

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: The Buddha, bending down to the Divine is the message of his right hand, deep concentration on high things that of the left. This is one of the canvas paintings to appear in an Exhibition at the Adyar Library and Research Centre (31.12.22 – 28.1.23). — Artist: Shivaram, has nearly 50 artworks at Chennai Airport, using his unique style of no curves in the paintings, only straight lines. <shivarampaintings.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.

The Need for Healing

TIM BOYD

I WOULD like to turn our attention to the important subject of Healing. Even though it is not greatly stressed within our Theosophical teachings, it is both a fundamental reason for the founding of the Theosophical Society (TS) and an unavoidable consequence of a serious engagement with those teachings. It is also worthwhile to note that members of the TS have been in the forefront of healing work since the Society's beginnings.

What is healing? If we examine the actual meaning of the word, it is not about specific practices or the methods employed in different healing communities. Its root meaning is to make whole. Its focus is the restoration of wholeness from a condition of fragmentation. But what does that mean? As a human being I have hands, legs, eyes, a brain, and so on; how can I not be whole?

The Ageless Wisdom tradition, which Theosophy represents, views the human being in terms of seven interpenetrating planes of consciousness, from highest spirit to lowest matter, with the most refined reaches of Spirit and the densest aspects of Matter being beyond the range of perception. But how is it that within this view of the human being, we can speak of ourselves as being somehow incomplete, fragmented? Our fragmen-

mentation results from our singular involvement with the most obvious and easily perceived aspects of our being. The theosophical work is directed toward Truth, or Spirit. However, the real work that we find ourselves doing is always related to the personality — the body, the emotions, and the mind in its lower uses. Truth or Spirit do not require our intervention, the personality does.

This path that we pursue is directed to the refinement and sensitizing of the instrument of personality, which is simultaneously our greatest tool and greatest obstacle to wholeness. The obstructive dominance of the personality, or ego, is where our work lies. In our normal functioning the seven interpenetrating planes of being are unequally active. A better way of saying this might be that they are not integrated in their activity. Our major focus from moment to moment is on the personal aspect — servicing the senses, emotions, and thoughts which continually demand our attention. Our fascination and attachment to all things personal prevent us from seeing something deeper, and sustains our fragmented condition.

Much of the human predicament results from a process of identification. Beginning at birth, when a soul first

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inhabits a body, we start forming a variety of identities. The first is body identification and gender — “It’s a boy/a girl”. Following on this we take on religions, nationalities, race, caste, and so forth. Each of these becomes inextricably woven into the fabric of the personality. Together they become “who I am”, a separate, individual self apart from all others. We claim these identities, then spend a lifetime enlarging them, clinging to them, and cultivating a host of desires based on them. In that process we remove ourselves from a broader possibility. This is the process of fragmentation which separates us from the central truth of our being that all is One.

H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) made a profound observation about this process: “Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, the only realities.” So when we are fixated on anything — that becomes our reality. Whether it is the pain we are feeling, our happiness, our social standing, or the video on our cell phone, for the duration of our fixation that is what we see and experience as real. Consciousness is the key in all of this.

So what does this mean in terms of Healing, or a restoration of wholeness? An answer to this question might begin with an assessment of the thoughts that fill our minds throughout the day. A brief check of the normal thoughts that occupy our attention and fill our conversations might be revealing. For many people who are consumers of daily news broadcasts,

normally certain fears arise. The recent cycle of reporting has raised fears of economic inflation and shortages. There is also anxiety in the air around war and armed conflict. Add in the usual reports of local violence, and for many the concern of personal vulnerability arises. Health concerns, interpersonal relationships, income, food, work-life, household needs, and so on, also fix our attention.

Using Brain Imaging Scanning, laboratory experiments have calculated the number of thoughts that arise in our minds in a day. It is a surprising number — at approximately 6.5 per minute, we have 6,000-plus thoughts per day! The chief characteristic of this host of thoughts is a focus on the self, the personality — its fears, desires, and needs. Until this cyclic channeling of consciousness is seen and redirected, there is no possibility for release.

There are many maladies that arise from this isolating focus on the self. The effects of prolonged physical and social isolation are well known — depression, increased risk of heart disease, dementia, suicide, stroke, and anxiety. These can be regarded as symptoms of a deeper condition requiring more than a correction in the physical body. At its deepest level, healing is the restoration of the sense of connection to an unfragmented Self, a Universal Consciousness. It is not merely about the correction of physical conditions. However, it is possible for the body’s vibrancy and longevity to be extended.

Even though I came from a family

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where almost all of my uncles were doctors, as a youth somehow I never made the connection between medicine and healing. My first real exposure to an energetic form of healing occurred as a teenager, while visiting with a gentleman who would become a profound mentor for me. He was a member of the TS, and highly regarded, particularly among many of the younger people in the Chicago area. They called him “the Old Man”.

During the visit another young man who had come with us was suffering from a severe headache. After talking with us for a short time the Old Man turned to him and said: “Al, it looks like you’re not feeling well, what’s going on?” When Al told him about the headache the Old Man called on two of his students, and said: “Please, guys, would you take Al’s headache?” They put a chair in the middle of the floor for Al to sit, one stood in front and one stood behind. They rubbed their hands together and without touching him, held their hands on each side of Al’s head. They stood like that for maybe a minute. When they finished, they shook their hands like they were shaking off water, went back to their seats, and sat down. For all appearances, I had seen nothing, I saw two people stand up, and I saw them sit down. But clearly Al was relieved.

That was my first exposure. I spent 13 years living in a community that we created with the Old Man. Over the years I saw many healings take place and came to know some profound healers. With time it became clear that healing is a natural ability that can be cultivated in anyone.

In TS history Col. Olcott is the most pronounced example of healing work. After coming to India he spent three years working in what was then called Ceylon — now Sri Lanka. The focus of his work was to revive Buddhism. In the face of the orchestrated attempts of the British colonial forces and the Catholic Church, Buddhism, the traditional religion of the nation, had come under attack and its influence was in decline. At one point the Christian missionaries announced they had discovered a well of water that would heal people. However, conveniently, it would only heal them in the name of Jesus. On hearing this Olcott went to the Buddhist monks and told them they could not allow these missionaries to lay their religious claim to the field of healing. He told them: “You have to do some healing.” When they all declined, Olcott’s response was: “Fine, then I will do it myself.”

In his youth he had some exposure to the practice of mesmerism (projection of etheric or vital energy). Even though he had never formally practiced, in Ceylon he began by working on a person who had a paralyzed arm. After the first treatment the person came back the next day and said he experienced great relief. Olcott said that the positive report buoyed his confidence. He continued the process the next day, with the result that the paralyzed arm became completely usable; and word spread.

Over the course of the next three years, anywhere Olcott went there were crowds demanding healing. Olcott was a man who

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kept records of everything. During those three years, he documented 7,000 cases of people whose conditions were ameliorated, or even completely reversed, including such things as paralysis, blindness, and all levels of pain.

Olcott spoke about the two methods that he employed in his healing. The first was that he would invoke the presence of his Master. He said that the greatest healings he did were the result of this method. In one case, while working on a blind man, this man described in great detail a figure that he saw standing in front of him. His description matched the features of Olcott's Master. In that case the blindness was cured. The other method that he employed involved the accumulation and projection of energy by a process of will. This was the method of Anton Mesmer. Ultimately he discontinued his healing work because of its all-consuming demands on his time and energy.

Another prominent member of the TS who did lasting work in the field of energetic healing was Dora Kunz. For a number of years she served as President of the TS in America. She was born and grew up in the Dutch East Indies. From early childhood she had profound clairvoyant ability. Later in life she did a great deal of work in the medical community, describing and diagnosing illness based on what she could see in the aura of the patient. One of the doctors who worked with Dora over a period of years, Shafica Karagula, wrote a couple of books based on the experience: *Breakthrough to Cre-*

ativity, and *The Chakras and Human Energy Fields*.

Dora's clairvoyant investigations of the human aura brought her into contact with healers. At one point there were a number of highly regarded healers who consented to work with her. Because of her ability to see energy fields she could see the changes in the health aura of the patients. She could also see the energetic activity taking place with the healer. In speaking with the healers she would ask them if they believed that healing was something that could be taught. Their almost unanimous answer was "No". Their general feeling was that the ability to heal was a gift from God, and if it had not been given to you, you cannot have it. But Dora did not accept that idea based on her own observations.

The more she observed and worked with the healers, the more she became convinced that, even though there were variations in the methods and capacities of individual healers, there were fundamental shared features of the healing process with all the healers she observed. She began holding regular invitational healing workshops for doctors, nurses, and healing professionals at the Pumpkin Hollow Farm, a TS camp in upstate New York. Later, additional sessions were added at the also Theosophical Indralaya Camp, in the state of Washington. At one of these sessions Dora met Dr Dolores Krieger, a professor of Nursing at New York University. Together they evolved the system of healing they titled Therapeutic Touch. Based on the results of the

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scientific testing performed on patients, training in the method entered the curriculum of the University. Later it spread to other universities in Europe as well. Around the world, more than 100,000 nurses have been trained in this method.

The first step in Dora's method of healing is what she called "centering". We pull ourselves away from our habitual condition of consciousness, of jumping from thought to thought. We become quiet. In that process of quieting, our own energies start to harmonize. This is the common experience of anyone who sits for meditation on a regular basis. Following from that centering, we cultivate the intention to heal. Healing is in no way a personal matter. The energies involved are not the property of anyone. Our intention to act as a conduit for the flow of healing energy makes us available to that flow. The remainder of the Therapeutic Touch process initially involves a use of the hands to sense and transmit the energies. With time and exposure one's sensitivity and effectiveness increase.

