the “Disturbed Reactive Environment”, as well as the fast emerging and more complex “Turbulent Fields”. This implies, from a sociological

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point of view, that it deals essentially with changing relationships, as well as structures and interdependence (Katz, 1966). Issues and modes of living are affecting our lives, communities, and nations at a faster pace than we are normally accustomed to. In continuing the analogy, it should be noted that the “Turbulent Fields Environment” gives rise to dynamic processes, whilst “the field” (that is, the world) itself may be said to be in motion or constantly changing. Consequently, the emerging “field forces” can attenuate lines of action or unexpectedly amplify these, resulting in a situation of “Relevant Uncertainty”, the sort of thing that is happening today. We are thus faced with a situation involving sustainability, synergism, and emerging new systems, whose outcomes appear to be well beyond the control of present-day means of government, customs, or established modes of thinking.

What follows may be summed up as follows:

1. Given that: “In such a system the growth of any one part depends on the growth or non-growth of others . . . undesirable factors of any one part threatens not only that part but the whole as well.” (Mesarovic, 1974)

2. Therefore: “Problem solving must be undertaken by those that understand what is well and what is not. Results must be communicated in a politically meaningful way . . .” (D. P. Loucks, Cornell University)

The Emergence of New Values

Continuing with our systems analogy,

from developments to date, we can see that for nations or interactive fields, “stability” may only be achieved through shared values. Thus, merging pressure groups become “power fields”, acting as injunctions seeking and affecting the overall (social) system, whilst hierarchical structures wane in influence. At the same time, relationships between dissimilar organizations become correlated, forcing cooperation and accommodation between parties. However, as we have witnessed over the past two decades, the transformation of the former status quo does not provide environments identical to the original. Established landmarks disappear, whilst the transformation period, or phase itself, takes an accelerating, variable, indefinite period of time. With the influence and pace of the media and the internet fostering new awareness, time itself is no longer consonant with generational change. New collective *values* emerge to alter the consciousness of society. The individual is required to:

- ◆ Redefine one’s identity
- ◆ Reverse basic values
- ◆ Refashion one’s organization or lifestyle
- ◆ All the above occur concurrently (Spengler, 1947)

Pertinent to the above emerging factors, the historian E. H. Carr in his book *What is History?* noted that:

◆ An expansion of reason (or perception) means, in essence, the emergence into history of groups and classes, of people and continents that hitherto lay outside society’s immediate interests, that

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is, the emergence of the world village.

◆ This gives rise to a universal history “distinct from the combined history of all countries”.

◆ The power of reason, as applied to man in society, may no longer be used to merely investigate, but also to transform.

◆ This “heightened consciousness” of the power of the individual to improve the management of his/her social, economic, and political affairs by the application of rational processes seems to be one of the major aspects of the 20th and 21st century revolution.

Bearing the above points in mind, and given that we have no real precedent for this “changing world order”, let us now see what some of the “Ancient Teachings” may offer by way of insight, inputs, and possible instructive directions.

Mesoamerican Wisdom

In this article a deliberate attempt has been made to steer away from theologically derived Middle Eastern traditions based on “divine dictums” and to look for sources from other key civilizations, such as the Mayan and Toltec, dated by modern historians around 3000 years ago.

According to the Khan Academy, the Maya had three calendars: the solar year of 365 days governed the agricultural cycle and a calendar of the ritual year of 260 days dictated daily affairs. A third calendar, called the Long Count calendar, (extending back to 13 August 3114 BCE) recorded large-scale cycles of time.

The Maya calculated a solar year as 365.242 days, only seconds shorter than our astronomical timing. Their number

system included the concept of zero. The Maya used their mathematical knowledge along with celestial observations to create monuments to observe and commemorate movements of the Sun, the Moon, and Venus. Spectacular examples of these may be seen at Chichén Itzá as implied by the Yucatan structure of Caracol that seems to be carefully aligned with the motions of Venus. Unlike the ancient Greeks, the Mayans recognized Venus in both the morning and evening skies as one celestial body. Maurice Cotterell’s “Theory of Sun Cycles” developed in 1989, gives incipient proof that the Mayan calendar was also built around their knowledge of sunspot activity.

