

Theosophy Forward

Moving
ahead in
the 21st
century

Main theme in this issue

Our Unity



Chronology of Theosophical Unity

The Eye and the Heart Doctrine

Human Regeneration

Adyar, Mon Amour

Theosophical approaches to Christianity

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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Chelas and Lay Chelas

by H. P. Blavatsky

[This article was published in *The Theosophist* 4.10 supplement (July, 1883): 10-11, and reprinted in *Collected Writings* 4:606-614.]

As the word *Chela* has, among others, been introduced by Theosophy into the nomenclature of Western metaphysics, and the circulation of our magazine is constantly widening, it will be as well if some more definite explanation than heretofore is given with respect to the meaning of this term and the rules of Chelaship, for the benefit of our European if not Eastern members. A “Chela” then, is one who has offered himself or herself as a pupil to learn practically the “hidden mysteries of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.” The spiritual teacher to whom he proposes his candidature is called in India a *Guru*; and the real Guru is always an Adept in the Occult Science. A man of profound knowledge, exoteric and esoteric, especially the latter; and one who has brought his carnal nature under subjection of the WILL; who has developed in himself both the power (*Siddhi*) to control the forces of nature, and the capacity to probe her secrets by the help of the formerly latent but now active powers of his being — this is the real Guru. To offer oneself as a candidate for Chelaship is easy enough, to develop into an Adept the most difficult task any man could possibly undertake. There are scores of “natural-born” poets, mathematicians, mechanics, statesmen, etc., but a natural-born Adept is something practically impossible. For, though we do hear at very rare intervals of one who has an extraordinary innate capacity for the acquisition of occult knowledge and power, yet even he has to pass the selfsame tests and probations, and go through the same self-training as any less endowed fellow aspirant. In this matter it is most true that there is no royal road by which favourites may travel.

For centuries the selection of Chelas — outside the hereditary group within the *gon-pa* (temple) — has been made by the Himalayan Mahatmas themselves from among the class — in Tibet, a considerable one as to number — of natural mystics. The only exceptions have been in the cases of Western

men like Fludd, Thomas Vaughan, Paracelsus, Pico della Mirandola, Count de Saint-Germain, etc., whose temperamental affinity to this celestial science more or less forced the distant Adepts to come into personal relations with them, and enabled them to get such small (or large) proportion of the whole truth as was possible under their social surroundings. From Book IV of *Kiu-ti*, chapter on “the Laws of Upasana,” we learn that the qualifications expected in a Chela were:

1. Perfect physical health;
2. Absolute mental and physical purity;
3. Unselfishness of purpose; universal charity; pity for all animate beings;
4. Truthfulness and unswerving faith in the law of Karma, independent of any power in nature that could interfere: a law whose course is not to be obstructed by any agency, not to be caused to deviate by prayer or propitiatory exoteric ceremonies;
5. A courage undaunted in every emergency, even by peril to life;
6. An intuitional perception of one’s being the vehicle of the manifested Avalokitesvara or Divine Atman (Spirit);
7. Calm indifference for, but a just appreciation of everything that constitutes the objective and transitory world, in its relation with, and to, the invisible regions.

Such, at the least, must have been the recommendations of one aspiring to perfect Chelaship. With the sole exception of the first, which in rare and exceptional cases might have been modified, each one of these points has been invariably insisted upon, and all must have been more or less developed in the inner nature by the Chela’s UN-HELPED EXERTIONS, before he could be actually put to the test.

When the self-evolving ascetic — whether in, or outside the active world — had placed himself, according to his natural capacity, above, hence made himself master of, his (1) *Sharira* — body; (2) *Indriya* — senses; (3) *Dosha* — faults; (4) *Duhkha* — pain; and is ready to become one with his *Manas* — mind; *Buddhi* — intellection, or spiritual intelligence; and *Atma* — highest soul, *i.e.*, spirit. When he is ready for this, and, further, to recognize in

Atma the highest ruler in the world of perceptions, and in the will, the highest executive energy (power), then may he, under the time-honoured rules, be taken in hand by one of the Initiates. He may then be shown the mysterious path at whose thither end the Chela is taught the unerring discernment of *Phala*, or the fruits of causes produced, and given the means of reaching *Apavarga* — emancipation, from the misery of repeated births (in whose determination the ignorant has no hand), and thus of avoiding *Pretya-bhava* — transmigration.

But since the advent of the Theosophical Society, one of whose arduous tasks it was to reawaken in the Aryan mind the dormant memory of the existence of this science and of those transcendent human capabilities, the rules of Chela selection have become slightly relaxed in one respect. Many members of the Society becoming convinced by practical proof upon the above points, and rightly enough thinking that if other men had hitherto reached the goal, they too if inherently fitted, might reach it by following the same path, pressed to be taken as candidates. And as it would be an interference with Karma to deny them the chance of at least beginning — since they were so importunate, they were given it. The results have been far from encouraging so far, and it is to show these unfortunates the cause of their failure as much as to warn others against rushing heedlessly upon a similar fate, that the writing of the present article has been ordered. The candidates in question, though plainly warned against it in advance, began wrong by selfishly looking to the future and losing sight of the past. They forgot that they had done nothing to deserve the rare honour of selection, nothing which warranted their expecting such a privilege; that they could boast of none of the above enumerated merits. As men of the selfish, sensual world, whether married or single, merchants, civilian or military employees, or members of the learned professions, they had been to a school most calculated to assimilate them to the animal nature, least so to develop their spiritual potentialities. Yet each and all had vanity enough to suppose that their case would be made an exception to the law of countless centuries' establishment as though, indeed, in their person had been born to the world a new *Avatara*! All expected to have hidden things taught, extraordinary powers given them because — well, because they had joined the Theosophical Society. Some had sincerely resolved to amend their lives, and give up their evil courses: we must do them that justice, at all events.

All were refused at first, Col. Olcott, the President, himself, to begin with: and as to the latter gentleman there is now no harm in saying that he was not formally accepted as a Chela until he had proved by more than a year's devoted labours and by a determination which brooked no denial, that he might safely be tested. Then from all sides came complaints — from Hindus, who ought to have known better, as well as from Europeans who, of course, were not in a condition to know anything at all about the rules. The cry was that unless at least a few Theosophists were given the chance to try, the Society could not endure. Every other noble and unselfish feature of our programme was ignored — a man's duty to his neighbour, to his country, his duty to help, enlighten, encourage and elevate those weaker and less favoured than he; all were trampled out of sight in the insane rush for adeptship. The call for phenomena, phenomena, phenomena, resounded in every quarter, and the Founders were impeded in their real work and teased importunately to intercede with the Mahatmas, against whom the real grievance lay, though their poor agents had to take all the buffets. At last, the word came from the higher authorities that a few of the most urgent candidates should be taken at their word. The result of the experiment would perhaps show better than any amount of preaching what Chelaship meant, and what are the consequences of selfishness and temerity. Each candidate was warned that he must wait for years in any event, before his fitness could be proven, and that he must pass through a series of tests that would bring out all there was in him, whether bad or good. They were nearly all married men and hence were designated "Lay Chelas" — a term new in English, but having long had its equivalent in Asiatic tongues. A Lay Chela is but a man of the world who affirms his desire to become wise in spiritual things. Virtually, every member of the Theosophical Society who subscribes to the second of our three "Declared Objects" is such; for though not of the number of true Chelas, he has yet the possibility of becoming one, for he has stepped across the boundary line which separated him from the Mahatmas, and has brought himself, as it were, under their notice. In joining the Society and binding himself to help along its work, he has pledged himself to act in some degree in concert with those Mahatmas, at whose behest the Society was organized, and under whose conditional protection it remains. The joining is then, the introduction; all the rest depends entirely upon the member himself, and he need never expect the most distant approach to the "favour" of one of our Mahatmas, or any other Mahatmas in

the world should the latter consent to become known — that has not been fully earned by personal merit. The *Mahatmas are the servants, not the arbiters of the Law of Karma*. LAY CHELASHIP CONFERS NO PRIVILEGE UPON ANYONE EXCEPT THAT OF WORKING FOR MERIT UNDER THE OBSERVATION OF A MASTER. And whether that Master be or be not seen by the Chela makes no difference whatever as to the result: his good thought, words and deeds will bear their fruits, his evil ones, theirs. To boast of Lay Chelaship or make a parade of it, is the surest way to reduce the relationship with the Guru to a mere empty name, for it would be *prima facie* evidence of vanity and unfitness for further progress. And for years we have been teaching everywhere the maxim “First deserve, then desire” intimacy with the Mahatmas.

Now there is a terrible law operative in nature, one which cannot be altered, and whose operation clears up the apparent mystery of the selection of certain “Chelas” who have turned out sorry specimens of morality, these few years past. Does the reader recall the old proverb: “Let sleeping dogs lie?” There is a world of occult meaning in it. No man or woman knows his or her moral strength until it is tried. Thousands go through life very respectably because they were never put to the pinch. This is a truism doubtless, but it is most pertinent to the present case. One who undertakes to try for Chelaship by that very act rouses and lashes to desperation every sleeping passion of his animal nature. For this is the commencement of a struggle for the mastery in which quarter is neither to be given nor taken. It is, once for all: “To be, or Not to be”; to conquer, means ADEPTSHIP; to fail, an ignoble Martyrdom; for to fall victim to lust, pride, avarice, vanity, selfishness, cowardice, or any other of the lower propensities, is indeed ignoble, if measured by the standard of true manhood. The Chela is not only called to face all the latent evil propensities of his nature, but, in addition, the whole volume of maleficent power accumulated by the community and nation to which he belongs. For he is an integral part of those aggregates, and what affects either the individual man, or the group (town or nation) reacts upon the other. And in this instance his struggle for goodness jars upon the whole body of badness in his environment, and draws its fury upon him. If he is content to go along with his neighbours and be almost as they are — perhaps a little better or somewhat worse than the average — no one may give him a thought. But let it be known that he has been able to detect the hollow mockery of social life, its hypocrisy, selfishness, sensuality, cupidity and other bad features, and has determined to lift himself

up to a higher level, at once he is hated, and every bad, or bigoted, or malicious nature sends at him a current of opposing will power. If he is innately strong he shakes it off, as the powerful swimmer dashes through the current that would bear a weaker one away. But in this moral battle, if the Chela has one single hidden blemish — do what he may, it *shall* and *will* be brought to light. The varnish of conventionalities which “civilization” overlays us all with must come off to the last coat, and the Inner Self, naked and without the slightest veil to conceal its reality, is exposed. The habits of society which hold men to a certain degree under moral restraint, and compel them to pay tribute to virtue by seeming to be good whether they are so or not, these habits are apt to be all forgotten, these restraints to be all broken through under the strain of Chelaship. He is now in an atmosphere of illusions — *Maya*. Vice puts on its most alluring face, and the tempting passions try to lure the inexperienced aspirant to the depths of psychic debasement. This is not a case like that depicted by a great artist, where Satan is seen playing a game of chess with a man upon the stake of his soul, while the latter’s good angel stands beside him to counsel and assist. For the strife is in this instance between the Chela’s Will and his carnal nature, and Karma forbids that any angel or Guru should interfere until the result is known. With the vividness of poetic fancy Bulwer Lytton has idealized it for us in his *Zanoni*, a work which will ever be prized by the occultist; while in his *Strange Story* he has with equal power shown the black side of occult research and its deadly perils. Chelaship was defined, the other day, by a Mahatma as a “psychic solvent, which eats away all dross and leaves only the pure gold behind.” If the candidate has the latent lust for money, or political chicanery, or materialistic scepticism, or vain display, or false speaking, or cruelty, or sensual gratification of any kind, the germ is almost sure to sprout; and so, on the other hand, as regards the noble qualities of human nature. The real man comes out. Is it not the height of folly, then, for anyone to leave the smooth path of commonplace life to scale the crags of Chelaship without some reasonable feeling of certainty that he has the right stuff in him? Well says the Bible: “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” [1 *Corinth.*, 10.12.] — a text that would-be Chelas should consider well before they rush headlong into the fray! It would have been well for some of our Lay Chelas if they had thought twice before defying the tests. *We call to mind several sad failures within a twelve-month*. One went bad in the head, recanted noble sentiments uttered but a few weeks previously, and became a

member of a religion he had just scornfully and unanswerably proven false. A second became a defaulter and absconded with his employer's money — the latter also a Theosophist. A third gave himself up to gross debauchery, and confessed it with ineffectual sobs and tears, to his chosen Guru. A fourth got entangled with a person of the other sex and fell out with his dearest and truest friends. A fifth showed signs of mental aberration and was brought into Court upon charges of discreditable conduct. A sixth shot himself to escape the consequences of criminality, on the verge of detection! And so we might go on and on. All these were apparently sincere searchers after truth, and passed in the world for respectable persons. Externally, they were fairly eligible as candidates for Chelaship, as appearances go; but "within all was rottenness and dead men's bones." The world's varnish was so thick as to hide the absence of the true gold underneath; and the "resolvent" doing its work, the candidate proved in each instance but a gilded figure of moral dross, from circumference to core. . . .

In what precedes we have, of course, dealt but with the failures among Lay Chelas; there have been partial successes too, and these are passing gradually through the first stages of their probation. Some are making themselves useful to the Society and to the world in general by good example and precept. If they persist, well for them, well for us all: the odds are fearfully against them, but still "there is no impossibility to him who WILLS." The difficulties in Chelaship will never be less until human nature changes and a new sort is evolved. St. Paul (*Rom.*, vii, 18-19) might have had a Chela in mind when he said "to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is (good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." And in the wise *Kirâtârajunîya* of Bhâravi it is written:

"The enemies which rise within the body,
Hard to be overcome — the evil passions —
Should manfully be fought; *who conquers these
Is equal to the conqueror of worlds.*" (11.32.)

Our Unity Series

In this fourth quarter 2013 issue of Theosophy Forward, five contributions by:

Dorothy Bell

John Algeo

Nicholas Weeks

John Roberts

Sally and Jim Colbert

Our Unity

by Dorothy Bell - Australia

What do you believe could be done in order to bring about more understanding among all the Theosophical traditions, overcoming the apparent insurmountable hindrances that have divided them for too long? How can you individually or with your group positively add to this process?

Religious or spiritual traditions are the product of their past in terms of change and continuity. Each one tends to recreate itself in successive generations over time, preserving and even solidifying the original model in its structures, beliefs and methods. Members usually have karmic connections and emotional investment in the tradition they choose or into which they are born.

Revolutionary offshoots tend to change methods or structures according to different values and perceptions. Evolutionary change within an organization becomes necessary when different cultural or changed social contexts impact on its relevance or survival. And so, one response to the guiding question is to say that while like-minded people across boundaries in spiritual organizations or churches could group together in a variety of activities for a variety of reasons, to do so is not so much to repair the past (because nothing is broken that needs fixing) - as to respond to a perception of a felt need and *common cause*.



The potential for change is always present. Our world is darkened by corruption, deceit, ambition, violence, hatred, greed, instability, disadvantage, fear and uncertainty – and bereft of compassion. The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions has evolved an interesting model of 'like-minds' working to harmonise their relationships in a context where insurmountable differences have prevailed for a long time. And the motivation is expressed in a shared vision and mission to create a better and just world. The website www.parliamentofreligions.org describes these as well as presenting information and news about structures and projects.

While the Council may be emerging as a global vehicle for the expression of practical religion, the question may be asked about the relevance and core business of Theosophy and the Society in these times of turmoil. The following extracts from H. P. Blavatsky and the Mahatma Koot Hoomi shape the direction of a possible response.

“Theosophy must not represent merely a collection of moral verities, a bundle of metaphysical ethics epitomized in theoretical dissertations. Theosophy must be made practical, and has, therefore to be disencumbered of useless discussion ... it has to find objective expression in an all-embracing code of life thoroughly impregnated with its spirit – the spirit of mutual tolerance, charity and love”.¹

“Theosophy is divine nature, visible and invisible, and its Society human nature trying to ascend to its divine parent ... It was formed to assist in showing to men that such a thing as Theosophy exists, and to help them to ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities.”²

... “the essence of Theosophy is the perfect harmonizing of the divine with the human in man, the adjustment of his god-like qualities and aspirations, and their sway over the terrestrial or animal passions in him. Kindness, absence of every ill feeling or selfishness, charity, goodwill to all beings, and perfect justice to others as to oneself, are its chief features.”³

(Theosophy's) “most holy and important mission” is “to unite firmly a body of men of all nations in brotherly love and bent on pure altruistic work, not on a labor with selfish motives.”⁴

“The crest wave of intellectuality must be taken hold of and guided into spirituality”⁵

“May Theosophy grow more and more a living power in the lives of each one of our members ... is the wish of your humble co-worker and fellow member.”⁶ [H.P.B.]

Theosophy - Divine Wisdom - is altruism; it is spiritual practice and the expression of our divine heritage, and our true inner and eternal nature. To be a theosophist is to become who we already are; it is to live the Life; to live the divine wisdom and loving compassion that reside in the hearts of everyone.

The journey of a Theosophist is to grow theosophy as our living truth and as a living power in our lives. It is a ‘steep and thorny road’ to remove the impediments and to nurture the divine seed to grow into a strong sapling and a great tree of knowledge, wisdom, compassion and strength. Along the way, it is our role to ‘be there’ for the vulnerable and disadvantaged who cross our paths in these darkest of times.

And surely it is the **role of any vehicle of Theosophy** to practically assist its members in understanding and using the tools of self-transformation. Drawn from theosophy, psychology and education they fashion the personal journey in a reality shift from a material to a spiritual world-view, from egoism to altruism and Self-Realization.

Self-transformation changes the world. Are the boundaries and territories of interpretation really relevant to the call of spirit?

Notes:

1. H. P. Blavatsky, Quotation from a letter written by one of the Masters, in *The Original Programme of The Theosophical Society*, TPH Adyar, p. 41
2. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 57
3. H. P. Blavatsky, *Letter to the American Convention 1888*, p.4
4. H. P. Blavatsky, *Letter to the American Convention 1888*, p.3
5. *Mahatma Koot Hoomi, Last Letter to Annie Besant*, Quest, Journal of the Theosophical Society in America, Summer 2011
6. H. P. Blavatsky, *Letter to the American Convention 1890*, p.5

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Our Unity

by John Algeo – USA

When we look around the world, we see — not unity, but disunity — not just diversity, but disharmony. We see aggressive opposition between nations, religions, particular sects of religions, races, ethnic groups, and individuals. Can this apparent disunity be reconciled with the concept of unity?

Merriam-Webster's 11th Collegiate Dictionary defines “unity,” among other ways, as “a condition of harmony” and “a totality of related parts: an entity that is a complex or systematic whole.” Those two senses do not exclude diversity from the concept of “unity”; in fact, they imply it. The opposite of a little truth is a falsehood; the opposite of a big truth is a yet bigger truth. Unity is the biggest truth of all.

In the “Proem” to *The Secret Doctrine* (1:14–20), Blavatsky writes that “the first fundamental axiom of the Secret Doctrine is ... one absolute — be-ness. ... The ‘Manifested Universe’ ... is pervaded by duality, which is, as it were, the very essence of its EX-istence as ‘manifestation.’ But ... the opposite poles of subject and object, spirit and matter, are but aspects of the One Unity in which they are synthesized.”

The word “unity” comes, via Old French, from the Latin word “unus,” meaning “one,” which in turn goes back to Indo-European, the ancestor of languages including English and most of those of Europe, as well as many of India. So “unity” is not a modern concept, a johnny-come-lately, but rather an ancient word and idea. Indeed, it is part of and fundamental to the Ancient Wisdom of Theosophy.

That Theosophy Forward should have a section devoted to “Our Unity” is therefore wholly appropriate. Let us as Theosophists move forward in unity with one another and in unity with all peoples everywhere — in the spirit of the universal (that is, one-world) oneness that Theosophy recognizes as the basic concept underlying all existence.

The image is a vertical composition. The top left corner shows a portion of a globe with blue oceans and green continents, overlaid with a colorful, multi-colored compass rose. The background is a gradient from light blue at the top to a warm orange at the bottom. In the lower half, a line of stylized red human figures is shown holding hands, receding into the distance. The figures are simple, blocky shapes with a rounded head and outstretched arms.

Universal

Brotherhood

The Aura of All-Being

by Nicholas Weeks – USA

To make unity among members of Theosophical groups a focus of our unifying efforts would be a mistake. It would be a form of group self-centeredness. Theosophists (like all of humanity) are already a unity within.

To form and maintain a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood outwardly, our intent needs to be far more inclusive than our family of Theosophists. Strive to speak, act and think unity for all beings, human and non-human, here and throughout all realms of space. This expansive attitude excludes no creature from the aura of All-Being.

In short, pay little or no attention to Theosophists as Theosophists, but just as sparks of the Divine in human form, like the rest of mankind.

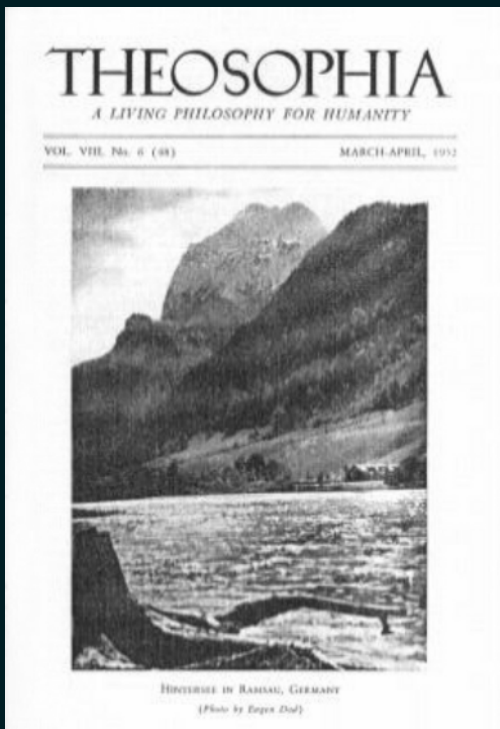
As W. Q. Judge advises, keep the focus of our work on all of humanity and unity will slowly manifest, even among Theosophists.

“The Theosophical philosophy shows that there is a unity among beings not only in their better natures but also on the physical plane, [then] our first object becomes most practical. For if all men are brothers in fact, that is, joined one to another by a tie which no one can break, then the formation of the nucleus for the future brotherhood is something that has to do with all the affairs of man...

This first object means philanthropy. Each Theosophist should therefore not only continue his private or public acts of charity, but also strive to so understand Theosophical philosophy as to be able to expound it in a practical and easily understood manner, so that he may be a wider philanthropist by ministering to the needs of the inner man. This inner man is a thinking being who feeds upon a right or wrong philosophy. If he is given that one which is wrong, then, becoming warped and diseased, he leads his instrument, the outer man, into bewilderment and sorrow ...

It is pre-eminently our duty to be thus practical in exposition as often as possible. Intellectual study only of our Theosophy will not speedily better

the world. It must, of course, have effect through immortal ideas once more set in motion, but while we are waiting for those ideas to bear fruit among men a revolution may break out and sweep us away. We should do as Buddha taught his disciples: preach, practice, promulgate, and illustrate our doctrines. He spoke to the meanest of men with effect, although having a deeper doctrine for greater and more learned minds. Let us, then, acquire the art of practical exposition of ethics based on our theories and enforced by the fact of Universal Brotherhood." ["What Our Society Needs Most," *Echoes of the Orient* 1:279-81]



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Unity by Multiplication, Multiplication by Units

by John Roberts - USA

The recognition of pure Theosophy - the philosophy of the rational explanation of things and not the tenets - is of the most vital importance in the [Theosophical] Society, inasmuch as it alone can furnish the beacon-light needed to guide humanity on its true path. - H. P. B. in her *First Message to American Theosophists*, 1888.

At first glance, it may seem that nothing could be simpler or more plainly stated than is the aim of the Theosophical Movement in the words of H. P. Blavatsky, addressed to a convention of American Theosophists in one of the climacteric years of the nineteenth-century effort: the year of The Secret Doctrine, and the year when the Esoteric Section would be announced. How is it, then, that the Movement today has become such a complex disunity? Why is it that almost none of the simple, plain directions of the Teacher are being consistently followed in the various “branches” of the Movement - let alone the fact that the very existence of rival societies is contrary to the First Object!

Even to define “pure Theosophy” is to start an internecine war among so-called Theosophists, although to fight about pure Theosophy is manifestly absurd: as well expect Einstein to propose a duel because an amateur mathematician scoffed at the Relativity Theory! What, then, is the war about? Why, about impure “theosophys,” and waged by those who desire to plant themselves in the ground that has been cleared in the name of H. P. B. and the Masters.

It is not significant that various and distinct interpretations of Theosophy are expounded in Theosophical circles. Nor is it surprising that some interpretations are useful, inspiring, and honest, while others are degrading, deceitful, and morally infectious. The Theosophical Movement continues nevertheless, except when free speech and a healthy divergence of

opinion are interfered with as a policy. To curtail the free expression of opinion and conviction among theosophical students is to encourage "spiritual" dictatorship; to preach Unity, while assiduously practicing the technique of "divide-and-rule," is hypocritical; and to celebrate "independent devotion" after all original thinkers and creative workers have been ejected from an organization, is sheer jesuitry. Such policies can only lead to the complete annihilation, as a theosophic center, of the group or clique which chooses to run thus counter to the real Theosophical Movement.

Regardless of individual differences, Theosophists are expected to work whole-heartedly for Theosophy, and neither for, nor against, any person or persons whatsoever. It is true that the student usually identifies himself with certain associates, and naturally takes direction from those whose judgment and ability he respects - thus avoiding the pitfalls of heedlessly trying to "go it alone." Yet a fine line has to be drawn: each of us must be our own final authority in all matters of conscience and decision. Making choices is a difficult, worrisome, and sometimes heart-breaking task, and the weakling, the "coward soul," can easily find fancy excuses for shirking the job. But if he does, he misses priceless opportunities to form his own conclusions, act upon his own understanding, stand by his convictions - and take the consequences of his own mistakes. Conscientious self-reliance is not all "sweetness and light"; it will necessarily involve, from time to time, definite disagreement with fellow-workers as to methods. But ideally speaking - and where soul integrity is the paramount consideration - disagreement need not imply disagreeableness.

Is this the picture today? Or is the Theosophical world a busy little (very little) arena, in which still smaller areas are given over to picayune skirmishings, and where so much dust is stirred up that the audience can see nothing clearly? When Theosophists devote time, energy, and ingenuity to personal squabbles, what do they expect Theosophy to mean to the world "outside"? Is there some magic way by which jealous hearts, ambitious egotists, and warped minds can nevertheless reflect Truth?

H. P. B.'s definition of pure Theosophy is "the philosophy of the rational explanation of things and not the tenets." How is this understood today? Do Theosophists honor and encourage every man's attempt to philosophize from the theosophic basis, or do they tend to focus on a few Rational Explainers who supposedly use Theosophy properly? Very cautious

are such “protectors” of the tender shoots of Theosophy, very particular about the words used in conveying Theosophy, very much concerned about the education, appearance, habits, and personality of those who are permitted to speak and write Theosophy. Does the Wisdom-Religion, which has existed and survived throughout innumerable cycles of civilization, depend, then, upon the flimsy foundation of names, forms, and appearances?

Not so thought H. P. B., whose outright statement in the First Message is: “The multiplication of local centres should be a foremost consideration in your minds, and each man should strive to be a centre of work in himself.” What can this mean, but that H. P. B. brought Theosophy for every man, woman, and child in the country and in the world, and that she hoped to see the great ideas adopted, used, and expressed by all kinds of minds, in all walks of life, from all points of view, and everywhere! What seems to have escaped the notice of “organizational” Theosophists is that “multiplication” is the opposite of centralization. No man who reads H. P. Blavatsky’s words with a welcoming heart is incapable of spreading Theosophy, in his own way, to those whom he meets in daily life. No man touched by a vision of the Theosophical Movement is unable to forward that Movement, to some degree.

In the light of H. P. B.’s convention messages, therefore, much theosophical work in our time must be termed anti-Theosophy. The question is, what is to be done about it?

Introducing the Esoteric Section in her second message, H. P. B. described it as a group “whose members are pledged, among other things, to work for Theosophy under my direction.” It may be that these words have a significance imperfectly fathomed by present Theosophical societies. Are we to think that the Esoteric Section began in 1888, that it ended in 1891, or that it exists no longer? Shall we search for it in a place, a person, or in one special “splinter” of the Movement? Or shall we ask, simply, if we have pledged ourselves to work for Theosophy under H. P. B.’s direction? If we have, is she not aware of the fact? Let us recall what a Mahatma wrote to A. P. Sinnett in 1882: “Your strivings, perplexities and forebodings are equally noticed, good and faithful friend. In the imperishable RECORD of the Masters you have written them all.” (*Mahatma Letters*, p. 266.) If this is so, what more do we need in the way of a go-ahead signal? What prevents us from forging our own path of Theosophical promulgation?

In the Theosophical Movement, as in evolution itself, the soul's position is neither a gift nor a privilege; it can neither be conferred nor taken away; neither bought, nor sold, nor transferred; it is what it is, as a result of self-induced and self-devised exertions. Let each Theosophist be a center; let each center expand and multiply; and as the multiplication proceeds, each nucleus will realize, more and more, the meaning of universal Brotherhood.



Chronology of Theosophical Unity

by Sally and Jim Colbert – USA

1907

[Location Unknown] Albert E.S. Smythe attempted to bring about “rapprochement among various elements that had branched off.” He found Theosophy through William Q. Judge en route while on a passenger liner to the United States.

According to the history provided by James Santucci (“An Early Attempt at Fraternization,” *Keeping the Link Unbroken*, Michael Gomes) it was after he had been expelled from the Point Loma Society he contacted G.R.S. Mead, Archibald Keightley, Charles Johnson and Annie Besant calling for an extension of greetings between the societies. To Smythe there were indications that these prominent figures were willing but agreement for this did not come forward from the other groups. Smythe later was a leader in establishing the Canadian Section of the Theosophical Society and became the first editor of the Canadian Theosophist.

1930

Point Loma, California. Gottfried de Purucker initiated the “Fraternization Movement.” [The word “fraternize” has come to have two meanings: **1.** To associate with others in a brotherly or congenial way. **2.** To associate on friendly terms with an enemy or opposing group, often in violation of discipline or orders. G de P and others in these early years were using the term in the first definition above.] G de P, as many called him, headed the Theosophical Society Point Loma. A tone was set for Theosophical unity which oriented the T. S. Point Loma (at a later time there was a split leading to T. S. Point Loma and T. S. Pasadena) ongoing efforts towards unification. From Emmett Small, quoting G de P, “Fraternization and Networking: Yesterday and

Today" [*Eclectic Theosophist*]. "Joint meetings have been held and arrangements for members of one society to freely visit the meetings of the other, and the accumulated ice of years was beginning to thaw under the growing recognition of the fact that all Theosophists, no matter what their affiliation, are thereby brothers." This tone continued through 1940, a break during World War II, and into the 1980s. Quoting Annie Besant: "I have always deeply regretted the unfortunate impression made upon the public when Theosophists assume an unfriendly attitude towards each other, and I have never been able to understand why the half dozen different Theosophical Societies which exist in the United States should not live at least harmoniously in the same country as the various orthodox denominations." Added by G. de Perucker: "Our ideal will be ultimately to make our beloved T. S. the Theosophical Society of the World."

1930

Adyar, India and Point Loma, California. On April 24, 1930, a letter was written to Dr. Annie Besant, President, The Theosophical Society (Adyar), asking for collaboration in the compilation of the forthcoming Complete Works of H. P. Blavatsky. Her endorsement was secured by Lars Eek, at the Theosophical Convention held in Geneva, Switzerland, June 28 — July 1, 1930, at which he presided. After a period of preliminary correspondence, constructive and fruitful literary teamwork was established with the officials at the Adyar Headquarters. The permission of Dr. Annie Besant to utilize material in the Archives of The Theosophical Society at Adyar, and the wholehearted collaboration of C. Jinarajadasa, A. J. Hamerster, Mary K. Neff, N. Sri Ram, and others, extending over a number of years, have been factors of primary importance in the success of this entire effort. Boris de Zirkoff led the way to the Complete Works which later became *The Collected Writings* of H. P. Blavatsky.

1931

Toronto, Canada. "Fraternization Conferences" were held annually and sponsored by the Canadian Theosophical Society through starting in 1931 through 1946. The conferences were, for the most part, alternately held in the United States and Canada. Students from several Theosophical traditions were represented.

1950

Ojai, California. USA. A group composed of Emmett Small (TS Point Loma), Henry Geiger (ULT), Victor Endersby, Boris de Zirkoff, and Geoffrey Barborka met at the Krotona site of TS Adyar. A quote from Victor Endersby from this time period ("Mission Prophetic," *Theosophical Notes*), commenting on the divisions in Theosophical history: "There have been many successive upheavals in the work, each of which has served purposes: it has shaken out the faint hearted, the followers of personalities, the devotees, conscious or unconscious, of the "Personal God" idea, the cowards, and the self-serving ..."

1950

Helsinki, Finland. Theosophists Gathered in Fraternization. [Note: this meeting was recorded in several sites but without reviews].

1984

Pasadena, California. A letter from Geoffrey Farthing was sent to all the heads of the Theosophical Societies towards a unity conference. This was organized by Ken Small, Rick Nurrie, Eldon Tucker, Dara Eklund, and Jerry Ekins. Conference name, "The Theosophical Movement: Networking for Unity."

1986

Santa Monica, California. Margaret Geiger, Gabe Blechman, Eileen Walker, (ULT) as well as students from the Pasadena TS, Adyar TS Canadian Section, and Point Loma Publications held a Networking conference.

1992

San Diego, California. This conference was recorded in *The High Country Theosophist* (July). Grace Knoche was the featured speaker. She portrayed Katherine Tingley making efforts toward peace and harmony. She also spoke informally of her personal reminiscences of Katherine Tingley as "Warrior for Peace."

1993

Chicago, IL. World Parliament of Religions. Representatives from TS Pasadena, United Lodge of Theosophists, and Theosophical Society in America, jointly participated in the Parliament representing Theosophy, to overflow crowds. These representatives worked together to presenting

Theosophy – not separate traditions.

1994

James Perkins, past National President of the Adyar TS, Henry Geiger (ULT), Kirby van Mater (Pasadena TS), Emmett Small (Point Loma Publications), Ted Davy (Canadian Theosophist) and John Algeo. Conference theme: “Networking for Unity.”

1994

Brookings, Oregon. Willie Dade and many other students, initially from ULT began informal gatherings. This led to annual meetings which brought attendees from many other Theosophical traditions. In 2003 the meetings were held in Long Beach, CA, 2004 in San Diego, CA. 2005 in Santa Barbara, CA, 2006 in Julian, CA, 2007 Petaluma, CA.

1998

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Secret Doctrine Symposium. Individuals from different groups were present including European Section of T. S., Theosophical Society in America, Theosophical Society Pasadena, United Lodge of Theosophists and unaffiliated students. Tibetan Buddhist monks from Drepung Loseling Monastery constructed a mandala sand painting during the conference.

2008

Haverford, Pennsylvania. International Theosophy Conferences, Inc. began as a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization. In 2009 the conference was held in Los Angeles, CA in connection to the ULT Centennial; in 2010 held in The Hague, Netherlands at the Point Loma TS headquarters; 2011 in Julian, CA; 2012 in Olcott- Wheaton; in 2013 in New York.

International Theosophy Conferences is dedicated to foster intercommunication among all Theosophical traditions. Students from most traditions attended the conferences.

The authors are the first to realize, the above is only a partial record of the multiple efforts towards a unity in the Theosophical world. There are some implications:

1. The call for unity between Theosophical traditions has been

existent for over 100 years.

2. Reviews following conferences were all strongly proclaimed “success.”

3. Theosophical fraternization or unity meetings have occurred in many places on the planet.

4. Some have opposed this movement, but for the most part, key leaders from all traditions have willingly participated.

5. Many publications, magazines, and articles resulted following a conference.

One student, just prior to our publication, after being told of these findings, said you have to ask at the end of the article why unity has not come about. It is our feeling that each and every one of us should take on this question.