A deepening awareness that we are not separate from one another opens us to dormant powers within. One outcome

of this is that people begin to seek out the presence of such a person. Why? Because without saying a word, in their presence others experience a sense of safety, of peace, the possibility to feel centered, calm, whole. Such a person becomes a radiant center that breathes the possibility of wholeness. In other words, one becomes a healer. This is a matter of choice and practice, not divine dispensation.

Am I a healer? That is really something that is up to us. Do we choose to maintain the fragmented state of continuous struggle for a separate identity? Or do we opt for another possibility? Our daily chores and relationships will always be there, but how we see and interact with them can transform them in a way that creates a condition of wholeness in our families, with our friends, and in our relationships.

The belief to which we cling, that we are each independent entities, separate from one another and from all other things, is disproved in this process of healing. At its root, healing is a spiritual practice because it confirms our unity. It confirms that the energies flowing through you also flow through me, and that we have the capacity to interact with these connecting energies. ✧

Pythagoras said that the most divine art is that of healing. And if the healing art is most divine, it must occupy itself with the soul as well as with the body; for no creature can be sound so long as the higher part in it is sickly.

Apollonius of Tyana

The Mystery of the Ego — I

RAGHAVAN N. IYER

If we feel not our spiritual death, how should we dream of invoking life?

Claude de St Martin

THE sure test that individuals have begun to ascend to higher planes of consciousness is that they find an increasing fusion of their ideas and their sympathies. Breadth of mental vision is supported by the depth of inmost feeling. Words are inadequate to convey these modes of awareness. Mystics cannot readily communicate the ineffable union of head and heart which has sometimes been called a mystic marriage. Such veiled metaphorical language may often refer to specific centres of consciousness in the human body. If the body is the living temple of an imprisoned divine intelligence, the metaphorical language of the mystics points to a tuning and activation of interrelated centres in the body.

There is a mystical heart that is different in location and function from the physical heart. There is also a seed of higher intellection, “the place between thine eyes”, which is distinct from those

centres of the brain that are involved in ordinary cerebration. The more a person is able to hold consciousness on a plane that is vaster in relation to time and space, subtler in relation to cause and motion, than normal sensory awareness, the more these higher centres are activated. Since this cannot take place without also arousing deeper feelings, the original meaning of the term “philosophy” — “love of wisdom” — is suggestive and significant.

There is a level of energy released by love that is conjoined with a profound reverence for truth *per se*. This energy releases a greater capacity to experience self-conscious attunement to what is behind the visible phantasmagoria of the whole of life, drawing one closer to what is gestating under the soil in the hidden roots of being, and closer to the unarticulated longings of all other human beings. Everyone senses this kinship at critical moments. Sometimes, in the context

Prof. Raghavan N. Iyer (10.3.1930–20.6.1995) 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. From *Hermes*, March 1985, Theosophy Trust Books. <theosophytrust.org/RNI-article>.

of a shared tragedy or at a time of crisis caused by a sudden catastrophe, many people experience an authentic oneness with each other despite the absence of any tokens of tangible expression.

To bring the disciplined and developed creative imagination into full play is to do much more than merely to have a passive awareness of sporadic moments of human solidarity. These moments are only intermittent, imperfect, and partial expressions of vaster capacities in the realms of thought and feeling. To draw out these capacities fully requires that we withdraw support from everything that is restrictive. The higher Eros presupposes a kind of negative Eros, a withdrawal of exaggerated emotional involvement in the things of this world, in sensations and sense-objects, in name and form and in ever-changing personalities.

This withdrawal is based upon the recognition that there is a lie involved in superficial emotion, and a calm awareness of a noumenal reality which is unmanifest. To realize this is to prepare for the potential release of the higher Eros, but this is truly difficult because to negate means to come to a void. There is no way to withdraw from the froth of psychic emotion and the tangles of discursive reasoning without experiencing a haunting loneliness and immense void wherein everything appears meaningless. Though painful and even terrifying, this is the necessary condition through which the seeker must pass if he is to die so that he may be reborn.

The Voice of the Silence teaches that

“the mind needs breadth and depth and points to draw it towards the Diamond Soul”. It must actively generate these mental linkages through deep meditation upon the suffering of humanity, seeing all individual strivings as part of a collective quest for enlightenment, focussing with compassion upon the universal suffering that transcends yet includes all the pains and agonies of all living beings.

When a person can connect and coordinate these periods of deliberate meditation and conscious cultivation of universal compassion, and experiences ordinary life through these contacts with the realm of non-being, then the purification and renovation of the temple has begun. There is a starving out of entire clusters of elementals, minute constellations of matter that have been given a murky colouring and destructive impress, and which make up the astral vesture. These matrices of frustration, limitation, anger, and self-hatred are gradually replaced by new clusters of life-energy — readily available throughout Nature — which are more attuned to the highest abstract conceptions of space, time and motion. Thus there is a greater incarnation of the indwelling divine nature.

Every human body may be seen as a mystic cross upon which the Christos within is being crucified. To nurture radical renovations in the vestures through the concentrated mind and disciplined imagination, by forging connections between points touched in meditation and in everyday life, is to make possible, after the Gethsemane (great suffering)

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necessitated by collective Karma, a fuller manifestation of the Christos, the god within. This long journey is coeval and coequal with the whole of life and the entirety of humankind.

When individuals discern in their own quest a cosmic dimension, impersonality and selflessness in their endeavours become an authentic affirmation of what is potentially within all. It is impossible to grow in awareness of what one truly is without finding that the barrier between oneself and other beings weakens. There is an internal integrity to this quest, and, therefore, it is pointless to pretend that all at once, simply by words, gestures, and rituals, one can suddenly come to a universal love of all mankind.

Of course, some desperate people, through drugs or other adventitious aids, experience enthralling intimations of the wonder of life or of its unity. These are the result of temporarily loosening the screws in the complex psychophysical organism called the human body and should not be mistaken for true wisdom. The crucial difference lies in continuity.

The more consciously one is able to sense the universal presence of the true Self, the more one can maintain continuity. The more one can see the moment of death and its connection with the present moment, the more one can participate in the unmanifest core of the universal quest. While the mystical capacity for sensing cosmic Eros grows, the desire to express it declines.

Those who are caught up in external appearances crave messianic miracles

and want to treat the universe as if they could manipulate it. This is a stumbling block to the quest. The real quest has an integrity that can be tested continuously because it must release an energy of commitment to the whole. Just as it is only through the cessation of the repetitive revolutions of the lower mind that higher thought is released, it is only by the cessation of limiting desires on the heterogeneous plane of perception that the true Eros may be released.

The Voice of the Silence teaches: “Shun ignorance, and likewise shun illusion. Avert thy face from world deceptions: mistrust thy senses; they are false. But within thy body — the shrine of thy sensations — seek in the Impersonal for the ‘Eternal Man’; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha.” Tragically, the divine origin of human consciousness is all too often forgotten by individuals who permit themselves to become entrapped in “world deceptions”.

Just as people in a room with artificial light forget the light of the sun, consciousness, when it is focussed through a lucid zone that points in the realm of externals in one direction, is in the very activity of awareness shutting off a larger consciousness. Human beings reinforce each other in assigning reality to the visible tip of the whole of life, to that which is maintained and activated by words, names, and desires which have public criteria of recognition that can be fulfilled on the plane of external events.

On the other hand, an individual who senses the rays of the Spiritual Sun,

enfolded in the blackness of the midnight sky, comes closer to wisdom. Participating in the reflections of lesser lights, while retaining an inward reverence for the cosmic ocean of light, is living within the moment with a calm awareness of eternity. *The Secret Doctrine* suggests that what is called light is a shadowy illusion and that beyond what are normally called light and darkness there is noumenal Darkness which is eternally radiant.

In the focussing of consciousness on the plane of differentiation, the process is broken into forms and colours, moments of time, fields of space. In the breaking up of consciousness, something gets caught, causing mental inertia. Cosmic spirit can only manifest in and through a material matrix, but it cannot manifest without mind, or without the energy that brings about the fusion of the matrix and what is potentially present in spirit. This is why, in all spiritual disciplines, the battleground is the mind.

The fact that the mind becomes dual is the price paid for self-consciousness and this price involves both self-limitation and the limiting of other selves. This limitation is reinforced by religious beliefs that foreshorten the age of man and the Earth, and also by constricting fears of death and decay, whether applied to human lives or collectively to a culture.

There is a consequent increase in the inability of consciousness to free itself from its frozen identification with a particular aspect of the differentiated field which is at best only

a veil cast over the greater life process.

At the very core of the life process all worlds are potentially present. In addition to a particular differentiated field, an infinite number of potentially differentiated fields lie latent in a pre-genetically differentiated state. This is the core of reality in the realm of divine thought called *Mahat*, the realm in which Mahatmas abide. It is also at the heart of cosmic Eros, or Fohat.

Whether one examines the collective structure of society or an individual in a nuclear family, one will find myriad ways in which human beings transfer anxiety and limitations to each other. Not all of them are equally trapped, nor are they all prey to the same kinds of illusions. Some individuals are perpetually subject to delusive expectations of worldly success. Their experience is painful and it seems they never truly learn.

There are others who experience violent reactions, and just because there is so much violence in their reaction, they are bound equally at the extreme points in the oscillation between optimism and pessimism. Still others seem to be shrewd and subtle in leaving possibilities open by negating their involvements intuitively and unconsciously, even though they may not have any metaphysical map to guide them.