In the light of the above, the notion that the Maya had names for time periods dating back 16.4 million years, as well as fourteen earlier unnamed cycles should not be easily discarded. This is also substantiated by an archeological artifact discovered in Cobá, Mexico, in the 1940s. The stele, carbon-dated to be approximately 1300 years old, revealed dates millions of years back in time depicting the hierarchical nature of creation. Did these epochs coincide with the modern Western science’s evolutionary cycles? Also, it would appear that the ancient Maya may have been aware of these cycles as timing the evolution of consciousness, as is the case of the Vedic *yugas* that link time cycles with the rise, fall, and change of humanity’s consciousness.

To sum up, the Mayans with their vast knowledge of cosmic cycles, imparted to them by gods like Pacal Votan who

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came from the stars,² gave rise to their prophecies based on cosmic time involving multiple creations. The last of the 5 ages or “Five Suns” recorded in the Long Count Calendar of 5,126 years from 3114 BCE ended in the winter solstice of 2012.

Part 2: Prophecies

As we come to their prophecies it should be noted that according to Armin W. Geertz, Professor in the History of Religions: “Prophecy is not prediction . . . it is a thread in the total fabric of meaning”. That, presumably, substantiates a body of traditional inherited knowledge. Whilst according to author Gerald Benedict, “Prophecy should be seen as direction for the spiritual advancement of the people.”³

Prophecy 6: “Then comes another law . . . The time of movement and noise in the sky and of movement and noise on Earth (shifting magnetic fields and earthquakes?)⁴ The Sun and the Earth shall come together within the district, the navel of the katun.” (A katun is a unit of time in the Maya calendar equal to 20 tuns or 7200 days, equivalent to 19.713 tropical years. So, is something “big” about to happen?)

Prophecy 11: (of the Unity of Mankind) “. . . I repeat my words of divine truth: I say that the divisions of the Earth shall be one!” Chilam Balam, the Jaguar Priest.

“I come to you as the special witness of time to remind you . . . On the day of truth you are to make yourselves one again.” Pacal Votan, the Closer of the Cycle.

Prophecy 13: “. . . Through solar initia-

tion can the sleeping body of mankind be awakened . . . Transcend into the memory of the Creator; become beings of luminosity”. K’altum Manuscript of the Mayan Elder Hunbatz Men.⁵

Prophecy 14: “This speaks of the recovery of memory”. Perhaps related to the origins of our spiritual nature?

Prophecy 15: “The end of each Mayan age — speaks of great destruction”.

Toltec Teachings

Alongside the Mayan civilization we find the almost parallel teachings of the Toltec civilisation whose apex flourished in Mesoamerica during 935–947 CE. Interestingly, the Maya had a cultural hero known as the “Feathered Serpent”, equating to Kukulcan and contemporary with the Toltec Quetzalcóatl. According to the historian Mark Cartwright, it was the Toltecs from whom the Aztecs claimed descent. Their ideal to have Toltecayotl (to have a Toltec heart) meant to be worthy and to excel in all things. It is from the cultures of these two that the author Sergio Magaña draws his knowledge by stating that they divided their natural time cycles known as Suns, into periods of 6,625 years.

In the light of this derived esoteric knowledge, based on mathematical and astronomical observations of these Mesoamericans, we are currently undergoing the shift from the Fifth Sun (or cycle) to the Sixth Sun, facing a 29-year transitional period that is both challenging humankind as well as offering new opportunities for healing and realignment. For us, significant amongst these

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years will be 2022–2023 where we shall have a choice of moving on spiritually in harmony or face war and famine. Judging from events in Eastern Europe we are facing the latter course.

2023–2024 will see, significantly, the emergence of the “feminine” with its new forms of spirituality as well as economics and “greener environmental practices”, but also strong opposition from the established order of things.

2024–2025 will be a year of “movement” (see Mayan Prophecy 6). Great changes and earthquakes will take place forcing humanity to change or perish (see Mayan Prophecy 15).