This is particularly true as we approach the Naarden conference in August 2014. The Naarden conference is truly historic. Think of this. ITC conferences have now been held at the headquarter locations of three different traditions – Los Angeles, CA (ULT), The Hague, The Netherlands for the Theosophical Society – Point Loma, Wheaton Illinois, for the Theosophical Society Adyar and now the next conference will take place at the International Theosophical Centre in Naarden, The Netherlands.

We feel the motivation as to why so many have participated is clear. Our first object is to form a nucleus of universal brotherhood. We really know it needs to start with us. Division is not unity. Most recognize too the lack of unity mitigates the power of Theosophical principles taking their place on the world stage. So what is holding us back? We will suggest a few answers:

1. There is the false belief that unity means one large Theosophical organization. We start to feel that somehow we will have to buy into writings or teachings of other traditions different from our own. We do not want to do this feeling that somehow we may have to give up something important in our own traditions. We contend unity does not mean this. It does mean that we can communicate with each other, try to understand each other, but unite at a higher level and, perhaps, become even stronger in our own traditions.

2. Unity can be painful. If we have become convinced that our

tradition is doing it right and others are not, it is a kind of way to feel safe. In our reviews of the literature on this subject we found a number of articles expressing fear that other tradition may steal members away from them if they get together. It reminds one of the fears many parents have of not wanting their child to go off to college. Who knows what they may find there?

3. We have not found a common cause that we can all work towards. This probably has the greatest ring of truth. We can all get together and have a conference, but what do we do then?

A common cause is needed that all can contribute to. There are important causes in the world which strongly need theosophical wisdom. For example, we have a student now working in the area of the trafficking of young woman into prostitution. As we understand, The Theosophical Order of Service has done outstanding work and it is an independent organization. Would this be an area we could unite behind and work through the TOS to help? The dignity of each individual on the path towards greater consciousness certainly applies to help for these young women. Are there other causes that we can support?

4. Can we, as a unity of all Theosophical traditions, reach out to other religious/spiritual organizations to promote greater harmony and compassion? It is our understanding that one of the reasons the Dalai Lama was hosted by the Theosophical Society recently is that theosophists do this. (The Theosophical Society in America hosted an event with the Dalai Lama on July 17-18, 2011 as part of their Summer National Gathering)

In conclusion, we find some successes and some failures in this path towards unity and brotherhood. We are all inter-dependent. Are any of these valiant efforts lost? As the Dalai Lama said:

“As long as we live in this world we are bound to encounter problems. If, at such times, we lose hope and become discouraged, we diminish our ability to face difficulties. If, on the other hand, we remember that it is not just ourselves but everyone who has to undergo suffering, this more realistic perspective will increase our determination and capacity to overcome troubles. Indeed, with this attitude, each new obstacle can be seen as yet another valuable opportunity to improve our mind! It is because our own human existence is so dependent on the help of others that our need for love lies at

the very foundation of our existence. Therefore we need a genuine sense of responsibility and a sincere concern for the welfare of others. We have to consider what we human beings really are. We are not like machine-made objects. If we are merely mechanical entities, then machines themselves could alleviate all of our sufferings and fulfill our needs." ("Compassion and the Individual," Tenzin Gyatso: The Fourteenth Dalai Lama)



Right Reverend William Downey

The Ingenious Nature of the Second Object

and an interview with LCC Bishop William Downey

by James LeFour – USA

“The Liberal Catholic Church aims at being a gnostic church, not in the sense of reproducing certain extravagancies of early Christianity, but in the sense of helping its members to attain for themselves this certainty of knowledge which is the true gnosis of which St Clement of Alexandria wrote.” -
From the Statement of Principles of The Liberal Catholic Church

In the article “Our Three Objects” by H. P. Blavatsky, first appearing in September 1889 *Lucifer*, she gives an example of ideal success in regards to the Theosophical Society implementing its Second Object. The story she tells is about the younger generation of India, no longer regarding the value of the Hindu teachings as their ancestors, or even as their parents, did. In her own words: “The materialistic and agnostic attitude of mind towards religion in the abstract, which prevails in Western Universities, had been conveyed to the Indian colleges and schools by their graduates, the European Professors who occupied the several chairs in the latter institutions of learning. The text books fed this spirit, and the educated Hindus, as a class, were thoroughly skeptical in religious matters, and only followed the rites and observances of the national cult from considerations of social necessity.”

The cure, as she explains, was to “attack the citadel of skepticism, scientific sciolism, and prove the scientific basis of religion in general and of Hinduism in particular. This task was undertaken from the first and pursued to the point of victory; a result evident to every traveler who enquires into the present state of Indian opinion ... Without exaggeration or danger of contradiction, it may be affirmed that the labors of the Theosophical Society in India have infused a fresh and vigorous life into Hindu Philosophy; revived the Hindu Religion; won back the allegiance of the graduate class to the ancestral beliefs ...” (www.blavatsky.net/...OurThreeObjects.htm)

Fantastic! What is more is that the writing of this occurred at around the fourteen year mark of the Theosophical Society; at the end of the second seven-year probationary period, a success like this makes a key impression as to the perpetual validity and necessity of a movement such as the TS in the way it influences public view of religion.

As we move from that golden moment in Theosophical history to the much more controversial topic of the Liberal Catholic Church (LCC), it is worthwhile to remind everyone of why such a topic is worth discussing. Christianity is a religion, in the same way that Hinduism is a religion. It is understood by the second object of the Theosophical Society that all religions hold within them, at their kernel, some glimpse of Truth. Although it is commonly agreed that the presence of Truth becomes less and less accessible the closer one gets toward dogma.

What could Theosophy do for Christianity, especially in light of what it did for Hinduism as Blavatsky expressed, or in light of the way Colonel Olcott revived Buddhism in Ceylon?

It is no secret as to what H. P. B. thought of Christianity in her time. The second object at the fourteen year anniversary only referred to "... the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions and sciences," and did not include all religions until a later amendment. She once referred to eastern countries embracing Christianity as "the suicidal adoption of Christianity ... to neglect their own natural national religion in favor of a parasitic growth ..." (*The Second Message to the American Convention*, 1889)

However H. P. B. did see great value in the *inner meaning* of Christianity as was expressed in her writings on "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels." From the words of the Maha Chohan as well, one could say there is great value in such an endeavor as the Theosophical approach to Christianity:

"Mystical Christianity, that is to say that Christianity which teaches self-redemption through one's own seventh principle — the liberated Para-atma (Augeoides) called by the one Christ, by others Buddha, and equivalent to regeneration or rebirth in spirit — will be found just the same truth as the Nirvana of mystical Buddhism." (*Mahatma Letters*, Appendix ii)

The greatest confusion many unfamiliar Theosophists have in approaching the LCC terminology is that they do not realize it is veiled in

allegory, instead of the familiar and flawed anthropomorphization of so many other Western attempts. The LCC allows freedom for its members to work out their own symbolism, as one would hope of a non-dogmatic spiritual group.

As KH explained, “Call it by whatever name, only let these unfortunate, deluded Christians know that the real Christ of every Christian is the Vāch, the ‘mystical Voice,’ while the man Jeshu was but a mortal like any of us, an adept more by his inherent purity and ignorance of real Evil than by what he had learned with his initiated Rabbis ...” - KH *ML* 111(59)

The Liberal Catholic Church is the first Christian church with so-called “Apostolic Succession” whose members are free to hold that True belief. It is only fitting that it would have been founded by Theosophists.

Interview

The following interview took place on September 24, 2013 between James LeFevour and Right Reverend William Downey, the Regionary bishop of the United States for the Liberal Catholic Church.

LeFevour: How would you describe the Liberal Catholic Church as a non-dogmatic church, as it defines itself?

Downey: Firstly, everything I say is just my interpretation. I’m prefacing this interview by saying that these are my opinions and my expression of my understanding of the church, and in no way implying an official doctrine of the church. And that in itself is a requirement, a prerequisite, for all of our clergy. Even when speaking from the pulpit we really try to communicate to our listeners that interpretation of doctrine, scriptures, church practices and so forth are left entirely up to the individual. We don’t try to legislate or dictate or put any kind of restraints on the thinking and discovery of any of our members.

So I think that’s the biggest thing, that we’re not dogmatic in the sense that we would try to impose any particular spin on the Christian faith or the Catholic faith, and as a result we have people in the church who run the gamut of very traditional orthodox thinking to very metaphysical interpretations and some, especially in the beginning of the church, who are immersed in the Theosophical concepts because our founding Bishops were Theosophists. So we see that as our unique contribution to the world of religion. We are bound together by a common liturgy, but not necessarily a common theology.

LeFevour: What about the sacraments? In what way would the sacraments be involved in the concept of non-dogmatic interpretation you just explained?

Downey: Well the Orthodox explanation of a sacrament is a pretty good interpretation, even from a metaphysical or philosophical or Theosophical approach. And that definition from the old catechism is that “a sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.” So we see the sacraments as channels or conduits through which grace or spiritual energy, if you want to put it in those terms, is made available. The church is given the express privilege, responsibility, and challenge to try to maintain the integrity of those sacraments. We are keeping those channels open and awake and valid as interpreted historically so that ideally we can bring more light into a relatively dark world.

LeFevour: The way you explain it sounds very similar to the purpose of many different faiths’ spiritual practices. Is that accurate to what you are saying?

Downey: It is indeed. And if you look at the sacraments, and how they are “performed”, if we use that term, it really engages all aspects of the participants, both the celebrants as well as the laity. It puts together rhythm, beauty, the use of physical actions, the use of certain implements and tools, like lights and bells and incense and wine and water and fire and earth and all the elements. It really is in many ways very much akin to ceremonial magic. Although we typically avoid the word “magic” with its implications, it actually appears in some of our literature. Even in the baptismal ceremony we say “I lay the spell of Christ’s church upon this child” so in a sense we actually use that term.

LeFevour: When you use the word “Christ” what do you mean?

Downey: That is really a personal thing. The church speaks of Christ historically as Christ, but many of our members who have a Theosophical orientation make a distinction between the cosmic Christ, the second person of the blessed trinity, and the man Jesus, the prophet Jesus. Others in our church believe that Jesus Christ was the incarnate son of God, but my own personal belief is that we are all incarnate sons of God in potential, and that the Christ, as I perceive it, is that second aspect of the threefold nature of God which is beyond space and time.

But again we have a full gamut of beliefs where Christ is concerned, and what

the function of Jesus was, and so forth. We do not try to bend people's minds or convince them of anything. We make an offering and if it seems reasonable, some people choose to stay, but we do not proselytize. We do not go out and seek converts because we are basically universalists; we do not believe anybody is lost. Nor do we believe we have the corner on "salvation and redemption."

Just as Theosophy does, we see all paths leading up the same mountain and ultimately to the same return from which we have come.

LeFevour: Does the Liberal Catholic Church still accredit Leadbeater and Wedgewood as much respect to this day as it did in the past? Are they required reading in seminary, for example?

Downey: Yes, that is correct.

LeFevour: Conversely, are there any LCC members who really don't care much for them at all, considering the majority of members are not Theosophists now?

Downey: I think not. Most people who find themselves attracted to the Liberal Catholic Church are probably initially attracted by the ceremony. It awakens something within them, and then they start reading about it. The most common book that most people read and that inspires them to look into the Liberal Catholic Church is the paramount work, as far as I'm concerned, of Leadbeater which is *The Science of the Sacraments*. Basically it is an explanation of the inner side of what's going on during the mass. And if you're initially attracted by that, I think it is just kind of automatic that it stays with you and you tend to have a reverence for Leadbeater and Wedgewood. Wedgewood was really quite a scholar in his own right and had written some very beautiful things. I think that anybody that stays with the Liberal Catholic Church generally likes what they have read by Wedgewood and Leadbeater.

LeFevour: So do many members of the LCC attribute to Leadbeater a level of clairvoyance, such as he gave descriptions of angels, for example, in the book *Christian Gnosis*?

Downey: I think that most people in the church do, and many people who have claimed clairvoyance through the years, some of whom were not members of the church, have corroborated the things that Leadbeater

describes. Certainly those kinds of clairvoyants are few and far between, but yes, I think that he's held as somewhat of an authority.

However all of our members are free to accept or reject that idea. I mean, in any area as subjective as clairvoyance, even CWL was one of the first to say, *the astral is a place of illusion*. It is transitory and changing all the time, so it's very easy to make mistakes. That is why even he, in his clairvoyant work, worked in cooperation with other clairvoyants. My personal feeling is that some of the things that I have read, I can't prove, and so I'm not sure that I accept everything. But for the most part, I think the Bishop Leadbeater was pretty close to what is going on in the other planes.

LeFevour: One final question, and it's more a question I am personally curious about, if you'll permit me. I think some people view the LCC as if it shouldn't be associated at all with the Theosophical Society, and there are other Theosophists who believe in the Liberal Catholic Church who feel that they are completely harmonious teachings. I'm not asking you to defend it, I'm just asking what would you offer for those differing sides to consider?

Downey: Well, the church has had a close relationship with the Theosophical movement from its beginnings, but there has always been this dichotomy in thinking with regards to the church and I suppose there always will be. We, on our side, likewise want to make it abundantly clear that we have no organized connection whatsoever to the Theosophical Society because we don't want to be looked upon (and I speak for myself again) as the handmaiden of the Theosophical Society either. We believe that we are a continuation of the historic Catholic Church. Rome may not agree with that, but that is our position, and we believe we offer an interpretation of the ageless wisdom, much of which harmonizes with the Theosophical Society. We want to continue our warmest and most cordial relationship wherever possible and cooperate in any way, but each person must find their own path and if they can resonate with what we offer then we would welcome them to come.

That's the other thing, our altars are always open so that anyone, whether members or not, are welcome to come and avail themselves of our sacraments. You do not have to be a member of the Liberal Catholic Church to witness the mass for yourself or to receive communion.

Secret Doctrine Elements Enhancing Empathetic Healing

by Richard Hiltner – USA

[This talk was given during 15th Annual International Theosophy Conference held in August 2013 in New York. The theme title of the conference was “How to Awaken Compassion? - H. P. Blavatsky and the Eternal Secret Doctrine”]

The Secret Doctrine has three propositions: Boundlessness, Cyclic Appearance and Disappearance. As above, so below or the identity of all souls with the Universal Oversoul. Being a child of the Boundless, you carry boundless capacities in yourself.

Helena P. Blavatsky [H. P. B.] states in *The Secret Doctrine* that the elements are very important for our understanding of the Universe and in this paper emphasis is placed on human health.

In H. P. B.'s *Collected Writings* Volume 12, page 661 (the Esoteric Instructions), she states the seven elements, starting with the most divine **Akaśa**. It is stated very clearly that everything originates from the Boundless. There are no words that can express the Boundless; and, therefore, nothing can be specifically said in this context. However, when manifestation presents in whatever hierarchy, the Elements originate from the most divine, then the **Divine Flame**, followed by **Ether**. Since our senses or perception have no real experience with the preceding three, we will start with the lower four: **Fire, Air, Water** and **Earth**.

AKAŚA
DIVINE FLAME
ETHER
FIRE
AIR
WATER
EARTH

Traditional Chinese Medicine [TCM] has listed for about 2000 years the various five elements. The five elements are, specifically: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water. TCM relates all health to Yang [or Spirit, Heat, *etc.*] and Yin [Matter, Cold, *etc.*] If one just looks at the water element, one notices the Fu [or Yang] organs that tend to be more hollow and move more. This would be the Urinary Bladder as opposed to the Zang [or Yin] that is more solid and moves less; in other words, is more material. Observing the five senses, it is related to the ears. The five tissues: the bones, *etc. etc.*

Another example of a major form of medicine associated with the elements is **Ayurvedic Medicine**. “Ayur” means life. “Vedic” relates to “Book”. It speaks of the THREE FAULTS or TRIDOŚA. These include **Vata = Ether +**

Human Body Classified by the Five Elements					
Five Elements	Zang	Fu	Five Sense Organs	Five Tissues	Emotions
Wood	Liver	Gall Bladder	Eye	Tendon	Anger
Fire	Heart	Small intestine	Tongue	Vessel	Joy
Earth	Spleen	Stomach	Mouth	Muscle	Meditation
Metal	Lung	Large intestine	Nose	Skin & Hair	Grief & Melancholy
Water	Kidney	Urinary Bladder	Ear	Bone	Fright & fear

Nature Classified by the Five Elements					
Seasons	Environmental factors	Growth & Development	Colors	Tastes	Orientations
Spring	Wind	Germination	Green	Sour	East
Summer	Heat	Growth	Red	Bitter	South
Late Summer	Dampness	Transformation	Yellow	Sweet	Middle
Autumn	Dryness	Reaping	White	Pungent	West
Winter	Cold	Storing	Black	Salty	North

Air. Pitta = Fire + Water. And **Kapha = Water + Earth.** There is not room in this paper to go into much detail. Ayurveda also uses Medical Astrology for diagnosis.

AYURVEDIC MEDICINE
TRIDOŚA=THREE FAULTS
VATA=ETHER + AIR
PITTA=FIRE + WATER
KAPHA= WATER + EARTH

There are two other medicines in India that go back hundreds or thousands of years. **Unani** originated in Persia and was brought over into India. It also speaks of the elements, mainly: Fire, Air, Water and Earth. Another form of traditional medicine in India is called **Siddha**. It was developed in southern India and use by the Tamils. It also utilized the four elements. Medical Astrology has been associated with these two forms of indigenous medicines in India.

UNANI IN INDIA AND PERSIA
SIDDHA IN SOUTHERN INDIA AND BY TAMILS

Since it would take some space to go into details on the elements in the above medicines in their clinical aspects, I would like to concentrate in this article on Medical Astrology revealing the four elements. Please see list of the Fire, Air, Water and Earth Signs.

- *Fire Signs: Aries, Leo, Sagitarius
- *Air Signs: Libra, Aquarius, Gemini
- *Water Signs: Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces
- *Earth Signs: Capricorn, Taurus, Virgo

The thoughts and emotions associated with the Fire signs are: Drive to express self and faith. Air signs are associated mainly with: communication, socialization conceptualization. The Water signs are mostly related to emotion, empathy and sensitivity. Earth signs deal primarily with practicality, caution and the material world. The concept of modality relates to the position of the signs in the four divisions of the zodiac. I wish not to get too complicated on this and keep it fairly simple. Basically the Cardinal signs which are dealing with action, initiative and great vitality. The Fixed signs are associated mainly with resistance to chang and great will power. Mutable signs are depict adaptability.

*Fire Signs: *Enthusiasm, Drive to Express self, Faith*
*Air Signs: *Communication, Socialization, Conceptualization*
*Water Signs: *Emotion, Empathy, Sensitivity*
*Earth Signs: *Practicality, Caution, Material world*

Cardinal: Action, Initiative, Great Vitality
Fixed: Resistance to Change; Great Will Power
Mutable: Adaptability

I wish now to present a case of a boy who was six years old when I saw him in 2003. If you refer to the chart of the elemental balances, you will see that its primarily elements are Fire and Air and Earth. There is no Water. This is a boy who had Attention Deficit Disorder and had difficulty with relationships; specifically, on being too forceful and and abrupt. Water deals with sensitivity, emotion and feeling of empathy. Even though this boy has some difficulties with concentration, he was quite bright [as noted by the Air, Fire and Earth elements] and had relationship difficulties with other children and adults. His mind was quite active, but not as concentrated as one would like. He tended, in general, to be more on the chillier side both physically and emotionally. He loved salt and sweets. Homeopathically, he presented the picture of *Tuberculinum* with intermittent *Phosphorus*. He could be very dramatic and outgoing, but also easily change to quite cold and withdrawn.

FIRE=3
AIR=4
WATER=0
EARTH=3

For example, I might ask him something about his diet and he might become quite agitated and walk out of the room. Over the last 10 years, this boy has become quite interested in computers is brilliant. He has become more diplomatic and sensitive to other people's feelings. However, he still has that earth element of practicality with computers. Very strong Fire with enthusiasm and Air associated with the mind. Because of the lack of the Water element, he still must be careful on becoming to strong and abrupt in his relationship with people.

This next case deals with the 7 y/o girl whom I first saw in 2012 for anxiety disorder and attention deficit disorder. By looking at her elemental

balance, you will know that she's primarily Fire, Air and Water. There is no earth. Therefore, it is noted that with these strong elements of fire and air, as with the previous boy, there will be enthusiasm and intelligence. But, because of the lack of Earth, there is a problem with concentration, and therefore, attention deficit. If you notice with the previous boy's case, there was a lack of water. So this young girl has a good water element showing sensitivity. But the earth did not help her to be grounded. This girl also needed *Tuberculinum* and *Phosphorus* and did well. These two remedies, like many of the *Polychrest* [or homeopathic medicines that help with many symptoms and have much experience] have a certain amount of polarity. In other words, *Phosphorus* can be very sensitive and kind; but also can have certain harshness as in the previous case. Likewise, with *Tuberculinum*, however, it is more often related to cold feelings. So, one can see that by knowing the elemental balance of these two patients, it is more clear that one is less grounded and sensitive; and the other is very grounded and practical, but lacks the sensitivity to others' feelings.

FIRE=5
AIR=3
WATER=2
EARTH=0

Next patient is a 72-year-old man with loss of control of knees and and unable to The next patient is a 72-year-old man with intermittent loss of control of knees and difficulty in standing still. He was first seen in 1998 at 57 y/o. He also had a diagnosis of Hepatitis C diagnosed when 50 years old. His elemental balance showed mainly Earth. He had a number fears [Caution], including: heights, falling and driving over bridges. The Earth element is known for practicality, but also many fears and phobias. His homeopathic remedies included: *Nux Vomica* [a plant], *Sulfur*, *Argentum Nitricum* [Silver Nitrate]. He eventually was able to control his knees and standstill. His hepatitis C titer became negative by 2012.

FIRE=1
AIR=2
WATER=2
EARTH=5

This man had difficulty with alcohol, marijuana and caffeine. He was highly sensuous both sexually and in general. It was necessary to eventually restrict all these toxic materials [very material and down to earth]. Undoubtedly, this lessening of toxicity was also helpful. *Nux Vomica* was primarily needed to curtail the toxicity. *Sulfur* was constitutional. *Argentum Nitricum* fit many of the emotional and neurological symptoms. It is of note that *Sulfur* and *Argentum* are both earth elements and both dealing with fire; he was warm-blooded.

The next patient is a 73-year-old lady whom I live first saw in 2003 because of chronic insomnia for 30 years. She was highly Earth with some Fire; with no Air or Water. She was very impulsive, claustrophobic and fears [Caution] of heights and prowlers. She was very warm-blooded and she had difficulty in turning off her thoughts at night. The lack of Water affected her sensitivity and Air her ability to concentrate. She was given the following homeopathic medicine: *Argentum Nitricum* [Silver Nitrate] in Q potencies. It was gradually increased in the symptoms improved considerably.

In summary, the use of the elements can be helpful in a variety of medical approaches. I would be able to present many more cases where Medical Astrology Element Analysis was beneficial. One does not rely solely on them, but as a tool to help evaluate the situation. It is necessary to do a complete history and physical. However, I have found this use of the elements as depicted through the aid of Medical Astrology to be helpful in looking towards certain medicines and restoring harmony.

FIRE=2
AIR=0
WATER=0
EARTH=8

Compassion is everywhere

from a student

[This talk was given during 15th Annual International Theosophy Conference held in August 2013 in New York. The theme title of the conference was “How to Awaken Compassion? - H. P. Blavatsky and the Eternal Secret Doctrine”]

We are beginning with trees, with the vegetable kingdom, since below that we do not know how to see the compassion that must be there. But we were able to find this:



Compassionate elephants

Physicist Andrew A. Cochran, in *Main Currents in Modern Thought*, said scientists have come to realize that there is nowhere a sharp dividing line between living and non-living matter. There is instead an unbroken series of small gradations in complexity that bridge the gap.

Cochran quotes Dr. Henry Margenau of Yale University: "Different atoms owe their characteristic features to a kind of social behavior of the electrons which may be summed up by saying: One electron knows what the others are doing and acts accordingly ..."

That sounds like trees for it is said that when a **tree** is sending out new roots, if it approaches the roots of a nearby tree, it turns aside. However, as hard as we tried, we were unable to prove this fact. But there are many uncanny facts about the vegetable kingdom that can be proven.

A few years ago, a gypsy moth attack in New York and Pennsylvania caused people to get chemicals sprayed on their unharmed trees, since the trees that were unharmed that year would be the trees that would be attacked the next year. Alas, all those expensive chemical treatments did not save the treated trees. But the trees that were left alone and got no chemicals survived perfectly. Why?

Biologist Ian Baldwin, Molecular Ecology Department at the Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology in Germany, has studied how plants defend themselves. He and his colleagues use chemical sensors to investigate plant communications that float past human noses unnoticed. The harder they looked for these signals, the more they found, discovering plants can send chemical cues to repel insect enemies, or they can send signals to attract allies. Nearby plants can listen in to this conversation and gear up their own defenses.

Scientists at Cornell University found that when a hornworm starts eating sagebrush, the wounded plant will send out a blast of scent that warns surrounding plants - in the case of this study, wild tobacco - that trouble is on its way. Those nearby plants, in turn, prepare chemical defenses that send the hungry critters in the opposite direction. Sagebrush warning the wild tobacco. That certainly sounds like compassion, doesn't it?

Sir Chandar Bose of India began to conduct experiments on plants in the year 1900. He claimed that plants can "feel pain, and understand

affection.” A well-known vegetarian, George Bernard Shaw, was intensely disturbed witnessing a demonstration in which a cabbage had “convulsions” as it boiled to death.

In a later demonstration with the equipment, a leaf’s reaction was off the chart when a live shrimp was dropped into the boiling hot water the leaf was itself submerged in. Clearly it is conceit on our part if we think only a human can feel compassion.

Quoting from “All About Elephants” from kidcyber.com.au: “Elephants appear to make allowances for other members of their herd ... one African herd always traveled slowly because one of them never recovered from a broken leg. One perplexing report was of an adult elephant making repeated attempts to help a baby rhinoceros stuck in the mud. She continued to try to save the baby rhino despite the fact that its mother charged her each time. Risking her life for the sake of an animal that is not her own, not related to her, or even her own species is remarkably altruistic in nature.”

You can watch a video of elephants helping elephants:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJZ4BEWr9hQ>

In addition, besides the behavior of animals in the wild, we have animals that are close to us: Animal control officer Michelle Smith of Anderson, South Carolina, got a call about a dog constantly barking in a ravine – the barking led through heavy foliage and an extremely steep embankment where she found a **Shih Tzu** comforting a little kitten it had rescued.

We all know dolphins have rescued other sea creatures as well as rescuing human beings.

We have numerous examples of animals rescuing humans collected on Listverse.

We seem to only notice compassion in times of crisis - like Hurricane Sandy. Beyond the generous response of thousands, in terms of dollars and people, simple acts by individuals show you can do for others without great expense - like this example: putting a power cord through a New York window with this - **WE HAVE POWER. FEEL FREE TO CHARGE YOUR PHONE!**

There are physicians who donate their time and genius to heal people around the world. But there is a group that not only donates their time and

talents, both doctors and nurses, to help treat West Africans in terms of eye surgery and plastic surgery. **BUT THEY PAY FOR THEIR OWN TRIP on Africa Mercy Ships.** Imagine, these medical professionals pay to be able to offer their services to thousands - over 30,000 to date.

H. P. Blavatsky pointed with high praise to the compassion of Tolstoy. The inscription in H. P. B.'s presentation copy to Tolstoy of *The Voice of The Silence*, reads: Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy, "one of the few", E. Blavatsky. You will recall she dedicated *The Voice of The Silence* to the few.

From H. P. B.'s translation of Tolstoy's *On the Science of Life*: "Our life, ever since we became conscious of it, is a pendulum-like motion between the two limits. One limit is an absolute unconcern for the life of the infinite Universe, an energy directed only toward the gratification of one's own personality. The other limit is a complete renunciation of that personality, the greatest concern with the life of the infinite Universe, in full accord with it, the transfer of all our desires and good will from one's self, to that infinite Universe and all the creatures outside of us." In a footnote: This is what the Theosophists call "living the life" — in a nut-shell. We have translated this rather lengthy fragment from the Report of Count Tolstoy's superb lecture, because it reads like the echo of the finest teachings of the universal ethics of true theosophy."

In *The Key to Theosophy*, H. P. Blavatsky writes of Father Damien, a young Catholic priest who served the lepers in Hawaii. On the Hawaiian island of Molokai, lepers were literally dumped into the ocean and left to fend for themselves without food or shelter or hope. Whatever supplies had been sent with them were thrown in the water, relying on currents to carry them ashore or the exiles to retrieve them. In 1873, Father Damien was sent to the lepers by his church for a time period of 3 months and ordered not to touch anyone. He never left once he arrived; he used his carpenter skills, learned in Belgium, to build homes, churches and coffins; he arranged for medical services and funding from Honolulu. Father Damien worked to restore human dignity and respect for life to each leper. He taught the lepers how to grow crops so they could eat better. He provided medical attention for the wounds and sicknesses that could be healed and, when they couldn't be, he organized burial details and performed funeral rites, so that death might be seen with some dignity.



Father Damien

In 1889, his sermon began “We lepers ...” He died from leprosy that year, aged 49. The life he had lived among the lepers led to an intensive study of the disease, eventually resulting in a cure.

H. P. B. said of him: “He was a true Theosophist, and his memory will live for ever in our annals.” “Had we the means to do so, we would raise a statue to Father Damien, the true, practical saint, and perpetuate his memory for ever as a living exemplar of Theosophical heroism — and of Buddha, and Christ-like mercy and self-sacrifice.”

In the June 8th issue of *Theosophy Watch* there is a feature on Father Damien and there are several online documentary films about him worth seeing as well. There are so many quotes on compassion from the writings of H. P. B. But perhaps none is more important than this, from *The Voice of The Silence*:

“Compassion is no attribute. It is the LAW of laws ...” Thus compassion and its source must be sought in the Heart, rather than the head. It is written: “As man thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

In *Lucifer*, November, 1887, H. P. B. wrote “He who does not practice altruism; he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or a poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation, or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who

turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery; he who hears an innocent person slandered, whether a brother Theosophist or not, and does not undertake his defense as he would undertake his own – is no Theosophist.”

We find in *Five Messages*: “Therefore it is that the Ethics of Theosophy are even more necessary to mankind than the scientific aspects of the psychic facts of nature and man.” And, “The life of altruism is not so much a high ideal as a matter of practice.”

Here is the answer to the question ‘How To Awaken Compassion’ - “The life of altruism is not so much a high ideal as a matter of practice.”

We are already very skilled in the use of compassion; but our use of compassion is restricted to what we love and care about.

We must practice compassion by seeing the other is truly myself.

COMPASSION IS EVERYWHERE; ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS LOOK FOR IT IN OURSELVES; THEN WE CAN BEGIN TO EXPAND OUR USE OF IT.

Practice, practice ... practice!





A good leader is a person who takes a little more than his share of the blame and a little less than his share of the credit.

John C. Maxwell

(an evangelical Christian author, speaker, and pastor)



Silence

The Voice of the Silence

10 (Verses 123-141)

by John Algeo – USA

Continuing an exploration of “The Two Paths,” that is, the Path of self-perfection and the Path of service to others, verses 123 to 134 explore a theme that HPB made central to Theosophy: altruism — the willingness to live, not for oneself alone, but for others. This theme is central to the entire second fragment of the book, but is developed in these passages with special clarity.

A. VERSES [123-134].

[123] If thou art told that to become Arhan thou hast to cease to love all beings — tell them they lie.

[124] If thou art told that to gain liberation thou hast to hate thy mother and disregard thy son; to disavow thy father and call him “householder”; for man and beast all pity to renounce — tell them their tongue is false.

[125] Thus teach the Tirthikas, the unbelievers.

[126] If thou art taught that sin is born of action and bliss of absolute inaction, then tell them that they err. Non-permanence of human action, deliverance of mind from thralldom by the cessation of sin and faults, are not for Deva Egos. Thus saith the Doctrine of the Heart.

[127] The Dharma of the “Eye” is the embodiment of the external, and the non-existing.

[128] The Dharma of the “Heart” is the embodiment of Bodhi, the permanent and everlasting.

[129] The Lamp burns bright when wick and oil are clean. To make them clean a cleaner is required. The flame feels not the process of the cleaning. “The branches of a tree are shaken by the wind; the trunk remains unmoved.”

[130] Both action and inaction may find room in thee; thy body

agitated, thy mind tranquil, thy soul as limpid as a mountain lake.

[131] Wouldst thou become a Yogi of Time's Circle? Then, O *Ianoo*:

[132] Believe thou not that sitting in dark forests, in proud seclusion and apart from men; believe thou not that life on roots and plants, that thirst assuaged with snow from the great Range — believe thou not, O devotee, that this will lead thee to the goal of final liberation.

[133] Think not that breaking bone, that rending flesh and muscle, unites thee to thy silent Self. Think not, that when the sins of thy gross form are conquered, O victim of thy shadows, thy duty is accomplished by nature and by man.

[134] The blessed ones have scorned to do so. The Lion of the Law, the Lord of Mercy, perceiving the true cause of human woe, immediately forsook the sweet but selfish rest of quiet wilds. From *Āranyaka* He became the Teacher of mankind. After *Julai* had entered the *Nirvāna*, He preached on mount and plain, and held discourses in the cities, to devas, men and gods.

B. COMMENT.

Verse 123 refers to an “*arhan*” (also called an “*arhat*”). The term means literally “deserving respect” and is used of an enlightened person. More particularly, the *arhat* is one who is at the fourth stage or has taken the fourth initiation on the Path. In Southern Buddhism, the *arhat* is one who has attained enlightenment, not through unaided self-effort, but rather through instruction from another already enlightened being. The statement in verse 123 emphasizes a central theme of this second fragment on “The Two Paths,” the *bodhisattva* concept, namely that becoming enlightened does not mean cutting oneself off from one’s fellow beings. That theme is further developed in the following verses.

The term “householder” in verse 124 refers to the second of the four idealized stages (or *ashramas*) in a person’s life. In the Hindu tradition, there are four chronological stages through which we may pass: (1) the student stage (*brahmacharya*), when we are learning what we need to live in the world; (2) the householder stage (*grihastha*), when we set up our household, marry, produce heirs, and generally go about the world’s business; (3) the forest-dweller stage (*vanaprastha*), when we retire from active life and are available to give advice to those in the first two stages; and (4) the renunciant stage

(*sannyasa*), when we have renounced all worldly concerns and are preparing ourselves for the next stage in our own pilgrimage to eternity. Not everyone goes through all four of those stages. But to call one's father a "householder" implies that his development has been arrested, that he is stuck in a stage from which he should have progressed. HPB has a gloss on the term:

Gloss 11. Rathapāla, the great Arhat, thus addresses his father in the legend called *Rathapāla Sutrāsanne*. But as all such legends are allegorical (e.g., Rathapāla's father has a mansion with seven doors), hence the reproof, to those who accept them literally.

The point is manifold: first, we should not presume to judge the spiritual progress of another. Also we should not distance ourselves from those living in the world, creating a climate of "us" versus "them." As HPB, says, we must not interpret literally statements that are metaphorical or symbolic. That same caution was later repeated by Pamela Travers, the author of the *Mary Poppins* books and a student of the Irish Theosophist George Russell (penname "AE"), who said that there are three rules for interpreting archetypes: (1) Don't take them literally. (2) Don't take them literally. (3) Don't take them literally.

In verse 125, HPB has a note on the term "tirthika," which she glosses as "Brahman ascetics." *The Theosophical Glossary* has a slightly longer comment: "Heretical teachers. An epithet applied by the Buddhist ascetics to the Brahmans and certain Yogis of India." The Sanskrit dictionary of Sir Monier Monier-Williams defines the term as a Buddhist expression for "an adherent or head of any other than one's own creed." That is, a tirthika is somebody with different ideas.