There are always a few everywhere who are reminiscent of the great galaxy of beings who are awake during the long night of non-manifestation. They self-consciously begin with a certain thread of awareness, and those who know them

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from an early age may sense how calmly they are going to lay aside their mortal vestures in the end. Theirs is a beautiful, self-conscious reflection, though guarded and veiled, within the lesser vehicles and ordinary orbits of profane existence. While other human beings are cursing life and themselves, these heroic pioneers move as if they are constantly making an inward advance towards that which they knew early in life, and to which they will be true until the end.

The difference between human beings has to do with previous lives, and with the sad fact that many seem to gravitate again and again in the same direction in which they had formerly been trapped. Given a sufficiently vast period of evolution, all of them require in some sense to be where they are, and need their illusions. This is true metaphysically and in regard to evolution as a whole. But under the law of cycles, in certain periods of history and at crucial moments in the present, people come to a parting of the ways, a moment of choice. It is as if they sense that if they

do not do something, they are going to be left behind.

One cannot hold down high souls who have work to do in regard to human evolution, who are going to sow the seeds for the harvest of tomorrow. One cannot expect them to be held back by those who are born then under karma, even though unwilling or unready to put themselves in that posture where they confidently affirm their right to belong to a larger life. This is part of the complex process of the dying of a civilization or an epoch, and of the coming to birth of a new order through a long and painful gestation.

Ultimately, then, fragmentation and entrapment of consciousness cannot be understood solely in terms of the interdependence between human beings, or the differences between people bound up with the same illusions and those with the courage to break them. The missing term in such an account is the confrontation between self-consciousness and the void.

(To be continued)

The term “Universal Brotherhood” is no idle phrase. Humanity in the mass has a paramount claim upon us, as I try to explain in my letter to Mr Hume, which you had better ask the loan of. It is the only secure foundation for universal morality. If it be a dream, it is at least a noble one for humankind: and it is the aspiration of the *true adept*.

Koot’ Hoomi Lal Singh
First letter of KH to A. O. Hume
Chron. Letter No. 5, (ML-4) Rec. Nov. 3, 1880

Awakening Theosophia: Imagination, Ideation, and Intuition

KIRK B. GRADIN

Reason is the clumsy weapon of the scientists
— intuition the unerring guide of the seer.

H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, p. 433

IN *The Secret Doctrine*, H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) explains that the “very old book”, or series of books from which both *The Voice of the Silence* and the Stanzas of Dzyan are derived, was originally taken down in Senzar, a language still unknown to modern linguists. She says it is a record of the words of divine beings who dictated it to the “Sons of Light” in Central Asia, roughly one million years ago. Like a mighty river of celestial light the greatest Initiates of every nation were carrying forth a knowledge passed down eons before by godlike beings present even at the dawn of the first Races of our globe.¹ And it is from this radiant stream that all the historically known sages have branched off.²

An unbroken lineage of Masters of the Wisdom stood behind the mystery schools of ancient Egypt and Greece, behind Krishna, Buddha, Pythagoras, Jesus and many others. But, “These founders were all *transmitters*, not original teachers.”³

In other words, what we call *Theosophia* has an origin that cannot be traced or encompassed by any history book, sacred text, or known tradition. “*Dzyu*” she wrote, inherited by the whole of humanity, “dealing with eternal truths and primal causes” is “the expression of the collective Wisdom of the Dhyani-Buddhas”.⁴ Phonetically she relates it to *Djan* or *Jñāna*, meaning “to reform one’s self by meditation and knowledge,”⁵ by means of which a second inner birth is possible.

So before speaking glibly about “awakening Theosophia”, we should understand that we are referring to progressive stages by which we may begin to rejoin an ever-present spiritual current of primeval wisdom, resonating with the most advanced and benevolent guardians and guides of the human race — from which we have become self-exiled. This reawakening to our inheritance and return to our true nature is the prospect held out for us by the Bodhisattva path. As described

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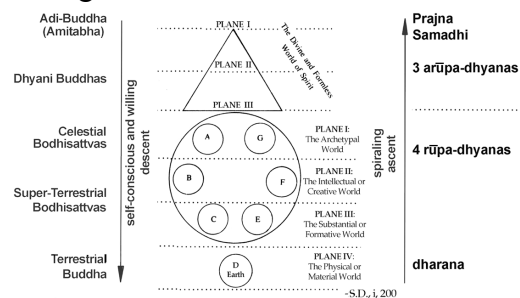
Awakening Theosophia: Imagination, Ideation, and Intuition

in *The Voice of the Silence*, this small old path is defined by seven guarded gates known as *pāramitās*. Though all seven must be eventually mastered, our theme today pertains most specifically to the 6th gate, that of *dhyāna*, “the Bodhi portal”.⁶

Dhyāna is summarily described in the *Voice*, as that “golden gate” which once opened leads toward “the realm of Sat eternal and its ceaseless contemplation”. *Sat* in Sanskrit is Truth, Purity, and Goodness, but in the Upanishads it is linked with knowledge of *Brahman*, embracing both Being and Non-Being. Called “Beness” in *The Secret Doctrine*, it is the All, the One Reality. The path of *dhyāna* that leads toward its realization may be said to be composed of seven fundamental tiers, four *rūpa* and three *arūpa dhyānas*. What begins with *dhāranā*, the intense concentration of the mind upon a single interior object, progresses through multiple stages of ever-deepening and more continuous states of meditative abstraction.

This stream of effort and increasing continuity of consciousness eventually culminates in the highest forms of *samādhi*, states of “faultless vision” in which seer, seen, and the faculty of seeing unite in complete, non-dual absorption. The knowledge and virtue necessarily awakened through this training also involves at least seven stages of initiation wherein the seventh *pāramitā*, that of *prajñā*, is realized. *Prajñā* too has many layers of meaning. At its pinnacle it is described in the *Voice* as that “which makes of a man a God, creating him a Bodhisattva, son of the Dhyanis.”⁷ In that

sense, the highest form of *dhyāna* is inseparable from the highest form of pure knowledge and compassion: direct, unbroken, self-conscious union with the All and with *Ādi-Buddha*, or universal *buddhi*, combined with the effortless mastery of creative logic essences and their proper use on every plane.⁸ Roughly correlating with the seven cosmic planes given by H PB, the column on the left of the diagram below summarizes the prototypical hierarchies of descent such a being passes through in its return into incarnation.⁹



And while the ideal of the Bodhisattva is certainly the highest imaginable fusion of pure knowledge, self-mastery, and universal service, all are invited to prepare to approach the threshold of the path leading thereto. No robes or monasteries, no degrees or physical postures are required. It is open to electricians and carpenters, blue-collar secretaries, accountants, trash collectors, and house cleaners. All that is needed, as Plato said, is the turning around of the soul from darkness to light. As Shantideva said, it begins when one discovers the precious jewel of *bodhi-chitta* within, the wisdom-seeking mind pervaded by a love for all, consecrated by an irreversible commitment.

Though “many are called, few are

chosen”.¹⁰ Even this initial unlocking of the heart is no simple feat, itself requiring the unfoldment of the higher faculties of both moral and metaphysical imagination. For we will be asked at the threshold: “Hast thou attuned thy heart and mind to the great mind and heart of all mankind?”¹¹ Have we imaginatively identified with both the worst and the best, the most degraded as well as the most advanced and exalted of beings?

The most fallen the *Voice* describes as the “living dead”, or those on the verge of soul-destruction. “Behold the Hosts of Souls. Watch how they hover o’er the stormy sea of human life, and how, exhausted, bleeding, broken-winged, they drop one after another on the swelling waves.”¹² Here the widespread suffering of which the Buddha spoke is not physical, but the tragedy of mental and moral isolation. Fundamentally, it is a crisis of identity, a misguided search for happiness based on ignorance and attachment to a false sense of self. It is “mental woe unspeakable” as the soul becomes enrapt in a collective vortex, inverting human purpose and destiny.

At the same time we are encouraged to imagine the boundless compassion of beings who are capable of calmly assessing the enormity of the problem and who possess the skillful means and precise wisdom needed to assist and alleviate. We are not only given a portrait of the ideal practitioner of meditation, like “an alabaster vase” in which the golden “flame of *Prajñā*”¹³ burns with unflickering radiance, but those Mahatmas who have reached the peace and bliss

of Nirvana and repeatedly renounced it on behalf of humanity. The mind, “like a becalmed and boundless ocean, spreadeth out in shoreless space.”¹⁴

With no more to gain or learn from terrestrial life, the Bodhisattva incarnates for “Kalpas without number” so that even “the blind may see, the lame walk, . . . and the dead be raised”¹⁵, that even the most fallen may regain confidence in the promise of self-redemption. So great is the hidden impact of such a being returning from the further shore, that all of Nature “thrills with joyous awe and feels subdued”. Even stately pines join the cosmic symphonic chorus and mysteriously whisper: “A Master has arisen, a MASTER OF THE DAY.”¹⁶ Every page of *The Voice of the Silence* is replete with such original precepts, or *bija sutras*. When repeatedly imagined and meditated upon, they will solicit *buddhic* intuitions and soul memories. Each is a truth with layers of meaning, designed to draw consciousness towards the Diamond Soul.

The 18th century writer and theologian, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, wrote of imagination as it operates in geniuses. He called it “a Living Power and prime agent of all human perceptions”, a “synthetic and magical” capacity “organic and active” which “assimilates, dissolves, and re-creates . . . synthesizes, and unifies”. At its pinnacle he deemed it a participation in the creative action of eternity itself. “The primary Imagination I hold to be . . . a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM.”¹⁷

Coleridge carefully distinguished between imagination and fantasy as “two

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distinct and widely differing faculties". Fancy, he wrote, is mechanical and passive, it "associates, aggregates, collates, juxtaposes, . . . and rearranges"¹⁸ without any true creativity taking place. Theosophically, fantasy would be categorized as a psychic mental production, morally colored by the false self. Captivated by lower levels of the astral light, the ceaseless generator of the mind serves the terrestrial persona, becoming the delusional evil genius in each of us.

