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# Theosophy

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# Forward

the 21st  
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Special issue

# OUR WORLD



 Theosophy Forward



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## **Our World**

A compilation of articles

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# Our World

A compilation of articles

# Foreword

In 2011, *Theosophy Forward* presented a series of articles entitled "Our World." The series was well received, and in it seventeen authors look at today's world from their own Theosophical perspectives.

The articles are timeless, so I am very pleased that we are now able to present the complete series in a wonderful e-book.

I thank all those who contributed to it and Anton Rozman in Slovenia, in particular, who did such a fine job in creating yet another remarkable *Theosophy Forward* publication.

Jan Nicolaas Kind - Brazil

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# Our World

by Dolores Gago

When we hear the news covering the variety of events that are taking place in different parts of the world, it seems that the present moment is a very difficult one, especially for the younger generations who, without discussion, will one day be in charge of the world activities. Does it mean that in the past things were easier and if so, why?

Even if we consider some facts that could help to give an acceptable answer, it is questionable if we truly see the situations that inevitable lead to the present state, do not help to clearly see the cause of the problem.

By no means is this to convey the idea that those of us who have already walked half or more of our individual pilgrimage are able to see the situation in a very clear way, for the solution does not depend on age. The purpose of these thoughts is to share some ideas that might help to see the matter from another perspective.

Through the ages, humanity has shown certain aspirations. The most common one is to find a state of mind of enduring happiness, thus an intangible possession attained by personal effort and not something that can be acquired in a special shop. In that search, humanity has developed a capacity to face situations during different time periods, an experience that we could refer as the inevitable pilgrimage of each human soul. It is only at the human stage that a special element is endowed to the form we call the human body, and that is the mind.



In the other kingdoms of Nature, the living entities seem to express their existence by following an established guidance, a sort of instinctual knowledge which dictates to them what to do and even how to do it. But at the level of human kingdom, this does not happen. It is true that those human beings who are newly incarnated seem to be able to do certain actions that might help them to take care of themselves, but this is done in a very primitive way.

The element mind is supposed to help individuals to know their place in Nature, to choose what is better for themselves and others, to develop such capacities which will eventually allow them to know who they are and what is the purpose of their life. When properly directed, the mind can help us to find answers to many riddles of life and guide our steps to a final goal. However, when we think that for the mere right of choosing - a capacity emanating from the mind - we have the absolute right to follow it fully, the same element can become a tool for destruction.

It is at this point that many human problems start. The mind makes us believe that we are an entity totally separated from the rest of the world. The sense of "I-ness" starts moving back and forth and its desire of domination has no limits, creating aspirations that are neither in accordance with our capacities, nor with our real essence. As the mind is an intangible element, we could say that it is advisable to recognize that essentially a human being is an spiritual entity, visible as it is, but mysterious in many ways which we do not understand fully.

The world as we know it shows us that there are Laws of Nature that are being followed without our cognizance; the sun rises and sets; we cannot escape from the power of those Laws.

The wisdom of the Ages, presently known as Theosophy,

suggests that human beings live their lives according to their decisions and that these delineate the world in which we live. It also tells us that the purpose can be to benefit us - to be part of the goal of human life - as we are told in *At the Feet of the Master* that "God has a plan and that is Evolution."

As spiritual entities, it seems that the human pilgrimage is to slowly educe the high characteristics of being human, which are not so much at the level of overlooking or exploiting other sentient beings, but rather at the intangible level of ethics and morality, thus right aspirations should be considered. It has to do with a sincere decision of abandoning the cruder levels of being and becoming more evolved toward such actions, feelings and thoughts that collaborate for a better world. Envy, hate, a sense of separateness based on differences such as race, color, creed, sex, as well as a sense of superiority based on a very unstable basis, are all elements that create disturbances in the plan of evolution.

In his book, *Ethics for a New Millennium*, His Holiness the Dalai Lama states that there presently exists a "neglect of our inner dimension." As long as we do not recognize our spiritual essence, we will never be in a position to show our humaneness, which, although intangible, can bring us nearer to enduring happiness. Respect and love for all sentient beings, and always keeping in mind that it is a mistake, and even a dishonor, to revert to a level of base desire, these are some useful thoughts to be considered in our daily pilgrimage.

In our search for happiness, we have unclear ideas as to the means for reaching that goal. A special object, a high social position, or wealth may give us happiness, but it will not be the kind that our real essence of a being human is in search of. The moral values, considered integral parts of the condition of



humaneness, still prevail as signposts for a safe pilgrimage; let us not abandon them. Instead let us become reliable collaborators of the Great Plan, thus touching real happiness. To clarify the expression "moral values", we turn again to the Dalai Lama, from the same book, who writes, "We cannot escape the necessity of love and compassion. Love for others and respect for their rights and dignity, no matter who or what they are, ultimately these are all we need. So long as we practice these in our daily lives, as long as we have compassion for others and conduct ourselves with restraint out of a sense of responsibility, there is no doubt we will be happy."



## Our Journey Together

by Jerry Hejka-Ekins

Traditionally, the medical profession's primary concern was to treat and relieve their patients' suffering and, if possible, cure their ailments. However, technological advances have since made it possible, through extraordinary means, to indefinitely extend the functioning of a patient's body. By the mid twentieth century, this new technology began to dominate the medical profession's priorities: Sometimes to the exclusion of the family's and the patient's own wishes.

Around sixty years ago, Cicely Saunders, a registered nurse in England, in response to the medical field's evolving policies, inaugurated a movement where respect for the patient's, beliefs, wishes and emotional needs might again become paramount. It was her vision to create a therapeutic atmosphere where the patient's wish for a comfortable passing in the company of their loved ones would again be honored. Her efforts eventuated into the Hospice movement, which has now become worldwide. Under Hospice, patients are provided with whatever physical, emotional and physical care is needed and desired in order to make them comfortable, but the extraordinary efforts to artificially keep them alive are not used.

My own experience with Hospice began in January of 2005 when Evelyn, my mother in law became terminally ill. My wife, April,



and I previously knew about the Hospice movement.

Accordingly, we requested that the hospital allow her to return home, under Hospice supervision, where she would be able to live out her last days in familiar surroundings with her family. Evelyn was back home around five-thirty that evening. We got her comfortably situated. By 10:30 she fell asleep. April and I watched over her through the night. The next morning, as the sun began to fill the room, she took her last breath. We lit a candle, closed the door, retired to the living room and cried.

After Evelyn's passing, my interest in Hospice began to deepen and I took a volunteer training course. After ten weeks, I received my first assignment: to visit a family who was caring for their terminally ill father. Such visits were usually to the patient's homes, where our main job is to give respite for the caretaking family members who may want to go to church, or just to get away for a while. Sometimes the family, for whatever reason, is unable to provide the care that the patient needs. It was under one of those situations that I was later assigned to Bill, a rather jovial man in his 70s. He was in a Hospice twenty-four hour care facility. We became immediate friends. We talked of his childhood on a farm, his wife and daughter and the current news. Over the weeks, his body began to weaken until he was no longer able to walk on his own. He remained in bed where we watched daytime television together. Over the weeks, I began to realize that I was his only visitor. It appeared that his family had abandoned him there. I never learned why. One day, I came in around lunch time. His tray of food was sitting at the side table, still untouched. "I'm not hungry" he said. I knew that loss of appetite is typical of those who are nearing their time of transition. So, I was careful not to push him. There was, however, a cup of pudding on the tray. I knew that he liked that

kind of pudding, so I offered to assist him. I pulled up a chair close to the bed and opened the container. As I began to scoop out the pudding, I began to think about how much like a child we become as we near the end of our lives. Like a baby, in old age, our bodies become weak; we lose control of them and, once again, need assistance to eat and almost everything we do.

The next day I came in, his bed was empty. The nurse said that he had passed away the previous evening. His wife and daughter briefly appeared, collected his belongings, and silently left. I pulled up a chair and sat next to his empty bed. The TV we had watched together was silent, and the room somehow seemed a little darker.

Over the years, there have been many other assignments, but this simple meeting and quiet companionship with Bill came to represent the essence of what Hospice is about for me. It was an opportunity to realize through hands-on experience, the reality of humanity's inner connectedness: that our responsibility extends beyond ourselves and our family, to everyone whom we come into contact, and even to those we never meet. Our purpose is to awaken from our self-centered dream of separateness; to learn the skills to do the work of healing for the benefit of others we meet along our path; to make the world a little better than it was when we came into it. Our very humanness is about the most basic act of being a companion to others; to share their joys and sadness is an important first step.

I have continued to do family visits, as well as taking up duties, in the office, and eventually, leading a support group for bereaved family members. But the lesson I learned from Bill has always remained with me - no matter what we do, the key to living a full and meaningful life is to be present with and responsive to those who come into our lives. Whatever needs to



be done will become evident - even if it is simply being a companion to a very lonely man who has no one else. No one should be left to die alone.

The Buddha was recorded to have said that death is a condition of birth. But those self-evident words take on a deeper, more personal and profound meaning to those who have attended the birth of their children and the death of their loved ones. The joys we experience with others bring an appreciation for our lives, while our grief over our separation from them reminds us of our own mortality. Every moment brings us an opportunity to live, experience, learn, share and, most important, to love.



*Devastation in Kosovo in 2011 still visible*

## Human Rights, Theosophy, and the Gypsy Children of Kosovo

by Kathleen F. Hall

"Among these gypsies one may find traces of ancient avatars, whose souls were gods long ago in India." (Walter Starkie, *In Sara's Tents*. London: John Murray, 1953, p. 1)

In July 2010, my fifteen-year-old son and I traveled to Kosovo, in the Balkans, to work with marginalized children of a people known as Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians (RAE), also called Gypsies, whose ancestors were ultimately from north India. Working with these children in a summer arts program sponsored by a local nongovernmental organization gave me insight into some of the great challenges within the lives of the RAE of Kosovo.

In 2008, Kosovo became a republic independent of Serbia and the former Yugoslavia. This newly found independence was not easily won; it followed a horrific 1999 war, which was marked by ethnic cleansing and mass destruction of properties belonging to Serbians, Albanians, and the RAE. During that war, NATO displaced many threatened RAE families into neighboring countries for protection. When the war ended, some returning RAE had no homes to go to and, being considered as Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), were housed in camps or IDP designated housing projects.