2025–2026, the year of the new world or Sixth Sun where inner focus (consciousness) will arise. (And perhaps, when wars will be finally seen as arising from subconscious fears that may otherwise be resolved through self-understanding.)

2026–2027 will see the return of Quetzalcóatl, or higher consciousness, whereby collective humanity will once again remember its spiritual nature (see Mayan Prophecy 14) and when the Sixth Sun will dominate the new cycles that are yet to come.

How to prepare ourselves could be the role of the TS during this period of transition. It rests upon us to perhaps gain an insight from the published effects of the Maharishi’s Transcendental Meditation practices (“the 1% effect”) that, if these were conducted regularly by groups of individuals, positive changes would be noted throughout the community.

Lynne McTaggart’s work on how group intention heals lives confirms the above. Katz and Kahn’s suggestions that “applied ethics” attenuate interactive tensions within competing firms is another such example. However, one thing is clear; when applied to daily life, our inner spiritual nature must be exalted and revealed in a new light to help mankind, and thus turn so called “inevitable prophecies” into possible predictions and no more. And we should take heart that, *after much travail*, according to the prophetic, legendary Templar “Knight John of Jerusalem”: “The dark days at the beginning of the millennium that follows the millennium will be followed by days of jubilation: man will once more find the righteous path of humanity and Earth will find harmony once more.”

Part 3: Predictions

With predictions, we are dealing essentially with “rationalism”. In keeping with the earlier comments of the historian E. H. Carr, it is worth remembering that early in the 20th century the economist, historian, and administrator, Sir Stanley M. Leathes, stated that: “The belief in the possibility of social reform by conscious effort is the dominant current of the European mind.” Thus, whether budgetary projections, financial markets, or the weather, our modern world relies heavily upon forecasts, so as to plan activities based on the rational assumption that, all things being equal, moving on a projected course, will help us to achieve the stipulated and hoped-for goals.

Perceptions, Prophecies, and Predictions: Are There Answers in the Light of Ancient Teachings?

Viewed in the above light, “predictions” may be said to be a management tool of orientation, rather than an inevitable prophetic statement. An example may be seen in the written comments of G. Lawton when dealing with climate change: “Ten years ago there was a genuine fear that we were heading for a catastrophic warming of between 4°C and 5°C by 2100. Today, those worst-case scenarios are no longer plausible.” (*New Scientist*, 14 January 2023) This is because upon perceiving the destructiveness of current planning modes and approach to development, we have embarked on mitigating extreme outcomes.

We can equally profit from the prediction of Satguru Kriya Babaji Nagaraj, the famed Himalayan yogi, given during

his nightly apparitions to a number of journalists in 1952–53 at Egmore, Madras, India, who stated that his dictated teachings would spread to the nooks and corners of our world and assist in establishing world peace and God-realization.

Similarly, we may take note of prophecies as not being “cast in stone” but as forewarnings to change course, before we come to much harm. And in so doing, let us, through perception, turn prophecy into a guiding prediction. For: “Man will know everything on earth and his own body . . . He will define himself curator of the human species and so, finally a new era will begin.” (Knight John of Jerusalem)

Wisdom knows in depth the great metaphor of meaning. — Karl G Jung

Endnotes

1. A holistic approach to analysis that focuses on constituent parts, their behavior and interrelations through time, within larger systems or settings. Systems thinking recognizes causal textures that operate affecting all those entities that are connected. These extend to organizations, firms, or even nations.
2. Significantly, across the oceans in another continent we find among the Aboriginal People of southeast Queensland, Australia, the concept of “Alcheringa” a threefold cyclical eternity wherein the sun goddess *Yahi* and their protecting father-spirit

Beiname came from the stars and returned back there after teaching their people how to live on this earth.

3. See his book, *The Maya: 2012: The End of the World, or the Dawn of Enlightenment?*
4. Pertinent to the above, over the past decades the Schumann Resonance, the low-frequency signal between the Earth’s electromagnetic field and the ionosphere used to monitor climate change and the Earth’s magnetic field, has shown a marked increase from 7.88Hz to 13 Hz. *Is a “shift imminent”?*
5. He was a keeper of the Maya Itzá tradition and member of the Itzá Council of Priests and Elders of Mexico.

