

# Theosophy

Moving  
ahead in

# Forward

the 21st  
century

Main theme in this issue

# Our Unity

**Finding Unity is The Most Difficult of All**

**A Dynamic Movement**

**Revelation or Realization**

**International Theosophy Conferences (ITC)**

**Abortion and the Reincarnation of the  
Soul**

# Theosophy Forward

This independent electronic magazine offers a portal to Theosophy for all those who believe that its teachings are timeless. It shuns passing fads, negativity, and the petty squabbles of sectarianism that mar even some efforts to propagate the eternal Truth. *Theosophy Forward* offers a positive and constructive outlook on current affairs.

*Theosophy Forward* encourages all Theosophists, of whatever organizations, as well as those who are unaligned but carry Theosophy in their hearts, to come together. Theosophists of any allegiance can meet and respectfully exchange views, because each of us is a centre for Theosophical work.

It needs to be underscored that strong ties are maintained with all the existing Theosophical Societies, but the magazine's commitment lies with Theosophy only and not with individuals or groups representing these various vehicles.

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# Theosophy

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## Psychic and Noetic Action

by H. P. Blavatsky

From *Lucifer* 7.39 (November 1890): 177-185; *Collected Writings* 12.

"... The knowledge of the past, present, and future, is embodied in Kshetrajna (the 'Self')." - *Occult Axioms*.

... memory has no seat, no special organ of its own in the human brain, but that it has *seats* in every organ of the body.

...

The seat of memory, then, is assuredly neither here nor there, but everywhere throughout the human body. To locate its organ in the brain is to limit and dwarf the Universal Mind and its countless Rays (the *Manasaputra*) which inform every rational mortal. As we write for Theosophists, first of all, we care little for the psychophobic prejudices of the Materialists who may read this and sniff contemptuously at the mention of "Universal Mind," and the Higher *noetic* souls of men. But, what is memory, we ask? "Both presentation of sense and image of memory, are transitory phases of consciousness," we are answered. But what is Consciousness itself? - we ask again.

...

Now, since the metaphysics of Occult physiology and psychology postulate within mortal man an immortal entity, "divine Mind," or *Nous*, whose pale and too often distorted reflection is that which we call "Mind" and intellect in men - virtually an entity apart from the former during the period of every





This painting is exhibited in the H. P. B. museum in Dnepropetrovsk in Ukraine. It portraits Helena as a young girl with her mother and was received as a gift from one of the heirs of her family. The name of the artist is not known and some have doubts about the painting's authenticity, while others ascribe it to H. P. B. herself.

incarnation - we say that the two sources of "memory" are in these two "principles." These two we distinguish as the Higher *Manas* (Mind or Ego), and the *Kama-Manas*, i.e., the rational, but earthly or physical intellect of man, incased in, and bound by, matter, therefore subject to the influence of the latter: the all-conscious SELF, that which reincarnates periodically - verily the WORD made flesh! - and which is always the same, while its reflected "Double," changing with every new incarnation and personality, is, therefore, conscious but for a life period. The latter "principle" is the *Lower Self*, or that, which manifesting through our *organic* system, acting on this plane of illusion, imagines itself the *Ego Sum*, and thus falls into what Buddhist philosophy brands as the "heresy of separateness." The former, we term INDIVIDUALITY, the latter *Personality*. From the first Proceeds all the noetic element, from the second, the *psychic*, i.e., "terrestrial wisdom" at best, as it is influenced by all the chaotic stimuli of the human or rather *animal passions* of the living body.

The "Higher Ego" cannot act directly on the body, as its consciousness belongs to quite another plane and planes of ideation: the "lower" *Self* does: and its action and behaviour depend on its free will and choice as to whether it will gravitate more towards its parent ("the Father in Heaven") or the "animal" which it informs, the man of flesh. The "Higher Ego," as part of the essence of the UNIVERSAL MIND, is unconditionally omniscient on its own plane, and only potentially so in our terrestrial sphere, as it has to act solely through its *alter ego* - the Personal Self. NOW, although the former is the vehicle of all knowledge of the past, the present, and the future, and although it is from this fountainhead that its "double" catches occasional glimpses of that which is beyond the senses of man, and

transmits them to certain brain cells (unknown to science in their functions), thus making of man a Seer, a soothsayer, and a prophet; yet the memory of bygone events - especially of the earth, earthy - has its seat in the Personal Ego alone. No memory of a purely daily-life function, of a physical, egotistical, or of a lower mental nature - such as, e.g., eating and drinking, enjoying personal sensual pleasures, transacting business to the detriment of one's neighbour, etc., etc., has aught to do with the "Higher" Mind or Ego. Nor has it any direct dealings on this physical plane with either our brain or our heart - for these two are the organs of a power higher than the *Personality* - but only with our passional organs, such as the liver, the stomach, the spleen, etc. Thus it only stands to reason that the memory of such-like events must be first awakened in that organ which was the first to induce the action remembered afterwards, and conveyed it to our "sense-thought," which is entirely *distinct from the "supersensuous" thought*. It is only the higher forms of the latter, the *superconscious* mental experiences, that can correlate with the cerebral and cardiac centres. The memories of physical and *selfish* (or personal) deeds, on the other hand, together with the mental experiences of a terrestrial nature, and of earthly biological functions, can, of necessity, only be correlated with the molecular constitution of various *Kamic* organs, and the "dynamical association" of the elements of the nervous system in each particular organ.

...

Indeed, every organ in our body *has its own memory*. For if it is endowed with a consciousness "of its own kind," every cell must of necessity have also a memory of its own kind, as likewise its own *psychic* and *noetic* action. Responding to the touch of both a physical and a *metaphysical* Force, the impulse given by the

*psychic* (or psycho-molecular) Force will act from *without within*, while that of the *noetic* (shall we call it Spiritual-dynamical?) Force works *from within without*. For, as our body is the covering of the inner "principles," soul, mind, life, etc., so the molecule or the cell is the body in which dwell its "principles," the (to our senses and comprehension) immaterial atoms which compose that cell. The cell's activity and behavior are determined by its being propelled either inwardly or outwardly, by the noetic or the psychic Force, the former having no relation to the *physical* cells proper. Therefore, while the latter act under the unavoidable law of the conservation and correlation of physical energy, the atoms - being psycho-spiritual, *not physical units* - *act under laws of their own*, ...

...

Every human organ and each cell in the latter has a keyboard of its own, like that of a piano, only that it registers and emits sensations instead of sounds. Every key contains the potentiality of good or bad, of producing harmony or disharmony. This depends on the impulse given and the combinations produced; on the force of the touch of the artist at work, a "double-faced Unity," indeed. And it is the action of this or the other "Face" of the Unity that determines the nature and the dynamical character of the manifested phenomena as a resulting action, and this whether they be physical or mental. For the whole life of man is guided by this double-faced Entity. If the impulse comes from the "Wisdom above," the Force applied being noetic or spiritual, the results will be actions worthy of the divine propeller; if from the "terrestrial, devilish wisdom" (psychic power), man's activities will be selfish, based solely on the exigencies of his physical, hence animal, nature. The above may sound to the average reader as pure nonsense; but every Theosophist must

understand when told that there are *Manasic* as well as *Kamic* organs in him, although the cells of his body answer to both physical and spiritual impulses.

Verily that body, so desecrated by Materialism and man himself, is the temple of the Holy Grail, *the Adytum* of the grandest, nay, of all, the mysteries of nature in our solar universe. That body is an Aeolian harp, chorded with two sets of strings, one made of pure silver, the other of catgut. When the breath from the divine Fiat brushes softly over the former, man becomes like unto *his* God - but the other set feels it not. It needs the breeze of a strong terrestrial wind, impregnated with animal effluvia, to set its animal chords vibrating. It is the function of the physical, lower mind to act upon the physical organs and their cells; but, it is the higher mind *alone* which can influence the atoms interacting in those cells, which interaction is alone capable of exciting the brain, *via the spinal "centre" cord*, to a mental representation of spiritual ideas far beyond any objects on this material plane. The phenomena of divine consciousness have to be regarded as activities of our mind on another and a higher plane, working through something less substantial than the moving molecules of the brain. They cannot be explained as the simple resultant of the cerebral physiological process, as indeed the latter only condition them or give them a final form for purposes of concrete manifestation. Occultism teaches that the liver and the spleen cells are the most subservient to the action of our "personal" mind, the heart being the organ *par excellence* through which the "Higher" Ego acts - through the Lower Self.

Nor can the visions or memory of purely terrestrial events be transmitted directly through the mental perceptions of the brain - the direct recipient of the impressions of the heart. All such

recollections have to be first stimulated by and awakened in the organs which were the originators, as already stated, of the various causes that led to the results, or, the direct recipients and participators of the latter. In other words, if what is called "association of *ideas*" has much to do with the awakening of memory, the mutual interaction and consistent interrelation between the personal "Mind-Entity" and the organs of the human body have far more so. A hungry stomach evokes the vision of a past banquet, because its action is reflected and repeated in the *personal* mind. But even before the memory of the personal Self radiates the vision from the tablets wherein are stored the experiences of one's daily life - even to the minutest details - the memory of the stomach has already evoked the same. And so with all the organs of the body. It is they which originate according to their animal needs and desires the electro-vital sparks that illuminate the field of consciousness in the Lower Ego; and it is these sparks which in their turn awaken to function the reminiscences in it. The whole human body is, as said, a vast sounding board, in which each cell bears a long record of impressions connected with its parent organ, and each cell has a memory and a consciousness of its kind, or call it instinct if you will. These impressions are, according to the nature of the organ, physical, psychic, or mental, as they relate to this or another plane. They may be called "states of consciousness" only for the want of a better expression - as there are states of instinctual, mental, and purely abstract, or spiritual consciousness. If we trace all such "psychic" actions to brain-work, it is only because in that mansion called the human body the brain is the front door, and the only one which opens out into Space. All the others are inner doors, openings in the private building, through which travel incessantly the transmitting

agents of memory and sensation. The clearness, the vividness, and intensity of these depend on the state of health and the organic soundness of the transmitters. But their reality, in the sense of trueness or correctness, is due to the "principle" they originate from, and the preponderance in the Lower *Manas* of the *noetic* or of the *phrenic* ("Kamic," terrestrial) element.

For, as Occultism teaches, if the Higher Mind-Entity - the permanent and the immortal - is of the divine homogeneous essence of "Alaya-Akasa,"\* or Mahat - its reflection, the Personal Mind, is, as a temporary "Principle," of the Substance of the Astral Light. As a pure ray of the "Son of the Universal Mind," it could perform no functions in the body, and would remain powerless over the turbulent organs of Matter. Thus, while its inner constitution is Manasic, its "body," or rather functioning essence, is heterogeneous, and leavened with the Astral Light, the lowest element of Ether. It is a part of the mission of the Manasic Ray, to get gradually rid of the blind, deceptive element which, though it makes of it an active spiritual entity on this plane, still brings it into so close contact with matter as to entirely becloud its divine nature and stultify its intuitions.

...

Blessed is he who has acquainted himself with the dual powers at work in the ASTRAL Light; thrice blessed he who has learned to discern the *Noetic* from the *Psychic* action of the "Double-Faced" God in him, and who knows the potency of his own Spirit - or "Soul Dynamics."

\* Another name for the universal mind



### Impermanence

[As quoted in *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, by Sogyal Rinpoche]

There is no place on earth where death cannot find us - even if we constantly twist our heads about in all directions as in a dubious and suspect land. ... If there were any way of sheltering from death's blows - I am not the man to recoil from it. ... But it is madness to think that you can succeed ... Men come and they go and they trot and they dance, and never a word about death. All well and good. Yet when death does come - to them, their wives, their children, their friends - catching them unawares and unprepared, then what storms of passion overwhelm them, what cries, what fury, what despair! ... To begin depriving death of its greatest advantage over us, let us adopt a way clean contrary to that common one; let us deprive death of its strangeness, let us frequent it, let us get used to it, let us have nothing more often in mind than death. ... We do not know where death awaits us: so let us wait for it everywhere. To practice death is to practice freedom. A man who has learned how to die has unlearned how to be a slave.

### Michel de Montaigne

(One of the most influential writers of the French renaissance).



# Our Unity Series

A new series will start on Theosophy Forward.

After the previous ones - "How to Move Forward?" (2009), "Living Theosophy" (2010), "Our World" (2011) and "Our Work" (2012) the fifth series will be entitled "Our Unity."

In this new series various contributors will elaborate on the subject of Theosophical Unity.

In the past several attempts were made to unify the various Theosophical traditions. These attempts all failed. In most instances and up until today, those who are aligned with one of the many Theosophical organizations have held negative opinions about their fellow Theosophists because of what they were told within their own circles. Old conflicts, prejudice, ignorance, intolerance, and above all a lack of compassion caused Theosophists to distance themselves from each other, while at the same time all of them assert that "to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity" is their main objective.

Through the initiatives of International Theosophy Conferences Inc., of *Theosophy Forward* (the magazine), but also of individual members, Theosophists from different organizations, as well as those who are not connected with any of the existing bodies, have started a significant dialogue. It is clear that slowly a new awareness is arising whereby all can respectfully meet on a shared platform. The invaluable writings of H. P. Blavatsky are

what all those who consider themselves Theosophists share, and her work is directly inspiring this newly emerged and heartwarming dialogue.

All Theosophical societies and associations are esteemed vehicles that have, over the years, earned their own place under the sun. Although on the surface our interpretation and understanding of what H.P.B. gave us may differ, on a higher level there is so much to share that, if indeed the imaginary obstacles are taken away, a real communion comes in sight.

While in the past attempts for unification were focused on a constitutional unity, one has come to realize that in the twenty-first century it is far more important to come to a spiritual unity instead, with the ultimate goal of contributing to the welfare of humanity.



# Our Unity Series

In this second quarter 2013 issue of Theosophy Forward, four contributions by:

James Colbert

Gene Jennings

Herman C. Vermeulen

Jan Nicolaas Kind

## Finding Unity is The Most Difficult of All.

by James Colbert

For most of us the path of unity is the most difficult. At one moment we may be content with separateness. We may feel safe and without threat. To join with another or others can have the effect that we might lose something of ourselves.



*The path of unity is the most difficult*

Yet, at another moment, unity is compelling. Brotherhood, Sisterhood, Compassion, Sympathy, Support for others and Unity resonates somewhere within us. There is an almost unconscious nodding of our heads as we let the flavor of the words circulate. The heart has taken the lead and found its rightful place. We sense this is somehow who and what we are.

But somehow we start to feel like "they" do things differently, not the right way, and "that is really not me." Traditions that are treasured so dearly we feel will be lost. Our inclination turns towards separateness. You go your way and I will go mine. Soon we find fault in how they do it. We sometimes feel so much better in not "giving in" to the way they do it. We feel justified and temporarily safe.

As long as we are not involved with "them" we can do fairly well. However, something may bring us in contact as the world is now growing smaller. We start to become aware "they" are really not that much different from ourselves. And, we recognize that if we were together so much more could be accomplished. We start to gravitate towards "them." We start to get along. We may even laugh and enjoy the sometimes comradeship. We may even become exposed and reveal our thoughts and feelings more openly. Then, something may happen and we may find what we said or did was not well received. We may again hunger for separateness. The cycle of going forward and drawing back begins to repeat.

How to get past this cycle? Theosophy does give us the tools. It is suggested that unity is at a higher level of our being. Separateness is at a much lower level. Unity is at the Buddhi-Manas level of consciousness. We are capable of finding this

level within ourselves and going there. Somehow we need to bring this to our awareness.



*Ianthe H. Hoskins*

In the extraordinary little booklet put together by the well-known English author and lecturer and member the Adyar Society, Ianthe H. Hoskins, Foundations of Esoteric Philosophy, she writes that Commander Robert Bowen recorded from H. P. B., that the first principle to keep in mind when studying Theosophy is the FUNDAMENTAL UNITY OF ALL EXISTENCE. Ianthe elaborated that existence is ONE THING.

Unity, we might say, is the bedrock of the Theosophical philosophy - even though it can hurt. Holding to this thought is the most difficult of all - yet so important.



# Thoughts on bringing about Greater Theosophical Unity

by Eugene Jennings - USA



Our Teaching, as our Lineage is ONE, The Eternal Wisdom Religion. The Root Base of our "Hierarchy and Holonarchy" The Wondrous Being, is the "Tree" from which all great and truly divine, spiritually known Sages have branched off, inclusive of H. P. B. and her Masters. These sages regardless of time, or cycle, are all directly or indirectly guided by this "Being", and the Great Souls in its lineage. "It is he again who holds spiritual sway over the *initiated* adepts throughout the *whole world*. ... It is under the direct, silent guidance of this Maha Guru that all the less divine teachers and instructors of mankind became from the awakening of human consciousness, the guides of early humanity. ...." And so to this day do they still act!

Theosophy, as presented by H. P. B. and her Masters, represents the only true expression of this divine system presented in a coherent and integrated form in modern times. This we must realize and accept as the imperishable ground of our currently broken UNITY.

Realizing this, we recognize One Essential Unity and truth of Theosophy, pervading and expressed diversely in the world according to time, culture, geography, spiritual development, and cycle.

To achieve Theosophical Unity and foster mutual understanding and tolerance, as well as cooperative work for humanity, while respecting each traditions "Vows and views", perhaps we might try to encourage all theosophical representative "leader students" and students, from different, to take time(s) each year, to share, problem solve, and communicate using the Principles and teachings of H. P. B's Theosophy *the different ways to best Serve The World Using The Teachings*.

"Students" should be able to enter into retreat and dialogue, bringing together the diverse elements and emphases of the different traditions showing the *direct links of their tradition to the original theosophical principles, teachings and references*. If it is *genuine spiritual truth, enlightenment and awakening we wish to further in the world* such teachings regarding spiritual Wisdom and moral practice, should not deviate from the original teachings morally, ethically, philosophically, spiritually or in any contradictory form if they are to be considered representative of "True Theosophy" being represented to and in the World.

The Timeless Esoteric path and its methods of development do not differ in True Esoteric Schools. Spiritual teachings pertaining to the inner being must be one in essence, and not based on personal being, ceremonies, rites, rituals, trances or related lower psychological processes for alleged development! Such is pure Theosophy and one of the reasons for its presence.

With genuine dialogue and exchange, leaving "personality outside the meeting", working as impersonal centers of theosophic force, we should be able to appreciate how the *principles of our being* play out in the different emphasis, application and focus of the teachings, which each tradition expresses. Perhaps bringing these diverse traditions together

under the Light of Pure Theosophy, we can build mutual understanding, respect, open mindedness, appreciation, healthy honest dialogue and meaningful exchange with all traditional views. Perhaps this will augment and strengthen each, as in Unity - Unity in Diversity, there is Strength and with spiritual strength we can assist and move the World in many ways, for the greater good, and awakening of Buddhi-Manas.



*Retreat and dialogue*

# THE SECRET DOCTRINE

H. P. Blavatsky



## We are all from the same root

by Herman C. Vermeulen - The Netherlands

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to share with you some of my thoughts on Unity. Unity is a fundamental principle in our Theosophical world; not only all our literature breathes this idea but the Theosophia (Wisdom of the Gods) starts from this point of view. Unity is often referred to as 'the Law of laws'. It is seen as a fact in Nature; wherever we look we see beings working with other beings. No being can live or act or work on its own. Every being in itself is an example of unity, every being works together with millions of other beings.

H. P. B. establishes three fundamental propositions. We find unity defined in the first proposition in the proem of *The Secret Doctrine* as follows:

"An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. It is beyond the range and reach of thought - in the words of Mandukya Upanishad, "unthinkable and unspeakable"."

We are all from the same root. Better said, we are this root. This same root in all beings is the fundament of Unity. And we must realize that we are individually expressing this in a unique and



limited way. Nature as a whole is just one expression of this Unity.

H. P. B. continues:

"To render these ideas clearer to the general reader, let him set out with the postulate that there is one absolute Reality which antecedes all manifested, conditioned, being. This Infinite and Eternal Cause - dimly formulated in the "Unconscious" and "Unknowable" of current European philosophy - is the rootless root of "all that was, is, or ever shall be." It is of course devoid of all attributes and is essentially without any relation to manifested, finite Being. It is "Be-ness" rather than Being (in Sanskrit, Sat), and is beyond all thought or speculation.

This "Be-ness" is symbolized in *The Secret Doctrine* under two aspects. On the one hand, absolute abstract Space, representing bare subjectivity, the one thing which no human mind can either exclude from any conception, or conceive of by itself. On the other, absolute Abstract Motion representing Unconditioned Consciousness. Even our Western thinkers have shown that Consciousness is inconceivable to us apart from change, and motion best symbolizes change, its essential characteristic. This latter aspect of the one Reality is also symbolized by the term "The Great Breath," a symbol sufficiently graphic to need no further elucidation. Thus, then, the first fundamental axiom of the Secret Doctrine is this metaphysical ONE ABSOLUTE - BE-NESS - symbolized by finite intelligence as the theological Trinity."

So we are all One, or a better way of saying is that we all are expressions of the One. From this follows that Brotherhood (with capital B) is a fact in Nature. Is the hand not an overall concept for the fingers?

Each finger cannot look at one of the other fingers as being something different from itself. Is it not clear that the fingers have to work together in harmony to be maximally functional? A finger apart of the hand is no finger anymore. We only call it a finger because it still has that shape, but the finger functionality is gone. The finger only has to realize that it is just an outgrowth of the hand, or better, that it is an aspect of the hand, and the hand in its turn is not a hand without finger(s).

This is the same we for us as human beings in relation with all other beings in the widest Theosophical view; there are no exceptions!!!





## All is in sacred unity

by Jan Nicolaas Kind - Brazil

Our planet Earth is the third planet from the sun and is, in diameter, the fifth largest in the solar system. Like a gigantic space craft, it is moving - in communion with the other planets - through space at the vertiginous speed of 72,360 km (some 44,962 miles) per hour toward the constellation of Hercules, while the Milky Way, of which our solar system is a part, is moving toward the constellation of Leo at about 2,160,000 km (some 1,342,161 miles) per hour. Also the earth and its satellite moon move together in an orbit around the sun. All these many movements are made in perfect harmony at incomprehensible speeds. All that exists is functioning in sacred unity.

Our Theosophical magazines that appear worldwide and the many publications on the Internet make it clear that the Theosophical movement still has great challenges to meet. Through those articles, it seems that many members in are in doubt, worried about the future of their particular group, and they occupy themselves either by pointing out that only certain teachings are to be considered the valid ones, or they are terribly busy trying to convince themselves of the *raison d'etre* of their own Society or group.

Our principles of Theosophy - the ideas of karma and



reincarnation, the visible and invisible worlds, hierarchies, and so forth - bind us, no matter to what Theosophical tradition we belong. What H.P.B. reintroduced to the world is the ground on which all meet. Nowadays, in the information age, we see that people are looking for a less scholarly and more practical approach to the problems of the world in which we are living, based on insight, appropriate comprehension, and living experience. All of us have something to offer. How do we offer it? Do we have the right attitude towards all this? Where do we stand with integrity in our sense of sister- and brotherhood?

Our time line covers centuries, not decades, so we must learn to think in centuries; we've only just begun. If there is one question we really should be concerned with now, it is the question of how we can continue doing Theosophical work, and how each of the traditions could play an active role in this. By doing the work unconditionally, respectfully in oneness, breaking new grounds, each of the groups and independent Theosophists will come up with answers. As we do the work, all our doubts will eventually ebb away.

Our unity on a spiritual level was a fact right from the start. It is by all means not a unity for the sake of just unity; it's far more profound and rooted in the principle that there is but one life and one truth and that all of us are merely representatives of it. Theosophy doesn't teach in the conventional sense, but often functions as a pointer bringing about renewal in our way of thinking. If we make our diversity a binder instead of a divider and work in a true religious spirit, and if are aware of the pitfalls that are undeniably there, we will learn from each other. A truly peaceful, unified, nonviolent, and altruistic world is only possible if the individual transforms, psychologically and fundamentally,

because the world is what the individual is. So, the Earth is our land, and that land needs to be ploughed.



*That land needs to be ploughed*

# Revelation or Realization: The Conflict in Theosophy

by J. J. van der Leeuw - The Netherlands

Preface by Jerry Hejka-Ekins - USA



*Author "Koos" van der Leeuw in the middle, with on the left his brother Cees and on the right his brother Dick*

## Preface

As part of regular discussion in the Theosophy list on the Internet, it was suggested that I might recommend a book or article that we might focus upon.

In response to this suggestion, I uploaded the scanned text of a very scarce Theosophical pamphlet written by J.J. van der Leeuw and published in 1930. The subject concerns the conflict between revelation and realization that has existed in the Theosophical Society since the beginning, which van der Leeuw (and I) believe is at the root of the failure of the Theosophical Society. For those who are part of the ULT and Point Loma traditions, I would suggest that the issues in this pamphlet also apply to these organizations, though he is only addressing Adyar theosophical history here.

To give a little background, the Adyar Theosophical Society was undergoing a crisis at the time this pamphlet was published. Krishnamurti had been for some time contradicting the Master's revelations and orders as given through Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater, and by the end of 1929 Krishnamurti ordered the



dissolution of the Order of the Star and resigned from the Theosophical Society. The text I am posting was originally a talk given by J.J. van der Leeuw, where he analyzes the Theosophical Society in order to discover what went wrong. Though this pamphlet is over sixty years old, (in 1995) I believe that van de Leeuw's insights continue to be as relevant today as they were then, because the underlying problems that plagued the TS in 1930 are the same today.

Johannes Jacobus (Koos) van der Leeuw (1893-1934) joined the TS in 1914 and quickly became a valued member of the inner circle. By 1921 he became a Priest of the Liberal Catholic Church and won the Subba Row Medal for *The Fire of Creation*, a Theosophical classic that I believe is still in print. He also published *A Dramatic History of the Christian Faith*, *The Conquest of Illusion*, and *Gods in Exile*. Tragically, like many before him who questioned the actions of the wrong people, J.J. van der Leeuw lost his standing in the inner circle after privately publishing this pamphlet. Of course, this pamphlet has never been reprinted and has become very scarce. This lack is now remedied.

I believe this pamphlet to be the most important Theosophical document published at the time, and certainly one of the most important Theosophical documents ever to be published - especially for these times. Here, like no one else, van der Leeuw struggles with the issue of revelations and realization in the TS and how this conflict brought about a crisis, which is still with us today, and is, I believe, primarily responsible for the poor state of affairs of not only the Adyar TS, but for all Theosophical Organizations. I submit that it is only when the Theosophical Organizations are able to come to grips with this issue that they

will ever have a chance to take their position as an important movement in the world.

Jerry Hejka-Ekins, September, 1995.

## Revelation or Realization: The Conflict in Theosophy

(Amsterdam: N.V. Theosofische Vereeniging Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1930)

There was a time when no doubt seemed possible about the future of the T.S. We had been told that the Masters of the Wisdom had founded it and that it was to be the keystone of the religions of the future. Consequently the possibility of its failure hardly occurred to members; empires might crumble, churches might cease to be, but the Theosophical Society would continue throughout the ages.

Of late, however, very serious doubts have arisen in the minds of many concerning this future. The world at large is no longer as interested in theosophy or the theosophical movement as it was forty years ago. Then the Society was opposed as a dangerous pioneer movement, now it is regarded with indifference and looked upon as a relic of the past rather than a promise of the future. In almost every Section there is a serious falling off of book sales showing that the literature which once appealed to the public is no longer desired.

More serious even than the indifference of the modern world with regard to the movement is the conflict within it. I am not speaking about a conflict between personalities; these do not matter. The conflict is one between different standpoints, views

of life. I would define these as the conflict between revelation and realization. This conflict has been inherent in the theosophical movement from its inception, and has become acute since 1925. It was then that on the one hand revelation became fantastic and thereby questionable and on the other hand realization was emphasized by Krishnamurti as the way of life.

A system of revelation is only possible when there is one oracle, or channel of revelation, the authority of which is not to be questioned. A plurality of oracles is death to revelation. When in 1925 it was announced that the World Teacher would have twelve apostles as before in Palestine and when Krishnamurti himself denied having any apostles or disciples at all it was inevitable that members should begin to ask whether this revelation as well as previous ones was to be trusted or not.

Previously the ceremonial movements had gained their adherents largely because they were announced as a preparation of the work of the coming teacher. In his name and on his authority were they launched forth and those who took part in them felt they were doing the teacher's work. When he began his teaching and denied the value of ceremonial, calling it an obstacle to liberation, there were again many who asked themselves how this contradiction could be explained. Many and ingenious were the explanations put forward, but the fact remained that the faith in revelation had been shaken forever. The consequence of this has been that the work and self-sacrifice of members in so far as these were based on such faith in revelations, has fallen off considerably. In the hearts of many doubt and despair have taken the place of unquestioning belief. The inevitable result is a process of

disintegration, in which many of the most serious members leave a movement in which they no longer have confidence.

It is my intention in this lecture to seek out the causes of this disintegration and, if possible, to find a cure. I shall therefore criticize quite frankly. Now criticism has always been exceedingly unpopular in the Theosophical Society. In theory our platform is free, but in practice one who thinks differently from the rest, though perfectly free to do so, will find no platform to express his thoughts. There has always been fear of any idea that might disturb the harmony among the members. Criticism, however kindly expressed, was immediately branded as "cruel and unjust attacks," as "unbrotherly" and in the last resort as being under the influence of the Dark Powers. It is the mediaeval attitude of mind where the sulphur smell of satanic activity is detected whenever an opinion is expressed different from its own.

I speak for love of truth, not to attack theosophy. The one thing I should like to ask you is to credit me at least with the sincere desire of helping our members in the present state of confusion and not to suspect me of sinister intentions. I feel like a doctor at a patient's bedside; he must look for the organs that are diseased and can only help the patient by seeking out every cause of ill health. When a doctor says that the patient's heart is diseased we do not call him unbrotherly or say that he is attacking the patient most cruelly; we do not tell him that he should look only for the good in the patient and not for the evil, and that he should rather emphasize the sound state of the lungs than the diseased condition of the heart. I have to speak of the unhealthy symptoms in the theosophical movement and it is only by a thorough criticism that we can hope to analyze them.

In criticizing theosophy we must first of all ask: which theosophy? Historically the word means the experience of the divine, in distinction to theology which is discussion about God. This experience of the ultimate, of reality, of life, of truth, is beyond all discussion. It exists wherever a man has it and cannot be criticized or denied. Secondly, the word has been used in an early theosophical manifesto as "the archaic system of esoteric wisdom in the keeping of the brotherhood of adepts."

I shall refer to this conception later on, but at present I am not dealing with it. Thirdly, theosophy is taken to mean the system of doctrines put forward in literature or lectures since the beginning of the Theosophical Society. This is what the world at large knows as theosophy. Finally, there is the practice in important centres of theosophical work, where, in the work actually done and in the aims held before people, we can see what is looked upon as valuable. At the moment I am speaking only about these last two forms of theosophy, that is to say, about that which has been presented to the world in books or lectures or can be seen in centres of theosophical work.

This theosophy was born in the Victorian Era. The end of the nineteenth century was a period divorced from life. Man had lost the sense of vital relations and had made objective absolutes out of things which have meaning only as living relations. Thus he looked upon the world surrounding him as an objective universe standing opposite him, independent of his consciousness. Actually what we call the world surrounding us is the way in which we interpret the reality that affects our consciousness. This interpretation in terms of our consciousness is our world-image which is real only with relation to the consciousness of which it forms part. As long as this relation is recognized all is well; life or reality affects man

and through him is externalized as a world-image in his consciousness. Man is the focus through which this process takes place, and there is an unimpeded flow of life reality affecting him and, through him, becoming world-image.

When however, man forgets that he is only a focus of reality and feels himself as a separate being, a soul or a spirit, all changes. Instead of recognizing that what he calls the world is his interpretation, in terms of consciousness, of the reality that affects him, he objectivates that world-image and makes it into an absolute, opposite him: the world of matter. In a similar way he separates himself from that life which creates the world-image in him, he objectivates that too and calls it God or Spirit. Thus he finds himself isolated between two worlds: a world of gross matter outside and a world of subtle spirit within. This duality henceforth rules his life and in practice he has to choose between its two elements. This choice is one between materialism and idealism.

In the 19th century this antithesis was a very real one, and theosophy, based on that dualism, identified itself with the idealistic world-view as against the materialistic. It fought the materialism of its day and was frankly idealistic or spiritual in its philosophy. It still is; in theosophical doctrine the spiritual world is looked upon as the real world in which man, the higher Self has his true home. From that world he descends into these lower worlds of matter where through his "lower bodies" he gathers experience. When, through this experience his Self has become perfected, it returns to that world beyond, whence it came. Thus theosophy is a philosophy of the Beyond; its ultimate reality is not this physical world but a world removed from it by several stages, its fulfillment is not in the present but at a future time when perfection shall be reached. Thus, in

space and time, it is a philosophy of the Beyond.

The world has changed considerably since the 19th century. The greatest change has been that it has rediscovered life and thereby re-established the vital relations which were lost in a period of dualism. Thus modern man no longer recognizes a duality of spirit and matter or, in scientific terms, force and mass, but sees these two as convertible quantities which appear as one or the other according to the position of the observer. A new outlook on life has been born which is neither idealistic nor materialistic, still less a compromise between the two. We can define it as a new realism in the light of which idealism appears as outworn as materialism. Its reality is not a world or worlds beyond, but the meaning of this world as of any other world, man being as near to reality in the physical world as in any other world in which he might live. Similarly the fulfillment of life is not seen as a far off apotheosis of ultimate perfection but in the realization of life here and now.

Man himself is the open door to reality, he is the focus through which reality becomes world-image and in his own actual experience of the moment he can therefore find the open door to all life. This is no mystic state, no "merging into the absolute," if such a thing were possible; it is a process taking place in the actual common experience of the actual present moment at the actual place where man finds himself. The experience you have at this actual moment at this place is the open door to reality - nothing else. It is in the here and the now that the way of life is to be found.

The men and women of the new age have therefore no time for a dualistic philosophy which preaches an outworn idealism, they have no interest in a philosophy of the Beyond. And such, in their

eyes, is theosophy. It was born in an age of dualism, it allied itself with one of its two elements, the spiritual, its reality in a world beyond and its perfection at a future date and is in that respect a relic of the past rather than a promise of the future.

Unless its philosophy becomes one of the here and the now, recognizing that reality or life can only be approached through the actual experience of the moment, and nowhere else, there is no future for it and it will cease to have other than a historical interest.

Another characteristic of the 19th century was its fear of life. Where man has disconnected himself from life he is afraid of it and seeks a shelter or refuge. He looks for a final certainty, a system which will solve all problems of life so that Life, which he dreads, shall not be able to take him unawares or upset his comfortable existence. A system of philosophy therefore which claims to solve the problems of life and to be able to explain all that happens has a very strong appeal for such a man.

Theosophy was such a philosophy; it claimed to have an answer to the problems of life, to have solved its riddles. Even its enemies must acknowledge that theosophists are unequaled in explaining all that happens, however contradictory. With a true virtuosity they perform the mental acrobatics by means of which they can assert or believe one thing and yet find an explanation when the facts of life contradict it.

Here the desire for truth is not so great as the desire to make life fit in with a preconceived system. Man feels safe only when nothing that happens to him in daily life escapes the system of rational explanation which he has built up. When something happens to him he wants to explain why it happened and what it is "good for" ultimately. Thus he fits it in into his system of

thought; he has rationalized the event. When Krishnamurti began his teaching the difficulty for most theosophists was not so much that they could not understand the teaching as that they could not fit it into their system of thought. The question was not: What does he mean? but: How can this be reconciled with what we have been taught before? Life, however, can never be reconciled to preconceived thoughts, neither can it be rationalized. Life is not an intelligence, therefore it is neither rational nor logical; it has no cause and no purpose. The attempt to rationalize the suffering that comes to us in life, to show that we have deserved it, and that it is "good for something" ultimately, is therefore doomed to failure; we cannot tame life in this way.

It is curious to see how man dreads the thought of life being beyond explanation. He wants consolation, a drug which will dull his suffering or a soothing sleeping draught which will give him an illusion of bliss. The theosophist had such consolation and such soporifics. No suffering could come to him, but he would soothe his outraged humanity by a rationalizing process in which he proved to himself that the suffering had to come to him, and that it would be good for him. These attempts at explanations, however, blind man to the true meaning of things that happen to him; they tempt his attention away from the event itself, which again is the here and the now, and lead it to some imaginary cause or result. Thus the meaning of the event which lies in the actual experience, escapes him and he is no richer, no wiser for his suffering.

In a similar way, theosophy claims to have an explanation of the great problems of life: why the world was created and how, what happens after death, why man lives and what he will become. Here again, the process of rationalizing leads the attention away

from the mystery of life which can only be experienced in the present. Life is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be experienced. It is the consummate ease with which theosophy explained all problems and all events that has ever made true artists and thinkers fight shy of it. They know too well that life cannot be contained in any system, and that the purpose of thought is not to explain life but to understand it, by experience.

A system of thought always brings about a state of mental certainty and repose in which there remains only one fear, that of being disturbed by doubt. That is why there has been no place for thinkers in the Theosophical Society; a thinker is always a disturbing influence. Theosophy, by claiming to offer a system of thought that would explain life and its problems, has not only scared away thinkers and artists, but has attracted the mediocre mind that seeks intellectual comfort and not truth. This explains why the theosophical movement, in the fifty years of its existence, has been so singularly lacking in creative or original thought; these were excluded automatically.

Once again, the great change that has taken place in the world has passed by the Theosophical Society completely. Modern man has rediscovered life and has consequently lost faith and interest in any systems of thought claiming to explain life or solve its riddles. He knows but too well that life can only be understood by the realization that comes through experience, not by any solutions or doctrines. Our modern age has emerged beyond that narrow conscious life which previously was all that man recognized in his speculations. He is now aware of the unconscious without which the conscious remains unintelligible.