Verse 126 moves to a theme that is central to the Bhagavad Gita: the undesirability (and in fact impossibility) of refraining from action. If we live in this world, we must act. We are evolving beings or "Deva Egos," a term HPB clarifies in a note as "reincarnating Egos." As such, we can progress only by acting, which is not a source of "sin" but of opportunity.

This verse and the next two (127 and 128) restate the two doctrines or dharmas, of the Eye and the Heart. The Dharma or teaching of the Eye is exoteric knowledge about what is "external" or outer and is therefore "nonexisting" because mayavic or illusory, being not stable in itself but constantly changing and relative in its meaning and value. The Dharma or

teaching of the Heart is esoteric wisdom about what is of permanent value and enduring. “Heart” here does not mean emotion or feeling or affection, but rather inner gnosis, the embodiment or expression of bodhi, which HPB notes is “true, divine Wisdom.”

Verses 129 and 130 consider the paradox of the stillness at the center of the storm as a resolution of the dichotomy between action and inaction. A hurricane is an extraordinarily strong and violent wind with rain and often associated tornados and floods from the waves of the sea encroaching on the land. But at the eye or center of the hurricane is a spot of stillness and calm. Those who have experienced a hurricane passing directly over them will know what that means. At the beginning of the hurricane, often several days ahead, the sky becomes gray and lowering; then the winds pick up and eventually become very strong and destructive, as the sky turns black. The weakest hurricane has winds of 74 miles an hour, and most are considerably stronger, often more than 100 miles an hour. When the eye of the hurricane passes over, suddenly all winds cease, there is a calmness that is an amazing contrast with the previous violence, and the sky is clear blue with the sun shining. Then the winds return, from the opposite direction and the storm continues. This phenomenon is due to the fact that a hurricane is an enormously large circular wind raging around a clear center.

Our life is like the wind of the hurricane. At its center, there is a place of calm and peace. With meteorological hurricanes, we can only wait for the storm to pass over us. With the hurricanes of our inner life, we can place ourselves at the eye of the storm, where all is clear, calm, and quiet. Surendra Narayan has an insightful exposition of this topic in “On the Watch-Tower,” *Theosophist* 128.10 (July 2007): 363-5.

Verses 129 and 130 offer three metaphors for this state of mind: (1) A lamp needs to have its wick trimmed and its oil needs to be cleaned if the lamp is to burn well; the flame (our inner consciousness) does not feel the trimming or cleaning, which are “violent” acts in the outward form. (2) A tree may have its branches shaken violently in a storm, but its trunk, its central core, is unmoved. (3) A lake may have its surface agitated by waves from a storm, but beneath the surface, it is still and tranquil. All of these metaphors are talking about a tranquil inner consciousness even when outer agitation disturbs the body.

In verse 131, “Time’s Circle” is a literal equivalent of the Sanskrit term *Kalachakra*, which is the name of one of the initiatory rites in Tibetan Buddhism but also refers more generally to the concept of cyclical time. The image of the kalachakra or Circle of Time is roughly equivalent to the Medieval and Renaissance European image of the Wheel of Fortune. The latter is an emblem of the constantly fluctuating reality in which we live, with one set of circumstances continually succeeding another. The Wheel of Fortune in the tarot cards (Trumps Major number 10) is a typical Western iconographic image of this archetype. Another is the Buddhist *bhavachakra* or Wheel of Becoming, which depicts graphically the Buddhist concept of “dependent origination,” that is, the causal chain that produces misery in life and constantly repeats itself.

The Yogi of “Time’s Circle” can probably be understood as anyone who is trying to attain wholeness (the goal of Yoga) within the fragmented and ever-changing circumstances of this world. To do that, we cannot set ourselves apart from the world as a hermit or an ascetic who rejects the world and the body. Instead, we should follow the example of the Buddha, who, after he attained enlightenment, went among people, teaching and ministering to their needs. This concept is set forth in verses 131 to 134.

Those verses also contain a number of glosses and a note to clarify some of the terms used in them. In verse 133, the “silent Self,” to which we as a personality must be united, is glossed as the atma or ultimate Self in us:

Gloss 12. The Higher Self, the seventh principle.

And correlatively, our “Shadows” are the physical-bodily personality, or rather personalities, since all of us have more than one persona with which we face the world:

Gloss 13. Our physical bodies are called “shadows” in the mystic schools.

In verse 134, the “Lion of the Law, the Lord of Mercy” is identified in a note as “Buddha.” *Āranyaka*, literally “pertaining to the forest or wilderness,” denotes one of the four types of Vedic scripture, the others being the Vedas themselves, which are hymns or mantras, the Brahmanas or guidebooks for performing ritual sacrifices, and the Upanishads or spiritual and philosophical treatises. The *Āranyakas* were allegorical and meditational works intended especially for ascetics who had retired to the forests; the term is also used, as

here, for a sage who dwells in the forest:

Gloss 14. A hermit who retires to the jungles and lives in a forest, when becoming a Yogi.

“Julai” is said to be another name for the Buddha, either the historical Siddhartha Gautama or any of the great souls who have attained the buddhic enlightenment. It is like *Thatāgata*, a title meaning literally “one who has thus gone or arrived,” that is, gone over the river of illusory *samsāra* to arrive at the Truth of *nirvāna*.

Gloss 15. *Julai*, the Chinese name for *Thatāgata*, a title applied to every Buddha.

Verse 134 ends with a gloss emphasizing the basic point made throughout all of these verses, namely, that enlightenment is not for the isolated individual. It requires sharing its benefits with all humanity:

Gloss 16. All the Northern and Southern traditions agree in showing Buddha quitting his solitude as soon as He had resolved the problem of life — i.e., received the inner enlightenment — and teaching mankind publicly.

C. MEDITATION.

1. Think of yourself as connected with all other people in the world. You may imagine yourself as clasping hands with two others, who in turn clasp hands with yet others, until the entire globe is united by people holding hands in a living chain. Or you may envision a network around the planet, each knot in the network a person — you, one of them — and the cords of the network the connections that link us all.

2. Envision one of the images mentioned above: the eye of calm in the midst of a hurricane, a lamp whose wick and oil are trimmed and cleaned but whose flame burns steadily, a tree whose branches are swayed by the wind but whose trunk is firm, or a mountain lake, ruffled on the surface but limpid and still beneath. Identify yourself with that image.

3. Contemplate the Buddha as a model for life. He left luxuriant comfort for the life of a homeless ascetic; then he found the middle way beneath the Tree of Wisdom, and immediately returned to the life of the world to be in, but not of, it and to teach all beings that all of us can enter the same light he found.

Verses 135 to 141 continue the call to action of the altruistic verses 123-134 and introduce a new metaphor, that of the “three vestures,” which becomes a major expression of the call to action in the rest of the *Voice*.

* * *

A. VERSES [135-141].

[135] Sow kindly acts and thou shalt reap their fruition. Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin. Thus saith the Sage.

[136] Shalt thou abstain from action? Not so shall gain thy soul her freedom. To reach Nirvāna one must reach Self-knowledge, and Self-knowledge is of loving deeds the child.

[137] Have patience, candidate, as one who fears no failure, courts no success. Fix thy Soul's gaze upon the star whose ray thou art, the flaming star that shines within the lightless depths of ever-being, the boundless fields of the Unknown.

[138] Have perseverance as one who doth for evermore endure. Thy shadows live and vanish; that which in thee shall live forever, that which in thee *knows*, for it is knowledge, is not of fleeting life: it is the man that was, that is, and will be, for whom the hour shall never strike.

[139] If thou wouldst reap sweet peace and rest, disciple, sow with the seeds of merit the fields of future harvests. Accept the woes of birth.

[140] Step out from sunlight into shade, to make more room for others. The tears that water the parched soil of pain and sorrow bring forth the blossoms and fruits of Karmic retribution. Out of the furnace of man's life and its black smoke, winged flames arise, flames purified, that soaring onward, 'neath the Karmic eye, weave in the end the fabric glorified of the three vestures of the Path.

[141] These vestures are: *Nirmānakāya*, *Sambhogakāya*, and *Dharmakāya*, robe sublime.

B. COMMENT.

Verses 135 and 136 treat the subject of karma. The word *karma* means literally “action” but is generally understood as referring to the results that inevitably follow any action. And so verse 135 begins with a reminder that

being kind to others will result in kindness coming to you. This is the most basic and practical moral principle, one that is the subject of the opening chapter of the Dhammapada: “All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the wagon. ... If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him.”

Immediately after that observation about karma as the fruit of action, the *Voice* considers the nature of action and inaction — a false dichotomy because “inaction,” as a decision not to act, is in fact a kind of action. The *Voice* tells us that negative virtues have little to recommend them. If we have the opportunity to do good, the failure to respond to that opportunity has bad consequences. The second sentence in verse 135, “Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin,” resumes the theme of verse 126 and echoes the plight of Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita. Being confused about what he should do, Arjuna decided he would do nothing. But Krishna pointed out to him that the very decision not to act was an action, and thus he had committed himself by seeking to avoid commitment.

Verse 136 continues the examination of this subject by looking on the positive side. If we do not become free by avoiding action, but only more entangled, how do we become free? Verse 136 says that freedom depends on Self-knowledge, that is, on knowing who we really are. When we are ignorant of our true nature, we are bound by all the limitations of the personality and its conditioning. Only when we know the real Self within are we free. And how do we achieve that knowledge? Not, as we might suppose, by study or meditation (good as those are), but rather by a third thing: service or, as the *Voice* calls it, “loving deeds,” that is, right action — action prompted by love.

When we act out of love, we discover who we are. When we know who we are, we are free of the bonds that tie us to this world. What the world regards as success or failure is irrelevant to that freedom, which is the only thing that really matters. Verse 137 goes on to compare our real Self to a star, of which our personal identity is only a ray of light. In the Theosophical tradition, it is said that when a disciple becomes an adept, the Star of Initiation blazes forth. That is a symbol of the discovery of who we really are — the blazing star that shines through our personality, or as HPB puts it in a gloss:

Gloss 17. Every spiritual Ego is a ray of a Planetary Spirit, according to esoteric teaching.

The esoteric teaching referred to here is doubtless that of the cosmic seven Rays; each of us is a ray of one of those Rays. Ultimately we are all rays of the one eternal central Sun. Or, as verse 138 puts it, our temporary personalities are shadows of that one light. Shadows come and go, being impermanent:

Gloss 18. “Personalities” or physical bodies are called “shadows” as they are evanescent.

It is notable that our personality is here equated with our physical body, in and through which our personality develops. A physical body with its personality is of one lifetime only; neither survives that lifetime. What survives and is permanent (or as permanent as anything in a world that is always changing) is the individuality, which is encapsulated in the principle of pure (or higher) mind within us. That principle is the faculty by which we know what really is and especially who we are. It is also what we know, both the means and the object of knowledge:

Gloss 19. Mind (*manas*), the thinking Principle or Ego in man, is referred to as Knowledge itself, because the human Egos are called *Mānasa-putras*, the sons of (universal) Mind.

One of the characteristic features of Theosophical thought is its teaching that our individuality, expressed through the principle of *manas* or mind, will never cease to be. Some forms of Indic thought emphasize that, since we are expressions of the Ultimate Reality (whether it is called Brahman or Nirvāna or something else), any separate identity is mere illusion. Hence everything about us, including our individuality, is unreal.

A typical Theosophical response is that, although in truth only one ultimate Reality exists (Parabrahm or whatever we call it), the ultimate One is unknowable but manifests in the relative world in a multitude of forms, some of which are evanescent and some of which (namely the individual expressions of the monad) abide throughout manifestation and indeed even across the periods of cosmic rest called “pralayas” that separate one period of manifestation from another. Thus, practically speaking, our individuality (*atma-buddhi-manas*) never ceases to be, but is our inner Self “that was, that is, and

will be, for whom the hour [of ending] shall never strike.”

This Theosophical view is that the relationship between the absolute One and the relative Many is a mystery and a paradox. We are both all one and yet individually distinct. This paradoxical mystery is expressed in a poem by Kabir, a saintly poet from India, who uses a familiar metaphor for it, namely, the relationship between the sea and a drop of water that comes from it: “I went looking for Him / And lost myself; / The drop merged with the Sea — / Who can find it now? / Looking and looking for Him, / I lost myself; / The Sea merged with the drop — / Who can find it now?”

On the one hand, we can say that we are drops of water which come from the sea and are finally merged into it, so that we, as separate realities, are lost in the sea, returning to our source and ceasing to be, as separate units: “Who can find it [the separate drop] now?” But, on the other hand, we can also say that when we find that Ultimate Reality for which we are searching, it becomes us. We do not lose our sense of identity, but instead are immeasurably and inconceivably enriched by the knowledge (the gnosis) that we and it are one. In this sense, the drop does not merge into the sea; rather the sea merges into the drop and thus realizes its identity, both One and Many, both united and distinct. “Who can find it [the sea separate from the drop] now?”

This Theosophical view thus resolves the dichotomy of the Hindu teaching that at the core of our being there is an “atma” or self and the Buddhist teaching that at our core there is only *anātman* or no (*an-*) self (*ātman*). Both are true, but in different ways. We are not ultimately and absolutely separate from the One Reality (the only Ultimate and Absolute), so there is no separate self, but only *anātman*. However, we are an individualized expression in the relative world of the ultimate and absolute Reality, so there is a Self at the heart of our being — the same Self as at the heart of every other being, though expressed in relatively different ways in each of us. The paradox is that these apparently contradictory statements are both true: We are the Self, and we have no self.

Eastern, and especially Indic, thought is full of paradoxes like this. Another related one is the teaching of Buddhism that all life is *duhkha*, usually translated “pain” or “suffering” but perhaps more adequately rendered as “frustration,” “insecurity,” or “dissatisfaction,” versus the Hindu teaching that all

life is an expression of *ānanda*, “bliss,” “delight,” or “joy.” Both are true. As verses 139 and 140 say in a series of metaphors, life is both woeful and sweet, shady and sunny, parched and blossoming, smoky and bright with light.

Verse 140 introduces another metaphor, that of the “three vestures,” which is an important theme in this and the last Fragment of the book. The three vestures are identified by name in verse 141 and two glosses refer to a gloss in Fragment 3 that discusses the subject in some detail. We will come to that gloss in its proper place, but here we can consider an overview of these vestures.

The concept of the three vestures is a Buddhist one, though interpreted somewhat differently in various schools of Buddhism. Blavatsky also thought that the way Western scholars generally understood the concept was inadequate. Because it is such an important concept in the *Voice*, it is worth considering in some detail. Even the literal sense of the words is noteworthy. The general term for the concept in Sanskrit is *trikāya*, from *tri* “three” and *kāya*, literally “body” but in this context usually translated “sheath” or “vesture.” The word *kāya* also refers to the trunk of a tree, among other uses. The Buddha (not just the historical Siddhartha Gautama, but the metaphysical Buddha nature or Buddha-ness that manifests in all historical Buddhas) is said to have three bodies or vestures.

The first of these is the *nirmānakāya*, the body or vesture of transformation. *Nirmāna* as an independent word means “measuring” and hence “building,” “making,” or “creating,” and, since all acts of creation involve change, it also means “transformation.” The *nirmānakāya*, or body of transformation and change, is usually said to be the historical Buddha in incarnation, as ordinary human beings might see him.

The second is the *sambhogakāya*, the body or vesture of enjoyment. *Sambhoga* means basically “pleasure,” “delight,” “love leading to union.” The *sambhogakāya* is usually understood as a heavenly or archetypal manifestation of the Buddha, as Bodhisattavas or other heavenly beings might see him, that is, as an idealized form.

The third is the *dharmakāya*, the body or vesture of *dharma* — a word for which no single English equivalent exists. It is usually translated “law,” but has many meanings, all related but depending on the context. In this context, perhaps we can think of *dharma* as that which abides, the Ground of all

existence, the ultimate Reality, the Absolute. All of the Buddhas or enlightened beings exist in that Reality, indeed *are* that Reality. The *dharmakāya* is said to be the Buddha as the Buddha really is, in pure Buddha nature. It is beyond perception but manifests itself as the other two bodies.

Thus, these three bodies are usually understood as three ways in which the Buddha reality can be understood or three ways in which it is expressed. As such, the *dharmakāya* or “body of the Absolute” is unmanifest; it is the Buddha nature as the ultimate, ineffable reality, the Ground of all things. The *sambhogakāya* or “body of realized love” is the Buddha nature as it is seen by enlightened beings, such as the bodhisattvas; it is expressed by all the archetypal, symbolical Buddhas. The *nirmānakāya* or “body of making and changing” is the empirically manifested Buddha, the historical incarnations of the Buddha nature, such as Siddhartha Gautama.

Understood in this way, the doctrine of the *trikāya* or three bodies is that there are three levels of existence: (1) one we are all aware of and experience, an outer reality in which the Buddha nature incarnates as a human being, a teacher (the *nirmānakāya*); (2) one that can be seen by “the eye of faith” or experienced by the imagination, an inner reality in which the Buddha nature is expressed in great archetypal forms (the *sambhogakāya*); and (3) one beyond all experience, the ultimate reality, which is the very Buddha nature (the *dharmakāya*).

Blavatsky’s presentation of the three vestures in subsequent verses and in the last Fragment is somewhat different, as we shall see.

C. MEDITATION.

1. Meditate on verse 136: “Shalt thou abstain from action? Not so shall gain thy soul her freedom. To reach Nirvāna one must reach Self-knowledge, and Self-knowledge is of loving deeds the child.”

2. Envision a blazing star that beams a ray of light into the profound darkness of space. See yourself as a spark of light at the very end of that ray. Then follow the path of the ray back to its origin — to the flaming star — and say to yourself, “I am That.”

To be continued

Thoughts
have
Power

In the Light of Theosophy

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

We seem to be churning out thoughts all the time. The purpose of a thought is to create, to affect a change and produce a meaningful reality. The potential of a thought has a close and direct connection with its purity. A pure thought is not fragmented, distracted or ripped by doubt and so is powerful. Just like the pure extract of a substance is strong, so that just a drop of it is sufficient, so also, a few concentrated thoughts can produce significant results.

Thoughts are like seeds, and like seeds they need the air of re-inforcement and repetition, the water of determination, and the sunlight of patience to grow into action. A task is realized when pure thoughts that head in the same direction are created, concentrated and then acted upon. Divergent and conflicting thoughts are like strong winds that cause the original sapling to droop. The waste thoughts, such as, thinking about the past, deliberating over others' behavior or commenting on things that do not concern us, tend to dampen the passions ignited by pure thoughts. Pure thoughts are heart-to-heart. They arise from the pure core of a being and touch similar chords on reaching their destination.

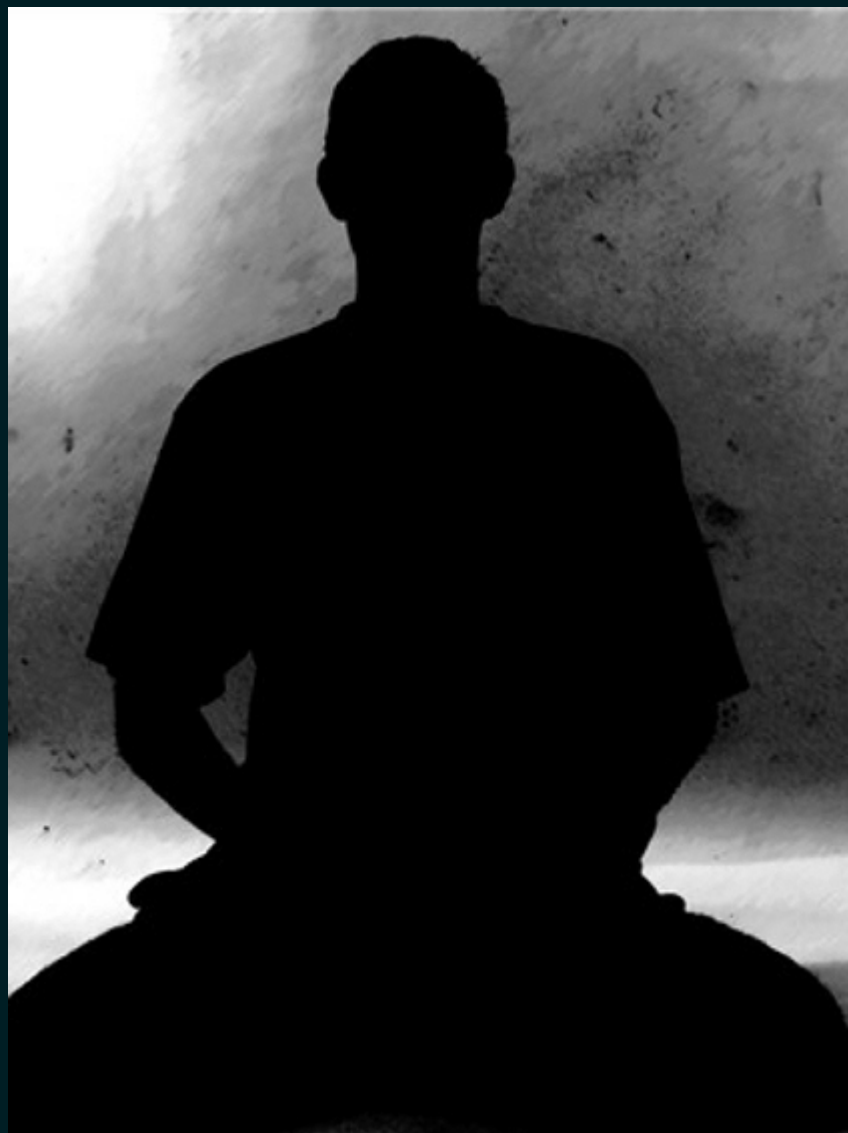
Good wishes, which are consciously created thoughts for one's own self and others, and which have immense power to transform circumstances, are the best example of pure thoughts.

Concentrated good wishes have the power to heal the hearts, damaged by acidic memories and bitter emotions. There is an urgent need to learn to create and sustain pure thoughts, because serving through the mind is the dire need in a spiritually polluted environment of the world. In the quiet hours of the morning, it would be a good exercise to shower peace over zones of conflict, to spray spiritual love in the areas that lack harmony, and to send happiness to those who have lost hope and joy. (*Purity*, September 2013)

Thoughts are the seeds of Karma and are at the very foundation of our destiny. How do we build fate or destiny? "Sow a thought, reap and act; sow an act reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny." Destiny is woven in the minds of men with good and evil thoughts. One needs to transform one's thinking and feeling and thus weave a better destiny.

Our good wishes and thoughts become more powerful when they are backed by strong will. H. P. B points out that every man or woman is endowed, more or less, with a magnetic potentiality, which when helped by a sincere and especially by an intense and indomitable *will*, can become the most effective magic lever in human hands. We should use that *will* to send out good wishes for the New Year to all. In Buddhism, *Metta* or loving kindness is a powerful positive emotion. We are asked to develop loving kindness towards all living beings. There must be overwhelming desire and wish, "May *all* the beings be happy." *Metta Bhavana meditation* helps to cultivate loving kindness. In this meditation, one has to visualize the image of one's own self, then the image of a friend, a neutral person, a "difficult person," and send out thoughts of friendliness and kindness towards that image. In the last stage, one has to expand the circle of loving kindness so as to include all the people in the family, in the building, in the locality, in the office, in the city, nation, and the whole universe.

It can happen that we might be away from the place where help is needed, but our pure and noble thoughts could bring wonderful results, inducing others to act. Mr. Judge mentions that some of the orphanages in India are supported only by prayers. The thoughts of prayer are carried by strong, constant faith into the receptive minds of other people, who are then moved by the subconsciously injected thought to answer the request, and thus financial or other help reaches the orphanage.





Reincarnation: the Evidence

by John Algeo - USA

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Reincarnation has become as American as apple pie, the Super Bowl, and the American conviction that anybody can grow up to be president. In the 1980s, several Gallup Polls established that about a quarter of Americans believe in reincarnation. In early 2001, one of the main e-commerce booksellers listed 649 books for the keyword “reincarnation,” and another listed 836. The widespread interest in reincarnation is a result — to a large extent indirectly to be sure — of its promulgation by the Theosophical Society.

A book on “alternative” or “new” religious movements in this country (Philip Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs*, Oxford University Press, 2000) pointed out the disproportionate effect our small organization has had on general thought: “Though the U.S. Census in 1926 found fewer than seven thousand declared Theosophists in the entire nation, that movement had already succeeded in making its views a familiar component of religious thought” (p. 10). “We might for instance observe the spread of ideas of reincarnation and karma, together with associated traditions like meditation and yoga. In the early twentieth century, all of these were associated with Theosophy ... [but now] the theories have entered the religious mainstream (p. 230).

Reincarnation is not an article of faith, but a theory. It is (as *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines “theory”) a “principle ... offered to explain phenomena.” For most people who believe in reincarnation, the phenomena it explains are chiefly subjective — their own experiences or observations. It is an idea that “makes sense.” However, although objective facts as evidence for reincarnation are not abundant, they do exist. A number of books provide just such evidence. Among them two by Ian Stevenson are

notable: *Where Reincarnation and Biology Intersect* and *Reincarnation and Biology: A Contribution to the Etiology of Birthmarks and Birth Defects*, 2 volumes (both Westport CT: Praeger, 1997).

These books are among the most important works ever published on the subject of reincarnation, and their author, Ian Stevenson (1918-2007), was the world's leading authority on the subject. Carlton Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia, he was the author of more than a dozen scholarly books and 250 articles. His special area of research was purported cases of memories by children of prior incarnations. His earlier works on the subject included *The Evidence for Survival from Claimed Memories of Former Incarnations* (1961), *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation* (1974), *Cases of the Reincarnation Type*, 4 volumes (1975–83), and *Children Who Remember Previous Lives: A Question of Reincarnation* (1987).

Stevenson meticulously investigated at first hand the accounts of children who apparently remember an earlier incarnation. His investigations included not only the child who reported the memories, but also the actual family, locale, circumstances, and events of the remembered life. The cumulative evidence of Stevenson's cases is so impressively massive and detailed that alternative explanations of chance or fraud (deliberate or unconscious) are improbable in the extreme. As Stevenson pointed out, unless one begins with the assumption that reincarnation is impossible, the simplest and most convincing explanation for a large number of cases is the factuality of reincarnation.

What makes the evidence reported in Stevenson's later books so impressive is that they add something new to his earlier studies, which dealt with reported memories and his investigative confirmation of the accuracy of those memories. This something new is physical bodily evidence in the form of birthmarks or birth defects on the body of the person who remembers a previous life. Those marks or defects match attested wounds or other physical anomalies on the body of the prior personality. For example, a child might remember having lived another life including enough details about it (names, places, events) to permit investigators to identify the earlier personality. That personality died from a gunshot wound, and medical or coroner's records establish the location of the entering and exiting wound marks made by the fatal bullet. The child who remembers the earlier life has birthmarks on places

that correspond to the wounds of the prior personality. Moreover, the birthmark corresponding to the exit wound is larger than the birthmark corresponding to the entry wound, just as the wounds themselves were, that being the normal pattern for bullet wounds. That is one type of case out of many involving birthmarks and defects.

The two hefty volumes of *Reincarnation and Biology* present extensive reports on cases of several types: volume 1 is devoted to birthmarks and volume 2 to birth defects and other anomalies. Many of the detailed accounts include photographs. The much more concise book *Where Reincarnation and Biology Intersect* corresponds chapter by chapter with the two-volume one but abridges and summarizes the material and is addressed to a general reader. The fuller two volumes, on the other hand, contain a good deal of technical detail and far more specific accounts of the evidence. For most readers, the shorter book will suffice, but anyone seriously interested in a scientific investigation of evidence for reincarnation should consult the longer version. And even a casual reader will find some of the detail in the two-volume set of absorbing interest.

A question that naturally arises is how the phenomenon works. Assuming that the memories of a former life are true, what causes unusual marks on a new infant body to correspond to physical abnormalities on the body of a former personality? Stevenson considers that question in chapters 2 and 3, where he points to several circumstances under which modifications in a person's body can be made by mental rather than physical intervention. Christian stigmatics are a well-known example; persons meditating on the crucified Jesus may undergo bodily changes in which marks or open wounds appear on their foreheads, palms, feet, sides, or other places corresponding to scriptural or iconographic details of the Passion.

Although the idea runs counter to the materialist assumptions that still dominate received opinion in our culture, it is clear that our mind affects our body, just as our body affects our mind. Because that is true, if reincarnation is also true, it is easy to understand that the mind of a person who reincarnates quickly, with something of the prior mind intact, would affect the new body, especially when traumatic memories are involved. Thus birthmarks and birth defects would be the physical impressions of memories carried over from a past life.

Most of the twenty-six chapters in these later books by Stevenson are case histories of various sorts illustrating the effects on a new body of memories from old lives. But two chapters (15 and 26) are especially interesting as considering the interpretation and implications of the phenomena. A reader pressed for time can gain much by skimming the case histories (which are the evidence) and reading carefully these chapters (which are the conclusions).

Ian Stevenson's work is impressive partly because it is not credulous. He considers the evidence critically. First, he is concerned with the authenticity of the reports. That is, do they "describe events with satisfactory closeness to the events as they really happened"? Second, are there "normal" explanations for the correspondences between birthmarks and the wounds of a deceased person? Could they be the result of fraud or of chance, perhaps augmented by fantasy or suggestion? Are there "paranormal" explanations, such as extrasensory perception, possession of a child by a discarnate personality, or maternal impressions on a fetus? Stevenson concludes: "I accept reincarnation as the best explanation for a case only after I have excluded all others — normal and paranormal. I conclude, however, that all the other interpretations may apply to a few cases, but to no more than a few. I believe, therefore, that reincarnation is the best explanation for the stronger cases, by which I mean those in which the two families were unacquainted before the case developed. It may well be the best explanation for many other cases also. ... Each reader should study the evidence carefully — preferably in the monograph [the two-volume work] — and then reach his or her own conclusion (*Where Reincarnation and Biology Intersect*, pp. 112-3).

In arriving at his conclusion, Stevenson does not reject the influence of genetics and environmental factors on our lives. He recognizes nature and nurture as powerful forces in molding our minds and bodies. What he proposes is that there is also a third factor, an additional powerful force, namely the effect of past lives on our present existence. The reality of that third factor has some significant implications for one's worldview.

1. To begin with, "the most important consequence would be acknowledgment of the duality of mind and body" (p. 181). By "duality" Stevenson does not mean moral or metaphysical dualism, but rather that the mind is a reality independent of, though interactive with, the brain: "Proponents

of dualism do not deny the usefulness of brains for our everyday living; but they do deny that minds are nothing but the subjective experiences of brain activity” (p. 181). His position in this matter is much like that of William James, Henri Bergson, or Theosophy. It is that mind-consciousness exists apart from its interaction with brain-consciousness, however important that interaction is during life.

2. The next implication is that there must be a “place” where the consciousness exists when it is not embodied and linked with a brain: “we are obliged to imagine a mental space that, necessarily, differs from the physical space with which we are ordinarily familiar. ... Existence there might have features that would seem familiar to persons who have given more than average attention to their dreams ... and to some persons who have come close to death and survived” (p. 181). The “mental space” Stevenson alludes to here will be recognized by those familiar with Theosophical teachings about the “inner” or “higher” planes of reality, which we inhabit during sleep and between lives.

3. Another implication is that some features are transmitted from one life to another: “I have found it helpful to use the word *diathanatic* (which means “carried through death”) as a term for subsuming the parts of a deceased person that may reach expression in a new incarnation. So what parts would be diathanatic? The cases I have described tell us that these would include: some cognitive information about events of the previous life; a variety of likes, dislikes, and other attitudes; and, in some cases, residues of physical injuries or other markings of the previous body” (pp. 181-2). Stevenson prefers not to use the traditional terminology of philosophical and religious systems in order to avoid any extraneous associations they may have. But his “diathanatic” is very close to the Buddhist concept of “skandhas,” the material, psychic, and mental residues that are carried over from one life to the next.

4. Yet another implication is that we must distinguish two “levels” of selfhood, one associated only with a single lifetime and another that stretches across lives: “We may understand better the loss through death of some or much of the previous personality by using the distinction between *personality* and *individuality*. By individuality I mean all the characteristics, whether concealed or expressed, that a person might have

from a previous life, or previous lives, as well as from this one. By personality I mean the aspects of individuality that are currently expressed or capable of expression” (p. 182). In this case, the terms and the distinction are traditional in Theosophical use, going back to Henry Steel Olcott’s use of them in the early 1880s for his *Buddhist Catechism* (as reported in his autobiographical *Old Diary Leaves* 1:285).

5. Next is a consideration of ways in which the reincarnating individual influences the physical body of its new incarnation. Stevenson identifies three possibilities. “First, the individual may in some sense ‘select’ its parents, motivated by strong ties of affection [or, Theosophists might add, by karmic links of whatever kind]. Second, the reincarnating individual may be able to screen and select fertilized ova or embryos. Third, and most relevant to the subject of birthmarks and defects, the individual may be able to exercise some direct control over the development of the fetus to reproduce physical attributes of the body of the previous personality. Any such direct influence implies some kind of template that imprints the embryo or fetus with ‘memories’ of the wounds, marks, or other features of the previous physical body. The template must have a vehicle that carries the memories of the physical body and also the cognitive and behavioral ones. I have suggested the word *psychophore* (which means ‘mind-carrying’) for this intermediate vehicle.

. . . The existence between terrestrial lives is therefore, according to this view, a corporeal one, but the psychophore would not be made of the material substances with which we are familiar. . . . These and other cases suggest to me that the psychophore has the properties of a field or, more probably, a collection of fields that carry the physical and other memories of the previous life and more or less reproduce them by acting on the embryo or fetus of the new body. . . . Morphogenetic fields have been imagined as governing the development of the forms that organs and the whole body of which they are the parts will have. . . .

Readers may reasonably ask whether there exists any evidence for a vehicle such as the psychophore apart from the cases of children who remember previous lives and who have birthmarks or birth defects. The answer is not much. Nevertheless certain cases of apparitions furnish some relevant evidence. . . . Some additional evidence for a vehicle that I have called

a psychophore comes from the occurrence of phantom limbs in congenital amputees — persons born with parts of limbs missing” (pp. 183-4).

The tenor of the long, though abridged, quotation above will seem very familiar to anyone versed in the Theosophical tradition. For that tradition holds that in addition to our dense physical body, we have several other bodies or vehicles composed of matter of various kinds different from ordinary physical stuff: etheric or vital, astral or emotional, and manasic or mental matter. These bodies exist on the “inner” or “higher” planes or in other “fields” than the dense physical. They carry the “diathanatic” or “skandhic” qualities from one incarnation to the next, and the etheric or vital body serves in particular as a template for the growth and development of the dense physical body.

Although the cases reported in Stevenson’s volumes show a great deal of variation, some features are characteristic, and those features are of interest in suggesting why some children remember their prior incarnation and even have signs of it in their new body. In a large number of these cases, the earlier life ended prematurely by violence. The reincarnation then happened quickly and in the same culture as the preceding life. And the violent ending of the earlier life so impressed the psychophore that it in turn passed on the impression to the new body in the form of a birthmark or defect.

It is as though a life was ended before its purpose had been achieved, so the individual was drawn back into the same milieu to finish the uncompleted experience. The Theosophical tradition is that normally a long period of time (centuries or even millennia) elapse between incarnations, during which time the psychophore (or collection of bodies on the inner planes) undergoes a process by which its experience in the past life is absorbed into the permanent individuality.

When the normal process is violently interrupted, however, it would seem natural that the individual might be quickly attracted back into the same circumstances as the last life. In that case, there would not be time between lives for the psychophore to be “cleansed” of its past memories, which would therefore be incorporated into the new personality. As the individual settles into the new body and new impressions come from the senses into the new brain, however, the old memories from the past life are overwritten and die out.

According to Stevenson, a child begins to talk about a past life very early, almost as soon as it learns to talk; but between the ages of 5 and 8, active memories of the past life are generally gone.

