

Freedom of Thought

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

Freedom of the Society

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

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



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Cover: The Bhowali Himalayan Centre of the Indian Section offers courses in English and other languages. This month they began having programmes in Spanish, with an overwhelming attendance.

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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

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

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

On Unity

TIM BOYD

THERE are a number of ways in which we can apply the principle of Oneness. Very often the example used is that of a doctor who gives a prescription. If we were to go to see a *good* doctor, he would first examine us, and would then give a diagnosis. However, someone who was *truly very good* as a doctor probably would function at different levels. He would examine our condition and prescribe things that function at other levels as well, such as exercise, change of diet, and so on. He might even be so far-reaching as to tell us that we need to consider the quality of our thinking, so he may recommend something to read, and even a practice of prayer or meditation.

When we think in terms of our spiritual condition, we need to apply a similar approach in our own thought, because the habit that we have adopted over so many lifetimes of profound conviction of separation, functions at every level of our consciousness. So we need to address it at many levels. Obviously the best cure is to directly address the root cause, but sometimes that is difficult for us. There are a couple of avenues along which we might be able to address this symptom of separateness that places us away from a realization of the fact of Oneness.

It is no accident that in the theological world there is an emphasis on service. If we could name it differently, we would describe service as conscious compassionate activity. The important part is *conscious* activity. There is a direction of the mind toward this extension beyond our own limited self, which often involves thought, our feeling nature, and even the movement of our bodies in this expression of compassionate activity. It addresses the sense of separation at the levels of the base personality. This is one of those avenues which is always available.

I often tell people that if we have a headache, or have had a bad day at the office and feel emotionally drained, sometimes the best cure that we can have for that is to do something for someone else. We can cook a meal and invite a person to share it with us. When we are sweeping in front of our house, also sweep in front of the neighbor's house, if our motive is good. These activities can have immediate effects in terms of our personal condition through extension beyond our limited self.

On other levels, much of this work is done within, at a deeper level. During H. P. Blavatsky's lifetime she shared

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many things in her writings about meditation and its value. But she had very little to say about *how* to meditate. She did have the wonderful diagram that she dictated just a few years before her death: Diagram of Meditation. In theosophical circles we place great emphasis on meditation, and it would be good if we were to discuss sometimes what meditation is, and what it is not. This is because very often we may be labouring under the belief, when we sit for twenty or thirty minutes or longer in the morning, that we are meditating. Perhaps we are, but perhaps ninety-nine percent of the time we are not.

When many years ago I first realized that meditation was important, I read books and talked with people to find out what meditation was. Everywhere I looked, there would be a description of a method or technique, but not of what *is* meditation. Even such things as the theosophical quotation, “Meditation is the inexpressible longing of the soul for the infinite”, has some poetic beauty that points in a certain direction, but “what do we do with that?” was my question. Probably the best quotation about the meaning of meditation I have found is from a theosophist and Tibetan Lama born in Germany who wrote many books, Anagarika Govinda. At one time he was asked what “meditation” is, and his answer is the one I like the best — “Meditation is not what you think” — short, but to the point! Any time that we are seated and engaged in a process of the nature of thought, of the mind, we

are not meditating. Meditation begins at that point where thought ends.

Thoughts never end, that plane is always active, but at the point in which our consciousness moves beyond its involvement in the mental movement, and *only* at that point, meditation begins. Everything else, all of those fifteen, twenty, thirty minutes we spend sitting, would more accurately be described as “the practice of meditation”, not as “meditation”. Similarly, when practising the piano, we are not *playing* the piano, we are practising. The wonderful thing about meditation is the common experience that we all have had — the momentary absence of self. This is a moment when we are not on a cushion, that is, we are having a genuine meditative experience. It does not require sitting with the legs crossed with the breath flowing in a certain way. Probably the most profound meditation experiences we have had have been at times when we would not say that we were technically meditating. But the practice is vitally important, much like a farmer prepares the earth for the seed to make itself known.

In Blavatsky’s Diagram of Meditation the very first point that she emphasizes is that, in meditation, we must make an effort, we must try to conceive of Oneness: “First conceive of UNITY by Expansion in space and infinite in Time.” In our imagination we try to expand ourselves into all space — it is an imaginative act at first. One of the things that is said to be eternal is space. Whatever our

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conception may be of the Divine, of God, and so forth, necessarily has the nature of limitless space. HPB asks us to conceive of Unity, and, knowing full well that Unity cannot be grasped in any conception, we are asked to try. This is the beginning of her Diagram of Meditation. It is an abstract approach, and by virtue of it being so abstract, it will necessarily not be appealing to any and all people.

But there are many other forms of meditation that do exactly the same thing, using different methods. In Buddhism there is the familiar form of *metta*, or loving-kindness meditation. There is also a meditation on the four immeasurable minds. These meditations essentially involve the aspiration that all beings may be happy and free from suffering. At the superficial level it is just a statement of a wish, and it could end there. But at a more profound level the meditation is actually taught beginning with a

visualization, to the extent that we are capable, of all beings being before us, and of this good wish flowing toward all of these beings that we have seen in our minds situated in front of us.

This is the way to incorporate a visual component into the same suggestion made by Blavatsky, trying to come to an understanding of Unity by expansion in space. In this case it takes place by expansion to the limitless number of beings before us. Because the beings are unlimited, the wish for their happiness also has the quality of being without limitation, without personal attachment. If the abstract approach is appealing, then simply the expansion is in space and infinite in time — the Blavatsky way. If we require some level of imagery in order to activate the imagination and stimulate the aspiration, there are other methods that accomplish the same thing. These are some ideas on how we can have some practical application of the principle of Unity. ✧

***Dharana* is the intense and perfect concentration of the mind upon some one interior object, accompanied by complete abstraction from everything pertaining to the external Universe, or the world of the senses.**

H. P. Blavatsky
The Voice of the Silence

Theosophical Teaching and Krishnamurti's Message

CHITTARANJAN SATAPATHY AND DEBASHREE DAS

THEOSOPHICAL teaching has come to us from the great Masters of the Wisdom through their letters and writings of the early pioneers of the Theosophical Society (TS), particularly Madame H. P. Blavatsky. There has been a vast amount of theosophical literature produced over the last 140 years, but none of the theosophical leaders claim to have invented Theosophy. The essential elements of theosophical teachings are modern restatements of ancient truths, not unique to any nation, civilization, or particular era. That is why Theosophy is described as different types of wisdom: ancient, perennial, timeless, ageless, eternal, and it also literally means divine wisdom. It is ancient wisdom in the sense that it has come down from the most ancient times, not that it is old or antiquated. It is based upon eternal truth, which is unaffected by time. Thus it has as much validity and value now as it has ever had. It is not wisdom conceived by someone, but that which exists in Nature and awaits discovery by each of us. This eternal wisdom is concerned with the nature of

life, humanity, and the universe as a whole, and how we are related inwardly to all beings and things around us.

As former President of the Theosophical Society, N. Sri Ram, often pointed out, this eternal teaching tells us that there is an uncreated and universal primordial Principle, purely spiritual, and can be experienced in the depths of human consciousness. This is the Principle to which we and everything else that exists are equally related. But we have a capacity of consciousness through which we can realize the truth in that Spirit, which is its true nature. That truth can manifest itself only in a consciousness that is prepared for it. It unfolds itself from within. Hence, there is this possibility for us to unfold from within, from that centre which exists in us as also in everything else. This is perhaps the most important truth in the philosophy which we call the Eternal Wisdom, or Theosophy.