He knows that life, not being consciousness, is irrational and neither logical nor just. It is therefore in vain to look for ethical explanations of its happenings or moral results of the sufferings

it inflicts on us. These can neither explain nor justify the events that take place. The meaning of the event can only be approached through the actual experience of it, and all search for shelter, refuge or consolation leads man away from it. Modern man, therefore, has no interest in a system of thought, however ingenious and elaborate, that would allay his fears and offer him a false repose by its attempts at explaining life. He does not want to be protected; he does not seek the warm and drowsy comfort of the fireside, he would rather go out naked and alone into the storm of life than be safe in a shelter that excludes it. He would rather perish in that storm than live in a false security. He does not seek happiness, but life itself, reality. Therefore, a philosophy which offers him the supposed security of explanations and solutions has no appeal to him, it is no longer valid. He who in these modern days claims to have solved the problems of life only succeeds in compromising himself.

If there is to be any future for the Theosophical Society, it will have to renounce utterly its claim of having solved the riddles of life and being a repository of truth; instead it will have to unite those who search for truth and for reality whatever these may bring by way of suffering and discomfort. The seeker after truth welcomes disturbance and doubt, the very things which were and are feared most by theosophists.

In yet another respect does the Theosophical Society breathe the atmosphere of last century. It is in the desire to unite in one brotherhood all who think or feel alike. Thus the Theosophical Society aimed at forming a nucleus of brotherhood. Such a nucleus however always defeats its own ends. It cannot escape becoming a brotherhood with the exclusion of less desirable brethren. The moment we unite a number of people in such a

nucleus we have created a sect, a separate group walled off from the rest of the world and thereby from life.

We show the truth of this each time we speak, as we so often do, of the "outside world". The words imply that we ourselves are inside something. Inside what? Inside something that keeps that "outside world" outside that same something! Inside a barrier which we have erected around us and by means of which we have shut out those who think differently. That barrier of elaborate beliefs and doctrines has so efficiently shut out the dreaded "outside world" that no fresh air from that world has succeeded in penetrating its inner fastnesses, and the Society has breathed for fifty years nothing but the atmosphere of its own thoughts and beliefs. At its meetings it was always theosophists who told other theosophists about the theosophical doctrines which they all knew already. The one thing that was prevented unanimously was the introduction of foreign ideas which might challenge or doubt the established doctrines. This exclusion of the outside world has been most manifest in the lodge life. It was in the snug and stuffy intimacy of lodge life that theosophical orthodoxy could breed; there, in a small circle of mediocre minds, all thinking and believing alike, a warm brotherliness could arise, uniting all in the delightful certainty of possessing the esoteric truth while the outside world lived on in darkness.

On my last lecture tour I visited a lodge, the president of which told me that his lodge was "just one happy family." This roused my misgivings, for I know what such happy families are like. Then he continued saying that a few years back there had been a member who was always questioning and challenging everything, causing disturbance at their otherwise harmonious meetings. But now that member had left their lodge, and all was



harmony again. He meant, of course, that the blissful drowsiness of their intellectual slumbers which had for a while been disturbed by the one member who happened to be alive had been re-established.

It is quite true that, theoretically, our platform is free, that we have no dogmas, and that everyone is free to criticize. But if he does, he will suffer a silent excommunication which will effectually cold-shoulder him out of the nucleus of brotherhood. He will be made to feel that his conduct is scandalous and unbrotherly, that he is in the throes of the lower mind, that he is attacking theosophy, and laying himself open to the influence of the Dark Powers. And this attitude holds good not only among groups of ignorant members; I have found it right up to the highest authorities. Therefore, the talk about a free platform and the perfect freedom of thought does not impress me; I know that there is no such freedom, but rather an unconscious orthodoxy that has almost succeeded in killing out the critical faculty among theosophists altogether.

If the Society, in its pride, had not been so certain that it walked in the light and had been called to bring this light to a world in darkness, it might have noticed that the barriers, which it built up between itself and the outside world, prevented the light of life from coming in, so that it lived in darkness, while in the outside world a new and great light had arisen. That world has rediscovered the life about which theosophists talked, and consequently, it will not suffer any more barriers. Therefore truly modern men and women will no longer become members of any Society, so long as they feel that its brotherhood is a sect and its freedom of thought an orthodoxy. The "outsider" feels that, by entering the Theosophical Society, or any other spiritual movement, he subscribes to a creed which excludes him from

the rest of the world, and enters a brotherhood which will make him different from all who do not belong to it.

If the Theosophical Society is to survive, if it is to attract those whom it has always endeavored, and generally failed, to attract, it will have to change its ways entirely. Above all, the traditional lodge with its traditional meetings should be abolished. There is no more dreadful mutual burden than that of the lodge which has to meet every Tuesday night and then think of something to do. The result must be a burden or an artificial semblance of life.

Once again, if the Theosophical Society is to continue, the old form of membership which implies the silent acceptance of a creed must go, and a loose organization take its place in which membership no more makes a man part of a sect than would, for instance, membership of the National Geographic Society. Modern man will suffer no barriers that shut life out in a supposed "outside world"; he seeks the free and unimpeded contact with life.

## II

So far I have dealt with the causes of the decline of the Theosophical Movement in its relation to the world at large. Now we must consider the more serious causes of disintegration within the movement.

From its very beginning the Society has suffered from an internal conflict which I characterized as that between realization and revelation. In its historical meaning theosophy means realization, the experience of the Divine within man. In that sense, it was used in Neo-Platonic philosophy and by mediaeval philosophers. This conception of Theosophy has been present in theosophical teaching from the beginning. A man was to find



the higher self within him and thereby come into conscious unity with the Life in all things. At the same time, however, theosophy is characterized as "the archaic system of esoteric truth in the keeping of a brotherhood of adepts." Here Theosophy is not a truth to be experienced by man in himself, it is a body of doctrine possessed and guarded by a group of Adepts in whose power it lay to reveal it to others. Thus the way of knowledge became one of discipleship; only by becoming a pupil of one of the Masters could man hope to partake of the esoteric truth. The aim was to gain initiation into the Brotherhood, to enter the Hierarchy that guarded the esoteric wisdom. This way of knowledge is one of revelation; the divine Wisdom is received by the pupil from his Master and handed on again by him to those less enlightened than himself. Thus a hierarchic system of revelation arises in which the authority of superiors is not being questioned and the slightest hint is an order not to be criticized but to be obeyed. The spirit is that of a spiritual army where obedience and efficiency are greater virtues than individual creative activity and genius. The way of realization is the way of the individual; its highest product is the creative genius. The way of revelation is the way of the group; its highest product is the perfect channel, obediently transmitting orders and power from above.

We must sharply distinguish revelation from authority. Authority is a fact in nature; where a man is superior in wisdom or power he will automatically have authority over others. That this authority can lead to abuse of power or to tyranny and impede the freedom of others does not invalidate the fact that superiority in any respect means authority.

But when I speak of revelation, I mean all information claiming to come from an unseen source, from an inaccessible authority.

Primitive man looked upon some few as being intimately related to the gods he feared and being able to reveal their will and power. Thus the priest was a channel through whom the will, the knowledge and the grace of the deity could be transmitted to the masses. Man sought for guidance of his own life by the revelations coming to him through the appointed oracle. The priesthood thus gained power over men's souls and were able to enforce their own will by clothing it in the garment of revelation from above. Therefore, revelation in the meaning in which I use it here, is a message from an unseen authority coming through an appointed channel.

In ordinary speech, we sometimes talk of things being "a revelation to us," but that is not the sense in which the word is used here. I can say that the Einstein theory is a revelation to me, but it will be clear that no scientific work ever partakes of the element of revelation. It does not speak in the name of an unseen authority, the scientist speaks in his own name and what he says can be questioned, criticized, proved or disproved. The authority is always available, the source of knowledge is accessible and, even though not every man has the means to prove whether the Einstein theory is true or not, he knows that Einstein's brother scientists have done their utmost to discover a flaw in it.

The bulk of our theosophical literature does not partake of the element of revelation. If a theosophist writes a book describing his experiences in this or other worlds, or expounding his ideas on life and its problems, there is no revelation in such a work. The one who wrote it is available, can be questioned and criticized, the argument of the book can be discussed and contradicted; the entire subject remains within the realm of reason. Yet even in the time of H.P.B. the element of revelation

was present in the Theosophical Society. Thus, in the Mahatma Letters we find messages coming from an unseen authority through an appointed channel. Later on, when letters were no longer forthcoming, messages came directly through certain recognized theosophical authorities. In these messages, the Masters would express their desires as to what should be done or not done, what activities undertaken or opposed, and give hints guiding the lives of prospective pupils. Here we find real revelation: messages from an unseen authority, inaccessible to others. Theoretically, of course, the unseen authority is accessible to all who succeed in raising their consciousness to its level; practically it is not, and should any claim to have come into touch with the same authority from whom messages were previously received through another, that authority usually speaks through him with a very different voice. We only need to compare the letters from the Master K.H. produced in the time of H.P.B. and written in her Bohemian manner interspersed with French expressions, often somewhat racy in style, with the messages revealed as coming from that same Master in recent years. They breathe an utterly different spirit; where the former denied the existence of God in any form, seen or unseen, personal or impersonal, the latter have reintroduced him in a very personal way indeed. Where in the Mahatma Letters the Master K.H. speaks of religion as being the greatest evil in human civilization, and denounces all churches, priesthoods and ceremonials in definite terms, his more recent messages speak with great reverence about religion and church and endorse ceremonial and priesthood most vigorously. One is therefore inclined to think that the source of unseen authority for each is a strictly individual and subjective one, an exteriorization of their own unconscious motives. This is still more evident with

regard to all messages revealed as coming from the World Teacher during the last fifteen years.

When Krishnamurti began speaking in his own authority, and in his own name as the World Teacher, the things he said were widely different in spirit and purpose from all messages thus received. First of all, he emphatically denied being the vehicle of another consciousness or being used by anyone who spoke through him or inspired him. He claimed to be the World Teacher, not because some other intelligence possessed or used him, but because he had gained liberation and become one with life, which is the only Teacher. He utterly denied having any apostles or even disciples and rejected ceremonial, however and wherever used, as an obstacle on the path to liberation. Neither would he have anything to do with the occult path of discipleship and initiation, characterizing all these as "inessentials." It was therefore inevitable that theosophists all over the world should have begun to doubt all previous revelations and to suspect that these were more in the nature of subjective opinions.

It takes the mental acrobatics of trained theosophical students to reconcile the contradictory facts contained in the earlier revelations and the subsequent teaching of Krishnamurti. Even though he himself strongly denies being used by another consciousness, they claim to know better than he does what is actually taking place in his own consciousness, and still maintain that there is another person, the "real" World Teacher, living in the Himalayas, who occasionally speaks through Krishnamurti. This real World Teacher entirely endorses all previous revelations; he has apostles and approves the ceremonial movements, especially the Liberal Catholic Church. The fact that Krishnamurti denies the value of all these is then

explained by the fact that he, being "only a vehicle", cannot express fully the "glorious consciousness" which they, the speakers, know so much more intimately than he. Thus it means nothing that he should contradict things previously revealed, it only shows that at that time, it was not the World Teacher speaking - but only Mr. Krishnamurti. The interesting situation arises that a few people are to be credited with the ability to tell us when Krishnamurti speaks and when the World Teacher is speaking. The result would seem to be that when the opinions agree with their own, it is the World Teacher speaking, while otherwise it is Mr. Krishnamurti. The only one who evidently is not to be believed, when he says the World Teacher is speaking, is Mr. Krishnamurti himself.

It is needless to expound further the length to which theosophical casuistry can go; the tragical fact remains that there appears to be less desire to understand what Krishnamurti says than to fit it in with revelations previously given. It would be far simpler to recognize the previous revelations to have been erroneous. But this, of course, would discredit the cause of revelation.

Enough, however, has been said to show how fatal the effects of revelation are in any movement. The fact that revelation is a message coming from an unseen authority, inaccessible to others, places it beyond the realm of reason and makes it impossible to criticize or discuss its value. In all discussions which I have ever had on the subject the adherents of revelation would always end by saying, "Well, all I can say is that the Master told me to do this, and so I do it." This ends any discussion, and puts the question beyond reason. Thus I maintain that the evil effects of revelation are caused by the fact that revelation can only be accepted or denied, but never

criticized in the light of reason. I know that theoretically this can be done, and whenever the subject is brought up, we are told that theosophical leaders have always urged their disciples to judge for themselves and not accept anything because they said it. This, however, is theory; in practice, one who ventured to criticize or doubt a message coming from the Master, would suffer the silent excommunication of the heretic, and be made to feel that he was unfit to be of the elect. Of what value is the freedom to criticize and to judge for oneself when, in the rare cases, where some brave soul has ventured to do so, we are told that "in incarnations to come, he will, through untold suffering, grope in vain for the light which he thus willfully rejected"? This is but Eternal Damnation in another form. It is the threat and fear of punishment to come which terrorizes the would-be critic back into an attitude of obedient submissiveness. In the Mahatma Letters and the correspondence between H.P.B. and Sinnett, we can read what is said about those who do not take a hint once given, or who dare to argue about an order coming from above. Even Sinnett himself was repeatedly threatened with the breaking off of all further intercourse with his Master if he did not follow the orders given. And there is no doubt that, if a theosophist at any time criticizes or rejects a message coming to him from the Master through an appointed channel, he will thereby be said to have cut himself off for a long time to come from any further such privileges. Where simultaneously discipleship and a drawing nearer to the Master are held up as the goal of life, it is clear that the theoretical freedom of criticism means the giving up of all that is held dearest and highest in the life of theosophists.

I wish to make it perfectly clear that I am in no way denying the existence of the Masters or the possibility of communion with

them. If I think that the Master has spoken to me, this fact implies no revelation, but only experience: I have an experience which may or may not be of value to me. Revelation only begins when I transmit to others the messages thus received as coming from that unseen authority. I should like to suggest that anyone who thinks he or she has received a message or order from a Master or higher authority should first see whether he himself agrees with it, whether it awakens a response in his own soul. If so, let him, when speaking about it to others, speak in his own name and say, "I think this, and I will this". But never let him say, "The Master thinks this or the Master wills this". Should he himself not agree with the communication thus received, let him say nothing at all. But let him never speak in the name of an unseen authority. Revelation is still more fatal when it interferes with the life of the individual and attempts to guide his life, to tell him what to do or where he stands. It has been the custom in theosophical centers to look to a few as being able to tell others where they stand in their spiritual evolution, whether they have taken a step forward or not. Thus spiritual progress is made to depend on revelation, and power is given to a few to tell others where they stand. The consequences of this are always fatal. The absurdity of the situation becomes clear when we consider that if these few people, supposed to be able to tell us where we stand, were to die, we should be lost in uncertainty. Again, if the appointed channels should disagree, as has happened before, we have to choose whom we are going to believe and whom not! It is inevitable that where such power is placed in the hands of the few, their own personal likes and dislikes will unconsciously influence the occult standing they confer on others. These, on the other hand, may be afraid to contradict or oppose one who has the power to bestow or withhold steps, but

will try to keep in good standing, and do what they are asked to do. Thus a host of spiritual inquiries are born, detrimental to the individual and to the cause he serves. But above all, the fact remains that it is impossible at any time for anyone to tell another where he stands in spiritual progress. No one can reveal that to you but the life that is in you. Each individual is as a ray going forth from the centre of the circle; he can only enter the centre of life along the ray that is his own being, never along another. Life expresses itself in each one of us in a way which we alone, and no one else, can know; there is a sanctuary of life in each of us where we alone can enter and hear the voice of. We cannot enter that sanctuary by the backstairs of revelation; there is only the royal road of our own daily experience of life. No one can tell you what to do in life, what work to serve but the voice of life that is within you, your own inner vocation, your individual uniqueness. To go to another, and to ask him what you should do or where you stand is to violate the life that is within you, and to shut yourself off from it.

I wish to emphasize that I do not deny the existence of the occult path or the steps on it such as discipleship or initiation. Their existence or non-existence lies outside the subject I am dealing with. The element of revelation only enters where any one, in the name of an unseen and inaccessible authority tells others where they stand and what steps they have taken, so that no one is supposed to have taken a step unless one of the few acknowledged channels of revelation has affirmed him to have done so.

Nothing would be lost if this practice with all its fatal consequences were discontinued. If the taking of a step means an expansion of life within, that expansion will be there and show

itself whether anyone else says you have taken a step or not. What would it avail you if everyone acknowledged you as having taken a step and the expansion of life were not within you, and on the other hand, what do you lose if everyone should agree in saying you have not taken a step and the expansion of life is in you and shows forth in your daily life? The telling or not telling is wholly unessential and wholly mischievous in its consequences. It makes for a spiritual snobbery in which the elect sit in the seats of honor, while the common herd is despised.

Though the results of revelation are always fatal, and opposed to the spirit of theosophy, which is realization, it is most dangerous where it interferes with the individual lives of people and attempts to make them cease from work they are doing or undertake work they have no intention of doing. Especially where young people are concerned such interference is inexcusable. I know cases where, on the basis of revelation, young people have been taken out of their university studies in order that they might dedicate themselves to "the Work." As if the Work for each one were not that which the life within him urges him to do, instead of the revelation coming from another! In modern education, especially in the Montessori method, it is fully recognized that the way of life is the way of realization. The child is surrounded by didactic material, the only purpose of which is to draw out its faculties and to enable it to learn by experience. In this way the child will spontaneously grow into that which the life within it means it to be.

Opposed to this spirit of life is the army spirit where orders come from above and have to be obeyed without argument or delay. It is this spirit which inevitably accompanies revelation; a spiritual hierarchy is like a spiritual army where orders are

obeyed and not questioned. In this army-spirit individual uniqueness and creative genius are crushed out. We cannot therefore wonder why there has been so little creative work in the Theosophical Society; it is because the ideal of the "band of servers" has been obedience to revelation, and not self-expression through realization.

There is no reason why anyone should not occasionally seek the advice of those wiser than himself, and discuss with them his difficulties. There is no reason why we should not try to learn as much as we can from teachers and books, so long as we realize that we have to make our decisions in our own name and that it is weakness to shift the responsibility on to others. We must have no fear to guide our own lives. Better to perish in the attempt than go safely along the way of another.

There is no future for the Theosophical Society unless the evil of revelation be shaken off, never to return. It is wholly incompatible with Theosophy which is essentially experience of the Divine, or realization. It is not another "path" or "aspect"; superstition is no path, but an error. There is a pseudo-tolerance which agrees with the most conflicting views, admiring them all impartially, and trying to get "some good out of each one." This tolerance is in reality a lack of backbone, an absence of vigorous life.

Let no one say that in my address I have denied occultism. There is a future for occultism if it will conform to strictly scientific methods, and submit to tests and proof. It can only develop if it renounces entirely all spiritual or religious claims; it has as little to do with these as ordinary science. Just as science could not develop until it shook off the mystical and spiritual glamour with which it was enveloped in the Middle Ages, so the condition of progress for occultism as a science is that it

should likewise discard the halo of mystery in which it is enveloped.

When the question is asked: Has the Theosophical Society a future? I can only answer that I do not know. But what I can say with utter certainty is that it has no future unless it breaks free from the outworn mentality that still permeates it and is born anew in the spirit of the new age. That spirit is one of love of life instead of fear of life, one in which life is welcomed even though it may destroy the beliefs in which we found refuge hitherto.

Theosophy must cease to be a philosophy of the Beyond; it must conquer the duality in which it is still rooted and realize that the open door to reality lies in the here and the now, in man's actual daily experience and not in some higher world or some distant future. None can open this door for us and none can close it. It is no mystical experience for the few alone; it is for all and it is only our fear of life that makes us incapable of seeing it. Theosophy has to realize that its claim of being a philosophical system, explaining the problems of life, has no appeal to modern man who knows that life is not a problem to be solved; to whom it is a search and an ever increasing experience.

The Society must cease to be a brotherhood with the exclusion of less desirable brethren; it must break down the barriers which make it possible to speak of an "outside world", and create a new form of membership which does not involve sectarian allegiance.

Above all, theosophists must learn to recognize the conflict that has been inherent in theosophy from the beginning: that between realization and revelation. Theosophy, as the realization of life by each man in his own consciousness, is incompatible with a hierarchic system of revelation where truth

and enlightenment come to us through others and where the guidance of our life rests on orders received from superiors.

Modern man no longer desires a shelter or a refuge, consolation or security. Rather than stagnate in the false repose and happiness which these can give, he will go out alone and face the storm of life in his own strength.

The aim of Theosophy is to breed, not weaklings, but strong men.

J.J. van der Leeuw, 1930



# The Voice of the Silence

8 (Verses 90 – 100)

by John Algeo - USA

The final verses of the first fragment seek to describe the state of *samadhi*. The word *samadhi* has two main parts: *sam* "together" and *dhi* "put." It is the state in which we finally have put it all together. And that is the goal of yoga. It is a state in which we realize our complete identity with everything else in the universe.

## A. VERSES.

**[90]** And now thy self is lost in Self, thyself unto Thyself, merged in that Self, from which thou first didst radiate.

**[91]** Where is thy individuality, *lanoo*, where the *lanoo* himself? It is the spark lost in the fire, the drop within the ocean, the ever-present ray become the All and the eternal radiance.

**[92]** And now, *lanoo*, thou art the doer and the witness, the radiator and the radiation, light in the sound, and the sound in the light.

**[93]** Thou art acquainted with the five impediments, O blessed one. Thou art their conqueror, the master of the sixth, deliverer of the four modes of Truth. The light that falls upon them shines from thyself, O thou who wast disciple, but art Teacher now.

And of these modes of Truth:

**[94]** Hast thou not passed through knowledge of all misery - truth the first?



*Silence*



**[95]** Hast thou not conquered the Maras' King at Tsi, the portal of assembling - truth the second?

**[96]** Hast thou not sin at the third gate destroyed and truth the third attained?

**[97]** Hast thou not entered Tau, the Path that leads to knowledge - the fourth truth?

**[98]** And now, rest 'neath the Bodhi tree, which is perfection of all knowledge, for, know, thou art the Master of Samadhi - the state of faultless vision.

**[99]** Behold! thou hast become the light, thou hast become the sound, thou art thy Master and thy God. Thou art Thyself the object of thy search: the Voice unbroken, that resounds throughout eternities, exempt from change, from sin exempt, the seven sounds in one,

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE

**[100]** Om Tat Sat

#### **B. COMMENT.**

Verses 90-92 describe the ultimate unity of samadhi under various metaphors. Verse 90 suggests that the personal self ("self" or "thyself") has become one with the individual self ("Self" or "Thyself"), and that unity is merged in the greater unity of the monad ("that Self"), from which we came forth in the beginning. When that identity is realized, there is no longer a distinction between the spark and the fire, the drop and the ocean - they are essentially one. There is no difference between the actor and the observer, light and sound - they are different aspects of a single Reality.

In verse 93 the enlightened person is said to be acquainted with the five impediments and to deliver the four modes of truth. These are identified in gloss 43:

Gloss 43. The four modes of truth are, in Northern Buddhism, *Ku* "suffering or misery"; *Tu* the "assembling of temptations"; *Mu* "their destructions"; and *Tau*, the "Path." The five "impediments" are the knowledge of misery, truth about human frailty, oppressive restraints, and the absolute necessity of separation from all the ties of passion and even of desires. The "Path of Salvation" is the last one.

There are a good many sets of five in Yoga and in Buddhism. For example, there are five vices or afflictions (*kleshas*); they are ignorance (*avidya*), egoism (*asmita*), attachment (*raga*), aversion (*dvesa*), and clinging to life and dread of death (*abhinivesha*). There are five components out of which our identity is built (*skandhas*); they are our body (*rupa*), the feelings (*vedana*) that come to us through the body, the perceptions (*sanna*) that we form on the basis of those feelings, the predispositions (*samskara*) to respond in certain ways that we acquire from our perceptions, and the consciousness (*vijnana*) we arrive at from our predispositions. Only when we are aware of the existence of something, such as the five afflictions or the five components of our identity, can we deal with them.

The four modes of truth, which are further specified in verses 94-97, are the Four Noble Truths of the Buddha: The first is that life is painful, transitory, and without anything one can depend on; that is, it is frustration. If there were only one truth, the first, that life is frustrating, there would be no hope in the message of the Buddha. But frustration is not inherent in the nature of things - it is caused. That is the second noble truth: frustration has a

cause. The second truth assures us that order exists in the universe. Things don't just happen. They happen for some reason, because of something.

Still, if there were only two truths, we would not greatly rejoice. Knowing that things are caused is all very well, but we want to know also that they can be cured. And that is the third truth. Frustration has a cure. It is not eternal. There is an end to it. However, knowing that a problem can be cured is one thing and knowing how to cure it is another. So we need finally a fourth truth, a way to the cure of frustration. The cause of frustration is wrong action, wrong desire, and wrong thought. It is ignorance, craving, and egotism. The tendency to give way to such impulses is personified as the Maha Mara, the Great Death, or Tempter, the Eastern equivalent of Satan. He has a jewel in his head, the brilliance of which stuns and misguides the unwary. But the jewel is not real; it is a false jewel, an illusion. We think it has value, although in truth it has none. We find that to be so in many little things in life:

Gloss 44. At the portal of the "assembling" the King of the Maras, the Maha Mara stands trying to blind the candidate by the radiance of his "Jewel."

Whatever has a cause has also a cure. So finally and best, there is a way we can discover that cure and apply it. The way to the cure of the cause of frustration is the Eightfold Path, or *Tau* (which suggests the Chinese *Tao*). Gloss 45 says that there are five paths we can choose to follow, which lead variously to joy or to sorrow. But all paths involve the principle of causation. As the Three Truths of the White Lotus say, we are each our own law-giver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to ourselves, the decreer of our life, our reward, our punishment:

Gloss 45. This is the fourth "Path" out of the five paths of rebirth which lead and toss all human beings into perpetual states of sorrow and joy. These "paths" are but subdivisions of the one, the Path followed by Karma.

The Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism consists of these steps: (1) Right views. We can't do anything right unless we see things in the right way. (2) Right intention. Having seen aright, we must resolve to do aright. (3) Right speech. Speaking or thinking, which is unuttered speech, precedes acting. (4) Right action. Our behavior must be appropriate. (5) Right livelihood. And specifically the means by which we live must be so. (6) Right effort. The Masters of the Wisdom say, "We have one word for all aspirants: TRY!" (7) Right mindfulness. We are to be aware of what we are doing and not act unconsciously. (8) Right contemplation. In fact the word here translated "contemplation" is actually *samadhi*.

Thus the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism leads to the same end as the eight limbs or stages of Yoga: *samadhi*, having it all together, being unified in consciousness with the ultimate Reality. Verses 98 and 99 are ecstatic expressions of the awareness that comes from the state of *samadhi*, the state of being truly awake, of being a Buddha.

Verse 100 completes the first fragment of *The Voice of the Silence* with the mantra of the Gita: *Om Taf Saf*. *Om* is untranslatable, being not a normal word, but a symbolic sound that suggests the wholeness of existence. *Taf* is the demonstrative pronoun "that." *Saf* is the present participle of the verb to be and so means "being." Thus the mantra might be rendered literally as "Oh, that Being!"

The mantra is given and commented upon in the Bhagavad Gita, chapter 17, verses 23-28. *Om* is said to be the beginning of things. *Tat* is said to be the performance of actions without desire for their fruit - that is to say, doing things because they are right to do, not because one hopes to get something from doing them. *Sat* is reality because it is what is; it is goodness because what is, is good; it is steadfastness because that which is never ceases to be; it is the ultimate because only the ultimate truly is. The mantra is thus an assertion that the ultimate nature of the universe is good, enduring, and real. One Western commentator on the Gita, Tom McArthur, has translated this mantra in a memorable way: "Well, that's the way it is!" That is what the *Voice of the Silence* says.

This completes the first fragment of *The Voice of the Silence*, which is a kind of Theosophical Yoga Sutras, dealing in particular with the eight stages of the process of Yoga.

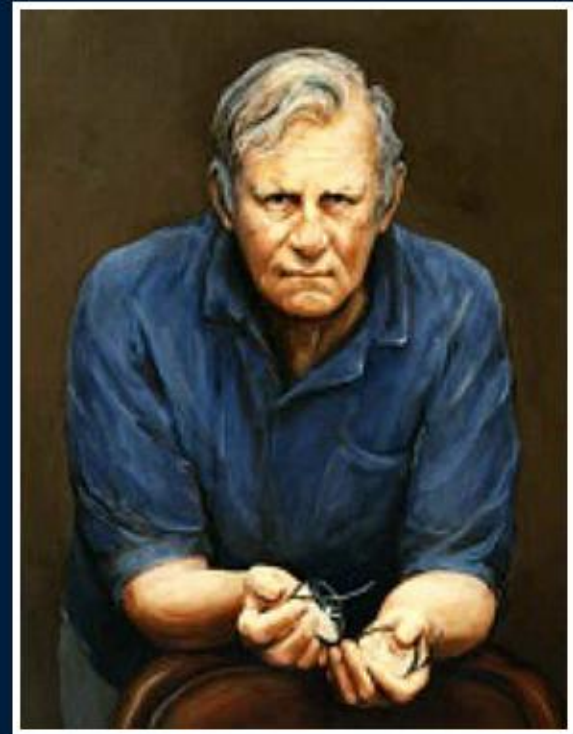
### C. MEDITATION.

Think about the Four Noble Truths. See their connections with each other and the liberating effect they can have if we realize their truth.

Say the mantra *Om Tat Sat* (pronounced approximately as "Ohm tut sut") quietly to yourself. Think about the meanings suggested for each of the words. Think about the meaning of the whole.

Focus your attention on any object, imagine yourself moving into that object, becoming it, being one with it. Expand your awareness, so that you are one with everything around you.

To be continued.



One has to accept pain as a condition of existence. One has to court doubt and darkness as the cost of knowing. One needs a will stubborn in conflict, but apt always to the total acceptance of every consequence of living and dying.

**Morris West**

(Australian novelist and playwright)



# H. P. B.: Modern Gnostic

by Stephan A. Hoeller



*Stephan A. Hoeller*

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## H.P.B. makes mincemeat of the cheap sentimentality and needless cheerfulness rampant in most "New Age" circles.

In one of the earliest academic works dealing with Theosophy, published in the *American Religion Series* sponsored by Columbia University, the late Dr. Alvin Boyd Kuhn wrote in 1930: "Theosophists tell us that before the launching of the latest 'drive' to promulgate Theosophy in the world, the councils of the Great White Brotherhood of Adepts, or Mahatmas, long debated whether the times were ripe for the free propagation of the secret Gnosis."<sup>1</sup> Fully fifty years later, another major academic work on the same subject, written by Professor Bruce Campbell of the University of California, Santa Barbara, described H. P. Blavatsky and her contribution to religious tradition as follows:

"The story of the Theosophical movement begins with a remarkable nineteenth-century émigré, Madame Helena Blavatsky, and the buried religious tradition that she revived. Theosophy, as she called it, was an ancient *Western* tradition, the Gnostic tradition, which went underground when Christianity triumphed."<sup>2</sup>

## H.P.B.'s postulates are virtually identical with Gnosticism.

Gnosticism or *gnosis*, as it was long known in scholarly literature, has been associated with Theosophy and with the writings of H. P. Blavatsky for a long time, an association that has recently gained in relevance. The discovery in 1945 of the greatest archaeological find of all times relative to the Gnostic tradition, and the subsequent publication of such influential works as *The Nag Hammadi Library*<sup>3</sup> and *The Gnostic Gospels*<sup>4</sup> have brought the topic of Gnosticism into increasing prominence during the 1970s and 1980s, and have created what amounts to a Gnostic renaissance of expanding proportions. In contrast with the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, our present times are no longer characterized by a lack of interest in and knowledge of matters Gnostic. From a "faith forgotten," as G. R. S. Mead named it in Blavatsky's days, this tradition has become a faith very much discovered. One might even hazard an educated guess to the effect that among contemporary Americans of some academic training in such fields as religion, mythology, and psychology, the term Gnosticism may be more familiar than the term Theosophy.

What then, one might ask, is this newly rediscovered Gnostic tradition, with which H. P. Blavatsky and her teachings show

such close an affinity? The word "gnosis" means "knowledge," and by it the Gnostics understood not factual or even philosophical knowledge, but rather a certain interior, intuitive cognition, sometimes characterized as the gnosis of the heart. This knowledge discloses that each human being has a portion of the divine, the *pneuma*, enshrined within his nature. This fact is unrecognized by most people, who are in a-gnosis, ignorance of their true selves. *The Gospel of Thomas* and other Gnostic documents refer to such persons as "asleep" or "drunk." Thus humans need to be awakened to know who they truly are and be able to make contact with this transcendental presence within themselves.

According to noted Dutch scholar Gilles Quispel, Gnosticism deals with a specific mystical or religious experience, which it generally expresses as myth. Mainstream religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam also include experiences of certain kinds of gnosis, but they almost inevitably turn them into belief and commandment. This is where Gnostics with their mythic approach depart radically from their orthodox counterparts. Myth, when originating in mystical realization and expressed in fervent poetic imagery, leads to an amplification and assimilation of the original experience. Faith understood as belief and ethical maxims expressed as commandments offer no such amplification of experience and allow for little assimilation of its import into the personality. The Gnostics' way of dealing with myth allowed them to once again approach the experience wherein the myth originated and enter the mystical experience again and again. Carried aloft on the zephyr winds of poetry and imagination, and aided by the winged thought of inspired myth, the soul of the Gnostic could be regenerated repeatedly by the experience of gnosis.

Turning to H. P. Blavatsky's teachings, we find that their fundamental postulates are virtually identical with those just mentioned in connection with Gnosticism. The pneuma of the Gnostics was no stranger to Blavatsky. Like the Gnostics before her, she endorsed the division of the psychophysical organism of the human being into body, soul, and spirit, the last of which she regarded as the true source of all theosophia (wisdom of the gods) and all theogonia (wisdom concerning the origin and descent of the gods). In her *Key to Theosophy* (pp. 90-92 of the 1889 edition) she refers explicitly to the spirit (pneuma) as a portion of the divine, the "immortal principle," the source of all "heavenly wisdom."

When it comes to H.P.B.'s attitude toward myth, there can be little doubt that the author of *The Secret Doctrine* is a magnificent myth-maker and that all of her works possess a mythic power and impact independent of and more valuable than their factual content. Professor Robert Ellwood, a man of eminent academic as well as Theosophical insight has this to say: "*The Secret Doctrine* is a book not easily forgotten, even by those who despise it or who, like many outside the Theosophical orbit, find it almost impossible to read. ... To understand what it has to offer, one must learn how to read it. *The Secret Doctrine* is not a textbook, but is like an ocean with waves and currents and eddies and whirlpools and quiet caves. It calls for suspending one's normal mode of conceptual progress until one has discovered where the tides and techniques of this new medium will carry him. Water is, to man, a distorting element, and probably whatever he sees in it will not be seen as it really is. The ecstatic surges in his body as he rides the swells will not be forgotten after he has found his feet once again on the sand. Like riding the waves, or like listening to great music, this book

wafts one to where he can perceive reality in new configurations that unite the subjective and the objective. It does not so much convey specific fact as arrange science, myth, philosophy, and poetic narrative in peculiar combinations which can generate remarkable experiences - or so it has been with Theosophists."<sup>5</sup>

What may one call such an arrangement of various motifs "in peculiar combinations which can generate remarkable experiences" but a myth as employed in the Gnostic manner? Certainly the writings of such Gnostic teachers as Valentinus or Basilides could be described in very similar words. The additional comments made by Ellwood merely reinforce this impression: "As one grows into the world of *The Secret Doctrine*, one understands more and more that it presents a psychological model of the cosmos. The more its vision is comprehended and interiorized, the more the reader shares the workings of universal consciousness."<sup>6</sup> Every occultist worth his or her salt is a romantic, be they aware of this or not. Whether they be called William Blake, Eliphas Levi, or Mme. Blavatsky, and before them Valentinus, Basilides, and Ammonius Saccus, all such persons were primarily concerned, not with passing on factual information, but with engendering that majestic sense of wonder that one glimpses to a minor degree in sunsets, grand landscapes, fairy tales, and hoary legends, and to a major degree in great art and in the experience of the "wholly other" in ecstasies of the spirit.

Mystics and Gnostics speak the language of myth, not of cold logic or scientific fact. Yet it must be remembered that some such persons have the misfortune to live in an age that has an inadequate appreciation of myth. The author of *The Secret Doctrine* belonged in this category. There was no word in the



dictionary of nineteenth century intellectuals for "psychological model of the cosmos"; C. G. Jung, Mircea Eliade, and their fellows had not come upon the scene yet to rehabilitate myth and symbol. What was H. P. Blavatsky to do?

According to available evidence, she did the best she could. In her work *Isis Unveiled* she wrote: "Myth was the favourite and universal method of teaching in archaic times."<sup>7</sup> "Fairy tales do not exclusively belong to nurseries; all mankind - except those few who in all ages have comprehended their hidden meaning, and tried to open the eyes of the superstitious - have listened to such tales in one shape or other, and after transforming them into sacred symbols, called the product Religion.<sup>8</sup> "There are few myths in any religious system but have an historical as well as scientific foundation. Myths ... are now proved to be fables, just in proportion as we *misunderstand* them; truths, in proportion as they were once *understood*."<sup>9</sup>

It is with words such as these that Blavatsky tried to point to the transformative value of myth. In *The Secret Doctrine* she went farther, and came close to asserting that the mythic and symbolic (which in the terminology of her day she calls "allegorical") element plays a crucial role in all esoteric material: "To some extent, it is admitted that even the Esoteric Teaching is allegorical. To make the latter comprehensible to the average intelligence, the use of symbols cast in an intelligible form is needed. Hence the allegorical and semi-mythical narratives in the exoteric, and the only semi-metaphysical and objective representations in the Esoteric Teachings. For the purely transcendently spiritual conceptions are adapted only to the perceptions of those who "see without eyes, hear without ears and sense without organs."<sup>10</sup> There is very little doubt that the enunciator of the modern Theosophical mythic system was an

expert mythmaker herself, who in spite of the unsympathetic intellectual climate of her day recognized the Gnostic function and value of myth, and who gently introduced her readers and followers to the controversial concept of the possible mythic and symbolic character of her teachings.