By contrast, the mystic and Irish theosophist George William Russell spoke of the purified imagination as the means by which we grasp archetypes perpetually manifesting in everyday experience. Speaking of the great sages of the past and present, he wrote:

The meditation they urged on us has been explained as "the inexpressible yearning of the inner man to go out to the infinite". But the Infinite we would enter is living. It is the ultimate being of us. Meditation is a fiery brooding on that majestic Self. We imagine ourselves into Its vastness. We conceive ourselves as mirroring Its infinitudes, as moving in all things, as living in all beings, in earth, water, air, fire, ether. We try to know as It knows, to live as It lives, to be compassionate as It is compassionate. We equal ourselves to It that we may understand It and become It. . . . "What a man thinks, that he is: that is the old secret," said the wise. We have imagined ourselves into this pitiful dream of life. By imagination and will, we re-enter true being, becoming what we conceive of.¹⁹

It is unlikely that Russell had know-

ledge of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition of Deity Yoga, but it sounds as though he had a clear grasp of the fundamental discipline. As defined by Mathieu Ricard, this Vajrayāna practice is not the wishful imaginative visualization of blissful but illusory realms and elevated states of being, but "the purification of perception"²⁰ by which we become aware of our true nature, like a pauper who discovers the pot of gold buried beneath his hut.

According to the late professor Henry Corbin, who spent his life devoted to studies in comparative philosophy, religion, and esoteric Islam, the vast and complex idea of imagination and its field of activity is called "*alam al-mithal*"²¹ by the Sufis. It is a multilayered metaphysical world between the phenomenal and that of pure mystery. It is composed of "Idea Images", essential meanings, and "fraternities of spiritual beings . . . by which divine realities are made intelligible". As a faculty of mystic perception, it is activated through the divine quest which does not so much create, as discover.

Corbin wrote of the Sufi and Christian mystics and theosophists of the Renaissance, in which we "encounter the idea that the Godhead itself possesses the power of Imagination". By imagining the universe, God brought it into manifestation through the eternal virtuosities and potencies of his own being. In the esoteric dimension of Islam these potencies are connected with the Names of Allah. The more the active imagination in the gnostic is aligned with truth and love for all, the more it becomes a self-conscious organ of deific, cosmogonic imagination.

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In the Gupta Vidya, ideation corresponding to levels of *Ākāśa-Vach*²² may be said to be fourfold: latent, pre-cosmic, cosmic, and human, each of which is oceanic and ultimately ineffable. We imagine it first as a boundless, omnipresent sphere of deathless radiance, mirroring Absolute Unity as the One Sun of Truth. Periodically, the unmanifested logos emerges to initiate the manifested. Out of boundless compassion and empathy the One Mind substance becomes two and three.

At the cosmic dawn, the descent of the pre-cosmic triad into cosmic ideation, from *arūpa* to *rūpa* is accompanied by the seven Dhyānis. These seven Divine Rays²³ of the One Sun, manifest the plan latent in the divine mind. Emanating through a process akin to what we call *dhyāna*²⁴, each sacrificially gives of their own essence. Each emanates and then sacrificially incarnates into theatres of evolution in which every spark of monadic life has the same opportunity to become a self-consciously divine, logic center of the highest creativity and universal good. Purified ideation in humanity would both mirror and participate in this salvific activity through dianoetic meditation, ceaseless service, constant renewal, and spiritual self-transformation.

For the beginning aspirant the reformation of thought, will, and feeling involves both deductive and inductive, discursive and non-discursive meditation nurtured by gratitude for the galaxies of beings who have gone before, an overflowing benevolence, and an overarching conviction regarding the One Life.

Spiritual truths, philosophical precepts, and Aquarian Axioms can be used to combine dialectical inquiry with self-alchemy. Daily mental breathing can mirror the spiraling descent and ascent of the “Great Breath”²⁵, fusing metaphysics with the purification of ethical practice in daily dharma. What would it mean to truly experience each dawn as the logoc dawn of a *manvantara* and noon (instead of just “lunch”) as the descent of the gods into human form, the awakening of *manas*?

Can one imaginatively follow the train of continuity from the formless into form, from the One Monad to the countless monads cycling through every plane and every form of experience possible in our chain of globes — all being mirrored in every human microcosm? Can we begin to sense the living presence of divine thought in every point of visible and invisible space?

Can we begin to see the continuous relevance of the seven Dhyānis manifesting in seven kingdoms through seven Rounds and Races by making credible correlations with a cycle of seven years in human life, with the cycle of seven days of the week, as well as with the various states of consciousness and energy we use or misuse over the course of a single day?

Can we fearlessly deepen our awareness of our own misalignment and inversion of these universal forces? Can we activate the spiritual will in order to repeatedly purify and self-correct? At the end of the day, can we noetically work our way back from our seemingly individual experiences, resolving all sense of separateness and differentiation on all

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planes into the universal quantum field of joyous identity with the whole of humanity and the One Life? Everything returns to that divine plenum of Absolute Light and Sound enjoyed by every human being in dreamless sleep and is consciously sought by the meditator in deepest reverie.

The more ideation of this type is cultivated in combination with all the *pāramitās*, the more intuition will waken. What we currently call intuition appears as a fleeting flash of insight, a partial glimpse of a higher truth, the “whisperings of *Buddhi* to *Manas*”.²⁶ Studies have shown intuition operating at critical breakthroughs in many arenas of human endeavor.²⁷ On the spiritual path, it must be tested through higher forms of reasoning and through moral embodiment before it becomes a reliable and indispensable means of knowing. Moral states precede mental states and “no vision of one Adept” is accepted “until it is checked and confirmed by the visions

— so obtained as to stand as independent evidence — of other adepts.”²⁸

In the psycho-spiritual physiology of the Gupta Vidya, intuition presages and culminates in the opening of the wisdom eye, the “Eye of Dangma”,²⁹ the means by which the true Seer apprehends Nature’s most hidden mysteries. Here, the soul of all things is seen. No veil of matter, time, or space offers obstruction to either vision or action. And because microcosm and macrocosm self-consciously unite, the being progressively becomes a channel of *Alaya*, “the Law of Laws”,³⁰ the absolute compassion, fohatic energy, and universal intelligence behind all of Nature.

This direct and unmediated form of knowing that is without bias or error, says HPB, is *Theosophia*: “the wisdom of the gods.”³¹ And it is one of the great purposes of the Theosophical movement in whatever form it has taken through the ages, to keep the possibility and promise of this potential alive in every human heart. ✧

Endnotes

1. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. xliii.
2. *Ibid*, vol. 1, pp. 207–8.
3. *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. xxxvi.
4. *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 108.
5. *Ibid*, vol. 1, pp. xx, fn.
6. *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 70.
7. *Ibid*, p. 53.
8. *Ibid*, pp. 23–24, where the “Master of SAMADHI” becomes the “Seven Sounds in one . . .” Also, see “Aquarian Axioms” compiled by HPB in 1890, nos. 8 and 9: “Spirituality . . . is the power of perceiving formless spiritual essences. The discovery and

right use of the true essence of Being; this is the whole secret of life.”

9. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. 572.
10. Matthew, 22:14.
11. *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 55.
12. *Ibid*, p. 9.
13. *Ibid*, p. 70.
14. *Ibid*, p. 71.
15. Matthew, 11:5.
16. *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 71.
17. *Biographia Literaria* (p. 49), Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Kindle Edition.

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18. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

19. *The Candle of Vision*, George William Russell, Unity Press, 1990, p. 14.

20. *Mandala, The Architecture of Enlightenment*, Leidy and Thurman, Appendix B: “Introduction to the Purpose and Symbolism of the Mandala in Tibetan Buddhism”, by Mathieu Ricard, p. 157.

21. “Alone with the Alone”. *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi*, Henry Corbin, Bollingen 1998, p. 21 and chap. 34.

22. R. N. Iyer, *The Gupta Vidya*, Vol. 3, pp. 46–7.

23. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. 430. “. . . with regard to Humanity, these “Seven Sons” and their numberless emanations, centres of energy personified, are an absolute necessity. Make away with them, and the mystery of Being and Mankind *will never be unriddled, not even closely approached*”.

24. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 572: “‘The Lord Prajapati (Brahma) created all this by the mind only,’ i.e., by *Dhyana*, or abstract meditation and mystic powers like the Dhyani Buddhas . . . as primordial, intelligent ‘Elements’, [and they] become the *creators* or the *emanators* of the monads destined to become human in that cycle; after which they evolve themselves, or, so to say, expand into their own selves as Bodhisattvas or Brāhmanas, in heaven and earth, to become at last simple men — ‘the creators of the world *are born here, on earth again and again*’ — truly.”

25. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 43: “The appearance and disappearance of the Universe are pictured as

an out-breathing and inbreathing of ‘the Great Breath’, which is eternal, and which, being Motion, is one of the three aspects of the Absolute. . . . When the ‘Great Breath’ is projected, it is called the Divine Breath, and is regarded as the breathing of the Unknowable Deity — the One Existence — which breathes out a thought, as it were, which becomes the Kosmos. So also is it when the Divine Breath is inspired again the Universe disappears into the bosom of ‘the Great Mother’, who then sleeps ‘wrapped in her invisible robes’.”