Living conditions in the IDP areas is dismissal. Many are run down and lack consistent water, electricity, and municipal services such as garbage pickup. Mitrovica, an IDP camp in northern Kosovo has extreme levels of lead poisoning, the cause of serious health issues, particularly in children living there. Plemetina, a community outside Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, has an IDP housing project that is situated next to "Kosovo B," a huge coal-burning power plant that pollutes the surrounding area with mountains of coal ash.



*Gypsy woman cries as her house burns during the war*

Many RAE who were placed in neighboring European countries during the war are now being forcibly returned to Kosovo. Huge challenges await these returning RAE, as they face intense poverty, discrimination, unemployment, and language barriers. The already inadequate social services in Kosovo cannot support them, so they have little hope for leading successful lives. Poverty and discrimination affect RAE children's access to

education. Many families cannot provide their children with books, supplies, or the clothing needed to attend school. Others cannot afford the fees to enroll their children in school or lack birth records needed for registration. Many children are embarrassed to attend school because their homes lack water and electricity, making it difficult to bathe regularly or have clean clothing. School nurses, psychologists, and special-education specialists are also lacking as help for children with learning or physical disabilities and chronic health problems.

Language is an additional problem. The official language of the schools in Kosovo is Albanian; many RAE children speak Roma, some speak Serbian, and others who were displaced to EU countries during the war grew up speaking German, Dutch, French, or other languages. Although the right to an education in a child's mother tongue is an international law of the United Nations (1989), that right is overlooked in Kosovo, where children must learn Albanian in order to succeed in school.

Discrimination is perhaps the biggest challenge for Kosovo RAE and their children. RAE children are often treated unfairly in schools by both peers and teachers, and consequently they do not want to go to school, nor do their parents want their children to be subjected to such treatment. Many RAE adults experience discrimination that denies them employment because they are identified as Gypsy. In Eastern Europe, like many other places in the world, Gypsies have historically suffered great prejudice. The persecution of the Gypsies stems from the early Christian churches of Europe and extends back to the fourteenth century or earlier. The churches feared and misunderstood the unique culture of the Gypsies, who today are still treated like unwelcome minorities in many countries, including Kosovo. The Gypsies are a passionate and spiritual people, whose cultural



traditions, particularly music and dance, have provided artistic inspiration throughout the world. It is sad to see a great culture subjected to ignorant prejudices and the resulting discrimination that denies their children basic human rights.



*Refugees in Kosovo*

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with RAE children in Kosovo and to recognize the challenges they face. Those children displayed a great passion for life despite their

marginalized circumstances. However, to be able to reach their fullest potential, RAE children need access to education so that they can eventually overcome the oppressions that limit their lives.



*RAE children*

From a Theosophical perspective, working towards alleviating the oppressive, poverty-ridden situation of the RAE in Kosovo is a call to duty. In *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 229) H. P. Blavatsky states: "Duty is that which is *due* to Humanity, to our fellow-men, neighbours, family, and especially that which we owe to all those who are poorer and more helpless than we are ourselves." She also says (p. 230-1) that what is due to humanity at large is "Full recognition of equal rights and privileges for all, and without distinction of race, colour, social position or birth." Such due is



not given "When there is the slightest invasion of another's right - be that other a man or a nation; when there is any failure to show him the same justice, kindness, consideration or mercy which we desire for ourselves."

Blavatsky also states in *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 230) that duty is a call to "action, enforced action, instead of mere intention and talk." From my perspective as an educator, the action that is most needed to help the situation for the RAE in Kosovo is to work toward ensuring that their children have every possible opportunity to access and complete an education in an environment that is supportive, without discrimination, and sensitive to their needs as learners. Children are the hope for the future, and those who are in a position to help have a duty to ensure that the RAE children of Kosovo are given their right to an education.

## Ethics and Morals in Our World

by Navin B. Shah

We are all generally prone to look at the bygone years, and especially the school days or our childhood experiences, as the best years of our life. It is like the 'Golden' period that we wish we could live all over again. The past is looked upon with nostalgia and sweet memories and we wish the present and the future that is to come to be the same. But someone rightly said that for one to have 'Golden Age' one must first forget the gold (mineral) that many are blindly chasing throughout their life.

Our world, with its modern materialistic society has witnessed an erosion of ethics and morality in even those whom ordinary men and women would look up to - teachers, doctors, priests and professionals in different fields. With a few exceptions it seems that the majority in the society have been gripped with this 'have more' and 'grab' syndrome. Greed, a basic instinct, has overcome our concern for the common man. What happens to him is not our concern as long as I can serve myself, however unethically.

This behavior has been helped by the 'next door neighbor' attitude. If my neighbor has new furniture then I should have it too and so forth. In other words there is nothing like 'enough' when it comes to earning and owning possessions. Man has thus become a weakling and does not draw a line where he



should stop. This is the only life, he thinks, and therefore he feels he must make the most of it. One forgets, in one's happier (healthier and wealthier) days that the present life is but just one 'bus stop' in our long journey to the final destination.

The above situation is extended to the community, national and international level. The two great Wars fought within a space of less than twenty-five years and many more since then are yet to teach mankind, and especially the leaders, the need for peaceful co-existence. History and old prejudices rear their ugly heads from time to time in different corners of the world. The leaders are drunk with power and instead of being tolerant of ethnic and religious differences in societies, they have played on the emotions of the helpless and innocent citizens to rise in the name of superiority of their own ethnic and religious groups to carve out bigger kingdoms for themselves. To 'take' and not 'give' is the order of the day. The presumptuous ethical behavior and upholding of democratic principles by self-appointed individuals, societies and nations is nothing but strengthening of one's own position. The hypocrisy that is witnessed in all transactions does not go unnoticed even by the simplest and the lowliest citizen in any society. But he is helpless to do anything because he does not have the position to influence any decision. He is simply a spectator in the whole drama.

It pains one to see that even as we are now in the second decade of the 21st century mankind is sliding faster toward ignominy. The passions which were allowed to run amok in the former federation of Yugoslavia and Rwanda bear witness to the untold suffering of innocent citizens - especially the helpless women and children. The 'democratic world' has found it convenient, in the name of non-interference and letting the parties sort out their own problems, to stand by almost

unconcerned. The sufferings, be these in Somalia, Sudan, or the drought-stricken regions of Africa one watches on the television has drawn tears from many eyes and makes one think about what is happening to this world. No man is an island to himself. We are all part of the big global village. What happens in one part of the world has an effect on the other part too. It has been said that even the plucking of a flower and the movement of a blade of grass on earth has its effects on the most distant star.



So the question remains: 'What is the answer to planting of a 'Golden Age' in our modern society?'



# MISSING, by Popular Demand: EDUCATION

by Susan Ockerse



Albert Schweitzer mentioned seven rights for every human being (food, water, shelter, etc.) The seventh was education. Every human being needs education as much as the other six essential rights. Education is as important as any other life sustaining need.

What is education? Each person on the planet probably has his own answer to that question. Does education mean the same as amassing knowledge? Aristotle and Plato differ fundamentally about that. Aristotle maintained that we come into this world an empty vessel and must be filled with knowledge. Plato, on the other hand, maintained that we come with a vast amount of knowledge that just has to be remembered. After all, the word education means to draw out. Theosophists may favor Plato because he was an initiate and must know, but they also understand the principle of reincarnation, that we carry with us the faculties we have acquired from former lives. Through education the individual knows who he is, why he is, and what he has to do. He sees his place in the great scheme of things, the unfolding of life in all its complexity and ecosystems. He realizes that one voice can make a difference, but many united can make all the difference in the world. All this drawing out does not mean that new advances in math, science, technology,



and the arts are not provided. The difference is the way in which the teachers present this information. The focus is on the individual. Unfortunately, Theosophists are in the minority. In the United States we have Montessori, Krishnamurti, and Steiner (Waldorf) education schools, to mention three, but compared to the vast number of the population, these schools reach very few. We can all hope that the students who receive Plato's idea of education will be the ones to make those positive differences. Good education can only provide the foundation for the future, prepare fertile ground for the seeds to grow. As Krishnamurti said, all change must start with the individual.

What goes on in all the other schools? Huston Smith mentioned in a talk he gave at Ojai, CA, that the Aristotelian ideas dominate Western religion as well as Science. We can see why, then, it dominates our teaching. (I deliberately use another word than education, for what we have here does not draw out, but fills in.) Why, we may ask, has the Aristotelian view so dominated Western humanity? The root cause could be fear, a fear of a loss of power or control from the early church leaders, or a fear of the unknown. When we draw out we don't know what we'll get, but when we pour in we hope to control the outcome. Winston Churchill hit the nail on the head when he said, "we have nothing to fear, but fear itself." This type of fear is more invasive than the adrenalin producing fight or flight kind. This fear can dominate all our thought and action if we aren't paying attention. I mention this only so we become aware of and consider who is giving us instruction, and why. We can now look at education, but with a more attentive eye.

From my corner of the world education is rife with problems. The fierce competition in every aspect of it comes immediately to mind. Schools organize contests of one sort or another in

almost every grade mostly based on how much of the poured in information has been retained. Memorization just fills the intellectual mind with facts; it doesn't nurture intelligence. Some schools give awards each year, sometimes for the most trivial ideas, so as not to leave any child without one. At least this shows some concern on the part of some organizers. Teachers and administration rank students according to their test scores. Even though studies show that test scores are not indicative of all our ability, the focus in the early schools, the formative years, concentrate on this. Why should we always have to compete, to be better than someone else, or in another reference the same as everyone else? Each individual must come into his own self. What about instilling a sense of personal satisfaction for grasping a concept, completing a study, or mastering a task? In sports athletes are told to focus on their personal best, even though there must always be a winner. We need a reward, and we have to compare ourselves to everyone else. As Theosophists, we know this isn't right. Society teaches us to be concerned that someone else is going to have something we don't, and then we become anxious. We learn competition from a very early age. Of course, we hear that we benefit from healthy competition, for it encourages students to try harder. Too bad it doesn't always work that way. I've seen too many examples where this has the opposite effect. When we read what Krishnamurti wrote about education, we understand that no competition is healthy. Competition breeds conflict. It can also start a lack of respect for others who don't seem to measure up to the top scorers. We have enough examples of where a lack of respect can lead. It's contagious; it can breed lack of respect in general, for the environment, society, authority, etc.