Let us now look at some other features of Gnosticism in the light of their relationship to various teachings in *The Secret Doctrine*, *Isis Unveiled*, and other works of Blavatsky. The worldview of the Gnostics declares that the rigid monotheism of mainstream Judeo-Christian-Islamic orthodoxy amounts to a gross oversimplification. The personal, well-nigh anthropomorphic God, envisioned as the creator, lawgiver, and judge of his universe is not the only and true God.

### **Authentic Godhead Is an Impersonal Fullness.**

The authentic Godhead is an impersonal fullness (pleroma), utterly transcendent and fully glorious as well as beyond the reach of the human mind in our present condition. This plenum, often envisioned as a boundless ocean of light, emanated a portion of its own essence, which became the created cosmos. It also emanated a number of angels or cosmic spirits, some of whom became estranged from their ultimate source and came to look upon themselves as self-existing divine rulers (archontes). One of these became so arrogant that he blasphemously asserted that he was the only god, and that there were no other gods before him. It is of this lesser, or intermediate godling that the creation myth of Genesis speaks. The world and the material universe are held captive by this being who, although no more than a kind of cosmic architect, came to imagine that he was the owner of all that exists. The

human existential predicament consists of the uncomfortable captivity to which this lesser god has subjected the spirits of human beings and from which only the experiential realization of gnosis can free them.

H. P. Blavatsky went to great pains to state over and over again that the true Godhead is not the personal god of the Bible, but rather an Infinite Reality that exists beyond the outflowings of manifestation. She gathered numerous cognate terms from various traditions to apply to this Infinite Reality; from Hinduism she adopted "Parabrahman," from Buddhism "Adi-Buddha," and from the Kabbalah "Ain-Sof-Aur." All of these, as she well knew and stated to be cognate terms for the Gnostic pleroma, or transcendental Fullness of Being.

The dislike she appears to have felt for the personal God of the Bible was probably only equalled by the more uncompromising of Gnostics in the early centuries of the Christian era. In *The Secret Doctrine* she not only calls Jehovah the bad names the Gnostics were wont to apply to him, but in a fashion reminiscent of Manichaeism and Cathar teachings she equates Jehovah with Satan. Here is but a small example of her lore concerning Jehovah-Satan. He is, she writes, "a proud, ambitious, and impure Spirit who has abused his power by usurping the place of the Highest God, though he was no better, and in some respects far worse than his brother Elohim; the latter representing the all-embracing, manifest Deity."<sup>11</sup> At another place in the same work she declares boldly: "The appellation Sa'tan, in Hebrew Satan ... belongs by right to the first and cruellest 'Adversary' of all the other Gods - Jehovah."<sup>12</sup> Very much like the Gnostics, H. P. Blavatsky gives little credence to the orthodox version of the temptation myth in Genesis, and

regards the serpent as a spirit of wisdom, dispensing sage and liberating advice.

The Sophia myth, so dear to many Gnostics, was also endorsed by H. P. Blavatsky, especially in *Isis Unveiled*. The wise daughter of the Fullness, who is called Sophia (wisdom), is in reality the mother of the blind and rebellious Jehovah-Satan, called here Ialda-Baôth, who in defiance of his mother has bungled the job of creation and merely fashioned a flawed world in the image of his own flaws. Humans, however, unlike the monstrous abortions whereby Jehovah peopled the earth, have within them the spark of the divine light, which allows them to communicate with Sophia and through her with the Infinite Light. This continuous seeking of human souls for their true source enrages Jehovah and impels him to attempt to destroy humanity in great disasters of cosmic proportions. All of this is recounted with complete agreement by Blavatsky.<sup>13</sup>

## **We must move beyond facile evasion of a flawed world.**

Arising from these considerations we find another perhaps even weightier consideration. Many Theosophists have opted for a certain kind of Neo-Platonic optimism which delights in a beautiful world, filled with evolving life and governed by laws of perfect justice and harmony. Some literature written for popular consumption by writers following in the footsteps of Blavatsky may be cited in support of such a rosy worldview. But the author of *The Secret Doctrine* seems to have adhered to a much darker view, quite similar in fact to that held by the Gnostics. Far from being a good world created by a good god (even if he be renamed Solar Logos), this world is a dark place - weird, flawed,

even monstrous at times. Fashioned and managed by flawed beings who are themselves radically alienated from the supreme source. Here is a relevant passage from *The Secret Doctrine*: "The One is infinite and unconditioned. It cannot create, for It can have no relation to the finite and conditioned. If everything we see, from the glorious suns and planets down to the blades of grass and specks of dust, had been created by the Absolute perfection and were the direct work of even the First Energy that proceeds from It, then every such thing would have been perfect, and unconditioned, like its author. The millions upon millions of imperfect works found in Nature testify loudly that they are the products of finite, conditioned beings - though the latter were and are Dhyan Chohans, Archangels, or whatever else they may be named. In short, these imperfect works are the unfinished production of evolution, under the guidance of imperfect Gods."<sup>14</sup> The implications of such passages (for this is not the only one) are significant. Not only do they make mincemeat of the cheap sentimentality and heedless cheerfulness that is rampant in most "New Age" circles and is not absent from Theosophical groups.

More importantly, such passages give one pause when reflecting over the rampant evil present in the world and in human history at any given time. The frequent and at times all-too glib approach to such evil declares that it is connected with laws that rule the world, among which karma is most prominent, all of which are in the nature of perfect justice, and therefore essentially good. The time may at last have come when, following the lead of Blavatsky, the Gnostic, we may begin to look beyond such facile attempts to evade the existential darkness and flawed character of the world and earthly life. An excellent step was in fact taken in this direction by the

above-quoted Robert Ellwood, who in his excellent basic work on Theosophy dared to ask and answer these fundamental questions on the basis of these very teachings of Blavatsky: "Whether one thinks of such propositions as literal or only allegorically true, they can meet an 'existential' need dealing with evil which goes beyond just attributing it to various laws.' Such explanations do not entirely satisfy the rage and despair the world's sufferings evoke. ... One answer is that the God of this world is, at best imperfect, and, at worst, a vindictive, incompetent blunderer into whose world we, whose true home is in halls of light far and above his sway, are entrapped until, by following the slow path of evolution and initiation, we free ourselves from his grasp."<sup>15</sup>

Even though the sparks of light which are the spirits of men and women are in a certain sense entrapped by the ruling powers of this lower world (so said the Gnostics), the greater light never abandoned interest in the scattered fragments of its own essence. It sent a redeemer or intermediary to assist in their liberation. The overwhelming majority of Gnostics were associated with the then brand-new Christian movement, and they looked to Jesus as the carrier of this redeeming heavenly light. At the same time, they disagreed with the exoteric Christians about the precise nature of the physical embodiment as well as the death and resurrection of the redeemer. Neither did they accept the simplistic notion that the redemption of humanity was accomplished by the physical death of Jesus on the cross, and that persons merely had to believe in this event in order to be redeemed.

The task of the messianic messenger was to help human beings discover who they truly were, and to assist them in overcoming the inimical cosmic powers and re-joining the

fullness of the true light. "Salvation" thus became synonymous with "liberation," and the way to this state was envisioned not as consisting of faith but of initiation. The Gnostics were in full possession of the Christian sacramental system, which they augmented by two supreme initiatory sacraments known as the redemption and the bride-chamber. These initiatory experiences admitted the Gnostic into the liberated state of the true pneumatic, in whom soul and spirit have become united, never to part again.

Blavatsky's position regarding salvation and particularly concerning the Christian savior is far from clear. At times she seemed inclined toward the position of Docetism, a minority Gnostic position that denied the physical incarnation of Jesus altogether. She most clearly expressed this view in her long essay, "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels." At other times, she reverently referred to Jesus as an initiate of signal purity and holiness, which is hard to reconcile with his presumed total lack of physicality at any time. Most importantly, perhaps, she presented a highly concentrated but brilliant reconciliation of these and other positions when discussing the meaning of such terms as Chr stos, Chr st s and Christos in her *Theosophical Glossary*. While greatly emphasizing the concept of an indwelling or mystic Christ, which is a universal principle rather than a person, she also acknowledges the great spiritual and indeed cosmic role of the saviour figure as represented in Gnosticism. She states: "Every good individual ... may find Christ in his 'inner man' as Paul expresses it (Ephes. iii. 16, 17), whether he be Jew, Mussulman, Hindu, or Christian."<sup>16</sup>

## Mary Magdalen Was the "Most Intuitive" Disciple.

Among the most learned and insightful statements ever to come forth from Blavatsky's pen in relation to Gnosticism are her voluminous commentaries on the scripture Pistis Sophia published in 1890-91 in *Lucifer*. These appeared in conjunction with the very first English translation of this noted Gnostic work by her pupil, G. R. S. Mead. In addition to their great erudition these commentaries show several significant aspects of her views of matters Gnostic. First, her aforementioned understanding and approval of the Gnostic approach to the mystery of Christ is quite evident. Second, she anticipates the subsequent discoveries in regard to Mary Magdalen, whom she calls "the most intuitive (pneumatic), and the most prominent interlocutor of all the disciples." Third, she comments most approvingly on the now completely restored passage from the *Gospel According to Thomas* (Logion 22) wherein the union of the opposites and the androgyny of human nature are held up by Jesus as the desirable qualities accompanying the "entry into the kingdom." This latter passage is interpreted by Blavatsky as (1) pertaining to the union of the opposites within the individual human being, as a sign of pneumatic gnosis, and (2) as the cosmic androgyny which according to her is to prevail in the distant history of the human race, when the separation of the sexes as known to us today shall have ceased.<sup>17</sup>

## Let us briefly summarize now our findings outlined above:

1. The frequently reiterated opinion of academics, concerning the intimate connection of Blavatsky and the Gnostics may be

considered valid. H.P.B. indeed qualifies as a modern Gnostic, not only because of her personal intuitive knowledge, or gnosis, but also on account of her intimate acquaintance with and profound sympathy for the Gnostic tradition.

2. In regard to the normative Gnostic method of employing myth rather than dogma and commandment to express gnosis, she occupies a position much closer to that of the Gnostics than one might suspect. Were she alive today, it is highly likely that she would enthusiastically join such pioneers as Jung, Eliade, and Joseph Campbell in endorsing myth as the way par excellence to esoteric truth.

3. Blavatsky endorsed the Gnostic concept of deity as the totally transcendent Fullness, to which she juxtaposed the equally Gnostic concept of limited intermediary beings, sometimes called demiurgoi and archontes, and at times represented as lacking in both wisdom and goodness.

4. Like the Gnostics before her, the great enunciator of Theosophy held that the manifest cosmos is flawed and the creation of flawed and unregenerate cosmic beings, and she appears to have held this view as a metaphysical certainty rather than as an allegory.

5. As to Gnostic soteriology (teaching of salvation), she held to a universal concept of messianic impulse, but recognized the complex and mysterious image of Jesus Christ as presented by the Gnostics as of truthful and salvific relevance.

6. With the Gnostic Jesus whose utterance to this effect is recorded in the *Gospel According to Thomas*, H.P.B. recognized the need for the reconciliation of opposites in human nature as a hallmark of spiritual liberation along Gnostic lines.

This paves the way to recognitions which might lead one into the symbolism of alchemy and into the experiential field of spiritual initiation, as exemplified by the two supreme Gnostic sacraments, the redemption and the bride-chamber.

Such are some of the signal convergences which set H. P. Blavatsky apart not only as the great torchbearer of Theosophy, but also as a true modern Gnostic, who restated and confirmed the wisdom of the knowers of old - those whose contribution, like the stone rejected by the builders, still awaits its reincorporation into the fabric of Western spirituality and culture.

As one whose religious commitment in this life has joined him to the Gnostic tradition, the present writer takes great pleasure in saluting Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in 1988, the centenary year of the publication of her magnum opus, *The Secret Doctrine*. May her noble soul journey gloriously in the aeons of light, and may her fiery spirit be united with the Fullness of the Great Flame from whence it once came into this darkened sphere, to bring gnosis to the light sparks in the sea of forgetfulness!

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7. H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled* 2:493 (New York: J. W. Bouton, 1877).
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13. H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis* 2:184ff.
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16. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary* (Los Angeles, CA: Theosophy Company, 1973; photographic reproduction of the original 1892 edition), p. 84.
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## Food for thought – The wheel of life

[This article appeared in the March 2013 issue of The Theosophical Movement. For more articles published in this excellent magazine follow this link: [http://www.ultindia.org/previous\\_issues.html](http://www.ultindia.org/previous_issues.html)]



"Where has my mommy gone, grandmother?" Arthur's lip trembled as he asked the question. For days he had not been allowed to go into his mother's room. "Hush! Your mother is sleeping" or "Mother isn't feeling well; you must be quiet." Or,



after school, he would be told to run down the street and play. That very morning a neighbor who had a car had taken Arthur for an all-day outing, it being Saturday, when there was no school, down to the sea, where he had always loved to go. He had waded and picked up shells and eaten sandwiches and fruit and little cakes. He had slipped a little pink-frosted cake into his pocket, to take home to his mother. They had waited to see the sunset before she had brought him home and he had run into the quiet house and been overjoyed to see the door of his mother's room, kept closed all these days, standing open. Puzzled not to find her, he had run to his grandmother, who had come to live with them not very long before. She drew him to her when he asked his question.

"You know your dear mother had been very sick, Arthur. She left her love for you but she has had to go away to rest."

"But, grandmother," he wailed, forgetting how old he was and crying like any little fellow, "she wouldn't go away and not tell me good-bye. She always told me when I went to school, 'Good-bye, dear boy, be good!'"

"She had to go, dear. She will come someday."

"When, grandmother, when? He stamped his foot in exasperation and bafflement.

"When she gets rested, she will come."

"I need my mommy to take care of me!"

"Your daddy and I will take good care of you, darling. And remember, Arthur, your daddy and I will miss her too."

On Monday, when Arthur went to school, he saw a child point at him and say to another child, "He has lost his mother, His mother is dead."

Arthur's heart sank. On going home he asked his grandmother, "What does it mean for a person to be dead, grandmother? A

boy said my mother is dead!"

"It means just what I said, my darling. She's gone away to rest. You know that when you play hard all day you rest all night and in the morning you wake up as fresh as ever. Well, being 'dead' means that we need a longer sleep. And what do you think your mother is dreaming about while she 'sleeps'?"

"Me?"

"Surely, besides you she is dreaming about your daddy, her mother and daddy, and all the relatives and friends she loved. She certainly must dream of us and sometimes we dream of her."



"Every night," Arthur's father told him, "your mother was not really here with us when her body was asleep. You could tip-toe

into her room and even hum a little tune without her waking up; but you knew that in the morning she would be awake and would talk to you and read you a story. It is like that now, only she is very sound asleep. When the right time comes, she will wake up again."

One day when the leaves were putting on their bright autumn colors, they all drove out to see them in glory. But the next time they went the leaves were falling and the day came when most of the trees were bare. Arthur's father told him that the trees, although they looked so quiet, were working steadily and would work all through the winter, even when the snow fell, preparing for the new time of growth.

When spring drew near they watched the glossy little buds that, from being almost flat against their twigs, swelled more and more week by week till they unfolded slowly and leaves and flowers came out. And Arthur's father taught him another verse about the

"Power divine which moves to good."

In dark soil and the silence of the seeds  
The robe of Spring it weaves ...

"And then, daddy?" Arthur asked.

"Over and over again the Wheel of Life turns, son! It turns for people too. We call it spring when the tree puts on a new coat of leaves for its active season. The spring season for every Soul, like you and mother and grandmother and me, begins when we put on a baby body. And it grows and fills out and gets tall and strong and then, when our autumn time comes, whether after many years, or sometimes only a few, we have no more use for the body, just as the tree has no more use for its old coat of

leaves. Before the leaves of a tree fall off or even turn bright-coloured they give back to the tree all they have that would be of use to it.



"It is the same with us. Our Soul is like the tree and all the good things that we have thought and felt and said and done are like



the food the leaves give to the tree. While we are away, the real Soul part of us, sometimes for years and years, is very busy, like the tree in winter, getting ready for another life in a new body, as the tree gets ready for another spring."

"But, daddy," Arthur asked him anxiously, "how will I know my mother if she has another body?" "Never fear, son!" he spoke with comforting conviction. "Some day when we come back at the same time you and I will surely know your mother and know each other, and she will know us, because we love each other. Don't you remember when we all went to the children's party at the Smith's and they gave each child a mask to wear? The others did not recognize you right away, but your mother and I knew as soon as you came in that it was our Arthur there behind the mask!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Death is a morbid subject even for most adults, but it is important that children also begin to have right concept of death. Each child is an old soul in a new body. As children grow up they witness death of their pets, of their grand-parents or some elderly relatives. It is important for a grieving person to grasp that death is not an end.

Death is a transition, and there is waking into another life. The pamphlet *What is Death?* suggests that death only brings an end to the body, but the "real person" lives on, and that when karma permits we will meet "him" or "her" again in some other life. Thus: "In spite of the fact that you have suffered and grown hopeless because of your recent loss, a new cycle of growth and understanding can be before you ... What was it that you loved of this Being who has passed - the body? Or was it the

soul that used it? You knew that individual through all his changes of body, of which there were so many. This in itself is proof that it was not the body but something else you loved. And is that Soul which you loved now dead? How can you say so - you who persist through every change of form! That which lives and thinks in you is the 'Eternal Pilgrim,' for him there is no beginning and no end, however many changes of body and of mind you use. Nothing is ever lost. This losing of yours is nothing but loss of physical contact for a little while ..."

The two Theosophical books, *Eternal Verities* and "*Because- For The Children Who Ask Why*," which deal with philosophical and moral subjects, such as, Karma, Death and Rebirth, Dreams, Ghosts, God and Prayer, are written in easily understood manner, so as not to overwhelm the understanding of a child. In the book "*Because- For the Children Who Ask Why*," the aunt of two children who had lost their mother explains that like petunia plants dying in the frost, the worn out body of their mother had died. The children are told by their aunt to try to be happy for their Mother, because kind death came to her tired body. Like putting away the clothes that have grown ragged and old, mother had put away her body and she will come back again in a newer, better body. Death is like sleep. During sleep, for a time, we leave our bodies behind us, and live in other bodies of our souls, and live in a world of dreams and dreamless sleep, untouched by sorrow. However, their Mother's love for them did not die with her body, just as their own love for their mother did not die because her body was dead.

# A Dynamic Movement

by Boris de Zirkoff - USA

[THEOSOPHIA-A Living Philosophy for Humanity -Volume XXVIII No. 4 (130) - Spring 1972]

The spread of Theosophy in the world and the strength of the Theosophy Movement depend primarily upon unremitting and intelligent work.

Wherever, among students there burns the holy flame of spiritual enthusiasm for the dissemination of the ancient wisdom, there the work flourishes and Theosophy becomes known.

Wherever self-interest is disregarded, and an honest and sustained effort is being made to sow the seeds of Theosophy broadcast, there every motion of hand and mind bears fruit all hundredfold.

Wherever worldly self-seeking interests have been imported into Theosophical affiliations, and the primary objective of the student is either self-advancement or intellectual gratification, or an easy pastime observing someone else doing the work - there the Movement comes sooner or later to a standstill, and pleasant but deadly moulds of mind take the place of a living and workable philosophy of life.

The organized Theosophical Movement *has* its workers. It has its self-forgetful toilers, whose whole life and thought are

## THEOSOPHIA

A LIVING PHILOSOPHY FOR HUMANITY

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GATES OF JERICHO OR DEVIANS (TOWER). URBAN EXETER

Originally on the ceiling of an upper room of the Temple, it was removed to TDN, and is now on display at the Centre, Paris. The outer circle of figures, moving counterclockwise like the stars, represents the thirty-six devans, or twelve works of the Egyptian, sun; the twelve arms of the supporting figures, the twelve months of the year. Consult *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, 304, 374 footnote, and 313-12, for important cross data.

dedicated to the Cause of Mankind. They are the pillars of the Movement, the "saints" of the universal Theosophical community. It is mainly through their life-blood that the Movement is sustained; it is their spiritual and psychomental fluid that flows through its arteries. If it were not for their self-sacrificing task in all parts of the world, the modern manifestation of the Movement would have given up its ghost long ago, scattering but a few bleached bones upon the sands of time. But does *their* sacrifice, nay, often martyrdom, in the face of grievous odds, persecution, ridicule, and sometimes social ostracism, justify the complacent attitude of the many whose ethical callousness is a deadweight on the Movement?

The living power of every truly spiritual Movement throughout the ages has always been gauged by the ability and the perseverance of its adherents to work on its behalf. It is impossible to work for the Cause without at least to some degree living its teachings. Working for it is already living its precepts. It would appear therefore that it is by the same measuring rod of work accomplished or sacrifices made on its behalf, that the Theosophical Movement can appraise its own worldwide membership at any time.

As has been so clearly pointed out by William Quan Judge (*Department of Branch Work*. Paper No. 8, New York, Nov., 1890.):

"Many persons, however, think that they can belong to the Society, and while negatively selfish, that is, ready and willing to sit down and hear others expound theosophical doctrine and never work for the body themselves, they may receive benefit in the way of comprehension of the doctrines of man and nature which are promulgated among us. But they forget a law in these

matters of great importance, one, indeed, that they may not be willing to admit, and which is much opposed to our modern ideas of the powers and functions of the human mind. It is that such an attitude by reason of its selfishness builds up a hard wall between their minds and the very truths they wish to know. I speak of an actual dynamic effort which is as plain to the eye of the trained seer as is any object to the healthy eye."

Truth, like the passion for life, craves expansion. It is of the very essence of Truth to universalize itself. It is a leaven which insists upon leavening the whole. It acknowledges no barriers, it respects no boundaries. It is upon this simple fact of being that has been based throughout the ages the missionary urge on the part of all movements, good and bad. And let it be remembered that there has hardly ever been a Movement of any kind that did not originate in some seed of Truth, however small and soon obscured.

A Movement, therefore, which does not exhibit any marked degree of that urge to universalize itself, is dying spiritually, and its decay and disappearance is only a matter of time. The Theosophical Movement, as a Movement, still exhibits many a healthy sign of that inner urge and this is, of course, its primary claim to growth and expansion in the future.

What is needed today more than anything else in our Movement is faith in this aggressive universalism of Truth; it is our only escape from smallness, parochialism, querulousness and stagnation.

The spiritual passion for Truth demands for its Apostles men and women who feel its urge, who can interpret its message and lay bare its imperatives. Among free men, always new leaders arise to meet the challenge of great emergencies.



These are the men who deny the don'ts and can'ts of conservative years, who go out and dare the impossible.

Our clamant need, as a Movement, is for leaders of thought. Every member - a leader! *Workers* are wanted, not mere well-wishers. Active centers of spiritual light, not mere names on the rostrum. Men and women who are possessed by the aggressive universalism of Truth and are prepared to "damn the consequences." The choice between self-complacent intellectual gratification and an intelligent, purposeful, dynamic, but kindly and self-sacrificing work for the Cause of Theosophy, is the difference between a sad wreck cast out on the sandbanks of thought in years to come, and a Movement whose every fiber responds with a quickened fire to the keynote of the Incoming Age. It is up to us!

"... the theosophist's duty is like that of the husbandman; to turn his furrows and sow his grains as best he can: the issue is with nature, and she, the slave of Law." - *The Mahatma Letters*, pp. 339-40. (3rd ed., p. 334.). [5]



A strong life force can be seen in physical vitality, courage, competent judgment, self-mastery, sexual vigor, and the realization of each persons unique talents and purpose in life. To maintain a powerful life force, forget yourself, forget about living and dying, and bring your full attention into this moment.

**Unknown**

# Theosophy and the Society in the Public Eye

Jean Sibelius

Comments on Theosophy

Henry A. Wallace

After the funeral

Theosophy, Fantasy, and Mary Poppins - by John Algeo

## Jean Sibelius (1865 – 1957)



[from *HPB: The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky, Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement*, by Sylvia Cranston and Carey Williams, research assistant, 3rd rev. ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: Path Publishing House, 1999; c. 1993), pp. 496-7.]

On the occasion of Sibelius's ninetieth birthday, the music critic for the *New York Times* (December 1955) wrote:

"The interrelationship between life and art is one of Sibelius's chief concerns. Sibelius's identification with the fields, the woods, the sea and the sky is so profound that it has always permeated his music. ... As a boy Sibelius wandered in the wilderness of his native province of Hame. Birds always fascinated him. "Millions of years ago, in my previous incarnations," he once told Jalas [his son-in-law], "I must have been related to swans or wild geese, because I can still feel that affinity."

A friend and neighbour of the Sibelius family, Mrs. Ida Sohlman, informed the writer that Sibelius spoke openly with intimate associates of his conviction in reincarnation and also of his previous lives. Independent confirmation of this came in January 1982, in a chance meeting with Harri Kallio in Santa Barbara, California, where Kallio teaches. The writer met him at the Institute of World Culture, with which he is actively associated. He told of spending some time in Finland and of a special visit made to the Sibelius family and to Yrjö Paloheimo, an archaeologist who lived next door to the composer. Kallio learned from the latter that Sibelius and the circle of artists surrounding him were much involved in the study of Theosophy, as well as Rosicrucian teachings.

## Comments on Theosophy

Comments on Theosophy by Robert V. Smith in *The Way of Oz: A Guide to Wisdom, Heart, and Courage*. Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 2012. Pp. xvii + 259.

"Given Frank and Maud Baum's belief in theosophy, it's been suggested that the name Toto [for Dorothy's dog] may be a contraction of *totality* - a word that embraces the Eastern philosophical concept of totality, or a natural 'unity of matter and energy ... both real and imagined'" (p. 4).

"Frank Baum believed in the tenets of theosophy, which include an acknowledgment of the power of the Buddha's Golden Road, or path to self-understanding and enlightenment through a life of study and struggle" (p. 17).

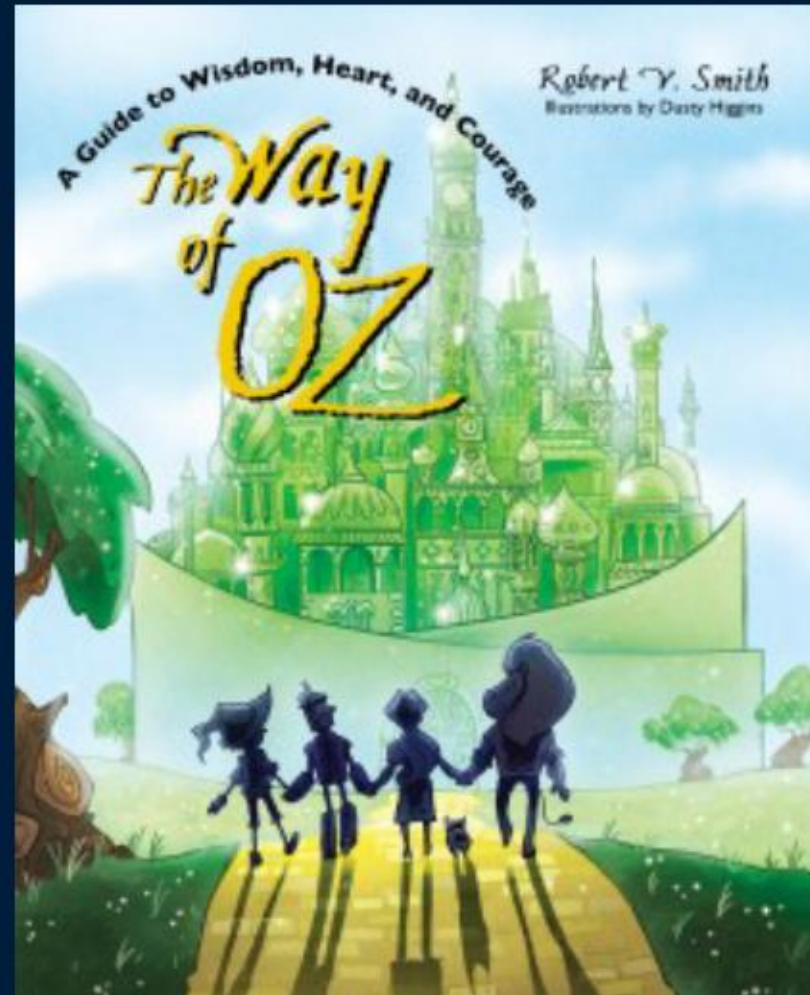
"Despite her initial reservations, Matilda Gage [the mother of Frank Baum's future wife, Maud] soon grew fond of Baum, in part because of his affable and kindly nature. She appreciated his creative talents and introduced him to theosophy, a religious movement brought to the United States by the Ukrainian psychic Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, whose writings were embraced by notables such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Thomas Alva Edison. Adherents of theosophy believe in the inalienable rights of all people, regardless of race, religion, sex, or class. Theosophists seek truth through a blended understanding of philosophy, religious beliefs from all faiths, and science.



Theosophists also believe science helps in the continuing illumination of religious belief. This enlightened interdisciplinary orientation and worldview influenced and informed much of Baum's lifelong learning and writing" (pp. 24-5).

Baum's "wide-ranging editorials [in his South Dakota newspaper, the *Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer*] covered many areas but emphasized such topics as women's suffrage (he was a staunch supporter of a ballot measure required by the 1889 South Dakota constitution for women to get the vote), Prohibition (although no teetotaler, Baum believed the state constitutional clause should be obeyed to give the experiment a chance), and issues of faith and reason (highlighting theosophical principles and sharing concerns about traditional religious practices and beliefs). In one of his editorials, he commented that theosophists 'are the dissatisfied of the world, the dissenters from all creeds ... They admit the existence of a God - not necessarily a personal god. To them God is Nature and Nature God' - thereby distancing himself from traditional Christian beliefs" (pp. 29-30).

"Works Cited and Consulted ... / ... Algeo, John. 'The Wizard of Oz: The Perilous Journey.' *The American Theosophist* [74.9], October 1986 [pp. 291-7; reprinted in *Quest* 6.2 (Summer 1993): 48-55]. / -. *Theosophy: An Introductory Study Course*. 4th ed. Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Society of America, 2007" (p. 231).





# Henry A. Wallace



*Henry Agard Wallace*

Henry Agard Wallace (October 7, 1888 - November 18, 1965) was the 33rd Vice President of the United States (1941-1945), the Secretary of Agriculture (1933-1940), and the Secretary of Commerce (1945-1946). In the 1948 presidential election, Wallace was the nominee of the Progressive Party.

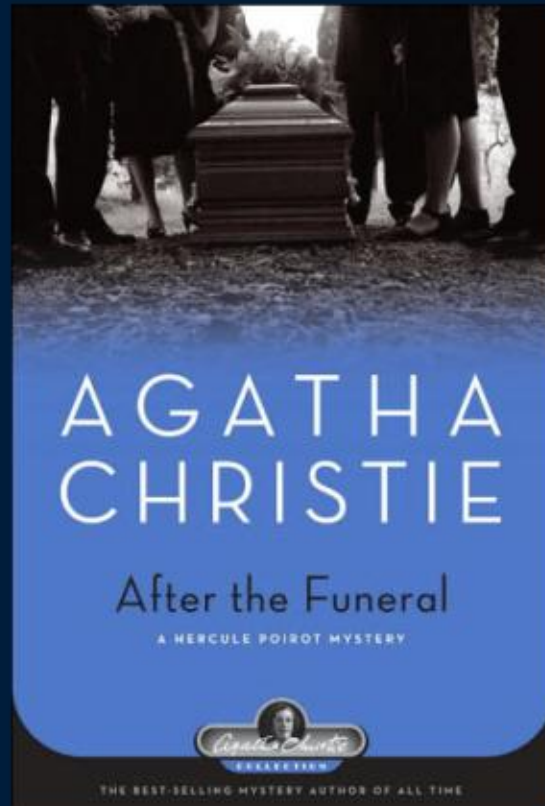
Wallace was raised as a Presbyterian and remained a devout Christian all his life. In college, however, he became increasingly dissatisfied with organized religion after reading William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). Around 1919 he stopped attending the Presbyterian church and spent the next ten years exploring other religious faiths and traditions, including spiritualism and esoteric religion.

He completed a correspondence course in Theosophy from the People's Temple, and was a card-holding member of the Theosophical Society in America, as verified by the archives in Wheaton, for some years until 1935, when he let his membership lapse after joining Franklin Roosevelt's cabinet, presumably for political reasons. He was also an altar boy in the Liberal Catholic Church.

Read more, follow this link:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry\\_A.\\_Wallace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_A._Wallace)

# After the funeral



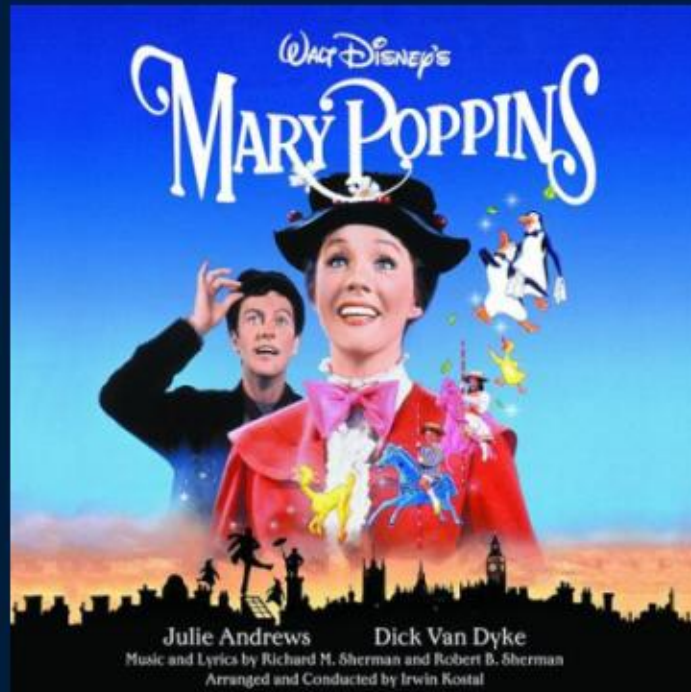
From Agatha Christie's *After the Funeral* (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal, 1953), p. 76: "She remade her will about three weeks ago. (It was formerly in favour of the Theosophical Society)."



*Agatha Christie*

# Theosophy, Fantasy, and Mary Poppins

by John Algeo - USA



Chapter 4:

## The Third Book of the Series: Mary Poppins Opens the Door

Travers, Pamela L. *Mary Poppins Opens the Door*. San Diego: Harcourt, Odyssey/Harcourt Young Classic, 1997, c. 1943.

*Mary Poppins Opens the Door*, the third and final volume of the three basic Mary Poppins books (with 255 pages of text), is almost as long as the preceding volume and has eight chapters.

The book opens on November 5, which in England is Guy Fawkes Day. Guy Fawkes was a Catholic in Protestant England under King James I. Fawkes became part of a plot to assassinate the King and blow up Parliament in what is called the Gunpowder Plot on November 5, 1605. Ever since then, that day on the calendar has been observed as Guy Fawkes Day, on which his effigy is burned on a bonfire to the accompaniment of fireworks, which are as closely linked to November 5 in England as they are to July 4 in America. The general term *guy* (which dates from 1806) has different meanings in England and America. In England, it means "a grotesque effigy of Guy

Fawkes burned on Guy Fawkes Day, or a grotesque-looking person." In America, it used to be a familiar term for any man, but more recently, especially in plurals like "you guys" it can apply to both men and women.

The Banks family in Number 17, Cherry Tree Lane, is in its usual chaotic condition when Mary Poppins is not there to organize everything. Mr. Banks is particularly agitated on this bleak and chilly November morning because Robertson Ay (the man of all work who works as little as possible) has given him one black shoe and one brown one, and Mr. Banks announces that he will not be home for dinner, which greatly alarms the children because he is the one who sets off the fireworks for them on Guy Fawkes Day. As he is leaving, the chimney-sweep arrives and offers to shake hands with him because it is lucky to shake hands with a Sweep; but Mr. Banks will have none of that. But the Sweep offers to take the children to the Park and set off some fireworks for them. So off they go.

In the Park, they have a fine time with splendid loud and colorful fireworks, but as closing time approaches, they set off the last rocket. It goes off and upward but does not end with the shower of sparks all the others did. Instead it creates only one tiny spark. The children watch it, and unlike the others it does not go out, but grows larger and brighter; and, as it comes down, it turns into Mary Poppins, with her carpetbag and parrot-headed umbrella. The Park Keeper is very upset at this irregularity and flings out his hand to stop her, but Mary Poppins puts into his hand a small piece of cardboard, which she says is her Return Ticket. She ushers the children home, where Mrs. Banks is delighted to see her, but complains, "You left me Without a Word, Mary Poppins ... I think you might tell me when you're

coming and going, I never know where I am." Mary Poppins replies, "Nobody does, ma'am." Then her carpetbag slides up the bannisters to the Nursery, and her umbrella spreads itself like a bird and follows.

Mary Poppins is back, and the house is again orderly. The children want her to stay permanently. She says only, "I'll stay until the door opens." What door she refers to is unclear. To their observation that she came down from the sky from a spark that a rocket produced, she responds with her usual outrage at the impropriety of their observation. But when they are in bed, they see in the folds of her umbrella a mass of colored stars of a kind a rocket produces when it explodes in the sky.