At the end of the volume, Stevenson repeats his caveat: "I do not propose reincarnation as a substitute for present or future knowledge of genetics and environmental influences. I think of it as a third factor contributing to the formation of human personality and of some physical features and abnormalities. I am, however, convinced that it deserves attention for the additional explanatory value that it has for numerous unsolved problems of psychology and medicine. ... We may, after all, be engaged in a dual evolution — of our bodies and of our minds or souls" (pp. 186-7). The last sentence above, with which Stevenson ends the book directed to a general reader, states a purpose for reincarnation with which the Theosophical tradition is wholly in accord. The purpose of our many lives is to further the evolutionary development of our minds and souls. It is remarkable, though not unique, to see such agreement between the careful investigation of a scientist and the hundred and twenty-five year old tradition of modern Theosophy.

A popular, well-written, and perceptive account of Ian Stevenson's work is *Old Souls: The Scientific Evidence for Past Lives*, by Tom Shroder (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999). Shroder is a Pulitzer-Prize winning editor of the *Miami Herald* and later of the *Washington Post*. While with the *Miami Herald*, he wrote an article on the Miami psychiatrist Brian Weiss, whose use of hypnotic retrogression to elicit putative memories of past incarnations resulted in a popular 1988 book *Many Lives, Many Masters*. Shroder found Weiss's work unconvincing as evidence for reincarnation, but through it he came into contact with Ian Stevenson, and thereby wrote this book.

Shroder accompanied Stevenson on two trips, in 1997 to Lebanon and later to India, to observe Stevenson's methods of fieldwork as he investigated cases of reported child memories of former lives. After returning to America, Shroder investigated some cases of the same sort in the South. Shroder's account of those experiences is set forth with the skill of a master reporter. The reader of this book learns both the facts of the cases and their value as evidence as analyzed by a neutral observer. Shroder's account also gives the reader a feeling for the frustration, the danger, and the culture shock of doing such research in third-world countries.

In addition, the reader gets an intimate view of Stevenson, the man and scientist, who has devoted his life to an investigation that his peers would prefer not to be bothered by. Their preference is due partly to his methods, which necessarily violate some widely accepted criteria of what can count as scientific research, and partly to the fact that they have already ruled out the possibility of his conclusions being acceptable. As one critic quoted by Shroder (p. 146) put it: "The problem lies less in the quality of data Stevenson adduces to prove his point, than in the body of knowledge and theory which must be abandoned or radically modified in order to accept it." Stevenson's response (p. 210) is a commonplace in the history of science: "There's an old aphorism . . . 'Science changes one funeral at a time.' There is a powerful conservatism among the scientific establishment. You don't persuade people with your evidence. They have to pretty much die off for new ideas to come to the fore."

Much of the power of this highly readable book comes from the fact that the author himself, while not doubting the facts of Stevenson's cases, since he participated in the investigation of some of them, is still undecided about their interpretation at the end of the book. What he witnessed cannot be explained away as fraud, coincidence, delusion, or any of the ordinary options. The apparent memories challenge "the body of knowledge and theory which must be abandoned or radically modified" in response to them. At the end of the book, Shroder recounts an investigation he did himself into the case of a boy in Virginia who remembered events unconnected with his present life, whose accuracy Shroder's research confirmed. The last chapter ends with an unanswered question the boy asked about his memories: "Why is that, Mom?" It is Shroder's question as well.

Ian Stevenson's point is simply that if we want an explanation for certain mysteries he has studied, the simplest, most adequate, and therefore best explanation is reincarnation. Reincarnation is often understood very simplistically. And simplistic views are almost always wrong. But a wrong simplistic view does not invalidate a more sophisticated one that accounts for the facts.



The Eye and the Heart Doctrine

from a student

[The magazine *Vidya*, <http://www.theosophysb.org/site/publications.html>, edited by associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists in Santa Barbara, USA, published in its summer 2013 issue the following article].

Saith the pupil: O Teacher, what shall I do to reach Wisdom?

O Wise one, what, to gain perfection?

Search for the Paths. But, O Lanoo, be of clean heart before thou startest on thy journey.

Before thou takest thy first step, learn to discern the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the everlasting.

Learn above all to separate Head-learning from Soul-wisdom, the "Eye" from the "Heart" doctrine

- from the Voice of the Silence

To a pupil seeking knowledge of the path to wisdom and perfection, the teacher responds with a distinction between Head-learning and Soul-wisdom and emphasizes the importance of cleansing or purifying the "heart". This distinction, central to the teaching in the sacred text, *The Voice of the Silence*, is expressed in the metaphorical terms of "the eye doctrine" and "the heart doctrine". Explanations of the two terms can be made at several levels of human development ranging from the highest choices of an enlightened being to the ordinary approaches to learning and the duties of human life.

For those seeking understanding of the material world, Head-learning is what we call worldly knowledge gained via the senses, the brain and the intellect. This knowledge of factual information and material reality is organized initially by what Theosophy calls the lower mind or lower *manas*. The predilections and emotions buried in the lower mind may distort the

perceptions of worldly learning and envelop them in a very personal consciousness. However, with discipline, the intellect may use methods of reasoning, logic or scientific methods to develop more objective and universally valid knowledge.

It is necessary to use the intellect in a search for wisdom, but the effort must open up and use the higher mind that can think through archetypal concepts, principles and correspondences that help explain the interdependence of life and the workings of karma both within human beings and throughout manifest existence. Eventually, the “eye” of the intellect or “head” can develop a fairly comprehensive understanding of the metaphysical path.

Ultimately this path of “Head-learning” can lead to a state of consciousness liberated from all the attachments, limitations and turmoil that circumscribe the perspectives and actions of personal consciousness. This task typically requires life-times of study, listening to instruction and countless experiments in practice. To attain this freedom from worldly ties, called *nirvana*, the seeker must also have mastered both the principles and practice of ethical choice. All personal karma must be settled. The challenges and magnificence of attaining *nirvana* should never be underestimated. The “eye” of discernment is necessary and would include a general study of human nature and the sources of suffering. lanes of reality.

Awareness of suffering presents the nirvaneer with a critical choice: should he pass into his earned reward of liberation from conditioned existence for many cycles of evolution, or should he renounce this prize and stay in contact with the trials and tribulations of human beings and with all that exists? Doing the latter is referred to as the Path of Renunciation or what is called “the path of woe”. This is the path that the great teachers of mankind, including the Masters of Wisdom spoken of in Theosophical teachings, have chosen. Using the knowledge they have attained, these Teachers strive to help and teach, so that all that lives may be guided towards the attainment of nirvana. Their bliss is postponed for cycles without number.

Making this choice expresses soul-wisdom and evokes compassion, the magnificent and comprehensive capacity for boundless and unconditioned devotion to the welfare of others. This pure, self-sacrificing motivation is what is referred to as the “heart” quality. This inner quality reflects the potency of

buddhi, a universal source of divine illumination and ethical discernment. Those who have fully awakened buddhi walk among us as inspiring exemplars of human potential. They live in unity and harmony with all of life. But how did they develop the “heart” quality that motivates their renunciation of rewards earned and bliss deserved? How did they become fully sensitive to feelings of human suffering in a world of turmoil and confusion? The answer is both mysterious and practical. Cultivation of “heart” qualities begins early in life as children are encouraged to feel love and yet accept discipline. Lessons of helpful service are mixed with experiences of happiness. Thereafter, ample messages of cooperation, brotherhood, service, karma and recognition of a common good help the child or young adult develop “heart” qualities in healthy relationships. In time, “heart” qualities can become natural and spontaneous. If learned deeply enough, these qualities can carry over to future lives where the process of education begins again.

In *The Key to Theosophy*, H. P. Blavatsky offers several methods of education that promote both head-learning and heart qualities. True Theosophical education must treat each child as an intelligent individual. Each child must be taught how to think and reason for himself. He must also be taught mutual charity, love for fellow man, and above all, unselfishness. That is the heart doctrine. The purely mechanical workings of the memory should be reduced to a minimum. Efforts should be made to awaken the inner senses and the latent capacities of the child. Although some schools of modern education have adopted some of these goals, their methods are nevertheless missing one central key: the knowledge of the soul. The typical methods of education for centuries focus on cultivating the mind rather than the soul. Theosophy points out that the mind is merely the vehicle, the instrument of the soul. Therefore, head-learning without the development of soul-wisdom, breeds selfishness, pride and arrogance.

True education and the use of the heart doctrine requires a recognition of the immortal, reincarnating soul in each one of us. This recognition should bring about fundamental changes in our thinking and actions. A one-life view gives no logical aim and goal to life, other than “survival of the fittest” in the “struggle for existence” or simply promotes an exaggerated image of an admired personality. Orthodox religious ideas can distort the possibilities for human development. The idea that in each baby

born, there is a new soul created for the first time blocks understanding of the tremendous wisdom that each baby brings to its pilgrimage in life. Theosophy, however, posits the idea that we are timeless, evolving beings, and that each incarnation brings exactly the right opportunities to learn and practise both head-learning and soul-wisdom.

Wisdom is not mere high learning, or bright intellectual training. It is profound knowledge that arises out of the depths of the “heart”. It integrates vision and intuitive insight. It expresses soul learning. It provides an inner illumination that is the result of meditation and reflection on universal concepts and principles—from day to day, and life to life. Wisdom reflects the inner experience of the eternal pilgrim and its contacts with various facets of life and with the cosmos as a whole. This is an entirely different kind of knowledge. To manifest this kind of knowledge, one must pass through incredible self-purification and self-discipline. The heart doctrine or soul-wisdom teaches self-realisation that includes realising one's unity with the whole of life and nature and with one's divine immortality.

The Wisdom Religion, in its practical bearing, is purely divine ethics based in metaphysics that offer rational explanations for the practice of ethics in life. Metaphysics and ethics are inseparable, as are two wings of a bird. These two wings are necessary for the soul to take flight and to engage in the true pilgrimage of life. The heart doctrine nurtures the moral virtues; the eye doctrine encourages clear and coherent knowledge. Knowledge and moral virtues must be practised together along parallel lines. The mere acceptance of teachings will not take us far. The mind and the heart must both be activated.

There is one fundamental principle, found in both *The Voice of the Silence* and in the *Bhagavad Gita*, guiding both head learning and soul wisdom. In *The Voice*, it says, “Be humble, if thou would'st attain to Wisdom. Be humbler still, when Wisdom thou hast mastered.” This means that humility is what shines in a wise man. It is the wise man who has the attitude of “Thus have I heard.” The person with head learning, worldly knowledge of the worldly intellect of the transitory life, will say, “Behold, I know.” The same point is also mentioned by Krishna in Chapter IV of the *Gita* where Krishna points out to Arjuna that to gain wisdom one must practise, service, strong search, questions and humility. Then the wise will communicate this truth to the

disciple so that he will not fall into error. Pride will create obstacles in the path to wisdom and will mar the work.

It is important, then, that we purify our lower nature.

Purification of our lower mind will allow the divine intuitions of our higher minds, our true self, to manifest in a gentle, harmonious mind, which cannot be distorted by values that are tainted by partial philosophies or prejudices. The aim of both the eye and heart doctrines should be to transform the animal man into human man and the human man into a divine beacon of light. Man is a potential god on a pilgrimage to become an active divine potency in life. This is what all the Great Teachers of humanity have taught and embodied. These encouraging exemplars have followed the path of renunciation. They live to help mankind that is now struggling through the valley of sin and sorrow. The seeker of Wisdom should remember that commitment and engagement in service to others is the first step in the pilgrimage. The instruction in *The Voice of the Silence* is clear:

If thou art taught that sin is born of action and bliss of absolute inaction, then tell them that they err.

Non-permanence of human action; deliverance of mind from thralldom by the cessation of sin and faults, are not for "Deva Egos." Thus saith the "Doctrine of the Heart."





Radha Burnier

Human Regeneration - Part I

T.S. Work and the Fundamental Change in Man and Society

by Radha Burnier - India

[Recognizing regeneration as the kernel of all Theosophical work, the International Theosophical Centre at Naarden, The Netherlands, jointly with the Federation of Theosophical Societies in Europe, organized two seminars in July 1990, with a number of office-bearers, workers and members of the Society from different countries as participants. The proceedings of the seminar were published as a book under the title *Human Regeneration*.]

We are meeting in the context of important changes that are taking place at the present moment, particularly in Europe. There were other times in the history of the world when great changes appeared to take place. But the world always reverts to a condition of chaos; and degeneration sets in in all institutions, social or political.

The subject of human regeneration is very important because a truly momentous change in the history of humanity will occur only when there is a revolutionary change in the human being. Probably a sufficient number of human beings must change to bring about a radical change in the course of human history. Therefore it is important for us to explore this question.

Every civilization has to meet challenges of various kinds. If they do not meet the challenge before them adequately, a nation or a people fail; the civilization begins to disappear. Historians like Toynbee have put forward a theory of challenge and response. Slowly the modern world is becoming conscious of the enormity of the challenge before our present civilization, if it can be called a civilization at all. We have had two terrible world wars, besides a number of other tragic struggles and minor wars (minor only in comparison to the world wars). The danger is not over, although there is talk of peace; we cannot eliminate the possibility of other wars breaking out, merely because Europe is changing.

There is also the danger of environmental degradation reaching a point where it threatens the whole world. Some experts believe that in another ten or fifteen years we will reach a crisis point which is beyond all present imagination. Whatever that be, it is a very serious threat. The proliferation of arms does not lead only to war. Disarmament may take place in western and eastern Europe, but arms are being distributed to many parts of the world. Violence is on the increase everywhere, in the form of terrorism, violence on the streets and so on.

There is further the problem of overpopulation which is a serious threat, bringing in its wake poverty. Perhaps those who have not been in the really poverty-stricken areas have no conception of what it means. Extreme poverty leads to moral degradation, crime, and hideousness in many forms. The poor people cannot help it because the only thing that matters to them is to stay alive.

So there are these enormous problems in the world, which is the external challenge. Unfortunately there are a number of people who do not want to face squarely even the external challenge. They prefer to ignore some or all of the aspects of that challenge. There are many more who do not realize that the challenges faced by every civilization are not merely external; the external challenge is the reflection of something inside the human being. Today this internal threat is far from clear to humanity; very, very few people realize that the real source of the problem is in the psyche of man. And we never deal adequately with the external challenges because we do not want to look at and deal with the internal challenge.

I think the work of the Theosophical Society is to point to the challenge within, because it is of much greater importance to see it and deal with it than to go on dealing with what is outside. If we do not look at the source of the problem, but only at the effects, then temporary, partial and superficial solutions are found. That is why, although we have reason to feel happy about the changes that are taking place in Europe, we cannot feel assured because we do not know in what way the stability which has been created will be disturbed once again.

If the human mind does not change, can society remain stable? In one of the Mahatma letters there is the remark: 'the origin of every evil whether small or great is in human action, in man whose intelligence makes him the

one free agent in Nature.' The challenges outside are our creation, because we divide ourselves into nations, groups, categories of various kinds and identify ourselves only with one group. We feel that the problems are not of our making - that the rest of the world has created the difficulties. But if we take a closer look we may find that basically our nature is not different from that of the rest of the world. The Mahatma continues: 'it is neither Nature nor an imaginary Deity that has to be blamed, but human nature made vile by *selfishness*. Think well over these few words.' That was his admonishment: think well over these few words.

Should not the T. S. be deeply concerned with a permanent solution - a solution which will transform human society, not merely a little bit, not only in a particular area and for a time, but one which will give it a new direction? Until now, in spite of various revolutions and political changes - from capitalism to socialism, changes in economic structure, new ideologies and theories - in spite of all these attempts to remodel society and improve it, the condition of the world has been more or less the same. We have of course many comforts - central heating etc.; and people can go to the moon. I am not talking about that; but the basic condition of humanity, that is the struggles, the competition, the stress, war - called the 'ultimate folly' - all this is going on. There is exploitation of people by people - slavery, oppression of women, use of child labour - this is all still going on and may yet go on for ages. Concentration camps in Europe or slavery in Mauritania are the same thing. Basically the world has not changed, obviously because we have not gone to the root of the problem and have not met the human challenge fully. We have only looked outside and not seen that the outside has come from the inside.

It is the condition of the mind which is the source of the problem, and this is true for the individual as well as for all of humanity. Each one of us probably has difficulties of some kind to face in life. In the family and profession, there are tussles, disappointments, desire to have and frustration because of not having. All kinds of disturbances arise in each individual, but he attributes his personal problems more to the environment than to his own mind. Therefore he is always trying to change circumstances, or escape from particular situations, or put responsibility or blame on others. He does not get down to dealing with his own internal condition.

What is true of humanity is true in a small way of the individual and

his life. Therefore we have to see that there is no difference between the individual and the society in which he lives, or human society as a whole. What we do with our own small lives is what humanity in the mass is doing. We are a reflection of humanity and humanity is what we are. Mr. Krishnamurti repeatedly pointed out this fact, that the world is not different from ourselves: 'As all human beings are basically the same, one can with reason say that the world is oneself, and one is the world. That is an absolute fact as one can see when one goes into it very deeply.' But perhaps that is just what we do not do, we do not go into it far enough, and therefore we do not see the need for regeneration to take place.

Society cannot be dealt with separately from the individual; the individual can never find himself in happy circumstances if he depends upon society to change. So they have to be dealt with together. The world today faces the challenge of unity or disunity, cooperation or confrontation and conflict. Is it only the world which faces that or does each one of us have to see whether the elements of that situation are not in his own mind? If there is division in the world today, which makes it so very difficult to find solutions to such questions as we described - poverty, war and disarmament - is it not because we refuse to deal with the divisiveness in our own minds?

I would like to quote one more passage, and this is from H. P. B.

She says: 'Our duty is to keep alive in man his spiritual intuitions. To oppose and counteract - after due investigation and proof of its irrational nature - bigotry in every form, religious, scientific or social, and 'cant' above all, whether as religious sectarianism, or as a belief in miracles or anything supernatural. What we have to do is to seek to obtain knowledge of all the laws of nature and to diffuse it.'

Here H. P. B. touches upon the fact that if there is bigotry, fanaticism, sectarianism, the tendency to compartmentalize in the minds of people, humanity cannot manage to be in a state of cooperation and peace. Solutions have always failed, because we have been dealing only with society, not with ourselves. To me it is clear that the main work of the T. S. is to point to the internal challenge and to help the world to deal radically with its problems. We must not become a group of people who are only interested in altering structures, systems and methods. I am not saying that we should not

participate in bringing about changes externally. But that cannot be the fundamental work of the Society, the core of its activities, central to its very existence.

Also, the T. S. stands for bringing about a solution which is for the whole of humanity, not for a section of humanity. Everywhere, people have their own angle to problems, whether it is war or poverty. They are unable to get away from their particular point of view, based on their own interests. The solution is therefore never right. If it is an environmental problem, India might want a solution which suits it, and Europe or Holland or whatever the nation is, may want the solution that is to its advantage. We look at all problems sectionally, directed by some form of self-interest. But the theosophical point of view must be universal, because no problem can be resolved piecemeal, especially in the modern world, where all the nations and peoples of the world are interlocked together. You know the 'Spaceship Earth' idea; if the ship sinks, all of us will sink; if it sails well all of us will be safe. There is no separate solution for anything. Although this seems rather obvious, there are millions of people who cannot bring themselves even to look at this question in its true light. The T. S. has to lead the way by pioneering the global outlook and not the nationalistic or the piecemeal outlook.

For members of the Society it should be clear that the fragmented mind cannot deal with the problems of today; in fact it never could. Today we are in a world where technological changes have interrelated everything. No part of the earth can enjoy security and prosperity without sharing with the rest of the earth. No fragmentary effort can succeed, no solution brought by such effort can last, because the fragmented mind is the author of the problems. If we did not have broken-up minds, we would not face these enormous difficulties and challenges. If we look carefully we will find that the short-sighted view and limited perspectives are at the base of difficulties.

Therefore the T. S. has the duty and the responsibility of pointing to the need for self-understanding. We do not know what is our own good, because our view is short-sighted. There are people who know that the destruction of vegetation will do great harm. Yet they destroy, for they want immediate profit. Such action exists in many fields. The immediate advantage is sought, for it is far more attractive than a long-term solution. This happens because we have a wrong idea of ourselves, a lack of perspective in respect of

our own lives. Theosophy provides the needed perspective. Unless man knows what he is, what his future must be, in what direction he must move, how can he do the right thing?

So it is vital for the human being to be aware of himself, of his true nature, and discern his inner potential. This is not a theoretical question. Even when we do deal with this matter we often tend to make it seem abstract, having little to do with daily life. Some thinkers have said that society is shaped by the image man has of himself. No doubt that is true. We create our particular society according to the concept we have of ourselves.

What do we know of ourselves? Is the image we have of ourselves completely wrong - the image of a small, struggling creature, insecure, grasping? Is this what the human being is meant to be? The theosophical understanding of man is very important from a practical point of view, because if we truly understand what we are, all our relationships will change. If I think of myself as a petty creature, who must grasp at everything that is possible, then my attitude is greedy, utilitarian, competitive. But if I understand what I really am, all that is automatically shed and my relationships are of a totally different order. This has immense practical value, of which perhaps we are not quite aware.

Our whole idea of what is practical may be wrong, just as our idea of progress is wrong. And as members of the T. S., responsible for carrying out its objects, we need to make clear what progress is. What is truly practical? Surely it is very impractical to know so little of ourselves and yet try to bring about our own happiness and fulfilment, to believe that we are creating something good for ourselves when we do not know what is that good.

To summarize, in the context of the world as it is at present, the T. S. should point out certain things. It must make clear that dealing with external challenges is not enough. The external challenge is a product of the internal one, which arises within the mind, in the psyche. Human society cannot change unless individuals change, and the change must be in the direction of universality of outlook. Solutions have so far failed because they are all fragmentary, arising from a fragmented mind. They are solutions for a time, for a particular people, meant to benefit a certain area. But problems today demand a universal outlook. A limited view of the human being and of human destiny can only lead to further difficulties. A much wider perspective is

needed, which theosophy provides. It is important for the human being to know what he is and what he can be. Even if he sees a little bit of this, it alters his relationship with everything, not only with other human beings but with everything in life. If the new outlook changes relationship, it also begins to change society, for what is society but a web of relationships?

So the T. S. has an important responsibility to fulfil, which is to bring about a renewal in one's way of looking at things, which will also be a renewal in relationships and in society. All this must be discussed in detail. Other aspects of the question will come up. Just getting a few ideas about these matters does not amount to understanding. We should try to see the whole question very clearly in the depth of our hearts. We ought to ask ourselves: What is it that humanity needs? What is the fundamental change that has to take place in society? Can that change happen without a radical change in individual human beings? What is the role of the T. S. in bringing about the necessary change? Is it not to end forever such grave problems as inequality, exploitation, cruelty and insecurity?

If the T. S. is to be a beneficent force in the world, we must see where our work lies. We should be very clear about it, not play about with relatively unimportant things, but get to the core. If we are clear about the central work, subsidiary matters will be resolved easily in accordance with it.

To be continued



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Art and Western Esotericism: FROM REJECTED KNOWLEDGE TO BLOCKBUSTER

by Marty Bax – The Netherlands

[This essay was first published on Bax Art Concepts and Services
www.baxpress.blogspot.com.br/ It is reproduced here in a revised form.]

From 1996 onwards, Dutch art historians Marty Bax, Andréa Kroon and Audrey Wagtberg Hansen have realized various projects aimed at drawing attention to the relationship between art and western esotericism. Because our goals have largely been realized, we feel the time has come to focus on other lacunas in our knowledge of art history. This column therefore marks the end of our joint 'lobby' for this fascinating subject.

Art and religion are closely related. Like the main world religions, lesser known religious currents have also provided artists with inspiration. Freemasonry, Spiritualism, Theosophy and Anthroposophy for instance, were



relevant to the development of modern art. Within the academic study of religions, these organisations are seen as part of western esotericism: an umbrella term for a group of related currents, which date back to the gnosis of antiquity, the hermetic philosophy of the Renaissance and what were considered the occult sciences (alchemy, magic, astrology).



During the nineteenth century the progress of industry and science went hand in hand with the process of secularization; people no longer found the answers to life's big questions in their traditional (Christian) faith, and turned to new religious, philosophical and ideological currents. Around 1900 especially the intellectual avant-garde found itself attracted to the organizations like freemasonry and Theosophy. Esoteric symbolism found its way to the arts through the work of these members. The membership of esoteric currents by artists and its relevance to their work was openly mentioned in Dutch newspapers at the time. Joséphin Péladans occult "Salons de la Rose + Croix" lay fresh in art critics memories; Piet Mondriaans interest in Theosophy was widely known; and architect Karel de Bazel made the headlines with his design for the temple of his masonic lodge in The Hague.



The start of World War II marked a sudden end to this openness. The Nazi regime ordered the abolishment of many esoteric organisations and confiscated their buildings and possessions. The Nazis also directed an intensive propaganda campaign against freemasonry and related organisations, insinuating they were part of a Jewish 'Zionist' conspiracy. Fear of persecution prompted many families, including artists, to destroy their membership papers and other documents between 1940 and 1945.

After the war, esoteric organisations were

damaged on many levels: after enduring years of negative propaganda and the loss of many members in the violence of war, they now faced a long judicial process to regain the rights to their buildings and property from the Dutch government. This may explain why they chose to prioritize internal matters, instead of seeking the public eye and trying to counteract prejudices. This allowed many misconceptions, started by the Nazi regime, to continue in the collective subconscious. Because artist's archives had been cleansed of 'sensitive' documents, the post-war generation of art historians often failed to recognize the influence of esoteric currents.

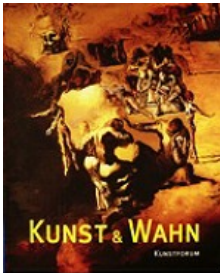
During the second half of the twentieth century, the term 'esoteric' was increasingly associated with New Age consumer fads. For many art historians this was a reason to shun the subject. They did not want the intellectual genius of an admired artist to be blemished by highlighting his or her woolly interest in the esoteric or the occult. Other complex factors also played a role in this process. (Here is an interesting PhD-project into rejected knowledge, waiting for a student to pick it up!) Whatever the precise cause, while esotericism could count on the attention of the art world before the war, the subject was largely ignored by the art historical field after 1945.

The 1960's saw the foundation of the first academic chair for the study of western esotericism at the University of Paris. The interest in the subject by art historians was rekindled in the 1970s, stimulated by publications by Sixten Ringbom *The Sounding Cosmos: a study in the spiritualism of Kandinsky and Abstract Painting* (1970), and Robert Pincus Witten *Occult Symbolism in France: Joséphin Péladan and the Salons de la Rose + Croix*, (1976). Within art history, esotericism was mainly viewed within the context of the decadent fin-de-siècle and the subject was touched upon in exhibitions

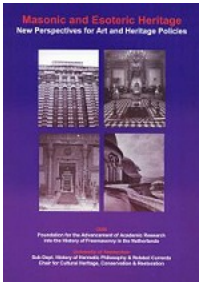


on broader themes like religion and spiritualism, mental illness or outsider art. Examples are: “Zeichen des Glaubens: Religiöse Tendenzen in der Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts” (Stuttgart, 1980); “The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985” (Den Haag, 1986-1987); “Okkultismus und Avantgarde: Von Munch bis Mondrian 1900-1915” (Frankfurt am Main 1995); “Im Reich der Phantome: Fotografie des Unsichtbaren” (Mönchengladbach 1997), and “Kunst und Wahn” (Wenen, 1997).

While historians of religions had supplied clear definitions, art historians kept interchanging terms like ‘spiritualism’, ‘spiritism’, ‘mysticism’, ‘occultism’ and ‘esotericism’, causing confusion. The family tree of esoteric currents and their influence on specific events in art remained unclear, especially to the public. Conclusions were drawn without consulting the historical archives of the relevant esoteric organizations and the enlightening correspondence by artists contained within these archives, that might shed light on such works, was missed. A strong citation culture amongst art historians meant that misunderstandings would be perpetuated instead of being corrected.



The foundation of chairs for western esotericism at European universities, such as the Chair for the History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents in Amsterdam, gave a strong impulse to interdisciplinary research from the end of the 1990s onwards. But the interest of Dutch art historians kept lagging behind international developments. Art historians Marijo Ariëns, Marty Bax (previously involved in “The Spiritual in Art”), Andréa Kroon and Audrey Wagberg Hansen met in 1996 via ARIES (*Association pour la Recherche et l'Information sur l'Esotérisme*), an interdisciplinary study group on western esotericism,



and its later international successor, ESSWE (European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism). We have since drawn attention to esoteric symbolism in art through both individual and joint projects. Examples of various conference themes are: 'Kunst en Westerse Esoterie: Een traditie in de kunst van de 17de eeuw tot heden' (Van Gogh Museum, 1999); the start of the OVN foundation, its research projects and conferences including "Masonic and Esoteric Heritage: new perspectives for art and heritage policies" (Dutch National Library, 2005); research into the esoteric interests of Helene Kröller-Müller (Kröller-Müller Museum, 2002-2003); and exhibition on artist and theosophist Henri Verstijnen (1882-1940) (Assen/Den Haag 2006-2007); the exhibition "Holy Inspiration. Religion and Spirituality in Modern Art" (Amsterdam 2008); and the city guide *Geheim Den Haag: vrijmetelaarstempels en andere esoterische gebouwen in Den Haag rond 1900* (Nieuwe Haagsche, 2011).

Bax published a dissertation on theosophy and art "Het web der schlemming: theosofie en kunst in Nederland van Lauweriks tot Mondriaan" (SUN, 2006), while Ariens' dissertation explored the influence of esotericism on Picasso and the Surrealists, "*De wangen van de Macroposofus: Een nieuwe interpretatie van het schilderij 'Les Femmes d'Alger' van Pablo Picasso.*" Kroon expects to finish her dissertation on "The role of Dutch freemasons in the cultural and commercial exchange with Asia, 1735-1852" in 2012.

While in the 1990s we were 'lonely callers in the desert', as the Dutch saying goes, younger art historians have since studied at the chair for Hermetic Philosophy in Amsterdam, whose interdisciplinary approach will further broaden the boundaries of the art historical field of study. Meanwhile, many esoteric organisations have opened up and digitalized their historical libraries and archives, making more and more sources accessible for art historians. The Art Archives (www.theartarchives.org) are now also online, providing international access to an important primary source.

Apparently it takes a long time for new perspectives and research results from academic circles to filter down to the daily practices of the art

world. Exhibitions like “The Perfect Medium: photography and the occult” (New York, 2004) and “Das Bauhaus und die Esoterik” (Hamm/Wurzburg 2005) broke little new ground. Other museums passed up on potential box office hits.



In 2006 Bax and Kroon worked together on the exhibition and publication concept “Verborgene werelden: esoterische stromingen in de kunst, 1800-1940” (later: Geheim!). We envisioned an exhibition introducing an overview of various esoteric currents, their history and key figures, and exploring how specific art currents and artists had soaked up and expressed these influences. The proposal was picked up by the Van Gogh Museum, the Singer Museum and Boom/SUN publishers, but budgetary matters prohibited the cooperation from materializing.



Accepting that Holland might be too small, we approached the large European museums in 2007 with the more internationally orientated concept “The Initiated Artist. Art & Western Esotericism, 1800-1940,” which was supported by international experts in the field of study, the Amsterdam University Press and the Iona Foundation. Museum managements responded with enthusiasm, but felt an overview of esoteric currents was too ‘complex’ a subject to draw large visitor numbers. However, several exhibitions were organized shortly after, which discussed esotericism in ‘safe’ terms, such as spiritualism and artists networks. Examples are: “Schilders van de Ziel: Symbolisme in Frankrijk” (Laren 2007); “Traces du Sacré” (Paris/München 2008); “Holy Inspiration: religion and spirituality in modern art” (Amsterdam 2008); “Albert von Keller: salons, séancen, secession” (Zürich 2009) and “Geheimgesellschaften: wissen wagen wollen schweigen” (Frankfurt 2011).



It is very satisfying to see that the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain in Strasbourg has recently

opened the amazing exhibition “L’Europe des Esprits ou la fascination de l’occulte, 1750-1950.” This exhibition is finally offering the beautiful overview of esoteric currents and their key players, for which we have pleaded for so long. It also distinguishes terms like spiritism and occultism which were confused before, and points out precisely which developments in modern art and the creation of which individual art works were stimulated by esoteric networks. Of course it is somewhat bittersweet to realize that this exhibition is in many ways identical to the concept which we circulated internationally in 2007, but the subject is now firmly on the map in the public and professional sphere, and is drawing large numbers of visitors. No doubt, a Dutch museum will soon dare to follow the example.

By now, western esotericism is recognized as an integral and important aspect of art history. We have had a tremendous amount of fun playing a part in that process, together with many others, and can happily consider this a joint objective achieved. So for us, this is the right moment to close the chapter on ‘art and western esotericism’ for a while and focus on other lacunas in art history. We will still be able to apply all the expertise gained, but will explore and invest in other, fresh, interdisciplinary research paths. And of course we already have new and exciting exhibitions plans on offer. Any takers?



Theosophy in *The New Yorker*

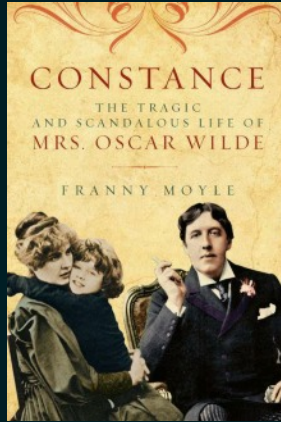
THE NEW YORKER

In every issue, a signature mix of culture and art, business and politics, fashion and design, science and technology attract millions who come to *The New Yorker* to be informed, to be surprised, to laugh, and to be moved.

“Vice-President Henry Wallace . . . was also considered something of an oddball: insiders mocked his fascination with plant genetics and gossiped about his enthusiasm for Nicholas Roerich, a Russian painter turned Theosophical guru. . . / . . . In the [nineteen-] twenties, Roerich and his wife, Helena, blended aspects of Theosophy, Hinduism, and Tibetan Buddhism into a doctrine called Agni Yoga” (*The New Yorker*, October 14, 2013, pp. 104, 106).

Theosophy in *Constance*:

The Tragic and Scandalous Life of Mrs Oscar Wilde.



Moyle, Franny. *Constance: The Tragic and Scandalous Life of Mrs Oscar Wilde*. New York: Pegasus Books, 2012. © 2011.

“They found themselves seated next to the exotic Russian émigré Madame Blavatsky and her disciple Annie Besant. ... Smoking ... heavily ... she held court talking about the position of women in Russia. ... Blavatsky had acquired huge fame at the time as one of the founders of the Theosophical Society. This society, which was created in New York in the mid-1870s ... had become a phenomenon across the Western world” (p. 165).

“The Theosophical Society represented an intellectual response to spiritualism. It sought to provide credibility to spiritualism by grounding it in a system of belief. At the very core of Theosophy was the concept that the material world cannot be separated from its spiritual counterpart . . . based on the idea of a constant flow and relationship between the material and spiritual dimensions” (p. 166).

“Constance, growing disenchanted with the conventional church, explored Theosophy ... as a genuine alternative to conventional religious practice” (p. 174).

Miscellany and Trivia

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Anecdote about a child (1)



I was driving with my three young children one warm summer evening when a woman in the convertible ahead of us stood up and waved. She was stark naked! As I was reeling from the shock, I heard my 5-year-old shout from the back seat, 'Mom, that lady isn't wearing a seat belt!'

Anecdote about a child (2)



A little boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages.' Mama, look what I found,' the boy called out. 'What have you got there, dear?' With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered, 'I think it's Adam's underwear!'

Anecdote about a child (3)



It was that time, during the Sunday morning service, for the children's sermon. All the children were invited to come forward. One little girl was wearing a particularly pretty dress and, as she sat down, the pastor leaned over and said, "That is a very pretty dress. Is it your Easter Dress?" The little girl replied, directly into the pastor's clip-on microphone, "Yes, and my Mom says it's a bitch to iron."