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Perceptions, Prophecies, and Predictions: Are There Answers in the Light of Ancient Teachings?

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Modern wisdom is satisfied with astronomical computations and prophecies based on unerring mathematical laws. Ancient Wisdom added to the cold shell of astronomy the vivifying elements of its soul and spirit — astrology. And, as the sidereal motions do regulate and determine other events on Earth . . . those events have to be allowed to find themselves predetermined by even simple astronomical computations. Believers in astrology will understand our meaning, sceptics will laugh at the belief and mock the idea. Thus they shut their eyes, ostrich-like, to their own fate. . . .

The Secret Doctrine, vol. 1, p. 645

Cagliostro the Grand Copt of Egyptian Freemasonry

JULIAN OCHOA

FREEMASONRY as we know it today had its beginnings in England during the early 1700s, and its roots can be traced back as far as the 14th century. But its heyday as a movement can be said to have been during the 18th century when it flourished across Europe and the globe through the networks of the British Empire. The most notable of the masonic fraternity at this time were Voltaire, Anton Mesmer, Charles Edward Stuart, Benjamin Franklin, Louis Claude de St Martin, Comte de St Germain, Joseph de Maistre, and Montesquieu. The most famous freemason of this period was Count Alessandro Cagliostro, also known as Giuseppe Balsamo. Cagliostro was famous for his Egyptian Rite, his healing abilities, his charitable character, and his idealism to improve the world through freemasonry. Like all famous occultists, he did not fare well. He was framed for criminal acts he never committed, and his reputation was muddied beyond repair. In 1791 he was arrested in Italy and tried by the Roman Inquisition and jailed for life. After his passing in 1795, his enemies continued to defame him to the point of

having been portrayed a villain in many stories. However, the intention here is not to focus on the many calumnies raised against him by his various adversaries, but instead, to have a brief look at his life and works. It is difficult to cover a person's entire life in an essay, but it is hoped that this will encourage the reader to look further into Cagliostro, his friends, and his Egyptian Rite.

Cagliostro's life and travels

Cagliostro was born in Palermo, Sicily, on 8 June 1743, and his full name was Alessandro Cagliostro though different writers have stated that his real name was Giuseppe Balsamo or Thiscio.¹ Since he was from southern Italy his complexion was Mediterranean, and his critics used this to racially profile him and discredit his reputation. At a young age he was educated by Catholic monks in Sicily who taught him how to administer medicine to people.² In his twenties he travelled across the Mediterranean and the Middle East, from Medina to North Africa.³ It is said that during his travels across the Middle East he met Althotas, the man who initiated him into the ancient mysteries.

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Cagliostro studied under him for several years. Others rumour that he was not born in Sicily but that he was either born in Medina or Mecca, that he was an Islamic prince, that Althotas was his appointed teacher, and Althotas taught him all the hidden knowledge that had survived from Ancient Egypt.⁴ H. R. Evans gives a different account about Cagliostro stating that he grew up in Medina, his tutor was Althotas, he was orphaned at an early age, his parents were a noble Maltese family, and later on in his youth he travelled to Malta where he became acquainted with Christianity and Western ideas of the time.⁵ Eliphas Levi said the following about Cagliostro's master:

The name Althotas, or that of Cagliostro's master, is composed of the word Thot, with the syllables Al and As, which, if read Kabalistically, are Sala, meaning messenger or envoy. The name therefore signifies Thot, the messenger of the Egyptians, and such in effect was he whom Cagliostro recognised as his master above all others.⁶

As a young man, Cagliostro travelled from Messina to Rhodes and then to Alexandria and Cairo. In 1766 he travelled to Malta where he worked as an assistant in the apothecary for the Knights of Malta. Working as an apothecary he learnt all he could about healing from an alchemist who was living in the same quarters. In 1768 he travelled to Rome where he met and married Seraphina Feliciani. With his wife he continued his journey across different European countries, healing the sick and poor for free. They travelled from Italy through France

and into Spain and Portugal. They travelled as far as England. In 1772 Cagliostro went back to mainland Europe, returning to Malta with his wife.⁷