In chapter 2, Mary, Jane, and Michael go to visit Mary's cousin, Fred Twigley, to get him to tune the Banks's piano. They are admitted, reluctantly and rudely by his housekeeper, Sarah Clump, who wants to marry him. Mr. Twigley's Godmother gave him seven wishes, of which he has used up two and is trying to save the other five, but he keeps on carelessly squandering them. Mr. Twigley is making a music box, into which he will put all the sounds of the Park, including "the slow, soft murmur of trees as they grow." Michael protests, "But you can't hear trees growing ... There's no music for that!" And Mr. Twigley responds, "Of course there is! There's a music for everything. . . . Everything in the world - trees, rocks and stars and human beings - they all have their own true music." That is a fundamentally Theosophical idea: everything vibrates, each thing produces its own characteristic sound. By the end of the visit, Mr. Twigley has gotten rid of Sarah Clump and used up all his wishes, the last one being to tune the Banks's piano.

Other adventures follow until chapters 6, "High Tide," and 7,



"Happy Ever After," either of which could be taken as the central-theme episode of the third book; it is a role they share. In the first book, the central-theme chapter involved a visit to the zoo, which represents the earth. In the second book, the central theme concerns a visit to the heavens, the air. In this third book, chapter 6 appropriately takes the children under water. There Jane has a conversation with a Terrapin; she says, "I thought the Sea would be so different, but really, it's very like the land!" The Terrapin replies, "And why not? ... The land came out of the sea, remember. Each thing on the earth has a brother here - the lion, the dog, the hare, the elephant. The precious gems have their kind in the sea so have the starry constellations. The rose remembers the salty waters and the moon the ebb and flow of the tide. You, too, must remember it. Jane and Michael! There are more things in the sea, my children, than ever came out of it." The notion of the great sea as the source of life is widespread; and the concept of parallel lines of evolution is very Theosophical.

Chapter 7 ("Happy Ever After") takes place on the last day of the old year and introduces a concept that was central to Pamela Travers's thinking: that of a Crack in space-time, in which anything is possible and all problems disappear. That Crack is, as it were, an opening to the Dreaming. As he is going to bed, Michael suddenly sits up and asks:

"When igzackly does the Old Year end?"

"Tonight," said Mary Poppins shortly. "At the first stroke of twelve."

"And when does it begin?" he went on.

"When does what begin?" she snapped.

"The New Year," answered Michael patiently.

"On the last stroke of twelve," she replied, giving a short sharp sniff.

"Oh? Then what happens in between? ... Between the first and last stroke," he explained hurriedly.

Mary Poppins turned and glared at him.

"Never trouble Trouble till Trouble troubles you!" she advised priggishly.

Michael gets his answer later, when the first strike of midnight ends the old year. Then remarkable things happen. Toys come alive: a Golden Pig, Alfred the Elephant, Pinnie the Monkey, and an old Blue Duck. They lead Jane and Michael out of the house and to the Park, where the following exchange takes place:

"Alfred flung up his flannel trunk and eagerly sniffed the air. / 'Ha!' He remarked delightedly 'We're safely inside, Pig, don't you think?' / 'Inside what?' asked Michael curiously. / 'The Crack,' said Alfred, flapping his ears."

Then many other characters from nursery rhymes, such as Humpty-Dumpty, and stories, such as Robinson Crusoe, appear. They have all escaped from their books because, before leaving the Nursery, Mary Poppins had propped open their books. Jane wonders at the characters' ability to slip out of their books and into the "real" world and asks whether they can often do so. Crusoe answers, "Alas, no! Only at the end of the year. The Crack's our one and only chance."

"What crack?" demanded Michael. 'The Crack between the Old Year and the New. The Old Year dies on the first Stroke of Midnight and the New Year is born on the Last Stroke. And in

between - while the other ten strokes are sounding - there lies the secret Crack.' [Sleeping Beauty continues:] 'And inside the Crack all things are as one. The eternal opposites meet and kiss. The wolf and the lamb lie down together, the dove and the serpent share one nest. The stars bend down and touch the earth and the young and the old forgive each other. Night and day meet here, so do the poles. The East leans over towards the West and the circle is complete. This is the time and place, my darlings - the *only* time and the *only* place - where everybody lives happily ever after.'

Mary Poppins also enters the Park. "But why is she here?" demanded Jane, as she watch that shape come down the clearing. 'Mary Poppins is not a fairy-tale.' / 'She's even better!' said Alfred loyally, 'She's a fairy-tale come true. Besides,' he rumbled, 'she's the Guest of the Evening! It was she who left the books open.'" Everyone is dancing. Everyone has a partner. No one is left out. Everyone is happy. Then the strokes of the clock begin again, up to "Eleven! O fleeting moment! O time on the wing! How short is the space between the years! Let us be happy - happy ever after! / Twelve!" Then the dancing ends. All the characters seem to melt into the moonshine, as all the bells all over London ring in the New Year.

Jane and Michael open their eyes and find they are back in their beds, and Mary Poppins asks who wants crumpets for breakfast. "'Is today the New Year, Mary Poppins?' asked Michael. / 'Yes,' she said calmly, as she put the plate down on the table. / Michael looked at her solemnly. He was thinking about the Crack. / 'Shall we too, Mary Poppins?' he asked, blurting out the question. / 'Shall you, too, what?' she enquired with a sniff. / 'Live happily ever afterwards?' he said eagerly. / A

smile, half sad, half tender, played faintly round her mouth. / 'Perhaps,' she said thoughtfully. 'It all depends.' / 'What on, Mary Poppins?' / 'On you,' she said quietly, as she carried the crumpets to the fire."

In chapter 8, "The Other Door," Mary Poppins leaves as she said she would. When she and the children are out and about, all her friends are saying good-bye to her. At first, the children think that the friends are going somewhere, but when they get back to the nursery, they find that her camp bed is gone, and they realize that it is Mary Poppins who is leaving. They look out the window and see reflected in it an image of the nursery in all details, including the nursery room door. It is the "Other Door," and they see Mary Poppins carrying her carpet bag and umbrella walking through the reflected room and opening the Other Door. She walks through it and into the sky, from which she came. "We'll never forget you, Mary Poppins!" the children exclaim, as they look up at the sky. "Her bright shape paused in its flight for a moment and gave an answering wave. Then darkness folded its wing about her and hid her from their eyes." So ends the third and last of the three basic Mary Poppins books.

To be continued

# Miscellany and Trivia

[Anecdote Diogenes of Sinope](#)

[Anecdote Thomas Aquinas](#)

[Anecdote Rene Descartes](#)

[Anecdote Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz](#)

[Anecdote Immanuel Kant](#)

[Anecdote F.P. Ramsey](#)

## Diogenes of Sinope

Greek philosopher and one of the founders of the Cynic philosophy (412 or 404 BC – 323 BC)



Also known as 'the Cynic,' Diogenes was the major follower of Antisthenes, who had invented cynicism as a philosophical movement. Cynicism demanded extreme detachment from society and its rules, living according to one's reason. One way Diogenes used to scandalize the Athenians was to eat in the Agora. Any bodily function was expected to be confined to the home, where no-one else need see it. Going one beyond this, Diogenes was once found masturbating in public. Asked how he could do such a thing, Diogenes replied, "If I could satisfy my hunger by rubbing my belly, I'd do that too."

Diogenes' fame began to spread, both as a sort of madman and as a wise man. For the latter reason, Alexander the Great reportedly came to Athens from Macedon to glean some wisdom from this eccentric philosopher. Alexander would find Diogenes in his customary place, an empty wine vat which he had made his home. When Alexander approached with praise for Diogenes wisdom and humbling himself to request audience, Diogenes replied, "Could you move? You're blocking my light."

## Anecdote Thomas Aquinas

Italian Dominican priest, philosopher and theologian  
(1225 - 1274)



When Aquinas was a student, his reserved demeanor kept him from participating in class discussions. Rather than assume shyness or meekness, the other students presumed Aquinas was simply stupid. In the Middle Ages, when noblemen frequently placed their children in monasteries or universities by force of position, it was common to have relatively unintelligent people even in university. This way Aquinas earned the nickname "the dumb ox," referring, of course, to his size and silence. Another student, taking pity on Aquinas, offered to aid Aquinas with his logic work. Aquinas accepted out of meekness. As the student attempted to demonstrate various rules of logic to Aquinas, he found himself being corrected by Aquinas. The student soon caught on and left Aquinas alone.

## Anecdote Rene Descartes

French philosopher, mathematician and writer (1596 – 1650)



Knowledge, as we know, was limited in the Renaissance. Where today it would be quite impossible to study all the major fields of knowledge, it was no so centuries ago. Descartes studied in a Jesuit school in his youth.

The Jesuits were renowned as scholars; having a Jesuit education was the best for which one could hope. Descartes, however, did not just master the subjects he was being taught, but having done so spent his free time in the Jesuit library. By the time he was in his late teens, he had read everything in the Jesuit library and knew everything there was to know--literally.

Knowing everything, Descartes decided to give up the scholar's life and live a little. So he did what many young men were then doing: he got involved in the war. Descartes, though, did not choose a side. Instead, he became a mercenary and fought on both sides of the war just for the fun of it. Indeed, not only did he know everything, but he also happened to be one of the finest swordsmen in France.



# Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz

German mathematician and philosopher (1646 – 1716)



Leibniz wrote obsessively, compulsively. His complete works, centuries after his death, is still not compiled. As he used to write so frequently, he had a special desk designed so he could write while travelling by carriage.

Looking through Leibniz's study at his thousands upon thousands of pages, scholars discovered a paper on which he had been working out the benefits of having a wife or not. He ultimately decided it was logically superior not to have a wife.

In his teens, Leibniz inherited his father's largely Latin library. Not knowing Latin yet did not dissuade him. He taught himself Latin simply by studying the Latin texts.

# Anecdote Immanuel Kant

German philosopher (1724 – 1804)



Kant believed in the supremacy of rational order: The more rational the being, the more a person is that being. This led to some peculiar behavior on Kant's part. He awoke every day at the same time. He insisted on having no fewer than two and no more than five guests for dinner every day at exactly one in the afternoon. After dinner he would go for a walk, back and forth exactly eight times on one street. His walk time was so regulated that it was reported townsfolk could set their clocks by him.

The University of Königsberg, where Kant taught philosophy, was chronically understaffed. Lacking professors, Kant was

frequently asked to teach subjects he was not qualified to teach. How did Kant teach the subjects? He made it up.

Kant once received a letter from a young lady who had read his works on ethics. Prizing Kant's genius, she sought advice on what she should do about a certain problem of hers. She was engaged to marry a gentleman whom she loved, but she was not a virgin. She wanted to know whether she should tell the man or keep quiet. Kant advised her that she must tell her fiancée. The fiancée broke off the marriage. Distraught, the woman wrote to Kant again, deeply troubled over the result of her decision and admitting she was having doubts over Kant's system of ethics. She asked if she might come to Königsberg to meet with Kant and discuss her doubts. Although he received the letter in a timely fashion, he chose never to reply. The woman committed suicide after some time.

## Anecdote F.P. Ramsey

British mathematician, philosopher and economist (1903 – 1930)



Ramsey was renowned for his precocious genius and his interest in every field of inquiry. Once, when expressing an interest in learning German, a friend passed him Ernst Mach's *Analysis of Sensations* - a complicated enough text in any language - and told him to go through it with a dictionary and grammar guide. Twelve days later Ramsey had returned having mastered the German language sufficiently to not only read the book, but also to have critiqued its arguments and pointed out several logical flaws.

# The Society

Editorial - by Jan Nicolaas Kind

MINI INTERVIEWS

## Editorial

by Jan Nicolaas Kind - Brazil



*Jan Nicolaas Kind*

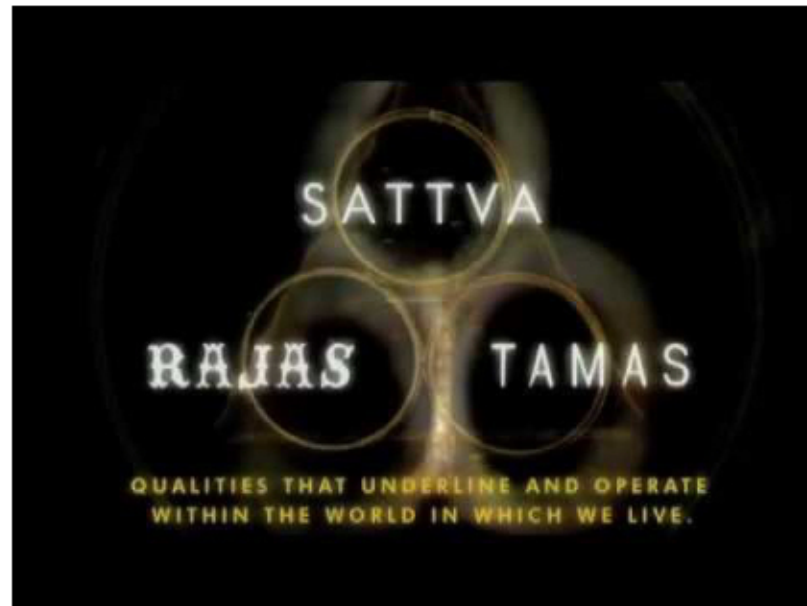
In response to the activities of the ITC (International Theosophy Conferences Inc.) and Theosophy Forward, many are pondering the idea of Theosophical unity. In the following months, articles on this subject will appear here and in other periodicals, so it will be interesting to see where the story is going to take us. A starting point is the work that needs to be done.

For Theosophists to come closer and to understand our past and present and therefore to have a fair idea about what the future could hold for us, the path of Karma Yoga shows the way. Of the four paths to realization (Jnana, Bhakti, Raja, and Karma), Karma Yoga is the process of achieving perfection and



unity in action. Karma or action should run parallel with the Yoga of unity. Yet our acts separate us so that there is no unity at all. The unbalanced nature of our activities creates division and keeps us separate from and strangers to one another.

The Divine Wisdom was specifically designed for just this task of introducing harmony in situations of apparent paradox and contradiction. If we are ever to achieve unity, we need to understand the teaching of occult philosophy that human beings do everything under the influence of the three fundamental forces in nature: the three gunas. In order to arrive at a deeper understanding, we need to investigate the way in which the gunas work.



The three gunas that constantly surround us are (1) sattva = purity, truth, harmony, and rhythm; (2) rajas = mobility, activity, passion, drive, and creativity; (3) tamas = sloth, illusion, ignorance, but also the positive qualities of tenacity and perseverance. We must learn to deal with these three gunas and with all of the qualities associated with them. We need to begin to understand them and finally to weave them into a magnificent and divine whole. The exercise by which one force is conquered while another is nurtured and further developed will bring about growth in the individual, inducing a deepening insight and indicating the beginning of freedom. Only in freedom and through devoted labor we are able to be in communion, to unite compassionately and unconditionally.

Once upon a time, a group of young inspired women and men all set out in search of the eternal values of the Ancient Wisdom. In 1875, when the Theosophical Society was founded in New York, H. P. Blavatsky was only 44, Henry Olcott 43, William Judge 24 and Annie Besant (who was to join in 1889), 28. All of them, in their own unique manners, worked hard and devoted their lives to trying to bring light to our world. Although later differences in approach and terminology developed, those four persons had something in common; they all had the same goal in sight. What we do have in common with them? What connects us with our history? Why don't we start a positive dialogue with our past? By being aware of our heritage and working for the cause, we focus on future responsibilities, preparing the path for new generations with all the strength we possess.

The unity we desire cannot be attained by solely promulgating our own viewpoint, by being unwilling to listen to others, or by a



meditative withdrawal from the world. It can be achieved, however, by active participation in life, dedicating ourselves to rigorous effort and thereby unveiling our divine powers and waging the spiritual fight right in the midst of the world and its nature. Karma Yoga is different from the other yogas in that, rather than being a system, it is a collection of ethical and moral precepts for those who live in the world. Karma yogis do not occupy themselves in pointing out how wrong others may be; instead, they reach out to those with whom they have differences of opinion, knowing that only through work, dedication, and respect apparent obstacles will disappear.

In this quest we should ask questions demonstrating our love and commitment to what is dear to us. Asking questions, being critical or discriminative, is often misunderstood and regarded as being disloyalty or not constructive; but it is quite the opposite. Those who founded the Theosophical Society never stopped asking questions. If we stop being enquirers or investigative and aren't prepared to take a stand because we find that taking stands is risky or too confronting, we take a wrong turn. There is, however, a difference between asking questions (or wondering) and condemning. We should not judge others, nor should we proclaim that our opinion is the only valid one.

If we consider truth to be relative, shouldn't we reason?



Do not fear death... only the unlived life. You don't have to live forever; You just have to live.

**Natalie Babbitt**

(American author and illustrator of children's books)

# Mini interviews

Abraham Oron

Ed Abdill

Ken Small

Mahendra Prakash Singhal

Marijn Gijbers

Navin B. Shah

Sandy Ravelli

Members of the Vasanta Youth Lodge

Opinions and ideas expressed in the mini-interviews are exclusively of those who are being interviewed. They don't necessarily represent the ideas and opinions of the compilers of *Theosophy Forward*.

The responses of the interviewees are not edited for content. Some contributors give short answers to the questions while others touch upon the subject more elaborately.

Please note that the mini-interview at the end is actually a "maxi" interview. Members of the Vasanta Youth Lodge in Adyar have done fine job making the interview a joint effort.

# Abraham Oron



1. *What's your name, where are you from and how long have you been a member of the TS?*

My name is Abraham Oron, I live in Israel and I am a member since 1978.

2. *Are you active in your Lodge/Section and if so, what do you do?*

I am lecturing and organizing the work of the TS in Israel. We have one lodge consisting of 80 members and about 3000 sympathizers with whom we are in touch. We have 5 study groups which are open also to non-members. Here are some of

the activities which we offer to the public:

- An introductory course of Theosophy named: "Meditation Theosophy and Self Transformation."
- A course of 12 sessions on the emotional nature of man in which we give Theosophical and Buddhist perspectives on dealing with harmful emotions.
- A workshop consisting of 5 sessions named "Helping our neighbor" which provides tools and insights for gaining inner peace. The study material for this workshop can be found on Theosophy Forward's website. Follow this link: [http://www.theosophyforward.net/special\\_2.html](http://www.theosophyforward.net/special_2.html)

### *3. How did your first learn about Theosophy or come in contact with the Society?*

I learned about Theosophy through an advertisement in a vegetarian magazine, about 3 years after I had been following a transcendental meditation course and meditating regularly. At the time I was desperately in search for spiritual books and that particular advertisement mentioned a library. So I went to one of their meetings which I did not find very interesting, but the library which contained mainly Theosophical books in English interested me very much, so I joined as a member on the spot. Now I seem to be like the biblical king Saul who as a common villager went in search for his lost mares but found a kingdom. I searched for books but I found the ocean of Divine Wisdom.

### *4. What does Theosophy mean to you?*

Theosophy for me is the hope for a better world and a better life for humanity. It brought so much light into my life, and I deeply feel that this light and profound knowledge should be made available to all, by making it clear, simple and practical. We can make Theosophy much more understandable if we avoid using

complex jargon while introducing Theosophy to the public or to beginners.

Theosophy can be made more interesting and practical if we could start by teaching some of the principles of Theosophy through subjects such as: meditation, the power of thought, Theosophical values for understanding our emotional nature and coping with harmful emotions and basic Theosophical teachings which help in understanding intuition and its development. If we would like to make Theosophy vital in creating a better world, we would have to avoid using too many abstract expressions; those should be kept for a later stage.

### *5. What is your favorite Theosophical book and why?*

I like books which inspire for a deeper understanding of the principles of spiritual life and Self Realization: *Light on the Path*, *The Voice of the Silence*, *Practical Occultism*, and *Letters from the Masters of Wisdom*. I study these books again and again together with the Bhagavad-Gita, *Vivekachudamani* (The crest jewel of discrimination by Shankaracharia) and the Dhamapada by the Buddha.

### *6. What in your opinion is the biggest challenge the TS Adyar (as an organization) is facing at the moment?*

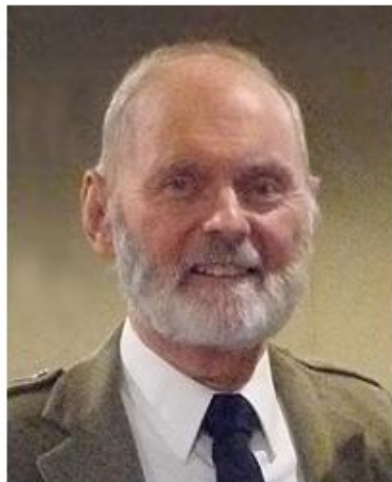
To be more involved and creative in preparing a dynamic leadership which can present Theosophy in new and inspiring forms, emphasizing the practical side of Theosophy in making life and relationships more meaningful and harmonious.

### *7. Is there anything you would wish for the future of the Theosophical Movement?*

That the rich treasures of knowledge and wisdom in the TS will find ways to the hearts of the younger generation.



# Ed Abdill



1. *What's your name, where are you from and how long have you been a member of the TS?*

Ed Abdill from New York City. I've been a member of the TS since 1959.

2. *Are you active in your Lodge/Section and if so, what do you do?*

I am active in the NYTS and the Theosophical Society in America. I lecture for the Society throughout the United States and internationally. I wrote *The Secret Gateway - Modern*

*Theosophy and the Ancient Wisdom Tradition* to give a contemporary overview of Theosophical philosophy.

3. *How did your first learn about Theosophy or come in contact with the Society?*

I learned about Theosophy from a Spanish language teacher in 1955. For a conversation exam I spoke about an essay I wrote in high school on comparative religion. Next day she gave me a pamphlet written in Spanish. It was about Theosophy. More on this is in a preface of *The Secret Gateway*.

4. *What does Theosophy mean to you?*

Theosophy means everything to me. It appeals to my mind and heart, and while it has, in Blavatsky's words, not solved the riddles of the universe, it has lifted a corner of the veil. I take to heart H. P. B.'s warning that we cannot expect to "get it" in words. The words appeal to "the higher faculties," toward truth that can flash on the mind as insight.

5. *What is your favourite Theosophical book and why?*

*The Voice of the Silence* is my favourite because it appeals to spiritual intuition. Some of its poetry would make Shakespeare jealous.

6. *What in your opinion is the biggest challenge the TS Adyar (as an organization) is facing at the moment?*

Perhaps the biggest challenge to the TS Adyar and all Theosophical organizations is find ways to help people understand that Theosophical principles are practical, common sense, and applicable in daily life. The didactic method was used in the past and still has some use, but the challenge is to help people focus their minds in such a way that they get



flashes of understanding within themselves. It seems to me that is the only way Theosophy can become a living force in the world, a force that is not a creed but a guide to harmonious living.

*7. Is there anything you would wish for the future of the Theosophical Movement?*

My fervent wish is that by living the life required to come to the wisdom we might be a beacon to others and lead them to richer and fuller lives.



*Ken Small*

## Ken Small

*1. What's your name, where are you from and how long have you been a member of the TS?*

My name is Ken Small and I grew up in the area of San Diego, California called Point Loma. I am not a member of any particular TS and facilitate the 'Point Loma School of Theosophic Perennialism', [www.pointlomaschool.com](http://www.pointlomaschool.com) for study and classes in the Theosophic Perennialism, which is the successor organization to Point Loma Publications.

*2. Are you active in your Lodge/Section and if so, what do you do?*

Through the 'Point Loma School of Theosophic Perennialism' we host discussion groups and study in the Blavatsky and Theosophic Perennialism of the Point Loma tradition. Additionally I express my 'theosophic' effort in teaching meditation and mindfulness through Zen and Buddhist groups at Enso Meditation in San Diego and other groups. In my view, Theosophy met the interests and needs of the late 19th century with what was at the time, revolutionary teachings on karma and reincarnation. Today's dynamic exploration and need is in the arena of understanding the nature of consciousness and also the very practical need to have tools to ameliorate our own

stress and suffering. Meditation is relevant and offers solutions and understanding in both of these areas and Theosophic Perennialism has deep insights to offer here.

*3. How did your first learn about Theosophy or come in contact with the Society?*

My parents and grandparents were 'Point Loma' Theosophists, so I grew up immersed in the broad context of theosophy. I realize now, that there was perhaps an added openness of inquiry due to fact that my parents and their large global Theosophical network of friends and associates were all no longer associated with any particular Theosophical society. Being exiles due to the fragmentation of the Point Loma society because of conflicting leadership claims after de Purucker's death, they were all in a sense quite free of organizational constraints. They manifest a rather unusual and continuous Theosophic creativity, which can be seen in the writings and work of this loosely associated group of de Purucker's closest esoteric students. (e.g. de Zirkoff, Iverson and Helen Harris, Gordon Plummer, Geoffrey and Ila Barborka, Emmett Small, Helen Todd, Elsie Benjamin etc.) For example, this organizational freedom opened the door to a great deal of positive Theosophic collaboration especially with the Adyar society during the late 1960's through mid-1980's.

*4. What does Theosophy mean to you?*

I find resonance with Blavatsky's expansive idea where she says: 'Vaughan offers a far better, more philosophical definition. "A Theosophist," he says - "is one who gives you a theory of God or the works of God, which has not revelation, but an inspiration of his own for its basis." In this view every great thinker and philosopher, especially every founder of a new

religion, school of philosophy, or sect, is necessarily a Theosophist.' I think it is important to always remember Blavatsky's broad and generous view! It is also summed up in the Theosophical motto: "There is no religion higher than truth".

*5. What is your favorite Theosophical book and why?*

Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence* I feel for myself, is still the most pivotal book in all Theosophical literature, because it opens the door to the practice of meditation and also the way of compassion and ideal of the Bodhisattva. It could be called a manual of the ethics for inner development, which is the inner 'fuel' that drives the Theosophical Movement.

*6. What in your opinion is the biggest challenge the TS Adyar (as an organization) is facing at the moment?*

Certainly it could be easily stated: 'All the Theosophical organizations are ingrown and rather toxic', but however true, this is too simplistic. The heart of the matter is in all of us. So to always remain clear that 'I am the 'biggest challenge' and to keep in mind: "How do we authentically challenge ourselves?" I think this is the only real question and that all the organizational questions are quite secondary.

*7. Is there anything you would wish for the future of the Theosophical Movement?*

It appears that there has been at times, in the historical dynamics of Theosophy, the tendency to lapse into, either, mere metaphysical descriptive replication from the past or follow the incomplete delusions of personal revelation. I would hope that the Theosophical Movement will be able to maintain its root source which can guide it through this inauthentic tendency to externalize the genuine 'inner light'.

# Mahendra Prakash Singhal



*1. What's your name, where are you from and how long have you been a member of the TS?*

My name is Mahendra Prakash Singhal. I was born in the State of Uttar Pradesh, India and I became a member of TS on December 31, 1978.

*2. Are you active in your Lodge/Section and if so, what do you do?*

I was President of the Besant Theosophical Lodge from 1998 until 2011 and President of the Delhi Theosophical Federation

for three periods. As President of the Delhi Federation I created a financial corpus of Rs. 500,000/- from individual donations to provide for its self-sufficiency. Was also General Secretary of the Indian Section from 1993 until 1998. From 2012 onwards I'm serving as International Vice President of the Theosophical Society, Adyar.

*3. How did your first learn about Theosophy or come in contact with the Society?*

I was married into a Theosophical family and that brought me in contact with Theosophy .

*4. What does Theosophy mean to you?*

I get a compass of life from its teachings and laws of life. I learn that life's development has limitless possibilities only if we take ourselves in hand with definiteness of purpose (Self-Realization) and deliberateness of action with perseverance, determination, confidence and hard work.

*5. What is your favourite Theosophical book and why?*

My favourite book is *The First Principles of Theosophy* by C. Jinerajadasa. The book is largely based on observations and experiences of the author; the concepts are illustrated by diagrams. It has all the material in its 15 chapters a reader needs to get a basic idea of Theosophical principles and march ahead if he wishes to do so.

*6. What in your opinion is the biggest challenge the TS Adyar (as an organization) is facing at the moment?*

The biggest challenge is to make Universal Brotherhood a reality among those members who do not live Theosophy. Presently very few study seriously, they contemplate little and practice seldom. So the challenge for TS Adyar (as an organization) is to



understand this issue seriously and devise innovative methods to inspire members to live Theosophy. It means first finding sufficient competent people who will teach others rigorously.

*7. Is there anything you would wish for the future of the Theosophical Movement?*

I wish more members would become serious students of Theosophy, contemplate deeply on its concepts and principles and practice them in daily life.

## Marijn Gijsbers



*1. What's your name, where are you from and how long have you been a member of the TS?*

My name is Marijn Gijsbers, Marino for those who are not Dutch. I am from the Netherlands and I have been a member of the TS Point Loma for about 10 years.

*2. Are you active in your Lodge/Section and if so, what do you do?*

I am a member of the Dutch board of the TS Point Loma organisation and work with a group of fellow members preparing and presenting conferences, both nationally and internationally.



3. *How did you first learn about Theosophy or come in contact with the Society?*

Someone who worked with a client asked if I knew the story of Plato's cave. After an interesting conversation he invited me to a public lecture. The gentleman who introduced the speaker started by emphasizing to the audience the importance of not just believing what would be presented, but to investigate it's truth in our own lives. That was such a different tone from anything I had seen or heard before that it really got my attention. I took the two courses that the TS Point Loma offers, 'think differently' and 'wisdom of life' to continue that investigation. It did not take long to realise that I had 'come home', so I joined.

4. *What does Theosophy mean to you?*

Theosophy means many things to me. First and foremost it means purpose. Since adolescence I was fascinated by the world behind the 'phenomena'. I never seemed to be able to find answers to my many questions that satisfied my intuition or seemed logical, until I found Theosophy (and Theosophy found me). Always fond of travelling and discovering new horizons I was quite aware of the suffering of mankind. It had taken quite a few years to figure out why we as mankind often screw up so badly. When I came to what I thought were the root causes, the obvious next question was: how can we improve, how can we grow, together? The answers I also found in Theosophy. Theosophy changed and refined my perspective on many things, thus becoming more and more a way of life.

5. *What is your favourite Theosophical book and why?*

Until I read this question I never thought of any one particular book to favour over others ... I guess now *The Voice of Silence*

by H.P. Blavatsky and many of the writings of G. De Purucker are the ones I most often consult and find tremendously inspiring.

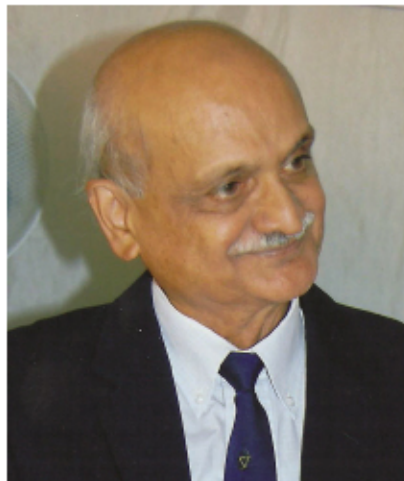
6. *What in your opinion is the biggest challenge the TS Adyar (as an organization) is facing at the moment?*

Since I am not a member of TS Adyar, let me answer that question in general. The challenge in my perspective for members of all Theosophical organizations is threefold: 1) to go beyond the mental exercise and make Theosophy a living power by constantly finding ways to apply it to our everyday lives; 2) to keep the windows to the world open and find ways to share this incredible wealth of wisdom, in language, examples and solutions that people understand, for mankind badly needs it; 3) to realise that our similarities are so much greater than our differences. So many Theosophical organizations serving the same noble cause. Can we find a way to work together, acknowledging, even embracing our differences as a living example of Brotherhood? The efforts set forward by the International Theosophical Conferences, this website and quite a few others are promising.

7. *Is there anything you would wish for the future of the Theosophical Movement?*

For it to remain a beacon of light in troubled times, which is only possible if its' torch bearers keep the link unbroken.

# Navin B. Shah



*1. What's your name, where are you from and how long have you been a member of the TS?*

My name is Navin B. Shah. I am from Nairobi, Kenya and I have been a member of the TS for 47 years (since 1966)

*2. Are you active in your Lodge/Section and if so, what do you do?*

Yes, I am active at both, Lodge and Section level. I am the current Hon. Treasurer of Nairobi Lodge which is the premier lodge in East & Central Africa. I was previously Lodge Chairman. I am the current General Secretary of our Section. I

have held this position since 2007, 6 years now. I play an active role in all aspects of TS admin work as well as the Theosophical side, including editing of newsletters, souvenir issues, etc.

*3. How did your first learn about Theosophy or come in contact with the Society?*

If my memory serves me right, I first came in touch with Theosophy in 1959 when I was in the final class at High School in Mombasa at the Kenya Coast, where I was born and did my primary and secondary schooling, when I went to listen to the well-known Indian Theosophist, Rohit Mehta. I had no further contact with Theosophy till 1966 when our Section's Convention was being held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. I had not been to Dar-es-Salaam before and thought it would be good to travel with the Nairobi delegates and see Dar-es-Salaam. It was at this Convention that I became a member of the T.S. Incidentally, it was also in Dar-es-Salaam, in 2007, that I was elected to the position of General Secretary of our Section.

*4. What does Theosophy mean to you?*

Theosophy means a lot to me. It has given me insights into real purpose of our coming into this world, about evolution and relationships. I have become more tolerant and understanding of people as to why they behave as they do. Theosophy, to cut it short, means the whole world to me and I count myself as a very lucky person to have found Theosophy. But then let me stop here, as you know, one can write a whole chapter on this question.

*5. What is your favourite Theosophical book and why?*

That, in a way, is a tough question, but still I shall try and name one book that I like to read often (I carry the small book in my car

also) - so my favourite Theosophical book is: *At the Feet of the Master* by J. Krishnamurti (called Alcyone). The book has set out all that we need to follow in this life to live/conduct our life such that it will take us on the Right Path. It has set out 4 virtues that we should develop for a virtuous life: Discrimination, Desirelessness, Good Conduct and Love.

*6. What in your opinion is the biggest challenge the TS Adyar (as an organization) is facing at the moment?*

TS at Adyar has its own admin and related problems - due to perhaps not being willing to adapt to changing times and also not open to well-meant suggestions for change. Several suggestions have been made to the International President to change certain clauses of the International T.S. Constitution to make them 'user friendly', remove ambiguities to make interpretations of election rules easy to follow - and there is also the lack of open dialogue by the President with those who raise issues. It is like shutting out all communication. These are my views and I do understand that I am coming from my limited understanding. But then this is where we, the lesser knowing people in the scheme of things, look for frank guidance for a clearer way forward. In short, there is a NEED FOR CHANGE with changing times. Nomination of Additional Members should be open to all the General Secretaries rather than that being just a prerogative of the President.

*7. Is there anything you would wish for the future of the Theosophical Movement?*

Yes, certainly. I would wish, for the future of the Theosophical Movement, that it spreads to every home and people understand its main pillars of Karma, Reincarnation, Evolution and also learn to respect all religions and know one's own religion/belief

better, so that we have a better world to live in - devoid of unnecessary wars in the name of religion and control of resources in the hands of a few.





# Sandy Ravelli



*1. What's your name, where are you from and how long have you been a member of the TS?*

My name is Sandy Ravelli from the NZ Section and I have been a member of the Theosophical Society since 1995.

*2. Are you active in your Lodge/Section and if so, what do you do?*

At present I am actively involved as the National President of the NZ Section.

*3. How did your first learn about Theosophy or come in contact with the Society?*

I was studying Maori Spirituality for a Social Work degree. One day whilst visiting my mother I read in a newspaper about a lecture to be given on Maori Spirituality by one of our treasured and long term members of the NZ Section. Whilst I did not gain any further insights on the topic I did become excited about meeting people who had a curiosity about life and were happy to talk about topics and beliefs that mirrored my own inner thoughts.

*4. What does Theosophy mean to you?*

It is a way of life. It gives me a framework that helps me see the connectors between all of life and life's systems.

*5. What is your favorite Theosophical book and why?*

I really like Geoffrey Barborka's book *The Divine Plan*. Whilst I enjoy HPB's expression of the wisdom traditions through *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* and the depth they offer, Barborka writes closer to today's language clarifying what H. P. B. wrote in parable or analogy. To me there are many books that explore individual aspects of life's wisdom but the books I have mentioned allow me to delve as deeply as I wish for those complex answers to life's mysteries.

*6. What in your opinion is the biggest challenge the TS Adyar (as an organization) is facing at the moment?*

The biggest challenge to me is that as an organization we need to stand tall in the Wisdom Tradition. At the same time we need to move forward with the clarification that comes from our evolutionary development of individual and collective oneness. The challenge is to continue to further explore the connection of the written word to our own inner and outer natures.



I believe we need to avoid any dilution of the teachings through our own laziness in exploring the emotional, mental and spiritual levels of our being in relation to the depth of the teachings that have been offered. Mind through memory has been the hallmark of development throughout many Theosophical centers, whereas we need to focus on the engagement of the whole of the person. We should avoid any sense of elitism 'that we are the grandmother of the new age' whatever that may mean. As an organization, there seems to be a crystallization which prevents us recognizing that there are many scientific and psychological discoveries that relate to Theosophy, discovered by people who are not members of the organization.

*7. Is there anything you would wish for the future of the Theosophical Movement?*

I would like to see the Theosophical Movement stand tall in being and sharing those truths that are the basis of Theosophy. I would wish that we would acknowledge the other holders of the incredibly helpful and wonderful information of the wisdom tradition. That will allow us to avoid any sense of separateness and come closer to fulfilling our first object to form a nucleus of brotherhood.



When you learn how to die, you learn how to live.

**Morrie Schwartz**

(American educator and writer)

# Members of the Vasanta Youth Lodge, Adyar - India



*The Vasanta Youth Lodge after a meeting*

## Responses from **Neena Swatika**

President - Vasanta Youth Lodge

Member - Vasanta Round Table

*1. What's your name, where are you from and how long have you been a member of the TS?*

My name is Neena Swatika (24) and I am from Chennai. I have been a member of The Theosophical Society since 2010.

*2. How did your first learn about Theosophy or come in contact with the Society?*

I came to know about the Society from my father Mr. Rajalingha

Rajah. Subsequently I got to know more about the Society during my internship at the Adyar Library and Research Centre, The Theosophical Society, Adyar.

*3. What does Theosophy mean to you?*

To me Theosophy is an ocean of knowledge which has helped me find answers to questions unanswered in life.