If competition is not good for some students, but it is encouraged, doesn't this say that schools don't focus on the individuals? In classrooms with a large number of students, (and they're getting larger because of additional funding cutbacks), the teacher usually doesn't have time to consider each one. The information is "poured out" and if a student doesn't get it, it's the student's fault. We Theosophists know that where there's interest, learning follows. Many teachers don't consider that part of their job is to create interest. The schools have their requirements, specific subjects or materials that must be covered. Teachers must submit lesson plans that should be completed. A teacher can't afford to fall behind. That wouldn't be good for the teacher or the school, since here also there is rank. One has to maintain the reputation or improve it. I'm sure we've all had the experience of trying to explain something to someone who doesn't seem to get it. Is there something wrong with that person; should we shrug our shoulders and forget about it? Or is there maybe another way to phrase our thought to make it intelligible? This takes time, but it's time that is important for the individual. There is nothing like witnessing the "ah ha" moment of a student's reaching understanding. They radiate happiness.

Another consideration concerning the individual involves special classes. This is a quick solution, but at what cost? If a school has a specified number of students needing special or remedial help, it can receive available grants to make the class possible. This also means labeling and separating the students who need the extra help. Sometimes it could also involve adding some "borderline" students, who don't really need the program, in order to make the quota. These labels create a stigma that can actually reinforce the problem instead of helping it. Some of these students are as intelligent as the others, but have histories with emotional kinks that should be addressed. All they need is

someone who cares, not another label to lessen their incentive and continue to hinder them. I'm also including gifted students in the separation and labeling with the attendant problems. We hear so much talk these days about right brain/left brain people. But in the case of learning, it really matters. So why don't our schools consider this? Our "education" departments set up schools with provisions for linear thinking, a decidedly left-brain function. What about the spatial right brain students? The teachers may consider them "slow," or problems, when many of them are just bored without an access of engagement. In fact many of our schools have eliminated art (and music) altogether, for they feel it is unnecessary, thus further alienating spatial thinkers. Not all teachers feel that way, but all schools have to operate within a budget. Therefore the school boards eliminate the "unnecessary". So not only the spatial thinkers suffer, but the whole student body, because the whole person is not addressed.

Teachers can also have a tendency, like all of us, to judge without having all the information, an activity that is more easily entered upon when all students are fed the same material. The judgments referred to here are other than the special cases mentioned before. These snap judgments usually border on being serious, but I'll give one funny incident to illustrate this for my fellow Theosophists. A teacher of first grade, otherwise exceptional, gave the same work sheet to all the students. It had two columns of pictures for the students to draw lines between the sets of related pictures. One picture was of a roasting pan, another a ham, while the other pairs were pretty straightforward. One little girl, a vegetarian, had never seen a ham, had no idea what it was, so couldn't connect the lines. This confused her so much she didn't know what to do and made a mess of it. The very concerned teacher spoke to the parent about the problem with the child. The parent looked at the paper and started to



laugh. This shocked the teacher, but as soon as she heard the explanation, she laughed too. She said she would be more attentive to the work sheets in the future.

All of these problems go hand in hand with the Aristotelian form of teaching. If we could have the opportunity to have real Platonic education, many of them would disappear. Unfortunately our "education" is at the mercy of politics/funding, economics, committee, and in some cases religion. We need not address these subjects here, for we all know their consequences. But subjecting every student to the same material limits the quality of instruction. Institutionalized programs limit what is taught, and can become narrow and generic. Students may also develop the tendency to try and give the teacher what they think he wants, rather than thinking for oneself. Institutionalized education can leave the door wide open to trends, which put the students' interest at risk to someone else's bright idea. Admittedly, some schools try to make up for this by having after-school programs, or clubs. The information provided within these situations far outstrips that in the classroom, for there is more personal interest, and personal experience. We learn best when we have experience, but it is infrequent in the classroom. Unfortunately all schools may not have the opportunity for after-school programs or experience in the classroom. I guess we see no mystery why we have a rise in home schooling.

There is one more problem affecting our children's education. Slowly, over the years, we can see a growing trend in generally not respecting our teachers as much as before. This could be tied to politics, but also to a false rumor carried to the population with more access to media, that if one can't do anything else, one teaches. Luckily this idea doesn't affect the naturally born,

not trained, teachers whose creativity and dedication cannot be swayed by public opinion. These individuals have a calling that overcomes obstacles, a knowledge that without quality in education our future as a society is bleak, a compassion for everyone, and a sense of duty that borders on self-sacrifice. The false rumor does affect the attitude of the students toward the teachers and education in general, and those responsible for policy making and funding. All this precipitates from conflict, comparison, and fear.





## In the World but not of the World

by Terry Hunt

Many people, when they first discover Theosophy, subconsciously recognize it as something they have known before. The tendency is often to bury ourselves in study and contemplation to the point that we ignore what is going on in the world around us. It is quite understandable that, once we have found something concrete and more real and, therefore, seemingly more important than the everyday world, we gravitate towards that which has by far the most importance for us.

It is probably forgivable that we adopt such a way of living. For many of us, the latest iteration of the Ancient Wisdom seems very comfortable. We have probably spent a number of lifetimes in various monastic centers studying and meditating upon just such topics. We instinctively realize that, in order to further our spiritual development, we must give up, to a certain extent, our attachment to and involvement with worldly pursuits. However, old methods must give way to new, even in occultism. The old way of spiritual progress must make way for new ways of thinking. Longtime members of spiritual groups often bemoan the apparent lack of interest in younger people to join their groups. Yet, all too often, we older members have held on to very old ways of doing things and are ourselves out of touch with the modern world. The younger students often reflect much



better than we do the incoming change of energy of the New Age.

So what is the proper attitude of Theosophists with regard to the outer world? Do we continue to ensconce ourselves in our study of The Secret Doctrine and let the rest of the world take care of itself? In her written address to the American Convention of 1888, H.P.B. wrote the following:

"Theosophists are of necessity the friends of all movements in the world, whether intellectual or simply practical, for the amelioration of the condition of mankind. We are the friends of all those who fight against drunkenness, against cruelty to animals, against injustice to women, against corruption in society or in government, although we do not meddle in politics. We are the friends of those who exercise practical charity, who seek to lift a little of the tremendous weight of misery that is crushing down the poor. But, in our quality of Theosophists, we cannot engage in any one of these great works in particular. As individuals we may do so, but as Theosophists we have a larger, more important, and much more difficult work to do. People say that Theosophists should show what is in them, that 'the tree is known by its fruit.' Let them build dwellings for the poor, it is said, let them open 'soup kitchens,' etc., etc., and the world will believe that there is something in Theosophy ... The function of Theosophists is to open men's hearts and understandings to charity, justice, and generosity, attributes which belong specifically to the human kingdom and are natural to man when he has developed the qualities of a human being. Theosophy teaches the animal-man to be a human-man; and when people have learnt to think and feel as truly human beings should feel and think, they will act humanely, and works of charity, justice and generosity will be done spontaneously by all."

Clearly, we are expected to be aware of and concerned with the outer world, but just as clearly, we are reminded that we have more important work to do than to attend to the world's physical and emotional needs. Perhaps we fail to realize just how much we influence the world around us by our very presence and by the higher frequencies of vibration that we have hopefully inculcated in ourselves through years of contemplation. We place so much emphasis on meditation that we often forget that important preparatory step of contemplation. Through pondering on the problems of humanity, whether it be civil rights, poverty, politics, violence or any of a thousand other problems, we are helping in ways that are subtle, yet extremely powerful.

Take, for example, the matter of violence in the world. All good people throughout the world yearn for peace, for an end to fighting and strife. Ask yourself this, "Have I eliminated all anger, resentment and acrimony from my own life?" If the answer is no, then how do you expect the rest of the world to be ready for peace when it doesn't even exist within your own heart? Even as Theosophists, we are often at war with our family members, acquaintances, and even with other Theosophical groups. Do you really think you can help others achieve peace if you have not found it for yourself?

Take any of the world problems mentioned above or one of your own choosing, and use it as a seed meditation for the next few weeks or even months. Re-visit it from time to time and see if you have additional insight. Remember, you do not need to impose your point of view on others. Once you have achieved a certain amount of equanimity and poise within yourself, others will automatically turn to you for advice or watch how you operate in certain circumstances and then try to apply your attitudes and manners to themselves. Preaching doesn't help.



Unless you have achieved it for yourself, you will never fool others, no matter what you say.

The Hierarchy depends on the great thinkers of the world to solve some of the world's most difficult problems. This does not mean that those who work out the solution must also implement it or even necessarily get others to do it. Once the solution has been worked out by even a single individual, the thought forms are already being shared with others. Members of the Hierarchy can then direct those thought forms to other individuals who are in a position to do something in a practical manner, whether it is writing a book, lecturing, or establishing an organization. The advanced students who are still living in the world have the potential for insights that others may not have.

Let us heed the advice of HPB and develop fully within ourselves all the qualities that we would like the rest of the world to display. Let us practice altruism, charity, complete honesty in all things. Let us give up arguments and anger and the need to be right. Let us stop judging others and look very carefully at our own motives. Let us eliminate spiritual pride and the smugness that characterizes so many "spiritual" persons. Let us get rid of our need to feel important. Once we have developed all of the character traits that distinguish the true occultist, our influence on the rest of the world is already in effect. We have already made an impact on the world around us.

## Some Possibilities for a Better Spiritual Future

by Roger Price

In considering the condition of the world and what can be done to make it a better place with a better future it will help us to consider Plato's famous observation "Ideas rule the world" and the lesser known "Motive is everything" by the Mahatma KH. Together they reveal how our thoughts and motives guide and direct the results of our lives individually and also collectively as humanity. It is important to realize that our thoughts and motives interact upon each other to take us consciously or unconsciously in the direction they create. Our thoughts and values give rise to our motives which in turn give rise to other thoughts to achieve the objectives of our motives. There is a cycle of thoughts and motives which feed upon each other forming the direction and outcomes of our lives.

Today there is an ever increasing materialism in the main current of human thought. It is perhaps most prominent in the overriding objective of increasing economic growth and gross national product. This is seen as the precursor or basis for any government policy. Economically I do not deny there are strong and logical arguments for this approach. However, taken to its extreme where everything is valued on lowest cost for governments and maximizing profit for private companies the consequences are often regressive for humanity and nature.