We are going to explore whether and how this eternal wisdom relates to the teachings of J. Krishnamurti, a wonderful

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modern teacher. At a gathering in Eerde, he said:

I hold that there is an eternal Life which is the Source and the Goal, the beginning and the end and yet it is without end or beginning. In that Life alone is there fulfilment. And anyone who fulfils that Life has the key to the Truth without limitation. That Life is for all. . . . That Life has no form as Truth has no form, no limitation. And to that Life everyone must return.

His message has come to us not only from his numerous talks but also from his life and the way he lived. He kept reminding us that the teacher was not important, only the teachings were, as we need to find the truth ourselves, and this requires an inner transformation. He was also very particular that there should be no interpreters of his teachings, because they distort the same.

In Bulletin No. 7, 1970, of the Krishnamurti Foundation Trust, England, Krishnamurti said: "No interpreters are necessary, for each person should observe his own activities, not according to any theory or authority." On 10 July 1973, he said that the Krishnamurti Foundations (England, India, and USA) had no authority in the matter of the teachings or to send out propagandists or interpreters of the teachings. Earlier in 1956 (6th New Delhi Talk), he had said, in strong terms: "All interpreters are traitors because they are not original experiencers, they are merely second-hand repeaters of something which they believe someone else has experienced

and which they think is true. So beware of interpreters."

We find a striking similarity in Theosophy with Krishnamurti reminding us that the teacher is not important. One of the main strengths of the Theosophical Society is the "freedom of thought" its members have, which has been enshrined in a resolution passed in 1924 by its General Council. It is clarified therein that "No teacher or writer from Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions" on others. This ensures that a member of the TS is free to hold any opinion or follow any school of thought. Such freedom is a *sine qua non*, or necessity, for a member to realize the Truth for himself. Further, one of the Great Truths given in *The Idyll of the White Lotus* and repeated in *Light on the Path* is: "Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment."

Theosophical teachings and Krishnamurti's message are about something sublime, incapable of being fully expressed in words, beyond the world of thought. Both require to be approached with great sensitivity. Flippant comparisons are bound to lead one to wrong conclusions. A famous mystic saint of recent times, Yogi Ramsuratkumar was a follower of Sri Aurobindo, Ramana Maharshi, and his guru, Swami Ramdas. When Krishnamurti placed his hand on Ramsuratkumar's head at the end of a talk, the latter says he had his final realization:

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Krishnaji is for the non-believers. For believers, there are any number of Masters for them to follow. But for a genuine non-believer, what is the recourse? Hence, Krishnaji chose totally differing terms, yet acceptable to non-believers. I assure you, Krishnaji gives us the same essence as any of the great Masters, but couched in opposite terminologies.

Following is another quote from Yogi Ramsuratkumar:

My Master, Swami Ramdas, emphasized that everything is in the name. When I read J. Krishnamurti, with equal reverence and interest, I found that he said, "there is nothing in the name". I was perplexed. Two differing, diametrically opposed statements! I also knew both utterances came from great Masters. Swami Ramdas had passed away. So, I sought Krishnamurti to get this clarified.

I went to Madras; Krishnamurti had gone to Rishi Valley. I went there; I could not meet him privately. Krishnamurti then went to Bombay; I followed him. There also I could not meet him. He returned to Madras; I too relentlessly followed. I was keen to get my doubt cleared by this living Master. In Madras, I was told I could not meet him.

Early one morning I waited in the garden of Vasanta Vihar, hoping Krishnamurti would come down and meet me. What happened I cannot describe as dream, vision, or reality! But this is what happened: Krishnaji came straight to me. I prostrated before him. After some time he lifted me

up and put both his hands on my shoulders. He said in his sweet voice, "Both of us say the same thing". Then he left.

I was in ecstasy. My doubt was eradicated. Yes! Both "Name is everything" and "Name is nothing" convey, in essence, the same truth. The total presence (*purna*) and total absence (*śunya*) mean exactly the same, single, indivisible Oneness!

It is easy to find apparent contradictions on the surface between theosophical teachings and Krishnamurti's. But a mature and sensitive reflection shows otherwise. Aryel Sanat, in his seminal work, *The Secret Doctrine, Krishnamurti, and Transformation*, finds what he calls previously unexpected connections between *The Secret Doctrine* and the work of Krishnamurti. According to him, a psychological understanding of *The Secret Doctrine* shows that its essence, like that of Krishnamurti's insights and observations, is human transformation. He points out that the Masters and HPB taught a way of living which expected a theosophist not to be someone who merely held certain beliefs, but rather someone who lives the life of transformation, since without the psychological transformation the understanding remains merely at the intellectual level and not a realization of Truth. Sanat's conclusion is that Krishnamurti's teachings look no different when we understand *The Secret Doctrine* using not the metaphysical key alone, but also the mythical and psychological keys, and we realize that both teachings point to

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the need of transformation within. While Krishnamurti talks of dying from moment to moment, Theosophy talks of the death of the personality.

It is known that words are limiting. This is the reason it is stressed from ancient times that real understanding of Truth comes only through experiences. In this context we learn from the Masters of the Wisdom: "Volumes of the most perfectly constructed information cannot reveal to man life in the higher regions. One has to get knowledge of spiritual facts by personal experience and from actual observation."

Mrs Radha Burnier, former President of the Theosophical Society, was a great exponent of Theosophy in recent times. She was not only a friend of Krishnamurti, but also one who found no conflict between his message and theosophical teachings. She observed that Krishnamurti was an inspiring embodiment of a mind free of attachment. He gave abundant affection even to strangers; his unattached affection was so warm, it was difficult for people not to feel special. Krishnamurti's advice was: "Be detached, don't be attached." The mind must cling to nothing, not even to the Teacher. Attachment is the source of jealousy, disappointment, and agitation, and a serious obstacle to friendship, mutual trust, and working together in cooperation.

Radhaji gave real life examples from Krishnamurti's life to illustrate how detachment from memories and freedom from expectations is the nature of the pure mind. Krishnamurti's profound wisdom

was shown by his great sense of equality to all, and equanimity in all situations. Radhaji points out that the *Bhagavad-gitā's* definition, yoga is inner equilibrium — *samatvam yoga uchyate* was exemplified in Krishnamurti's life. She said that the full significance and implications of some truths stated from ancient times came more alive by watching what Krishnamurti did, said, and left unsaid, than by reading any commentaries on them. Concluding a talk once she said, in centuries to come the teaching of Krishnamurti will continue to energize the human mind, for it is no ordinary one.

Pablo Sender is another prominent writer and speaker who says that Krishnamurti's and HPB's teachings, as well as her Masters', complement and shed light on each other. He explores their deep similarity in a paper titled "Krishnamurti's teachings and Theosophy". Here is an example from Pablo Sender's paper:

JK: As long as the "self" is active and creating a projection, there is no possibility to realize the reality.

HPB: The spiritual Ego can act only when the personal Ego is paralysed.

Here is another:

JK: I do not know if you have noticed that there is understanding when the mind is very quiet even for a second; there is the flash of understanding when the verbalisation of thought is not. Just experiment with it and you will see for yourself that you have the flash of understanding, that

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extraordinary rapidity of insight, when the mind is very still, when thought is absent.