*4. What is your favourite Theosophical book and why?*

Among the Theosophical books I have read, *The Masters and The Path* by C. W. Leadbeater is my favourite book because this was the book that gave me a new insight to Theosophy. It helped me understand the underlying principles that govern life.



*After the Round Table Ceremony*

### Responses from **Harish Sridhar**

Treasurer & Past President - Vasanta Youth Lodge

Past Secretary - Vasanta Round Table

*1. What's your name, where are you from and how long have you been a member of the TS?*

My name is Harish Sridhar (25). I live in Adyar, Chennai. I have been a member of the Theosophical Society ('TS') since 2009.

*2. How did your first learn about Theosophy or come in contact with the Society?*

I came to know about the TS through my school mate - Ms Upasika Maithreya; who is a 6th generation Theosophist.

*3. What does Theosophy mean to you?*

To me, Theosophy is the answer to all the questions around us. It is larger than religion as it encompasses every aspect of mankind.

*4. What is your favourite Theosophical book and why?*

My favourite book is *At the feet of the Master*. The language is lucid and the book though not voluminous, gives you everything you need to follow for betterment of not just yourself but the entire world around you.

### Responses from **Chaganti Upasika Maithreya**

Committee Member & Past President - Vasanta Youth Lodge

Past Leading Knight - Vasanta Round Table

*1. What's your name, where are you from and how long have you been a member of the TS?*

My name is Chaganti Upasika Maithreya (25). I live in Chennai

and I have been a member of The Theosophical Society for nearly 15 years now.

*2. How did your first learn about Theosophy or come in contact with the Society?*

I have had the good fortune of being born in a family of Theosophists. My sister and I are sixth generation members of The Theosophical Society. We have grown up with the value systems that form the crux of Theosophical teachings.

*3. What does Theosophy mean to you?*

Theosophy in its literal sense is 'Divine Wisdom'. To me Theosophy is like a beacon of light. It has helped me at every stage in my life. The values I have learnt have helped me become a better person. It has taught me to be true to myself and to others. It has made me contemplate on the reason of my existence and on how I could lead a meaningful life. It has also taught me to be tolerant and understanding. The choices we make define who we are and I think the Theosophical teachings have always guided me in these choices. It has also taught me not to judge people by the choices they make.

*4. What is your favourite Theosophical book and why?*

My favourite book is *At the Feet of the Master* by Alcyone. It is the first book I read and the teachings have stayed with me. The learning from the book is like a spiral staircase. At every stage in life it reveals new insights to the seeker. It reinstates the simple values that guide our lives. It is also a book that I have given to a number of friends who have now become members of The Theosophical Society.



### Responses from **Chaganti Aditi Maithreya**

Vice President - Vasanta Youth Lodge

Leading Knight - Vasanta Round Table

*1. What's your name, where are you from and how long have you been a member of the TS?*

My name is Chaganti Aditi Maithreya. I am 19 years old and I am doing my Bachelor of Science degree in Visual Communication from M.O.P. Vaishnav College for Women, Chennai. I have been a member for close to a decade now.

*2. How did your first learn about Theosophy or come in contact with the Society?*

My family is one of the oldest in The Theosophical Society. I am a 6th generation member of The Theosophical Society. I am blessed to be born into this wonderful organisation and to be able to grow in it since my childhood. I first learnt about Theosophy from my father. As a child he explained the meaning of that word in simple terms to a 4 year old, the time I joined the International Order of the Round Table.

*3. What does Theosophy mean to you?*

Theosophy is a kind of system which helps me understand the meaning behind the beliefs of various religions and many unexplained phenomena in nature and powers of men. Through its books, it creates an innate morality in me that helps me in various instances of life.

*4. What is your favourite Theosophical book and why?*

My favourite theosophical books are *At the Feet of the Master* and *The Light of Asia*. The former for its simple yet meaningful teachings for everyday life. It seems to convey a different

meaning every time it is read. The latter because of the beauty with which it has been written. The story and teachings of the Lord Buddha go beyond the words in the book and go on to create vivid images.

### Responses from **Arvind Srikanthan**

Committee Member & Past Vice President - Vasanta Youth Lodge

Member - Vasanta Round Table

*1. What's your name, where are you from and how long have you been a member of the TS?*

I am Arvind Srikanthan (23) from India and I have been a member for 3 years.

*2. How did your first learn about Theosophy or come in contact with the Society?*

Through a friend of mine who was a member in the society and introduced me.

*3. What does Theosophy mean to you?*

A way of life which tries to accept that science and religion can be intertwined.

*4. What is your favourite Theosophical book and why?*

*At the Feet of the Master*, the first book I read and the book has had a profound impact on the way I look at things.

### Responses from **Yugesh R.V.**

Member - Vasanta Youth Lodge

Member - Vasanta Round Table

*1. What's your name, where are you from and how long have you been a member of the TS?*



Yugesh RV (22), I'm from Delhi and I have been a member of the TS for 6 months now.

*2. How did your first learn about Theosophy or come in contact with the Society?*

I came to know about the TS through my mother.

*3. What does Theosophy mean to you?*

To me, Theosophy means a deep spiritual knowledge of humanity and the universe, and how we can use this knowledge for our (personal as well as mankind as a whole) spiritual growth and benefit.

*4. What is your favourite Theosophical book and why?*

I haven't been able to read any books on Theosophy yet. I had read a bit of *The Key To Theosophy* (simplified version) to familiarise myself with Theosophy and it was not hard to follow.

#### Responses from **Hariharan**

Auditor & Past Vice President - Vasanta Youth Lodge

Past Leading Knight - Vasanta Round Table

*1. What's your name, where are you from and how long have you been a member of the TS?*

My name is Hariharan (25). I am from Chennai. I have been a member of The Theosophical Society for many years now.

*2. How did your first learn about Theosophy or come in contact with the Society?*

My dad works here so that's how I came into contact with the Society.

*3. What does Theosophy mean to you?*

Theosophy: how to enjoy your life without causing harm to others.

*4. What is your favourite Theosophical book and why?*

My favorite book is *At the Feet of the Master ...* Teaches how to handle and carry ourselves in any situation.

#### Responses from **Rahul Sridhar**

Committee Member - Vasanta Youth Lodge

Secretary - Vasanta Round Table

*1. What's your name, where are you from and how long have you been a member of the TS?*

I'm Rahul Sridhar (18), from Chennai. I have been associated with the Theosophical Society for the past 3 years.

*2. How did your first learn about Theosophy or come in contact with the Society?*

The school I went to was a stone's throw away from the TS headquarters. I passed by it for years wondering what it was, who the people living inside were and what it would take to be allowed inside. To my surprise, it was my brother, through an acquaintance, who had introduced to me to the world of Theosophy.

*3. What does Theosophy mean to you?*

Theosophy, to me, is a way of life. It helps me understand the laws of the universe better. By that, I'm not suggesting that everyone has to put in hours studying books to imbibe the wisdom Theosophy has to offer. We learn to be compassionate and we learn to be tolerant. It makes us understand our own religion better. I remember reading someone who said,

"Theosophy has made me a better Muslim".

4. *What is your favourite Theosophical book and why?*

My favorite Theosophical book is *At the Feet of The Master* by J. Krishnamurti (Alcyone). This book treats on the four qualifications for enlightenment: Discrimination, Desirelessness, Good Conduct and Love. The size of the book may fool you, but there's meaning in every word. It isn't religion specific, it's easy on the words for anyone seeking enlightenment and it can be carried around easily.

Note: We decided to answer the following questions as a group.

5. *Are you active in your Lodge/Section and if so, what do you do?*

We are a part of the Vasanta Youth Lodge at The Theosophical Society, Adyar and the Vasanta Round Table. We are also a part of World Care Way. The youth group carries out its



*Down to Earth - Eco-Workshop for schools conducted by World Care Way*

activities under the banners of the Vasanta Youth Lodge, the Vasanta Round Table and World Care Way.

- We have regular lodge meetings. We have experts lecturing us on various subjects in relation to Theosophy. We have group discussions and exhibitions as part of our meetings. We had an interesting display on August 12, 2012 on the life and teachings of Madame Blavatsky. We also meet informally for study classes.

The books we have studied include selected parts of *The Mahatmas Letters*, *The Key to Theosophy* and *At the Feet of the Master*. We have also had interaction on subjects including Karma, biographies of Theosophical leaders and Theosophy in the contemporary world.

We have actively collaborated with the Madras Theosophical Federation in organising an out-reach programme at the campus of the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras where 16 papers were presented by students from different colleges. The format was that of a 'debate through presentation'. The students were briefed about Theosophy and The Theosophical Society before the programme.

Some of the members have helped the author during the publishing of the two books - 'Theosophy, The Theosophical Society & its Founders' and the Theosophical play based on the Mahabharata, 'The Vision of Sanjaya' authored by Chaganti V. K. Maithreya and staged on January 1, 2013 for the delegates to the International Convention. We also subsequently had an interactive session on the symbology in this play.

- We involve ourselves in various social service activities. A list of our activities is given below.



## **CLOTH BAG PROJECT**

Plastic bags are a quick fix solution with long term negative consequences. To combat this, the youth started the 'Cloth Bag Project' in December 2009. The youth collect data on the negative impact of plastic bags and educates the public through presentations in schools, shops, etc. The group has designed cloth bags as an alternative to plastic bags that have now become an eco-fashion statement. The group has taken the assistance of underprivileged women to print motifs and messages on these bags. Thousands of bags have been sold.

The concept has been replicated by a youth group in Tanzania. A few other countries have shown interest in replicating this project.

## **PROMOTING ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS**

In 2004 the Asian tsunami struck our shores. The underprivileged women of the coastal community were victims of poverty, domestic problems and indebtedness. After the tsunami their problems were compounded.

The Theosophical Order of Service set up reverse osmosis plants along the coast & also set up two recycling projects for eco-friendly paper and other products.

The youth have been involved in:

1. Creating awareness about these eco-products both in India & abroad.
2. Arranging training programmes for school children, where these underprivileged women train them to make eco-friendly products at a domestic level.
3. Designing products that are popular.

4. Mentoring these women in simple business concepts.

The outcome has been a win-win situation in a few ways:-

1. Now many people are sensitized & they collect waste paper for recycling.
2. Tsunami affected women, salt pan workers and many others of the underprivileged sections have found a source of income.
3. The women who had been victims of circumstances have now become entrepreneurs and manage cooperative societies which provide self-employment and manufacture these products.

## **SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN**

In the wake of the notorious Delhi molestation & murder case, the youth carried out a signature campaign to request the President of India to declare December 29th as 'Woman's Honour Day' with a series of programmes to create awareness,



*Jumble Sale*

to spread the message of abstinence and to aim for the amelioration of women belonging to the weaker sections.

### **JUMBLE SALES**

The youth collect reusable items from the locality and conduct Jumble Sales a few times a year for the underprivileged. These sales are timed to coincide with the free multi-disciplinary Medical Camps that are held by the Theosophical Order of Service, Chennai.



*Visit to old age home*

### **CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL & MEDICAL CAUSES**

The youth helps in fund raising for any social or medical cause. The causes range from college fees to money for an accident victim.

The youth visit orphanages, old age homes, the Cancer institute and other such places on certain festival days. The members of the group contribute money and purchase gifts that will be of use to inmates. They spend time chatting with the inmates and also have sing-along sessions with them.



*Visit to Cancer Hospital*

### **DISASTER RELIEF**

The youth actively participate in relief operations at the time of disasters. They collect old clothes and medicines that are sent to the disaster hit areas.



The Theosophical Order of Service, Chennai also has two significant projects. Seeing Eyes for Everyone [SEE] is a project which has screened thousands of cases & provides total care that is free. The Safety Health & Energy [SHE] project is for providing overall health care. The youth have now shown interest in involving in these also.

*6. What in your opinion is the biggest challenge the TS Adyar (as an organization) is facing at the moment?*

We are finding it a challenge to reach out to young people in large numbers as there are many distractions. But we are happy to have made considerable progress in this area. We have used the social media to popularise Theosophy. We are also looking to have virtual interactions on the internet with members at mutually convenient timings. On many occasions members who have travelled to other places have spoken about Theosophy and interacted with like-minded organisations.

*7. Is there anything you would wish for the future of the Theosophical Movement?*

The Theosophical movement has been and always will be very close to our hearts. We hope that many young people join our movement and we are able to popularise a study of Theosophy. We hope that the youth from various branches of The Theosophical Society from across the globe are able to network more effectively and share ideas on subjects of mutual interest.



*We carry Theosophy in our hearts, so why don't you all come to Adyar this year for the International Convention? This is our youth corner there and when you come we will tell you more about our activities; we'll be waiting for you!*

# Good News

Good News from Ireland

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## Good News from Ireland

The Eighth All Ireland Convention was held on Saturday 25th May 2013, in a conference Room at Bewley's Hotel, Ballsbridge, Dublin.

As this was the occasion of Wesak, we felt there was a very special blessing over the whole proceedings. It was a great joy to once again welcome into our midst as Guest Speaker, dear Ali Ritsema from the Netherlands.



*Participants and in the middle Ali Ritsema (white blouse)*

Apart from a number of longer term members, also present were many new members and some local sympathisers. Before long, Ali had them spellbound, all as one listening and interacting on her chosen theme 'Karma', a Power-Point Presentation. Many thought she was magnificent and greatly appreciated and enjoyed the frequent interaction. Her long experience became obvious as she drew out the best in our members, even the



more reticent ones. This auspicious occasion proved informative, interesting and truly inspirational. It turned out that some of the newer members had studied TS texts before joining, so all reacted very favourably to this format and were totally understanding of and in tune with the apt quotations from such texts as *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Key to Theosophy*, *The Mahatma Letters*, the *Theosophical Glossary* and the *Collected Works* by H. P. B.

The Convention started with the Business Meeting following the lighting of Adyar incense and a candle, and a few moment's potent silence.

The election of Officers took place and the All Ireland Officers for the next term are: Organising Secretary, Marie Harkness who hails from the North of Ireland, Assistant Organising Secretary, Selina Scott who lives in Co. Tipperary in the South and Treasurer, Brian Houston who lives in Belfast, Northern Ireland. There followed refreshments and before the much awaited talk by Ali, the Organising Secretary read out the many messages of support received from the International President and countries across the globe. We deliberately picked this time for this exercise so that the non-members who joined us after the Business Meeting received a flavour of the international extent of the Society and the sense of oneness and much appreciated support received from other countries attuned to us at this time.

Following Ali's PowerPoint Presentation she was presented with an Irish memento and received a number of requests for her to return again soon.

Indeed it was a truly inspirational and blessed occasion.

## Good News from East & Central Africa



From the outgoing General Secretary M. Navin B. Shah, Theosophy Forward received the following message:

East & Central African Section of the T.S. held its 46th Convention from Friday 17 to Sunday 19 May 2013 at Nairobi Lodge. At this Convention, which is held every two years, a new General Secretary was elected for the next 2 years. Term of our Section is 2 years and there is no limit on number of terms one can stand for.



*Navin B. Shah*



*Ebrony Peteli*



*Narendra M. Shah*

I have served 3 two year terms - total 6 years. I did not want to continue as G.S. as it is right that, even though there is no limit, to have a change of guard.

The Assistant General Secretaries for Kenya, Mr. Narendra M. Shah (has been A.G.S. for 6 years and was my recording Secretary) and Mr. Harsukh Dubal for Tanzania (he has also been A.G.S. for 6 years) were proposed for the post of new General Secretary to replace me but they both declined this position.

The A.G.S. for Zambia, Mr. Ebrony Peteli, who has been Zambia A.G.S. for 2 years was then proposed for this position and he accepted this nomination and was elected as the Section G.S.

Welcome address by Mr. Narendra M. Shah, who is the chairman of the Nairobi lodge and also the Assistant General Secretary, Kenya Region:

It is indeed a matter of great pride and privilege for the Nairobi Lodge to host the 46th Convention of The Theosophical Society in East and Central Africa, during this historic year when we celebrate our 50th Anniversary of the opening of this simple but magnificent hall. It was the wisdom and foresight of the members of those pioneering years that they saw the need and usefulness of this grand facility. We bow down, with humility, to late Mr. Rattanji bhai H. Patel, who donated this plot, completely free of charge, to the Nairobi Lodge. The elders of that time, worked hard, collected the funds and managed to build this monument! It is mainly due to this facility of a regular meeting place, that Nairobi Lodge has been able to grow from strength to strength and become the premier lodge in East and Central Africa.

In fact it is mainly due to this facility that Nairobi Lodge has been able to score two firsts in the Theosophical World.

The first one is that Nairobi Lodge stands out as the first and only Lodge



in Africa, which has successfully hosted a World Congress of the International Theosophical Society, way back in 1982, when the 7th World Congress of the Theosophical Society was held in Nairobi.

The second one is that Nairobi Lodge is the only lodge in the whole Theosophical World which has succeeded in getting a new stamp issued by the postal authorities to mark the work done under the Theosophical Order of Service.

The world is passing through a very difficult period owing to ideological differences, political upheavals, economic downturns, material greed and environmental degradation. At such a time, it is paramount that we return to nature and understand the oneness of life.

Each one of us must play our parts, no matter how small, in the upliftment of mankind. In order to do this, we must understand who we are. We must realize that we are a spark of Divinity - a ray of the Logos, clothed life after life in different bodies and in different lands, in order to learn our lessons, pay our debts and finally to emerge as a perfect man - just as our elder Brothers, Jesus, Buddha, Mahavir, Mohammed, Guru Nanak and many more have done before us.

Many of the problems and challenges faced by mankind today can be solved or reduced if human beings live based on the principles of Integrity and moral values.

Laws of right behavior are part of the Universal Order. We must ask ourselves "How far have we wandered from Truth?" Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal". These laws of truth have been expounded in the Ten Commandments and much earlier in the Eightfold Path of Yoga. The first two steps being of Yama and Niyama, the principals of right behavior which we should embrace and shun the wrong behavior.

The education and social fabric has not provided for the children the proper development of their minds. The Moral fabric is in shreds, virtues of courtesy, patience, respect and other wholesome qualities are

lacking. Peer and environmental pressures, to get ahead at any cost to the detriment of self and others takes us on a wrong tangent.

Uprightness, honesty, humbleness all the basic foundations of integrity, which build one's character, are replaced by arrogance, visions and grandeur and a lifestyle filled with restless activity, leading to stress, depression and a horde of other negative effects.

Until and unless moral values and the backbone of integrity are not part of oneself, it is very unlikely that humanity will find peace, contentment and joy in life. INTEGRITY and MORAL VALUES must become our cornerstone if there is to be a better world to live in.

On behalf of the Nairobi Lodge, I welcome all the delegates to this 46th Convention and hope their stay in Nairobi will be comfortable and the deliberations fruitful.

[This welcome address was not edited by Theosophy Forward's editor; it is reproduced here as it was received]



*Group photo participants*



# Good News from Israel

The editor received this news from Abraham Oron and Rachel Almog, both active workers and facilitators for the Theosophical Society in Israel.



*The Sisters of Zion convent, Ein Karem*

## **Meditative Weekend**

At the Sisters of Zion convent, Ein Karem, Jerusalem  
Friday & Saturday, May 10 & 11 2013

In the beautiful and quiet surroundings of the convent and its gardens, we gathered during two days for a meditation retreat. Nearly 70 people, T.S. members and guests came together for inner listening and attunement to other participants and the surrounding nature. Amidst the beauty and serenity, the flowers, the fragrance of herbs, the sound of water flowing, and the birds singing, we sat quietly focusing on various themes or just moved around in walking meditation.

The central motto of the retreat's program was meditation, both guided and silent, accompanied by short discussions and sharing.

The program included activities in the meditation hall and the convent's gardens, having intervals with guitar and flute music



*Togetherness in the open air*

played by two of the members. In between the activities we enjoyed free time for relaxation, meeting with our friends.



*Sharing and short discussions*

Here are some of the topics:

- Meditation - to be simple and simply be
- Being present and open to colors, sounds, fragrances and the beauty of nature
- Looking within - making peace within our self
- Silent meditation and movement circle
- "Meditation comes to you only when your heart is open as a cloudless sky". Meditating in the spirit of Krishnamurti
- The power of the present moment
- "Walking in Peace" - Meditating in the spirit of the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh
- Buddhist meditation - "May all beings be happy"

During this weekend we felt blessed and inspired by a spirit of Peace, Harmony and Brotherhood.

The activities were led by Bracha Elron.

### **The project of the quiet room at schools**

Rachel Almog

Time, age and life experiences arouse me to ask more and more about the meaning of life. Why was I born, why do suffering and pain exist, and so on. I was agitated and my thoughts were spinning like a washing machine drum. I had no rest until I studied relaxation, meditation and visualization. One day I discovered that there is a lot of quietness in me. I asked myself again, what made me feel so quiet inside, my feelings and thoughts? Understanding that daily meditation was the reason, I felt really sorry for not knowing about it while I was

younger. I could have avoided so much suffering, distress and frustration.

I thought about those many wasted years. If only I had known about the bliss of meditation; just taking a break every day, stop for a minute this crazy race of materiality, of all what we think about as important in life: career, money, social-class, trying to keep our youth and weight, to please, to be important and wanted, and so on. So much energy and strength I have invested for nothing, because I felt a huge growing emptiness inside, and although nothing really changed in my life, meditation gave me a new point of view about it.

The quietness I have experienced in 20 minutes of meditation in my room, isolated from outside noise and hustle, made the change and created a miracle. Indeed, this living marvel is but the start of a long way before me, yet it is a miracle. So I asked myself, even if I did not have this quietness in me when I was young, whether children could enjoy this and how.

Being a teacher and used to educate my natural environment is the school. Although retired, I felt I should go back to school and teach kids the wisdom of meditation.





That is how the idea of "The Quiet Room" was born. I volunteered, and it's over 4 years that I have had a quiet room at school. Children come to the pleasant room I have created: curtains, a carpet from wall to wall, quiet background music, mattresses, cushions, board games and creative games.



All that the kids are asked to do in the room is to keep silent, play, talk and create silently. Talk kindly, no quarreling, no incitement, and no competitiveness. Just to calm down for one hour a week which is regrettably not enough. A child has no commitment in the quiet room. Nothing is demanded from him or her.

A child gets the chance to have a time-out from a "stormy" life, where adults and friends all the time demand that high social standards are accomplished without checking if the kid is ready

for that. Many children experience frustrations, hardships and problems and because of that often reach their adulthood being sore and sad.

I have asked myself: what is my goal? Can I achieve it? What do I want?

I want the world to be a more pleasant place to live in. I want us all to have a quieter mind. The kids that come to my quiet room do behave better to each other. They are more relaxed and quiet in the room. They enjoy attention and get it unconditionally. They feel pleased and repose and sometimes even take a nap. They are accepted with a big smile and a hug, and, according to their teachers, return to class satisfied and calmer.

I am thankful for that.



# Good News from Kiev, Ukraine

White Lotus day and seminar in Kiev



From T. Petrishevskaya the editor received the following:

In May the international vice-president of the Theosophical Society (Adyar) Mr. Mahendra Singhal visited Ukraine. On May 8, in the hall of the "Knowledge Society" in Kiev the celebration of White Lotus Day took place in which he took part. On the same day he answered questions from local Theosophists about his approach to Theosophy. On May 9 and 11, he conducted a seminar on "The Deeper aspects of life" which was attended by circa 50 participants from various cities in Ukraine and 5 participants from Russia. On May 12 Mr. Singhal left for Dnepropetrovsk where visited the memorial house of H.P. Blavatsky.

Mr. Singhal's encounter with participants of the seminar coincided with White Lotus Day. The declamation of touching passages from the Bhagavad-Gita, The Voice of the Silence and

The Light of Asia which became the landmarks on the spiritual Path, set the tone for the seminar and created a solemn atmosphere. The venue where the seminar took place was located in green suburb of Kiev. The vice-president's wife Mrs. Shashi Singhal also took part in the events. She is a 4th generation Theosophist, as her great-grandfather was a co-worker of Annie Besant. In spite of his high office Mr. Singhal and his wife proved to be sincere and open-hearted. Thanks to them an atmosphere of unity, oneness and mutual understanding was established.

The topic "The Deeper Aspects of Life" was taken after the title of the book by N. Sri Ram known in Theosophical circles as an internationalist, genuine idealist and a profound philosopher, who joined TS when he was 19. He was its international president as from 1953 for a period of 20 years. The book has not been translated into Russian yet.

The main written sources, on which the seminar's work was based, were *At the feet of the Master* by J. Krishnamurti, *Light on the Path* by M. Collins and *The Voice of the Silence* by H. P. Blavatsky which are well-known among Russian Theosophists. These books seem to many less important than *The Secret Doctrine*, but this seminar has proven that such an impression is not very correct. Mr. Singhal demonstrated that apparent simple passages contain very profound values and instructions; they are multifaceted, revealing instructions to all seekers of Truth. We became convinced once again that all which is profound can also be simple at the same time.

The seminar enabled all of us to touch upon the beauty and pithiness of the old Indian wisdom, to live and realize the simple but half-forgotten truths, to see the great in the small.

# Good News from Moscow

## Second All-Russian Theosophical Conference

On March 23 and 24, 2013 the Second All-Russian Theosophical conference took place in Moscow. The theme was Spiritual Human Regeneration and it was organized by the Theosophical Society.

This year's conference really became international. In addition to the delegations from several Russian cities, St. Petersburg, Smolensk, Ryazan, Nizhny Novgorod, Vladivostok and others, as well as from Ukraine and Belarus, the conference was also attended by Jan Jelle Keppler, General Secretary of the Belgian section of the Theosophical Society, and Monique Ver Poorten who is the secretary of the Leuven Lodge in Belgium. Attendance was about 100 people, coming from 12 cities and 5 countries.



*Jan Jelle Keppler and Monique Ver Poorten from Belgium*

In total 17 talks were delivered. The subject of Human Regeneration was dealt with in several aspects:

The first group of talks touched the topic directly. Speeches were made by Jan Jelle Keppler, Svitlana Gavrilenko, chairman of the TS council in Ukraine, Tatiana Semionova, head of the center "Human Development" and Tatiana Petrishchevskaya, TS - Moscow.



*Tatiana Petrishchevskaya on the chair*

In the second group of talks the role of Masters in Human Regeneration was shown by the poet Leonid Volodarsky and Tatiana Kadochkina, FTS - Moscow.

The third group dealt with a cosmic theme with an astrological



aspect. Presentations were given by Petr Smirnov, FTS - Moscow, Vadim Mikhailov, President of the Environmental Education Center "Light", Elena Ivanova, esoteric psychologist, astrologer, healer and educationist.

The fourth group elucidated the historical aspect of the theme with talks by Nikolai Panchishin, Theosophical group "Helios", Minsk, Belarus, Ruslan Nizamiev, president of the foundation "Neopalimaya Kupina," i.e. The Burning Bush, and Nikolai Nechayev of that same foundation.

The fifth group presented talks on the subject of ethics. Speeches were given by Elena Logayeva, researcher of H.P.B's life and work, Tatiana Bobyliova, FTS - Moscow, Luebov Mezinova, FTS - Nizhny Novgorod, and Larisa Popova, MD - Kiev branch of the TS.

In addition, the possible areas of social cooperation were explored in the talks of Luebov Krivich, FTS - Moscow, and N. Panchishin, Minsk. New areas of work were looked at by Dennis and Svetlana Orlovs, St.Petersburg.

The objective of discussions at the round tables was to discuss how to put theory into practice and integrate Theosophy in one's daily life.

A new feature was the round table discussion led by Peter Smirnov, which was especially organized to attract the attention of young people and those who are new to the Theosophical movement.

The following artistic groups took part in the conference: the Indian classical dance group "Saraswati", directed by Natalia Obolensky, Bharata-Natyam style, performed scenes from the Indian epic "Ramayana". The vocal group "Awakening" from



*Round table discussion without a table*

Smolensk performed songs on spirituality and the group "Light", conducted by Vadim Mikhailov, performed music with singing bowls.



*Indian classical dance group Saraswati*





*Singing bowls*

Another valuable contribution to the success of the conference was the distribution of books and magazines. The publishing houses Prologue, Neopalimaya Kupina and Amrita-Rus, as well as the magazines Delphis and Vestnik Teosofii took part in this. A proposal to publish H. P. Blavatsky's Collected Writings in Russian was made.

The walls of the foyer were decorated by watercolor paintings by A.D. Armand, Doctor of Geographical Sciences, artist, F.T.S.

At the end of the first day of the conference, participants took a bus tour through Moscow.

The conference has shown how dynamic the subject of Human Regeneration is nowadays. Communication and a collective

search for the solutions brought all partakers closer to each other.

The organizing committee is grateful to all those who morally and materially contributed to the realization of this successful conference.



*Making books available*

# Good News from ITC

Start spreading the news!

Theosophy Forward supports the initiatives of International Theosophy Conferences (ITC) wholeheartedly. The 14th annual meeting of ITC held at Olcott in Wheaton in August 2011, made it clear that Theosophists from all traditions can respectfully meet on a shared platform. This year, the 15th annual meeting will be held in the city where it all started in 1875, New York.

The dates are: August 8 -11, 2013 and the event's title is: **"How to Awaken Compassion? H. P. Blavatsky and the Eternal Secret Doctrine."**

Organizers have booked a superb location: the Bohemian National Hall, right in the heart of the Big Apple and participants are expected from all corners of the globe.



*The Bohemian National Hall at night*



*Staircase inside the Bohemian National Hall*



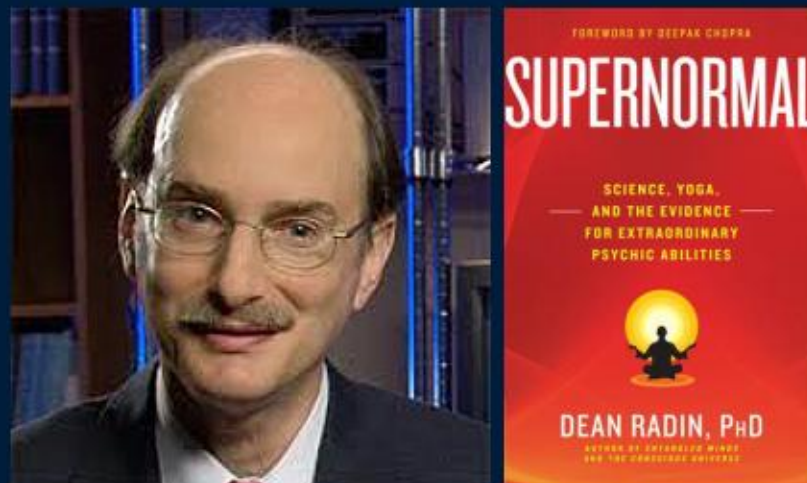


*Grand meeting hall*

There will be a number of workshops while renowned and well-versed speakers with a solid Theosophical background will explore the Conference theme. Among them are: Ramu Sudarsan, Jan Jelle Keppler, Ken Small, Ed Abdill, Michael Gomes, Joop Smits, Ananya Rajan, Ruth Richards, April Hejka-Ekins and also ULT students.

Among the special guest speakers is Dean Radin Ph.D., who will speak on his new book: *Supernormal: Science, yoga and the evidence for extraordinary psychic abilities*.

For detailed information regarding the venue, hotels, apartment rentals, and the registration form click here: ....



*Dean Radin and the cover of his latest book*

Seating is limited, book NOW!

The purposes of ITC (International Theosophy Conferences, Inc.) include support for the Three Objects as expressed in the writings of H.P. Blavatsky; and the fostering of intercommunication among all Theosophical traditions.

Photos of the venue by courtesy of Pavel Semarak



# Good News from the I.S.I.S. Foundation

From: Herman C. Vermeulen - Blavatsky House, The Hague, The Netherlands



We would like to present to you our first digital edition of the magazine Lucifer, *the messenger of Light* in English.

Click here: ....

In 1979 some members of the Dutch section of The Theosophical Society Point Loma Blavatskyhouse took the initiative to start a Theosophical magazine. We did not want to write about 'technical' Theosophy. Primarily, we wanted to show the practical value of Theosophy.

The Dutch Lucifer has been in print for thirty-four years now. We have published articles about almost every aspect of society. The range of subjects varies from social problems, to drugs and

medicine, to scientific issues like climate change and evolution. Sometimes we have also tried to explain less understood aspects of Theosophy.

## Lucifer in English

In the last few years a better communication and understanding has arisen between all kinds of theosophists and theosophical organizations in different countries. We were happy to be able to participate in international congresses. Often we were asked about our vision on many issues and about our working methods. We had already published articles in our Dutch Lucifer about many of those ideas.

So, naturally we started to produce an English written Lucifer, in a language that is not only understood in English speaking countries, but all over the world.

Here we present our first digital edition of Lucifer, *the messenger of Light* in English. It contains articles about Râja and Hatha Yoga, Emanation, Addiction and attachments, the Bodhisattva vow, Organ donation and - to get to know us better - we have also published an article about the Point Loma tradition in this issue.

We present the digital version of Lucifer for free. We will publish this magazine a couple of times per year. Are you interested to receive following editions of Lucifer, please subscribe for free by sending an e-mail to: [lucifer.red@isis-foundation.org](mailto:lucifer.red@isis-foundation.org).

Do you know of others who might be interested in this magazine, please feel free to forward this e-mail.

On behalf of the editors and all co-workers I hope you will enjoy reading Lucifer.

# Good News from New Zealand

*Finding a Different Way, Part 2 - Pamela Zane Keys*



*Pamela Zane Keys*

## Introduction

Pamela Zane Keys is learning via a mystic path leading through an early and valuable Christian experience to special interests in the Sufi Way, Gnosticism and Buddhism. Theosophy, she says, 'made sense' of her life. Pamela's formal studies included Education, Psychology and Theology. She has also travelled widely.

Pamela's teaching has spanned more than 50 years and she enjoys editing *TheoSophia*, the magazine of the Theosophical Society in New Zealand.

In *Finding a Different Way, Part 1*, Pamela wrote, "While we may think of the latent powers referred to in the Third Object of the Theosophical Society as extraordinary and spectacular, I have recently realized that they may also be small and outwardly indiscernible yet inwardly life changing." In Part 2, she talks of the healing effects of making inner harmony her first priority.

## Part 2

When I was told I had breast cancer in October 2010, I was shocked because somehow I thought I had 'done that' twenty years earlier when I had a partial mastectomy and radiation treatment. I seldom thought about it except to have a yearly mammogram. Now I wondered if I'd somehow missed the Life Lesson the first time round and decided to approach this scary experience in a different way - though I had no idea what that would be - as though it was a second chance.

The new cancer was apparently different from the first as it was estrogen dependent, aggressive and grade three. This time the whole breast had to go and there could be no more radiation on my damaged skin. I would need a drug to counter estrogen.

That same week I learned of the breast cancer, my dear friend Jan Weston died of ovarian cancer after months of suffering which I had witnessed firsthand, as I saw her most days. Her ability and willingness to reach out to others and her courage - which was devoid of stoicism - was later to inspire me in my own struggles. But right then, the load of grief of her going on top of my own bad news seemed impossible to bear. I wondered if this could be where a different way could help. That night I woke and knew what I needed to do and prayerfully began reviewing my life and forgiving past hurts and wrongs - my own included.

When I woke next morning, I was relieved to discover the sad burden had lightened and I felt able to cope.

Recovery time after the mastectomy went well at first and I was happy to be able to continue normal life including favorite extras such as helping with my granddaughters' homework and editing a quarterly magazine. On Boxing Day, when my husband, Warwick, left for a long-planned visit to Egypt and Turkey with his family, I could assure him I was well, able to visit friends and family around New Zealand and looked forward to some quiet times at home before his return in February.

The love and goodwill of friends near and far expressed through our being together, or phone calls, emails and cards were then and are still, gifts I treasure. As well as attending church with friends I was blessed with special prayers and received two words for the New Year: Rest and Trust. All this strengthened me and reminded me that I was part of a community of love and faith. Back home I prayed in church a trusting: "Only say the word and I shall be healed." Gradually grief and sadness over the loss of a good friend as well as a breast became less painful. I had a new chance at life and saw the world around me with fresh eyes and renewed appreciation.

In spite of this, soon after Warwick's return in February, I became more and more conscious of battling depression, brain fog, sleeplessness, restlessness, tiredness, nausea, head and body aches, constant thirst, extreme hot flushes, palpitations and more. We wondered if I was having a delayed reaction to a time of huge challenges and grief. Perhaps I felt safe enough to react this way now that he was home. I tried to pull myself out of the mire I felt I was in - unsuccessfully. Because I tend to be a 'human doing' rather than a human being, I swung into action -

between long rests on my bed. Not exactly resting and trusting. I still had those lessons to learn.

First on the plan was visiting the optician whom I knew to be very thorough and who I thought may be able to see if I had a brain tumour. He was (I got new glasses for working on my lap top) and I didn't (he showed me photos of the back of my very healthy eyeballs). Through the internet I researched retreat centres here and in Australia where cancer patients are taught meditation, healthy eating, exercise and attitudinal changes. However, I eventually agreed with Warwick, that I had most of that information and excellent support already. It was more a matter of applying it.

Books by celebrated Australian 'terminal' cancer overcomer and cancer retreat centre leader, Ian Gawler: You Can Conquer Cancer and Peace of Mind, Richard Beliveau and Denis Gingras' Foods that Fight Cancer, David Servan-Schreiber's Anti-Cancer: A new way of life and Wayne W. Dyer's The Power of Intention became my focus. I tried to will myself back to feeling well. I gave 'thanks for all things', as St Paul advised, which often lifted my spirits but the sense that every day I was wading through treacle was getting stronger and meant I often felt like just staying in bed and giving up. Although all this effort didn't seem to be working, the information gained was valuable in the long term. Meanwhile, I continued to feel worse each day and I had constant thoughts of death and dying. Worst of all for me, I had to stop being with my granddaughters after school three days a week and request it be just one day, though I still hoped they would visit on weekends but with no sleepovers - for the duration. I was concerned it could be forever but hoped it wasn't as this felt like a huge loss to me.