A very worrying example of how commercial interests are put before individual human rights and also common sense and decency is the recent decision taken in Brussels by the European Union to allow the sale of meat, milk and dairy products from the offspring of cloned animals. Although the vast majority of the members of European Parliament who are elected by the people voted against it the European Parliament was overruled by the Commission which is unelected and represents the European governments. Furthermore the moves for compromise by the European Parliament to at least have the products from the offspring of cloned animals labeled so that consumers have the choice whether to eat it or not was also not allowed, it being deemed too expensive for the producers. This means that meat, milk and dairy products from the offspring of cloned animals will now begin to flood into European supermarkets without the consumers knowing it and/or having a choice. The long term effect of humans eating products from cloned animals or their offspring is not known. This is particularly important because it appears that according to Theosophical teachings the evolution of animal bodies is connected to that of human bodies.

Another important moral and ethical issue is that cloned animals reportedly suffer much more than normal animals. A Royal Society for the Protection and Care of Animals spokesman said: "We are totally opposed to cloning for food production on animal welfare and ethical grounds. Cloning has huge potential to cause unnecessary pain, suffering and distress which cannot be justified by purely commercial benefits." Compassion in World Farming accused British ministers of "shameful hypocrisy" for supporting clone farming while claiming to champion animal welfare. Policy director Peter Stevenson said: "The Government seems determined to foist food from clones

and their offspring on to consumers' plates. A significant proportion of clones die in the early stages of life from health problems such as cardiovascular failure, respiratory difficulties and immune system deficiencies." The lack of research into the safety of cloned produce has been well documented by British and European scientists.

Although politicians make promises such as to give people more choice, in practice these promises are very often overridden by the predominant ideas that economic growth and reduction of costs for manufacturers offer greater wealth and hence wellbeing than other considerations. However, consciously or unconsciously the close ties between political parties, politicians and even government departments and large commercial interest groups representing big business also serve to distort politicians motives away from putting the benefit and rights of people first in favour of big business.

So long as the majority world view is one of a material life here and now with perhaps a spiritual existence afterwards (for those who still have religious beliefs) it will be very difficult to turn the thinking and motivation of humanity away from short-term material benefit and individualism.

In hoping to play a role in the reversing of this increasing trend to materialism Theosophy can help if presented in a clear way focusing on its essential principles. In an article in the *Collected Writings* No 13 P102/3, also in this edition of *Theosophy Forward*, H.P. Blavatsky argues that the trend toward materialism can only be prevented by:

"The spread of the knowledge of the laws of Karma and Reincarnation and of a belief in the absolute spiritual unity of all beings will alone prevent this drift. The cycle must, however, run its course, and until that is ended all beneficial causes will of



necessity act slowly and not to the extent they would in a brighter age."

Only through a change in world view from a material to a spiritual one can we hope to change humanity's dominant thought patterns, values and motivations which will lead to a better future not only for humanity but also for nature. Central to this change are the above key themes: the absolute spiritual unity of all beings and the spread of the knowledge of the laws of karma and reincarnation.

If we return to my above example about products from the offspring from cloned animals what might have been the resulting approach based on a spiritual perspective by politicians, scientists and the farming industry? In the first place it is likely that the cloning itself would not have gone ahead since there would have been an understanding that all beings including animals are part of an inseparable spiritual unity and that what affects one affects all. Furthermore, that all of life is evolving to an inherent evolutionary plan, guided by the law of karma and thus we would not try to interfere with it. Even assuming that the depth of understanding was not such as to prevent cloning then the knowledge of everyone's individual responsibility and hence right of choice would surely have resulted in the products being labelled.

Considering the ideas/world views build on materialism and the resulting motive to maximize material and individual benefit these would also gradually slacken and diminish as we understand that it is the evolution of our spiritual nature in line with universal law that is the most important. This, together with an understanding that through the laws of karma and reincarnation we reap what we have sown in this and future lives individually and collectively and that if we interfere with nature

now we affect the state of the natural world in which we will have to live not only in this, and, but also in future lives. Gradually our thoughts and motives would move in a positive cycle aligning with universal law and purpose opening up as yet un-thought of possibilities as we move toward a new and brighter spiritual future.





# Dealing with Our Emotions - A Case in Practical Theosophy

by Abraham Oron



Theosophy as the Divine Wisdom is very much alive in our world. The Divine Wisdom is the life force and intelligence which sustain the world. However, the teachings of Theosophy are not alive in most human hearts and minds.

Why is it that such a wonderful holistic philosophy of life, such a profound wisdom as we find in Theosophy, does not attract spiritual seekers worldwide? Why is the Theosophical Society not widely known as one of the leading spiritual movements of the world?

About 25 years ago we started introductory courses in Theosophy in Israel. The four first lessons were: What is Theosophy, The Plan, Man and his Bodies, Life after Death.

It took us about five years to understand that it is inappropriate to start with subjects which are too abstract and too removed from the everyday experience of the average newcomer to Theosophy.

Life was much easier for the facilitators of the introductory courses when we changed the first three lessons to the following: The Art of Serenity, Concentration and Focusing, Meditation and Inner Listening.



In these three lessons in which participants with restless minds learned how to calm down and had some intervals of peace and serenity, we laid the foundation for the whole introductory course. After that the fourth lesson about the power of thought and the fifth about the planes of Nature and man's bodies were more easily accepted. The first three lessons created trust between the facilitator and the students and gave the students some practical tools to improve the quality of their lives.

If Theosophy is to become a living force in the lives of men, we, the members of the TS, who were trusted with the mission of illuminating more and more minds with the Truth and the Light of Theosophy, have to be more creative in finding ways and means to reach out to the masses who are not highly philosophical, those of whom *The Voice of Silence* says:

"seek out him who knows still less than thou; who in his wretched desolation sits starving for the bread of Wisdom and the bread which feeds the shadow, without a Teacher, hope or consolation, and - let him hear the Law."

At the Israeli TS we try to reach out to these masses who are in great need of simple tools and insights that can help them deal more effectively with stress and harmful emotions and thoughts, by offering them (in addition to our introductory course of Theosophy) a five-day workshop named "Learning to Help Ourselves" (this workshop developed into the publication of the booklet *Helping our Neighbor and Promoting Theosophy*). The objective of this program is to teach them ways of coping with the distress and hardships of life using mindfulness and attentiveness tools.

In these workshops we emphasize that all harmful emotions have their roots in ignorance and separate-ness. Ignorance of

the power of our thoughts and desires create harmful feelings and emotions.

The following are some of the principles we teach and which I feel are in harmony with the principles of Theosophy:

1. Harmful emotions are the outer expressions of hidden patterns of thoughts and beliefs. They are messengers from within, showing us the separative and disharmonious tendencies we hold within us.
2. We created these emotions through our ignorance of the creative power of our consciousness. Repetition of thoughts give it power and create strong emotions that become automatic responses to this kind of thoughts or events that trigger these thoughts.
3. Our character is the result of such hidden patterns of thoughts and beliefs. By discovering these patterns and the suffering they cause us, we can start changing them.
4. We cannot change if we are not willing to see and experience our emotional states even if they are painful. Usually we run away from unpleasant feeling, and that is why we are stuck with the emotions that produce this feeling. This is what Krishnamurti meant when he spoke about running away from "what is".
5. We have to learn to differentiate between the consciousness, the onlooker, and the emotions. This can be done only when we learn to look within without judgment. If we can do this, then we can observe our emotional states without being emotional, and feel our emotions without hating them or ourselves. This is the beginning of real self-knowledge.
6. This kind of observation, in which we make space for our



emotions and make peace with them, is also the best way to transform their destructive nature.

To summarize, making Theosophy a functioning force in our world depends very much on making Theosophy more understandable, practical and experiential to the average man and woman. We cannot advance in spirituality if we ignore our lower self with its selfishness, anger and fear. The Light and treasures of the Spirit are hidden beneath the shadows of our personality. When more of us are able to engage in this inner work and teach it, Theosophy will flourish in our world.

Those who are interested in learning more about these workshops can receive from us the main subjects and exercises by writing to my email: [oravr@netvision.net.il](mailto:oravr@netvision.net.il)

## Having an Eye for What is Happening around Us

by Fay van Ierlant

In *The Secret Doctrine* we read that, as humans of this manifested Universe we belong to the Fifth Sub-Race of the Fifth Root-Race. The number five, points to the fifth principle in the sevenfold constitution of the human being, which is the mind. As a race, our possibilities to become more aware of our world lie in the nature of our mind.

The human mind, as HP Blavatsky explains in her *Key to Theosophy*, has a dual principle in its functions. One function, called the lower mind, "is the centre of the animal man, where lies the line of demarcation which separates the mortal man from the immortal entity." The other function is "the higher human mind, whose radiation links the monad, the spiritual principle in man, for the lifetime, to the mortal man."

HPB states that "The future state and the Karmic destiny of man depend on whether Manas [the mind] gravitates more downwards to Kama rupa, the seat of the lower mind and of the animal passions, or upwards to *Buddhi*, the Spiritual Ego."

From Robert Bowen's brochure "Madame Blavatsky on How to Study Theosophy," we find more about the mind and how it uses the physical brain. Bowen, as many remember was a student of HP Blavatsky's circle in London. He quotes HPB as saying:



"The brain is the instrument of waking consciousness and every conscious mental picture formed, means change and destruction of the atoms of the brain. Ordinary intellectual activity moves on well beaten paths in the brain, and does not compel sudden adjustments and destructions in the substance. But this new kind of mental effort calls for something very different - the carving out of 'new brain paths', the ranking in different order of the little brain lives. If forced injudiciously it may do serious physical harm to the brain. ... This mode of thinking (she says) is what the Indians call Jnana Yoga."

*Jnana* means spiritual insight. Jnana yoga is the mental process in which the mind learns to transcend narrowed reflections and mental pictures until it can dwell in the "World of No Form but of which all forms are narrowed reflections." Why do we have to go through the process of Jnana yoga to be able to become aware of the reality that lies beyond the narrowed reflections and beyond our own mind made pictures of our world?

The answer may be found in the second part of *The Secret Doctrine*, Anthropogenesis. Stanza X, sloka 42 mentions that during the Fourth Root-Race, "They built temples for the human body. Male and female they worshipped. Then the Third Eye acted no longer." In the chapter "The Races with the 'Third Eye,'" it is explained that the third eye acted no longer because humanity had sunk too deep into the mire of matter. That happened when the Fourth Race arrived at its middle age and the falling into matter began to dim their spiritual vision. The third eye, the organ of spiritual vision, petrified and disappeared inside the head and became the pineal gland. Since then insight into Reality can only be acquired through training and initiation. It is said that, "During the activity of the inner man (during trances and spiritual visions) the gland swells and expands". What was

once a natural human capacity now needs be developed through effort. We can read more about the third eye in the *Collected Writings* Vol. XII where the difference between Hatha and Raja Yoga is explained. HPB writes how the *nadis* (the channels along which the currents of *prana*, or vitality, flow) when struck in a proper way, awaken the sentries on both sides, the spiritual manas and the physical kama, and subdues the lower through the higher.