Anecdote about a child (4)



A child can teach an adult three things...

To be happy for no reason.

To always be busy with something.

And to know how to demand with all his might that which he desires.

Anecdote about a child (5)



Children ask better questions than adults. “May I have a cookie?” “Why is the sky blue?” And “What does a cow say?” are far more likely to elicit a cheerful response than “Where’s your manuscript?” “Why haven’t you called?” And “Who’s your lawyer?”

Anecdote about a child (6)



While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my 4-year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, 'The tooth fairy will never believe this!'

Anecdote about a child (7)



A little girl asked her mother, "Can I go outside and play with the boys?" Her mother replied, "No, you can't play with the boys, they're too rough." The little girl thought about it for a few moments and asked, "If I can find a smooth one, can I play with him?"

The Society

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Editorial - What's in a Name?

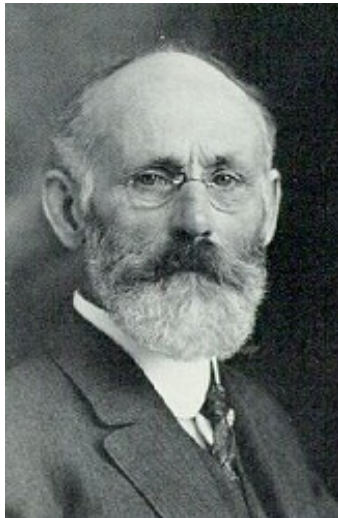
by Jan Nicolaas Kind

In the various Theosophical traditions, different approaches are used when referring to speakers and authors. It is very interesting to compare them in order to come to a better understanding of those diverse ways of doing things.

In the United Lodge of Theosophists, names for speakers and writers aren't used. When I asked a Lodge friend for the reason, I received the following explanation:



In his book *The Friendly Philosopher*, Robert Crosbie, in the section "In The Beginning" wrote this: "Let ULT flourish on its moral worth alone. The work we have to do, the knowledge we have to give out, depends on no other names than those of the true Teachers, H. P. B. and W. Q. J. Associates must learn to look to Them, to point to Them and to the Masters whom They served. Nothing else will restore the Movement. Unity is the key note of our attempt, and living persons, if made prominent, will detract from that attempt, will be attacked, to the injury of the Movement. So we will keep their names out of consideration."



Robert Crosbie

As to why articles are not signed, Crosbie continues: "What is at the root of the schisms that have disrupted the Theosophical Society that H. P. B. left? Personalities every time. What is the opposite and corrective of Personality? Nothing less than impersonality which seeks nothing for itself and everything for the Cause of Theosophy pure and simple. There is no worldly fame, glory or profit in such a course, yet it, and it alone, removes every obstacle that might intervene between the Message of Theosophy and those who desire to study and apply it on its own merits. For that reason, and that reason alone, are the magazine *Theosophy* and 'The United Lodge of Theosophists' conducted anonymously."

To an editor of a magazine trying to bring Theosophists from the various traditions together, this strict approach is sometimes rather confusing. It was, nevertheless, possible to find some sort of solution for it. Certain associates of the ULT have no problems in having their name mentioned, whereas others have, so each case is looked at separately, and the author is specifically and respectfully asked.

I believe that what Crosbie wrote at the time was, and still is, spot on. Personalities, egos, and in particular ambition should have no place in the world of spirituality. Many of the problems and upheavals in the past, but also the ones we see in our day, have been rooted in a desire to have and not to be. Actually ambition combined with spirituality, in whatever subtle form, turns into something very ugly. How far one can actually take impersonality is an enduring question since it can be revealing and refreshing indeed to see a real face behind an article or an idea.

In other Theosophical traditions, names, titles, or basic background information about speakers and authors are often given to accommodate the reader or listener. It is considered to be helpful to know more and be informed about those who write and lecture. In *Theosophy Forward*, the magazine, we keep that info to a minimum. A name and a country are usually sufficient, because many of the authors are known and need no further introduction. In the series of mini interviews, more personal info is given because the purpose of that series is to provide an opportunity for both known and lesser known Theosophists to introduce themselves, irrespective of their function or tradition.

If there is one thing Theosophy teaches, it is that we need to let things go, we need to get rid of the shackles of attachment. All that we possess on this plane is Maya and only temporarily relevant, if relevant at all. Names, titles, achievements, diplomas, status, medals, and trophies may be nice to keep somewhere hidden in a cupboard to go through, or look at once in a while, but ultimately that is not what Theosophy is about; it is about detachment and being humble!

Yet, and this is the paradox, you see that within certain Theosophical circles some apparently seem to have lost sight of basic Theosophical principles, in ambitious but at the same time ludicrous attempts to impress fellow seekers. It seems that some have egos as big as pompous glass cathedrals that really have gone over the top showing themselves.



A glass cathedral

So on the one hand, we have students who do not want to be mentioned or even referred to in their talks or articles, which is doubtless respectable, but on the other hand there is an example of the complete opposite. A Theosophist of the Brazilian Section (TS Adyar) who was giving a talk on the subject of astrology was introduced as follows * — to be absolutely correct I first reproduce the Portuguese text in full:

Engenheiro Civil pela UFRGS (1), mestrando em Filosofia pela UnB (2), astrólogo (3), presidente do Sindicato dos Astrólogos (4), *conselheiro* internacional da Sociedade Teosófica (5), ex-presidente da Sociedade Teosófica no Brasil (6), bispo da Igreja Católica Liberal (7), com diversos programas gravados e veiculados pela TV Supren em todo o país (8). [The numbering is mine.]

Here is the English version:

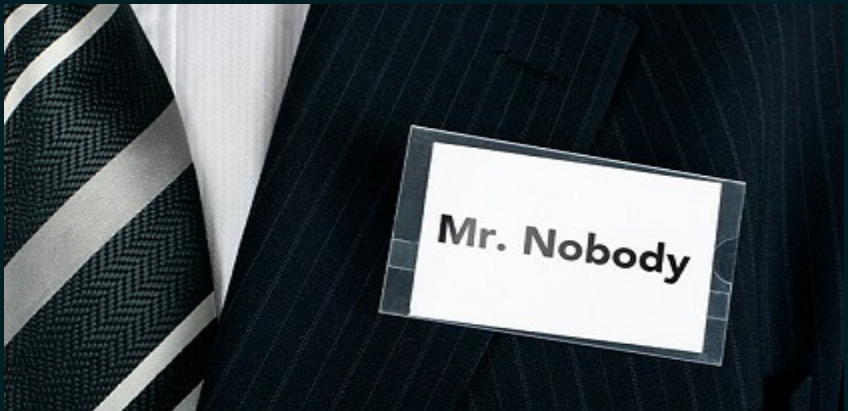
B. S. in Civil Engineering at UFRGS (1), MBA student of Philosophy at UnB (2), astrologer (3), president of the Astrologers Union (4), international advisor of the Theosophical Society (5), former president of the Theosophical Society in Brasil (6), bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church (7), with several recorded programs broadcast by TV Supren all over the country (8).

Not only is this presenter introduced making use of eight (8) titles and or activities, but a part of the introduction is inappropriate. The fifth "title," in Portuguese *conselheiro internacional da Sociedade Teosófica*, when translated into English comes down to *International Advisor of the Theosophical Society*, which is flat out wrong. His real and official function title there is *Additional member of the General Council*, in plain Portuguese that is *Membro adicional do Conselho Geral*.

Ah well, according to this lavish curriculum, the presenter has to be extremely well versed on astrological subjects and far beyond. Anyone can, of course, freely choose the way he or she wishes to be made known to an audience, but this text clearly speaks for itself; no further commentary is needed ...

For those interested in the name of this distinguished speaker ...

Sorry but no, after all, what's in a name?



*Please note that this particular announcement was made public in *October 2013*.



What is bagunça?

Editorial 2 - Aveline's "bagunça"

by Jan Nicolaas Kind

When Theosophists go after other Theosophists, no matter what the argument is about, I believe one enters a red danger zone and caution is needed.

With the publication of his latest book, Carlos Cardoso Aveline from Brazil has stirred emotions left and right. Because of the way this release was handled a fiery discussion erupted on a Theosophical Facebook site. Shortly before this publication, those who belong to Aveline's circle had been overactive on various social networking sites, performing their dreary mantra, deliberately ignoring rules moderators had implemented, not paying attention to warnings, repeating themselves again and again and above all incapable of engaging in a respectful dialogue.

Their chant "we are veracious and know it all; others, not on our line of thinking are nothing but petty pseudo theosophists", is well-known to many. Thanks to a few brave souls Aveline and his tiny group of die-hard admirers were seriously questioned, put on the right spot and even banned from some social networking sites.

Don't want to talk about the book, don't want to discuss or touch the way Aveline thinks he needs to present himself, that's entirely up to him. I do want to point out the irony of Aveline who allegedly aligns himself with a respected Theosophical tradition, where the importance of personalities is specifically minimized, and then directly attacks personalities of people he has problems with. He adores being the protector of what he considers the truth; he needs an audience and seems to enjoy shocking others, which attracts some youngsters mainly in Brazil, Portugal and Italy. But is this Theosophy?

Modesty, kindness, friendliness or simply tolerance, words so essential for any Theosophist from any tradition are not to be found in Aveline's dictionary. Instead, going through his revelations, one is primarily confronted with darkish anger, frustration and resentment. On these three pillars it is hard, if not impossible to build a Theosophical house.

So far it is all up to Aveline and his group. He is obviously totally free to decorate his own life, following the path he wants to follow, writing whatever he wants to write and publishing that what he thinks should be published.

It all turns rather unacceptable however, when Aveline makes the grave error to go after persons who have chosen not to defend themselves, hunting them ceaselessly, accusing them, while claiming that he is defending the Old Lady and the teachings as *he* understands them, centering his thesis and allegations on what *he*, very subjectively, sees as being accurate. I wonder what our Old Lady would have thought of such a defender.

Anyway, it's clear that he has a dispute with John Algeo, which is fine with me too, we cannot always agree with each other, but like a howling coyote lost in the desert he initiates and revives his by now worn out accusations. By doing so he has crossed a line.



Howling coyote

With the publication of his book and introducing it as he did Aveline is doing his well-known and provocative bit again but has gone past what is generally accepted as being decent, morally or socially appropriate, so I consider his most recent comments regarding John Algeo very indecent.

Let me clarify:

From Aveline's own website and supplying the reader with a direct link I reproduce in Portuguese:

“Aparentemente, os diretores da *Theosophy Company* não podiam aceitar a publicação de um livro que, ao defender HPB, criticaria o Dr. John Algeo, um notável divulgador de mentiras e falsidades contra a fundadora do movimento. Na época, Algeo tinha forte influência política internacional.”

Follow this link:

http://www.filosofiaesoterica.com/ler.php?id=1129#.Um_UmUCgwfZ

Translated into English:

“Apparently the directors of *Theosophy Company* could not accept the publication of a book defending HPB that would attack Dr. John Algeo, an outstanding promoter of lies and falsehoods against the founder of the movement. At the time, Algeo had strong influence in international politics.”

The line regarding *Theosophy Company* in Los Angeles although interesting is not relevant; it is the phrase in which John Algeo, a man who dedicated his entire life to Theosophy is labeled “*an outstanding promoter of lies and falsehoods against the founder of the movement.*”

Shame on you Carlos ...

Next to this, Aveline in this one and other epistles bearing his name refers erroneously to John Algeo's so called political stance as in regards to the controversial 2008 election for International President of the Adyar TS. Here he makes a terrible mess, in Portuguese the language spoken in Brazil the word for “mess” is *bagunça*, of facts and recorded historical material and goes solely by what some, who had their own agenda at the time, told him. Aveline never had any direct access to what actually took place in 2008, nor was he involved in any of the proceedings, he was not in any way a player in the drama and bases his vague and bias conclusions on hearsay and gossip.

Carlos Cardoso Aveline, Brazilian, amateur historian, self-styled expert, journalist and author might have studied the teachings and by doing so he probably gained some knowledge.

Knowledge is one thing ... Wisdom another.

To obtain Wisdom and be a beacon one must practice service and be unpretentious, compassionate and endlessly tolerant, not heartless and arrogant.



Radha Burnier



John Algeo

Adyar, Mon Amour

by Jan Nicolaas Kind - Brazil

[In part, this article was previously published in Theosophy Forward, March 2012]

Readers of Theosophy Forward were recently invited to share thoughts regarding the succession of leadership in the Theosophical Society Adyar. Reactions were marginal or insignificant, almost as if the writers feared even to consider this subject.

The third quarter issue of Theosophy Forward contained an article entitled “Theosophical Leadership.” In the introduction to that article, among other things, I wrote:

“Before long, at the latest in 2015, once more an International President will have to be chosen, and it is quite possible that this time more than one candidate will be on the ballot. But having learned from the 2008 debacle, and looking forward to the future, even if there should be only one candidate, it is a good exercise to ponder the subject of Theosophical leadership. What are the requirements and challenges for a modern leadership that will enable the largest Theosophical organization to find its rightful place in the world, serving humanity? Who could be suitable candidates? And how should members prepare themselves for that inevitable election looming on the horizon?”

When one looks at the phrase above: “Before long, and at the latest in 2015,” it was a kind of forecast. Unfortunately it so happened that on Thursday, October 31, 2013, the seventh International President of the Theosophical Society Adyar, Radha Burnier, died.

When we go back in time, it is clear that 2008 was not a very good year for the Theosophical Society Adyar and its members. It became painfully clear how divided and vulnerable the organization had become. During the

election for International President, choices that some thought were the right ones later seemed to be unfortunate, to say the least. The apparent conflict drove many apart and didn't contribute to a much-needed cohesion among members.

Until today, the aftermath of that ill-fated epoch is felt in Adyar circles, and many are still not accurately informed and left in the dark about what *really* took place, even though impartial historical documents dealing with the events, archived and accessible by anyone, are available on the Internet. The 2008 election proceedings were an example of how not to elect a leader. Some have definitely made up their minds about those events and will never consider changing their opinions or look rationally at historical facts. They prefer to cling to worn-out and untrue conspiracy theories, the inapt disenfranchise fright, or the "move-the-headquarters-to-the-USA" phantom. So be it.

Looking back at the two candidates on the ballot at the time, however, and to what actually happened in 2008, neither John Algeo nor Radha Burnier *personally* had anything to do with the utter nonsense that was allegedly coming from their so-called supporters. Their good names, especially their personal relationship and reputations were used by others who, ambitiously and ruthlessly, were occupied waging their own personal conflict, pursuing explicit agendas; so those others made it seem as though Burnier and Algeo were rivals.

Neither one of those two would ever say anything to discredit the other. I dare to state that, in spite of some fundamental differences of opinion, Radha Burnier and John Algeo always respected one another immensely.

Whatever happened then, all of us need to look forward now, and things need to be done better. The International Rules and Regulations need to be followed. If those rules no longer suit, they need to be altered. That is everybody's responsibility.

Adyar is a unique spiritual centre and Theosophical meeting place. The headquarters of the Theosophical Society Adyar do belong there; India is a magnificent country, and all members of the Theosophical Society Adyar should engage in this transitional process in a positive and constructive manner.

The Theosophical Society Adyar, as one of the major vehicles for the dissemination of theosophia, the perennial wisdom, is emphatically not the property of its International President, its Vice President, Executive Committee, or General Council; it belongs solely to its members. So, let those members raise their voices and contribute, and let those who can make a difference prepare themselves appropriately and be present *when* and *where* it counts. The problems the TS Adyar is faced with now cannot be solved on Theosophy Forward or on any other Theosophical social networking site. It needs to be done in Adyar during General Council meetings. With modern software, GOTO for example, and the internet at its disposal the General Council can meet a number of times per year through conference calls next to its annual meeting at Adyar. The International President, who is first and foremost a *member* of the Society, naturally holds office at the International Headquarters in Adyar; but to reiterate, the Theosophical Society Adyar should unquestionably be a united and international organization.

As an organization, an association as H. P. B. called it, the Theosophical Society Adyar is obliged to set a good example. Individuals can share their thoughts and convey their opinions, but a collective action is necessary to bring about weighty changes. No member should accuse, point



The author and his wife Terezinha on the far right with friends

ingers at, or affront another member. Theosophy is about living up to the teachings and acting together.

Adyar members ought to reach out, so that East meets West again and vice versa. The Theosophical Society Adyar is not just an Indian affair, yet those in the West should make genuine efforts to get to know Indians better.

To conclude a personal note: I owe much to Adyar. I actually met my dear wife Terezinha on the banks of the Adyar River, and I had the privilege of serving there, experiencing typical Indian hospitality, friendship, and ways of doing things. Adyar, “mon amour” ... we'll take care of you, for sure.



Adyar Beach



A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one by the equality of his actions and the integrity of his intent.

Douglas MacArthur

(an American general and field marshal of the Philippine Army who was Chief of Staff of the United States Army during the 1930s and played a prominent role in the Pacific theater during World War II)

Mini interviews

John Algeo
James Andrew LeFevour
Domen Kočevar
David Grossman
Chaganti V.K. Maithreya
Deepa Padhi
Nancy Patterson Bragin

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.

John Algeo



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

John Algeo, from the U.S.A. I joined the T.S. at the age of 17 in 1947.

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

I was President of the Florida Lodge (Miami) shortly after joining. In later years, I was president of the Atlanta, Georgia, Lodge and chairman of the board for the Stil-Light Theosophical Center in North Carolina. In the American Section, I served on the National Board of Directors (1984–7), as First Vice President (1987–93), and as National President (1993–2002). I was international Vice President 2002–8.

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

I read a pamphlet about Theosophy as a “dangerous heresy” in the library of a Jesuit church in Miami; then I saw a T. S. meeting announced in the

Miami Herald newspaper, attended, and joined a few weeks later. So I say that the Jesuits converted me to Theosophy.

4. *What does Theosophy mean to you?*

Theosophy offers the most explanatory view of the cosmos and human life I have ever found, and it provides the best guide for successful living out of all systems of thought I've encountered.

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

The Secret Doctrine because it is the fullest exposition of the cosmos and humanity.

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

The Adyar society needs to keep abreast (internationally) with current developments in communication (as *Theosophy Forward* is doing!) and with the presentation of the Ancient Wisdom for modern times. It also needs to critically appraise its form of organizational government and make whatever adaptations that appraisal leads to.

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

The movement as a whole needs to work more assiduously at fulfilling the Mahachohan's vision of its future and its contribution to the welfare of the planet and all humanity.

James Andrew LeFevour



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

James Andrew LeFevour, from Wheaton, Illinois, USA and I joined in 2010 so I have been a member for 3 years.

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

I am involved in our Study Lodge, Co-Masons, and I teach Reiki. My work entails photo editing for the publishing house, AV production, Online Classes management, and being on the Programs Committee. I am also a Friar of The Paracelsian Order, and I enjoy volunteering my time and technical skills to Madre Grande Monastery.

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

I was introduced 3 times until it finally sunk in. The first is when my world religions mentor in high school took me and some of his favoured

students to the Theosophical Society and showed it to us. The second time, I moved very near and was looking for a quiet place to write. I wandered to the campus almost in a daze and sat in a corner of the library. I saw some leftover lecture notes on *The Secret Doctrine* and it was like discovering very sacred glyphs. I knew that this book was important, and yet I was too shy to pursue it by asking more about the Society itself. The third time, I interned for my master's degree at the publishing house. When my internship was over I had to come to terms with the fact that I was not capable of leaving this place. I got a membership and volunteered my time instead of moving onto another actual job somewhere else. Eventually they hired me because I wouldn't leave.

4. *What does Theosophy mean to you?*

When I think of Theosophy I define it as perhaps the most recent incarnation of the Ancient Wisdom. While it is the Truth, and it is my path, I find it most effective to think of it as a very efficient tool. I think everyone should have their own Theosophical tool, that's how great I think it is. And as any owner of a superior tool should, I have dedicated my life to learning how to use it properly.

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

I'll offer two books for different reasons.

My first favourite is *The Key to Theosophy* by H. P. B. That was the first book that gave me my much desired definition for what is Theosophy and how to practice it. Plus the old gal's got some teeth when she writes it; she's not just putting in the book what people want to hear.

My other favourite is *The Light of the Sanctuary* by Geoffrey Hodson. In my opinion, it is a genuine first person perspective of the journey through true Occultism. His sentiments and his experiences are so sincere, and yet there is struggle and there are pitfalls the same way you would expect from an aspirant on the path. I also appreciate that it was published posthumously as many might find it hubris for a chela to publish a diary on the subject otherwise.

6. *What in your opinion is the biggest challenge the TS is facing at the moment?*

Relevance. Figuring out how young people think is not hard (I am 31),

but you have to be willing to go out and talk with them. Address this generation's concerns about life, which has more to do with them wanting to not feel insignificant more so than wanting to know what happens after we die. They are less about joining fraternities, and more about what activities we offer them today.

You don't have to be technologically savvy to be modern, you just have to be willing to lead. If we have no leaders, no one will follow us.

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

I would wish for all Theosophical members to have a common goal amongst all our colourful differences. A house divided against itself cannot stand, and all Theosophists (in my opinion) are one house.

Forgive me for being absolutely blunt, but we should promote what we believe in instead of pointing out how other Theosophists are wrong. This includes using terms like pseudo-theosophy and neo-theosophy against already established Theosophical institutions.

My genuine wish for the future is that the body of knowledge within different Theosophical organizations will be considered as different teachings within a larger field of study. To compare it with psychology, which has theoretical concepts within Jungian psychology, Freudian psychology, Adlerian psychology, etc. Theosophy would be viewed as one body of knowledge branching into ULT Theosophy, Point Loma Theosophy, Adyar Theosophy, etc. in a very non-competitive way.

I think that excellent examples of work in a positive direction are the efforts of the International Theosophical Conference and the Theosophy Forward publication.

Domen Kočevar



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

My name is Domen Kočevar and I'm from Slovenia. I've been an official member of TS Jivatma for 6 years and a member of TS America for a few years.

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

Besides leading our study group in Celje on Patanjali's sutras and meditation, I do some public talks on Theosophical subjects. I also lead the *Theosophical library and reading room of Alma M. Karlin* in Celje with more than 9000 books which is open to public.

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

I was introduced to Theosophy in 1998 through Aristid Havlicek who's been involved in Theosophy since 1970. Theosophy was my love at first sight. Since that time, I'm part of our group. I do visit all Theosophical societies

around the world, wherever I am, trying to connect with everybody whose work is connected to the foundations that were set by H. P. B. Also the ones that are forwarding the qualities of Theosophy without mentioning it. Although I believe that to be a Theosophist you don't need to be a member of Theosophical Society, we did start an 'independent' Theosophical Society in 2007 that is open to everyone.

4. *What does Theosophy mean to you?*

I feel it as a huge attempt (to me the best so far in human history), to reach towards the greatest goal of understanding everyone and include everyone who is helping humanity on its path of evolution towards perfection. It is the endless attempt of moving towards Divine Wisdom. If you climb in direction of that ideal, your inclusiveness will grow, glimpses of deeper understanding will appear and most important of all, your concrete work in the big plan will slowly become clearer. And then you won't have time to waste on unimportant quarrels that were/are still present also in the Theosophy.

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

Besides *The Voice of the Silence*, *Light on the Path* and *At the Feet of the Master* as endless pocket size jewels, I was many times touched by *Idyll of the White Lotus*, a very inspirational novel. In our study groups we use works from I. K. Taimni, especially *Self-culture in the Light of Ancient Wisdom* and *Science of Yoga* with Taimni's precious commentaries on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras.

6. *What in your opinion is the biggest challenge the TS is facing at the moment?*

I'll be very abstract in this. Biggest, eternal challenge in this loud, noisy time, is to find silence inside and then more easily you know what to do in all situations. If all individuals will be clearer on their 'personal' dharma, dharma of our different but same societies will be acted out decisively. If we really try to do our work well, bridges of cooperation and future together projects pop up so naturally and inevitable.

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

I think almost all theosophical societies have at least a slight feeling

that there were good old times when lodges, study groups, lectures were full of people and today's situation is a bit slow and sad. Qualities that were set as a foundation for TS in general are today present around us but we don't see them because they are not tagged with a 'theosophy' sign. But that was never a goal. A lot of people are living theosophy but don't know for it. That makes me happy. And connecting with those people and activities in a bigger plan, and connecting with all theosophists in the world will make us see that a lot of work has been done in sowing the seeds. That there are a lot of us here. And what makes me still happier? That a lot more work is still waiting to be done. Let's find it, let's do it.



Domen Kočevar presenting the Slovenian translation of Alma Karlin's book Isolanthis.

David Grossman



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

My name is David Grossman. I've lived in Brooklyn New York for nearly half my life. I was born in Chicago, Illinois and later lived in Southern California where I first made physical contact with a Theosophical organization, the ULT in Los Angeles. I signed their membership card sometime prior to 1975. I am also a member of the TS.

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

I have not been active in any lodge in more than a decade. Recently I have become involved in ITC (International Theosophy Conferences) where I am the acting treasurer of the organization. In the early part of the first decade of this century I was involved in a Theosophical independent writing group and wrote articles and participated in a regular column in Theosophy Magazine. I also lent some of my photographic work to the magazine. The last years of the publication incorporated imagery into the magazine which really added a nice

dimension to the publication. Unfortunately Theosophy Magazine was discontinued. I've participated in creating independent public workshops on Theosophy in New York City, some of which were presented at the Theosophical Society. Previous to that I was actively involved in the dissemination of Theosophy through the New York ULT and before that in Los Angeles. In New York I was involved in the production of a Theosophy television show that was distributed widely for many years in the New York area and other regions.

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

In the summer of 1970 I got a job in a small bookstore in Aspen, Colorado and ran into a copy of *Isis Unveiled*. In the natural course of events I met the person who recommended the bookstore carry the book. From him I learned about Theosophy, its history and the existence of various Theosophical groups in the U.S. and the world. A few years later I visited the United Lodge of Theosophists while on a trip to Los Angeles.

4. *What does Theosophy mean to you?*

Theosophy means at least two things to me: the teaching, presented by H. P. B. and her teachers, and elaborated on by other Theosophical writers, is the most cohesive and informative presentation of that Ancient Wisdom Tradition, scattered throughout the religions, sciences, myths and philosophies of mankind across the ages. It is a master key for the understanding of the underlying unity of all beings and the "progressive march toward a higher life" that all sentient beings are engaged in. Theosophy also stands for that great evolutionary impulse in all ages that we Theosophists call the Theosophical Movement appearing under many names and expressions but always upholding the dignity of man and the spiritual pedigree of every being.

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

Isis Unveiled and *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. B. are profoundly unique books, encyclopedic in scope and overwhelming in the evolutionary vision they present. I have found the Hindu classic, although not strictly a Theosophy book, the *Bhagavad Gita*, very rewarding in bridging the gap between Theosophical theory and living the life. It has been referred to as "the study of adepts." One can't forget *The Voice of the Silence* which resonates up

and down the octaves of our nature.

6. What in your opinion is the biggest challenge the TS is facing at the moment?

The biggest challenge is to remain relevant to the active evolutionary needs of the race; in other words to actively apply Theosophical principles which are universal, to the growing needs of civilization in terms of the environment, international relations, religious fundamentalism, world hunger and to combat the soulless onslaught of scientism or materialistic reductionism all too often carried forth in the name of science. This can be done by keeping the original teachings before the public and by acting as Theosophists in the uncompromising way H. P. B. did by speaking "truth to power". The TS (all Theosophical groups) is made up of individuals. We can either hide behind the accomplishments of the past and think we are doing something special by attending meetings and mainly preaching to the congregation or we can infuse the movement with life by accepting the challenge of the present circumstances of the cycle. This demands participating in the public forum of ideas. Infusing Theosophical ideas into the public dialog is what H. P. B. did. Sometimes the worry of diluting Theosophy is misplaced. A worse fate is to be unrecognized at all. If we don't speak up about Theosophy, the philosophy and its implications, others will paint a distorted picture of its teachings and founders as we have seen over the last 138 years.

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

That it will be an ameliorating force & guide; a light, illuminating the many dark days of the Kali Yuga.

Chaganti V.K. Maithreya



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

My name is Chaganti V. K. Maithreya. I am from Adyar. I have been a member for over 44 years.

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

I am the President of the Madras Theosophical Federation and the TOS, Chennai. Besides, I am on the Indian Section Council & the National Board of the TOS, India.

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

I am a fifth generation member and hence came into contact with Theosophy since I can remember things.

4. What does Theosophy mean to you?

It is a holistic way of life I aspire to live and a body of truths I

persevere to learn.

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

The *ML*, *LMW* & *The Secret Doctrine*. [I find it difficult to choose.]

There is no doubt that the *SD* is a unique work, unparalleled in modern times.

6. *What in your opinion is the biggest challenge the TS is facing at the moment?*

There is a dearth among its members of youth, well-read persons and committed volunteers. All three combined present the biggest challenge to the organization.

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

I would like each member to live a Theosophical life and make efforts to "Popularize the knowledge of Theosophy".



Deepa Padhi



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

I am Dr. Deepa Padhi, retired Prof. of Philosophy. I have Indian Nationality as I belong to Odisha, a state in the Eastern part of India. I have been a member of Debapi Lodge, Bhubaneswar, Odisha for last 19 years.

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

Am the Secretary of Debapi Lodge and President of TOS, Mahabharat Group. Most of the members of TS are members of TOS and some of the TOS members have joined the TS.

I organize meetings and invite eminent persons from different spiritual and religious organisations, scientists and philosophers to speak on science, spirituality, religion and philosophy. I invite as guests members of other social, spiritual and religious organisations so that they would at least know about Theosophy and its motto - "There is no religion higher than Truth".

I also organize workshops / retreats on certain concepts of

Theosophy and invite as participants students from University as well as members from other Lodges.

In our lodge, we celebrate the birth Anniversary of Dr. Annie Besant (October 1) and the White Lotus Day on May 8.

I give talks on 'Theosophy' and 'Indian Philosophy' in our federation meetings as well as lodge meetings. Sometimes I take study classes for three consecutive days and contribute articles to a journal 'Theoscientist' which has International circulation. I do sometimes contribute articles to 'Viswadhara' which is a Theosophical magazine in the local language.

Would like to mention here that our TS and TOS members are running a 'play school' for children below 4 years of age in a slum area whose parents are daily laborers.

We are also running a 'Day Care Centre' for senior citizens below the poverty line which has 10 male and female members. They are provided food, clothing, medical assistance and three of them are given shelter as they are homeless.

We are continuing with the project 'Save a thalassemic child 'started in 2010 in which we sponsor 60 poor thalassemic children by providing blood transfusion free of cost through-out the year as per individual need.

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

I would like to tell you that I belong to a 'Theosophists' family. My father, maternal, uncles, brothers, brothers-in-law and sisters were member of Theosophical Society. My father Late Dr. R. C. Rath had joined TOS in 1929 when he was only 19 and later on he become the founder President of Utkal Theosophical Federation, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India. I grew up with a Theosophical background and formally joined TS in 1994. Interestingly my father had never asked me or any of my brothers and sisters to join the TS. He left it to our volition. I remember attending TS International convention at Adyar, Chennai, India when N. Sri Ram was the International President.

4. What does Theosophy mean to you?

Theosophy to me is a way of life. It is not only an intellectual pursuit of ageless wisdom but practical teachings to be practiced in day to day life.

Practical Theosophy as selfless service to bio community is what holds for me to-day.

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

'*At the feet of the master*' is my pocket guide book which is always there in my hand bag. It constantly reminds me of the Higher Power. I do like '*The Secret Doctrine*' by Madam Blavatsky mainly because it is secular but contains the essence of all religions. There are many books by Dr. Annie Besant, C. W. Leadbeater, Paul Brunton, J. Krishnamurti, I. K. Taimni and Radha Burnier which I also consider as my favorites.

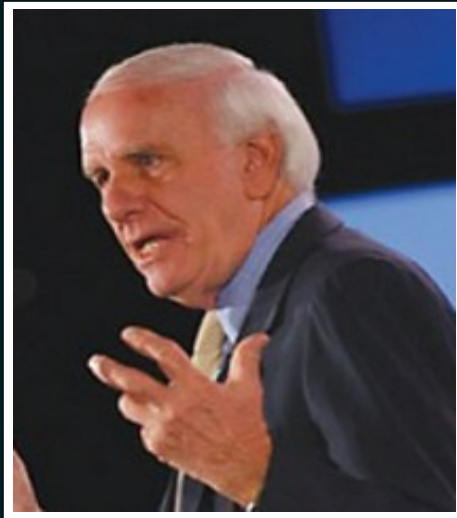
6. *What in your opinion is the biggest challenge the TS facing at the moment.*

The biggest challenge the TOS is facing at the moment is, in my opinion, the lack of motivation for self-transformation. We are being more theoretical and intellectual instead of being practical. It is practice that makes a man perfect. Unless the principles of Theosophy are practiced in our day to day life, all our studies are of no value. They become futile.

There are only a few Theosophists who follow the Path in their lives. The social impact, therefore, is getting lost. Possibly, that could be the reason why the younger generations are not only getting attracted to the study of Theosophy and its practices.

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

Theosophical Society needs to emphasize on transformational practices and motivate members to be more open, tolerant, compassionate, and non-judgmental towards others. There should be less of speech more of practice.



The challenge of leadership is to be strong, but not rude; be kind, but not weak; be bold, but not bully; be thoughtful, but not lazy; be humble, but not timid; be proud, but not arrogant; have humor, but without folly.

Jim Rohn

(an American entrepreneur, author and motivational speaker)

Nancy Patterson Bragin



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

My name is Nancy Patterson Bragin, I live in Southampton, Pennsylvania, in the suburbs of Philadelphia. I started studying Eastern Philosophy and then Theosophy in the late 1960's, an auspicious time during the Vietnam War when we baby-boomers thought we would change the world. I still believe we will.

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

I belong to the Abraxas Lodge and have been a member for six years. The founder of Abraxas, Bob Fahey, is a close friend, and we're both concerned that our members are getting up in age and our recruitment of youth -- the future of Theosophy -- is non-existent. I've taken this on as my dharma -- spreading the teachings of Theosophy in a modern way to those outside of the Theosophical community through social media, articles, blogs, producing videos and speaking at local events. I have a video series in

development on the remarkable lesser-known Grand Dames of Theosophy such as Dora Van Gelder Kunz, Alexandra David-Neel and Clara Codd. By the way, *Theosophy Forward* is doing an excellent job of presenting the teachings in a modern, relevant and fresh way. Kudos.

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

While in college I became passionate about H. P. B. and her teachings. The fire still burns.

4. *What does Theosophy mean to you?*

Theosophy is the essence of my being; we are all part of the Eternal One, drops in the ocean, and together we can and will shift into unity consciousness. 'Seek shelter in the Eternal alone' nicely sums it up for me.

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

It's impossible to pick my favourite Theosophical book - they permeate my life as daily reminders and inspirations. *The Voice of the Silence* is always nearby - magical, poetic with beautiful streamers of consciousness. A favourite passage: "When he has ceased to hear the many, he may discern the ONE — the inner sound which kills the outer."

I have to admit I haven't been able to read the entire *The Secret Doctrine* cover to cover. It feels like my head will explode at the thought. The largeness of it is overwhelming to my brain as it tries to sort it all out. It's more of a staple in my life, a reference book with an index where all answers to my questions can be found. *At the Feet of the Master* rounds out my top three, a simple and elegant jewel of esoteric wisdom. I like to randomly open it up to a page, and find it timeless.

6. *What in your opinion is the biggest challenge the TS is facing at the moment?*

To stay true to the teachings of H. P. B. and at the same time remain current, appeal to and attract the youth of today through new and social media, for they are our future.

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

I wish for all Theosophical groups to stop the inner squabbling and unite as one strong voice to guide mankind not only by spreading the Masters teachings but more importantly, by *being* one united voice of Truth. We've got to walk our talk.