Finally, someone suggested I should research the side effects of the well-known anti-cancer drug I'd been taking since November. That was a turning point for me. There in front of me was a list of what I was experiencing. I read scholarly reports, alternatively based views and chat room comments. It was a relief to see I was not alone. I stopped the drug that day and by the end of the week the brain fog and depression had markedly reduced.

Total wellness took longer but I felt strong enough to travel to Auckland to stay with friends, catch up with family and attend a women's health seminar given by the internationally renowned teacher and healer Mother Maya Tiwari. I had heard her story and it seemed a small miracle to me that she was here in New Zealand.

When she was young and working in the New York fashion industry, Maya had several surgeries for cancer and finally reached a point where the cancer was declared terminal. She took herself off to a cabin in the woods and spent time meditating and preparing for death. However, she didn't die; she was healed and went back to her native India to become a devout student of Ayurveda and Vedanta. Since then she has written many books and taught all over the world.

Her seminar was exactly what I needed at that time. Maya reminded me: I am not the mind, I am awareness - pointing out that we are generally too attached to our thoughts, feelings and bodies and that what we bring into awareness, can be made wonderfully whole. She also invited us to take her Ahimsa Vow. Ahimsa is a way of non-violence toward ourselves as well as others. I vowed: I make inner harmony my first priority. As I said those words I saw with great clarity and without regret how very

differently my whole life could have gone had I been able to have that understanding earlier but was also aware that I had just received a marvelous gift for the rest of my life. I felt whole and healed right then.

Reading Maya's books caused me to modify my diet further though I suspect that the peaceful mind created by the Ahimsa Vow and three times daily meditation sessions are even more important. Keeping the vow means being more mindful of everything - what I see, hear, think, say, do, eat and drink - in a calm and positive way. I have slowed down and allowed myself space and time. In this space I have found joy.

Joy needs the time and space that I had seldom allowed through my busy crammed-full life as a 'human doing'. Joy, it seems, lives in the life gaps - along with peace.

Although I am still not a great meditator, with the mind constantly wandering and having to be brought back, the exercises of meditating and being mindful of inner harmony are having a calming, strengthening effect while the daily practice of prayer and weekly religious observance bring their own rewards. Rest and trust figure in all this learning that leads to wholeness.

When I visited the surgeon four weeks after stopping the medication, he put me on another drug which worked in a different way, asking that I trial it for a month. I barely lasted two weeks. The old symptoms returned with the added shock of sharp shooting chest pains. After a couple of days and nights of these, I stopped the second medication and revisited the surgeon who has agreed to no more drugs.

During the drug experimentation, before rediscovering the feeling of being well, I thought far more than I would normally

about life and death - my own and others'. A dream where I was getting dressed into my wedding outfit, recurred. As I prepared, with peaceful feelings of happiness and expectation, I became aware I was actually dressing for my own funeral. While these were not nightmares, they seemed important dreams of extreme clarity that made me think. I wondered if they meant I would die soon. Eventually I dreamt the same dream twice in one night but with a twist, I was invited to choose: a) the funeral or b) Life. I chose Life.

Around that time I was sleeping during the day and just before I woke, my mother, who had died nine years before, visited me. She was looking her happiest and best. She smiled down at me as she stood by my bed and I felt her love. I knew then that all misunderstandings and difficulties she and I may have had in the past were as nothing. Only happy memories remained. Only love connected us now. A special Life Lesson seemed complete. I woke full of joy. My mother's name was Joy.

I couldn't resist checking with Warwick in his study, over a cup of tea, if he thought these dreams meant I was about to die. We decided they didn't. They were part of a profound experience that has brought me to face more closely than I would have expected, some of the meaning of life and death and choices. It was all part of choosing a different way.

A big learning for me this time with breast cancer has been acknowledging my need for the caring support of others and allowing myself to feel that support. Last time, two decades ago, I acted independently and remained solitary and secretive about it, getting through the entire experience in denial. This time, by reaching out as my friend Jan did, I experience a oneness with those I care for, as they reach back to me. This is part of that

different way I looked for. It is teaching me about life choices, about rest and trust and just how blessed I am.

Remembering St Paul again:

"All things work together to good to those who love God and are called to His plan."

And we're all called to that plan, so let us give thanks.

This article was preciously published in the on-line magazine of the Theosophical Order of Service, International.

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# Theosophical Encyclopedia

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Huna

Curuppumullage Jinarajadasa

## Theosophy in Canada

In November, 1884, William Q. JUDGE, then vice president of the Theosophical Society, returned to New York after visiting the Society's headquarters in India. On the transatlantic crossing, one of his fellow passengers was a young Irishman, Albert E. S. Smythe (1861-1947) on his way to America as a prospective migrant. Their shipboard meeting was to have an important and lasting influence on both Smythe and the Theosophical movement in Canada: so inspired was the young man with what he heard from Judge that he devoted the rest of his life to the cause. Smythe did not settle down immediately, but, after early career experiments on both sides of the Atlantic in 1890, he eventually established himself in Toronto, Canada.



*A.E.S. Smythe*



Smythe introduced Theosophy to that city and, within a few months, enrolled a sufficient number of members to apply for a branch charter of the Theosophical Society. These pioneers included the first woman to practice as a medical doctor in Canada and her daughter, who was the first woman to graduate from a Canadian medical school. A young English immigrant Algernon BLACKWOOD, who later became a successful occult novelist, was among these pioneers of Theosophy in Canada. Together they formed the Toronto Theosophical Society in 1891. Its charter bears the signature of Helena P. BLAVATSKY and was one of the last to be signed by her before her death. This branch is still active.



*Algernon Blackwood*

Although the TS gradually attracted members in the larger Canadian cities - branches were formed in Montreal and Victoria in 1892 - expansion was slow. Canada's small population was scattered and vast areas of the young country were still virtual wilderness.

At this time Canadian members and branches came under the jurisdiction of the American Section of the Theosophical Society. At the 1895 Convention in Boston, the lone Canadian delegate voted with the majority to form the Theosophical Society in America as an autonomous body, under the Presidency of William Q. Judge. In the event, a small number of members in Toronto elected to remain with the original American Section. These were allowed to retain the original branch charter, while those who supported the change thereupon established a parallel Lodge, the two groups apparently co-existing fairly amicably.

The death of William Q. Judge in 1896 was followed by a turbulent period for the remainder of the decade, which ended with three Theosophical organizations in North America. E. T. Hargrove became president of the Judge group, but in 1898 the majority accepted the leadership of Katherine TINGLEY, who merged her society with a new organization known as "Universal Brotherhood." Initially, most of the Canadian members followed her. In 1899, however, discontent led to a number of resignations and expulsions, Smythe's among them. Stability gradually returned to Theosophy in Canada but the next decade was one of slow growth. In 1903 the two branches in Toronto reunited and membership increased.

During this period, Adyar's Canadian branches and members continued to be part of the American Section, and not until 1911 were there the requisite number of branches to form a separate Canadian Section. However, although various overtures to this effect came from the American headquarters, there was little enthusiasm for independence at this time.



*Katherine Tingley*

Eventually two incidents caused concern among Canadian members. The first was an attempt by the Theosophical Society in America to influence the British government to release international president Annie BESANT from internment in World War I. This did not meet with approval by the Canadians who had fought on the side of the Allies from the beginning of the war, which America was yet to join. The second incident was a proposed revision to the bylaws of the American Section, which it was felt would give the President what amounted to autocratic powers. This was not appreciated by most Canadian members, who were loud in their protests and separation was actively pursued.

Finally, on November 12, 1919, the Theosophical Society in Canada was officially chartered as a national Section of the international body, and Smythe was the first General Secretary.

Difficulties experienced in the transfer of records from the American Section initially added to the inevitable growing pains, but on the whole the new organization was off to a promising start.

One of the new Section's priorities was to publish a monthly journal. So it came about as early as March 1920 that the first number of *The Canadian Theosophist* came off the press. From the first issue until his death in 1947, it was edited by Smythe and quickly built up a strong subscriber base both in Canada and around the world.

At this time, Smythe edited one of Toronto's daily newspapers and applied traditional journalistic standards to the new magazine. To this end he allowed criticism of the Society to be expressed. Editorials, articles, and letters to the editor protested that the international Society had moved away from its original program as well as espoused various fringe activities.

Teachings promoted by the magazine were mostly restricted to HPB, W. Q. Judge, and a few others. There was much criticism of Adyar leaders and their policies. This might have passed without consequence, but the associated implicit and explicit criticism of President Annie Besant and Charles W. Leadbeater was offensive to some members in Canada who took the view that Annie Besant, C.W. Leadbeater, and others were expanding the work by presenting the teachings in a simpler form understandable by the general public. It was felt that in this they succeeded magnificently, attracting large numbers of members around the world. Concern about the Section's magazine's strong bias in its criticisms towards the new teachings, calling them "watered-down theosophy" and criticizing some of the clairvoyant investigations being done, led some to appeal to Mrs.

Besant to allow them to leave the Section but remain in the Society with special status. In 1923 she granted their request. They went on to form the Canadian Federation, thus making Canada the only country in the world having two distinct national Societies within the international body.

And so it was that in Canada, for a long time, there were two groups of lodges and members, namely the Canadian Section TS and the Canadian Federation TS, with the origin of these two bodies going back to the first quarter of the twentieth century. Normally the Theosophical Society does not approve of the existence of separate bodies in the same place, since its aim is to unite all people in a single nucleus of universal brotherhood. Only when there are "serious and weighty reasons" are lodges or individuals permitted to leave the concerned National Society and become directly attached to headquarters. There were such reasons to allow a Federation independent of the Section in Canada.

For seventy years, the two organizations, each in its own way, continued to serve Theosophy in Canada. From time to time, attempts were made towards reunification, but the will was never present on both sides at the same time. Nevertheless, the two organizations went about their activities separately but in relative harmony, nor was the status quo seriously altered when on January 1, 1992, the General Council of the Theosophical Society disassociated the Theosophical Society in Canada from its ranks, leaving the Canadian Federation as the sole official unit of the TS (Adyar) for Canada.

This turn of events occurred because in the 1980s the Canadian Section was being perceived as continuing to act somewhat like an independent organization, not fully cooperating and

communicating with Adyar. Then in 1991, the Canadian Section (the TS in Canada) took steps to alter the picture further. Registered in 1976 as a corporation under the laws governing business corporations in Canada, some changes were made in its bylaws that were incompatible with the rules and regulations of the international Society. Though the then president John Coats objected, and the Section was given ample time to consider their decision, the situation did not change. Later, several amendments were again made to the Section's by-laws eliminating all references to the international Society.

After discussion of the various aspects of the question, the General Council (the governing body) of the international Society decided on January 1, 1992, that since all references to the parent Society had been removed from its bylaws, the TS in Canada could no longer be considered as part of the international Society. Adyar then had no recourse but to advise the Section of this.

On April 29, 1999, the Canadian Federation was issued a certificate by the international headquarters at Adyar, confirming it to be a regional association. Two years later, on August 2, 2001, the Canadian Federation was incorporated as the Canadian Theosophical Association under the Canada Corporations Act. Three former presidents of the Canadian Federation, namely George Duguay, Hugh Jackson, and Elizabeth Smith were the chief applicants and became the first directors of the newly incorporated association.

The Canadian Theosophical Association (CTA) is now recognized as the official representative within Canada of the Theosophical Society at Adyar. It is an integral and indivisible part of the Theosophical Society, but is constituted as an



autonomous body composed of members of lodges, study centers and members-at-large. Lodges and study centers are fully autonomous bodies within the Canadian Theosophical Association, provided however, that no lodge or study center may take any action that is contrary to the purposes of the Theosophical Society and must abide by the rules and regulations of the international Society and the Canadian Theosophical Association.

Those who join the CTA do so knowing that the Canadian association follows the international rules of the Society and allows the members freedom to study Theosophy with an open-minded holistic approach. Freedom of choice has not dampened serious study of Theosophy. Several groups across Canada conduct studies of such classics as *The Secret Doctrine* and the *Mahatma Letters*.

Theosophy in Canada has also been enriched with contributions from other organizations. The United Lodge of Theosophists has been active in various cities over many years. There have also been a number of Canadian students of Theosophy affiliated with the Point Loma Theosophical Society. La Societe Theosophique du Quebec, associated with the Canadian Federation TS, served for many years the French-speaking Canadians in Quebec.

Among the independent Canadian Theosophical organizations is the HPB LIBRARY. Founded in 1917 by Alice L. CLEATHER, a member of Blavatsky's Inner Group, the library includes many volumes from her personal collection. In addition to a public lending service, the HPB Library keeps in print the Peking edition of *The Voice of the Silence*, the 1925 publication that was encouraged by the Tashi Lama, who also penned for it a brief

exhortation, "The Path of Liberation." The Library also publishes Cleather's three books championing Madame Blavatsky. A catalogue of the HPB Library books available for loan is presently featured on the Website of the Canadian Theosophical Association.

The Blavatsky Institute of Canada was founded in 1924 for the purpose of reissuing out-of-print Theosophical literature. More recently, the Edmonton Theosophical Society of Alberta has in place an active ongoing program to reprint early Theosophical journals in quality bindings. In British Columbia, the Victoria Theosophical Society maintains friendly, informal ties with Adyar through the Western District of the TS in America.

Magazine publishing has always been an important part of Theosophical activity in Canada. In 1894, Smythe had begun editing and publishing the first Canadian Theosophical journal, *The Lamp*. This independent monthly in a 16-page format attracted subscribers from all over America and a few in Europe, but most of its 5,000 print run was distributed by volunteers free to Toronto households. Publication was suspended in 1896, when the editor spent much of his time crisscrossing America lecturing to Theosophical groups. Resettling in Toronto, Smythe resuscitated his magazine. Still independent, it now aspired to an international reputation with Daniel N. Dunlop, former editor of *The Irish Theosophist*, then living in London, named as coeditor. Regrettably, this venture lasted only a year, and Canada thereafter remained without a Theosophical journal for the next 20 years, after which the previously mentioned *Canadian Theosophist* filled the void.

The Canadian Federation had been represented with a series of Theosophical journals, starting in 1929 with the *Federation*

*Quarterly*. This was succeeded in similar format but with different titles: *Federation News* (1975) and *Theosophy* (1981). Also, for several years the Federation was well represented in the French language with the quarterly *Ouverture*, established in 1983. The current journal published by the Canadian Theosophical Association, is called *The Light Bearer*, a bilingual magazine with articles in English and French.

Thomas G. Davis, Lorraine A. Christensen, Hugh B. Jackson, and Elizabeth M. Smith

## Theosophy in The Netherlands

On July 9, 1892, a national Theosophical Society was founded in Netherlands. Its name was *De Nederlandsche Theosophische Vereeniging* (NTV). This was not the first association that undertook Theosophical activities in the Netherlands; there had been earlier activities.

**Early Theosophical Activities:** One of the first Theosophical Lodges in the Netherlands was called the "Lodge Post Nubila Lux" (light after darkness). It was founded on June 27, 1881. One of its founders was Adelberth de Bourbon, grandson of the French King Louis XVI. This Lodge, which had joined the French Section, was established at The Hague. Among its members were several painters of the Hague School, a leading group of artists who worked from about 1870 to 1900. After the death of Adelberth in 1897, the Lodge became dormant.

In 1888, H. P. Blavatsky appointed Mrs. H. P. de Neufville as representative of the Esoteric School of the Theosophical Society in the Netherlands. De Neufville translated *The Voice of the Silence* into Dutch in 1892. It was the first Theosophical book that was translated entirely from English into Dutch. The Esoteric School was a part of the Theosophical Society in 1888, but became independent in 1892.

In 1890 a Lodge was founded in Amsterdam by Dr. L. L. Plantenga. This Lodge was also affiliated with the French

Section. Well-known Dutch Theosophists such as Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Fricke, and Mrs. P. C. Meuleman were members of this lodge.



*Mr. W. B. Fricke and  
Mrs. P.C. Meuleman*

**The Dutch-Belgian Branch:** On January 15, 1891, Mrs. H. P. de Neufville, Miss J. Stout, Miss C. Immerzeel, Mrs. P. C. Meuleman, and Messrs. W. B. Fricke and M. A. Opperman held a meeting at which they decided to apply for a Lodge charter from the Theosophical Society in London. On February 21, 1891, the charter was granted to the Dutch-Belgian Branch of the Theosophical Society, Amsterdam. In 1892 the Belgian group became independent, and the Dutch-Belgian Branch was disbanded on April 24, 1892.

**The Nederlandsche Theosophische Vereeniging (NTV):** The dissolution of the Dutch-Belgian Branch was followed by the founding of the Nederlandsche Theosophische Vereeniging (NTV) on July 9, 1892. Mrs. De Neufville was the Chairman and Mr. G. R. S. Mead was appointed General Secretary, a post he held until 1897.

**The Secession of 1895:** A part of the American section under the leadership of Mr. W. Q. Judge separated from the Theosophical Society (Adyar). Mr. Judge founded a new organization, called the Theosophical Society in America, in 1895. This had repercussions in the Netherlands, where a separation also resulted, creating the Theosofisch Genootschap, with its own legal status.

**The Vahana Lodge:** On November 19, 1896, Johannes Ludovicus Lauweriks, an art teacher, designer, and architect (1864-1932), and the architect Charles Peter Cornelis de Bazel (1869-1923), together with several other people, founded the Vahana Lodge (in the Rules and Regulations of the Theosophical Society in the Netherlands also called the Wahana Loge). De Bazel and Lauweriks joined the NTV on May 31, 1894. The Vahana Lodge is one of the founding organizations of the Theosophische Vereeniging Nederlandsche Afdeling (TVNA). The members of this Lodge were mainly architects and artisans, painters joining one of the other regular lodges. This Lodge also had a school that taught drawing, art criticism, and aesthetics. Its members made their designs on an abstract geometrical basis.

**The Theosophische Vereeniging, Nederlandsche Afdeling (TVNA):** A Theosophical Center was founded in The Hague on February 17, 1897. On March 30, 1897, this center was granted a Lodge Charter. Then six other lodges, countrywide, followed. On May 14, 1897, the Theosophische Vereeniging Nederlandsche Afdeling (TVNA) could be established. It was incorporated by Royal Decree on November 24, 1899. The NTV continued its legal existence until December 31, 1921. The headquarters of the TVNA were situated at Amsteldijk 76 in Amsterdam.



**Piet Mondrian:** The painter Pieter Cornelis Mondrian became a member of the TVNA in 1909, and probably remained a member until his death on February 1, 1944. It has been suggested that Mondriaan was influenced by Theosophy only in his early period. However, we now know that Theosophical philosophy was of great importance throughout Mondrian's entire life and work.

**Stichting Proklos (Proklos Foundation):** On May 30, 1956, the Stichting Proklos was established. The object of this foundation is to promote education and training in the spirit of Theosophy. Since 1958, the Foundation has sponsored a chair at the University of Leiden, with a professor who teaches Metaphysics in the Spirit of Theosophy.

**The Theosofische Vereniging in Nederland (TVN):** The name of the TVNA was changed to Theosofische Vereniging in Nederland (TVN) on February 14, 1979. Its headquarters are now located at Tolstraat 154, in Amsterdam, not far from the former location on the Amsteldijk. Currently the TVN has nine Lodges and seven Centers. It also has its own bookstore and publishing house. Four times a year it publishes the periodical *Theosophia*, a magazine first appeared in 1899; it is currently in its 114th year.

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"Piet Mondriaan" in Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piet\\_Mondrian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piet_Mondrian)  
Rules and Regulations of the TVN (Theosophical Society in the Netherlands).

Rules and Regulations of the Hague Lodge.

*Theosophia: Tijdschrift van de Theosofische Vereniging in Nederland*,  
March 2013.

Hans van Aurich, vice chairman of the TVN



*Headquarters of the TVN in Amsterdam*

# Theosophy in Scotland

In 1884, Henry S. OLCOTT, then President of the Theosophical Society visited Scotland. This led to the formation in Edinburgh, on July 17, 1884, of the first lodge in Scotland. This was named "The Scottish Lodge." Factionalism in the early 1890's resulted in the Scottish Lodge severing its connection with Headquarters which resulted in its charter being withdrawn. A new lodge was chartered in 1893 named "Edinburgh Lodge". This was followed by the formation of a lodge in Glasgow which received its charter in 1900.

During these early years, the Scottish lodges were part of the English Section. The Scottish Section was formed in 1910 and the following year the premises at 28 Great King Street, Edinburgh were purchased for the purpose of being used as our National Headquarters. This building, in beautiful Georgian Edinburgh remains as our headquarters to this day. In the same year the Scottish Section held its first National Convention in these newly acquired premises with the then President of the TS, Annie BESANT, as our guest speaker.

By 1951 the Scottish Section comprised 20 lodges. However in the years following World War II Scotland witnessed a general decline in theosophical activity. In 1983 the charter was withdrawn and the General Secretary was dismissed by the General Council. In 1994 a Presidential Representative was appointed.

There are currently three active lodges in Scotland in 2012- Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow. The Theosophical Society in Scotland is presently striving to play its part in the global shift in consciousness which is presently occurring as we undergo the transition between the Piscean Age and the Aquarian Age. This has been greatly assisted by many of our members undertaking the Diploma in Theosophy which was introduced in 2011 by the English Section.

It is the opinion of the Scottish Section that by providing answers to the origins and the spiritual purpose of humanity and by promoting the concept of universal brotherhood, based upon the great theosophical truth that all of aspects of creation are part of the one divine life, we are playing our part in achieving that which the society's founders, and the great beings who inspired their work, intended.

# Theosophy in Sweden

The Theosophical Society (TS) in Scandinavia started in Sweden in 1889. In the year before, the famous Swedish author Viktor Rydberg who had taken an interest in Helena P. BLAVATSKY's *The Secret Doctrine*, called together a group of Swedes, among them two ladies who had visited Blavatsky in London; the purpose was to start theosophical activity in Sweden. A Swedish group, attached to the British section, was formed on February 10, 1889. Dr. Gustaf Zander became the first chairman. The other members of the board were baron Victor Pfeiff, Vice-Chairman, A. F. Akerberg, Ph.D., Secretary, Amelie Cederschlöld, Corresponding Secretary, and Emil Zander, B.A. Treasurer.

The main activity during the first years was concentrated in Stockholm with public lectures, group meetings, discussions and answers to criticism from the press and others, the publication of books and booklets in Swedish, among them *The Key to Theosophy*, *The Secret Doctrine* (offered in instalments published successively), *The Voice of the Silence* by Blavatsky, *Light on the Path* by Mabel COLLINS, and *Man's Seven Principles* by Annie BESANT. A library with some 500 titles was gathered and was open to the public. In 1891, a theosophical journal, *Teosofisk Tidskrift*, started and has been continuously published since then, sometimes under other names and under certain periods in cooperation with one or more of the other Scandinavian countries.

In 1891, then President Henry OLCOTT visited Stockholm. He gave several lectures in public halls, and paid a visit to the King, Oscar II, on the King's own invitation. Annie Besant visited Sweden in 1894, gave lectures and also was received by the King.

In the period up to 1895, twelve local associations had been formed in different parts of the country, and the membership then comprised 353 members; a third of them being women, which was remarkable for its time. In addition to Swedish members, some 90 members in the neighbouring Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Norway and Finland had joined.

On July 7, 1895, the Swedish section (directly under Headquarters at Adyar) was formed with Gustaf Zander as General Secretary. It was then called The Scandinavian Section of the T.S, because, as mentioned above, it included members in the other Scandinavian countries. Gradually, independent sections were formed in those countries and in 1918 the name of The Theosophical Society in Sweden was adopted.

The following year, i.e., 1896, saw the unrest in the Swedish Theosophical Society that followed the split of the international Theosophical Society caused by the so called "Judge crisis." In the end, 321 members stayed in the Swedish Theosophical Society with navy commissary A. Zettersten as General Secretary. A separate group was formed of those who chose to join the "Judge society," but meeting locality and the library were kept in common for the two organisations for some time. One thing that has put Sweden on the theosophical world map may be mentioned here. Katherine TINGLEY, who took over the leadership of the society formed by W. JUDGE, established a "second Point Loma" on the island of Visingsö in lake Vättern, a



center which lasted for some time after her death in 1926. After the unrest of 1896 in the Swedish society, the following one and a half decades was a period of continuous growth of theosophical activity in Sweden. Many lodges were formed and membership increased. G. R. S. MEAD was guest speaker at the annual convention of 1897. President Olcott visited Sweden again in 1900 and Annie Besant came back in 1898 as well as in 1904 and 1907, this last time as President. On these occasions especially, Besant made long lecture tours in different parts of Sweden, which strongly contributed to membership growth. Swedish theosophical lecturers visited places around the country. The Swedish countess Constance WACHTMEISTER, known for being a close friend of Blavatsky, gave strong support to the Swedish Theosophical Society during the first decade of the new century. By 1912 there were 26 lodges and the membership was 508, including some unattached members.

Around this time there were several attacks on theosophy in Sweden, and replies were offered by theosophists. One of the most active defenders was chief engineer Arvid Knös, who became General Secretary in 1913. This change of leadership occurred after his predecessor, Gustaf Kinell, had left the Society and enrolled in the Antroposophical Society together with about a hundred members.

On Arvid Knös fell the main responsibility of arranging the European Congress, planned to take place that year in Stockholm. This European Congress in Stockholm of 1913 was reported to be well organized and successful. The main guest was Annie Besant and there was also a group of Russian members, notably Anna KAMENSKY.

Soon after this congress World War I began and had at first a moderating effect on the the work in the Section, but soon activities flourished, thanks to a group of young members. Some of the most active members of this group were Gunnar Floman, Hugo Fahicrantz, Sigfried Fjellander and Anna Pallin, all of them good speakers. This group, during periods, lived together in a so-called "colony"; they arranged summer activities and lecture tours in the country. One of them, Hugo Fahicrantz, a lawyer, was very active as General Secretary from 1923 to 1928. During this time the Swedish section was visited twice by George S. ARUNDALE and his wife Rukmini Devi, and for the 50th-year International Jubilee Convention eighteen Swedish members traveled to Adyar to participate in the celebrations. By 1929 there were 763 members and 33 lodges at 29 places. This was the highest number of members in the history of the Swedish section. A change came because of a well-known event.

In the summer of 1929 J. KRISHNAMURTI dissolved the Order of the Star in the East. Many members came to the conclusion that Krishnamurti frowned on the existence of organizations, and more than 100 of the members left the Section.

At the beginning of WW II, activities continued quietly. There were some visits from abroad, including Edwin Bolt and Adelaide Gardner from England. The then President George Arundale came for a visit in 1936 as well as Curuppumullage JINARAJADASA in 1935. On the occasion in 1939 of the 50-year Jubilee of the beginning of theosophy in Sweden, Sidney Ransom from England was the guest of honor. The membership at that time stood at about 400 and there were 24 lodges.

During the years of WW II, almost no theosophical contacts with other countries were possible (among others, Denmark and Norway were occupied by Germany). Activities within Sweden, however, were comparatively lively thanks to Theo Lilliefelt from Estonia who held the office of General Secretary.

In contrast to this period of isolation, a very fruitful cooperation between the Scandinavian countries started immediately after the war. The prime mover in this was the Danish woman, Birgitte Valvanne, who together with the Dane Jorgen Winde and some others invited all Scandinavian theosophists to summer gatherings in a place called Gammel Praestegaard in Denmark. That also opened contacts with other parts of the theosophical world, firstly with England through Josephine Ransom and others. This period of about fifteen years gave much inspiration to the theosophical activity in the Scandinavian countries.

The 1950's and 1960's brought to the Swedish Sections several contacts with other sections in Europe and other parts of the world. Among others, the following theosophical lecturers visited Sweden: the President N. SRI RAM (five visits) and Radha BURNIER (from India), Josephine and Sidney RANSOM, Madeleine and Leslie Leslie-Smith, Phoebe and Laurence BENDIT, John COATS, Geoffrey Farthing, and Mary Elmore (all from England), and Hugh Shearman (from N. Ireland). Coincidentally, and often every year, one or more Swedish members attended summer gatherings in different parts of Europe. Further, the Swedish Section hosted European gatherings arranged by the European Federation under its chairman J. van Dissel: in Mariefred in 1948 and in Uddevalla in 1951. During part of the 1960's and 1970's there was a lively group of young theosophists. In 1970, 12 lodges were active,

four of them new, while 8 lodges had been dissolved since 1950. The membership in 1970 was around 250.

Since the beginning of the 1970's, the theosophical work in the Section has carried much influence from the way N. Sri Ram presented theosophy, one important aspect being to look into oneself and connect what is seen with the destiny of every human being.

During the 1980's and 1990's, there have been regular activities in 5 lodges and the membership at the end of the century was around 175. Other annual activities, arranged by the Board of the Section, have been a summer gathering with a theosophical theme and two study weekends, one in the spring and one in the autumn, the venues being places in different parts of the country. The last international gathering of the century arranged by the Swedish Section was hosting the European Congress in 1995, on which occasion the Section celebrated its 100th year anniversary. The International President, Radha Burnier was the guest of honour and there were 170 theosophists attending the Congress, coming from all over Europe as well as other parts of the world. Noteworthy was the participation of a group from Russia and Ukraine, where theosophy restarted in 1990.

All through the years, there took place the translation and printing of theosophical books into Swedish, the keeping of a lending library open to the public, and also the selling of books. Since 1975 it has been possible to combine the Section headquarters with a bookshop having a street frontage, which has turned out to be a good point of contact with the public. During the last few years the Section has arranged a web site and an e-mail address, which has shown itself to be further points of contact.

Magazines:

*Teosofisk Tidskrift* 1894-1974

*Teosofi i Norden* 1975-1986

*Tidlös Visdom* 1987-1999

Some Swedish members have had offices in the Theosophical Society outside the Swedish section. Mrs. Barbro Melander was chairman of The European Federation from 1980 to 1989 and Curt Berg held the same office from 1989-1995. He continued as Treasurer in the Federation from 1995 to 1998. Curt Berg also was International Treasurer at Headquarters in Adyar 1987-1989 and has been an additional member of the General Council since then.

Ing-Britt Wiklund

## Huna

Huna is a Hawaiian word with a basic meaning of "secret" or "hard to see," used by some Hawaiians to refer to a body of traditional esoteric knowledge that is applied to the practical problems of life. Because the same word was also used by Max Freedom Long for his interpretation of Hawaiian esoteric lore, the term is surrounded by a certain amount of controversy among the Hawaiians themselves.

In addition, Hawaiian culture is composed of a number of ideas about life based on different family traditions that arrived in the islands from various parts of Polynesia at various times in history, which makes the study of Hawaiian culture and philosophy a very complex issue. The view of Huna described in this article derives from the tradition of the Kahiliokamoku family from the North Shore of the island of Kauai whose oral genealogy traces their existence as a family for more than two thousand years. According to this tradition, the essence of the philosophy that they call Huna is contained in seven Hawaiian key phrases and the principles derived from them.

"Hanau ka 'ike i ka mana'o" (= "the world is what you think it is"). This is a viewpoint that the world quite naturally responds to one's thoughts and feelings. The world is, in effect, an exact reflection of what one thinks it is, no more and no less. In Huna, physical reality is generated from beliefs, expectations, intentions, fears, emotions, and desires. The Huna practitioner



learns to change beliefs or shift mindsets at will in order to produce specific effects under various circumstances.

"Ana 'ole ke ao, ka po" (= "there are no limits"). This posits that there really are no limits, no actual separations between beings or things. The universe is infinite, and therefore everything is intimately connected. So it is possible to communicate with a stone, and through the stone with a fish in the ocean. It is also possible for one's consciousness to leave one's body to become one with the wind, and go back again without the slightest difficulty. Believing that there are no limits is a way of granting oneself tremendous freedom, but its corollary is total responsibility for one's actions and reactions.

"Makia ke ali'i, ehu ka ukali" (= "energy flows where attention goes"). This is a poetic way of saying that the concentration of attention on anything produces a concentration of energy connected with the object of focus, whether physical or not. The energy thus concentrated will have a creative effect according to the nature of the thoughts that accompany the attention. This effect is seen to be in operation in everything one does, from planning a project to healing an illness.

"He mana i ka manawa" (= "now is the moment of power"). The idea that power or the ability to act effectively exists only in the present moment is found in the Hawaiian language itself, which has no past or future tense. The Hawaiian sense of time is thus quite different from that of the typical modern individual. This view assumes that one cannot act in the past or the future and so there is no point to regrets and worries. It also assumes that from this present moment one can change both past and future. For this reason there are no long-term Hawaiian prophecies about future events. One can see the patterns of the future in

present events, and one can take action to change them.

"Ke aloha, ke alo, ke oha" (= "to love is to be happy with someone or something"). One of the most far-reaching ideas of Huna is that love is an act of expressing and sharing joy. Anger, fear, jealousy, hate are not seen as the opposite of love, but rather as its absence. Love is also thought to work better than anything else as a tool for effective action. For the Huna practitioner, love is a spiritual power that increases as judgment and criticism decrease. A truly loving intent is the most powerful spiritual force the world can know. Separation diminishes power, and love diminishes separation, thereby increasing power. The Huna practitioner expresses love as blessing, praise, appreciation, and gratitude. The concept of "aloha" as the expressing of love is a fundamental ideal of the entire Hawaiian culture.

"Mai ka po mai ka mana" (= "all power comes from within"). If the universe is infinite - and that is a basic assumption of the second key phrase - then the center and power of the universe is infinite also. Therefore, goes the argument, the center and power of the universe is within everything. That being so, there is no power outside of oneself that is greater than the power inside oneself. The fact that one may not be able to access that power at any given moment has to do with one's skill and confidence, and not with the existence of the power. A large part of the practice of Huna has to do with learning to make this power manifest within one's own life as well as in the lives of others. This whole idea is based on the Hawaiian concept of "mana." Although generally treated by Western anthropologists as a mysterious or symbolic force, the actual meaning of the word is "authority," in the sense of an ability to influence events

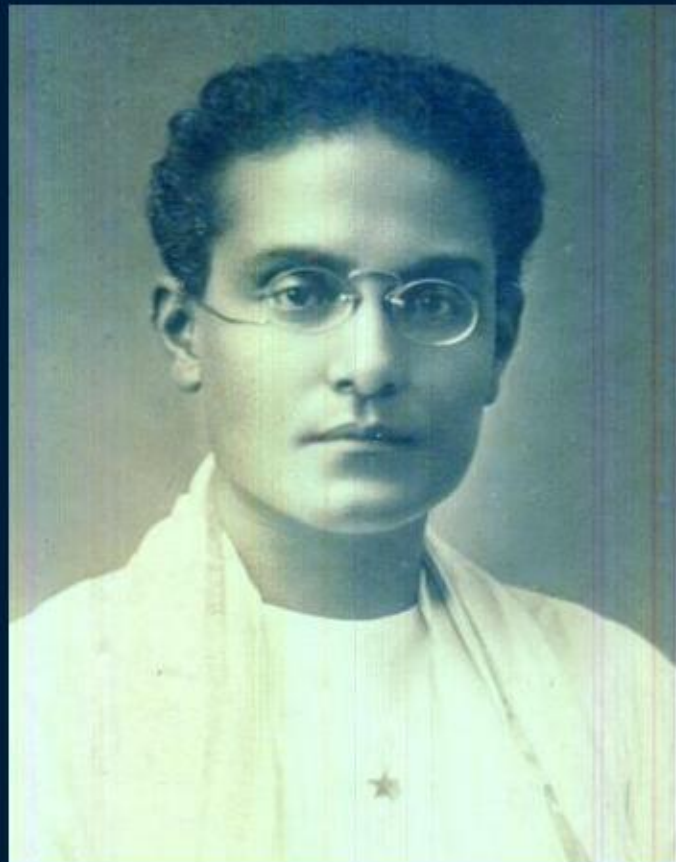
and behavior. Thus, in Hawaiian thinking, "mana" can derive from genealogy, skill, physical energy and strength, wealth, political position, responsibility, inner confidence, spiritual powers, or any source that confers authority and influence.

"Ana 'oia i ka hopena" (= "effectiveness is the measure of truth"). Being eminently practical as most traditional peoples are, the founders of this philosophy were concerned with practical truth. Absolute truth carried to its logical extreme comes out translated as "Everything is," because anything added to that makes it relative. Since this is hardly helpful at the human level, Huna practitioners measure truth by the question "Does it work?" If it does, then for all practical purposes at that moment it is true. The Huna practitioner therefore feels free to change mindsets and shift belief systems in order to achieve the best effects in a given situation. Is it true that one can speak with a stone and that it can answer back? Yes, if the answer is useful. Is it true that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west? Yes, if that helps us regulate our work and play. Cause and effect are not the same for the Huna practitioner as they are for the ordinary person in modern society. In this philosophy, beliefs shape experience, and experience shapes truth.

In its application, Huna is above all a healing path, a way of loving power and powerful love adapted to whatever time-period it is being used in. Because the principles are always operating, the same basic processes are used for healing body, mind, and personal as well as social circumstances. In their way of thinking, the Huna practitioners of today are using modern means to carry out an ancient service to humanity based on even more ancient observations on the nature of life.

Serge King





## Jinarajadasa, Curuppumullage

Jinarajadasa, Curuppumullage (1875-1953). Fourth President of the Theosophical Society, Jinarajadasa was born in Sri Lanka on December 16, 1875, one month after the Theosophical Society was founded. His parents were Buddhists and he was raised as such. In 1886 the prominent Theosophical worker Charles Leadbeater visited Sri Lanka in connection with Buddhist education there and met Jinarajadasa. At the age of thirteen he was taken to England by Leadbeater and after a period of private education went up to St. John's College, Cambridge, and in 1900 graduated in Sanskrit and Philology. After graduation, Jinarajadasa returned to Sri Lanka and accepted an appointment as vice principal of Ananda College (1900-01). He joined the Theosophical Society on March 14, 1903, and worked energetically for the Society in Sri Lanka until, at the request of Annie Besant, then international president of the Theosophical Society, he spent two years in Italy on Theosophical work, during which time he attended the University of Pavia for post-graduate study. After his time in Italy, he commenced a period of international lecturing for the Theosophical Society, which continued until the outbreak of war in 1939.