"We [Raja Yogis] begin with the mastery of that organ which is situated at the base of the brain, in the pharynx, and called by the Western anatomists the Pituitary Body. In the series of the objective cranial organs, it stands to the Third Eye (Pineal Gland) as Manas stands to Buddhi. ... The one is the Energizer of Will, the other that of *Clairvoyant Perception*" (p.616-617).

Exploring further we find Mahatma KH in his first letter to A.O. Hume writing about the evolution of the mind:

"You ask us to teach you true Science, the occult aspect of the known side of nature, and this you think can be easily done as asked. You do not seem to realize the tremendous difficulties in the way of imparting even the rudiments of *our* Science to those who have been trained in the familiar methods of *yours*. You do not see that the more you have of the one the less capable you are of intuitively comprehending the other, for a man can only think in his worn grooves, and unless he has the courage to fill up these and make new ones for himself, he must perforce travel on the old lines ...

The idea that I wish to convey is, that the result of the highest intellection in the scientifically occupied brain is the evolution of a sublimated form of spiritual energy, which, in the cosmic action, is productive of illimitable results, while the automatically acting



brain holds or stores in itself only a certain quantum of brute force that is unfruitful of benefit for the individual or humanity. The human brain is an exhaustless generator of the most refined quality of cosmic force out of the low, brute energy of nature ..."

The Mahatma mentions a mind being capable of comprehending intuitively. Intuition is knowledge by identity, all dualities are dissolved. It gives the vision of the whole, a unified vision of reality in which the individual and the universal are perceived as one.

The limitations of universal consciousness, when it is centralized and expressed through an individual's center of consciousness, deprives the individual of the awareness of their divine nature. It is the delusion caused by this privation which makes a person run after all kinds of worldly objects and pursuits in a futile search for happiness. Under this delusion, as mentioned above in Stanza 10, sloka 42 of the *Secret Doctrine* (Anthropogenesis), that because of the loss of the original third eye, humans regard the divine power flowing through them as their own personal power that they are entitled to use in any way they like. It is this attitude that is really responsible for the almost universal misuse of power in this, our world, and the cause of most of its problems. This trend is becoming more and more pronounced and those who benefit from it, take it for granted and consider it a legitimate exercise of freedom and their right as a human being.

The blind pursuit of power is the indication that one is grossly involved in the illusions of the world and therefore inevitable. However, humans, that can use their minds to refine "the low, brute energy of nature" of the human brain to "an exhaustless generator" of cosmic consciousness will intuitively comprehend

the truth that reality is an undivided whole of which they are an integrated part. Such a mind will be able to discern between separated delusions and the real sense of fundamental unity; the fundamental unity of universal brotherhood. This might be the challenge of the Fifth Sub-Race of the Fifth Root-Race going through matter in the Fourth Round.







## Some Information and Reflection on the Lowest Form of Energy

by Trân-Thi-Kim-Dieu

The Mother, Sri Aurobindo's companion, was asked by Satprem, one of their closest disciples, what ruled the *material* world, her answer was money, sex and power. She did not say something new; many wise observers acknowledge this fact and most spiritual students know it theoretically. When one looks at the world of today one cannot deny the truth of the statement. Due to the editorial limitation, I will only concentrate on the subject of money.

Money is the lowest form of energy on the lowest level of existence, the material level. It is the drive of most activities. Everyone wants to make money, even some non-profit organizations with noble intentions. The undeniable fact is that money produces money and investments are, at present, so commonly accepted if not systematically searched, that it turns out to be absolutely "normal" that one should earn money from money. But this thinking is totally wrong. Erwin Wagenhofer's documentary *Let's Make Money*, which is now known as a reference to information on the financial process worldwide, proves that this process enriches the rich and impoverishes the poor. Those who are comfortably off would resist the view of poverty that has struck and strikes many populations worldwide.



Let's take just a few examples:

(1) The intensive cotton farming is causing starvation to the people in Burkina Faso because the soil has become unproductive for any other type of farming. The wealth of the country has been diverted to enrich other countries which, through the commerce of cotton and its manufactured products, have become increasingly richer.

(2) Similarly, farmers in India pay a high price by buying Monsanto's genetically modified seeds. These seeds have to be bought again and again because the crops they produce cannot be used as seeds for new sowing; as soon as a harvest fails farmers face bankruptcy. This, in the worst scenario, causes farmers to commit suicide out of despair and, in a better situation, causes great debt for the farmers and their families for years to come.

(3) The third example is the worst because it shows the present state of the world economy. The money "in circulation" is not real money, but artificially produced for the sake of loans. It means that when Mr. Smith is granted a loan by the bank to purchase a house, the bank actually does not have the money; it purposely "creates" the amount just by a stroke of the pen; the amount is just "scriptural," therefore virtual. What follows is between banks through other strokes of accountancy. However, the borrower has to reimburse the money through his earnings, in other words by "real value" money. The whole process implies that with virtual money, the bank earns real money with the interests owed on the principal of Mr. Smith's loan. Yet because the loans are huge and the interests are high, Mr. Smith - and other victims - can no longer honor the debt; the bank takes over and becomes the owner of the property. This happened three years ago and is likely to happen again - as

greed has neither limits nor borders - if no significant reform is applied to the worldwide banking system.

These examples let us know that:

- When we receive increased money through investments, even "ethical ones" (ruling out those for armaments, toxins, and poisons, etc.) we have done a wrong thing; the poor in the developing nations have been deprived of some means of survival. We all know that the origin is greed. We can gloss over this but still a solution ought to be brought about. This makes us conscious of our unconscious exploitation of the poor.

- When we take out a loan, we increase the bubble of virtual "scriptural" money adding to the mass of money in circulation, which is not real money, but money as debt. This makes us conscious of our unconscious complicity.

- The world economy is totally dependent upon the bank system which is its main beneficiary. This tears a small corner of our ignorance on globalization.

Solutions belong to each and all who have come to some understanding. One aspect of this understanding demands that money be used effectively and rightly. This means that it should be used to produce goodness, whether for short or long term purposes. It should not be retained just to produce more money. Even a small amount of good common sense can show the absurdity of the system based on "money produces money." After a time of "the wealthy turning wealthier," the consequences have to be paid. It first starts by the poor becoming poorer and then by the starving poor no longer tolerating the situation and so revolt. The third step is the wealthy discovering that money is not perennial. A portion of the wealthy people (their prestigious names need not to be quoted) organize the rescue and another



portion (these are more anonymous) try to put their assets in safer forms, gold or whatever else. Both have initiated action. Huge fortunes have been given away to the amelioration of the poor world, as well as an acceleration of greed among the second portion of the wealthy. In the meantime, before approaching the final collapse of the world economy if nothing significant has occurred, humans become inhuman to each other. Ethics, which is said to be "the soul of theosophy" is distant, from the attitude of humans towards the environment, towards animals, and towards all other human beings. This state is called barbarianism. And it is happening now!

The editor of *Theosophy Forward* wants the writer to offer a healing solution. Since the writer has just a small voice, the voice of suggestion, it says "Let's consider, each one for oneself, how one can deal with this."

In order to heal the disease of "money producing money," one mild solution is to use accrued interests to produce goodness. Obviously this action cannot suddenly heal the system, yet it would work as a filter and a brake on the present system. Above all, one should not hesitate to use the principle to produce goodness, whenever necessary. Use the money rightly - in accordance with the law of ethics - and abstain from hoarding. This ought to be a motto for those who claim to be theosophists.

Since the structure of the economy of today is based on consumerism, the only solution is to abstain from consuming thoughtlessly. Thoughtlessness prevents one from seeing that consumerism makes oneself a slave to the system. Getting things according to one's real need and not according to one's wants, one learns to be watchful to discriminate as to what is one's real need and not the need created and imposed by the

system. This ought to be a discipline to all students of theosophy.

And eventually, due to one's pedagogical role, one should try to increase awareness of the majority of people about the perversion of the system. This hopefully might rally more and more responsible minds to the human community. The only purpose of all actions is to save the whole world from a final global collapse, and by doing so, to earn not money, but more responsibility guided by the spirit of sharing.

Being firmly convinced that great things are always prepared on the subtle levels well before their precipitation on earth, I should like to share with the readers - including fellow-Theosophists - these ideas so that by our united thinking action, the worst could be avoided, because we all are convinced that "Ideas rule the World."





# Our World

by Barbara Herbert

When we look around our world today, we can quickly become overwhelmed with all of the problems and difficulties we see before us. Poverty and hunger are endemic in many areas; intolerance, discrimination, and inequality continue to plague the world; violence seems to be the primary means to solve conflict. Around the world, we face the scourge of substance abuse with its multiplicity of venal tentacles that cause untold suffering and sadness to its users and to the loved ones of those users. As we look around our world today and see the reality of suffering, it seems as if the only solution is to sadly shake our heads and whisper quietly, "Oh, this orphan humanity."

As Theosophists, we have been accused of "hiding" in our books, of not living in the real world. We are accused of being "head" focused, not "heart" focused. That is, knowing that individually we cannot even begin to make a dent in the tragedies suffered by humankind, we can return to our studies, safe in the understanding that suffering is the way of the world at this time in evolution because it is the Kali Yuga. Correct? Absolutely not.

Theosophy is about the study of the ancient wisdom which prompts us to strive for conscious awareness of our own divinity and the unity of all beings. Theosophy is about wholeness. If one



individual falls into the mire, then we all fall into the mire. If one suffers, we all suffer. We cannot separate ourselves into "head" and "heart." Both head and heart are part of who we are; both are needed for successfully functioning in the world; both are needed on the journey toward conscious awareness. Think for a moment ... what would it be like to have only one's mind as one makes this journey? ... what would it be like if one only had one's heart for this journey? We need both, we have both, and we must use both!

Studying allows us to understand the tragedies faced by individuals the world over. Our minds help us to make some sense of the suffering we see. Our minds grapple with concepts such as karma and dharma. Through our minds, we reach for ultimate understanding, for our journey's end - not simply to know, but rather to KNOW. However, we cannot reach the journey's end through our minds alone. Our hearts must accompany us.