26. Mahatma K. H., *Letters from the Masters of Wisdom*, Letter 20.

27. See for example, *Irreducible Mind: Toward a Psychology for the 21st Century*, Kelly and Kelly, chaps. 7 and 8 on “Genius” and “Mysticism”. “Inspirations of genius in general involve successful appeal to the deeper subliminal levels, with success being due to some combination of intensity in the appeal itself (via preparatory labor) and a favorable psychological constitution (traits) or conditions (states) that provide an unusual ‘permeability’ or openness to the subliminal.” p. 431. Also see a remarkable study (available online) of the operation of intuition in mathematics by Jacques Hadamard, 1945: *Psychology of Invention in the Mathematical Field*.

28. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. 273.

29. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 45 and p. 46 fn.

30. *The Voice of the Silence*, pp. 74–5.

31. *Theosophical Articles by H. P. Blavatsky*, Theosophy Co., 1981, “*Le Phare de L’Inconnu*” vol. 1, p. 424.

As the brain-mind is the receiver in the waking state, it has to be purified from sense-perception, and the truest way to do this is by combining philosophy with the highest outward and inward virtue.

HPB Collected Writings, Volume IX, p. 400

Daily Steps towards Brotherhood¹ — I

PAVEL MALAKHOV

AS we all know, there exist various paths facilitating the spiritual development of human beings, each of them being quite justified as far as it helps individuals who follow this path to progress towards the refinement of their nature. Thus, anyone seeking to develop their *understanding* of how the world works finds it important to conceive the subject intellectually before they can integrate the resulting conception into their living practice. Theory and speculation are no idle words for individuals of this kind, but rather instruments for achieving their own progress. They need first to elaborate a clear-cut conception of what *brotherhood* really is, how helpful and necessary it might be, before they agree to make the concept part of their daily reality. Hopefully, the ideas I am presenting further on, will help some to come closer to the adoption and implementation of this noble concept.

Subject of Investigation

The Theosophical Society (TS) was founded precisely for the practical application of brotherhood principles — a fact which not only found its formal expres-

sion in the Society's first Object, but also was clearly set forth in the short message of the Mahachohan, the Mahatmas' Teacher, who had inspired the establishment of the TS. Following is a fragment of his message:

. . . how is the combative *natural* instinct of man to be restrained from inflicting hitherto unheard of cruelties and enormities, tyranny, injustice, and so on, if not through the soothing influence of a brotherhood?

. . .

Perish rather the Theosophical Society . . . than that we should permit it to become no better than an academy of magic and a hall of occultism. That *we*, the devoted followers of that spirit incarnate of absolute self-sacrifice, of philanthropy, divine kindness, as of all the highest virtues attainable on this Earth of sorrow, the man of men, Gautama Buddha, should ever allow the Theosophical Society to represent the *embodiment of selfishness*, the refuge of the few with no thought in them for the many, is a strange idea, my brothers.

Such an emphasis on the understanding and feeling of brotherhood is made

Mr Pavel Malakhov, former Presidential Representative of the TS in Russia, made a presentation based on this article at the Russian National Theosophical Congress of Nov. 2021. Published in *Sovremennaya Teosofskaya Mysl* (Modern Theosophical Thought), 2022-1 (13).

by people whose brief fragmentary reflection of their knowledge is the voluminous work of *The Secret Doctrine*, taken in all its complexity and depth — that is, they are people with a fairly well-developed intellect, imagination, and intuition. It means that there is something fundamental underlying the brotherhood idea, something that enables one to penetrate far deeper into the laws of the Universe compared with what can be obtained by means of intellect alone.

To be able to understand anything, one should push oneself inwardly towards it. This holds true *not solely* for the intellectual approach, but for such an approach *as well*. Therefore, let us try to get an intellectual understanding of brotherhood by means of logical reasoning so that, upon giving intellect the food it needs, we can pass on to other levels of understanding to end up finding ways for implementing this idea in our everyday life.

Theory

Theosophy asserts that the human being is multiplanar in the literal sense of the word. He perceives the world from several angles and on several planes of existence simultaneously. Thus, we distinguish our physical body with its five senses from what we experience independently of the latter: for example, alarm, uncertainty, fear, affection, and other emotions and feelings. Another level of existence is represented by our own thoughts and the way we perceive other people's thoughts. Theosophy (and

some other teachings), however, maintain that apart from these three, there exists a spiritual level that links all creatures together. Thus, for example, we can describe our four planes of existence as follows:

1. *Physical*, where our physical body exists with its senses;
2. *Substantial, sensual, or psychic*, where our sensual perceptions and emotional experiences dwell;
3. *Intellectual*, where our thoughts appear, exist, and evolve;
4. *Spiritual*, what represents the enduring reality, our immortal nature.

Just as any concept can be considered in accordance with the above four planes of existence, brotherhood can be represented as the fourfold:

- *physical*, members of a family, or neighbours;
- *psychic*, those compassionate, those sharing our feelings;
- *intellectual*, like-minded persons, or those sharing the same faith;
- *spiritual*, teachers, guides; but as all separating boundaries begin to disappear at higher grades of existence, the very notion of brothers or sisters disappears, melting in the universal Unity and common perception of Reality.

Table A, below, “Brotherhood Levels”, deals in more detail with human communication to specify human qualities reflecting the concept of brotherhood at each level.

If we find there is something that prevents us from experiencing friendly feelings towards others, let us examine what it is and to which level of existence

Brotherhood Levels

Level of communication	Individuals involved	Modes of communication	Valuable qualities of brothers and sisters
physical	relatives, neighbours, community	Meetings and congresses, handshakes and embraces, specific vestments and paraphernalia; sharing things and providing financial aid; creating a common space (home, community)	generosity, thoroughness, diligence
psychic	those sympathizing, empathizing	sympathy, ability to listen to and cheer up others; creating a friendly atmosphere, cosiness	gentleness, responsiveness, affection, friendliness, kindness
intellectual	like-minded persons and those sharing the same faith	discussion, formalization of cooperative arrangements, modes of expression, work on the text and wording (rules, regulations, commandments), structuring; promoting a culture of creativity	tolerance, inclusiveness, flexibility of mind, creative approach
spiritual	teachers, guides	unselfish transmission of knowledge; meditation; dissolution of one's Self in the others; manifesting oneself as a vehicle of natural forces	ability to synthesize ideas and penetrate into the essence of things; altruism

it pertains. Is the obstacle really *ours* and is it insurmountable? This requires from us conscious realization of what it is that we regard as ourselves. The question itself is fundamental and difficult enough to demand that we examine it closely. Yet, it is not due to the human constitution theory offered to us by Theosophy (fairly simple in its general outlines) that makes

the question so difficult. Rather, it is due to our attachment to lower principles. Thus, according to the classical theosophical description, human constitution can be represented in a simplified way:

1. *Physical body* — an outer shell of the rest of the principles enabling our consciousness to gain experience in the densest layers of matter.

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2. *Astral body* — the prototype of the physical body; the vehicle of the sensual principle responsible for the connection between our mind and the exterior world.

3. *Prāna* — the energy principle responsible for human beings' industry and vitality; this principle pervades the remaining bodies, linking them with each other.

4. *Inferior mind*, concrete — intellectual activity, high adaptability to the environment, the ability to analyse information supplied by senses; its main function is to provide vital activity, survival of man; develops a new personality for each reincarnation.

5. *Superior mind*, abstract — rational or reasonable activity, the ability to discover laws, get the gist of what happens around us; its main function is to comprehend the world; develops an immortal individuality.

6. *Buddhi* — a transcendental principle, which connects our evolving individuality with the reflection of the ideal universe inside of us, its basic function being individualization of the eternal and unconditioned existence or reflection of the latter inside of us.

7. *Ātma* — another transcendental principle, but there is nothing individual about it; its basic function is to maintain connection with the entire Universe.

We are all these seven principles simultaneously, but what we regard as ourselves at any given moment of our lives may vary a great deal. Hence, there is a great difference in our understanding of Brotherhood.

1) Should we view ourselves as

bodies alone, then brotherhood will take shape in our view as a union of bodies. Brotherly activities shall be expressed as general meetings, personal attendance, special handshakes and embraces, specific vestments, and paraphernalia. What is important at this level is sharing things and providing financial aid, improved living conditions, establishment of communities and communes, and so on. Brotherly qualities would include generosity, thoroughness, and diligence.

2) Should we perceive ourselves, above all **sensually**, then the brotherhood idea will find expression, in our eyes, through sympathy, the ability to listen to and cheer up our neighbours. A friendly atmosphere in our group will be of great importance to us, and, accordingly, we will be seeking to act in a more environment-friendly and positive manner, following the principle: "Do no harm." It will become important for us to see gentleness, affection, kindness and responsiveness in other people. Naturally enough, we will be cultivating the same qualities in ourselves.

3) Should we identify ourselves with **intellectual** activities, we will try to rub shoulders with like-minded people and those sharing our own faiths. The brotherhood criteria will then embrace the similarity of views while in our practice we will seek to develop a proclivity towards acting thoughtfully and reasonably. A creative approach to any problem will also become an important requirement for us. At still higher levels of our development, we will seek to expand our intel-

lectual horizons. Next, brotherly relations would give rise to a highly marked ability to accept other people's view of the world. Therefore, flexibility of mind, tolerance, and inclusiveness will become qualities that we will value most of all in others.