In 1776 he visited London again where he would be initiated into freemasonry. On 12 April 1776, he was initiated in the Esperance Lodge, number 289, into the Rite of Strict Observance in London.⁸ The Rite of Strict Observance had been officially founded in 1754 in continental Europe by three freemasons, the most notable of whom was Baron Von Hund. The Rite of Strict Observance claimed to have direct lineage to the medieval Knights Templar. What made the order more conspicuous was that it claimed to be guided by "unknown superiors" whom no one ever knew. One of them was possibly Prince Charles Edward Stuart, the Scottish Pretender to the British throne who was exiled into Europe with the surviving Jacobite rebels after the battle of Culloden, Scotland, in 1746.⁹ In Gary Lachman's biography of Blavatsky, he points out that her grandfather Prince Pavel was also a member of the Rite of Strict Observance in Russia, where this order was popular among high-ranking masons. Lachman does not discard the possibility that Prince Pavel met Cagliostro, as it is known that Cagliostro visited the Russian royal court and many masonic lodges in Russia.¹⁰

Another interesting character that Cagliostro met throughout his travels in Europe was a notable freemason called Count St Germain. Earlier in Cagliostro's life he was instructed by his tutor Althotas,

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who transmitted knowledge of the Egyptian Mysteries and other secrets of the Middle East, but it was with Count St Germain that he would be initiated into the Mysteries, which would inspire him to perform the Great Work, which is what he is commonly known for. Trowbridge said that St Germain had discovered the philosopher's stone.¹¹ Cooper-Oakley said that Count St Germain was present at the Templar initiation (Order of Strict Observance) of Cagliostro.¹² In the book, *The Masonic Magician* by P. Faulks and R. L. D. Cooper an additional meeting is said to have happened, in which Count St Germain officiated over the initiation of Count Cagliostro and his wife Seraphina. This initiation occurred at 02:00 hours at which time they were admitted into the "Temple of Mysteries" where Count St Germain sat on his throne accompanied by his officers.¹³ In *The History of Magic* Eliphas Levi says that Count St Germain was a member of the Order of the Rosy Cross, but later created a new order.¹⁴ In *The Mahatma Letters*, letter number ML-54, Master KH says of Count St Germain and Count Cagliostro:

Were not St Germain, and Cagliostro, both gentlemen of the highest education and achievements — and presumably *Europeans* ... regarded at the time, and still so regarded by posterity — as impostors, confederates, jugglers and what not?¹⁵

Cagliostro's masonic initiations, the Egyptian Rite, and legacy

After all the initiations Cagliostro underwent, he resumed his travels, and

during this period he began working with Egyptian freemasonry. The Egyptian Rite was formalised in 1789 in Lyon with the consecration of the "Lodge Triumphant Wisdom".¹⁶ Many scholars claim that the most common source attributed to Cagliostro's inspiration for the formation of the Egyptian Rite was a book he had found in England written by George Coston. However, there is no evidence to the existence of this author. Cooper and Faulks trace other sources to his inspiration, one being that Cagliostro was introduced into the Egyptian Rite by a Danish merchant called Ananiah who had lived in Egypt. A London rabbi is also attributed for instructing Cagliostro into the Egyptian mysteries and other occult teachings.¹⁷ Another teacher attributed for Cagliostro's inspiration is Martinez de Pasqually, founder of the Masonic order, the *Élus Coëns*, in 1767. Cooper and Faulks quoted John Yarker from his 1909 book, *The Arcane Schools*, that Cagliostro's rite was similar to Pasqually's theurgy.¹⁸ Regardless of the origin of Cagliostro's inspiration, his rite caused ripples across continental freemasonry. The following quote from the book, *The Masonic Magician*, explains Cagliostro's objectives for the Egyptian Rite and the "Regeneration of Humanity" as he coined his vision for this new type of Freemasonry:

The wisdom of the Egyptian priests would be supplanted in the temple of Cagliostro — three vitally important magical practices would be the basis for his Regeneration of Mankind; firstly, the convocation of spirits,