KH: It is upon the serene and placid surface of the unruffled mind that the visions gathered from the invisible find a representation in the visible world. Otherwise you would vainly seek those visions, those flashes of sudden light which have already helped to solve so many of the minor problems and which alone can bring the truth before the eye of the soul. It is with jealous care that we have to guard our mind-plane from all the adverse influences which daily arise in our passage through earth-life.

One would think this is Krishnamurti speaking. It sounds so much like him. But this is a quote from *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, Letter No. 11.

Pablo Sender concludes that Krishnamurti's teachings do not oppose theosophical teachings, but they are an integral part of them, because theosophical work involves two aspects: the philosophical-metaphysical and the experimental-psychological. If we only touch the first one, then Theosophy is being presented as theory and not related to life, and it does not offer tools for self-transformation.

It is worth drawing attention to the work of another life-long Theosophist and Krishnamurti follower. Relatively unknown, J. K. Patnaik appeared so simple and ordinary to the outside world that it was difficult to fathom his deep understanding of Theosophy and Krishnamurti's teachings. A small book dictated by him

titled, *Where Theosophy Meets Krishnamurti* has been published posthumously. The consciousness model that came to him in a vision provides not only a link between the two but shows us a practical way to benefit from Theosophy as well as from Krishnamurti's teachings.

Man is conscious in the physical, astral, and mental planes, but is not ordinarily aware of his subtler bodies. Traditional methods of spiritual practices enable man to make horizontal progress in these lower planes, leading to psychic powers, or lower siddhis. Krishnamurti and HPB warn about the dangers of such powers in their respective books: *At the Feet of the Master* and *The Voice of the Silence*. True spiritual progress requires vertical progress, a quantum jump to the next level beyond the three lower planes, which is the *buddhic* plane. Only when man is conscious in the *buddhic* or intuitional plane, will the feeling of separateness end, and one will be freed from the cycle of births and deaths.

According to Patnaik, two conditions are required for one to be conscious in the higher plane: activity in the lower planes must stop, and sufficient number of root atoms in the higher plane must be activated. He firmly believes that Krishnamurti's teachings, which have extraordinary depth, can help pacify the lower plane root atoms and activate the root atoms of higher planes to awaken consciousness at those levels. This is perhaps the reason why Krishnamurti forbade interpretation and alteration of

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his teachings. Extraordinary clarity comes about when the mind is very alert and there is no thought, no intention and no mental effort, a state often referred to as “choiceless awareness”. One needs to have a silent mind without movement of thought, without choice as to what one wants or does not want. Choiceless awareness and effortless reading of

Krishnamurti's teachings can lead to an understanding in a flash and experience of something vast and unlimited.

Understanding only takes place in a flash, not in the course of time, or through the accumulation of knowledge from books, and so on. You see something immediately, or not at all. (J. Krishnamurti, 3rd Public Talk, Saanen, 11 July 1963) ✧

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J. Krishnamurti used a vocabulary which is not the traditional one. He did not use such words as “the path”. In fact, he said “Truth is a pathless land”, and many people are still puzzled by it. But from the Theosophical point of view, every Monad is unique and, entering the material plane, follows its own unique path. The development that takes place in every individual is unlike any other — the whole of Nature is like this. . . . So each person has to proceed through his own understanding to the truth. Nobody else can say “This is the path you must tread”.

Radha Burnier

The Third Object of the Theosophical Society

CLEMICE PETTER

THE Theosophical Society (TS) was founded in 1875 to help humanity overcome cruelty, materialism, superstition, religious dogmatism, and finally awaken to divine wisdom. The task is not an easy one, and it is said that Theosophy did not have anywhere to land its foot in this world, that man does not want it. It is not a surprise that it is so because the human mind, being dual, divides everything into good and bad, right and wrong, but Divine Wisdom is whole, knows no division, and functions in unity. The human mind is competitive, aggressive, and cruel. Divine Wisdom is all-merciful, cooperative, and knows with whom to cooperate. It will not cooperate with those who work under a selfish motive, and selfishness can be very subtle. It is also said that humanity has reached a stage where the transformation of consciousness is not only possible but needed. H. P. Blavatsky said that *The Secret Doctrine* cannot be understood by the concrete or self-centred mind, but it is the transformed mind that will understand it.

So the Theosophical Society's work is to help humanity at this turning point, from a dual mind to the "all-one" consciousness. And if one may point out, it is a delicate work. To accomplish this purpose the Society started with three declared Objects. "*To investigate the unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man*" is the third declared Object of the Society. Of the three declared Objects, the third may be the most misunderstood one. It may be so because to most people the desire for power is still very strong, this shows that such people are not fit to help humanity, which is what the TS is all about.

Also, the word "occultism", which was strictly used by HPB as a synonym for the perennial philosophy and self-knowledge, never had the evil connotation given later. Now it is heavily misunderstood and many think she is talking about some kind of hocus-pocus that will make those who possess this so-called "occult" knowledge do all kinds of tricks. It is those people's greed that makes them desire the knowledge of that which is

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occult, not known, hoping to get supernatural powers, but it is not in this Society that greed will be fulfilled.

It is true that Blavatsky did know about the laws of Nature, and had some powers, which she was born with. It is also known that she never encouraged anyone to go after psychic powers; on the contrary, she always advised that those powers are not worth going after. In a letter to the American Section she wrote that psychic cravings are but another form of materialism. There are certain powers which come naturally along with the development of the inner man. To have these powers before one is ready, and by ready we mean unselfish, can give cause to destructiveness. Blavatsky defined occultism in a few words: she said that True Occultism or Theosophy is the “Great Renunciation of Self”, unconditionally and absolutely, in thought as in action. In the small book *Practical Occultism* she wrote:

Occultism is not magic. It is *comparatively* easy to learn the trick of spells and the methods of using the subtler, but still material, forces of physical nature; the powers of the animal soul in man are soon awakened; the forces which his love, his hate, his passion, can call into operation are readily developed. But this is Black Magic — *Sorcery*. For it is the motive, *and the motive alone*, which makes any exercise of power become black, malignant, or white, beneficent Magic. It is impossible to employ *Spiritual* forces if there is the slightest tinge of selfishness remaining in the operator. For, unless the

intention is entirely unalloyed [pure, clean, whole], the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the astral plane, and dire [disastrous] results may be produced by it. The powers and forces of animal nature can equally be used by the selfish and revengeful, as by the unselfish and all-forgiving; the powers and forces of spirit lend themselves only to the perfectly pure in heart — and this is DIVINE MAGIC.

This is only a short quotation, where it is made very clear that the TS work is about the transformation of man. And it is also clear that psychic is not spiritual. It is important to emphasize that HPB says: “Unless the intention is entirely unalloyed [pure, clean, whole], the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the astral plane, and dire [disastrous] results may be produced by it.” We hope by now everyone has understood, because her language leaves no room for misunderstandings, which is as clear as the shining Sun.

As long as there is any form of selfishness in one’s motives when dealing with these powers, the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, and act on the astral plane, this also shows that the astral plane is not the spiritual plane, the astral plane is still material, part of the animal in man. This shows how subtle these things are. The slightest tinge of selfishness — it does not need to be great selfishness — only the slightest trace is enough to transform the spiritual into the psychic. We are being repetitive because this is a crucial point that has to be made very clear, so that it will be

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understood once and for all; this misunderstanding has gone on for too long in this Society.