Our actions, our love, our hearts reach out to those who are suffering. We see sadness, and we act to assuage it. We see intolerance, and we work to mitigate it. We see poverty and hunger, and we attempt to end it. Through this karma yoga, we move toward our journey's end, not simply to love all of creation, but rather to SERVE all aspects of life in the most divine sense. However, in order to avoid being swept up in the emotions of serving, our minds must accompany us on our journey.

Our minds and our hearts must meld in order to provide the balance needed to both KNOW and SERVE. Knowledge without service is useless; service without knowledge is helpless. How then do we move forward?

Using our studies to provide the basis of knowledge from which we serve seems reasonable. If we did not have some tentative

understanding of the laws of karma, we would likely be overwhelmed with the heartache that exists in our world. At that point, we may simply give up in despair; thus, instead of helping, we would be adding to the desperation that exists in so many places. Through our studies, we know that thoughts have power and can influence others. We can use our thoughts to help others. Also through our studies, we know that meditation can help to raise the very consciousness of humanity as a whole. It seems that possessing an understanding of the divine wisdom can only enhance our service. And serve, we must.

The axiom "Theosophy is who Theosophy does" propels us toward service. We must DO Theosophy. We must put the teachings of Theosophy into action. For some, the idea of putting the teachings of Theosophy into action may sound daunting; for others, this may sound like a clarion call! Those of us who are daunted may wonder ... "What can I do to help? I don't have much money. I have to work and take care of my family. How can I serve?"

Regardless of whether we are racing to the forefront to challenge the inequality in our world or whether we are helping our neighbor during a time of need, we are "doing Theosophy"!

Each of us is unique and can thus serve in our own unique manner. We can use our thoughts to help others. Sending kind and caring thoughts to someone who is clearly having an especially difficult day is a form of service. For instance, if someone cuts us off in traffic, we could send thoughts of peace and caring to that individual (rather than the normal thoughts we send in his/her direction!). We can also use our actions to serve others. Peppering our lives with random acts of kindness is truly a means of serving. On a very simple level, we can hold the door open for someone (whether they need us to do so or not!).



We can make eye contact and smile genuinely at others throughout the day. Of course, we can add to these simple methods of serving by focusing our thoughts and actions on a broader scale - meditation. We can use our meditation practices to help raise the consciousness of humanity, to raise it above the mire of suffering and hurt so that all beings can live in the Light.

Thus, when we look at our world today we can see not just the suffering that seems endemic, but also the endless possibilities of serving through the use of both our heads and our hearts. We can not only balance ourselves but help to balance the world in which we live through both Knowledge and Service. We can "do Theosophy"!



## Emanation in daily life

by Herman C. Vermeulen

'Emanation' is a Latin compound meaning 'the flowing out' of what is within. Each embodying being emanates a characteristic 'sphere', a 'force field' to which lesser developed beings are attracted, thus forming his(its, one's) body. In this force field, the lesser developed beings find the appropriate habitat to develop themselves. An example is the planetary being Earth, creating an appropriate environment for all the other beings of our planet, including ourselves. This concept of emanation is a very fundamental idea in *The Secret Doctrine* of Madame Blavatsky, and in the philosophy of Plato, the Neo-Platonist Plotinus and his teacher Ammonius Saccas. Below some practical examples of emanation are given.

There is a very interesting phenomenon in nature, which biologists call a biotope. A biotope is an area with uniform living conditions (a marsh or moorland) in which certain plants and animals can thrive, because they are in harmony with their environment. It is their natural habitat or growth environment.

If we give this some thought, the concept becomes broader and more dynamic. If we create the right circumstances, the corresponding animal or plant appears naturally. There is clearly a mutual attraction between different types of beings, creating living conditions for one another. However, there is a critical



*boundary*. For example, if we create a square meter of biotope, we will probably not attract one single being, because the minimal condition, in this case the minimum size, is not met.

This example of mutual attraction and cooperation is an aspect or part of the concept of 'emanation.' The biotopes in nature clearly illustrate that beings in equal or even different phases of development not only have a stimulating influence on one another, but also create a necessary cooperation. This cooperation provides them with the mutual opportunity to gain experience and work on inner growth. This once again proves that growth or development is not possible alone: that it is an illusion to think we are separate from one another.

If we consider this observation and the corresponding ideas from a fundamental standpoint, then we can say that, lesser developed beings are able to attract more highly developed beings, although they cannot demand cooperation. How do you attract higher beings, such as great spiritual teachers? By being open to them; being a qualified spiritual biotope; developing corresponding spiritual qualities within your own sphere. This is how you can form connections and strengthen existing bonds. Developing spiritual qualities means: to be these in the core of your being. False pretenses or wrong motives do not work. Are we really capable of making our character more spiritual? Of course we can, because every being has endless capabilities within itself. Every form of good education is based on this principle. It creates an environment/atmosphere that evokes ones higher characteristics. Not by rules and regulations or memorizing facts, but by showing someone the way to his own conscience (wisdom from past incarnations).

In a good learning environment there is always a dynamic balance between providing space and stimulation. In a sense it

is easier if someone tells us exactly what to do, rather than being told which goal we need to achieve and what the important factors are. In the latter case we have to use our own inner abilities to fulfill the ideal - thereby taking responsibility for the consequences.

You can find these same principles of cooperation in the human birth process. Let us take the reproductive cells as an example. Our reproductive cells are incarnations of universal stem cells that belong to other persons, at least most of them are not our own. Because we have built up karmic relationships with these cells, they incarnate in our body, even though they do not belong to our own cells. Why doesn't our body reject these reproductive cells, while other foreign cells are forcefully rejected? Why does our body protect them, and is even actively stimulating their growth?

From a biological standpoint, the mother protects the mature egg against her own immune responses by wrapping the egg in a firm layer of cells. She is able to allow her own cells to play a protective role for the benefit of foreign cells, in this case the universal, reproductive cells.

What kind of (spiritual) sphere or biotope is created between parent and reincarnating human, so that the mother is able to play host for the cell-beings of the reincarnating human? It is a dynamic cooperation with two sides: on the one hand providing space to other beings, on the other hand 'challenging' them to use the possibilities for growth themselves. The mother's body protects the embryo against rejection (we do not yet know exactly how this works). At the same time it appears that the vitality of the embryo has to be strong enough to develop into a healthy baby within the influential sphere of the mother.

Compare this with a comet that is finding its place within a solar



system. The comet needs to find its balance between its own characteristics and the dominating characteristics in that system, between its own powers and the powers in that system.

These aspects of the universal teaching of emanation provide a picture of a 'dynamic spiritual biotope': the attraction of beings who explore the given possibilities themselves. We can find many examples of this in nature as well as in our daily lives. For example: do we play a protective role for people being attracted to our culture, our 'biotope'? In our society you can clearly see comparable processes taking place that can be solved with compassion - by living for the whole and not for yourself alone.



## Global Mental Health Concerns

by Tom Davis

There is a serious blind spot when it comes to the truth about mental health in many areas of activity in the world, probably due to the stigma attached to mental illness.

From a holistic or positive psychological viewpoint, mental health is seen as the general absence of a mental disorder, although recent evidence suggests that mental health is more than the mere absence of a mental disorder or illness. Put simply, mental health refers to the health of a person's mind. Therefore the impact of traumas in childhood during education and in social, cultural and physical situations and the deleterious effects of aging can affect mental health. Our ability to cope with or adapt to a range of daily demands and how we react to or express ourselves emotionally, especially in stressful and traumatic circumstances, determines our level of mental health. In many spheres of human life people, including those in leadership positions and presidents of countries suffer from serious mental illnesses. This negatively affects the people around them, the organization or country. Surely then, this should be a serious area of study for Theosophists.

The World Health Organization defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work



productively and fruitfully and is able to make a worthwhile contribution to his or her community".

Recently the term "Global Mental Health" emerged as a field of study and research that places a priority on improving mental health worldwide, so global guidelines regarding testing and evaluation of individuals should follow eventually. How this will be implemented will be interesting as cultural differences and various professional approaches and opinions affect the definitions of mental disorders.

The current global recession has affected many physically, emotionally and mentally. This has led to an increase in mental illness and suicides in all age groups from youths to the aged. Although there have been increased levels of suicides during the current global recession, even during boom times, the levels of mental illness was a cause for concern. The WHO statistics state that global suicide rates increased 60% over 45 years from 1959 to 2004. On average, one person dies by suicide every 40 seconds somewhere in the world.

In the past socially acceptable drugs (alkaloids) in cigarettes, coffee, tea, chocolate, cocoa, colas and mild pain killers, plus alcohol were used by millions to cope with levels of stress. It eventually became known that these have a deleterious long term effect on the body and are especially dangerous when use is excessive. Alkaloid stimulants, coffee, tea, cola and large amounts of sugar (sucrose) in soft drinks usually increases the heart rate and tricks the body into releasing the energy that it holds in reserve. In addition refined sugar or sucrose leaches calcium from teeth and bones.

As the pace of life increased, so did the consumption of these stimulants and with it, not surprisingly, increasing numbers of

people suffering from depression, burnout, yuppie flue etc. However, a much larger range of harmful but socially acceptable drugs have gradually been introduced in the form of stimulants, suppressants, anti-depressants, sedatives, tranquilizers and pain relief pills. These are attractively packaged and marketed to a public looking for relief from the effect of stress. These can be more harmful long term, as many are habit forming and can also lead to debilitating physical and mental health.

In addition to these, there are many very serious illegal drugs like enhanced marijuana, mandrax, crystal meths, cocaine, heroin and even more dangerous drug cocktails. Many take these drugs as a form of euphoric escape from the real world and end up losing their lives prematurely.

Mental illness does not only arise from stress and drugs, it can be a hereditary illness or one caused by serious accident or induced as a result of serious trauma.

The effect of advancing years and deterioration of the physical body and mind can affect memory, and an inability to deal effectively with situations that were previously not an issue.

Turning from causes to actual mental illness; normally most people suffer from some form of mild neurosis. But there is a progressive deterioration in mental health as people regress emotionally and psychologically as a result of an inability to cope with or face up to difficult situations or the modern pace of life or rat race. This manifests in several ways as anxiety, depression, possible addiction and deteriorating stages leading to burn out. If progressive drug addiction occurs, serious mental illnesses or psychoses can develop which can be difficult to treat. These days powerful drugs with serious side effects are used in treatment of these advanced mental illnesses.