4) When we reach the level of **spiritual** perception, unity and the public good will become our key values as we seek to share everything we have there. Yet, unlike the preceding planes, this one focuses on non-material benefits alone. Therefore, while unselfishly sharing our knowledge and wisdom we should realise we are acting on the spiritual plane. In that event, we have no wish to prove anything or convince anybody; we are only eager to answer questions asked, speaking the language familiar to the enquirer. This is a level where we accept the exterior world in all entirety, and, thus, none of those who consciously stay on this plane, desire to create anything for themselves or change it to suit their needs. All their acts are connected with the needs of other people.

Seeking to act in perfect agreement with Nature, individuals here voluntarily become creative conductors of higher powers and dedicate themselves to the service of all beings with the care of a parent, while taking the position of an older brother, that is, the senior among equals. At still higher levels of this plane, however, even the notions *brother* or *sister* disappear, because we find ourselves in a state of an integral perception of reality shared by all, staying at the same level, so that vis-à-vis the lower

ones such people regard themselves not as elder brothers but, rather, as auxiliary forces of Nature which provide the necessary conditions for development. In other words, their feelings and assistance are impersonal and, of course, absolutely disinterested.

The higher the level of brotherhood we can make part of our worldview and field of our activities, the easier it will be for us to show brotherly feelings at other, lower levels. Yet, activities at some of the levels will not replace activities at the rest. Each level is sufficiently important, because a *complete* man must feel *completely* at home at *each* of the levels. In ordinary life, however, we see that the development of these levels does not proceed one after the other, but simultaneously, and the speed of progress may be different.

Sometimes the *intellectual* level can significantly overtake the physical and psychic ones, and then the idea of brotherhood fails to come to fruition, remaining a mere idea. An individual like this will remain a theoretician useless to other people.

Should the *psychic* level happen to take the leading position, one could see such people overwhelmed with emotions: they eagerly share their problems and experience with others, but they are unable to resolve their problems either because they fail to see any solutions or they are too lethargic to translate them into life.

If it is the *physical* level that comes out on top, one can watch people build

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assembly and conference halls, but cannot come to terms in them; they may establish communities but fail to get along with each other in them; they may earn a great deal of money and acquire material wealth by joint effort but they fail to distribute the capital fairly.

Should, however, an individual withdraw into isolation at the *spiritual* level, he will, then, become useless for the rest of humankind: while perceiving higher energies and plunging into the field of divine wisdom, he loses the ability to serve as their conductor and transmitter for other people.

Therefore, the evolution of the human being must proceed at *all* levels, and each level must be given equal attention, and we should improve our ability to show allegiance to the brotherhood principles at each level, which means that each level requires its own regular practice.

The Practice of Brotherhood

For everyone practicing brotherhood, it is very important to understand that it is primarily a state of consciousness, or a set of conditions under which such consciousness is possible and the violation of which makes it impossible. Just as we cannot experience both hatred and love at the same time, so there are states — for example, arrogance, vindictiveness, irritation, irresponsibility, fanaticism — that are opposite to brotherhood and undermine it. In this regard, the necessary daily practice will include switching oneself from negative states to positive ones. Each individual will have

his own list of qualities to pay attention to. To begin with, we need to focus on minimising feelings and thoughts that alienate us from other people, cause irritation, rejection, and dissatisfaction with communication.

Without setting ourselves the goal of comprehensively highlighting the possible practices for people of different characters and inclinations, we will outline some practical advice for those who are prone to intellectual activity. For such people, a fundamental disagreement with their opponents on any worldview issue can often be an obstacle to cooperation and brotherly communication. In that event, two approaches can help to remove the barrier: *acceptance* and *understanding*. Both approaches have their own realisation paths which embrace a number of quite specific actions.

Based on *acceptance*, brotherhood principles can be inculcated through *passive actions* that are the result and expression of empathy, compassion, and resignation. The implementation of the following tips may prove helpful for achieving success during one's daily meetings and conversations:

- *let the other person have his own opinion*, different from ours;
- *allow others to make mistakes*;
- *admit the possibility of yourself being wrong*;
- *accept the imperfection of the world as an inescapable fact*, including the imperfection of others and yourself;
- *assume your opponent has good intentions*, avoid taking his words as an insult;

Daily Steps towards Brotherhood — I

- *do not talk down your opponent, do not try to dominate*, accept him as an equal; or if you find it difficult to do, try to imagine him as your superior in erudition and pay attention to his strong sides;

- *accept the idea of universal unity* and inextricable connection with other people: our connection cannot be escaped, brotherhood exists regardless of our desire, understanding, or participation — it is an integral part of being.

As regards brotherhood based on *understanding*, the following *active efforts* are required for self-transformation and self-perfection:

- *try to understand where your opponents may be right*, try to grasp the context of what they said; taking into account their worldview, try to understand what precisely they meant;

- *do not impose your opinion*, restrain your desire to convince the opponent with an abundance of arguments;

- *do not press your opponent emotionally* by raising your voice, pushing, or sensuality of speech;

- *do not ignore arguments that challenge your claims*; change your worldview in accordance with them so that it retains the property of consistency with all the facts known to us;

- if we disagree, it would be advisable to avoid answering with a negative: “no, because . . .” and try to answer in the spirit of clarification: “yes, this is true in such and such a context, but in another context it may be different”;

- *use only words that are familiar to your opponent*, do not flaunt erudition;

- pay more attention to *understanding the opponent’s position* than to explaining your own.

The practical application of each advice and both approaches will bring us closer to the state of brotherhood. No theory can give us an experience of this state, one needs to experience it personally, for which appropriate conditions must be available. In this regard, it should be noted that one of the most important practical hints says that *brotherhood is a collective state*; it cannot be achieved individually; it is the result of interaction with others. On the other hand, brotherhood is primarily an internal state; it embraces *our own* feelings and state of mind, *our own* world outlooks; it cannot be instilled from the outside; it must be nurtured *from within*. These considerations lead us to understand the need to unite with others and motivate ourselves to do so.

(To be continued)

Endnote

1. The words “brotherhood”, “man”, “men”, “he” and the like are used in a wider sense, referring to a human being(s).

**The Argument from Intimidation
is a confession of intellectual impotence.**

Ayn Rand

The Olcott Panchama Free School — I

GEETHA JAIKUMAR

THE Olcott Panchama Free School was possibly the earliest non-missionary school in India, started for educating the “Pariah” (lowest caste) children. It was started in June 1884 by Colonel H. S. Olcott, who felt that in education lay the path to their emancipation and empowerment. Several Theosophists, some coming from the United States especially to help in this work, joined him in this venture. Successive Presidents of the Theosophical Society and members in various countries valued the School not only for the good work it did, but also as an abiding memorial to Col. Olcott’s tenderness and sympathy for the downtrodden and the oppressed.

Many first-of-a-kind, pioneering initiatives originated here such as the noon meal scheme for children, emphasis on hygiene and health, introduction of kindergarten, vocational education, and scouting activities, to name just a few. Col. Olcott’s action in founding these schools for the “untouchables” opened out to them new careers which not only gave them better economic status, but also much needed self-respect gained from education.

History

When Col. Olcott, President-Founder of the Theosophical Society (TS), came and settled at Adyar, he was deeply concerned by the dire poverty and abysmal living conditions of the community called the “Pariah-s”, or Untouchables. Also called the Panchama or “fifth” caste, they were outside the pale of the Hindu social and religious organization. Apart from extreme poverty, they also suffered from complete social ostracism, as any form of contact with them was supposed to cause pollution.

Appalled by the treatment meted out to these unfortunate people, Col. Olcott was one of the earliest persons (even before the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi on the scene) to begin the urgent reform for abolishing the evil of untouchability, which was a blight on the entire community. There is an oft-recounted story of how the plight of the poor Pariah children came to the Colonel’s notice.

Olcott was fond of swimming in the Adyar River, which used to flow swift and clean in those days. He would float on his

Dr Geetha Jaikumar, who retired as an Associate Professor and Principal of a Women’s College in Chennai, has also for many years managed and edited magazines related to the TS and Theosophy, including the *Adyar Newsletter* and *Wake Up India*. She is currently doing research at the Adyar Archives.

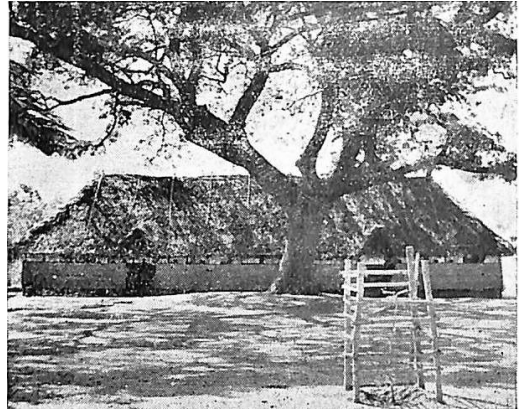
The Olcott Panchama Free School — I

back, simultaneously reading a newspaper and smoking a cigar, which was no mean feat! A cluster of practically naked fishermen's children would also swim around, watching with great curiosity, the Western gentleman with the long flowing beard. To win their confidence, he used to throw a few coins into the water, which the children would retrieve by diving in, like ducks. One day he asked them why they were not at school at that hour in the morning and was horrified to learn that no school would admit them.

Not one to let grass grow under his feet, Olcott immediately set about remedying the situation by starting a school for these Panchama children. He realized that in education lay the salvation of the depressed classes in India. The first of the five "Olcott Panchama Free Schools" was started by him in June 1884, near the Headquarters of the TS at Adyar, for the benefit of the children in the neighbourhood.

A small building with mud walls and a roof of palm leaves was erected on rented land to accommodate 45 pupils, nine of whom were girls. One teacher was employed for imparting elementary education in Tamil, coupled with instruction in conversational English. The school became a runaway success with more and more parents wanting to admit their children in them.