Another point that has to be understood is that we are not really aware of our motives, because we have become specialists in justifying everything, so the mind has become very clever and has an explanation or justification for almost everything we do. To be aware of our motives we have to be very honest with ourselves, not justify or run for explanations of any kind, just be with the fact. As long as we need to justify or explain what is behind our thinking and acting, we are not being honest, because we cannot stand the truth behind it. Note that we are talking about explanations in the psychological realm, and these explanations are a psychological escape, running away, losing contact with reality, and breeding illusion.

Theosophy, meaning Divine Wisdom, is for those who have no trace of selfishness, who have transformed themselves. Only those who have no trace of selfishness in them can safely know about the secrets of Nature. And this is the difficulty: we want the result, but we are not willing to do the necessary work, because to reach this state one has to work hard, to give one's whole mind and heart, to give one's life to it. There has to be passion and, as Blavatsky pointed out, an ardent intellect. We feel easier talking about it and never take up the path of self-knowledge, because on this path one will be torn to pieces. There will be no dark corner left; one's world will be

turned upside down. And we do not want that, I am afraid. The majority of us are looking for a comfortable way of life, with reward for the so-called "good" done, which means: "I will be good if there is a reward waiting for me somewhere in this or in a future life." And this is not goodness at all. We need to question how serious we are, and if we are not passionate enough it is all right; to be aware of it is already a big step.

The powers latent in man that the TS is investigating are the powers that come with self-knowledge and those are the powers of Love, Compassion, and Kindness. As the Lord Buddha said, Love is the power capable of healing hate. So the power of Love and Compassion are the powers worth having, because they can heal humanity from the mortal disease called "me" and "mine", also known as selfishness. After all, human beings are the only form of life on this planet capable of self-perception, self-knowledge. The first step for serious students is to work on self-inquiry, to know oneself. This is not something new that the Theosophical Society is the first to talk about; it was said by the ancient Greeks: "Know thyself and thou shall know all the mysteries of the gods and of the universe". To know about the unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man, the prime condition is to go deep into oneself, to know all the hidden motives that drive one's actions, to free oneself from all illusion.

It is said in *The Voice of the Silence*: "The pupil must seek out the Rājā of the

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senses, the thought-producer, he who awakes illusion.” One need not only free oneself from all illusion, but, in order to stop it, also know the thought-producer, which is the awakener of illusion. It is clear that thought is the awakener of illusion; we need to stop the thought processes. When we see (seeing is a sense) a beautiful car or a nice colourful dress, immediately thought comes in and we think how nice it will feel to possess that car, people will admire us; or what a beautiful colour, that green shirt in the shop window, we touch, feel the material, see the beautiful colour, immediately desire is awakened by this thought process, and we know very well all that follows. (This example has been given many times by J. Krishnamurti.)

To stop this process of awakening of illusion, which is the thought process, is the first step. How many have done it? How many seriously consider this question? Very few, it seems. We have not done the basic work, we are not willing to do it, and yet we want to be taught about the complex issues, only because it may give us fame or prominence. We behave like spoilt children. Again we forget a very simple instruction given by HPB: “Be humble if you want to attain Wisdom, be even more humble after you have attained it.” So it is a waste of time and energy to look for instructions about how to acquire any kind of power in the occult realm before mastering the basic knowledge, which is the knowledge of oneself.

If the basic knowledge (of oneself) remains occult, hidden, how will one

come to that which lies beyond oneself? It is impossible. No teacher can help in the process of self-knowledge. HPB reminded more than once of the danger of imprudence and that this is not a playground. In *Practical Occultism* she wrote:

No man can swim unless he enters deep water. No bird can fly unless its wings are grown, and it has space before it and courage to trust itself to the air. A man who will wield a two-edged sword, must be a thorough master of the blunt weapon, if he would not injure himself or — what is worse — others, at the first attempt.

The letters to A. P. Sinnett have plenty of examples of people who, having come across serious teachers, were not happy about not being instructed the way they wanted to, left them for a fraudulent teacher who was willing to satisfy their wishes and, in doing so, ruined their health, or worse.

Since the TS was given to humanity when in a deep, materialistic, and spiritually undeveloped state, it was also more or less natural that the teachings would be misunderstood by many, and that people would think in terms of acquiring powers for the use of the “me” and the “mine”; after all, the mind’s nature is acquisitive, it does not realize that Love and Compassion can *be*, only when the me, the self, is no more. One hopes that at this point it is clear once and for all that the TS is not meant to become a school of magic, that it is concerned only with the total transformation of man from a dual and selfish state of consciousness to the

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altruistic, indivisible consciousness, a state that knows no division, such as me and you, my country and your country, my religion and your religion, a state of being that is all compassion and responsibility.

By “responsibility” we do not mean the ordinary sense with which this word is heavily loaded and made into a weighty and disgusting affair, but the real sense of the word responsibility, which means response-ability, the ability to respond. But to be able to respond one needs first to hear, to listen. And to hear one needs to be fully attentive, to be sensitive, to listen to everything in life, without choice, not just one’s preferences or inclinations. To be responsible means to be awake, aware of what is going on without judgement, just to be aware of the beauty of the Earth with its running water, of the tree and the sky, the birds that fly unaware of the danger of man, and of the ugliness of this world brought about by greed, envy, arrogance, the brutality of human beings, and the endless struggle for power that is destroying the Earth.

It is said that in human history there was once a very technological advanced civilization called Atlantis, and, despite having reached a high level of technology, it did not develop the heart, remaining selfish. According to Blavatsky the reason for this great technologically advanced people to be vanished from the face of the Earth was the misuse of the knowledge of certain laws of Nature. Being selfish and in possession of those laws, it was brought down into the ocean, in one night, the whole continent due to

karmic law. This shows how dangerous it is to acquire knowledge without the quality of Love in one’s heart, because no matter how much knowledge one acquires, as long as one’s consciousness works at the level of the “me” and the “mine”, one is bound to the laws of karma, and there is no way of escaping from it. There is no loophole in Nature’s laws, simply because it is a law of Nature, it is perfect. It is not a man-made law.

The only concern of this Society is the total freedom of man, a new human being that knows not a thing about self-centred activity, with a different kind of mind and heart, a human being free from opinions, free from knowledge, free from attachment, free from all limitations. A compassionate Human being. It is very important to make it clear that this state of consciousness is not the projection of the self-centred mind, the “me”. We are not talking about the bettering of the me, the self, but the cessation of it. Blavatsky said in *The Voice of the Silence*: “The self of matter and the Self of Spirit can never meet. One of the twain [two] must disappear; there is no place for both.” We hope that there is no need to explain this to the serious student. For those who are not serious, no amount of explanations will make them understand it anyway.

If you ask whether the TS has explored the third Object, which means, has it investigated the unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man?, we could say that N. Sri Ram talked about self-knowledge a great deal; there

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is a vast literature left by him. Radha Burnier talked about it all the time when she was President of this Society; it is no secret that her motto was “human regeneration”. There is a small and beautiful book written by her, *The Way of Self-knowledge*, which deals with the subject in a clear and wonderful way. It is not for lack of incentive that people are not working on self-knowledge, it is because despite the advice given by HPB and the Inner Founders themselves, many of the TS members are still under the illusion of acquiring psychic powers, or to master the power of thought, which one will see how impossible it is when knowing the nature of it.