Nancy Bragin

sat nam

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I think leadership comes from integrity – that you do whatever you ask others to do. I think there are non-obvious ways to lead. Just by providing a good example as a parent, a friend, a neighbor makes it possible for other people to see better ways to do things. Leadership does not need to be a dramatic, fist in the air and trumpets blaring, activity.

Scott Berkun

(an American author and speaker)

Good News

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Good News from Adyar

Last October, Gene Jennings, vice-president of the International Theosophical Conference Inc., while touring India, came over from New York to the Theosophical Society in Adyar, visiting TS Head Quarters for one day. He had a quick tour organized by the Theosophical Publishing House. He met with the International President, visited the Library, Leadbeater Chambers' restaurant and Head Quarters Building and walked over Adyar beach. He is affiliated with the United Lodge of Theosophists.



Gene Jennings (left), N.C. Ramanujachary, Ramu Sudarsan and ... a small dog on the far left in Head Quarters building

In the evening he attended a meeting of Adyar Lodge the subject of Theosophical Organizations all through history and participated in very lively discussions with some twenty people present.

After a short introduction on the different Theosophical organizations from the past, like Plato, Pythagoreans, Phylatheleans of Ammonius Saccas, Jacob Boehme etc., an exchange of opinion took place.

Gene spoke profoundly about power of the mind and awareness mirroring spirit in matter and fusing into oneness of consciousness. From his words it was clear, that he must have read many Theosophical works. His best one-liner was that he experienced the reading of *The Secret Doctrine* as reading poetry. This is a type of appreciation of the Magnum opus of H. P. Blavatsky which is not so often heard.

All Theosophists might consider this idea worthwhile to ponder on.

In Gene Jennings' own words:

Dear friends,

On a too short trip I was hosted by several gracious students at the Adyar Theosophical Society, who treated a visiting student of ULT as one of their own.

At the urging of a kind friend it was suggested that upon arrival in India I make plans to visit the international headquarters of the Theosophical Society (Adyar) at Adyar. With one phone call from that friend everything was arranged and prepared.

After briefly settling in Delhi, I continued on to Chennai, where Ramu and later Jan Jelle Keppler, both guest speakers at our last held ITC meeting in New York, graciously met me. They are longtime students of Theosophy and perfect hosts throughout my short stay that day at the Theosophical Society.

Ramu diligently picked me up from my hotel and transported me a short way to the wonderful grounds of the Theosophical Society at Adyar.

The soft colors, the spiraling trees, The Bodhi Tree, planted there, and the quiet serenity at that place were among my first awareness's, leaving deeply felt impressions and silent longings. In the midst of the surrounding throngs of persons, loudness, hustling and bustling activities on the city streets of Chennai, just walking through the gates, one entered into what seemed to

be a different time and place. What stood out most was the sense of a deep silence, and almost palpable peace, greatly conducive for study, reflection, and contemplation regarding the great concerns of life through the lens of a Theosophical understanding.

My tour at Adyar included seeing the headquarters building and hall, and aspects of the administration process that occur daily. I was graciously taken for a short visitation with Radha Burnier, the president of the Theosophical society at Adyar, who shared time with me in conversation despite her busy schedule. Although I spent only a short time with her I was able to appreciate the vast work that she has done for Theosophy and the Masters through her lectures, writings, talks and presence. I also feel somehow very fortunate that I was able to meet her before her passing, which occurred several days later.

As my tour continued I was able to see the full sized statues of H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott that were at the headquarters hall. There was also visible the Theosophical Society Plaque containing 52 branches or societies which are chartered, located in the different regions of the world. There was a freemasonry symbol directly above the Theosophical Plaque of charters, and below it the words "Universal Brotherhood". The latter is clearly the heartfelt desire of our Great Teachers who spearheaded this movement as it relates modern day Theosophy, and who themselves belong to that greater invisible but ever present Theosophical Movement which is the deep current supporting all of humanity and life.

My tour continued and I was able to see the library through the gracious time spent with me by the librarian. She showed me both large and small relics, literary works, manuscripts that were on display, and other literary treasures contained in the Theosophical library / Research center started by the efforts of Colonel Olcott. The various databases, and variety of articles and published works, as well as other writings related to the objects of theosophy were presented and appreciated.

I was able to visit the Adyar bookshop with its many interesting works containing ideas related to many of the different spiritual disciplines, practices, sciences and philosophical studies, as well as the works of H. P. B.

As I continued my tour with Jan Jelle, looking at the grounds which

ncluded many acres, (many of which I was unable to see), I was able to appreciate the cremation site, the guesthouse where many of the visitors stay while spending time enjoying the Adyar yearly conference, the meditational center, and directly beyond the gates the great expanse of Ocean and Sky, while standing on the Adyar portion of the Beach, which was quite a sight at that time of the evening. Since the weather was good, we were able to take a short walk along the shore, which was very conducive to the arousal of contemplative thoughts.

Upon making our way back to the Theosophical Hall, I was able to participate in a very lively Wednesday evening Theosophical meeting led by two solid students of Theosophy. Although in private conversation we were able to acknowledge aspects of superficial difference in regards to the expression of certain Theosophical teachings and ideas, it does seem that we were all able to appreciate the great single spiritual teaching and the ideas that arise from it – related to the teachings of Theosophy and the expressed spiritual truths given by Madame Blavatsky and her Masters. It was a wonderful experience indeed to be involved in the class, listening to Theosophy, as well as being asked questions regarding the theme of the Theosophical Movement, and its representatives throughout the historical years and ages. It was also wonderful finding out that there is much common ground regarding Theosophical understanding, despite the appearances of differences related to particulars in regards to the core truths, expressed in the different traditions.

At the end, I found myself being very thankful to the friend who persistently suggested I visit Adyar, as well as all the spiritual friends committed to the Great Cause of Theosophy, each in their unique way, whom I was fortunate enough to encounter along this journey.

Thank you all for a gift I will eternally feel and cherish.

Good News from FOTA

WHY THEOSOPHICAL ARCHIVES NEED FRIENDS

On Oct 21 2007, a fire near San Diego destroyed the stock, library and archives of Point Loma Publications. (Fortunately, much of the archives had already been copied by Alexandria West.) A year or two later, heavy rain came through the roof of a London library. It stopped one floor short of the bookcase containing Madame Blavatsky's own copy of "Spiritual Scientist" with her handwritten comments about the medium D.D. Home. Less fortunate were the birth records of Dr Eric Dingwall (biographer of Home) which had already been eaten by termites in Ceylon. Meanwhile, peacefully hundreds of Theosophical pamphlets rested in lodge bookcases in five continents. In silence their modern paper began to disintegrate, and their staples rotted.

There is a crisis facing Theosophists, as the original records since 1875 decay. There is a race against time to digitize and preserve electronically. Although there are handful of properly curated Theosophical archives, the general picture is serious. So a group of scholars, archivists, and prospective donors have joined forces to launch the Friends of Theosophical Archives which will take formal shape in various countries.

To learn more, and sign up for the free FOTA newsletter go to:
www.hypatia.gr/fota/





Ravi Ravindra



Main conference hall

Good News from the IPF

Indo-Pacific Federation Conference

The Indo-Pacific Federation of the Theosophical Society (IPF) was held in Bali, Indonesia from the first to the sixth of November 2013. Over 90 representatives from Asia-Pacific region took part in the conference with the theme of the conference *Practising Theosophy*. Many of the presentations focused on answering the question of how we as an organisation and as individuals can turn the Theosophy we understand from an intellectual concept to one that informs and becomes an active part of our lives.

The conference was inspired by the words of the Mahachohan: “*We have to preach and popularize a knowledge of Theosophy.*” We are living in times when it is more difficult to attract new members to our meetings and perhaps the time is upon us to go where there is a need, into our communities where the popularisation of theosophical values can be a true means of change. We discussed the importance of developing Self-awareness as part of our practical approach to living, by each of us becoming an example of Theosophy, which of course requires us to bring our own lives into harmony with the universal values, such as nonviolence, honesty, respect, Brotherhood and Sisterhood and being willing to undergo our own transformation as part of this process.

Our guest speaker was Ravi Ravindra who presented three remarkable dialogues leaving us with a sense of deep reflection after each one. Ravi spoke on ‘*Actorless Action*’, ‘*Knowledge and the State of Unknowing*’ and finally on ‘*Mindfulness in Action and Mindlessness in Love*’ sharing with us many insights from his dialogues with Krishnamurti.

The conference emphasised the importance of discovering your ‘Inner Diamond’ through a process using nonviolence as a mechanism of practising Theosophy. Nonviolence of course is a universal truth which is reflected in many religions. It is often the first step that must be taken; as epitomised by Mahatma Ghandi and Annie Besant in their own lives.

The Singapore Lodge shared with us some insights into the history of Theosophy in China which have come out of the research by a group of Singapore members on behalf of the IPF, creating an Internet presence related to Theosophy in the native Chinese language. We heard of Dr. Wu Ting Fang, a Chinese diplomat who spent much time outside of China. It was during the last three years of his life that he did the most work for the Theosophical Society while holding dual portfolios of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Finance. In 1920, aged 78, while residing in Shenjiang, Shanghai, he actively promoted The Theosophical Society. The Singapore lodge have an active group translating some of the core theosophical texts into Chinese and making these available through the project website at: www.chinesetheosophy.org

There were many other speakers during the conference including a panel of Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) speakers who spoke about how the TOS can help the Theosophical Society. The speakers discussed the importance of service as part of our journey to awaken compassion in the lives of our members.

The Indonesian National Speaker shared some of the history of Hinduism in early Indonesian history highlighting some of the prominent



Photo taken during the TOS symposium, on the far left Vic Hao Chin

figures of the past and how the Hindu culture of Indonesia eventually moved to Bali, which is predominantly Hindu with a sprinkling of Buddhism. This influence was very apparent as the conference took a break for a tour of part of Indonesia on one of the days of the conference.

The conference started on the day of Radha Burnier's cremation in Adyar with many of the guests learning of Radha's passing as they arrived. During the opening ceremony we took time to reflect on the work of Radha with short presentations by some who knew Radha Burnier well. After the presentations we had a few minutes' respectful silence for Radha.

John Vorstermans

Indo-Pacific Federation President

www.ipf-ts.org

Photos by courtesy of Isis de Resende from Brazil



*IndoPacific Federation Conference
Bali, 1-6 November 2013*

Good News from ITC

A letter from Garrett Riegg, ITC's President.
TO: ITC Members, Associates and Friends



Garrett Riegg

RE: International Theosophy Conference at Naarden, NL, August 15-18, 2014

I am happy to announce the dates, location and theme of our next conference. We are looking forward to a special conference in The Netherlands, at the International Theosophical Centre which is located near the small town of Naarden, about 20 miles from Amsterdam. Next year the conference will begin on a Friday and continue through Monday. The conference will follow a more interactive and holistic approach, emphasizing more dialogues, workshops and sharing as compared to past years. The theme will be focused on our goals and roles as students of Theosophy in the various organizations.

The theme that has been chosen by our board of directors is:
“Theosophy, Unity and Helping the World ... Where do we go from here?”

This theme is intended to emphasize communication and harmony among different Theosophical groups. Much of the program will explore ways in which all Theosophical groups can share in spreading Theosophy with due respect for each of our different traditions. We will be looking for ways to spread Theosophy in the world, to help students connect with Theosophical traditions and to exchange ideas in the spirit of the Three Objects and the legacy of H. P. Blavatsky.

The venue, the International Theosophical Centre at Naarden, is a wonderfully located spiritual retreat centre fostering Brotherhood and Peace. It has a long history of serving Theosophy and is affiliated with the Theosophical Society, Adyar.

Participants can be accommodated at the centre itself which offers a variety of possibilities although the availability of rooms is somewhat limited. Very close to the venue however there are a number of first class and moderately priced hotels. From those hotels you'll have the option to commute to the centre by car, bicycle, or public transport.

Our website, www.theosconf.org already has considerable information about the centre, its accommodations and the nearby hotels. Soon we will have registration forms obtainable from the website.

We anticipate having vegetarian breakfasts, luncheons and dinners available at the centre itself. There are also several good restaurants in the nearby town of Naarden.

This year, the conference organizers are Herman C. Vermeulen from The Hague, Netherlands, and Jan N. Kind from Brasilia, Brazil. Herman is also our Vice-President for International Development, and Jan is our Publicity Chair.

Please mark your calendars for next year's conference. To be sure of your first choices, you may want to make your housing arrangements in the next month or two.

Our board of directors is enthusiastic about next year's conference. We hope you will be able to join us in 2014! Meanwhile we wish you a happy and meaningful holiday season, as we all look forward to the spiritual renewal of the winter solstice.

Sincerely yours,
Garrett Riegg,
ITC President
garrettriegg@att.net

Good News from Portugal 1



The Portuguese blog Lua em Escorpião celebrated its second year on November 11, 2013. This outstanding blog is edited by Paulo Baptista with the help of two other contributors: Luísa Garcês de Lima and Ivan Silvestre.

Lua em Escorpião's main feature is the publication of translated texts authored by Theosophists who belong to the different traditions within the Theosophical movement. Jan Kind, Odin Townley, David Pratt, N.C. Ramanujachary, Barend Voorham and Pablo Sender are some of the Theosophists who agreed to have their articles published on Lua em Escorpião.

The blog's address is

<http://lua-em-escorpiao.blogspot.pt>.

Good News from Portugal 2

Carlos Guerra, the General Secretary of the TS (Adyar) in Portugal sent the following message:

Dear friends all around the world,

Hope that all is well with all of you.

I want to use this opportunity to thank you for your friendship always clearly expressed on so many occasions and in so many different ways. Wish to thank our friend Kim-Diêu in particular.

Am very happy with the new EFTS website: <http://www.ts-efts.org/>

Have visited this site several times and along with some other Theosophical websites it will be an inspiration for our own TS website in Portugal. It provides an excellent source of information, is easily accessible and graphically very clear. I want to congratulate the team of workers which were directly or indirectly involved in its development. It certainly will have a

positive impact on the dissemination of Theosophy in the world, especially in Europe.

I am happy to announce that the Portuguese Section of the TS Adyar now has a new and “grand” stimulus to get on with its essential work: a brand-new Headquarters building in Lisbon. All of us in Portugal hope that our new location will motivate all to work for the well-fare of humanity because that is what Theosophy is all about.

Here some photos:



Entrance of the new headquarters building in Lisbon



What a wonderful library



A silent place to “meet”

For those who would like to get in touch with us, here is our address:

Sociedade Teosófica de Portugal

Rua José Estêvão, nº 10 B

1150-202 Lisboa

Portugal

You may also mail me direct: carlos.a.g.guerra@gmail.com

With the most fraternal thoughts to all of you,

Affectionately,

Carlos Guerra



Reading room at the Theosophical library in Slovenia

Good News from Slovenia 1

The Theosophical Society Jivatma in Slovenia is operating the first public Theosophical library in Slovenia. The Theosophical Library and Reading Room of Alma M. Karlin was started in 2010 and is dedicated in memory of the great Slovenian female traveler, writer, poet, collector, hyper polyglot and Theosophist Alma Maximiliana Karlin (12 October 1889 – 15 January 1950). Between 1919 and 1928, Alma made a nine year journey around the world. She was an inspiration for many members of the first theosophical circle in Slovenia (which was part of Yugoslavia at the time) called “Krishnaji”, which started functioning in 1927 in Celje and was led by Konrad Konec, a priest in the Liberal Catholic Church (LCC).

“Alone and abandoned walks through life he who thinks only of himself; but he who knows how to lovingly adapt and turn everything for the better, who always knows where to offer a helping hand and gives himself to others, his life is a blossoming meadow, and traces of his work remain even after his death.” – Alma M. Karlin

The Library was established as a resource for independent research. There are over 10,000 volumes in its collection and more than 5000 of those are present only here in the whole of Slovenia. It is a unique place for resource material in the field of the Divine Wisdom. Besides the works of Alma Karlin, the library makes available to the public a great and exclusive reference collection with significant works on theosophy, philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, esotericism, spiritual and personal development and the world's religions, such as Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam and many others. Complete collections can be seen on the site www.jivatma.si which will be translated into English in the near future. One big work in progress is to digitalize the historical material of the Slovenian TS and slowly make it easily available for researchers. Anton Rozman, through his great work on www.teozofija.info has already covered other Theosophical material.



Cozy and inspiring atmosphere in the library

Also included is a wealth of material on comparative religion, mysticism, Kabala, alchemy and traditional as well as leading-edge fields of science. The reader may follow the recurrent ideas that have helped people of all cultures find a deeper meaning in life. Prominence is given to the extensive collections of world known Theosophists starting with H. P. Blavatsky, H. S. Olcott, Judge, A. Besant, G. de Purucker, C. W. Leadbeater as well as J. Krishnamurti, A. Bailey, R. Steiner and others that started in theosophy and began their own teachings. We also have a wide collection from Sri Aurobindo, Vivekananda, Osho, Ramana Maharshi, Torkom Saraydarian, Lucille Cedercranz and others.

The Theosophical library also offers lectures, study groups, workshops, and other programs to members and the general public. The subject matter is a wide range to facilitate the study of comparative religion, philosophy, science and health. We have a daily Zen meditation and monthly full moon meditations, as well as presentations of books in Slovenian, and cultural evenings with music and spiritual poem readings. We also host Young Rite (Liberal Catholic Church in Slovenia) with occasional Sunday masses and a Friday evening Krishna Bhakti group, and we allow other groups to present who have a respect for different paths and who try not to be exclusive or too orthodox in their approach to understanding life.

We are grateful to all who helped us to build this library thus far by donating of books, offering lectures and supporting us in many ways. We happily look forward to the future developments of the library. And though the Theosophical Society Jivatma is not a part of any bigger Theosophical organization such as Adyar, we feel a part of the world Theosophical family and a part of the One work.

Good News from Slovenia 2

Annual visit of the EFTS Chairman to Slovenia



Tran-Thi-Kim-Dieu

There is a tradition that the EFTS Chairman, Miss Tran-Thi-Kim-Dieu, annually visits Slovenia in the month of October. This year's program – from October 17 till October 21 - included an interview at Studio 12 under the title: "Spiritual Perspective - Scientific and spiritual approach of Life."

You can watch this interesting video interview with Tran-Thi-Kim-Dieu here: [....](#)

It was followed by a public talk in Ljubljana on the theme "Crisis, progress, evolution: the perspectives," in which Miss Tran-Thi-Kim-Dieu addressed the following questions: (1) How many crises has humanity

undergone? (2) What is the meaning of a crisis? (3) What perspectives can it bring about? The aim of these questions was to discover a new vision of human-hood.

On Saturday, October 19, Miss Tran-Thi-Kim-Dieu conducted one-day seminar at the beautiful premises of the Theosophical Library Alma Maximiliana Karlin in Celje, attended by thirty students, who focusing on the theme: The Spiritual Life: An exploration into The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali (Based on the *Science of Yoga* by I.K Taimni).

Once again Miss Tran-Thi-Kim-Dieu's visit brought together many earnest seekers who were following her presentations with great interest.



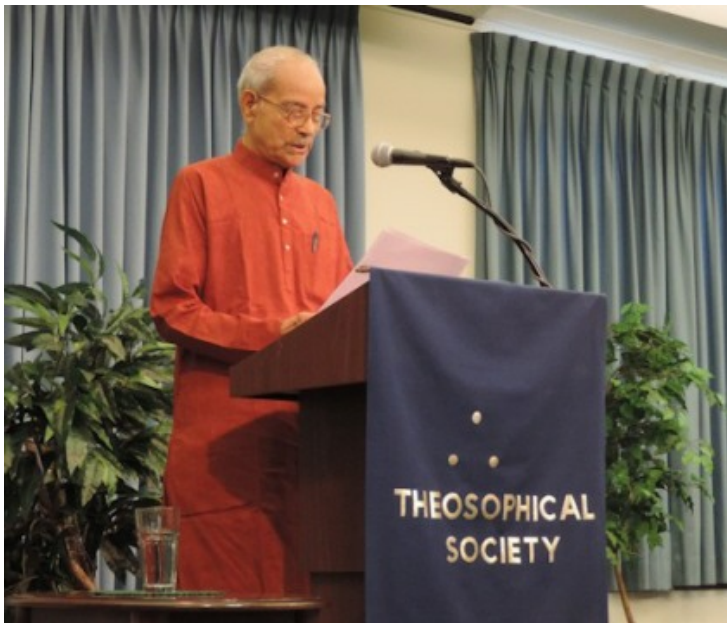
Audience at the Theosophical Library in Celje

Good News from the TOS

Service as Sacred Labor

B.L. Bhattacharyya – India

The words 'labor' and 'service', taken out of our TS and TOS context, generally refer simply to the fulfilling of a duty or work often in exchange for remuneration. We talk of a young girl "going into service" as a maid, for example, or of a young man "serving his time" as an apprentice, or of men "laboring" on a building site or out in the fields. Labor or service, in this general sense of work, is fundamental in our lives. There is rarely a time when we are not working. From the moment we are born, some part of us is working. The body works to grow and our brains work to learn how to understand the world around us. Even now as we all sit here we are working in some way.



B. L. Bhattacharyya speaks at Olcott in Wheaton

Service in the TS and TOS context, however, is thought of as something more than this kind of work. When we work to benefit others, or do something to minimize the suffering of the poor, we give of ourselves for something intangible. We give freely because it is the right thing to do. When it is given without thinking, when it is given from our heart, it is given with love, affection and benevolence. It becomes sacred because it is given purely with the intention of relieving another's suffering. It is truly altruistic. It is a sacred labor.

Sacred labor creates positive Karma. The Law of Karma states that "As you sow, so must you reap." Whatever action we take creates a reaction of which we are a part. So we must constantly be aware of whether the action we take is the correct action. In the book *At the Feet of the Master*, Krishnamurti writes, "Between right and wrong it should not be difficult to choose, for those who wish to follow the Master have already decided to take the right at all costs." This means that we are willing to choose that path which may be more difficult to live, but in the end, it serves more people. It is a choice that puts our attention outside of ourselves.

As a pilgrim to India in 1893, Annie Besant believed she had found the land of the great Masters and felt she could learn something from the people of the country. But what she learned was very different from what she expected. She noticed that Indians had forgotten their glorious old culture and traditions. Instead people were killing animals as a sacrifice and donating large sums of money and ornaments to temples in the hope of obtaining a good life. Little attention was given to those who were poor or sick. Cruelty and superstition were abundant such as untouchability due to the caste system and the concept of sati or bride burning.

Annie Besant was instrumental in changing many of these beliefs and educating the public. She stressed the Vedic belief that the sacred resides in everything and everyone and encouraged Indians to rule their own country. Annie Besant realized that we cannot change wrongs without action. We must act but we must be aware of how those actions will affect others. Are we doing the action for the benefit of ourselves or for the whole?

In his talk "We Help Ourselves, Not the World", Swami Vivekananda also stressed the need to understand how our actions affect ourselves and others because we are one. To be able to help another should be looked at as

a gift we can give others. He stated, "We must do good; the desire to do good is the highest motive power we have, if we know all the time that it is a privilege to help others. Do not stand on a high pedestal and take five cents in your hand and say, 'Here, my poor man,' but be grateful that the poor man is there, so that by making a gift to him you are able to help yourself. It is not the receiver that is blessed, but it is the giver. Be thankful that you are allowed to exercise your power of benevolence and mercy in the world."

As we can see, no work, no sacrifice can be sacred without love. The message given in *At the Feet of the Master* states that will, wisdom and love are three aspects of the Logos. If we wish to do the Masters' work, we must do it through love. We all need love. The whole of creation is held together by the bonds of divine love and compassion. In H. P. B.'s *The Voice of the Silence* she asks, "Canst thou destroy divine COMPASSION? Compassion is no attribute. It is the LAW of LAWS – eternal Harmony ... a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting Right, and fitness of all things, the law of love eternal."

The work of the Theosophical Order of Service is sacred. It was started to provide TS members with a platform to put theosophical concepts into action; to make those principles concrete. Can there be anything more sacred? It is right action with love and respect, with compassion between the server and served. It is service to the living god within every being.

We have had plenty of examples of service as sacred labor from the leaders of the Theosophical Society and the Theosophical Order of Service. Our late International President Mrs. Radha Burnier (TS Adyar) worked for the welfare of others for most of her life. Through her Watchtower notes, she directed the attention of all TS/TOS members and readers of *The Theosophist* to the need for right action, to minimize cruelty, superstitions, prejudice and sufferings of all beings. But the world is not free from these vices despite the amount of work we have done. This also is part of sacred labor. No matter how tired we become or how weary of the world we may be, we must not lose sight that our labor is for a higher cause, a greater cause, a sacred cause.

One of the teachings in H. P. Blavatsky's *Practical Occultism* states "The god in us – that is to say, the spirit of Love and Truth, Justice and Wisdom, Goodness and Power – should be our only true and permanent Love,

our only reliance in everything, our only Faith which standing firm as a rock, can forever be trusted; our only Hope, which will never fail us if all other things perish; and the only object which we must seek to obtain, by our Patience, waiting contentedly until our evil Karma has been exhausted and the divine Redeemer will reveal to us His presence within our soul.”

As members of TS and TOS, as spirits of Love and Truth, Justice and Wisdom, Goodness and Power, we should work together following the footsteps of our great leaders to awaken the consciousness of Humanity through that sacred labor which is dedicated service full of love and compassion. In the words of Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, “Love is the only reality and it is not a mere sentiment. It is the ultimate truth that lies at the heart of the creation.”



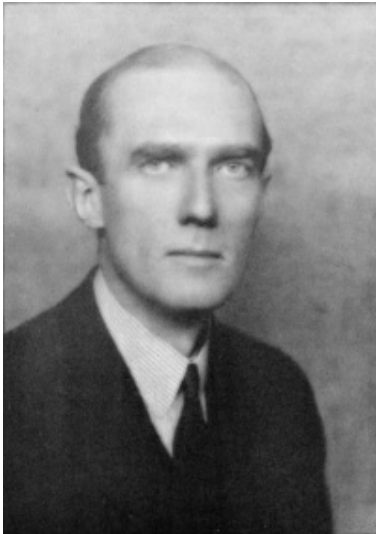


Theosophical Encyclopedia

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Alfred Trevor Barker (1893-1941).

A Theosophist who is particularly noted for compiling and publishing *The MAHATMA LETTERS TO A. P. SINNETT* in December 1923.



Alfred Trevor Barker

Barker was born October 10, 1893, at Las Palmas in the Canary Islands. There are no records extant regarding his education, but his work for the Theosophical Society (TS) was of such a standard that he obviously had a good general education. Several references accord him the title "Doctor," but it is not clear when and where he gained this degree. In 1926 he published *H. P. Blavatsky's Letters to A. P. Sinnett*.

He originally joined the Theosophical Society (Adyar), but resigned in 1925; he joined the Point Loma Theosophical Society in July 30, 1930. Barker was for a number of years the President of the English Section of the Point Loma Theosophical Society. He died at Torquay, Devon, England on July 17, 1941.

Fritz Kunz (1888-1972)

Prolific Theosophical writer and lecturer for the Theosophical Society (TS) in America.



Fritz Kunz

Kunz was born on May 16, 1888, in Freeport, Illinois, USA. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin, he was appointed Principal of Ananda College in Sri Lanka, occupying that post from 1914 to 1918. In 1918, Kunz went to Adyar and became manager of the Theosophical Publishing House.

In 1925, Kunz returned to the US and became a lecturer for the TS and other organizations. On May 16, 1927, he married Dora van Gelder. In 1940 he founded The Foundation for Integrative Education and edited its magazine *Main Currents in Modern Thought* which was published from 1940 to 1975. Interest in this work became widespread and conferences were organized in the US and Europe. He lectured in India under the sponsorship of the Indian Government. He was co-author of *Integrative Principles of Modern Thought*. Kunz died in 1972.

Publications include: *Men Beyond Mankind*, *Sex Concepts for the New Age*, *To Those Who Rejoice*.

James Ingall Wedgwood

(1883-1951)

Founder of the LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH and a prominent member of the Theosophical Society – Adyar.



James Ingall Wedgwood

He was born in London, England, into well-known pottery manufacturing family. After leaving school, the young Wedgwood entered University College, Nottingham, to prepare for life as an analytical chemist, but on completing this course he transferred his energies to the learning of the church organ at York Minster. Four years later he decided to prepare for Holy Orders in this Anglo-Catholic diocese of the Anglican Church. Instead he found himself suddenly converted to Theosophy. Having once before been reluctantly impressed on hearing an address by Annie BESANT, he went to hear her when she visited York. Notwithstanding his resolve to resist, he was entirely won over, resulting in his instant dismissal from York Minster.

Wedgwood relinquished all claims on the family business in return for a small but adequate income. Then, within a very short time after joining the Theosophical Society, he was able to help with lectures, and to serve as General Secretary for the Society in England and Wales (1911-13). Subsequently he became the organizer in England for the new Co-Masonic movement. In 1913 he heard of the existence of the Old Catholic Church in

England, and on meeting Archbishop Arnold Matthew found the way open to him to enter Holy Orders without having to hide or relinquish his theosophical views. He was ordained later that year. With the return of Matthew to Rome, Wedgwood was elected to lead the English Old Catholic Church, which by this time consisted mainly of those theosophists who had followed him there. Once consecrated a bishop, Wedgwood traveled to Sydney, Australia, to collaborate with Charles LEADBEATER in preparing the foundations of the new church (called Liberal Catholic from September 1918). In July 1916 Wedgwood advanced Leadbeater to the Episcopate. Wedgwood was the principal author of the Liberal Catholic liturgy, applying to it great eloquence and sensitivity in the use of language. Both men are believed to have developed a high level of clairvoyance, which they applied to the task of maximizing the potency of the many services needed in a comprehensive liturgy. The task took three years, and was interrupted several times as Wedgwood traveled to New Zealand, the United States, England and Europe, establishing new centers and churches.

Overwork and persecution by the English press took its toll on Wedgwood. In 1922 he resigned as Presiding Bishop, which task was finally taken up by Leadbeater (1923) when convinced Wedgwood could not in the short term resume as leader. For some time Wedgwood attended the Sorbonne in Paris, returning to the physics of organ music, for which studies he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Science. As his health improved he accepted responsibility for the LCC in Europe, and supervised a major center of the Church — and the TS — at Huizen in the Netherlands. He wrote extensively, trained many priests, and established a congregation highly skilled in helping him to heighten the influence of the Church's sacramental rites. He is said to have been electrifying as a ceremonialist, graceful, precise, and powerful.

Once more overtaken by ill health, Wedgwood retired to the Theosophical center at Camberley in England, where he contributed as fully as his condition permitted, until his death in 1951.

J. I. Wedgwood's publications include: *The Distinctive Contribution of Theosophy to Christian Thought*; *Meditation for Beginners*; *Varieties of Psychism*; *The Presence of Christ in the Holy Communion*; *the Larger Meaning of Religion*; *The Beginnings of the Liberal Catholic Church*; *New Insights into Christian Worship*.

Ernest Wood (1883-1965)

Prominent Theosophist and author.



Ernest Wood

He was born in Manchester, England, in 1883. He attended the Manchester College of Technology, gaining Firsts in Physics, Chemistry and Geology. Wood joined the Theosophical Society (TS) in 1902. A worker for Theosophy in education, administration, lecturing and writing, he was a founder of the Theosophical College at Madanapalle, India, and also Founder and Principal of the Sind National College at Hyderabad. Wood worked as Secretary to Charles W. LEADBEATER for some years. He was awarded the SUBBA ROW MEDAL in 1924. Wood held office as the Recording Secretary of the TS at Adyar 1929-33. He was an unsuccessful candidate for President in 1934, losing to George ARUNDALE. He moved to the US and took the post of President and Dean of the American Academy of Asian Studies, a graduate school in San Francisco. Wood became literate in Sanskrit and studied texts on yoga in their original language.

Wood brought a severely practical attitude to his theosophical work, constantly looking for opportunities to apply the theories. He was not easily fooled and he exposed as a fraud an Indian woman who claimed to be holy because she could go without food for long periods. Wood simply locked her

nto an isolated room with a guard on her and she soon cried for food and confessed to her fraudulent activities.

Publications include: *A Guide to Theosophy*; *Reincarnation*; *Concentration*; *Memory Training*; *Character Building*; *Destiny*; *Intuition of the Will*; *The Seven Rays*; *Rāja Yoga*; *An Englishman Defends Mother India*; *A "Secret Doctrine" Digest*. His book entitled *Yoga* was published as a Penguin paperback in 1959.



Theosophical approaches to Christianity

Introduction: Theosophy, far from being inconsistent or incompatible with the Christian Way, is in fact its other side. Theosophy merits consideration by all who wish to make their Christian faith both more intelligible to their minds and more alive in their hearts. It agrees with St. Paul that Christ is within us. It teaches people not to leave the religion in which they have heard God speak but, rather, to live it more fully and perceive it more clearly.

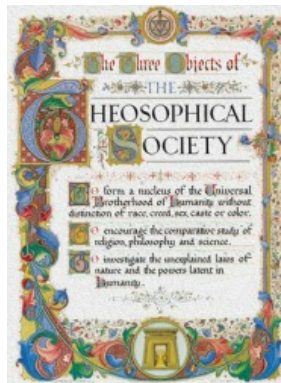
The emphasis in Christ's teachings on the love of God and of one's neighbor is also echoed by Theosophy. That love is not an emotion or a sentimental affection. It is rather what is called in Greek "agape," a recognition of a greater Reality in human experience and a concern for the welfare of others. In Theosophy it is called "altruism," a recognition that, as we and others are ultimately one, their good is also ultimately ours.

Those who take their stand in the eternal verities, on the inner or hidden aspect of Christianity, are like the man in the parable who "had the sense to build his house on rock" (Matthew 7:24). Such people can view without alarm the shifting sands of criticism and doubt that arise in each new age. Storms may come, winds may blow, but the house stands, for its occupants are no longer in bondage to the letter of the law. They hold to that hidden spiritual foundation of which external facts are but the sign and symbol. In possession of the Divine Wisdom, they know the truth that makes us free.]

Christianity, numerically the world's largest religion, and modern Theosophy have had a complex and sometimes troubled relationship. The Christian faith was and is the natal religion of the great majority of Western members of the Theosophical Society (TS) from the generation of the Founders to the late twentieth century. But many came to Theosophy through a process of questioning, or even rebellion against that faith. Some were of no faith or, increasingly, have been raised in Theosophy or some other spiritual alternative. Other Theosophists, both Eastern and Western, were never

Christians, being of Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Zoroastrian or tribal religious background and so also were the Masters of the East.

Thus Theosophy has had to deal with the feelings of persons who find themselves at odds with Christianity as well as those sympathetic but who look to theosophy to add a dimension of depth and esoteric meaning to conventional expressions of the religion — and also with those of all faith traditions who want to find in them all, Christianity no less than any other, relics of a common ancient wisdom. All this has understandably led to some differences of tone and emphasis amongst Theosophical writers treating of Christianity.



Helena P. BLAVATSKY was herself unsparing in her polemics against the ecclesiastical tradition of Christianity, whether dealing with the Church Fathers or modern priests, pastors and missionaries. That was above all the case in *Isis Unveiled* and certain letters. Roman Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox clerics were all subjected to her scorn, though she considered her own Russian Orthodox church a bit purer than the others (see CW XIV:125). The basis of her animus against Christian churches was what she perceived as arrogance combined with misplaced concreteness. That is to say, Blavatsky held that churchmen, past and present, whether through intentional deceit or mere stupidity, had concealed the real origin and meaning of Christianity as a vehicle of the ancient wisdom and had then made absolute, dogmatic creeds of Christianity's symbolic outer conveyors of esoteric truth, to the extent of suppression and persecution of those who saw beyond the letter. The fundamental error, or deception, was making God a Creator external to

the universe rather than, as theosophists understood the situation to be, a source of consciousness-matter emanations unfolding from within the heart of the cosmos. The best intellectual expression of this position may be the following passage from *The Secret Doctrine* (II:41):

“Christian theology, having rejected the doctrine of emanations and replaced them with direct, conscious creations of angels and the rest out of nothing, now finds itself hopelessly stranded between Supernaturalism, or miracle, and materialism. An extra-cosmic god is fatal to philosophy, an intra-cosmic Deity — i.e., Spirit and matter inseparable from each other — is a philosophical necessity. Separate them and that which is left is a gross superstition under a mask of emotionalism.”