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secondly, the practice of moral, physical, and spiritual regeneration, and finally, the use of divination by means of the medium or “dove” to interpret images sent from the Divine. His system of Egyptian Freemasonry would take the Mason from the mundane to the sublime, from purely speculative to positively transcendental.¹⁹

Men and women could join the Egyptian Rite, and the meetings for each gender were performed in separate temples. Cagliostro’s wife Seraphina officiated over the temple for women. For men, the prerequisite to join the Rite was that they had to be master masons of a regular masonic lodge as the Rite was not created to replace freemasonry, but to shed greater light on the masonic mysteries and fulfil the original purpose of freemasonry, and to instruct its members to lead a more spiritual and disciplined life. To be a member of the Egyptian Rite, it was also important to have a belief in God. The degrees of the rite were Egyptian Apprentice, Egyptian Fellowcraft and Egyptian Master.²⁰ After Cagliostro’s death in 1795, the Vatican burnt his Egyptian Rite rituals and manuscripts, but several copies of his ritual survived in different lodges and private estates. Cagliostro’s push to improve freemasonry and reform humanity, and his rituals and teachings were an inspiration to many in freemasonry. Out of his masonic influence and masonic rituals that emerged and disappeared in the 1700s, the Rite of Misraim was formed, to replace the Egyptian Rite.²¹ In 1814 another masonic order called the Memphis Rite was con-

stituted. This rite was composed of 95° which pertained to different masonic orders that were unified to make a complete initiatic system.²² The most notable member of the Rite of Memphis was Giuseppe Garibaldi who was Grand Master of the Italian Grand Orient. Garibaldi was Honorary Grand Hierophant of the Rite of Memphis for Italy with its Sovereign Sanctuary at Palermo, Sicily, until his death in 1882.

Jinarajadasa in his article in *The Theosophist* titled “The Rite of Memphis” mentions that during the 1900s a British consul based in Sicily, Reginald Macbean, had become Grand Master of the Order. C. W. Leadbeater, Jinarajadasa, George Arundale, J. I. Wedgewood, and O. Kollerstrom were invited and initiated into the sovereign sanctuary by Macbean in 1923. Jinarajadasa explains that Wedgewood was already a member of the Misraim Rite in England connected to John Yarker and Leadbeater had joined another lineage of the Misraim Rite based in France. Macbean granted the five theosophists a charter which they could use to consecrate a Sovereign Sanctuary at their convenience.²³ Upon retiring from his work at the British consulate in Sicily, Macbean relocated to live at the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, where he continued to work in the local Co-Masonic Temple.²⁴

Cagliostro in theosophical literature and anecdotes

In May 1875, one of the founders of the Theosophical Society, Charles

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Sotheran, who was also member of the Rite of Memphis and the Misraim Rite, presented a paper at the New York Liberal Club, on Count Cagliostro: "Alessandro di Cagliostro: Impostor or Martyr?"²⁵ In 1890 Blavatsky wrote an essay on Cagliostro, "Was Cagliostro a Charlatan?" for the *Lucifer* magazine, where she mentioned that Althotas his teacher was an "Eastern Hermetic Sage". She also said that the real reason for his clash with the Church and many others was due to his knowledge and connection with "Eastern Occult Science". Blavatsky goes on to say that Cagliostro's teachings were "Eastern Doctrines". She also said of Cagliostro: "He served the Masters of a Fraternity he *would not* name because on account of his pledge *he could not*."²⁶ In *The Path* magazine of 1890, William Quan Judge wrote an article about Count Cagliostro. This is an account of an encounter of the Prince with Cagliostro.²⁷ W. R. H. Trowbridge in his biography of Cagliostro said that many years after his registered death in 1795 in Italy, he was seen in Russia where he was staying at Blavatsky's house. Trowbridge said Cagliostro performed phenomena during his stay. If this is correct, it occurred before Blavatsky was born in 1831.²⁸ Another connection between Cagliostro and Blavatsky was Blavatsky's Cagliostro Rose Croix Jewel which was handed down to Col. H. S. Olcott after Blavatsky's passing. It was recorded that Olcott had lent it to George Arundale, who handed it to Rukmini Arundale, who kept it until her passing.