It is the attraction for power that makes people blind and unwilling to see the obvious. Of course, many things are yet to be done, a deeper and more

direct approach and attention to self-knowledge has to be undertaken by the TS in order to enter safely into what HPB called the “New Age”, or the Spiritual Era, the end of the “me” and the “mine”. This is the only hope for humankind. Otherwise, humans as a race have very little chance of surviving. This is obvious, as one can see how willing we still are to kill one another, and now we have the technology for great destruction, just as the Atlanteans once had. Either humankind changes or it will not survive. And no matter how much the TS goes into self-knowledge, finally it is up to the student to either take up the matter seriously, or just play with words. It is up to you and each one of us to change completely, to face ambition, jealousy, pride, knowledge, and all self-centred activities and let them die. Will you do it? ✧

The first necessity for obtaining Self-knowledge is to become profoundly conscious of ignorance; to feel with every fibre of the heart that one is ceaselessly self-deceived.

The second requisite is the still deeper conviction that such knowledge — such intuitive and certain knowledge — can be obtained by effort.

The third and most important is an indomitable determination to obtain and face that knowledge.

Self-knowledge of this kind is unattainable by what men usually call “self-analysis”. It is not reached by reasoning or any brain process; for it is the awakening to consciousness of the Divine nature of man.

To obtain this knowledge is a greater achievement than to command the elements or to know the future.

Lucifer vol.1, no. 2; Oct. 15, 1887
H. P. Blavatsky

Listening to the March of the Future

SHIKHAR AGNIHOTRI

LET us consider the very existence of the Theosophical Society (TS), in a changing world. Everything is changing within and without. So, one has to constantly listen to the march of the future, and remain relevant to the contemporary needs and requirements, yet not at the cost of diluting the teachings, but, instead, making them more appealing to the prevailing times, with the help of *intuition*, as far as possible.

We cannot listen to the future without giving due attention to the past because the past is the basis of the present, and the present is the seed for the future. Looking at the past, I would like to emphasize the aim with which the TS was founded, not in terms of its Objects but rather the approach that was to be taken. A very good expression of this is found in the foreword to the small but valuable booklet, *Five Messages*, from H. P. Blavatsky to American theosophists. It says:

Theosophy commands us to work for humanity; that service is of a particular character; its nature is spiritual; the method whereof is twofold:

(1) to watch the steps of erring humanity and erect signposts against certain pitfalls; (2) to hold aloft the beacon light of instruction which cheers the weary pilgrim and inspires him to make his very own the Power which is Peace, and the Service which is Joy.

We all are trying to do this by using the various resources available to us: by writing articles in newspapers, arranging lectures for the public and college students, and so on. Apart from this, most of us are aware of the fast pace with which modern technology has overrun our lives. We have become so used to it that we just cannot imagine our lives without it. Due to this fact, I feel that technology can be used as much as possible to better our effort in the propagation of Theosophy, which is already being done. Today it is much more convenient for a person to read an update on a social networking site or email, rather than taking time out for a two- or three-day study course, for which maybe he gets time only once a year. For a few weeks now, we have

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been posting the synopsis of our Lodge meetings on a social networking site, and it does have its effect. It serves two purposes. First, the members who could not attend the meeting can read the synopsis and at least get some idea about the subject. Second, those who are not yet members but who are interested in such subjects become inclined to attend the same.

At the national and international level we have already seen considerable progress in this direction. The Society's website is now very informative, including minute details. The most astonishing effect of technology, if properly used, is that it tends to develop in us, members in different geographical areas, a sense of connectedness, a sense of family, which is the Society's real source of strength. Now everyone is just a click away and no doubt it does make the bond of friendship stronger by removing the hesitancy.

In the same light, the second Object of the TS gives us a direction: To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science. Practically, the number of religions and philosophies are limited, but there is one aspect which is ever reinventing itself, and that is science. Unfortunately, science has brought in the same limitation which organised religion has been doing for centuries, and that is blind faith. Today anything that is told to us in the name of scientific research, we tend to believe it, no matter what. Even the fact that the next research project often contradicts the previous one,

and more so that many such researches are sponsored to have specific desired outcomes, do not deter us. So, as theosophists, being in possession of a large body of knowledge in the form of *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Mahatma Letters*, it is our duty to (1) gradually acquaint ourselves with this knowledge so that we can not only correlate it with modern scientific findings, (2) but also point out its limitations, and thus (3) try to awaken a few scientific minds to the fact that it is not *only* through physical means that we can find the secrets of existence. We can also create and strengthen a platform where such correlations can be explained and discussed with people at large, to open their mind to the divine wisdom which is Theosophy. Thus, by making Theosophy more visible through various means, it is possible to give a ray of hope to those who have developed their mental faculties to some extent, and have faced or are facing their share of highs and lows in life and looking for answers.

But is that enough? There is a greater challenge when it comes to those who, although having a religious bent of mind, do not think that such teachings can be implemented in daily life by an average householder. They think this is work designated only for some great souls and we are here just to worship them. It is this mentality that we have to fight, within and without, because it does not let us make a whole-hearted effort. It comes up very often during day-to-day conversations that reactions like anger,

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irritation, greed, and so on, are part of human nature and cannot be gotten rid off. Why has this mentality become so common? Because there is a tendency of the mind to compare itself with its surroundings and when the mind sees the majority going in a particular direction it assumes that to be the correct path. To make matters worse, it does not find any real-life examples in its immediate surroundings.

In this case, the work as a theosophist is all the more difficult because unlike other organizations working with similar objects, there is no uniform set of rituals or way of greeting by which a theosophist can be recognized, which is also the beauty of the TS, as it has carefully kept itself free from any creed. At the same time, it is the test of a theosophist who has to solely depend upon his behaviour or character to convincingly convey his words. This behaviour or character is not just limited to the Lodge or the campus of the TS. It extends far and beyond. It permeates each and every aspect of our daily life. And it is this behaviour and character of a person which is perceived first by the people around him.

We may say that this is nothing new; we have been doing this for long, and I think the same. But I am sure we all understand that there are no shortcuts to this work. And it is in this “sincere effort-making” process that we develop patience and perseverance, hope and strength, love and wisdom, which begin to reflect themselves outside in the form of various efforts, and

in turn strengthens the organization.

Many of us here may attest, based on their personal experiences, to the fact that when we begin to work on ourselves, with every step that we take ahead, we see someone asking for assistance from the step we left behind. This is for the simple reason that one life pervades all and all units of consciousness have this inherent thirst for growth; when some progress is made by one unit, other units are automatically drawn towards it. That is my understanding of the statement: “Where there is honey, bees will come.”

And this is the only way to fight this pessimism or inertia that ideals are for worshipping and not for living. I am not implying that we become perfect in the first attempt. We may fail miserably innumerable times, but that does not matter; we should have the firm conviction that “failing while trying is not failure, but failing to try is the real failure”. It is this inertia of not trying wholeheartedly that we have to shake off ourselves. And it can start right where we live, whatever situations we are facing. This attitude completely removes doubts about the value of one’s effort as a member. That is why the following powerful statement by Col H. S. Olcott is included, which instills energy and hope every time it is read:

I wish that everybody in the Society could realize how certain it is that those Great Brothers who are behind our work keep a vigilant eye upon all of us who with a pure heart and unselfish mind throw our energies into it.

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I do not think we can ask for any more persuasion about the significance of even a small effort made with an altruistic attitude towards the Society.