There were, however, among the Christians, some initiates who understood these things. Jesus himself, whom she said taught karma and reincarnation above all, was one, and so was St. Paul, and they presented the deeper truth in the veiled language of Jesus’ parables and Paul in his grasp of the esoteric meaning of the Cross (*SD* II:556). In Blavatsky’s understanding of Jesus and Paul, the former is not exactly the singular incarnation of an external God, or even of the creative Logos, of ordinary Christianity. That is the Christ, who is more than Jesus: “Christ, the Logos, or the God in Space and the Savior on Earth, is but one of the echoes of the same antediluvian and sorely misunderstood Wisdom” (*SD* II:483).

But esoterically the doctrines about Jesus as Christ come close to the truth when they acknowledge that he was an initiate and a Master, and that in the symbolic drama of his life, death, and resurrection profound mysteries that must be interiorized by all initiates are presented in symbol. In her view this was how the ancient Gnostics understood Christ and Christianity. They, Blavatsky like many Theosophists contended, alone entertained a true and deep understanding of the Christian mysteries. As for the rest of the churchmen, they came nigh to obliterating it with their quarrelsome dogmatism and political ambition.

It must be admitted that Blavatsky’s onslaughts against most Christianity, which included attacks even on groups given to good works such as the Salvation Army, were not always even-handed. There was little inclination to give credit as well as blame in connection with the faith’s long and exceedingly diverse history. Moreover, Blavatsky seemed unaware of the

emerging liberal, and broadly Platonic, strand in Christian theology — Schleiermacher, Coleridge, Channing, Kingsley and many others — that in her own nineteenth century was giving Christianity a far different face from that of the naive dogmatism she so hated. Yet her assault on church Christianity can be viewed as a preliminary necessary to her particular task, and that of the Theosophical Society: the establishment of a new spirituality based on an immanentist universalism which stood at an opposite pole from the exclusivist, hidebound but aggressive faith she saw all around, whether in European bishops or in missionaries abroad. Other writers of the first Theosophical generation were generally of the Blavatsky stamp on the issue of Christianity. The tone is generally more sympathetic — and the discussion more extensive — when the subject is HINDUISM or BUDDHISM than the great faith of the West, but Jesus and Paul are seen as initiates whose support can be summoned on behalf of certain basic tenets of the ancient wisdom. Alfred P. SINNETT, in *Esoteric Buddhism* and elsewhere, is quite reticent on Christianity. William Q. JUDGE, though he also had relatively little to say about the subject, points out in *The Ocean of Theosophy* that the sometimes cryptic language of Jesus must be understood in light of the fact that his mission was to the Jews and so was couched in the terminology of their tradition; he was in fact an avatar for the Jews. In *Echoes of the Orient II*, we find a passage in which Judge says that “the religion which Jesus taught is not what the world understands by Christianity,” and states that Jesus actually taught reincarnation (p. 435). Henry Steel Olcott, in his inaugural address as President of the Theosophical Society, very nicely positioned Theosophy between the conflicting dogmas of science and religion (here obviously meaning Christian religion), making its reversion to an ancient heritage underlying them both the solution to that great Victorian battle: “If I rightly apprehend our work, it is to aid in freeing the public mind of theological superstition and a tame subservience to the arrogance of science.” According to Stephen Prothero in his study of Olcott and Buddhism, *The White Buddhist*, after further interaction with Blavatsky and his own labors on behalf of Asian Buddhists, Olcott developed more and more antipathy to the Christian faith.

Another side, however, was beginning to emerge elsewhere in the Theosophical world, particularly in a circle related to the London Lodge in the early 1880s centering on Anna KINGSFORD and her companion Edward MAITLAND, and supported by their great Parisian friend and patron, Marie,

countess of Caithness and duchesse de Pomar, founder and president of the French lodge in 1883. This group has been examined by Joscelyn Godwin in *The Theosophical Enlightenment*. Lady Caithness had published on esotericism and Christianity in *Old Truths in a New Light* as early as 1876.

Kingsford and Maitland were finding their way toward an esoteric but Christ-centered faith. Most well-educated Theosophists were aware of a tradition of allegorical interpretations of scripture influenced by Neoplatonism and the Hellenistic approach to myth, of Jewish and Christian writers like Philo, ORIGEN, Gregory of Nyssa, and more recently BOEHME and SWEDENBORG. The first Christian esotericism Kingsford and Maitland had heard of was Swedenborg; Lady Caithness, with whom they had corresponded by 1878, told them of Jacob Boehme and Eliphas LEVI. On the basis of such reading, and of direct mystical visions on the part of Anna Kingsford they called "illumination," they came to interpret the Christian mythos as one form of the popular "solar myth" pattern, allegories of the passage of the Sun through the Zodiac which scholars as distinguished as Max Müller then took to be basic to all religion. But they also claimed that Jesus was a real person; the Christ, however, represented the state of regenerate man, united with the Logos or Divine Spirit. They conceded that the other ancient mysteries and the pagan gods had concealed and revealed the esoteric doctrine as much as did Christ. But now, for obvious historical reasons, that burden lay almost entirely on Christianity in the West. But that faith, though now the main vehicle for the wisdom, had become so corrupt that it was hardly fulfilling its true function.

All this was presented in lectures at the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society in 1881, published anonymously with the help of Lady Caithness in 1882 as *The Perfect Way; or, the Finding of Christ*. This fascinating work, which clearly influenced Annie BESANT deeply, centers on the Gnostic theme of the liberation of spirit from matter, a salvation prefigured, after the mystery drama of the Crucifixion and Death of Christ, in his Resurrection in his "true and immortal form," and finally culminated in his Ascension, which is "that of the whole Man, now regenerate, to his own celestial kingdom within himself" (1924 ed., p. 213.). Between Caithness and Kingsford there was now before the world an esoteric, quasi-theosophical understanding of Christianity, especially Catholic Christianity. (Both Kingsford and Caithness were Roman Catholics; Kingsford, like Annie Besant, the unhappy wife of an Anglican vicar, a convert in 1870.) In 1883 Anna Kingsford

became president of the London Lodge of the TS, but was defeated for reelection the next year at a meeting over which Olcott presided by a faction backed by A. P. Sinnett; at Olcott's suggestion she, Maitland, and others left to form the more Western- and Christian-oriented Hermetic Society. Tension between Christian/Catholic Theosophy and the vigorously Eastern-oriented, anti-clerical Theosophy of Sinnett and the Blavatsky-Olcott tradition was certainly a factor in this acrimonious division. But though Maitland and Kingsford went their own way, their ideas were far from forgotten in Theosophical circles, their counterparts finding larger and larger place, though never without intense controversy, after 1900. A new generation was arising which was often temperamentally better disposed to reconciliation between Christianity and Theosophy than the earlier cohort had been. One reason was that the world itself had changed, and Christianity with it. The mid-Victorian starkly-defined "war" between science and religion, or faith and reason, had given way by the end of the century to serious philosophical and theological attempts at mediation and taking higher perspectives, including growing popularity of the previously-mentioned theological liberalism. One upshot was a vogue for Christian mysticism, popularized by books like those of Evelyn Underhill. A parallel and no less helpful enthusiasm for the deeply psychological and sometimes sympathetic study of mythology and folklore, whether in the manner of Andrew Lang and James Frazer, or the psychoanalytic style of Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung, suggested, as had Blavatsky and Swedenborg even earlier, other ways of looking at the Christian mythos than either the literalist or rationalist.

Another congenial trend, widespread even among the clergy in the 1890s and 1900s, was a "Christian mysteries" approach to the faith with its worship and festivals. Inspired by Freemasonry and the ceremonial magic of the Order of the Golden Dawn, it sought new ways of understanding how the forms of conventional Christianity expressed timeless mystical truths and channeled divine power. One exemplar of this vision was Dr. Robert Felkin of England and New Zealand, Theosophist, leader in the Golden Dawn, and devout Anglican layman who founded within that church the Order of St. Luke, devoted to the spiritual side of healing.

Another reason for a certain shift in attitude was a new type of Theosophist. By 1900 the Theosophical Society was generally less "bohemian"

and more middle class than in its early days; these were people by no means as radical in their overall social views, including those concerning the established religion, as their predecessors. Often Anglican in background, at least in the English-speaking world, they carried over something of that communion's relative toleration of theological diversity and its ritual sense, and some were as much interested in reconciling all that with Theosophy as in renewed theology/theosophy battles. Out of this new realm of the spirit came the Theosophical Christianity of persons like Annie Besant, Charles W. LEADBEATER, James Ingall WEDGWOOD, Geoffrey HODSON, and the LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH. These writers certainly continued in the tradition of affirming that the Gnostics represented the best and truest version of Christianity, and that the religion was to be understood in a mystical, mythological, "Christian mysteries" kind of way. But in their books the earlier trenchant anticlericalism, the diatribes against Jesuits, missionaries, and the church fathers, is noticeably missing. The tone is almost entirely positive, and one can imagine these works being well-received — as some of them were — by Christians in the pews of any reasonably liberal or "mainstream" twentieth century church.

The first in the new series, though drawing from Caithness, Kingsford, and Maitland, was Annie Besant's *Esoteric Christianity* of 1898. Its basic message is that all religions contain a "hidden side," a "mystic and esoteric teaching," and that Christianity is no exception though lamentably that side is not widely known. The particulars of that teaching are not new, nor are they meant to be: it is that the Christian "mythos" of the life of Christ is an allegory of the descent of the Logos into matter and the initiatory transformation of matter through the "Christian Mysteries," the "Mysteries of the Kingdom." The "solar myth" concept is still much employed. What is new about the book is, first, the emphasis on drawing material not only from heretical Gnostics, but from "orthodox" fathers like Clement of Alexandria, and even from readings of the normatively orthodox Nicene and Athanasian creeds; and third, the positive interpretation even of the central act of Christian worship in the Anglican and Roman Catholic traditions, the Eucharistic sacrifice and holy communion, in light of their esoteric meaning.

The same animated regard for normative Catholic-type doctrine and worship understood esoterically and theosophically, was carried forward by the

ex-Anglican priest and Theosophist, C. W. Leadbeater. In *The Christian Creed* (1899) he continued, with much greater fullness, his colleague Annie Besant's Theosophical exposition of the traditional credenda. *The Hidden Side of Things* (1913) contained a celebrated passage, reprinted in *The Science of the Sacraments* (1920) where it well articulates the sacramental theology of the Liberal Catholic Church, relating the author's experiences at mass in a simple Sicilian Roman Catholic Church. Leadbeater describes the radiant lines of spiritual forces from the inner planes that he clairvoyantly saw streaming from the altar and consecrated Host in that humble place, irradiating the peasant congregation and the village with benign energies.

In 1916 the Theosophist James Ingall Wedgwood was consecrated a bishop in an English Old Catholic Church which already was largely Theosophical. He shortly afterwards traveled to Australia to consecrate Leadbeater as a fellow bishop. Both prelates were by then enthusiasts for the ceremonial expression of Theosophical concepts, whether in Co-Masonry or Christian worship or other venues like the Order of the Star. Together they prepared liturgies for a Catholic style of worship consistent with Theosophy. Their church soon became the Liberal Catholic Church. The meaning of its rites were expounded in Leadbeater's *The Science of the Sacraments* and *The Hidden Side of Christian Festivals* (both 1920). Wedgwood wrote more, including *The Presence of Christ in the Holy Communion* (1928), *The Place of Ceremonies in the Spiritual Life* (1928), and *The Larger Meaning of Religion* (1929). In these distinctly Liberal Catholic works the basic esoteric Christian premise that the religion's myths, creeds, and festivals are allegories of fundamental Theosophical teachings about the outpourings of the Logos and the initiatory path of return to the One is accepted implicitly. The task now is to relate it to the details of traditional liturgical worship — the offering and consecration of the bread and wine, the cut of vestments and the swing of incense — and beyond that, to show how those features of Catholic Christian worship channel spiritual energies, as in the Sicilian church, to the congregation. Much emphasis was placed on the presence of ministering angels assisting in Eucharistic worship.

Another prolific Theosophical writer of similar interests, and one reportedly clairvoyant like Leadbeater, was Geoffrey Hodson. In his Liberal Catholic writings like *The Inner Side of Church Worship* (1930) and *The*

Priestly Ideal (1971) he continued in the same vein as Leadbeater; his clairvoyance was especially attuned to angels, and as well to entities in the devic line of evolution; the role of angelic beings in worship was especially emphasized. In a typical passage, he wrote:

There is an order of angels attached to the Christian Church, who, being dedicated to the service of Christ, and serving as channels and conservators of His blessing and His power, attend every service held in His name. Filled with His love and compassion, they seek to bear those priceless gifts to the souls of men; at the great celebration of the mystery of the bread and wine they come, that every thirsting soul shall receive according to his need. Men know and see them not, and so the angel servers pass unnoticed and unknown. (*The Inner Side of Church Worship*, p. 15)

Hodson had another Christian interest too: the esoteric interpretation of the Bible. He authored several works offering extensive and often profound esoteric interpretations of familiar stories from the Old Testament and the life and parables of Jesus, showing what they can teach the believer about the descent into matter, evolution, and life on the several inner planes. The close rapport between these authorities and Christianity, especially in the form of the Liberal Catholic Church, was not popular in all Theosophical quarters. Leadbeater particularly was a man who drew both fervent support and condemnation, and his many enemies often roundly condemned the church as a reversion to superstition and priestcraft which Blavatsky would have loudly rejected.

Yet even the non-Adyar strands of Theosophy in the twentieth century, the Theosophical Society of Point Loma TS (PL) and the UNITED LODGE OF THEOSOPHISTS (ULT), were more reconciling toward Christianity and less stridently anticlerical than was characteristic of the previous century, though the TS (PL) and the ULT were, in the tradition of Sinnett and Judge, considerably more cautious than Adyar on the topic, and showed no overt interest in churchly, much less ritual, aspects of the Faith. Their principal figures, Katherine Tingley and Robert Crosbie, like Sinnett and Judge, offer only scattered references to the dominant religion of their world, and then chiefly to emphasize that Theosophy is not opposed to “pure” Christianity as Jesus taught it, but only to “churchianity” with its creeds and rites (*The Wisdom of the Heart: Katherine Tingley Speaks*, p. 122), and that on the other hand the

true Christ, Messiah, or Savior is the divine principle within every human being (*A Book of Quotations from Robert Crosbie*, pp. 105-6). Gottfried de PURUCKER, successor to Katherine Tingley as head of the Point Loma community and the Theosophical Society there, while he may not have worshiped with the Liberal Catholics, offered a fine exposition of the esoteric interpretation of Jesus in lectures later published as *Clothed with the Sun: The Mystery-Tale of Jesus the Avatara* (1972). He emphasizes, however, as have other esoteric writers, the correlation of the Christian mysteries with those of other ancient deities, noting, for example, that the day selected for the Christian celebration of the birth of Christ is identical with the birth-celebration of Mithras and the Roman festival of Sol Invictus, the unconquerable sun.

Other twentieth-century groups related to Theosophy have generally carried on something of the same esoteric Christian tradition. The Alice BAILEY groups and books, especially *From Bethlehem to Calvary and The Reappearance of the Christ*, take seriously and broadly the coming World Teacher, for whose coming they see themselves as making preparation, with the return of the Christ. The Anthroposophy of Rudolf STEINER has made as virtually central to its program a very profound Western, Christian mysteries occultism. In the "I AM" movement Jesus has appeared, together with SAINT GERMAIN, as one of the most important Ascended Masters.

One perceives within modern Theosophy two modes of thought regarding Christianity. The first style was willing to grant value in the "original" teachings of Jesus, which were held to include reincarnation and other Theosophical precepts. This school honored the ancient Gnostics, and even acknowledged the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection as a "mystery drama" instructive as to the crucifixion of spirit on the "cross of matter" and its liberation therefrom; but these Theosophists clearly sought to distance themselves from all subsequent forms of churchly Christianity. This was the style of Olcott, Judge, Sinnett, Blavatsky herself, and of the TS (PL) and ULT.

The second party, originally associated mainly with former Anglicans like Kingsford, Besant, Leadbeater, and Hodson, was prepared to see value in the doctrines and practices of historic Christianity as well, especially in its Catholic forms. While accepting the allegorical character of much of the Christian mythos, it did not stop there. These Theosophists also viewed Christ, together with the church's seasons, festivals, and sacraments, as not only

symbols of spiritual truth but also as means of transmitting transcendent energies; most of this group entered the Liberal Catholic Church, though some have been Anglicans and Roman Catholics.

Needless to say, the whole matter has been a divisive issue within Theosophy. Though some of the passion once generated by this divergence of view had subsided by the late twentieth century, the debate over Theosophy and Christianity remains alive.



Gnosticism

Gnosticism was an esoteric religious movement, which flourished primarily during the second and third centuries CE, and for a time posed a major challenge to mainstream Christianity. Its adherents claimed to possess a secret knowledge of the divine realms and its inhabitants, and utilized a complex mythology to describe this system. This myth began with the One Unknowable God, then went on to tell of intermediary emanations. One of these emanations, Sophia (Wisdom), desired to know the Unknowable God, but since this desire was illegitimate, what came forth from this desire was an aborted deformity, a being that went forth and created the physical universe. This Creator (or Demiurge) in turn, used the newly created universe to enslave the divine sparks of God into human bodies, where they could only be redeemed by the grace of Gnosis.

Most Gnostics considered themselves to be Christians, yet there were many theological differences between them and the mainstream Christians. The Gnostics did not consider the God of the Old Testament to be the same God as taught by Jesus. The acceptance of the sacraments varied among Gnostic sects. Many of the Gnostic sects used special hymns, magical formulas and amulets in their practices. The Gnostics also admitted women equally into their clergy.

The word “Gnosis” essentially means knowledge. Beyond this simple definition there is considerable disagreement among scholars as to a more precise meaning. It may be safely stated however that the early Gnostics were not speaking of a mundane common knowledge, but rather an intuitive internally derived knowledge. The next logical question would naturally be what exactly was the nature of this secret knowledge. The nearest that we may come to answering this question would be to say that the Gnostics knew “from whence they came and to whither they were going.” In a sense, the art of obtaining Gnosis is within the realm of anamnesis, or a remembering of things divine, where the present is brought into intimate contact with the past, and the past with the present. Anamnesis would be the word used in Christ’s command: “Do this in remembrance of me.”

The Gnosis therefore imparted knowledge of the origin of things as well as the destiny of the world which the Gnostic saw as a temporary state far away from his original home. The Gnostic considers himself as a temporary resident in an alien world, in a state of spiritual drunkenness or sleep. It is only through the redeeming grace of the Gnosis that he may become sober and awakened to a higher state of consciousness, which in turn will reveal his latent spiritual potentialities.

Origins. Perhaps the greatest area of disagreement among scholars concerning Gnosticism lies in its origin. One problem with assigning a source or sources to Gnosticism is that there is no written historical record of the Gnostics, as we have in mainstream Christianity such as the Acts of the Apostles or the Church History as given by Eusebius. Possible sources would include neoplatonism, Zoroastrianism, the mystery schools of Babylon, Egypt, Chaldea, and Judaism, or any combination of these.

For those who would ascribe the origin of Gnosticism to mystical or fringe Judaism there is at the very least sufficient circumstantial evidence to support this view. Old Testament names and derivations such as Adam, Seth, Cain, Shem and Noah are frequently found in Gnostic myth and scripture. Parallels may also be made with the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament as found in the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs. One of the principal themes of Gnostic myth is that of Wisdom/Sophia and the manner of these myths are reminiscent of ideas expressed in the Old Testament Wisdom Literature.

Another possibility as to a source of Gnosticism would be the Essenes, a fringe sect of Judaism that flourished during the birth of Christianity, and believed by many to be the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls.



Dead Sea Scrolls

Simon Magus, the father of Christian Gnosticism was a disciple of Dositheus who was clearly an Essene. Dositheus was known as a “Son of Zadok,” a term used by the Essenes, and lived near Damascus which was considered a habitation of exiled Essenes. He was an ascetic and had known John the Baptist. Simon later left Dositheus to form his own sect, which became a radical expression of Essene dualism.



Scrolls being examined

Simon Magus. The actual events of the life and teachings of Simon Magus are surrounded by mystery, especially in light of the fact that most of the information concerning him is derived from the writings of the heresiologists. These early Church Fathers were extremely biased and at times unreliable in their anti-Gnostic writings. It is unfortunate that we do not possess a history of Gnosticism written by the Gnostics themselves. Simon was said to be an accomplished magician from Samaria and claimed for himself to be an incarnation of the “Great Power.” Hippolytus assigns to Simon a work entitled, “The Great Revelation or the Great Announcement.” In this document, Simon set the stage for the future development of Christian Gnosticism. His account describes the doctrine of the demiurge and his archons and their role in the creation of the world, the Unknowable God, the

Logos, and the fall of the soul into the world and its path of redemption through the process of successive cycles of death and rebirth.

Simon was also said to have had a relationship with a former prostitute of Tyre named Helen. Simon viewed Helen as the reincarnation of the primordial Ennoia or Indwelling mind, the first conception of the Spirit of God. Simon thought that Helen had reincarnated many times in female form and was the same Helen of the Trojan War. She continued to degrade over time, until she finally became a prostitute. It was claimed that she was the lost sheep spoken of in Luke 15:16. It should also be noted that there were similar accounts in Gnostic writings concerning Jesus and his consort Mary Magdalene.

Menander. The heresiologist Irenaeus tells us that the direct successor of Simon was Menander. Menander was also a native of Samaria, however he transported his school of Gnosticism to Antioch. Irenaeus further hints at a possible link of Menander to both Paul and John, and this could very well be the case as the theological school of Menander seems to contain elements of the Pauline letters and of the Gospel of John. Menander like Simon was accused of being a magician who taught a system of magic designed to overcome the power of the angels who had created this world. Menander taught the existence of a first cause, who was an unknowable and absolutely transcendent God, who co-existed with Ennoia and from the union of these two came forth the creator angels.

As Simon identified himself with the Great Power, Menander merely equated himself with the Savior who was sent by the invisible ones to bring about the redemption of man. He taught his disciples that they could obtain resurrection and thus immortality in this life by way of baptism in the name of their founder. This is one of the first cases of the idea that resurrection and redemption could be attained while still in the body and this doctrine would predominate many later schools of the Gnosis. This also gave an indication of the importance of certain ritual practices of the early Gnostics.

Saturninus. Saturninus who was an Antiochene from Daphne succeeded Menander. Like his predecessors he taught the existence of an unknowable God who in turn was the creator of the archangels, angels, powers and dominions. His version of the creation of the world by seven angels has been recorded for us by Irenaeus.

“When a shining image appeared from the Supreme Power above, which they were not able to detain, he says, because it immediately sped back upwards, they exhorted one another, saying, ‘Let us make a man after the image and likeness.’ When this was done, he says, and their creation could not stand erect because of the powerlessness of the angels, but crept like a worm, then the power above took pity on him because he had been made in his likeness and sent a spark of life which raised the man up, equipped him with limbs and made him live.”

Saturninus describes one of the seven creator angels as the God of the Jews or the Demiurge and gives him an elevated status over the other angels. Irenaeus summarizes Saturninus’ doctrine thus, “Christ came into the world for the destruction of the God of the Jews and for the salvation of those who believe in him (Jesus).” So it is clear that he considers the God of the Jews as not only the leader of the creator angels, but also as the principal creator. The distinction is therefore made that Yahweh is not to be identified as the one true Unknowable God. With this being said, we must take into account that the reliability of the heresiologists may be questionable and that this supposed view of Saturninus toward the Old Testament God might very well be over exaggerated.

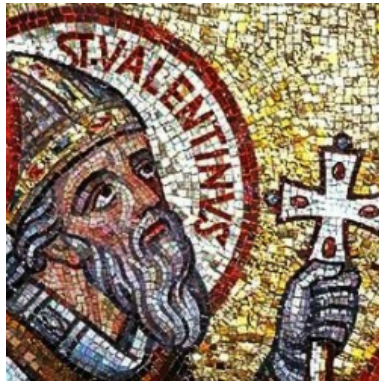
Basilides. As for the Alexandrian Gnostic teacher Basilides, we have two varying accounts from the heresiologists, one from Irenaeus, the other from Hippolytus. Although we cannot be certain as to which may be more reliable, the consensus among modern scholars would tend to lean more in the direction of Irenaeus, even though fragments of Basilides as quoted by Clement of Alexandria are often at variance with Irenaeus.

Basilides lived in the first half of the second century and was said to have received his teaching from either the Apostle Matthew or from Glaucias, a disciple of Paul. He attempted to legitimize his teachings by relating them to accounts of the life of Jesus, in a time frame in which oral tradition still retained its prestige. Basilides’ doctrine included the theory of karma and reincarnation, from which he taught that, “For just as the babe, although it has done no wrong previously, or practically committed any sin, and yet has the capacity of sin in it (from its former lives), men suffer, from their deeds in former lives; the elect soul suffers honorably through martyrdom, but souls of another nature by other appropriate punishments.”

There are hints that Basilides may have been influenced by Pythagorean, Zoroastrian and possibly other Oriental schools of thought. He imposed a period of silence for five years for his students, as was the custom in the Pythagorean School.

The Basilidians held veneration for a certain being named Abraxas whom they claimed was the ruler of the first heaven of which heavens there were no less than 365. The number 365 related not only to the days of the year, but also held special significance since the numerical value of the Greek letters in the name Abraxas equaled 365 in their summation. There have been preserved for us many amulets and invocations of Abraxas from the early centuries of the Christian era, so it becomes obvious that this name was considered to hold much power. We cannot be certain how long this school may have survived, but we do know that Epiphanes, at the end of the fourth century found Basilidian Gnostics in the general area of Memphis in Egypt.

Valentinus. Perhaps the most well-known and popular of all Gnostic teachers would be Valentinus.



Valentinus

He was born during the first quarter of the second century in Carthage of Christian parents. He received his education in Alexandria possibly under the renowned Neo-Platonic philosopher AMMONIUS SACCAS, who was also the teacher of Clement of Alexandria. He also became a disciple of the Christian teacher Theudas who had been a disciple of Saint Paul. From Theudas he learned a secret tradition that Paul allegedly taught to his inner

circle. By the year 136, he moved to Rome, where it is said that he rose in fame to the point of nearly becoming the Bishop of Rome.

The Valentinian school taught that the Supreme God was incomprehensible and beyond description in any manner, in much the same way that the Jewish Kabbalists viewed the Limitless Light of Ain Soph Aur. Valentinus, like many early Gnostics, stated that the world was not directly created by God, but rather by creator angels, at least insofar as the creation of humanity was concerned. Valentinus also spoke of the demiurge or principal creator who was not equated with the one true God. The creation myth of Valentinus was similar in many ways to that of Saturninus and Basilides. The angels created Adam, however he received an essence from on high which instilled fear into the angels. Due to this fear, the angels attempted to destroy or disfigure their creation; therefore there came about a fall of Adam, or rather a degradation that his creators made him suffer through jealousy.

The pre-existence of the Christ is a basic precept of Valentinian Christology. Valentinus himself claimed to have had a vision of the Logos who appeared to him as a young child. So Valentinus, as did Paul, met the incarnating presence of Christ, and experienced the truth of the Christian Religion, rather than depending on faith based scripture reading or the authority of apostolic lineage, even though he allegedly possessed the apostolic Gnosis through Theudas. For the Valentinians it was Christ alone who was capable of liberating humanity and bestowing the Gnosis to them.

Valentinian Gnosticism became widespread over most of the civilized world including Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, Rome, Gaul and Spain. The Valentinians are generally acknowledged as the authors of a number of Gnostic writings such as the Gospel of Philip, the Gospel of Truth and the Pistis Sophia. His most noted disciples Marcus, Heracleon and Ptolamaeus carried on the work of Valentinus.

Marcion also lived during the first half of the second century and was born in Asia Minor on the Black Sea. He was a wealthy ship owner as well as a Bishop in the Church as was his father. Marcion was initially in good standing with the Church primarily due to his substantial financial contributions. After attending a synod in Rome in the year 144 he was excommunicated for heresy. This was most likely due to his doctrines concerning the God of the Old Testament and God as preached by Jesus. Marcion and his followers

considered this expulsion as a sign to form their own Church and they therefore used this date as their founding. The Marcionite Churches spread throughout Italy, Egypt, Mesopotamia and Armenia and were still flourishing as late as the fifth century. This new Church possessed a clergy very similar to the mainstream Churches, yet made less distinction between clergy and laity. Some characteristics of the Marcionite Church were: equality between the sexes, acceptance of non-members to participate in the Eucharist and the use of a New Testament Canon organized by Marcion which included the Gospel of Luke (which Marcion believed to have been written by Paul) and ten Pauline letters. Marcionite Churches were also accredited as the first to widely utilize congregational singing and the composition of Christian Hymns.



Marcion

Mani. Mani, a Persian of royal parentage lived during the third century. His father was a member of the Elkasites, a sect of proto-Mandaeans. Mani himself left the Elkasite community at age 24, under the guidance of his heavenly “twin,” in order to found not only his own Church, but also a unique religion in itself. Mani’s guide or heavenly twin was also referred to as the “Living Paraclete,” and came down and spoke to Mani. Mani gives a report of this conversation in the Kephalaia:

He revealed to me the hidden mystery that was hidden from the worlds and the generations: the mystery of the Depth and the height: he revealed to me the mystery of the Light and the Darkness, the mystery of the

conflict and the Great War which the darkness stirred up. He revealed to me how the Light overcame the Darkness by their intermingling and how in consequence was set up this world. He enlightened me on the mystery of the forming of Adam, the first man. He instructed me on the mystery of the tree of knowledge of which Adam ate, by which his eyes were made to see; the mystery of the Apostles who were sent out into the world to select the Churches (i.e., to found the religions). Thus was revealed to me by the Paraclete all that has been and that shall be, and all that the eye sees and the ear hears and the thought thinks. Through him I learned to know everything, I saw the All through him, and I became one body and one spirit with Him.

After receiving his divine guidance, Mani began missionary work in Persia and sent missionaries as far west as Alexandria and east to Afghanistan. By the year 240, Mani sailed to India and adjacent areas to today's Baluchistan, and there converted a Buddhist King, the Turan Shah.

The doctrine of the Manichaeans was truly unique, a remarkably unified system in spite of the great diversity of its sources. It was adapted to Christian terminology in the west, to Islam in the Abbasid realm, to Buddhism in central Asia and to Taoism in China. One of the most important contributions of the Manichaeans would be that they provided a bridge of transmission of Gnostic doctrine from the second and third century Gnostic sects to such groups as the Bogomils and Cathars in the middle ages. One could safely say that there are many parallels between a Manichaean doctrine and the modern Theosophical movement.

Cathars.



Cathar Cross

Although the term Cathar (Cathari, the pure) has been used by many groups, it most commonly refers to a medieval sect of Gnostics found in Italy, Germany and primarily in Southern France, which was known at the time as Occitania. They were also known as Albigensians due to the fact that many of the Cathar believers were from around the area of Albi. The Cathars who flourished from the 11th to the 14th centuries were thought to have received influence from the Bogomils, a Manichaean sect from Bulgaria, although the extent of this influence is unknown.

The Cathars rejected the Catholic Church, its clergy and sacraments. At the time, the Catholic clergy of the area had become very corrupt and the Cathars believed that any sacrament could only be valid if the clergy that administered it were pure themselves. For the Cathars, baptism by water was useless if not sacrilegious; the only real baptism was that given by the spirit, which came with the laying on of hands. Many women became priests or Perfectae in the Cathar Church, and administered the sacraments; a privilege denied them in the Catholic Church.

The Cathar clergy lived a life of austere asceticism in some ways similar to other monastic traditions, detaching themselves from the world in order to better serve God. They were obliged to undergo three periods of abstinence each year. The first of these was before Palm Sunday, the second after Whitsunday and the third before Christmas. Throughout the year they would fast on bread and water on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and at no time would they eat the meat of warm-blooded animals. The Cathar Church refused to sanctify the act of marriage and procreation, feeling that this would only imprison more souls into mundane bodies.

On March 28, 1208, Pope Innocent III issued a Bull of Anathema against the Cathars, and thus began the only crusade by the Catholic Church against other Christians. What followed was a campaign of torture, murder and genocide for twenty years until the "Pure Ones" were either all exterminated or driven into permanent exile.

The Gnostics have continued to resurface throughout the centuries through various forms and guises. Though worldly authorities have gone to great lengths to persecute the Gnostics into non-existence, the human spirit's quest for reintegration back to its original home will always survive. We have seen the quest resurface in such manifestations as Hermeticism, Alchemy,

Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, Sufism and Kabbalah.

Along with the occult revival of the 19th century came a renewed interest in Gnosticism complete with the reconstitution of the Gnostic Church in France. This new Church of the Gnosis came about in the year 1890, when Jules Doinel, a librarian from Carcassone, was allegedly consecrated as Patriarch by Jesus and two Bogomil Bishops in a miraculous vision. This vision took place at the home of Marie, Countess of CAITHNESS, a well-known Theosophical leader in France at the time. One of the first Bishops that were subsequently consecrated by Doinel was Gerard Encausse (Papus), who had joined the Theosophical Society at age 23. On October 25, 1887, Henry S. OLCOTT personally announced the election of Papus to the newly formed General Council of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, India.

One of the greatest admirers of the Gnostic path was none other than Helena P. BLAVATSKY herself. During the year of her death, 1891, she published an excellent commentary on the ancient Gnostic writing the Pistis Sophia, which was being translated by her secretary G. R. S. Mead. HPB wrote a great deal on the Gnostics throughout her writings, and we are now fortunate to have a compilation of these writings in one volume, "H. P. Blavatsky, On the Gnostics," compiled and annotated by H. J. Spierenburg.

HPB felt that there was an underlying unity between the esoteric traditions within all religions, and that in the case of Christianity this was represented by the Gnostics. She goes on to tell us in the Key to Theosophy that "There are six great schools of Indian Philosophy — the six principles of that unit of wisdom of which the GNOSIS, the hidden knowledge, is the seventh."

No account of the Gnostic tradition would be complete without giving honor to G. R. S. Mead. Mead was the personal secretary to HPB in the last years of her life. He will most appropriately be remembered for his scholarly English translations and commentaries of ancient Gnostic and Hermetic texts. Mead wrote of the Gnostics not only from a scholarly point of view, but also as one who had an inner understanding of these mysteries, or one who had experienced the Gnosis himself.

In 1928, the brothers James and John Pryse, who at one time were well connected with Mead and the Theosophical Society, founded the Gnostic

Society in Los Angeles. The Gnostic Society was founded with the purpose of studying Gnosticism and the Western Esoteric Tradition in general. The Gnostic Society has since been united with the Ecclesia Gnostica whose presiding Bishop, Stephan Hoeller, is a well-known lecturer and writer for the Theosophical Society today.

We are indeed coming into a renaissance of Gnostic thought in the twentieth century. To find examples of Gnostic influence we need look no farther than the science fiction of Phillip K. Dick, the art of Salvador Dali or the psychology of C. G. Jung, who went so far as to write his own Gnostic Gospel, "The Seven Sermons to the Dead," which he wrote under the name, Basilides. In a closing note, we must remember that in a sense, Gnosticism is not a religion that can be extinguished by terror and repression, but rather it is a Tao or way that is already inherently archetypal within us all, patiently lying dormant, awaiting the day of the great awakening.