In 1992 Pedro Oliveira, former International Secretary of the Theosophical Society, on behalf of the then President of the Theosophical Society, Radha Burnier, officially collected the jewel from the Kalakshetra College of Fine Arts.²⁹

Conclusion

Since his youth, Cagliostro's life has been full of mystery and adventure. He had the fortune of having teachers that imparted knowledge from antiquity and the Far East. He travelled extensively across Europe, was initiated into freemasonry, was a healer, and worked incessantly on his Egyptian Rite which for a time was popular among Continental and British freemasons. He travelled with his wife and made many worthy friends, the likes of Count St Germain and Louis Claude de St Martin. He had friends among royalty, and ecclesiastical authorities. But in the end his enemies had more influence and captured him, handing him over to the Roman Inquisition. The Inquisition arrested him for promoting freemasonry. He was jailed for life. His death remains a mystery just like the death of other occult adepts. His legacy remains exemplary and admired by many within occult circles. The masonic orders of Memphis-Misraim and others carry his lineage and influence. Within the theosophical milieu he is known as one of many disciples of the Masters that dared to take the road, "steep and thorny". His life of service and sacrifice is left for those aspirants to observe. Blavatsky best describes that road:

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There is a road, steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind, but yet a road, and it leads to the very heart of the Universe: I can tell you how to find those who will show you the secret gateway that opens inward only, and closes fast behind the neophyte for evermore. There is no danger that dauntless cou-

rage cannot conquer; there is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through; there is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win onwards there is reward past all telling — the power to bless and save humanity; for those who fail, there are other lives in which success may come.



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148TH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION INFORMATION

Theme: *Exploring and Understanding UNIVERSAL INTELLIGENCE*

The 148th International Convention of the Theosophical Society will be held at the International Headquarters, Adyar, **from 31 December 2023 to 4 January 2024** (departure on 5 January). All members of the Society in good standing are welcome to attend as delegates. Non-members are not eligible for accommodation but can register for the Convention and meals at the canteen. For online programs, registration is required.

ACCOMMODATION FOR MEMBERS ONLY

Western style: Leadbeater Chambers (LBC) has rooms with two beds and an attached bathroom in each room. Some rooms are large enough to have three beds.

Indian style: Accommodations have been upgraded but their number is limited. Hence be early to register.

Allotments: Accommodations will be decided by the Convention Committee during December 2023 and the result will be informed by email. **Allotment will be on first-come-first-serve basis.**

PACKAGES

The rates are per person from 30 December 2023 dinner to 5 January 2024 lunch.

Overseas delegates:

- A. LBC: US\$ 400 — incl. registration fee, accommodation, and meals at LBC.
- B. Indian style: US\$ 150 — including registration fee, Indian-style accommodation, and meals at Indian canteen.
- C. Attending the program without meals and accommodation: registration fee US\$ 70.
- D. Attending the program online only: Registration fee US\$ 10.

Indian delegates:

- E. LBC: Rs 13,500 — including registration fee, accommodation, and meals at LBC.
- F. Indian style: Rs 5,000 — including registration fee, Indian-style accommodation, and meals at Indian canteen.
- G. Registration and meals at Indian canteen without accommodation — Rs 3,500.
- H. Registration and Indian-style accommodation without meals — Rs 2,000.

(See over)

148th International Convention Information

- I. Attending the program without meals and accommodation: Registration fee Rs 500.
- J. Attending the program online only: Registration fee Rs 100.

PAYMENT

Overseas delegates: Register online and make the payment. If for some reason you cannot pay with the online sheet, payments will be collected from you “on arrival”. Then you may pay the applicable package rate by MasterCard or Visa credit cards, or in cash in foreign currency (with a copy of your passport). Please remember to take your travel insurance before arriving at Adyar.