Another kind of inertia that very often overcomes us as members arises out of the belief that it is the job of the office-bearers, whether at the Federation, the Section or the International level, to do everything. Yes, it is true that the growth of a unit depends a lot on the enthusiasm and ability of the office-bearers, but each and every effort, however small, by any member bears an equal significance because it is not the President or the Secretary of the TS or a Section that comes in day-to-day contact with the people. It is the members like you and me who are the ambassadors of the TS in our immediate surroundings. So we can very easily realize the amount of responsibility that lies with us as individuals while representing Theosophy and the TS in our surroundings, and here arises the importance of a Lodge.

Although the headquarters, whether national or international, have a significant role to play as a nucleus of inspiration and vitality, a Lodge is that organ of the Society which deals with the immediate surroundings on a day-to-day basis. Not everyone has the responsibility to work in the headquarters due to individual karma, but the very same karma gives us an opportunity to work with similar zeal and enthusiasm in our Lodges if we are willing.

A Lodge acts as a nucleus which is the source and channel of subtler forms

of energies and, without a doubt, a blessing for the society or area around it. An effort has to be made consciously to have more and more of such vital nuclei. We may think it is easier said than done, and of course it is not easy. A lot of effort has to be put into it. And here comes the role of the Lodges or members who are old enough to give birth to new ones, not as replacements but as supplements. There is no quick fix or shortcut to strengthen ourselves as an organization. In the words of HPB to William Quan Judge in 1888:

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. When his inner development has reached a certain point, he will naturally draw those with whom he is in contact under the same influence; a nucleus will be formed, round which other people will gather, forming a centre from which information and spiritual influence radiate, and towards which higher influences are directed.

To give an example, I feel that ten centres with seven members each is more beneficent, than having one centre with 70 members. From a cursory glance it seems that a gathering of 70 members at one place is a lot better than 7 members because we all know how the power of thought increases geometrically with the number of people. But a deeper look reveals that due to various deterrents like old age, lack of conveyance, inconvenient timings, traffic, travel time, and

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so on, out of the 70 only 10 to 15 are able to attend the weekly study meetings on a regular basis. On the other hand, if there were more number of centres strategically located, not necessarily in a Society building, with the meetings done at members' homes on a rotational basis, which is very practical, we would be able to avoid the deterrents just talked about, and not only will the number of members attending the study be greater but the group's influence will be better felt in that larger area as well.

There is one more aspect to this effort of ours, and that is motive. What is the motive behind doing all this? Being students of theosophy we all know that it is the motive which is the real weaver of karma, whether individually or collectively as an organization. So how are we listening to the future? Are we doing it the way the CEO of a private company does? Which is, seeing how to make more and more profit, which in our case may be a greater number of members. Also, do we want to do this because "I" am related to this organization and "I" am more important than the teachings promulgated? If these are the only motives, then they may not be enough. How can that be, if the essence of theosophy is altruism? Is it not a better motive to bring theosophy to more and more people whether or not they become members; to bring the light of theosophy to the souls caught in between brutal materialism and exploitative spiritualism? And further, not because "I" am related to the Society but because it is the right thing to do, as the

TS was founded as a channel for disseminating the knowledge of Theosophy and students of the same can very easily identify that the teachings and principles of Theosophy are *all-inclusive*. Only that which is all-inclusive can offer a solution to any possible situation known as a problem in any aspect of life of an individual, society, country or the planet. Be it the problem of climate change, of terrorism, of religious intolerance and sectarian violence, of violence against children, women and the elderly, and so on. Thus when we work for Theosophy and the TS we are actually performing our universal responsibility. If selfless devotion to the cause of Theosophy be the motive, which I assume most of us have, then we generate a force beyond the mental plane which practically moves unopposed and which as per the law of karma will bring its consequences. These consequences will not only be positive but also long-lasting.

As far as the membership is concerned there will always be sufficient embodied souls to continue the work of the TS who by their karmic link, whether to the Society or the teachings, will get attracted towards it. Many of us may have real-life examples of how someone just saw the signboard of a theosophical Lodge, walked in, and very soon became a willing student of Theosophy.

Further, working together for a social cause tends to bring the members closer, and the Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) is really helpful in this regard. Ideally, with every TS Lodge there should

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be a TOS Group as well, or, if not a formal Group, at least the TS Lodge should engage in some TOS activities. Then, as a group we will be trying to make Theosophy a living wisdom, making the bond stronger among the members.

Lastly, HPB warns us against the dangers of the craze for psychic development without a foundation of moral strength, which has once again become, or is gradually becoming, the cause of exploitation of sincere spiritual aspirants. Various entities are also offering instant yoga or nirvana by way of a shortcut. We as theosophists need to not only remain vigilant of our temptation for such things, but also try to communicate the related dangers to those who come in contact with us. The ethics of Theosophy

are even more important than the scientific aspects of the psychic facts of Nature and man.

We all can and are contributing in this effort, whether by sharing our time or finances, by sharing our views in the form of a lecture, by writing an article, by acts of charity, by spreading theosophical literature, by attending a study class, by starting a study centre or Lodge, by meditation or by any other means available. This has been clearly stated by HPB in *The Key to Theosophy*:

The future of the TS will depend almost entirely upon the degree of selflessness, earnestness, devotion, and last but not least, on the amount of knowledge and wisdom possessed by those members, on whom it will fall to carry on the work. ✧

What of the future? What are the lines of work along which the Society should expand? From year to year the world's needs change and it is for us to see in what manner we can help, first our own country, and then humanity as a whole. What are our watchwords for the next few years?

Firstly, as set forth in the first Object of the Society, SOLIDARITY. Secondly, as in the second Object, WISDOM. Thirdly, as in the third Object, ASPIRATION. And fourthly as the fruition of these three, ACTIVITY.

Alice Law

Theosophy — Yoga for the Modern World

K. DINAKARAN

THE meaning of “yoga” varies from individual to individual. The teachings of Patañjali in the form of aphorisms shed light on this ancient wisdom. How is Theosophy, which H. P. Blavatsky described as the Wisdom Religion, closely related to yoga? Like the principles enumerated in the *Yoga-sutra-s*, Theosophy is also for the upliftment of humanity. In the “Sādhana Pāda” of the *Yoga-sutra-s* Patañjali describes the five vows to be observed by the student of yoga as compassion (*ahimsā*), truthfulness (*satya*), not stealing (*asteya*), moderation, or living in higher awareness (*brahma-charya*), and non-greediness (*aparigraha*). He also states that these vows are not conditioned by class, place, time, or occasion, and extend to all the stages which constitute the Great Vow.

The first Object of the Theosophical Society (TS) is: “To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour.” These principles, as well as the One Life, evolution, karma, and reincarnation are applicable to all, whether they accept it or not.

Dr Annie Besant said that Theosophy teaches us the great unfolding, which goes on through millions of years, eons of time, and so on. In a still briefer cycle, a similar unfolding also takes place in the individual. These forces that manifest and unveil themselves in evolution are cumulative in their power — stone to vegetable to animal to man, and from human to superhuman. This last process of evolution is called “yoga”. She also added: “If you realize the unity of the Self amid the diversities of the Not-Self, then yoga will not seem an impossible thing to [us].” The acceptance of this fundamental principle of Unity of Life is the sole condition to be a student of yoga. This same acceptance is also expected from an individual who wishes to join the TS, which is that of the universal brotherhood of humanity without distinctions, though there are various differences that divide man from man in the name of beliefs, political ideology, racial and social conditions, and so forth.