While most schools in India existing during that period did not offer free education, Olcott was very particular that no fees should be collected. During his extensive tours the Colonel appealed



The mud-walled building of the first Olcott school

for financial support for this educational venture and managed to secure donations from individual members all over the world. However, he made it clear that it was his private undertaking, and not carried on by the TS. Dr W. A. English became the first superintendent of the school, who took care of its functioning in Olcott's absence.

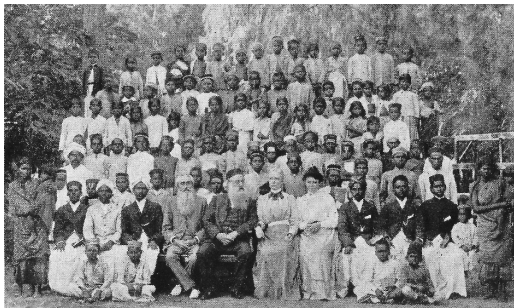
In June 1886, two years after its inception, the School was visited by H. E. the Governor of the Madras Presidency, Sir Arthur Havelock; following which an official grant-in-aid was received from the Government, which made it possible to start a second school in the village of Kodambakkam, about six miles from Madras, now Chennai. This was named the HPB Memorial School.

A year later a third school, "Damodar", was opened in Teynampet, 4 miles from Adyar, and a fourth school in Mylapore named "Thiruvalluvar", in commemoration of one who was born a Pariah before this race was forced into its present state of degradation. A fifth school was opened

The Olcott Panchama Free School — I

in May 1906 at Krishnampet, three miles from Adyar, and was called the “Annie Besant School”.

Col. Olcott managed to rope in some experienced educators from abroad to shape the schools to fulfil his vision for the upliftment of the Panchama community. One of the earliest to take charge was Miss Sarah Palmer, BA, BSc, of the Minnesota University, who undertook the supervision of the schools in the autumn of 1898. When she resigned at the close of 1901, Miss N. A. Courtwright, who had come from Chicago with Olcott for the purpose, undertook the supervision of the schools in the beginning of 1902. When she left because of ill health, her place was taken by Miss C. Kofel, and later on by Miss E. E. Orr. And subsequently, equally dedicated and committed individuals picked up the mantle to continue the crusade.



The pupils of Olcott Panchama Free School with HSO

Though all the schools were run very efficiently and had made a significant difference to the lives of the Pariah children, extreme shortage of funds compelled the TS management to reluctantly transfer three of the schools in 1925 to the Corporation of Madras. In 1933, the

HPB Memorial School at Kodambakkam was also transferred to the Labour Department of the Madras Government. Today, of the five schools started by Olcott, only one remains associated with the TS, and that is the Olcott Memorial Higher Secondary School, located in the Besant Gardens side of the TS estate.

Early Days of the Olcott Panchama Free Schools

The story of the immense struggle not only to establish, but also to financially sustain, the Olcott Panchama Free Schools, reveals the heroic and selfless service put in by Olcott and others, who undertook this challenge to educate the Pariah children. For, they had realized intuitively that this was the only way to uplift the community from the morass of poverty and degradation into which it had sunk.

If the establishment and running of the schools was a herculean task, ensuring regular attendance posed yet another daunting challenge. The plight of the Pariah children and their struggle to attend school against all odds is movingly narrated in a report written in 1911 by Miss C. Kofel, Superintendent of the Schools, the gist of which is given below:

The pupils often came late to school or were absent altogether, in spite of the teachers going to their houses to get them early in the morning. This irregular attendance was cause for dismay, yet excusable, when one took all the circumstances into consideration. For example, a great number of children lived several miles

from their respective schools; there were no watches or clocks in their houses or on any building near them, none therefore had any idea of the time.

Some pupils, boys as well as girls, were kept at home to do the house work or look after the babies whenever both mother and father found some coolie work to do, such as carrying sand, bricks, or stone for some building.

In some cases, where the parents were anxious for the children to attend school, the students would come, bringing babies with them! This of course, did not lighten the teachers' task when they were called upon to soothe a few sleepy, hungry or fretful babies, besides attending to their class.

Miss Kofel writes that it was also very disheartening to see how soon the pupils, often the best ones, were taken away altogether before they even reached the third standard, because they had to help to "keep the wolf from the door". Where there were perhaps ten hungry mouths to feed (grandmother, grandfather, disabled aunt, father, mother and five children often made up a family), and where both parents together barely earned 6 annas (12 and a half cents) a day, and that too not regularly. One could not blame them if they took their boy away from school because someone who had noticed his bright looks offered him a place as a *chokra* (young servant in the family), or as an errand boy in a shop or office, by which means he could earn Rs 3 (\$1) per month.

Hygiene, Cleanliness, and Medical Care

Unlike in conventional schools where only book learning was imparted, the Pariah children had to be taught everything from scratch. Basic hygiene and cleanliness was insisted upon by making the children compulsorily have a bath on arriving at the school, with little children being helped by the older children and teachers, who also combed and oiled their hair. The need to be clean and tidy in appearance was routinely emphasized through practical demonstrations.



Senior boys bathing at the school

In later years, much assistance was received towards this end from the Adyar Baby Welfare started by Mrs Bhagirathi Sri Ram in 1927, which functioned from the main campus of the TS, caring for the tiny tots and expectant mothers in the villages in and around Adyar. Minor ailments were attended to in the TS Dispensary and periodical visits by doctors also helped in providing medical assistance where required.

Midday Meals

In another first, Olcott realized very early that many of the children came to school on an empty stomach, as grinding

The Olcott Panchama Free School — I

poverty often meant that the entire family went without food for long spells of time. There is a moving account given in an article written by him in *The Theosophist* of December 1905 wherein he writes:

These Panchamas are, perhaps, the most poverty-stricken class with which civilization comes into touch, and yet their filial faithfulness to each other is affecting to see. A quite common instance came to our notice only a few weeks ago: one of the . . . dining-room servants, here at Adyar, whose wage is about Rs. 7 (\$2.33) a month . . . came to one of us to say that he was hungry and asked to borrow four annas (eight cents) as he had had only one meal a day for the past week.

Inquiry elicited the fact that he had a sick father and two little brothers and a sister at home, and this brave “Pariah” . . . had been keeping his family and himself alive — working fourteen hours a day to do it — dividing with them his little all. They are all poor to starvation point — a rise of twenty per cent in the price of rice caused by a failure in the rainfall, means that many thousands get just that much less to eat, and this has to be continued for weeks and months at a time.

Many instances might be told that have come to our notice in the schools. A little girl fell over while sitting on the floor in our class: she was taken to the hospital, but it was too late: “exhaustion from hunger”, they said. She had asked for nothing — uttered no word of complaint;

the first we knew of her suffering was the end. In another case in the same school, the HPB Memorial School, Mrs Courtright noticed a little girl who seemed never to be free from running sores and fever; suspecting insufficient nourishment, she had the headmaster provide the child with good food daily, and now she looks the picture of health.

To quote from Ms Kofel’s 1911 Report:

Naturally when the little inside is empty a child cannot pay much attention to the most interesting lesson, especially when he is also tired with a long walk. Some of them cry because they are hungry. So the best thing to do for such a little one is to get him something to eat and let him lie down in a corner, where he is soon fast asleep. When he awakes he is ready and able to enjoy his lessons.

For years past it has been the custom to provide the children most in need of food with one, two, or three rice cakes each in the middle of the day. Even in the worst monsoon weather those who are thus fed hardly ever fail to come to school, so much do they seem to enjoy these few cakes. About two or three times a year some kind friends provide a good square meal, a regular feast, for all the children. These treats are greatly enjoyed and it is astonishing to see how quickly the food disappears and what quantities even the tiniest youngsters can make part of themselves.

This pioneering initiative of Olcott was later to become the springboard for large-scale feeding of all the children

needing a meal with the help of grants from the government and other agencies as is recounted in a pamphlet brought out in 1970 during the 75th anniversary of the starting of the Olcott Panchama Free Schools. It is also reported that the enthusiasm of the staff raised the whole project from a mere feeding of the poor to a valuable learning experience involving lessons in organization, hygiene, and cleanliness.

The Introduction of Kindergarten and Vocational Training

The imparting of vocational training, in addition to the three Rs, was perhaps introduced for the first time in India at the Olcott Panchama Free Schools. The need to equip the children with some skills that would lead to gainful employment and consequent betterment of their economic condition led to the introduction of subjects like spinning, cloth weaving, cot tape and seats, palm-leaf work, volleyball nets, hammocks, and net bags for the boys.

The girls were taught to cut and make their own skirts and jackets. A School report mentions that friends gave samples and remnants from which coats were made for the older boys. The manufacturer's name and trade mark were usually stamped on the samples and several pieces had to be used to make one coat! Though the coats differed in colour and quality no child ever showed by look or word that he would prefer another jacket to the one given to him. All were happy and grateful! In addition, the girls were also taught other useful crafts like embroidery work, making fancy bags, and basket-weaving.

Apart from these, Col. Olcott introduced cookery classes once a fortnight for the boys and whatever was made was eaten by all the children and teachers with great gusto. Much to the children's delight, Olcott often partook of the dishes made and has mentioned that they were extremely palatable.