Jinarajadasa was married in 1916 to Dorothy M. Graham who was a prominent worker for the Theosophical Society, a Justice



of the Peace for Madras, and founded the Women's Indian Association in 1917.

Jinarajadasa held many positions in the Theosophical Society, including vice president, 1921-28; head of the Manor in Sydney, Australia, 1934; and director of the Adyar Library, 1930-32. In 1935 he became Outer Head of the Esoteric School of Theosophy.

In 1945 Jinarajadasa was nominated for the position of President of the Theosophical Society and was elected unopposed, taking office on February 17, 1946. The Adyar headquarters was then in a state of disrepair because it had been occupied by the English Royal Air Force during World War II and because of the years of neglect caused by the war.

Jinarajadasa drew around himself a committed band of workers, and under his leadership the estate rapidly regained its former beauty. In spite of poor health, he threw himself into the task of reconstructing the Theosophical Society in those countries that had suffered badly from the devastation of war, particularly in Europe. A special conference was held in Geneva, with nineteen sections represented, to aid the revival of the Lodges. In 1949 Jinarajadasa started the School of the Wisdom at the Adyar headquarters, both to offer members more advanced training in Theosophy and to fit them for work in their own districts.

Jinarajadasa was noted for his extensive traveling and lecturing on behalf of the Theosophical Society. His fluency in English, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese enabled him to promote Theosophy in many countries; and he was, undoubtedly, instrumental in bringing about the revival of Theosophical work after the end of World War II. He was that unusual combination: a mystic with a strong scientific

inclination. He was able to go to the essence of any thesis or theory and present it in clear, easily understood terms.

Throughout his life, he kept in close touch with current affairs and scientific discoveries, thus bringing to his Theosophical work a freshness of presentation that endeared him to his audiences.

By 1953, Jinarajadasa had completed his seven year term as president and, because of poor health, he declined to be re-nominated; and after installing his successor, N. Sri Ram, he embarked on what was to be his final journey. Although his health was the cause of much anxiety, he insisted on keeping a promise to visit America; and it was there that he passed out of this life on June 18, 1953. His body was cremated; and during the American presidency of John Algeo, a box of Jinarajadasa's ashes was discovered in a filing cabinet in the American headquarters at Olcott, Wheaton, Illinois. Some of those ashes were deposited in a new Garden of Remembrance at Olcott, and the rest were sent to Adyar, India, to be deposited there.

To those who knew him, Jinarajadasa was a complex personality who presented different facets of himself according to circumstances. At times he could be absorbed in some mystic realm of his own and at such times appear brusque yet at other times warm and sympathetic. He wrote a great deal, both prose and poetry, and in 1913 he was awarded the T. Subba Row Medal for his contribution to Theosophical literature.

Jinarajadasa's published works include: *Christ and Buddha*, 1908; *In His Name*, 1913; *Theosophy and Modern Thought*, 1914; *How We Remember Our Past Lives*, 1915; *The Nature of Mysticism*, 1917; *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, First Series, 1919; *First Principles of Theosophy*, 1921; *The Early*

*Teachings of the Masters*, 1923; *Did Madame Blavatsky Forge the Mahatma Letters?*, 1934; and *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Second Series, 1926 - all published by the Theosophical Publishing House in Madras, India.

FOR FURTHER READING:

Ransom, Josephine. *The Seventy-fifth Anniversary Book*.  
Ransom, Josephine. *A Short History of the Theosophical Society*.  
*Theosophist*, December 1975 (Jinarajadasa centenary number).

Philip Sydney Harris



You matter because you are you, and you matter to the end of your life. We will do all we can not only to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die.

**Cicely Saunders**

(Anglican nurse, social worker, physician and writer)

# Medley

Abortion and the Reincarnation of the Soul by James Colbert

Focus by Leo Babauta

Can Meditation Make You a More Compassionate Person?

Reflections on the meaning of life by P. Krishna

## Abortion and the Reincarnation of the Soul

James Colbert - USA

The place was a bank building. It had a meeting room on the second floor, a room of the kind some banks make available to nonprofit or spiritual groups for their meetings. The location was Laguna Beach, nesting along the California coast. The meeting was a Theosophical one. The topic was abortion. The tone was decidedly against abortion. Fifty people were in the audience. After the presentation, a young woman came up. I had given the talk.





The young woman's eyes were filled with tears. "Tell me about your tears," I carefully asked. She said that, after hearing the talk, she realized what a terrible act she had just committed. She said that recently she had an abortion. She now felt that she had killed another human being. Lamely, I said that the topic of abortion is very difficult. She quietly walked away.



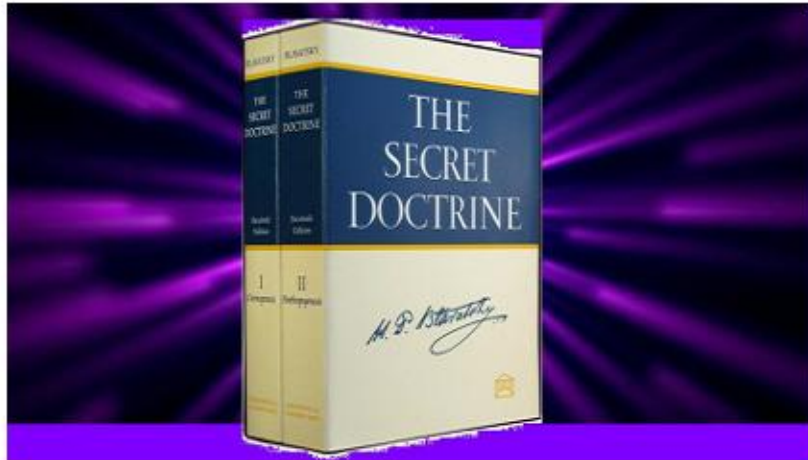
Over the years, this haunting moment has reappeared in my consciousness. Where was compassion? Understanding? For her, the father, and the lost child? Somehow I wanted to give the talk over again. Maybe do it better and bring understanding. This article is an attempt to do that. It is addressed to Marie, not her real name. I never knew her name.

**Marie**, here, will stand for all who are and who have faced abortion. It is intended to include both mothers and fathers.

**Dear Marie:** Somehow, in some way, I hope you can sense or hear these words as a way to learn about Theosophical ideas and abortion. I really did a bad job that first time in the bank building. I feel I have learned so much more. Maybe by writing this, I can offer something to others as well. I want to let you know about abortion, but I want to do it in a very special way. I have thought about you so much over the years; you led me to do research on the subject which may be important to share. I hope you do not mind my doing it this way, but you may be less alone, knowing the history and perhaps why abortion is so much different in these times than it was in earlier times - particularly in early Theosophical writing. I would also like to give information as to what you may want to read, and find resources that can help. I hope this is OK, so here goes.

Before diving right into the subject, it may be best you know something about the Theosophical perspective on who we truly are, as a way to get started. H. P. Blavatsky - who was primarily responsible for bringing the teachings to the world, quoted Carlyle as a way to express this: "There is but one temple in the universe, and that is the body of man. Nothing is holier than that high form ... We touch heaven when we lay our hand on a human body!" "This sounds like a mere flourish of rhetoric," adds Carlyle, "but it is not so. If well meditated, it will turn out to be a scientific fact, the expression ... of the actual truth of the thing. We are the miracle of miracles - the great inscrutable Mystery" (*Secret Doctrine* 1: 211-2).

Please do not get the idea from that quotation, Marie, that abortion is ruled out - or in - I just wanted you to know how



Theosophy views the human being as pivotal to all of life. What follows is meant to bring out the multiple meanings of this topic. Hopefully, there will be information about abortion that few are aware of but that can possibly lead to better decisions.

Now we can get started: If you were one of those without money and resources to bring a child into the world, you are not alone. That above all other reasons is probably why there are so many abortions in the world. The following statistics make the point. Throughout the world, the abortion rate is about 28 per 1000 women of childbearing age (15-44)<sup>1</sup>. In western Europe, where there is a fairly high standard of living, the abortion rate is 12 per 1000 women. In eastern Europe, where the standard is not as high, the rate is 43. In the United States, overall it is about 20; Hispanics 41; Blacks 60. Given the Black unemployment rate is over twice the national average this underscores income and abortion are related.

One could almost predict the number of abortions per year by knowing the economy. Reducing poverty is the best way to reduce abortions. An exception to that generalization may be in India, where there seems to be a preference for male over female babies. Nevertheless, the millions of dollars raised by anti-abortionists might be better spent on reducing poverty than by shaming women. The 1 percent of the world's population that controls 40 percent of the wealth ought to give it back. They need to know they cannot spend it in their crematoriums or in their graves. Besides, if reincarnation is true, in one's next life, there may be some balancing.<sup>2</sup>

**Marie**, you might also like to know that where there are the most restrictive laws against abortion the abortion rate is higher. You could call this counterintuitive. Where there are liberal abortion laws there is less abortion.<sup>3</sup> Also, where there is greater access to contraceptives, there are lower abortion rates. The last finding is really important for contraception. The "pill" has changed everything for both women and men.

There is now choice about pregnancy. There is some downside, but the choice is manageable. You have to get a prescription; it needs to be taken at the same time every day, with a week off during the four-week cycle; and the cost is about \$15 to \$50 a month. Do not minimize the importance of a visit to a woman's health center (such as Planned Parenthood in the United States).<sup>4</sup> Workers are there to help. I hope you have medical insurance. It is true that some politicians are trying to reduce such financial support. Read *Time Magazine*, (March 4, 2013): "40 Years Ago, Abortion-Rights Activists Won an Epic Victory with Roe V. Wade. They've Been Losing Ever Since," by Kate Pickert. You might find this online.



But, let's go back to the larger perspective on abortion. I know that I have not yet written about Theosophical ideas on abortion. They are coming, so hold on. We will first go over the view held by four of the world's great religions. Hopefully, we will show how this topic has always been with us, including the conflict.



We can start with **Hinduism**.<sup>5</sup> Traditional Hindu teachings condemn abortion because it is thought to violate the religion's teachings of nonviolence. "The general value system of Hinduism teaches that the correct course of action is the one that causes the least harm to those involved. Thus in the case where the mother's life is at risk, abortion is considered acceptable." ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism\\_and\\_abortion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism_and_abortion))

**Muslims** views on abortion are shaped by the hadith (a narrative record of the sayings or customs of Muhammad and his companions), as well as by the opinions of subsequent legal and religious scholars and commentators. In Islam, the fetus is believed to become a living soul after four months of gestation, and abortion after that point is generally viewed as impermissible.

**Tibetan Buddhists**<sup>7</sup> believe that a person who has had an abortion should be treated compassionately, and guided to atone for the negative act through appropriate good deeds and religious practices; these acts are aimed at improving the karmic outcome for both the mother and the aborted fetus. The Dalai Lama has said that abortion is "negative," but there are exceptions. He said, "I think abortion should be approved or disapproved according to each circumstance." ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism\\_and\\_abortion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism_and_abortion))

**Protestant Christians**<sup>8</sup> might be divided into two groups - conservative and liberal, who share certain beliefs. They disagree on the centrality of the Bible as the literal word of God. Conservative Protestants (both fundamentalists and evangelicals) regard the Bible as the unchanging word of God, the guidance for how one should live and worship. Since the 1970s, there has been a growing consensus that abortion has to



be actively opposed. Catholicism opposes all forms of abortion procedures whose direct purpose is to destroy an embryo, blastocyst, zygote or fetus, since it holds that "human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception." From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person.



Excommunication can be involved. Most Bible scholars agree there is nothing in the Bible regarding abortion. But it does state when life begins: Genesis 2:7<sup>9</sup> is clearest. The first human became a "living being" (*nephesh hayah*, "a living breath") when God blew into its nostrils, and it started to breathe. Human life begins when you start breathing. Different Christians have different interpretations.

### **Now, let us drop into some of the Theosophical writings.**

We can start with Blavatsky's one article on this subject: "Is Foeticide a Crime?"<sup>10</sup> But, you need to know the article has a significant historical context. We are starting with this, as many Theosophists, in our opinion, use this article - wrongly, to view Theosophy as anti-abortion no matter what the circumstances.

In this article, you will find Blavatsky strongly against foeticide and abortion. We will later show more writings from her which have greater dimension. We will get back to the article. Foeticide is the intentional killing of the foetus. The term now is mostly used legally. In the U.S. it was a capital offence until 1922.<sup>11</sup> It is hard for us to understand that in this time period foeticide had a level of acceptance in the 1800s. Remember, abortion as practiced in this earlier period was far more primitive. Anesthetics were not readily available. The abortions that were performed were expensive and the mother's life was truly in danger. Infanticide was not an option. Some of the active feminists of this era were writing articles against infanticide and against abortion. Included were Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Matilda Joslyn Gage<sup>12</sup> - who later became a Theosophist and, Blavatsky, a feminist to the core. To better understand this historical period, Roberta Wollons<sup>13</sup> can help us: "The era's notorious 'baby farms,' ostensibly places that

boarded infants for the state or for individual parents for profit alone, developed a reputation among Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children reformers as slaughterhouses for abandoned babies. There was nothing new about infanticide, directly or indirectly accomplished, as a method for getting rid of unwanted babies. Abortion was expensive in the late 1800s and increasingly illegal. For individuals with illegitimate babies, or for whom additional children presented crushing economic liabilities, the choices were stark and agonizing. Without insurance or relief programs, a number of parents chose to abandon their infants. Each year in large cities, authorities found hundreds of tiny bodies in culverts, cesspools, trash bins, and rivers. In some instances, mothers left babies in public places so people could find them. Foundling asylums tried to save deserted infants, but typically the mortality rates were frightening, sometimes ranging more than 90%. Baby farmers claimed to do better, but some of them simply killed and disposed of unwanted babies, either because customers did not pay the boarding fees or as a preferred business practice. By the late 1800s, sensational accounts about infanticide for profit and underground traffic in children and child abuse attracted widespread attention. While baby farms were both an out and a job for poor or working-class women, they were an affront to middle-class sentimentalized images of motherhood."

Society, you could say, has mistreated children throughout history. Few are aware that many of the indentured servants (who had to remove an indebtedness to be free) were children sent to work in the new world. Leftover children were "used" as free labor in foundling institutions with related high death rates.

Children's trains<sup>14</sup> were sent out West to work for those expanding the reach of the United States.



*Children's trains*

Physical, sexual, and emotional abuses of children were often the norm in our past. From the standpoint of some, infanticide was a preferred alternative. Put against this backdrop, today's abortion procedures may be more humane. You could speculate that the next generation's wars come from millions of abused children.

**Marie**, there have long been Theosophists involved in the struggle for rights. Annie Besant,<sup>15</sup> a principle driving force of the early Theosophical Society in India and other parts of the world, not only stood for the rights of women but for the rights of all.

Her stand for birth control in the late 1800s almost sent her to prison in England. There she and an associate published a book by the American birth control advocate Charles Knowlton. This scandal cost Besant custody of her children, as her husband



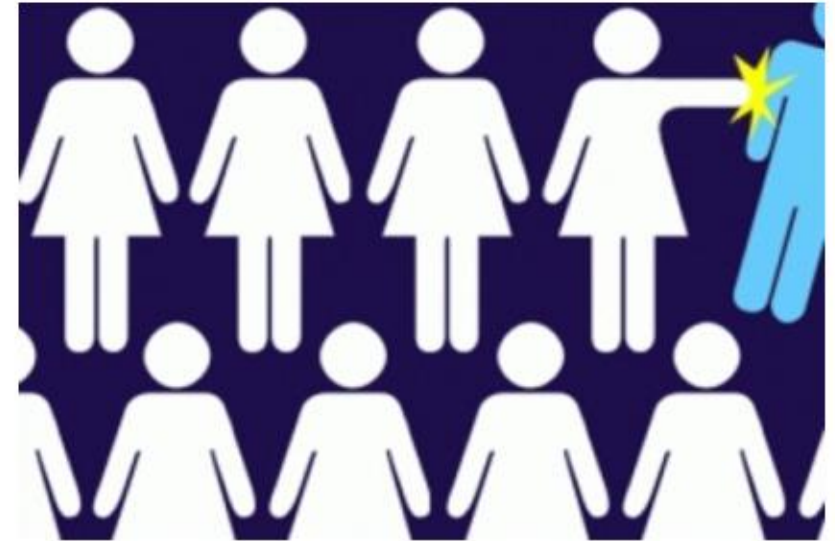


*Annie Besant*

persuaded the court she was unfit to look after them. Besant, in India, fought for Indian home rule and in 1917 became President of the India National Congress, a leading party in India today. She and several other Theosophists were imprisoned there for a short time.

**Marie**, it might be asked, where were men and where are men in the abortion conundrum? The cultural stereotype may hold true that a few men have done all they could to get out of financially supporting their child and have abandoned the mother

to fend on her own. But that is not likely to be true of the majority. If you review the literature on "Father's Rights," the lament is mostly along these lines:<sup>16</sup> "Currently, the law allows a woman to abort her child without the father's knowledge or consent. Fathers are completely excluded from the decision.



Why are fathers' rights being denied? For example, fathers who want to abort their child - but are prevented from doing so because the mother will not consent to an abortion - lack both the freedom to determine the fate of the child they co-create as well as the freedom to decide whether to financially support the child." To put it more plainly, they have no say whether to abort or not to abort, but are legally required to pay. While this theme



is found in many commentaries, it does not touch on a core issue for many men.

This clinician has had many male clients coming into psychotherapy dealing with depression following a decision for abortion by their lover saying the reason they were seeking treatment was, "She killed my baby, She killed my baby." Catherine Coyle<sup>17</sup> has made a pertinent comment: "Masculine identity may be damaged when men fail to keep those they love from harm. Role confusion or a sense of emasculation may occur if men are not allowed to act on their healthy instinct to protect or when they judge themselves to have failed as guardians. In an attempt to fulfill their perceived role as one of stoic support to their partners, men tend to contain their own emotions and put on a brave face. Ironically, men's efforts to be strong for their partners by repressing their own emotions may lead to complicated or unresolved grief or to clinical depression." In the Theosophical *Sunrise Magazine*<sup>18</sup> Sarah Belle Dougherty reviewed the medical doctor Thomas Verny's book, *The Secret Life of the Unborn Child* (1981), which portrays the incredible "dance of life" between the mother and child during pregnancy. Here the doctor writes, "The second most important prenatal influence is the father's attitude toward the pregnancy and his commitment to the relationship with the mother." For there to be a healthy loving child, the mother needs to feel loved as well. The father does have a role. Later, in the essay, a separate bonding process is described in the first few months of birth between the father and child.

**Marie**, I know this subject is getting more and more complicated. But, it is complicated. So many things to think about. One of these subjects would include abortion and

disability. This is a really tough one to address. Consider this: Years ago, in my practice, a blind friend of mine asked me to see her daughter. My friend was a highly successful grant writer and she also expressed happiness about her wonderful marriage. Her daughter was also blind. She told me her daughter was having a difficult time with blindness and she was acting out. I asked my friend how her daughter came to be blind. She said they both (daughter and mother) have a genetic condition. I asked, did she know her daughter was going to be blind before becoming pregnant? She said, "Yes, of course. What's wrong with being blind?"

I could not help but reflecting what others would have done. What is the "right" thing to do in these circumstances? To really get your head into this topic, I hope you get a chance to read Carolyn Jones's story as it was reported in the Texas Observer.<sup>19</sup> This woman became pregnant, and she and her husband were looking forward to the joy of a second child. However, a sonogram was taken, and it was discovered that if this child was brought to term and lived, due to a molecular flaw, the brain, arms, and legs would not develop and there would be continuous pain. She opted for abortion. If you read this story you will understand and also, possibly react as well, against the good Texas politicians who tried to stop her.

Here, **Marie**, let us take on the big one. When does life begin? You did not tell me at what stage your abortion was and I forgot to ask. This becomes the important determinant with many. Remember with Catholics and many Christian denominations life begins at conception despite Dr. Coyle's research showing there is nothing in the Bible indicating this, but there is an indication that life begins when the baby takes its first breath.

With some Muslims it is in the fourth month of pregnancy. In Theosophical writings there are at least two places indicating it is the seventh month. One of the quotations is in the *Mahatma Letters*<sup>20</sup>: "Invariably, only rather call it the *germ* of a future entity, which it has been for ages. Take the human foetus. From the moment of its first planting until it completes its seventh month of gestation it repeats in miniature the mineral, vegetable, and animal cycles it passed through in its previous encasements, and only during the last two, develops its future human entity." Gosh, do you remember from biology class that ontology recapitulates phylogeny? Remember, at a certain stage, the foetus has a tail.

Blavatsky has a statement found in the recently published *Secret Doctrine Commentaries*:<sup>21</sup> "The Monad overshadows the foetus only in the seventh month, and enters fully the child after he reaches consciousness. The Devachanic entity, envelops, so to speak, the new entity, lights it up, but begins its process of assimilation only after the first ray of consciousness, say at seven or eight months. Thus it does not enter it. It begins to overshadow it, it is there, it is led by Karmic law to it, but cannot enter immediately. It is perfect nonsense to say the child has a soul, and it is a human being before it is born."

To this student, the major implication of the teachings is that abortion is not in the natural scheme of things. And in cases where it is determined to be necessary, there can be a possibility of a second chance for the being to re-enter the reincarnation journey. Another quote from Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled*<sup>22</sup> is given: "Reincarnation i.e., the appearance of the same individual, or rather of his astral monad, twice on the same planet is not a rule in nature, it is an exception, like the

teratological phenomenon of a two-headed infant. It is preceded by a violation of the laws of harmony of nature, and happens only when the latter seeking to restore its disturbed equilibrium, violently throws back into earth-life the astral monad which had been tossed out of the circle of necessity by crime or accident. Thus in cases of abortion, of infants dying before a certain age, and of congenital and incurable idiocy, nature's original design to produce a perfect human being, has been interrupted. Therefore, while the gross matter of each of these several entities is suffered to disperse itself at death, through the vast realm of being, the immortal spirit and astral monad of the individual - the latter having been set apart to animate a frame and the former to shed its divine light on the corporeal organization - must try a second time to carry out the purpose of the creative intelligence" (Ibid 1:351).

For me, if there was an ideal situation in cases where abortion might be considered, it would be something like this. The potential mother and father would recognize the importance of a life coming into being. If there was a consideration of abortion, they would read and discuss between themselves as much as they could. If it became evident that abortion was something they wanted, they might possibly imagine in their minds a dialogue between themselves and the being that would enter. This author came across an interesting effort by a colleague who worked with women wanting abortion. She had these clients imagine a communication between themselves and the growing child they held in their wombs. The mothers-to-be communicated that this was not a good time for there to be a child but that their love was still extended. In a number of instances, as reported by the colleague, spontaneous abortions came about. To what extent this process could be replicated,

we would have no idea. But, just the thought of communication between the mother and the unborn baby lends itself to a greater respect for the importance of birth. Of course, these ideal circumstances as outlined above are not likely to be possible. However, to come close may be helpful.



**Marie**, we wanted you to know that your concerns, and your tears, are very important. That you are seeking greater meaning from your experience is very significant. In this presentation we have used this letter to you as a way for others as well to be aware of the dimensions of this topic and to provide a theosophical perspective. The letter was started indicating life itself is "the miracle of miracles" as is a new birth. We reviewed statements from a number of religious views showing how this

concern is in all cultures. Some of the history of how society has dealt with unwanted children in the past was covered. We have tried to show that with the contraceptive information and approaches now available to lessen the chance of pregnancy, the need for abortion may become less and less. We have emphasized that the need for abortion is strongly connected to poverty. When resources are made available, e.g., insurance, to all there are less instances of abortion.

**Marie**, you wanted to know how abortion affects reincarnation. You must have sensed a reality to reincarnation which probably brought you here. A good part of the world does subscribe to this idea. It is estimated that one quarter of the world's population has this belief<sup>23</sup>. Remember the options are that after death is nothing; after death we stay in some eternal place; after death we continue a cyclic journey. This is just as it is in every heartbeat, every breath, sleeping and waking, day and night as well as it is with the universe - coming and going. Given reincarnation, then, let us look at how abortion is involved. Think of the karmic complexity of your life and to a child you may have. In some respects a child entering our life strongly influences the rest of our life. A child presents an opportunity to work towards a greater harmony for the expected child, the mother, father, and possibly with siblings. With abortion, the opportunity is lost. So many karmic currents have to come together from past lives to find a meaningful fit with the new family. During this life we lead, we know how decisions we make affect so many others as well as we are affected by the decisions of others. Multiply this with the birth of a child and we can see how the chain of events in all of our lives is influenced. Abortion alters so much for so many.

We do hope this letter is not too overwhelming, and will help provide understanding. There are circumstances which may call



for an abortion and yours may be one of them. Give it as much thought as you can. There are a number of organizations throughout the world that can help. In the United States, there is Planned Parenthood. According to their website, they offer not only counseling to talk it over, but many options to abortion as well. My only concern is that they do not seem to offer the counseling before and after an abortion to men as well as women. They do, however, offer warm acceptance and understanding. In other areas of the world, hopefully, there are similar organizations. If and when, a new life comes to you have no hesitation in contacting those of us that help with [www.beyond-the-gates.com](http://www.beyond-the-gates.com). We may also help you find a connection to a theosophical center near where you live. Thank you, for letting us do again our initial presentation on this subject.

Email: [jim@jim2sal.com](mailto:jim@jim2sal.com). Skype: [beyond.gate1](https://www.skype.com/en/contacts/voice/beyond.gate1). For those wanting more information on any of the topics considered, or those wanting to make comments, please let us know.

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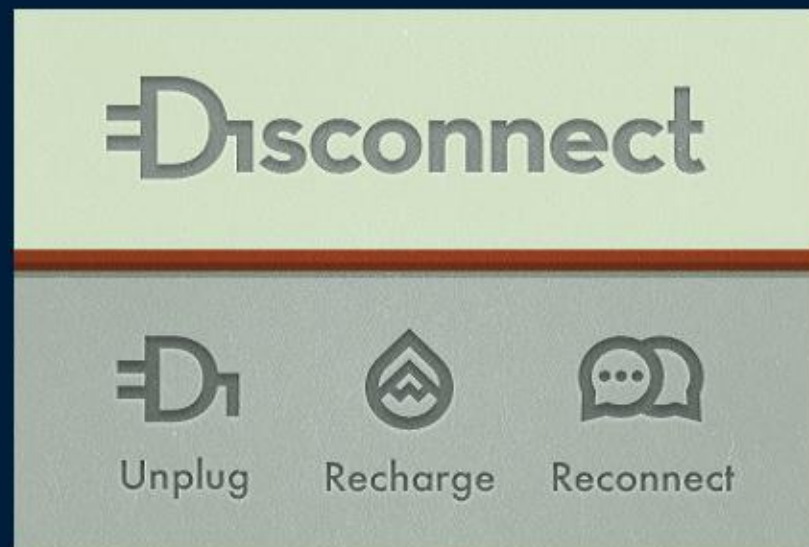
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## Focus

Leo Babauta - USA

### A simplicity manifesto in the Age of Distraction

Part three

The beauty of disconnection

*"Without great solitude no serious work is possible."*

*Pablo Picasso*

There are days when I wake up and refuse to turn on the Internet, and sit still with my cup of coffee in the hush that fills the hours just before dawn. I'll listen to the quiet. I'll reflect on life. I'll lose myself in a novel. Some days I'll sit down and write, just my thoughts and the quiet and the gentle tapping of the keyboard.

And it's beautiful.

Other days I'll go for a run and enjoy the rich outdoor air, salty when I jog by the ocean, sweet when I pass a field of wildflowers, saturated with soft light. And this is a wonderful time for me, as I enjoy the moment, as I soak in the quietness, as I bask in my connection with life but my disconnection with technology.

Other times I'll sit with a friend and have a cup of coffee and chat. We'll argue about politics, or whose computer OS is better, or tease each other, or share stories. While disconnected from technology.

And some days, I take a walk or go for a run with my wife. Or I'll sit with my child, and read, or just play.



These are unbeatable moments.

These are the moments when disconnection shows its glorious face, when life is in full force, when we are fully connected to the world immediately around us, while disconnected from the world at large.

These moments have become increasingly rare and fleeting, because of our connectedness with technology. And that's a sad thing in my book.

I'm no Luddite - I don't think we should abandon technology. It's given me the career and life that I've always wanted, where I'm able to play for a living, create, be a full-time writer, help others, and live a simple life. Technology has empowered me, and I am as big a proponent of the latest technologies as anyone.



It's not technology we should be afraid of. It's a life where we're always connected, always interrupted, always distracted, always bombarded with information and requests. It's a life where we have no time to create, or connect with real people. Disconnection is the solution, or at least an integral part of it. It's very difficult for many people, because connection is addictive. We'll talk more about that in a minute.

### **The Benefits of Disconnection**

Why should we even consider disconnecting from the grid of information and communication? Let's look at just a few reasons:

- You shut off the interruptions and distractions of email, Twitter, IM, blogs, news, and more.
- You give yourself space to focus and work.
- You allow yourself space to create.



- You can connect with real people without distractions.
- You can read, you know, books.
- You can accomplish a lot more.
- You allow yourself a break from the stress of overload.
- You can find quiet and peace of mind.
- You can reflect and contemplate.

There are dozens of other good reasons, but I think those are serviceable for our needs.

### How to Disconnect

So how do we go about disconnecting? There are varying strategies, and no one is better than another. I won't be able to tell you what will work best for you - I suggest you experiment, and find a method that fits your needs and situation best. Often that will be a hybrid approach, which is perfectly great - every person is different, and no cookie-cutter approach will work for everyone.

Some ideas:

1. **Unplug.** Just unplug your network connector or cable, or turn off your wireless router, or go to your connections settings and disable temporarily. Close your browser and open another program so you can focus on creating without distraction. Do this for as long as you can.
2. **Have a disconnect time each day.** It's like setting office hours if you're a professor - you set the times that work best for you, and you can even let people know about these times. Let's say you are disconnected from 8-10 a.m. each day, or 4-5 p.m., or even anytime after 2 p.m. Tell people your policy, so they know you won't be available for email or IM. And use this time to create.

3. **Work somewhere without a connection.** For me, this might be the public library - while it has computers with Internet access, there's no wireless in my library. Some coffee shops don't have wireless connection. Some of you might have to look for a good building that's quiet but doesn't have free wireless. Go to this disconnected zone ready to create, or perhaps just to relax and enjoy the quiet.

4. **Get outside.** Leave your devices behind and go for a walk, or a run, or a bike ride. Enjoy nature. Watch a sunset; go to the beach or a lake or river or forest. Take your child or spouse or friend. Recharge your batteries, reflect and contemplate.

5. **Leave your mobile device behind, or shut it off.** When you're on the go, you don't always need to be connected. Sure, the iPhone and Android and Blackberry are cool, but they just feed our addictions, they make the problem worse than ever. If you're driving, shut off your device. If you're meeting with someone, turn off the device so you can focus on that person completely. If you're out with your family or friends and not working ... leave the device at home. You don't need this personal time to be interrupted by work or your impulse to check on things.

6. **Use blocking software.** If you're doing work on the computer, you can use various types of software to shut yourself off from the Internet, or at least from the most distracting portions of it. For example, you can use software to block your web email, Twitter, favorite news sites, favorite blogs, and so on - whatever your worst distractions are, you can block them selectively. Or block all Internet browsing. We'll talk more about software in a later chapter on tools.

7. **Alternate connection and disconnection.** There are any

number of variations on this theme, but let's say you disconnected for 20 minutes, then connected for a maximum of 10 minutes, and kept alternating in those intervals. Or you work disconnected for 45 minutes and connect for 15 minutes. You get the idea - it's almost as if the connected period is a reward for doing good, focused work.

8. **Disconnect away from work.** A good policy is to leave your work behind, when you're done with work, and a better policy is to stay disconnected during that time, or work and browsing will creep into the rest of your life. Draw a line in the sand, and say, "After 5 p.m. (or whatever), I won't be connected, I'll focus on my family and my other interests."

### **How to Beat the Connection Addiction**

Being connected is an addiction - and it's one that can be extremely hard to beat. Trust me; I struggle with it myself, all the time.

Like any addiction, connection has very quick positive reinforcements and only long-term negative consequences. When you take drugs or eat junk food, for example, you get instant pleasure but the negative health effects aren't felt until much, much later, when you're already firmly addicted. So you get the positive reinforcement immediately, each time you do the addictive activity such as eating sweets or taking drugs, giving you a pleasure rush and making you want to do the activity again, as soon as possible. You get the positive reinforcement again, and again, and again, in a constant cycle of positive reinforcement, and soon you're addicted.

Connection works the same way. When we check email and get a new message, it's a little bit of validation that we're worthy of

someone else's attention - we get a little ego boost, a little pleasure from this. When we check Twitter or our feed reader and see something that grabs our attention, that's a positive reinforcement, a little bit of reward for checking. And so we check again, and again, until we're addicted.

It's not until much later that we feel the consequences, if we even admit them to ourselves. It's months or years later, much after we're addicted, that we realize we're spending all our time online, that our personal lives have been taken over, that we have lost our ability to find quiet and focus, that our creative time and energies have been eroded by these addictions.

So while I can list all kinds of ways to disconnect, if you're addicted even to a small degree, it won't be a small feat to disconnect and stay disconnected.

### **How do we beat this addiction, then?**

The same way you beat any addiction: by breaking the cycle of positive feedback, and by replacing the old habit with a new one.

And while beating addictions is really a subject to be tackled in another book, let's briefly outline some quick strategies you can use to beat this addiction:

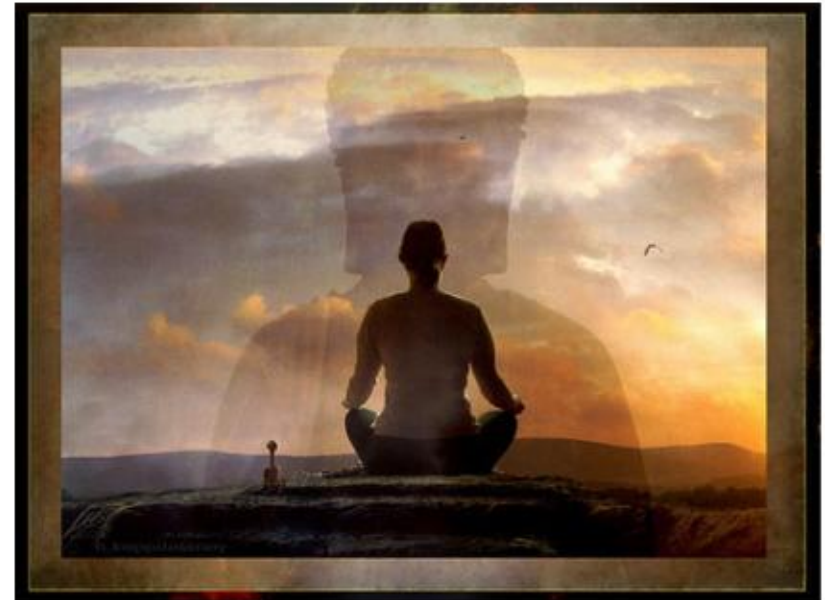
- Figure out your triggers. What things trigger your habits? It's usually something you do each day, something that leads directly to your addicted behavior. List these out.
- Find a new, positive habit to replace the old habit for each trigger. For example, with quitting smoking, I needed a new habit for stress relief (running), a new thing to do after meetings (write out my notes), a new thing to do with coffee in the morning (reading), and so on.
- Try changing each trigger, one at a time. So if you go to check

your blogs first thing in the morning, make it a new habit to not open your browser, and instead open a simple text editor and start writing.

- Create positive feedback for the new habit. If the new habit is something you don't enjoy, you'll quit before long. But if it's something enjoyable, that gives you positive feedback, that's good. Praise from others is also a good positive feedback - there are many, and you'll want to engineer your habit change so that you get almost instant positive feedback.
- Create instant negative feedback for the old habit. Instead of having negative feedback be long-term for going online, you want some negative feedback instantly: make it a rule that you have to call someone and tell them you failed if you go online after a certain trigger, for example. There are lots of kinds of negative feedback - maybe you'll have to log and blog your failures, or something like that.
- Repeat the positive feedback cycle as often as possible for the new habit. Soon, after a few weeks, it'll become a new habit and the old one will be (mostly) licked. Repeat for the next trigger.

Starting small, with just one trigger at a time, is a good way to be successful.

## Can Meditation Make You a More Compassionate Person?



Scientists have mostly focused on the benefits of meditation for the brain and the body, but a recent study by Northeastern University's David DeSteno, published in *Psychological Science*, takes a look at what impacts meditation has on interpersonal harmony and compassion.



Several religious traditions have suggested that mediation does just that, but there has been no scientific proof - until now.

In this study, a team of researchers from Northeastern University and Harvard University examined the effects meditation would have on compassion and virtuous behavior, and the results were fascinating.

This study - funded by the Mind and Life Institute - invited participants to complete eight-week trainings in two types of meditation. After the sessions, they were put to the test.

Sitting in a staged waiting room with three chairs were two actors. With one empty chair left, the participant sat down and waited to be called. Another actor using crutches and appearing to be in great physical pain, would then enter the room. As she did, the actors in the chair would ignore her by fiddling with their phones or opening a book.

The question DeSteno and Paul Condon - a graduate student in DeSteno's lab who led the study - and their team wanted to answer was whether the subjects who took part in the meditation classes would be more likely to come to the aid of the person in pain, even in the face of everyone else ignoring her. "We know meditation improves a person's own physical and psychological wellbeing," said Condon. "We wanted to know whether it actually increases compassionate behavior."