Yoga is Science. According to Besant: “Yoga is only a quickened process of the ordinary unfolding of consciousness”,

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instead of following the long beaten track of natural selection. In her book, *In the Outer Court*, Besant expresses this idea in a pictorial manner, as climbing a mountain in either of two ways — by the long winding path, and by the shortest but steep path. Just like any other science, yoga, as the systematized knowledge of the unfolding of the consciousness and its laws, has universal applicability.

One of the gems of Theosophy, *At the Feet of the Master*, clearly states: “What religion a man holds, to what race he belongs, these things are not important; the really important thing is this knowledge — the knowledge of God’s plan for men. For God has a plan, and that plan is evolution. . . . If he is on God’s side he is one of us, and it does not matter in the least whether he calls himself a Hindu or Buddhist, Christian or Muslim, whether he is an Indian or Englishman, Chinese or Russian.” We must remember that this teaching was given in the beginning of the twentieth century when humanity was divided on the basis of various religious beliefs, political ideologies, racial discriminations, and so on. But the problems of humanity are one and the same.

Rāja yoga, or the royal yoga, begins where hatha yoga ends. For treading the path of yoga perfectly suitable vehicles are a must. The various postures prescribed in hatha yoga help the students to acquire a fit vehicle. *At the Feet of the Master* compares the body to a horse for riding: “The body is your animal — the horse upon which you ride. Therefore you must treat it well, and take good care

of it; you must not overwork it, you must feed it properly on pure food and drink only, and keep it strictly clean always, even from the minutest speck of dirt.” In the *Yogasutras*, the first observance (*niyama*) to be followed by the student, is purity (*śauca*), which is related to our vehicles, including the physical body, so that the Divine Life can manifest through them. Purity of thought, word, and action is a must to tread the spiritual path.

The second *niyama* is contentment (*santoshā*). It is one of the primary conditions to lead a yogic life. *At the Feet of the Master* advises the student: “You must bear your karma cheerfully, whatever it may be, taking it as an honour that suffering comes to you, because it shows that the Lords of Karma think you worth helping. However hard it is, be thankful that it is no worse.” The story of Rāja Hariśchandra in the Hindu epic, and Job in the Holy Bible, are examples of facing the tests of Karma Devas. All the trials in their lives could not deviate them from the path of righteousness. Such undaunted courage is expected from the student of yoga.

At the Feet of the Master advises us to have the qualification of “tolerance”. In a world of intolerance and its manifold problems, this qualification is most relevant. The Master advises: “You must feel perfect tolerance to all, and a hearty interest in the beliefs of those of another religion, just as much as in your own. For their religion is a path to the highest, just as yours is. And to help all, you must understand all.” The second Object of the

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TS points to this important aspect. Those joining the Society should subscribe to this Object: “To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy, and Science.” These three fields of learning are the sources of Wisdom to humanity.

Patañjali defines yoga in the second aphorism as “the inhibition of the modifications of the mind”. *The Voice of the Silence*, another gem of Theosophy, proclaims: “The mind is the great slayer of the Real. Let the disciple slay the slayer.” It is easy to say but difficult to practise. Kṛṣṇa consoles Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that this state can be achieved by constant practice and desirelessness. When such a state is attained, the *Yoga-sutra-s* says: “Then the Seer is established in his own essential and fundamental nature.” Patañjali also puts it in another way: “Their suppression (is brought about) by persistent practice and non-attachment.” So these two great teachers of Wisdom, Kṛṣṇa and Patañjali, advise the same: “practice and non-attachment”.

All spiritual enquiry begins with the questions: Who am I? What is the real nature of this One, or Monad? The third part of *At the Feet of the Master* concludes: “But *you* — the real you — you are a spark of God’s own fire, and God, who is Almighty, is in you, and because of that there is nothing that you cannot do if you will. Say to yourself: ‘What man has done, man can do. I am a man, yet also God in man; I can do this thing, and I will.’ For your will must be like tempered steel, if you would tread the Path.”

This treading the Path can be compared

only to “walking on the razor’s edge” (*asidhārāvratā*). Here also we can get guidance from *At the Feet of the Master*: “Between right and wrong, Occultism knows no compromise. At whatever apparent cost, that which is right you must do, no matter what the ignorant may think or say.” The *Vivekachudāmani* — the “Crest Jewel of Wisdom” by Śrī Śankarāchārya — proclaims: “Owing to the desire to run after society, the passion for too much study of the Scriptures, and the desire to keep the body in good trim, people cannot attain to proper Realization.”

Svādhyāya, or study of self, is very important for one who treads the path. In HPB’s words, it is “looking at the lower in the light of the Higher”. *At the Feet of the Master* again states: “You must study deeply the hidden laws of Nature, and when you know them, arrange your life according to them, using always reason and common sense.” The relevance of the third Object of the TS demands this investigation from the earnest seeker. As the Master of Wisdom rightly warns:

Have no desire for psychic powers; they will come when the Master knows that it is best for you to have them. To force them too soon often brings in its train much trouble; often their possessor is misled by deceitful nature-spirits, or becomes conceited and thinks he cannot make a mistake; and in any case the time and strength that it takes to gain them might be spent in work for others.

The opening sentence of *The Voice of the Silence* states: “These instructions are

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for those ignorant of the dangers of the lower *iddhi*, or psychic powers.”

Just like any other science, yoga also demands serious study and application from its students. Many years and even a whole lifetime may not be sufficient to achieve the marked result. I. K. Taimni says in *The Science of Yoga*:

There are too many cases of enthusiastic aspirants who for no apparent reason cool off, or finding the yogic discipline too irksome, give it up. They are not yet ready for the yogic life . . . and decide to tune their aspiration to the lower key of mere intellectual study.

The intellectual study must be carried through the progressive stages of reflection, meditation and practice in day-to-day life. In the foreword of *At the Feet of the Master* it is stated:

To look at food and say that it is good will not satisfy a starving man; he must put forth his hand and eat. So, to hear the Master's words is not enough; you must do what He says, attending to every word, taking every hint. If a hint is not taken, if a word is missed, it is lost forever; for He does not speak twice.

In the olden days this self discipline was called *tapas*, which literally means “burning”, and implied burning away the impurities — of anger, jealousy, greed, envy, desire, passion, and so on. A great yogic text, the *Bhagavadgītā*, narrates different types of *tapas* or austerities. According to it, “speech causing no annoyance, truthful, pleasant, and

beneficial, the practice of the study of the Scriptures, are called austerity of speech. Mental happiness, gentleness, silence, self-control, purity of nature — this is called austerity of the mind.” In short, our thought, word, and deed should have these three qualifications. It must be true, kind, and helpful.

The Golden Stairs, dictated to H. P. Blavatsky, are those “up the steps of which the learner may climb to the temple of Divine Wisdom”. Following these steps are really the yogic path prescribed by great teachers in various Wisdom traditions. These golden stairs declare in another way that there is no shortcut in the spiritual path. The learner must climb himself. No teacher, no authority, no system can do any miracles; for example, a courageous endurance of personal injustice. All those who trod the spiritual Path, such as Socrates, Christ, the Buddha, Bruno, Hypatia, and, in recent times, H. P. Blavatsky, C. W. Leadbeater, and Annie Besant — underwent various trials in their personal life. Without any murmur, they sipped the last drop of sorrow from the cup of life left by Karma.