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Western Philosophy

It is generally agreed that philosophy began in the Western world in Greece with Thales of Miletus (6th cent. BCE). He is credited with accurately predicting an eclipse, which suggests that he had made a careful study of astronomy. We have only fragments of his cosmological speculation, so we are not absolutely certain what some of his cryptic statements mean, but he claimed that the basic element from which all other elements are derived was water. This spurred alternative suggestions about the primary stuff of the world (air, fire, atoms, etc.) from other pre-Socratic philosophers, including PYTHAGORAS' (ca. 582 – ca. 507) claim that it was not an element, but number or proportion. A change in emphasis came with the Greek Sophists, a group of professional teachers who trained students in various rhetorical devices to help them win court cases. Because some of these rhetorical devices were clearly fallacious, they have been immortalized in the words “sophistries” and “sophistical.” Socrates (470?-399 BCE) was distressed by this trend, shifting the topic of philosophy to ethics and politics. His principal pupil, Plato (427?-347 BCE), did the same. Plato's most famous pupil, ARISTOTLE (384-322 BCE), broadened the scope of philosophy to cover all these subjects, and more. One of Aristotle's most enduring contributions was a systematic development of formal logic, which was only superseded in the latter part of the 19th century.

Some of the post-Socratic philosophers of Greece and Rome had an influence on early Christian thinkers, especially Augustine (354-430). Plato's influence can be seen in Medieval Christian philosophers up to the 13th century when Aristotle was rediscovered through the writings of Muslim philosophers, such as Ibn Sina (980-1037), whose name was Latinized as Avicenna, and Ibn Rushd (1126-1198) or Averroës. St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) was the principal heir to this rediscovery, seeking to justify faith through reason. But it was not until the Renaissance that philosophy began to be divorced from Christian apologetics.

Most historians date the beginning of modern philosophy with Rene Descartes (1596-1650), though some would trace it back to Francis Bacon

(1561-1626). Both were interested in the newly developing sciences and contributed to philosophy of science as well as to other fields. In fact, all of the major Rationalists — Descartes, Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716) — were scientists and mathematicians as well as philosophers. A departure from Rationalism began in England with the Empiricists: Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704), George Berkeley (1685-1753), and David Hume (1711-1776). It was the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) who sought to reconcile the two approaches. His successor, Georg Hegel (1770-1831), developed philosophy in a dialectic, transcendental idealistic direction, which influenced Karl Marx's Dialectical Materialism, and continues to influence Continental philosophers of the 20th century (in a movement called Phenomenology), just as Empiricism continues to dominate Anglo-American philosophy. German Romanticism, associated with Johann Fichte (1762-1814), Gotthold Lessing (1729-1781), Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854), and Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), had some influence on American Transcendentalists, such as Ralph W. Emerson (1803-1882) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862). But another American development, which proved more influential, was Pragmatism. It is associated with C. S. Peirce (1839-1914), William James (1842-1910), and John Dewey (1859-1952); some would classify the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) in that category as well.

Scientific approaches to an understanding of the world gave rise to materialism among the French Encyclopedists, such as Denis Diderot (1713-1784) and Jean-le-Rond d'Alembert (1717?-1783). But it was Charles Darwin (1809-1882) who strengthened the movement with his attempt to explain the evolution of life by purely material means and chance mutations. This found its sociological application in Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and its philosophic development in the positivist movement of August Comte (1798-1857) and Ernst Mach (1838-1916). These, combined with logical developments of Gottlob Frege (1848-1925), Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), and others, gave rise to Logical Positivism in the Vienna Circle (M. Schlick, F. Waismann, O. Neurath, R. Carnap, H. Feigl, K. Gödel, etc.). They, in turn, influenced British philosophers such as Gilbert Ryle and A. J. Ayer and German philosophers such as H. Reichenbach, C. Hempel, and K. R. Popper. They also had a profound impact on American philosophy when many of them emigrated to the

United States during the rise of Nazi Germany. Logical Positivism was eventually rejected, but its influence continues in the 20th century as scientific empiricism, which has a strong materialist bias. The contribution of Frege, Russell, Carnap, and others to the development of logic in its modern symbolic form also continued throughout the 20th century. An important influence on the Vienna Circle was the Austrian mathematician, architect, and philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951). However, after contact with common sense philosophers, such as G. E. Moore (1873-1958) at Cambridge University, Wittgenstein rejected his earlier approach to philosophy and reformulated his ideas by investigating language. This spawned a "linguistic turn" in philosophy, perhaps the most noted exponent being the British philosopher John Austin (1911-1960). All these various approaches to philosophy continue to influence philosophers throughout the 20th and into the 21st century.

Theosophical writers, as might be expected, tend to focus on those Western philosophers whose views most closely correspond with their own, such as Pythagoras, Plato, Plotinus, Spinoza, and Leibniz. In *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, however, Helena P. BLAVATSKY refers to a large number of other Western philosophers, commending some for their views and taking issue with others, such as the materialists. There is no discussion of the developments in logic over the centuries, although obviously basic logical principles of consistency and non-contradiction are assumed by all Theosophical writers.



A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be.

Rosalynn Carter

(is the wife of the 39th President of the United States, Jimmy Carter)

Medley

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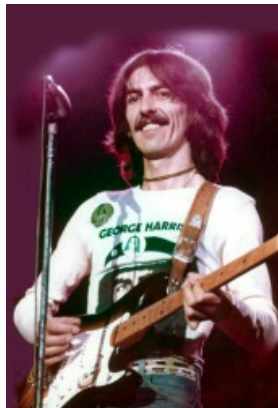
George Harrison – Beatle, Seeker, Lover of God

by Joshua M. Greene – USA

“The people of India have a tremendous spiritual strength, which I don’t think is found elsewhere. The spirit of the people, the beauty, the goodness—that’s what I’ve been trying to learn about.”

- George Harrison, 1966

In 1969, devotees from the London Radha Krishna temple invited me to take part in an album of mantras and prayers that George Harrison was producing at Apple Studios. Meeting him for the first time, I was struck by his humility, by his understated humor, and by his excitement over the music we had gathered to make. Recording these ancient songs was his way of letting people know “there’s more to life than boogying,” as he put it. At that time, the Beatles were dissolving but George’s solo career was growing thanks in large measure to his daily meditations and yoga practice. For the next thirty-two years, until his death from cancer at age fifty-eight, George would continue to produce recordings of *Nada Brahma*, God in sacred sound.



George Harrison

It was astonishing to see how this world-renowned artist distanced himself from stardom to better cultivate his inner self. How many celebrities have ever done that? His dedication meant even more since he wasn't just any celebrity. He was a Beatle. Not only were the Beatles the most successful pop group in history, they were also the postwar generation's wise men. If a Beatle said chanting Sanskrit names of God was okay, a lot of people around the globe were inclined to at least give it a try.

It may be difficult for someone who did not grow up in the sixties to understand the significance of a Beatle committing to India's spiritual teachings. A large percentage of baby boomers, as the generation born after World War II came to be called, took their cues about beliefs, behavior, and politics, as well as wardrobe and hairstyle, from what the Beatles did and sang. In 1964, when the Beatles first came to New York to appear on the popular Ed Sullivan television show, yoga played no role in American life. Only a handful of people were vegetarians, and even educators who should have known better commonly confused Hinduism with Buddhism. If Americans had any impression of Hinduism at all, it was usually distorted by British missionary prejudice. By publicly declaring his appreciation for yoga, meditation, karma, dharma, reincarnation, and other concepts identified with India, George helped reverse nearly three hundred years of anti-Hindu ignorance and bias.



Ravi Shankar

There was a trajectory to George's spiritual life, which began and ended with music. In 1966, he met maestro Ravi Shankar and thrilled to the sound of a sitar, to the lull of its sympathetic strings and the way it could stretch a single note to imitate the yearning of a heart in love. Later that year, George continued his sitar lessons in Srinagar, an extended village at the foot of the Himalayan Mountains surrounded by fields of golden saffron flowers. In this idyllic setting he practiced music and spent hours reading about India's millennial teachings. As a boy, George had been an indifferent student, but during that visit he was rarely without a book in his hands, including Swami Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga* and Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

What he learned of India's spiritual culture amazed him. Unlike institutional religions that barely tolerate one another, here was a worldview that encompassed everyone and everything. All living beings are eternal souls, part and parcel of God, the texts declared. Our job is to manifest that divinity. This, the Hindu tradition said, is *sanatana-dharma*, the eternal religion, which dwells in all beings. "Through Hinduism I feel a better person," he told a reporter. "I just get happier and happier."

A few weeks later, he returned to London inspired by a vision of himself not as a working class boy from Liverpool who had become a superstar, but as an eternal soul who, if he applied himself, could see God face to face. Being merely a Beatle had lost its appeal.

Still, John, Paul, and Ringo were his closest friends, and in 1968 he induced his fellow Beatles and their partners to join him and his then wife, model Patty Boyd, on a retreat to Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's ashram in Rishikesh. The group arrived in Delhi at three o'clock one morning in February 1968, and by noon their hired cars were weaving down Rishikesh's dusty streets crowded with cows and bullock carts. They got out and climbed a path leading to a bluff above the river's eastern bank. Before them, stone huts and wooden bungalows mushroomed out from groves of teak and guava trees. Looking out over the bluff, the group traced the Ganges River flowing from a source high in the mountains.

The Beatles' days in Rishikesh consisted of a casual breakfast, morning meditation classes until lunch, leisure time in the afternoons, and sometimes as many as three more hours of meditation in the evenings.

George and his friends found their creative energies heightened in the peaceful atmosphere of the retreat: in Rishikesh, the Beatles composed more than forty songs. Many were recorded on the *White Album*, and others would appear on their final LP *Abbey Road*. Too much time spent writing, though, struck George as a distraction from their purpose in coming to India, and he said as much.

“We’re not here to talk music,” he told the others.

“We’re here to meditate.”

“Calm down, man,” Paul replied.

“Sense of humor needed here, you know.”

George argued that they needed to make best use of their time. This is a land of yogis and saints, he reminded them, and people hundreds of years old. “There’s one somewhere around,” he said, “who was born before Christ—and is still living now” and then went looking, climbing paths that snaked high into the mountains.

George’s commitment to communing with these mystic beings impressed his friends. “The way George is going,” John said with admiration, “he’ll be flying a magic carpet by the time he’s forty.”

Apart from musical inspiration and mystic yogis, there was something else George discovered in Rishikesh: Nature. Perfected creation. Around him, flowering herbs opened their leaves each morning. Medicinal plants such as *primula*, *sausaurea*, and *aconitum* grew green and yellow with the rising sun. Purple Ipomea, blue and yellow Himalayan poppies, and downy white thistle colored his view of steep gorges, overhanging cliffs and vast stretches of forests and meadows. The area abounded with wildlife, and every so often a Musk deer or Indian porcupine would poke out its snout from under a bush or from behind a tree.

Whatever other gods there were, however many more he would meet on this magical journey, the goddess of nature spoke to him in commanding tones, a goddess of magnificent things as large as a mountain and small as a leaf. She was called by many names: Bhumi, Goddess of the Earth; Maha-Shakti, the Divine Mother; Kali-Ma, the Personified Universal Energy. Everyone in Rishikesh, from the Maharishi to the truck driver who delivered the daily produce, paid her homage. They wore garlands made of her flowers,

burned incense made of her fragrant woods, and lit candles in her honor. The goddess of nature would follow George into his later years, when gardening became an important part of his meditations.

At day's end, John, Paul, and Ringo joined George on the roof of his bungalow.

They sat quietly listening to the swoosh of Ganges water as it blended with a whisper of wind blowing through gnarled trees and across ancient valleys in the distance.

They all appreciated their time in India, but it was George who took away a lasting impression that this was his real life's work, to go deeper into India's millennial teachings and realize his eternal relationship with the Divine.

On return to London, he met disciples of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, founder-*acharya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. George identified with the American devotees, young people his own age who had rejected materialism for higher ground. In their company, George began to chant the Hare Krishna mantra daily and to read the *Bhagavad-gita*.



At Friar Park (1996). From left: Krishna Yoga teacher Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, George's then wife Patti Boyd, George, Krishna devotee Dhananjaya Das

George held India's sacred texts in high regard, but his realizations were experiential rather than academic. In his post Beatles songs, he only occasionally referred to philosophical terms and preferred writing simple, sing-along lyrics. In "Living In The Material World" (1973), for instance, he declared "Senses never gratified/Only swelling like a tide/That could drown me in the material world." The lines offer a terse rendering of several verses from Gita chapter two, which describe "While contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment lust develops ... then anger ... then delusion ... then bewilderment of memory ... then loss of intelligence ... [after which] one falls down again into the material pool."

Inspired by the Gita's injunction that the divine energy animating all life has no material name, George called himself spirit soul rather than Hindu. Perhaps it was because of this deep respect for God's universality that he never took formal initiation into any one tradition. "The *guru-shishya* (teacher-disciple) relationship is an exceptionally powerful one," he wrote in Ravi Shankar's autobiography *Raga Mala*. "In order to gain the benefits of the received wisdom of the ages, the student must yield completely to the demands of the guru in a submission of the ego [and] must accept without question what he is taught." If he'd learned anything as a Beatle it was to question authority, and pledging himself exclusively to one teacher, it seems, was a step he never felt prepared to take.

Still, George appreciated those who had sincerely dedicated themselves to God, and as often as his busy life allowed, he spent time with his fellow chanters. On several occasions, after a day of recording, he invited us to his home in Friar Park north of London. We'd arrive at Henley-on-Thames, a quiet town thirty-six miles west of London, and George and Patty would greet us at the gates of their sprawling property with a wave and a smile. When devotees visited, George flew an Om flag from the tower of his gothic manor.

Signs of George's devotion to yoga and meditation filled his home. Incense sweetened the air. A small altar sat on the mantle of the fireplace. Pictures of favorite teachers and paintings of deities from India's scriptures decorated the walls: Lakshmi, the Goddess of Fortune; elephant-headed Ganesh; Krishna playing with his friends in the cowherd village of Vrindavan. George found Indian theology exciting and sensual, filled with meditative

music, tasty food, fabulous stories of eternal worlds, and all the satisfactions a newcomer to the spiritual journey could ever hope to find.

Nonetheless, working only for his own salvation did not appeal to George. He was more a doer than a talker, and he looked for opportunities to put his convictions to work. Producing records with spiritual messages provided an ideal way for him to make use of both his musical skills and his influence with the record industry. In 1970, he released “My Sweet Lord,” inspired by the Edwin Hawkins Singers’ “Oh Happy Day,” a gospel classic that featured a chorus repeating the song’s title over and over. George wrote a choral line using the word “Hallelujah” as the refrain, and then switched midway to the phrase “Hare Krishna.” At the end of the song, he included an entire prayer in honor of those teachers who bring wisdom into the world:

gurur brahma, gurur vishnu, gurur deva maheshwara
gurur sakshat, parabrahma, tasmai shri gurave namah.

“I offer homage to my guru,” the prayer says, “who is as great as the creator Brahma, the maintainer Vishnu, the destroyer Shiva, and who is the very energy of God.”

Devotees and scholars familiar with ancient mantras were stunned to hear one chanted to a Ringo drumbeat.

Mantras with a gospel rhythm proved to be an inspired combination. “My Sweet Lord” skyrocketed to number one on both the UK and US charts and stayed there for months. As a result, letters addressed to George Harrison poured into the London temple from all parts of the world. It seemed a lot of people had been waiting for someone to validate their own search for God, and from the day “My Sweet Lord” was released thank you letters started coming and never stopped.

“I still get letters from people,” he said in the 1980s, “so I know by the Lord’s grace I am a small part in the cosmic play.”

Another opportunity to put his spiritual energies to work came along in 1971. East Pakistan had recently declared independence from West Pakistan and renamed itself Bangladesh. War between the two states broke out and hundreds of thousands of civilians lay dead. Millions more were fleeing into India, where lack of food and facilities had transformed refugee camps into

infectious open-air graveyards. Among the refugees were members of Ravi Shankar's family.

"Something should be done," George told Ravi. The result, which took place at Madison Square Garden in August 1971, was history's first rock charity concert and one of the greatest music spectacles of all time. The Concert for Bangla Dosh featured Eric Clapton, Billy Preston, Ringo Starr, other pop notables, and most astonishingly Bob Dylan, who had not played a public performance in more than two years. As the second show came to an end, the audience yelled and screamed and begged for more. The musicians crowded around center stage for final bows. Cheers washed up in waves from the audience, and even Dylan was swept up in the euphoria. Backstage, he picked George up and squeezed him.



George Harrison and Bob Dylan

"God," Dylan said, "if only we'd done *three* shows." George beamed like a schoolboy. For him, this was even better than the Ed Sullivan Show in 1964.

Eventually, the album and movie of the concert grossed several million dollars for the people of Bangladesh. The concert also demonstrated

George's conviction that spirituality should make a tangible difference in the world. How could people call themselves spiritual if they just stood by while others killed each other? Where was the enlightenment in that?

Still, he harbored no illusions about a pop concert bringing peace to a war-torn nation. It was sufficient to "do his bit," knowing that over time little drops of water could wear away a mountain.

George's spiritual journey was not an easy one. His wife Patty left him, in large measure because his commitment to God grew stronger than his commitment to their partnership. Fans derided him for taking his faith onstage and exhorting them to "Chant Krishna! Jesus! Buddha!" when it was rock'n'roll they wanted. The press was occasionally cruel in its judgment of his post Beatles music. And for a while, some bad habits from his rocker days — in particular alcohol and drugs — returned to haunt him.

Salvation from the material world can come in many forms. For George, struggling with depression after the Dark Horse debacle, it came in the form of Olivia Arias, a fellow yoga practitioner who nursed him back to health and later became his loving wife. It came in the form of their son, Dhani, a gentle, talented boy who in time became George's closest friend.

On visits to Los Angeles, George spent time at the Self-Realization Fellowship estate in Encinitas, overlooking the Pacific Ocean and only three miles from Ravi Shankar's home. Ravi had met SRF founder Yogananda in the 1930s and had given his first U.S. concert at the Encinitas retreat in 1957. The organization strictly honored its members' privacy, a privilege George appreciated after the notoriety of his affiliation with Krishna devotees. The quiet ambience of the Encinitas estate and the organization's focus on achieving heightened awareness through Kriya-Yoga had a calming effect.

In later years, George retreated from his pop celebrity into the life of a humble gardener. He took great pleasure in tilling the earth, in planting jasmine bushes, in freeing a magnolia tree from wild brambles, and bringing his neglected Friar Park grounds back to a state of beauty. In India, he had seen people worshiping nature. The Gita calls the earth God's "Universal Form." Trees are the hairs on that divine form, mountains and hills are its bones, clouds form the hair, and rivers are the blood flowing through its veins.

Gardening from that vantage point takes on holy dimensions, a

caressing of God's body. Gardening, caring for his family, and meditating became the focus of his life.

"The best thing anyone can give to humanity is God consciousness," he told Mukunda Goswami, a devotee friend, in 1986. "But first you have to concentrate on your own spiritual advancement. So in a sense, we have to become selfish to become selfless." In April 1996, he flew to Madras, South India to record an album of traditional Indian songs and mantras with Ravi Shankar. Taking advantage of his proximity to Vrindavan, he met up with devotee friends and they set out for the village where Krishna appeared five thousand years ago. In the sixteenth century, followers of the saint Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had developed the holy town and restored its many places of pilgrimage to rustic dignity. By the time of George's visit, the population had reached 35,000 full-time residents, and more than 5,000 temples filled the village's twenty square miles. Some of these temples were five stories tall and featured ornate architecture. Others were barely larger than a hole in the wall, with only enough room for one attendant and a small deity.

On the second day of their pilgrimage, George and his friends walked by a group of singers seated roadside. The lead singer stretched his hand toward heaven. The Gopis — cowherd women — hear Krishna's flute, he sang in Braj, the local language, and run to him in the dead of night. Krishna multiplies himself into an equal number of Gopis so that each Gopi may be happy believing she alone dances with her beloved. In that moment of pleasure, the Gopis become proud and Krishna disappears from their sight and the cowherd women go mad from separation.

George did not speak Braj, but he understood the gist of what the man was singing — sorrow and yearning were universal. Yet there was nothing irreconcilable about the man's sadness, for in the next moment the group broke out into rapid drums and joyous chorus. People stood and danced, hands above their heads, then swooped down executing slow turns, then rose up again with a jump. No one led: the waxing and waning rhythms and spontaneous dance came from intuition. There seemed to be no logical sequence to their actions. This was a display without notation or orchestration and, in that sense, not performance at all — simply hearts drifting on waves of devotion, a song that would never be repeated exactly the same way again.

George and his friends moved down the road. It was a long time before anyone spoke. They passed one kirtan then another. Temple bells mingled with drums and bells, clappers and clapping. The world seemed afloat in music. Spirit for the people of Vrindavan was not a weekly class or weekend retreat — they breathed it in at every moment and breathed it out in song. “How magnificent this feeling is,” George told his friends.

The album of traditional songs and mantras was released in 1997. George considered *Chants Of India* one of his most important works, as it allowed listeners to “turn off your mind, relax, and float downstream, and listen to something that has its roots in the transcendental ... beyond intellect. If you let yourself be free ... it can have a positive effect.”

George never stopped making music or trying to put a spiritual message out into the world. But these callings seemed less urgent to him in his later years than they had as a young man. He once described himself as someone who had climbed to the top of the material world, then looked over to find that there was much more on the other side. There, on the other side of the material mountain, was the call of his eternal self and his relationship with the Divine. As he approach death, with his missionary years behind him, that vision became all that mattered. “Now I understand about ninety-year-old people who feel like teenagers,” he said less than a year before his death. “The soul in the body is there at birth and there at death. The only change is the bodily condition.”

George's life started in music and ended in music. In Los Angeles, surrounded by family and friends and the chanting of God's holy names, his soul left its body on November 29 — only a few weeks after the tragedy of 9/11. For those of us who had been inspired by his example, it was impossible to avoid seeing these two events in macabre orbit around one another: the terrible consequences of turning away from the light, and the miracles that can come when we put the light of spirit at the center of our lives.

In August 1966, a reporter had asked George to describe his personal goal. “To do as well as I can do,” he replied, “whatever I attempt, and someday to die with a peaceful mind.” He was twenty-three years old when he set that goal for himself. He never gave it up.

“You know, I read a letter from him to his mother that he wrote when

he was twenty-four," his son Dhani said. "He was on tour or someplace when he wrote it. And it basically says, 'I want to be self-realized. I want to find God. I'm not interested in material things, this world, fame — I'm going for the real goal. And I hope you don't worry about me, mum.' And he wrote that when he was twenty-four! And that was basically the philosophy that he had up until the day he died. He was just going for it right from an early age — the big goal."

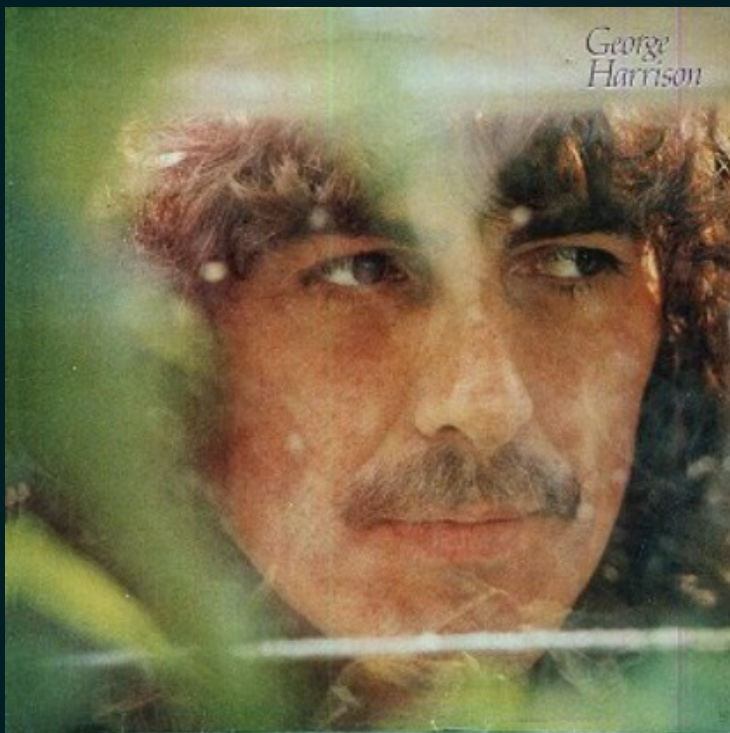
Theosophy Forward recommends the author's book *Here Comes the Sun* which is available from:

<http://www.amazon.com/Here-Comes-Sun-Spiritual-Harrison/dp/047169021X>

You may contact the author direct via his web site: www.atma.org

George Harrison - The Last Performance:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjWTFIq2Er0>



Earth Expected To Be Habitable For Another 1.75 Billion Years



Habitable conditions on Earth will be possible for at least another 1.75 billion years - according to astrobiologists at the University of East Anglia.

Findings published today in the journal *Astrobiology* reveal the habitable lifetime of planet Earth - based on our distance from the sun and temperatures at which it is possible for the planet to have liquid water.

The research team looked to the stars for inspiration. Using recently discovered planets outside our solar system (exoplanets) as examples, they investigated the potential for these planets to host life.

The research was led by Andrew Rushby, from UEA's school of Environmental Sciences. He said: "We used the 'habitable zone' concept to make these estimates - this is the distance from a planet's star at which temperatures are conducive to having liquid water on the surface."

"We used stellar evolution models to estimate the end of a planet's habitable lifetime by determining when it will no longer be in the habitable zone. We estimate that Earth will cease to be habitable somewhere between 1.75 and 3.25 billion years from now. After this point, Earth will be in the 'hot zone' of the sun, with temperatures so high that the seas would evaporate. We would see a catastrophic and terminal extinction event for all life.

"Of course conditions for humans and other complex life will become impossible much sooner - and this is being accelerated by anthropogenic climate change. Humans would be in trouble with even a small increase in temperature, and near the end only microbes in niche environments would be able to endure the heat.

"Looking back a similar amount of time, we know that there was cellular life on earth. We had insects 400 million years ago, dinosaurs 300 million years ago and flowering plants 130 million years ago. Anatomically modern humans have only been around for the last 200,000 years - so you can see it takes a really long time for intelligent life to develop.

"The amount of habitable time on a planet is very important because it tells us about the potential for the evolution of complex life - which is likely to require a longer period of habitable conditions.

"Looking at habitability metrics is useful because it allows us to investigate the potential for other planets to host life, and understand the stage that life may be at elsewhere in the galaxy.

"Of course, much of evolution is down to luck, so this isn't concrete, but we know that complex, intelligent species like humans could not emerge after only a few million years because it took us 75 per cent of the entire habitable lifetime of this planet to evolve. We think it will probably be a similar story elsewhere."

"Almost 1,000 planets outside our solar system have been identified by astronomers. The research team looked at some of these as examples, and studied the evolving nature of planetary habitability over astronomical and geological time.

"Interestingly, not many other predictions based on the habitable zone alone were available, which is why we decided to work on a method for this.

Other scientists have used complex models to make estimates for the Earth alone, but these are not suitable for applying to other planets.

“We compared Earth to eight planets which are currently in their habitable phase, including Mars. We found that planets orbiting smaller mass stars tend to have longer habitable zone lifetimes.

“One of the planets that we applied our model to is Kepler 22b, which has a habitable lifetime of 4.3 to 6.1 billion years. Even more surprising is Gliese 581d which has a massive habitable lifetime of between 42.4 to 54.7 billion years. This planet may be warm and pleasant for 10 times the entire time that our solar system has existed!

“To date, no true Earth analogue planet has been detected. But it is possible that there will be a habitable, Earth-like planet within 10 light-years, which is very close in astronomical terms. However reaching it would take hundreds of thousands of years with our current technology.

“If we ever needed to move to another planet, Mars is probably our best bet. It's very close and will remain in the habitable zone until the end of the Sun's lifetime -- six billion years from now.”

For more interesting articles click here: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/>



Focus

by Leo Babauta – USA

A simplicity manifesto in the Age of Distraction

Part five



Limiting the stream

“Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in.”

– Henry David Thoreau

The stream of news, information, and messages we get these days is enough to drown us. It's staggering in its volume.

It's a wonder anyone can find any focus with an information stream like that.

LOOK!
A Distraction!



The Stream of Distractions

The more connected a person becomes on the Internet, the more distractions they face in their day. Just a couple decades ago, most people's distractions consisted of the phone, the fax machine, incoming memos and paperwork, solitaire, and actual people in their offices.

These days, people who work online face much more than that:

- email (perhaps the biggest problem for most people)
- instant messaging
- Twitter
- Facebook
- online forums
- blogs
- other social networks
- news sites
- text messages
- Skype
- podcasts
- Google alerts
- mobile device notifications (iPhone, Blackberry, etc.)
- mobile apps
- videos
- online music
- online shopping
- Internet radio
- paperwork
- online games
- solitaire
- internet TV
- e-books

And more.

Why and How to Limit the Stream

With so many distractions, it's impossible to truly focus on the important.

We try to drink the stream, but it's too voluminous and never-ending



to take in this way.

Some people think this is just a part of their work, or their lives, and that there's nothing wrong with being connected. It's a part of doing business, they say.

However, there's no one way to do business, and this book is about finding a better way. A saner way. I'm just one example of many people who have managed to do business online, have managed to stay connected, but who are able to limit the stream and make conscious decisions about how to be connected and how much information we consume.

We do it consciously, with intent. Social networks, blogs and news sites you read, different ways to communicate and consume information ... these tend to build up as you spend time online. You build them up without much thought, but you end up being consumed by what you consume.

I suggest becoming more conscious of this, and choosing what you consume and how much you communicate carefully. Limit your stream to only the most essential information and communications, and you'll free up hours of time for creating and doing amazing things.

I also suggest starting from scratch. Assume that nothing is sacred, empty your plate, and only put back on it what you absolutely need or love. Let the rest fade away.

Make an Important Admission

It's crucial that you admit to yourself: you can't read and consume everything. You can't do everything, respond to everything. Not only would the attempt take up all of your waking hours, but you'd fail. There's too much out there to read, too many people to potentially connect with and respond to, too

many possible projects and tasks to actually complete.

It's impossible. Once you admit this, the next logical argument is that if you can't do and read and respond to everything, you must choose what you'll do and read and respond to, and let the rest go.

Let the rest go. This is unbelievably important. You have to accept this, and be OK with it.

An Information Cleanse

If you look at information and communication as a form of mild (or sometimes not-so-mild) addiction, it can be healthy to force yourself to take a break from it.

Go on a mini-cleanse. Start with something that's not so scary: perhaps a day, or even half a day. Do this once a week. Later, as you get used to this, try a 2-3 day cleanse, and maybe even work your way up to a week.

Here's how to do the cleanse:

- Don't check email or other types of digital inboxes.
- Don't log into Twitter, Facebook, or other social networks or forums.
- Don't read news, blogs, subscriptions.
- Don't check your favorite websites for updates.
- Don't watch TV.
- Don't use instant messaging of any kind.
- Do use phones for as little time as possible, only for essential calls.
- Do send an email if necessary, but try to avoid it, and don't check your inbox if you do.
- Do use the Internet for absolutely necessary research. Be vigorous about this rule.
- Do spend your time creating, working on important projects, getting outside, communicating with people in person, collaborating, exercising.
- Do read: books, long-form articles or essays you've been wanting to read but haven't had the time for.
- Do watch informative or thought-provoking films, but not mindless popular movies.

You could make a personalized list of your dos and don'ts, but you get the general idea. Again, start with half a day or a day — something

manageable. Do it once a week, and gradually expand the time you spend on the cleanse.

Reducing the Stream

If you've done the cleanse, you now know the value of disconnecting, and you know that you can live without having to check your streams of information and messages all day, every day.

You've cleaned your plate. Now it's time to figure out what to add back on it.

Give it some thought: what are the most essential ways you communicate? Email? Skype? Twitter? Cell phone? IM?

What are the most essential information streams you consume? What blogs? What news? What other reading or watching or listening?

What can you cut out? Can you cut half of the things you read and watch? More?

Try eliminating at least one thing each day: a blog you read, an email newsletter you receive, a communication channel you don't need anymore, a news site you check often. Take them out of your email or feed inbox, or block them using one of the blocking tools mentioned in the "Focus Tools" chapter.

Slowly reduce your stream, leaving only the essentials.

Using the Stream Wisely

Just as importantly, reduce the time you spend using the essentials. If email is essential, do you need to be notified of every new email right this second? Do you need to be in your inbox all day long?



Place limits on the time you spend reading and communicating — a small limit for each channel. Only check email for 30 minutes, twice a day, for example (or whatever limits work for you). Only read the limited number of blogs you subscribe to for 30 minutes a day. Only watch an hour of TV a day (for example).

Write these limits down, and add them up for a grand total of what you plan to spend on reading, consuming, communicating. Is this an ideal amount, given the amount of time you have available to you each day? The smaller the overall limit, the better.

To be continued.



FOCUS
-ON-
WHAT
matters



To handle yourself, use your head; to handle others, use your heart."

Eleanor Roosevelt
(was the longest-serving First Lady
of the United States)

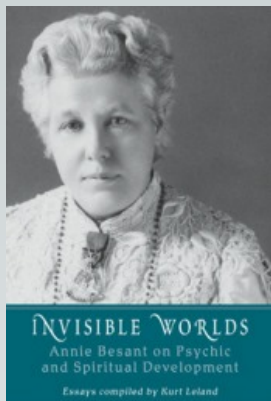
Notable Books

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Reading good books is a thrilling experience ...

Notable books:



Besant, Annie.

Invisible Worlds: Annie Besant on Psychic and Spiritual Development.

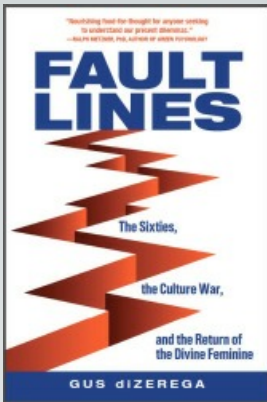
Essays compiled by Kurt Leland.

Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, Quest Books, 2013. © 2013.

Pp. [xii] + 411.

\$28.95.

This volume contains sixteen pieces by Annie Besant, who was clearly the most level-headed, well-informed, and skillful author of the second generation of Theosophical authorities. The compiler, Kurt Leland, puts the pieces into four general categories: “Occultism Light and Dark,” “Higher Life Training,” “Investigation of Different Worlds,” and “Science of the Superphysical.” Leland’s extended introduction (pp. 1-19) is well-worth reading, and his Besant chronology, tracing her life from 1847 to 1933, is a useful record. The book ends with a highly useful set of notes (pp. 273-368), followed by a list of sources Leland used, a bibliography of works cited, and an index. As a historical collection, one could ask for little more.



diZerega, Gus.

Fault Lines: The Sixties, the Culture War, and the Return of the Divine Feminine.

Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, Quest Books, 2013. © 2013.

Pp. [x] + 308.

\$18.95.

The author, Gus diZerega, who is a political scientist, writes that his book “explores the spiritual, social, and political currents that have brought the United States to its greatest internal crisis since the Civil War.” It traces that crisis back to “the sixties and their aftermath,” “the Enlightenment and the religious wars that preceded it,” and “the roots of what constitutes civilization itself” (p. 1). That’s a tall order, which the author seeks to fill in eleven chapters. A short “Afterword” chapter (pp.235-238) aims at relating the book’s themes to events in the United States of 2012 and after. This book is not everyone’s cup of tea, but it deals with and analyzes significant matters in our history.



Leadership should be born out of the understanding of the needs of those who would be affected by it.

Marian Anderson
(was an African-American contralto)

Links to the non-English section



Lengua Española

Editorial por Jan Nicolaas Kind - Brasil

Hacia adelante por Jacques Mahnich – Francia

La Unidad entre los Teósofos por Betty Bland - EE. UU

Nos acercamos al Objetivo por Dara Eklund - EE. UU

Sobre la Unidad Teosófica por Vicente Hao Chin Hijo – Filipinas

Liderazgo Teosófico

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Lingua Italiana

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Stiamo raggiungendo l'obiettivo da Dara Eklund - Stati Uniti

Sull'Unita teosofica da Vicente Hao Chin Jr. – Filippine

La leadership teosofica



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