Among the non-meditating participants, only about 15 percent of people acted to help. But among the participants who were in the meditation sessions "we were able to boost that up to 50 percent," said DeSteno. This result was true for both meditation groups thereby showing the effect to be consistent across different forms of meditation. "The truly surprising aspect of this

finding is that meditation made people willing to act virtuous - to help another who was suffering - even in the face of a norm not to do so," DeSteno said, "The fact that the other actors were ignoring the pain creates as 'bystander-effect' that normally tends to reduce helping. People often wonder 'Why should I help someone if no one else is?'"

These results appear to prove what the Buddhist theologians have long believed - that meditation is supposed to lead you to experience more compassion and love for all sentient beings. But even for non-Buddhists, the findings offer scientific proof for meditation techniques to alter the calculus of the moral mind.

For original article and more click here: ....



*More Compassion*

# Reflections on the meaning of life

With Professor P. Krishna



## Questions

- *Generally the big questions about life arise out of grief, illness, death and seldom during happy moments which we all chase. What is happiness for you?*

Happiness is a by-product of right living, which in turn requires wisdom. Theosophy literally means the quest for wisdom, which is the same as the quest for truth since the perception of truth ends illusion. The perception of what is true and what is false is self-knowledge which is the key to wisdom and therefore to happiness. Only then is happiness not dependant on circumstances.

- *What is love for you?*

Love is a state of being in which there is compassion for all living beings without any self-interest or judgement.

- *How do you explain suffering in any form?*

Ignorance as illusion is the cause of suffering. One must distinguish between personal suffering and the suffering due to compassion. Personal suffering ends when the mind is freed of all illusion. The ego is the greatest source of illusion and

therefore freedom from the ego is the beginning of wisdom and the end of psychological suffering.

- *What is death for you?*

Death of the body is a natural fact of all life and therefore a part of living. There is real creative and joyous living only when one dies to the ego, which is attachment to the personality. That is also freedom from conditioning due to the past or the known.

- *We know we are born, we know we will die and within this temporal space we live and build up a route; for some this is lived consciously, for others unconsciously. What are your objectives in life and what do you do to realize them?*

To me the whole of life is a ground for learning, not only learning about the external world but also learning to distinguish what is true from what is false. Life is a great mystery and understanding that mystery is the objective of my life. The rest is a by-product of the wisdom so generated.

- *Do we have an existential project to perform?*

Being true to oneself and therefore to others is a major responsibility in addition to whatever other responsibility one takes up in life. This again is a by-product of self-knowledge or wisdom.

- *We are social animals; our life would have no meaning without the others, notwithstanding that we live in an era where individualism is more exalted than ever. This brings about a social involution: what do you think of that?*

Individualism is an illusion. We are inextricably linked to each other and to the entire universe around us. To separate oneself from the world and treat it as something meant for one's use is

narrow-minded egoism. It is the greatest source of all suffering, both personal and global.

- *How can we recognize good and evil?*

To the extent we are capable of being egoistic we have the capacity for evil. Any action born of the ego state is evil irrespective of what results it achieves outwardly and any action born of love and compassion is right action irrespective of what it achieves externally.

- *Man has always been distressed by the unknown. Religions, and afterwards philosophies with the aid of reason, gave him some help. What help did you have?*

Theosophy and Krishnamurti taught me that religion is not belief but the quest for truth. That we can grow in wisdom if we have a learning mind and look upon life as a mystery to be lived and learnt from. The known is very limited and the awareness of the existence of the vast unknown brings humility. Our knowledge leads to arrogance when it is not coupled with wisdom and blocks learning.

- *What is for you the meaning of life?*

Life is not a problem to be solved; it is a mystery to be lived.



# Notable books

Changing Reality by Serge K. King

The Chakras by C.W. Leadbeater

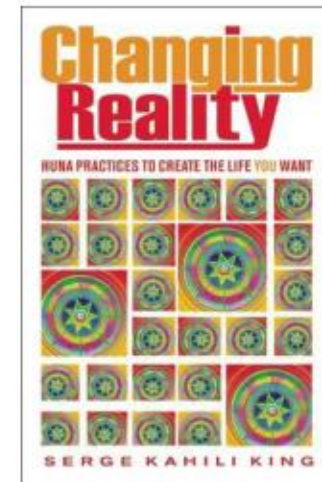
Dancing with Fire by John Amodeo

Finding the On-Ramp to Your Spiritual Path by Jan Phillips



*Are they notable or  
what...??*

## Notable Books:



King, Serge Kahili

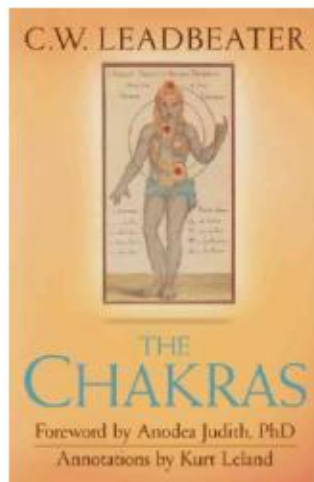
*Changing Reality: Huna Practices to  
Create the Life You Want.*

Wheaton, IL: Theosophical  
Publishing House, Quest Books,  
2013.

Pp. ix + 333.

\$16.95

Huna is a Hawaiian term for the shamanistic practices of those islands and hence for traditional esoteric knowledge applied to the practical problems of life. This book has no Theosophy in it, a little anthropology, and a lot of new-agery. It will appeal especially to those whose main interest is the last.



Leadbeater, Charles Webster.

*The Chakras: An Authoritative Edition of the Groundbreaking Classic.*

Foreword by Anodea Judith, PhD.  
Annotations and Afterword by Kurt Leland.

Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, Quest Books, 1927, 1997, 2nd ed. 2013.

Pp. xxi + 160.

\$16.95.

This is a new edition of the old, but still standard, book on the subject of the chakras. There are many others, of which the best is probably *The Chakras and the Human Energy Fields*, by Shafica Karagulla and Dora van Gelder Kunz (Wheaton, IL:

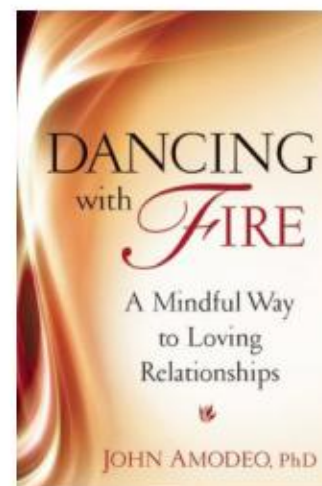


Theosophical Publishing House, 1989). Another noteworthy treatment is *Practical Centering: Exercises to Energize Your Chakras for Relaxation, Vitality, and Health*, by Larkin Barnett (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, Quest Books, 2012). Amazon.com lists a dozen or so others of unknown usefulness and importance.

The new edition preserves the text of

the original and its impressive color illustrations (as well as the black-and-white ones). It adds some new useful front and back matter. It is an excellent addition to the list of basic works on Theosophical subjects and should be added to the list of references on the subject in the *Theosophical Encyclopedia*. It is a classic in the field.

The following are two Quest books that fall into the growing category of new-age volumes of little or no explicitly Theosophical relevance, which the Wheaton Theosophical Publishing House has recently been specializing in. Both are good books of their kind, but the kind has little to do with Theosophy in the traditional sense. The problem faced by TPH is that it is, at least in part, a publisher catering to a wide range of general readers and aspiring (indeed needing) to sell its works in general bookstores, including especially large chain



Amodeo, John.

*Dancing with Fire: A Mindful Way to Loving Relationships.*

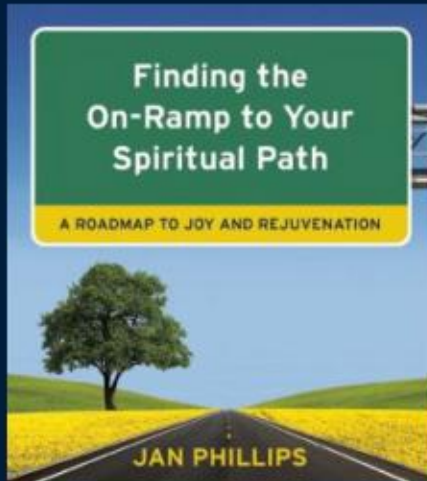
Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, Quest Books, 2013.

Pp. [∞] + 292.

\$16.95.



stores. And so the available market dictates the sort of book that TPH-Wheaton publishes. This is not a new problem for TPH-Wheaton, but of late it has become increasingly problematical.



Phillips, Jan.

*Finding the On-Ramp to Your Spiritual Path: A Road Map to Joy and Rejuvenation.*

Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, Quest Books, 2013.

Pages [iv] + 146.

\$14.95.



Quest Books store





# Lengua Española

Crimen y castigo

Una Historia hawaiana

Editorial por Jan Nicolaas Kind

Nuestro Trabajo por Sally Colbert

Buenas noticias de Amsterdam

Buenas noticias de Internacional Theosophy Conferences

## Crimen y castigo

[Este artículo apareció en la edición de diciembre de 2012 de *The Theosophical Movement*. Para más artículos publicados en esta excelente revista seguid este enlace:

[http://www.ultindia.org/previous\\_issues.html](http://www.ultindia.org/previous_issues.html)]



El terrorista Paquistaní Ajmal Kasab, la única persona armada que sobrevivió, fue condenado por un juez especial, en mayo de 2010, en la ciudad de Mumbai (India) por el asesinato directo de siete personas y por el intento, junto con otro terrorista, de matar a otras 65. El 22 de noviembre de 2012 la nación despertó con la noticia de que Kasab había sido ahorcado

después de que el presidente de la India rechazase la petición de clemencia de Kasab. La reacción general de la gente fue que la ejecución había puesto fin al trauma provocado por el ataque terrorista del 26 de noviembre de 2008. La ejecución provocó muchas y variadas reacciones. Algunos pensaban que por fin se había hecho justicia o que se había rendido tributo a los héroes muertos. Hubo casos aislados de personas que expresaron lástima y compasión por el terrorista ejecutado.

Yug Chaudhry, abogado de Mumbai, comenta que el Artículo 72 de la Constitución de la India contempla la capacidad del



Presidente de la India para otorgar clemencia al reo incluso después de que el sistema judicial haya confirmado la pena de muerte. Solamente en los delitos más raros, los que son realmente imperdonables, el delincuente puede optar al perdón y a la clemencia. Paradójicamente, el hecho de que Kasab hubiera cometido un delito imperdonable era lo que le permitía optar a la clemencia." Clemencia y perdón son actos de gracia ... Darle a alguien lo que se merece o aquello a lo que tiene derecho no es clemencia, es una recompensa sin implicaciones de gracia alguna ... No merecemos piedad, la necesitamos. Creo que todos nosotros - los mejores y los peores - estamos necesitados de piedad, y sólo siendo piadosos nos hacemos moralmente merecedores de recibir esa piedad. Sin la piedad, nuestra sociedad sería inhumana y empobrecida, ya que la piedad es en esencia una cualidad humana, no encontrándose en ninguna otra parte del mundo natural ... La piedad modera la justicia, la hace menos exigente, más humana," escribe Chaudhry. (En el Mumbai Mirror del 22 de noviembre de 2012)

Es importante tener en cuenta que estos nobles sentimientos mencionados antes fueron expresados por un abogado, y no son un mero tópico piadoso. Podríamos recordar que durante el ataque terrorista del 26 de noviembre de 2008, muchos fueron asesinados y otros muchos mutilados de por vida. Uno de ellos fue una ciudadana americana, profesora de meditación y exitosa corredora de maratones, que perdió a su hija de 13 años y quedó gravemente herida. A pesar de tener que desplazarse con ayuda de un andador, confiaba en que Ajmal Kasab no fuera condenado a muerte, porque para las víctimas de los ataques hubiera sido un consuelo pensar que un terrorista como Kasab acabaría transformándose. Tal vez

estaba descarriado. Jesús en la cruz perdonó a las almas descarriadas, así que ella también le perdonó y Irezaba por él cada día!

Verdaderamente, errar es humano, pero perdonar es divino, especialmente cuando una persona corriente acaba perdonando un dano muy grave. El perdón ayuda tanto a la víctima como al malhechor a curarse más rápido. Perdonad, perdonad y olvidad mucho, dice H.P.B. en su artículo, "¿Es un deber denunciar?" H.P.B. senala que denunciar es un deber a la verdad, y nuestro deber es el de denunciar sistemas y organizaciones, males sociales y religiosos, pero no a los individuos, que son sólo hijos de su propio siglo, víctimas de su entorno. "Condenar y deshonrar a un hombre en vez de compadecerle y tratar de ayudarle, cuando es un leproso, por haber nacido en una comunidad de leprosos, es como maldecir una habitación porque está oscura, en vez de encender en silencio una vela que disperse la penumbra," escribe H. P. B.

Se nos pide "condenar el pecado y no al pecador." Pero disociar el pecado del pecador es muy difícil. Tendemos a etiquetar a la gente por sus más pequeños errores y transgresiones. Deberíamos estar dispuestos a mirar a la persona de una forma nueva. Tendemos a pensar, "pecador una vez, pecador para siempre." Para cambiar este modo de pensar hemos de empezar poco a poco, perdonando y olvidando, es decir, sin resentimiento contra otro por el mal que nos han hecho. A menudo, estamos dispuestos a dar otra oportunidad a un amigo por una falta grave. Ciertamente, estamos dispuestos a dar una segunda oportunidad a nuestros hijos, hijas, hermanas y hermanos. Recordemos que no todos los delitos son premeditados. A veces, se cometen por impulso, sin pensarlo, y

la persona se arrepiente realmente. "Hemos de aprender a mirar con inteligencia en el corazón de los hombres." La separatividad no existe como tal porque en los planos internos del ser estamos todos unidos. No podemos aislarnos de los necios y de los malvados, porque el mundo en el que hoy vivimos es el mundo que nosotros hemos fabricado.

Estamos todos unidos en los planos internos e invisibles, y nos afectamos continuamente los unos a los otros con nuestros pensamientos, sentimientos y actos. Es difícil decir que parte del karma de otra persona es estrictamente resultado de su propia fabricación. Hemos contribuido a la fabricación de la humanidad tal y como la encontramos hoy. Conocemos la historia de aquel rey oriental que tenía un hijo, y este hijo cometió una mala acción, cuyo castigo era el de morir aplastado por una roca muy grande. Pero vieron que ese castigo no repararía el daño causado ni le daría al delincuente la posibilidad de ser mejor persona, y por eso los asesores del rey aconsejaron romper la roca en pequeños trozos que le tirarían mientras él pudiera soportarlo, de modo que sufriría pero no moriría. El consejo de H. P. B. es que las leyes humanas deben ser restrictivas y no punitivas, porque no tenemos la sabiduría para asignar el castigo adecuado, un castigo que pueda darle a la persona la posibilidad de arrepentirse y superarse.

La razón oculta por la que la Teosofía está en contra de la Pena Capital es que un criminal ejecutado, aunque físicamente muerto, sigue vivo astralmente. Está lleno de sentimientos de odio hacia la sociedad y hacia todos los responsables de su juicio y ejecución; y también tiene fuertes deseos de venganza. Puede inyectar pensamientos delictivos en la mente de algunas personas sensibles y mentalmente débiles e incitarlas a



cometer delitos. Por eso oímos hablar de casos en los que una persona débil comete repentinamente un delito, aparentemente arrastrada por alguna fuerza exterior. Mientras está en su cuerpo físico, el criminal es capaz de influir sólo en unos cuantos, pero después de muerto, mientras vive en el cuerpo astral, su área de influencia no tiene límites.

La clemencia no es lo opuesto a la Justicia y la mayor justicia viene a ser lo mismo que la mayor misericordia. Sin embargo, esto sólo se aplica a la ley del Karma, y no a la ley de los hombres. Nuestro concepto de una ley misericordiosa es la ley que perdona nuestros errores y nos permite escapar de las consiguientes consecuencias. El aspecto de "clemencia" en la ley del Karma consiste en que, a diferencia de la ley humana, nos da innumerables oportunidades para mejorar. A menudo nos encontramos con circunstancias fuera de nuestro control. La ley del Karma tiene en cuenta todas las "circunstancias atenuantes." El karma es acción y reacción. Sin embargo, esta reacción no es mecánica, sino que tiene en cuenta el motivo, el estado interno de la persona y el peso de su Karma anterior. Otro significado que tiene la clemencia es el de la compasión. La compasión es un amor universal omniabarcante que aspira al bien "Universal". La compasión es el aspecto de la ley que desea el crecimiento de cada ser, aunque ello implique sufrimiento. Debemos aprender a imitar la Ley. Cada vez que tengamos la tentación de condenar, debemos recordar que el estado interno de la persona es sólo conocido por la Ley del Karma. Cuando vemos a un ser malvado, deberíamos verlo como alguien que lleva unas botas muy pesadas por el barro y deberíamos darle la mano para ayudarlo a salir de esa situación.

H. P. B. parece sugerir que un criminal es como un leproso

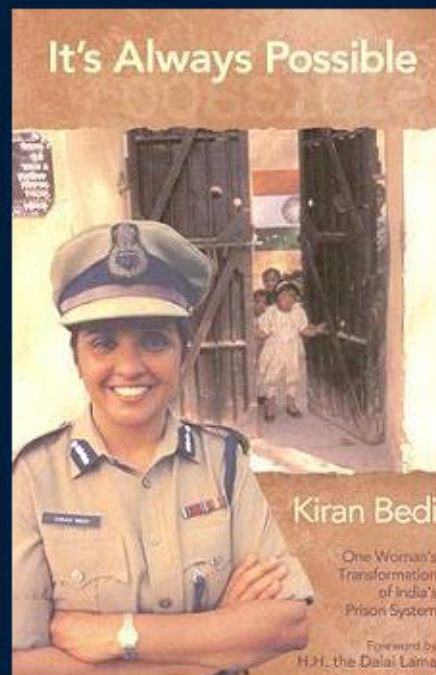
nacido en una leprosería. Nadie nace criminal, y la sociedad o las circunstancias son también responsables de convertir a una persona en lo que es. El terrorismo obedece en gran parte al nombre de la religión y nace de una interpretación falsa y literal de conceptos espirituales muy elevados. La percepción de uno mismo y de la propia comunidad como víctimas despierta nuestra ira. Debemos tratar de entender los antecedentes del criminal. Ajmal Kasab ha sido considerado como un fanático religioso. Sin embargo, un Teniente general jubilado del ejército indio, V. G. Patankar, anteriormente Comandante del Cuerpo en Cachemira, escribe que más que el fanatismo religioso, es la pobreza lo que empuja a los jóvenes a las actividades terroristas. Ajmal Kasab, herido en una cama de hospital, admitió no saber muchas cosas de la yihad (la guerra justa), pero dijo que se había unido a los terroristas sólo para conseguir dinero con el que ayudar a su pobre familia. Patankar comenta haber escuchado argumentos parecidos de terroristas capturados en el valle de Cachemira. "Eran jóvenes adolescentes o veinteaneros, generalmente sin trabajo, algunos con una educación rudimentaria y otros analfabetos, pero casi siempre de familias desvalidas. El típico terrorista joven solía pertenecer a una familia numerosa con escasos medios; uno entre varios hermanos, con sólo una o dos personas para traer el pan a casa, en el mejor de los casos," escribe Patankar (*The Times of India*, 23 de noviembre de 2012).

?Quién es el culpable de la injusticia económica? Hoy en día, un gran número de personas sufren miseria y pobreza, y a menudo sus facultades espirituales están casi durmientes. En el extremo opuesto de la escala vemos una riqueza sin sentido y una indulgencia egoísta. H. P. B. atribuye tal disparidad al

abandono del deber social por parte de aquellos que "tienen" la riqueza y el conocimiento hacia los que "no lo tienen."

?Cuál es el mejor método para reformar a los delincuentes? Se ha considerado que la rehabilitación, el encarcelamiento y los programas de rehabilitación religiosos son mejores alternativas que la horca. Lamentablemente, las prisiones, que procuran mejorar el carácter de los presos, tienden en cambio a degradarlo, ya que carecen de empatía. Es verdad que un individuo debe reformarse a sí mismo, pero se le puede ayudar en esa labor. No se puede conseguir ninguna reforma perdurable si no cambia la naturaleza humana. El individuo delictivo necesita una formación apropiada y necesita que se le muestren elevados ideales que puedan provocar un cambio en su actitud mental y moral. El libro, *It's Always Possible - One Woman's Transformation of Tihar Prison*, es una narración de los esfuerzos que hizo la Dra. Kiran Bedi por cambiar fundamentalmente todo el sistema carcelario de la criminalidad a la humanidad en la prisión india de Tihar. La Dra. Bedi empezó a pasear por la prisión y a hablar con los reclusos para conocer sus problemas. Reactivó y amplió la biblioteca, comenzó a dar clases de yoga, y empezó a trabajar en la educación oficial. En 1994 unos mil reclusos fueron introducidos a la meditación Vipassana, popularizada por el Sr. S. N. Goenka, que abrió la mente de los presos a las bellezas y posibilidades de la vida. Para facilitar que los reclusos tuvieran confianza en sí mismos al final de su condena, se les enseñaron oficios como la fabricación de calzado, la producción de fertilizantes, la serigrafía, la sastrería, la encuadernación y la fabricación de sobres. Lo más importante es tener la actitud correcta respecto al delito y al delincuente. Como decía el Sr.

Winston Churchill, deben producirse "incansables esfuerzos para descubrir los procesos curativos y regeneradores. Hay que tener una fe inquebrantable en el hecho de que en el corazón de cada hombre existe un tesoro, si somos capaces de encontrarlo."



# Una Historia hawaiana

Marcando la diferencia [por cortesía de Robert Zuk



Érase una vez, había un sabio kupuna (mayor), que fue al mar para reflexionar. Un día, mientras caminaba por la orilla, el kupuna miró hacia la playa y vio una figura humana bailando graciosamente. El kupuna se preguntó en voz alta, "¿quién puede saludar tan alegremente este día con un hula?" y comenzó a andar más rápido para alcanzarle. Al acercarse, el kupuna vio que el bailarín era un keiki (niño), que no estaba bailando. El keiki se agachaba hacia la arena para recoger algo y lo lanzaba al mar con delicadeza. El kupuna se dirigió al keiki, "¡Aloha! ¿Qué haces?" El keiki se detuvo, levantó la mirada y contestó, "Estoy lanzando estrellas de mar al mar." Sorprendido, el kupuna farfulló: "Supongo que tenía que haber preguntado, "¿Por qué estás tirando estrellas de mar al mar?" El keiki sonrió abiertamente, señaló a lo alto y, con una simplicidad exquisita, contestó: "El sol está alto, la marea se está retirando y si no las devuelvo al mar morirán." "Pero ¿no te das cuenta," preguntó el kupuna, "de que hay millas y millas de playa llenas de estrellas de mar? ¡Lo que estás haciendo no representa nada!" El keiki escuchó cortésmente. Después se inclinó, recogió otra estrella de mar y la lanzó delicadamente al mar, un poco más allá de donde rompen las olas, y declaró eufóricamente: "¡Para esa sí que ha representado algo!" - Ka Hôku Kai





# Editorial

por Jan Nicolaas Kind

## ¿Es mi Blavatsky mejor que la tuya?

Parece que dentro de nuestros círculos algunos intransigentes están todavía tratando de probar que han inventado la rueda. Algunos han dividido el panorama Teosófico en los que saben y los que mienten. Hay algunos que están exclusivamente conectados con la verdad, ya sea lo que sea esa verdad, y hay otros eternamente desconectados.

En un sitio de web de redes sociales, los lectores son constantemente confrontados con condescendientes y abominables exposés por un moderador que aparentemente se ha nombrado a sí mismo como la conciencia de la ST en Adyar, mientras que en otros sitios de web autores y sus editores tienen la tendencia de proclamar sea lo que sea que sienten como proclamar. Sus artículos y editoriales están llenos de los bien conocidos verbos modelo como "deber de," "tener que," "debería de," y "deberé de." Ellos se presentan como los buenos pastores vigilando a su rebaño.

Es como si los fariseos nos estuvieran hablando otra vez. Recibimos instrucciones acerca de lo que es correcto y de lo que no lo es, y todo bajo la bandera de la aprobación de H. P. Blavatsky. Pero ¿quién está dando esa aprobación? ¿Es H.P.B. misma o algunos que se encuentran capacitados para hablar en su nombre?

Habiendo estudiado este maravilloso fenómeno ruso durante muchos años, me inclino a pensar que ella aprobaría un mayor desarrollo de lo que trajo a nuestro mundo. Ella vino con su propio mensaje singular y nos dio la oportunidad de pensar y resolver lo que nos dio. No creo ni por un momento que quería ser la "última mensajera," y sin duda ese no era su punto de partida.

Algunos creen que representan su singularidad y esplendor, afirmando que todos los que tengan puntos de vista o interpretaciones ligeramente diferentes no son más que falsificadores o aún conspiradores, con su único objetivo: destruir todo lo que la Teosofía significa. No hablemos de la tolerancia y franqueza tan claramente abogada por la misma H.P.B.

En una reciente publicación en el *internet*, John Algeo fue otra vez atacado y calumniado como si fuera la peor escoria del planeta. ¿Qué es lo que H.P.B. misma escribió acerca de tales ataques?

"¿ES LA DENUNCIA UN DEBER?"

[Lucifer, Vol. III No.16, diciembre 1888, pp. 265-73]

"No condene a nadie en su ausencia; y cuando somos forzados a reprobar, debemos hacerlo de cara a cara, pero suavemente, y con palabras llenas de caridad y compasión. Ya que el corazón humano es como la planta de Kusuli: abre su taza al dulce rocío de la mañana, y la cierra antes de una ducha de lluvia torrencial."

"De hecho, el deber de defender al prójimo azotado por una lengua venenosa durante su ausencia, y abstenerse, en general, 'de condenar a otros' es la misma vida y el alma de

teosofía práctica, ya que tal acción es la doncella que nos conduce al angosto Camino de la 'vida superior,' esa vida que nos lleva al objetivo que todos anhelamos alcanzar."

Bueno, aquí va, sin lugar a dudas. En el número de enero 2013 del *The Aquarian Theosophist*, el editor, usando su muy reconocible prosa otra vez persiguió a John Algeo de una manera que seguramente no hubiera complacido a H.P.B.

Las críticas de que algunas cartas incluidas en la compilación de John Algeo, *Las Cartas de H. P. Blavatsky*, no deberían haber sido publicadas allí, o deberían haber tenido una introducción más clara, son legítimas. Pero lo fueron, y tenemos que vivir con los hechos; podemos muy claramente aprender de esta situación. Hubo un consenso en aquel entonces entre los editores de ese libro que esta publicación requeriría cierta inteligencia también de parte de los lectores. Hace cinco años, en una entrevista con Katinka Hesselink, John Algeo respondió a este asunto con el siguiente comentario:

PREGUNTA:

2. *Hubo una tormenta alrededor de la publicación de Las Cartas de H. P. Blavatsky, que Ud. y su esposa trabajaron tan arduamente para crear. ¿Esperaban la tormenta, y puede explicarle a mis lectores de qué se trataba esa tormenta?*

RESPUESTA:

El primer volumen de Las Cartas de H.P.B. necesitaba, por varias razones, ser publicado con rapidez. Por lo tanto, tiene una serie de defectos, sobre la mayor parte de los cuales no se ha comentado, pero sobre los que estamos agudamente conscientes. Estamos ahora trabajando mas despacio y deliberadamente con el segundo volumen y esperamos que

salga mejor. Por ejemplo, tendremos más cuidado de comentar sobre asuntos que puedan molestar a algunos lectores. Sin embargo, los principios básicos de esta edición abarcan lo siguiente: Vamos a incluir todas las cartas que se han razonablemente atribuido a H.P.B., incluso las que algunos Teósofos rechazan porque no están en consonancia con su opinión de ella. De H.P.B., podemos decir lo que Walt Whitman dijo de sí mismo en *Canción de Mi Mismo (Song of Myself)*: "¿Me contradigo?" / Muy bien entonces me contradigo / (Soy grande, contengo multitudes).

H.P.B. era una persona demasiado noble para caber en cualquiera de las estrechas categorías que sus admiradores podamos imaginarnos que ella ocupe. Que incluyamos una carta en el volumen no quiere decir que afirmamos que es realmente suya, sino que ha sido razonablemente atribuida a ella. La mayoría de las cartas que existen no son copias autógrafas (es decir, en su propia letra), sino en cambio son transcripciones realizadas por otros y a menudo "mejoradas" o por otra parte modificadas por los transcriptores. Es imposible afirmar la autenticidad de los textos de la mayor parte de las copias de las cartas que existen. Nuestro objetivo ha sido y será incluir los textos más antiguos y auténticos que podamos encontrar de todas las cartas que, con algún fundamento, se le han atribuido a H.P.B. Los lectores son libres de decidir por sí mismos cuáles son genuinas o cuánto de cualquier carta dada es lo que ella realmente escribió. No obstante, trataremos de ofrecer a los lectores la mayor ayuda posible para poder llegar a esa decisión. Pero esas decisiones a menudo dependerán del prejuicio de un determinado lector sobre lo que es o no es similar a Blavatsky. Como va el antiguo refrán, *de gustibus non disputandum est*, o sea, a cada uno su propia decisión.

PREGUNTA:

3. ¿Habría manejado las cosas diferentemente si hubiera sabido las reservas que las personas tendrían con la publicación?

RESPUESTA:

Habríamos incluido más advertencias admonitorias, pero no habríamos cambiado los principios sobre los cuales la edición se basa, que creo son la única base honesta para hacer tal edición.

Enlace a la entrevista original:

<http://www.allconsidering.com/2008/john-algeo-interview/>

Ningún otro comentario por esta parte. Está claro: Se podría haber hecho mejor, pero debido a las circunstancias el libro sobre el cual John y su esposa Adele trabajaron tan duro se convirtió en una publicación perfectamente "imperfecta".

Hubiera sido más que suficiente que los analistas y editores hubieran advertido a los futuros lectores que fueran cautelosos al leer este libro. No hay necesidad de anunciadores o cualquier tipo de "Senores Sabelotodo" de proclamar ultimátums patéticos y lanzar todo a aquellos que se han ganado el aprecio y respeto de miles alrededor del mundo. Se refieren a trabajadores incondicionales para la causa Teosófica como "aficionados y éticamente ingenuos", pero quién en realidad es el que habla así?

John Algeo es un buen hombre, un trabajador dedicado a la causa. Tiene la capacidad, única, de admitir un error y compensarlo. Ahora, en sus ochenta y después de haber perdido a su Adele y de haberse enfrentado con deterioro de



salud, sigue trabajando para la Teosofía de la mejor forma posible. En sus ochenta "y pico" años de esta encarnación ha hecho mucho bien y, Sí, ha cometido errores, ¿pero quién no ...?

Su respeto y amor por H. P. Blavatsky y sus escrituras son indiscutibles. Hace aproximadamente trece años los ví a él y a Adele realmente trabajando en los archivos de Adyar para coleccionar material para el libro. La intención y la dedicación es lo que cuenta; viéndolos trabajar tanto juntos fue y sigue siendo un ejemplo inspirador para mí.

Todos podemos enfocarnos en H.P.B. desde nuestro propio punto de vista, desde nuestra propia tradición. A veces es evidente que hay grandes diferencias, pero ¿no es esto magnífico? ¿No sería terriblemente aburrido estar de acuerdo en todo?

Así que uno se puede preguntar: "¿Es mi Blavatsky mejor que la suya? ¿Tenemos que llegar a este extremo? ¿Es la Blavatsky de John Algeo, de Radha Burnier, o de cualquier editor mejor que la de cualquier otro? Claro que no. Aprendamos finalmente que nuestra Casa Teosófica es suficientemente grande para todos nosotros y que en vez de acusarnos los unos a los otros deberíamos realmente y finalmente escucharnos para beneficiar a nuestro planeta. Este es sólo un ejemplo de cómo hacerlo:

Haga clic aquí ....

# Nuestro Trabajo

por Sally Colbert

## **Introducción de Jan Nicolaas Kind:**

Nuestra querida amiga y compañera Sally falleció en febrero pasado. De hecho, estaba revisando su artículo para la sección de OUR WORK cuando recibí la noticia. Sally fue una trabajadora infatigable para la Teosofía durante toda su vida, y como presidente apoyó las iniciativas tomadas por las International Theosophy Conferences para fomentar la unidad entre todas las tradiciones Teosóficas. Ella y su marido Jim tenían todavía muchos proyectos. Sally fue una mujer notable, adorable y realista, que se entregó a la Causa hasta sus últimos momentos. Ha sido y es un brillante ejemplo para todos nosotros y una inspiración para seguir con el trabajo que tenemos que hacer. Después de consultar con Jim, hemos decidido honrar a Sally publicando su artículo completo.

Tanto mi marido Jim como yo experimentamos esa energía procedente de la unión con todas las tradiciones Teosóficas y la ponemos en práctica. Aunque yo provengo de la United Lodge of Theosophists, ahora mismo me siento parte de la familia de todos los teósofos. Me he dedicado a promover las Internacionales Theosophy Conferences y fui su presidente varios años. Mi intención era la de enfocar como objetivo principal de esta organización la unidad Teosófica. Hay una frase en las enseñanzas que dice que los Maestros no nos pueden ayudar si no existe unidad entre los Teósofos. Me he dado cuenta de que ha sido cientos los teósofos que han intentado durante

años conseguir la unidad, pero no han sido reconocidos ni se les ha dado la prominencia que merecían. Nos hemos sentido muy honrados de formar parte de todo esto.

Un resultado concreto de la unidad entre las tradiciones teosóficas es el de abrir la puerta a un enorme almacén de escritos teosóficos y a una serie de personas maravillosas dispuestas a ponerlos a nuestra disposición. En particular, los que se dedican a la investigación. Viendo todo esto, Jim y yo vimos la posibilidad de contribuir con las ideas Teosóficas al mundo moderno. Especialmente allí donde más dura es la trayectoria de tanta gente. Creamos una página web: [www.beyond-the-gates.com](http://www.beyond-the-gates.com) y hemos escrito artículos sobre la esquizofrenia, el suicidio y la psicoterapia Teosófica, y estamos a punto de publicar un artículo llamado: El Aborto, y la Reencarnación del Alma. Ahora tenemos la posibilidad, gracias a internet, de encontrar rápidamente las últimas investigaciones, la corriente actual de pensamiento, en libros y artículos, y hemos recibido ayuda, además, de muchos teósofos de todo el mundo. Por ello, tenemos la sensación de que estamos en un momento increíble para hacer este tipo de trabajo. El nombre de la página, "Beyond the Gates" está sacado del pasaje de la vida de Buddha, en el que se le advierte al joven príncipe de que si cruza las puertas del reino protegido, encontrará los cuatro sufrimientos del nacimiento, la invalidez, la vejez y la muerte.

Tenemos intención de publicar un artículo especial sobre las numerosas bibliotecas que contienen escritos teosóficos y prestan un servicio on line. También hemos visto que algunas de estas bibliotecas os pueden escanear y mandar los artículos que os interesen. Imaginaros. !Qué agradecidos tenemos que estar!

Me he visto obligada a aprender informática, algo que nunca creí posible. Pero pronto podremos tener el último Adobe Dreamweaver conectado con el software de CMS Wordpress. Mi nieto, verdadero experto en informática, me considera como un colega suyo y nunca pensé que esto pudiera pasar.



*Sally y Jim Colbert*

# Buenas noticias de Amsterdam

Septiembre 25-27, 2013



Hay programada una conferencia muy interesante para los días 25-27 de septiembre de 2013 en Amsterdam. **"Modernidades encantadas: la Teosofía y las Artes en el Mundo moderno"**

es uno de varios acontecimientos programados en un proyecto apoyado por The Leverhulme Trust, con una página web de la universidad de York. Este proyecto, que se hará en varios años, tiene el siguiente objetivo:

Reuniendo a estudiantes expertos en el arte visual, en la música, el sonido y la literatura de todo el mundo, los eventos de la Red explorarán lo puede decirnos el arte visual, material y artístico sobre las relaciones entre la Teosofía, la modernidad y el misticismo c. 1875-1960.

La URL del proyecto es la siguiente:

<http://www.york.ac.uk/history-of-art/enchanted-modernities/>

Por favor, difundid la noticia entre los estudiosos de estos campos de investigación que pudieran estar interesados.



# Buenas noticias de ITC

!Empezad a difundir las noticias!

Theosophy Forward apoya las iniciativas de Internacional Theosophy Conferences (ITC) incondicionalmente. La 14a reunión anual de ITC que tuvo lugar en Olcott, Wheaton, en Agosto de 2011, dejó claro que los teósofos de todas las tradiciones se podrían reunir respetuosamente en una plataforma compartida. Este año, la 15a reunión anual se celebrará en la ciudad donde comenzó todo en 1875, Nueva York.

Los organizadores han reservado una sede magnífica: el Bohemian National Hall, en el mismo corazón de la Gran Manzana y se esperan participantes de todos los rincones del mundo.



*El Bohemian National Hall por la noche*



*La escalera del Bohemian National Hall*



*La terraza de la azotea en el Bohemian*



*El vestíbulo, con su famosa escalera*

Las fechas son: del 8 al 11 de Agosto de 2013 y el tema del evento será:

**"¿Cómo Despertar la Compasión? H. P. Blavatsky y la Doctrina Secreta Eterna."**

Para información detallada en cuanto al local, los hoteles, los alquileres de piso y el formulario de inscripción hacer clic aquí:  
<http://www.theosconf.org/>





*La magnífica sala de reuniones*

Los objetivos de la ITC (Internacional Theosophy Conferences) incluyen el apoyo a los Tres Objetivos tal y como se recogen en los escritos de H.P. Blavatsky y el fomento de la comunicación entre todas las tradiciones Teosóficas.



*Sala de reuniones más pequeña*

Foto de la terraza de la Azotea por cortesía de Marian Benes.

Las demás fotos son cortesía de Pavel Semarak





## 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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