(To be continued)

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**When there is true understanding of the self
and purgation has taken place
there is no self in the ordinary sense of the term.
Therefore the very word “self-knowledge”
has no meaning in that situation.
The word “self-knowledge” may suggest that there is a knower
who knows the self as an object.
But in the state of true, deep knowledge,
which is the state of wisdom, there is no duality;
there is no self to be known;
there is no knower and no object of knowledge.
“The Real knowledge . . . is not a mental but a spiritual state,
implying full union between the Knower and the Known.”
(*The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, letter no. 69 in both editions.)**

Radha Burnier (15 Nov. 1923–31 Oct. 2013)
From “The Way of Self-Knowledge”
The Blavatsky Lecture, delivered at the Annual Convention
of the Theosophical Society in England, 26 May 1979

The Journey of Awakening

CECIL MESSER

KNOW O Seeker, there is a way out of the morass of chaos, the confusion that entraps many living beings in suffering and despair. Like disoriented wayfarers in a world on the brink of insanity, we may feel alienated in a foreign and inhospitable land — vulnerable to spiraling further into the heart of uncertainty. Our innate core status, *spirit*, is nurtured by the inherent benevolence of the universe and underlies the possibility of liberation from the misery of self-delusion. It is better to recognize or think of ourselves as divine souls rather than beings in possession of an appendage called a soul. From the swamp of ignorance, there is the high ground and a path of return to clarity and luminosity — a journey of awakening via meditation that continues life after life. Fortunately, sages graced with *robes of many colors* have provided signposts for such a journey.

The path of return to our primordial *source* of being — our mythical *Eden*, our natural home, leads to luminous clarity and liberation from our current existential status. Treading this path is a *journey of discovery and radical trans-*

formation. It is a life-altering project for the dissatisfied and the disenchanted — weary ones who have known many dead ends in their search for meaning. *It* connects with the womb of being wherein we may experience metamorphosis through the compassionate openness of meditation. This path leads to a generative spiritual practice — a process that refreshes the mind and deconstructs the obstacles to well-being.

The opening line of this article could well have been: “Know O Wanderer, we are like a homeless orphan with no heritage — origin and identity unknown. Although we have a name, we are not that name.” Both openings initiate the arduous journey to reclaim our royal birthright, moving to our natural primordial condition — the state of purity, freedom, and wholeness. Some say that outwardly we appear as a frog but that inwardly we are actually a prince or princess, ready to be liberated by the touch of love. Here, it is said that we are a Buddha-in-becoming, ready to awaken.

The essence of being, *spirit*, is innate to all living beings. Veiled by a mantle

Mr Cecil Messer, retired from the NASA Space Program Science and Engineering Team, presented spiritual teachings from various traditions for 12 years while residing at Krotona Institute of Theosophy, Ojai, CA. He now resides in the North Carolina mountains. From his *Dance with Samsara: Deconstructing Ego's Drama*, ch. I, 2022.

The Journey of Awakening

of ignorance, there is, nevertheless, that precious jewel within our heart which is self — secret because we do not recognize it. Sentient beings, from the smallest microbe to the largest mammal, desire happiness and want to be free from suffering. Acknowledgment of this simple observation forms the basis for sharing our common burden of uncertainty and dissatisfaction.

Fortunately for us, the human genus has the mental capacity to look into the causes of our predicament and the altruistic will to benefit others. Since animals do not have this capacity, they must depend on our kindness and compassion for their well-being. Within the collective karma of the human race, few are lucky enough to be born into spiritually nurturing circumstances such as: possessing a sound mind and body, a hospitable environment free of war and strife, adequate means of livelihood with leisure time, and access to educational and spiritual teachings. Among these, rare are those who see the urgency or necessity to awaken from our dreamlike existence.

Once in a magic land of timeless time, a child of five or six years — pure of heart in that age of innocence, visited his grandmother. His favorite pastime was to explore the surrounding woods and stroll along the creek bank, frequently stopping to gather wild flowers for her. She always exhibited delight and surprise when he presented her with a colorful bouquet. From her core of being, joyfulness and grace came as blessings whose fragrance permeated their relationship. As

the child perceived this deep connection, an inner flower of realization blossomed in his heart:

Joys and sorrows of relationship,
intimately experienced,
are shared by all.
Profound interconnections
formed in past lives,
carry over to the present.
Truly, all beings
have been my most precious loved one
many, many times.

The attainment of happiness and freedom from suffering for all beings can become our noble mandate and motive for action. From this perspective of interconnectivity, we may cultivate a mind of compassionate openness and the wish to remove the obstacles to well-being.

Imagine that the treasure we wish for, the jewel of enlightenment, is hidden at the top of a distant mountain. To seek the jewel, virtuous qualities are required for the journey. Ordinary qualities are not sufficient because they divert our search into the wanderings of the indefinitely repeated cycles of birth, death, and rebirth caused by karma, or *samsāra*. To prepare, we may simply appreciate the beauty of the idea that meditation is integral to a virtuous life. Our motives will gradually gestate into the certainty of pure aspirations and requisite virtuous qualities will unfold and ripen into skillful means.

To shed light on some aspects of this journey, let us look into the mental processes that occur after a typical dream.

The Journey of Awakening

Immediately on waking, before the regular activities of our mind set in, vivid emotions, palpable and intense, may linger. They are the surreal offspring of the remembrance of the dream. However, the realization that the people and activities in the dream were not substantive but simply illusions quickly intrudes on our reverie. These were mirage-like reappearances of karmic memories and soon disappear into the realm of memory remnants. Analogous to recognizing the illusory nature of our dreams, the flame of meditation exposes and purifies our hidden delusions and mental habit patterns while we are awake. This profound experience of meditative consciousness relates to the ordinary waking state as the latter relates to dreaming.

Our journey of awakening is purposed to disrupt the ego's drama by addressing the karmic residues of consciousness which impede our radical transformation. This process involves transcending our ego-cherishing. Understanding and insight do not come from accumulated

knowledge or concepts but from the direct perception of reality through meditation. Let us set aside preconceived notions and start the process of inquiry from the stance of not-knowing, like an empty vase — receptive, without expectations.

Throughout history, special teachers have left guidance and maps applicable to our journey. Tradition records that during a span of forty years, the Buddha gave eighty-four thousand dharma teachings in recognition of the diversity of human minds.

Jesus the Christ gave the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes to the multitudes. During this journey, we will encounter requisite teachings suitable for each and every temperament. Our approach to meditation will be both passionate and tentative. Communion with the sources will be respectful; however, no traditions are immune to the light of inquiry. Let us step into the baptismal waters of the meditation practice river with the confidence that enlightenment is beyond the other shore. ✧

**Your task is not to seek for love,
but merely to seek and find
all the barriers within yourself
that you have built against it.**

Rumi

Theosophical Work around the World



Members meeting outdoors, enjoying the spring sun



Symbolically burning one's main weakness in silence, by taking turns throwing into the bonfire a paper where a personal flaw was written privately by each participant



Main lecture hall of the San Rafael Center during the opening of the Andean Workshops – II. Mr Esteban Langlois, General Secretary of the Argentinian Section, talking via Zoom to those present



Chanting of the Gayatri mantra every evening at sunset on the west side of the campus

Theosophical Work around the World



Daily yoga class led by Ms Claudia Ferrada, TS member



A meeting in the sun, next to the dining room and bedrooms.
The arboretum at the back is showing its Spring presence



Bookshop in the Theosophical Centre in San Rafael.
Ms Andy Cirella (sitting), bookshop staff, and Ms Vilma González, one of the Andean Workshops' team organizers



Final hours of the weekend program, sharing a thread connecting symbolically all the individual goals and aims in the TS and in life

Theosophical Work around the World

TS in Argentina – Andean Workshops –II

Ms Vilma González, member of the Andean Workshops – II Organizing Team, reports that this program took place in the Theosophical Center in San Rafael, Mendoza, Argentina, from 7 to 10 October 2022, which means spring time in South America. Their theme was “Practical Theosophy: An invitation to live altruistically, transforming knowledge into Wisdom”.

The members and sympathizers who attended these workshops are related to Theosophical Society (TS) centers functioning in different provinces and cities: Tucumán, San Lorenzo, Córdoba, San Juan, La Pampa, Mendoza, and San Rafael. Also in attendance were some members’ children and young Theosophists contributing their enthusiasm, bringing the total to 33 participants.

The opening of these workshops took place in the main Lecture Hall building, with Esteban Langlois, General Secretary of the Argentinian Section for six years, virtually sending his best wishes for the success of the work ahead of those participating during the weekend. He also announced his retirement as General Secretary of the Section effective 8 December 2022. Mr Leandro Cesano, recently elected, will be succeeding him.

Each day’s activities were concluded in the western portion of the campus with a group of participants watching the sunset and chanting the powerful Vedic invocation, the Gayatri Mantra, interpreted by Swami Vivekananda as: “We meditate on

the glory of that Being who has produced this universe; may She enlighten our minds.”

The different topics based on the theme of the workshops were written on a previously prepared booklet to serve as a guiding axis for the weekend program. They were meant for reflection over the following ideas of the five moments of work that are supported by the principles described in the three Objects of the TS:

- (1) Live Theosophy here and now. (2) Become aware and analyze the causes of suffering. (3) Learn the timeless teachings in order to live in harmony. (4) Discover the aspiration for the superior in each one of us, that which transforms. (5) Build Unity observing the first Object of the TS.

Titles of new books published by the Editorial Teosófica en Español (ETE), Theosophical Editorial in Spanish, were made available to the participants of the Workshops in the Bookshop of the San Rafael Theosophical Center. In addition to sharing healthy meals in their dining hall, this was a place where it was possible to create new bonds of friendship and strengthen already existing ones. These days turned out to be greatly enriching and motivating to continue with, and strengthen the work of the TS.

On the last evening of the program, the participants encircled a bonfire, where each one took their turn to symbolically toss into the fire a piece of paper where they had written a personal quality that they wished to eliminate from their nature. ✧

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