Psychological profiling and regular mental health checkups are heavily neglected in industry, commerce, finance, education, religious organizations and most other fields except for a country's intelligence operatives and within special forces who carry out covert operations.

Psychological profiling and strictly enforced rules concerning priests in the Roman Catholic Church could have avoided the stigma associated with the scandal of pedophile priests.

There are so many examples of people in highly responsible positions who terrorize their subordinates or staff, because they can be delusional, psychotic, paranoid, bipolar schizophrenic or suffer from other forms of mental illness, which in turn creates undue stress in others and can at times cause mental illness in others. There are many case histories of people who have committed serious crimes and only after this, have been ordered by a court to undergo psychiatric evaluation.

Although many organizations carry out regular physical examinations, most do not conduct regular mental health sessions to check the effect of the stresses of the job and maybe the effect of a changed personal life situation on the individual, such as a divorce.

Those engaged in personnel and mental health fields should be campaigning for formal and professionally authorized regular testing or screening procedures especially for those in leadership and management roles to protect reasonably normal people and the organization from the traumatic vicissitudes of seriously mentally ill persons in responsible positions. This should become a mandatory procedure written into the rules, laws and constitutions of organizations and countries.

## Religions and the Theosophical Society

by Vic Hao Chin

When the Theosophical Society was founded, it was expected to play a major role in the minimization of the evils brought about by institutionalized religion. A significant proportion of H. P. Blavatsky's writings addressed this matter, and the *Mahatma Letters* were quite scathing in pointing out the harmful side of religion. Today, however, it seems that the Theosophical Society is not playing a major role in world thought in continuing such a work. If the rise of fundamentalism is any indication, then the harmful side of religion has not abated but may have increased.

In Letter 88 of the *Mahatma Letters* (chronological edition), the Mahatma Koot Hoomi wrote:

"I will point out the greatest, the chief cause of nearly two thirds of the evils that pursue humanity ever since that cause became a power. It is religion under whatever form and in whatsoever nation. It is the sacerdotal caste, the priesthood and the churches; it is in those illusions that man looks upon as sacred, that he has to search out the source of that multitude of evils which is the great curse of humanity and that almost overwhelms mankind. Ignorance created Gods and cunning took advantage of the opportunity. Look at India and look at Christendom and Islam, at Judaism and Fetichism. It is priestly imposture that rendered these Gods so terrible to man; it is



religion that makes of him the selfish bigot, the fanatic that hates all mankind out of his own sect without rendering him any better or more moral for it. It is belief in God and Gods that makes two-thirds of humanity the slaves of a handful of those who deceive them under the false pretence of saving them. Is not man ever ready to commit any kind of evil if told that his God or Gods demand the crime - voluntary victim of an illusionary God, the abject slave of his crafty ministers? The Irish, Italian and Slavonian peasant will starve himself and see his family starving and naked to feed and clothe his padre and pope. For two thousand years India groaned under the weight of caste, Brahmins alone feeding on the fat of the land, and to-day the followers of Christ and those of Mahomet are cutting each other's throats in the names of and for the greater glory of their respective myths. Remember the sum of human misery will never be diminished unto that day when the better portion of humanity destroys in the name of Truth, morality, and universal charity, the altars of their false gods."

Even if one disagrees with the numbers quoted "two thirds of the evils that pursue humanity", one cannot help but agree with the general diagnosis. Some of mankind's longest wars and conflicts have been waged on religious grounds, such as the Crusades, Thirty Years War, Arab-Israeli wars, Protestant-Catholic conflict in Ireland, etc. We are today witnessing the worst form of indiscriminate terrorism in history - religious terrorism.

In speaking about beliefs in anthropomorphic god or gods, the Mahatma Koot Hoomi stressed:

"Our chief aim is to deliver humanity of this nightmare, to teach man virtue for its own sake, and to walk in life relying on himself

instead of leaning on a theological crutch, that for countless ages was the direct cause of nearly all human misery." (Ibid)

What have we been doing about this, and what should we collectively do about this in the future? What should be the role of the Theosophical Society in freeing humanity from such a specter?

It is to be noted that the Theosophical Society seems to have undergone two historical phases on this mission. The first one was when HPB and the Mahatma Letters called a spade a spade and wrote very frankly about the evil side of religious beliefs and institutions. The second phase gradually seeped in after the death of HPB and Henry Steel Olcott, when the Theosophical Society began to be over-conciliatory about religion and started to speak about religious beliefs in a manner quite incongruent with the early writings.

An example is the belief in anthropomorphic God or gods. The writings of the Mahatmas and HPB were virtually uncompromising about their non-existence. Yet in the decades following the turn of the century, theosophical literature began to speak again of God in a manner that surely would make the Mahatmas raise their eyebrows, such as equating Isvara or the Solar Logos with God. "Isvar is the effect of Avidya and Maya, ignorance based upon the great delusion," states the Mahatma KH. Even *At the Feet of the Master* refers to God in an almost personal manner, such as "the wise man knows that only God is great, that all good work is done by God alone"; "If he is on God's side he is one of us ..."

The close association between the TS and the Liberal Catholic Church had all the more clouded the difference between the original teachings and the later theosophical view, not only on



the subject of God, but on Jesus, vicarious atonement, etc. The TS in some respect has become an esoteric apologist for Christianity.

It is then essential for theosophists to review again the work of the TS in relation to religions and religious beliefs. In the effort to espouse religious unity, it is easy to go overboard by trying to forcibly adapt to the questionable doctrines of current religions just to appease them, a Procrustean solution that sacrifices truth.

This work must be done in stages. For example, we must promote a wider discussion about the superstition of anthropomorphism in current religious belief systems, in the hope that the common adherents will be freed from such an internally contradictory concept of the Deity. Another is to free people from the concept of an eternal hell due to the wrath of God, and popularize the view that we make our own future destiny from our actions and thoughts. Another is that we must take part in the movement to free people from mindlessly accepting that the words of scriptures are the words of God and that every word is literally true.

When these things are popularly but intelligently discussed, new paradigms will emerge in world thought that will bring public opinion farther away from superstition and closer to the reality. Let us be part of that effort to bring about the paradigm shift about religions. Then indeed we will to some degree contribute to the vision of the Mahachohan that the Theosophical Society will be "the corner-stone, the foundation of the future religion of humanity."

## Our World

by Ed Abdill

Often Theosophists are accused of being so intellectual, so concerned with debating philosophical issues, that they do not become actively engaged in political or humanitarian work. Since we seldom discuss such work at our meetings, that accusation seems to be true. When looked at from another perspective, the accusation could not be farther from the truth.

Both members and non members of the Theosophical Society frequently ask, "Why doesn't the Society take a position on global issues? Why doesn't the Society fight for human rights, help the homeless, or why doesn't it do so many other things to make the world a better place?" To address those questions we must first distinguish between the Theosophical Society and the members of the Society.

When the T.S. was formed in 1875 Colonel Olcott said that its *declared* objects were "To collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the universe." Since then quite a few changes have been made to those objects, ending in the current ones with which we are familiar. The use of the phrase, "declared objects" implies that there may be undeclared objects. Since no undeclared objects have ever been stated, we are left to speculate on what, if any, those undeclared objects might be.



In a letter to the fourth American convention of the T. S. Blavatsky wrote, "The ethics of Theosophy are more important than any divulgement of psychic laws and facts. The latter relate wholly to the material and evanescent part of the septenary man, but the ethics sink into and take hold of the real man - the reincarnating Ego." She goes on to say we need to learn the "system of life and thought which alone can save the coming races."

That statement makes it clear that what is important is the way we live. She emphasized this again when she said, "Theosophist is who Theosophy does." She even taught that if we live the required life we will come to wisdom naturally.

The "undeclared" objects of the Theosophical Society may be related to an altruistic life that follows inevitably from a realization of the ultimate unity of all. It is the Society's sacred mission to lead people toward that realization, not belief in unity, but a conscious experience of unity, even if that experience is what a Zen master called a "fleeting forever." Modern science is making every effort to collect the laws which govern the universe, but to date modern science seeks to discover those laws almost exclusively by observation and measurement of the physical world. That is indeed an important work, but we are not only physical creatures. We have a mind, emotions, and a spiritual nature. Although psychology makes an effort to understand the mind and the emotions it is an infant science. Moreover, many psychologists are convinced that mind and emotions are but a byproduct of the physical brain and body.

Our current first object is to form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity. The second and third objects seem to suggest a way to bring that about. They suggest a search, but that search is not only an outward search, it is a search within.

Although not mentioned in the objects, meditation has been a corner stone of the Theosophical life, perhaps because it is through meditation that we may come to realize our unity with all life.

Blavatsky defined meditation as the inexpressible longing of the inner self for the infinite. The infinite is without boundaries. It is undifferentiated. In the words of K. H. it is the subjective whole. Those whose goal in meditation is union with the infinite cannot go wrong. That drive for the eternal can lead them to a realization of unity.

When we have only a momentary realization of unity, it changes us forever. We begin to live an altruistic life. The New Testament informs us that Jesus said that only those who *do* the will of his Father would be saved. Those who simply talk about it, as many Theosophists are accused of doing, will not be saved. The parable of the Good Samaritan also illustrates that altruism is a key to eternal life. Shorn of its sectarian interpretation, Theosophical philosophy would agree.

Since joining the Society in 1959 I have been privileged to know several prominent Theosophists. Among them are Dora and Fritz Kunz, Emily and John Sellon, Diana Chapotin, and others. In every case these members have been active in humanitarian work, speaking out against injustice of every sort and petitioning their legislators for right action. The fact is that I have never known a single dedicated Theosophist who was not actively working for the benefit of humanity. Many of them have been members of the Theosophical Order of Service, an active organization working for the good of humanity, animals, and the environment.

According to Blavatsky, the Theosophical Society has a sacred mission. In the modern vernacular, it directs us to walk the talk.



Dedicated members do just that. As to action by the Society rather than action by its members, the Society would dilute its central purpose if it were to engage in social and political campaigns. The Society is meant to get at the root cause of suffering. It is meant to inspire its members to action, to walking the talk, to living the life that alone can save orphan humanity.



## The Internet, an Instrument of the Forces of Light and of Darkness

by Marie Harkness

The advent of the internet towards the end of the last century, from the 1980s onwards, has strongly impacted on our lives and, with ever advancing technology, is swiftly changing the face of human relationships, human behavior and modes of contact. We must be ever mindful that with every increasing opportunity comes increasing responsibility.