Delegates from India: Register online and make the payment in INR either (a) online with registration (preferred), or (b) by cheque / bank draft payable to *The Theosophical Society*, couriered to the Convention Officer, The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai 600020, India (Telephone: +91-44-24917198). It is important that you send an email about payment to <convention@ts-adyar.org> soon after completing the payment process, mentioning the following: delegate(s) name, bank name, date of transfer, and transfer reference ID.

REGISTRATION FORM

Last date to register with accommodation is 26 November 2023.

Online registration with instructions for payment will appear on the Convention website <convention.ts-adyar.org> (opens on 1 September). *If accommodations become full the status will be intimated on the website.*

Delegates who are (or cannot be) allotted accommodation will be intimated by email by 20 December 2023.

Delegates who cannot be allotted but have paid will have their payment returned after the Convention.

Cancellation by 10 December 2023

For delegates wanting to cancel their registration and accommodation requests, the last date will be 10 December 2023. After this date, no amount will be refunded. If the cancellation request is received before 10 December then the package amount (in INR) minus the registration fee will be refunded after the Convention.

Convention Officer:

Mr Shikhar Agnihotri, **Email:** <convention@ts-adyar.org>

Postal Address: The Convention Officer, The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai — 600020, India.

Convention website: <convention.ts-adyar.org>

Theosophical Work around the World

Italian Section National Congress

The 109th National Congress of the Italian Theosophical Society was held in Cervignano del Friuli, Udine, from 1 to 4 June 2023, with over 80 members and sympathisers. The Congress theme, “Sublime Harmony, Beauty of Life”, immediately blended with the reality of the fraternal atmosphere that characterized the meeting, which was very serene and interactive.

The days in Cervignano had a cultural side to it, beginning on 1 June with a guided tour of the Patriarchal Basilica of Aquileia and its extraordinary mosaics, under the expert guidance of Claudia Giordani. It continued on Saturday, 3 June evening, with a concert of medieval and renaissance music by the duo “Iter Musici” from Koper in Slovenia, composed by Marino Kranjac (Deputy Secretary of the Slovenian Theosophical Society) and Ana Birsa Krusec, and presented on the occasion by Adriana Volpato.

The next day was dedicated to institutional work, with the Members Assembly’s appointment of Dr Giuliano Campanella as Head of the Supervisory Body of the Italian Theosophical Society. This was followed by various speeches aimed at sharing the initiatives carried out and the projects to be undertaken.

The mornings always opened with a meditation session, led alternately by Patrizia Moschin Calvi and Flavia Polignano. The lectures on the main theme

were delivered by: Marina De Grandis (“Harmony is a Creative Act”), Diego Fayenz (“Sublime Harmony, the Beauty of Life”), Graziella Ricci (“Harmony: a Way to Happiness”), Laura Bessone (“Beauty and Harmony in Man’s Evolutionary Path”), Gaetano Mollo (“Beauty and Harmony”), Luigi Antonio Macrì (“Harmony and Humanity in the Digital Age”), Irena Primc, Secretary General of the Slovenian TS (“Sublime Harmony, Beauty of Life”, translated and read by Alenka Jeric), Gianni Bastiani (“Harmony and Beauty, Instruments of Peace”), and Patrizia Moschin Calvi (“The Song of Life”).

All the lectures were followed by a notable interactive part with questions to the speakers and interventions on the topics discussed. The experience of the Cervignano del Friuli Congress shows the importance of in-person participation, with ample space for the attendees to meet, an interaction that can turn into fraternal sharing, in the spirit of the Beautiful and the Good. ✧

Recent Appointments

Mr Jean-Paul Silvan was elected as the new General Secretary of the TS in **Finland**, effective 5 May 2023, succeeding Mr Janne Vuononvirta.

Mr Douglas Keene was elected as the new General Secretary (National President) of the TS in **America**, effective 1 July 2023, succeeding Dr Barbara Hebert. ✧

INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY

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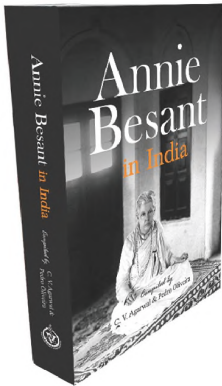
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