On the plus side, use of the internet broadens our knowledge by opening a new window on the world; it helps us to communicate swiftly with each other and from many respects exercises a positive influence on our minds. Having friends and links through the web enhances self-esteem, allows freedom of expression, and also facilitates regular contact between colleagues, friends, home, work and office. Time spent on the internet at home or elsewhere can help reduce the feeling of isolation or loneliness. Research on any chosen topic is made available through the press of a button accessing Google, whereas in former times extensive reading of books or visits to the library was deemed essential. There are various web facilities available to us, to name a few: e-mail, blogging, Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Wikipedia, Wikileaks, Google Research, Google Earth, Skype, current news & information etc. In a sense, the internet has become a "super power."



All peoples, all countries, irrespective of race, creed, sex, age, geographical distance, and time zones, are able to inter-communicate, share greetings and intelligence. Online interaction also creates and strengthens groups of people sharing common interests or goals. Most Theosophical sections, regional associations and countries linked to the headquarters in Adyar, have their own special Theosophical website allowing members, enquirers, or the general public access to a plethora of Theosophical material, history, and notification of events via the links on their websites. There is the potential for easier and rapid research on a range of topics for school pupils and university students thus facilitating their quest, enhancing learning, and widening their depth of knowledge. It provides an important and swift facility for remaining in regular touch with family and friends and therefore to some extent has replaced the art of letter writing. The web has also proved to be more cost effective for business as postal mail can be expensive.

With this rapidly advancing phenomenon, much of it weighing on the positive side, it behooves us to be aware of the web's negative side and its darker influence: Friendships created over the internet can prevent close ties as there is no physical contact, no eye to eye with opportunity to sense or read facial expressions. All contact is through the medium of a machine. Family life can greatly suffer through the amount of time some members spend in isolation on the computer. The lack of quality time spent together can prove detrimental to young children and teenagers and to family bonding. Cyber bullying is a real concern and is known to have adversely affected vulnerable and susceptible women and children causing untold misery. We frequently hear of and read reports of those who have been duped of their savings by cunning spammers and hackers using

deceitful means. Then there are numerous people who pour their hearts out on blogging sites, on Twitter and Facebook - posting too much personal information about themselves and are surprised whenever their homes are burgled during their well-advertised holiday away. Information given out can never be retracted. On the more sinister side, there are suicide sites encouraging extremely vulnerable people to commit the final act, there are evil sites set up to groom and harm young children, self-harming sites, and casual date and partner sites for one night stands. The internet can be used to facilitate gangs intent on violence which can morph into mass lawlessness. Many of the blogging sites set up are ego-based, frequently used by attention seeking individuals. There are social networking sites like MySpace and YouTube which allow users to create their own pages to post blogs, photos, and videos but this service has been abused by some posting videos depicting crimes against animals.

In many ways, as mentioned earlier, the facility of e-mail has greatly helped communication at all levels but there is another disturbing side - the unpleasant or nasty e-mail. These can cause much distress, and again one must look carefully and question the motive and state of mind of the sender of such e-mails, prime examples of great unkindness. Reputations of famous sports people and celebrities have been ruined by news blogs and the numerous negative comments which follow such postings. Some have elicited hundreds of comments, a few in defense of, but the majority condemning the individual concerned. Such an accumulation of ill will only serves to make matters worse and to strengthen the so-called vice or evil in the person concerned. Another misuse of the internet is that of anonymous postings letting off steam and the anonymous letter, deriding some unfortunate person with the express expectation



on the part of the sender, that others will denounce or react based on the vitriol sent, despite the fact that the writer lacked the courage to sign their name. Generally in police stations, courts of law, and other establishments, such letters are not given any credence.

Such abuses of the internet deliberately cause harm or hurt to the individual, can hinder a person's own spiritual development, and distract from higher, nobler thinking. Some may be unaware of the effects of their postings or in some cases rants, hitting others like bricks, they don't stop to think. Many replies are rattled off with no proper thought behind them. Karma makes no allowances. "Each man is personally responsible to the Law of Compensation for every word of his voluntary production" KH (ML, 258).

Those of us who are earnest in serving the Theosophical Society, the blessed movement so dear to the Masters' hearts, must try to consciously use the internet as a vehicle for the Light, as a tremendous medium for Their Work. HPB maintained that "co-workers must work like the fingers of one hand." Care must be taken at all times not to be judgmental, to remember to send a blessing and goodwill with every single reply or e-mail, even when deleting nuisance postings or spam mail. We must be aware that the intent or motive *behind* the words we send will have a greater impact or influence on the receiver. Presently, the internet is an instrument of, not only the forces of Light but also those of Darkness. As beings with free will, both are necessary for us to grow, to learn to discriminate, in time to *be* that which we essentially *are*. This is the age with emphasis on the development of higher mind and for the members of the TS movement to make the best use of the internet as a vehicle, and to function at optimum level with full awareness, the advice from

the Master KH is most apt, "be steadfast, wary and united" (ML, 318).

And finally inspiring words from Lord Gautama Buddha:

"The thought manifests as the word  
The word manifests as the deed  
The deed develops into habit  
And habit hardens into character  
So watch the thought and its ways with care  
And let it spring from love born out of concern for all beings."







## Our World and Us

by Mary Anderson

When we look around us, read a newspaper or listen to the news on a computer, television, or radio, what strikes us most in today's world? Perhaps it is the amount of verbal and physical violence perpetrated against innocent and defenseless humans - especially minority sections of the population - as well as animals - that seems to dominate the headlines. The apparent injustice involved in all this may strike us and, at times, we may feel we are indeed living in *Kali Yuga*, the Dark Age, which will not end for a very long time. On the other hand, *Kali Yuga* is said to be the age in which we can learn most how to grow in insight, wisdom, compassion, and love; and also in the ability, indeed sometimes the urge, to become active against the evils of the age.

Organizations, like the United Nations, have been formed to combat evil. To them we owe the statement to the effect that evil begins in the mind. Should we not examine our own thinking and feeling, our reactions to the evils we hear of and perhaps witness? Is there a danger that we may be creating and fostering negative forces by becoming excited and taking sides? But is it right to attack violence with violent thoughts - to crusade with violence in thought or even action against those who are prejudiced, biased, excitable, sometimes easily led, and



therefore inconsiderate? Should we not rather pity them for the unhappiness which violent feelings and thoughts create in those who express and even think and feel violence?

Perhaps those who are responsible for injustice and cruelty are more to be pitied than those who suffer - not only for the reason that their karma will catch up with them - but their negative or abusive thoughts, words, and actions make very unhappy people of them:

Who toiled a slave may come anew a prince  
For gentle worthiness and merit won.  
Who ruled a king may wander earth in rags,  
For things done and undone.

(Edwin Arnold, *Light of Asia*, Book 8)

We all differ from each other. Understanding these differences can widen not only our hearts, but also our minds. Those who have quarreled with their near and dear are well aware of this and of the joy that comes if they can and do make it up and know true brotherly feelings again.

Members of the Theosophical Society are all aware of its First Object: "To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or color." Do we, within the Society, form such a brotherhood in our lodges, for example? When I was first living in Switzerland, I went with a group of our lodge members to a TS meeting in another town. At her request, an office colleague of mine also came along. She remarked on "how nice" we all were to each other. This was certainly the case. In our Lodge, indeed at that time in the whole Section, there was friendliness and

brotherhood. Such relationships indeed go to form a nucleus, which is a center from which growth is possible.

Whether we are TS members or not, we can spread a feeling of brotherhood - a "fellow feeling" - through our attitude towards individuals and acquaintances whom we meet for the first time. A person's attitude - even if not always expressed in action - really matters. (And if it is strong enough, and if occasion arises, it will express itself in action.) Many members owe their first interest in the Theosophical Society not to reading a book or attending a lecture, but to the brotherhood expressed in individual members or within a lodge.

How then can we contribute to making the world a better place? If we can act helpfully, by all means let us do so, but we can also act and help through our thoughts, our emotions, our attitude. The first thing to do may be to observe ourselves, to catch ourselves unaware - in other words, to be wide awake, aware of our own thoughts and feelings, especially in regard to what is negative in today's world. We should avoid blaming others, but try to understand how difficult it is in today's environment to remain kind and understanding. Those who lack understanding may laugh at us. But, there and there, we may plant a seed - a seed which, after many days or lives, may blossom in understanding and affection.



# Tips

How to take full advantage of this electronic magazine?

This electronic edition of *Theosophy Forward* has a number of integrated features. They give you to a great extent, the possibility to customize the appearance of this e-magazine to your liking and to highlight the text or insert your notes and share them with your friends.

To access these features you have to click your mouse on MENU icon at the bottom of the e-magazine and a pop-up menu window will appear. You will see that by placing your cursor and clicking with your mouse on a definite individual feature you can customize the e-magazine Turn Mode, Page Turn Speed, eliminate its default background, change Book Shadow and Book Color, i.e. color of text background.

But what you will probably appreciate most is the possibility to highlight a portion of text you like and/or to insert your personal notes which will remain, if saved, in your own e-magazine copy.

To highlight the text just click on Highlights in the menu window and choose Add new highlight. An arrow with a pencil will replace your usual cursor which you have to lead with your mouse to the chosen text and by clicking to place your highlight. Once your highlight is placed you can change its size and position and even its opacity and color if you right click your

mouse with your cursor placed in the highlight and a small new menu window will appear. In that window you can also choose to lock your created highlight or to delete it.

In a similar way you can place your own personal note. Instead of Highlights, choose Notes and Add new note and an arrow with a cup will replace your usual cursor which you have to lead with your mouse to the position where you would like to have your note placed. Just click the mouse and the note window will appear. Insert your text in the window and, when finished, close the window, and you will see that your note icon remains in the chosen position. By rightclicking on the icon a new small window appears in which you can choose to open the note or to delete it. While by clicking on the Options in the note window you can choose your note icon type, define the subject of your note, insert your name and change your note and text color.

But this is not all. You can share your highlights and notes with your friends who possess a copy of the same *Theosophy Forward* issue. Namely, by choosing the feature Export highlights/notes to DNN file or Send highlights/notes by email, you can create a file which you can attach to an e-mail you are sending to your friend or directly place it in an e-mail to your friend. On receiving your email your friend can then place your highlights/notes in her/his own *Theosophy Forward* copy by choosing Import highlights/notes from DNN file. In that way you can transform your *Theosophy Forward* copy in an interaction media for your creativity and study.



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### THEOSOPHY IN SLOVENIA

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