Theosophy, through its present vehicle in the modern world, the Theosophical Society, proclaims *rāja yoga*, the yoga for the modern man. We need not run towards snow-capped mountains, dense forests, or deserts to learn this Wisdom; we need not abandon family, friends, and relatives; but like Arjuna, who learned this yoga in the middle of a battlefield, we can also realize this Yoga of the Kingly Science in our daily life. ✧

My Law

The sun may be clouded, yet ever the sun
Will sweep on its course till the Cycle is run.
And when into chaos the system is hurled
Again shall the Builder reshape a new world.

Your path may be clouded, uncertain your goal:
Move on — for your orbit is fixed to your soul.
And though it may lead into darkness of night
The torch of the Builder shall give it new light.

You were. You will be! Know this while you are:
Your spirit has travelled both long and afar.
It came from the Source, to the Source it returns —
The Spark which was lighted eternally burns.

It slept in a jewel. It leapt in a wave.
It roamed in the forest. It rose from the grave.
It took on strange garbs for long eons of years
And now in the soul of yourself It appears.

From body to body your spirit speeds on
It seeks a new form when the old one has gone
And the form that it finds is the fabric you wrought
On the loom of the Mind from the fibre of Thought.

Culture of Concentration

DARA EKLUND

CONCENTRATION, contemplation, and meditation all involve focus, and a knowledge of both the Known and the Knower. Concentration focuses the direction of our thoughts; meditation focuses the direction of our lives. According to the *Bhagavadgītā* the highest knowledge is that “wisdom which perceives in all Nature one single principle, indivisible and incorruptible, not separate in the separate objects seen” (ch. 18). As Kṛṣṇa expounds: “In this path there is only one single object, and this of a steady, constant nature; but widely branched is the faith and infinite are the objects of those who follow not this system” (ch. 2).

In his interpretation of Patañjali’s *Yoga Aphorisms*, William Quan Judge defines concentration as the “power to apply the mind, at any moment, to the consideration of a single point of thought, to the exclusion of all else”. Yet Patañjali tells us that “at the time of concentration the soul abides in the state of a spectator without a spectacle” — a seeming paradox. He also states that the “practical part of concentration is for the purpose of establishing meditation and eliminating

afflictions”. These afflictions, arising from the senses and tumultuous lower mind, prevent the tranquillity of every aspect of our being, which is needed to focus thought. Even memory may be a hindrance in that it does not let go of a train of thought. Therefore we first must learn to concentrate, or at least contemplate. Contemplation can range from vague brooding on a particular problem or idea, to deliberate reflection upon it. Unlike reverie, contemplation allows us to sift through our chains of thought and experiences, or give due consideration to any one of them. It is more akin to meditation with an emphasis on a seed thought or idea.

Of what use are such practices? In his *Meditations* Marcus Aurelius advised his readers:

Acquire the contemplative way of seeing how all things change into one another, and constantly attend to it, and exercise yourself about this part of philosophy. Nothing is so apt to produce magnanimity. Such a man has put off the body, and as he sees that at any moment he must go away from among men and leave everything

Mrs Dara Eklund, who passed away last month, was a member of the TS Pt Loma in the Hague; TS Adyar in Wheaton, IL; and TS Pasadena. Reprinted from *Sunrise* magazine, June/July 2001, TUP. From a lecture given at the Theosophical Library Centre, Altadena, California, USA, 6 April 2001.

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here, he gives himself entirely up to just actions, and . . . resigns himself to the universal nature. But as to what any man shall say or think about him or do against him, he never even thinks of it, being himself contented with . . . acting justly in what he now does, and being satisfied with what is now assigned to him; . . . he lays aside all distracting and busy pursuits, and desires nothing else than to run the straight course. (ch. 10)

The straight course has to do with the “examined life”, upheld by Pythagoras and Plato. To run the straight course one must bring under control the untrained stallions of the mind. Even Arjuna, though a precise archer, is troubled by the restlessness of the mind. Kṛṣṇa acknowledges its restraint to be difficult, but not impossible. By controlling the desires which arise in his heart and soul, man attains to perfect devotion. Kṛṣṇa describes that devotee as “He who closeth all the doors of his senses, imprisoneth his mind in his heart . . . undiverted to any other object” (*Gītā*, ch. 8). To know the true Self one must transcend, or shed, the veils which hide Reality.

This requires some form of mind development, beginning first with concentration. Which types are advisable and safe? Christmas Humphreys wrote that the right motive for mind development is the enlightenment of all life. In this motive lies our protection. In *Concentration and Meditation* (p. 4) he states that the steps he outlines can be hastened by an understanding of the purpose of evolution, right motive, and the use of

the will. Judge comments in his preface to *Yoga Aphorisms* that “Will is a spiritual power . . . present in every portion of the Universe.” H. P. Blavatsky often repeated that behind will stands desire. How do we transform the desire principle into a servant of the dedicated life? When the will is freed from the domination of passion, it is able to subdue the mind, which has a tendency to diffuseness. The focused or calm mind receives all desires like the ocean receives all streams.

Aside from developing willpower by redirecting the desire principle, Blavatsky and Judge recommended raja yoga. Rāja yogis seek to control the mind itself. When the mind is stilled, its modifications are stilled. Will and mind are only servants for the real Self, and the goal of raja yoga is union with Ísvara, the spirit in man, which gradually raises the lower self to higher planes. This process involves meditation, which HPB called “silent and *unuttered* prayer, or, as Plato expressed it, ‘the ardent turning of the soul toward the divine’” (*Key to Theosophy*, p. 10). Damodar K. Mavalankar in his article “Contemplation” agrees that meditation “is the inexpressible yearning of the inner Man to ‘go out towards the infinite’, which in olden times was the real meaning of adoration”.

Patañjali in his *Yoga Aphorisms* provides three distinct steps for meditation:

1. Fixing the mind on a place, object, or subject is attention [*dhāraṇa*].
2. The continuance of this attention is contemplation [*dhyāna*].

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3. This contemplation, becomes meditation when the object of attention alone radiates, and the mind loses awareness of itself [*samādhi*]. (Book III)

As Swami Kṛṣṇānanda summarizes it: “If *dhāraṇa* is the drop, *dhyāna* is the river. Many concentrations make a meditation.” (*The Yoga System*, ch.11.) When the river unites with the ocean, that is called *samādhi*. Swami Vivekananda describes this highest state as the giving up of all forms.

In the *Gītā* Kṛṣṇa extols gaining purity of motive by placing one’s attention in the act itself rather than in any ensuing reward. This can be done in everyday life without postures or mantras. A childhood memory verse teaches, “Act for and as the Self of all creatures.” Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna: “I am the Ego seated in the hearts of all beings” (ch. 10). He instructs Arjuna to fix his mind on the true Self: “to whatsoever object the inconstant mind goeth out . . . subdue it, bring it back, and place it upon the Spirit” (ch. 6). In time this becomes easy, since Kṛṣṇa declares that he himself is “the power of concentration in those whose minds are on the spirit” (ch. 10).

A Mahatma is quoted by A. P. Sinnett as saying that personal feelings and ties will one day “become blended into one universal feeling, the only true and holy, the only unselfish and eternal one — Love, an Immense Love for humanity as a whole” (*The Occult World*, p. 152). We see here that concentration is much more than a mental practice, but requires

unremitting and lifelong discipline and dispassion. This is why the sages dwell on attaining calmness, charity, and love which “casteth out all fear”. Thus rāja yoga focuses on altruism, not postures, astral projections, or psychic recipes for the meagre lower self. The virtues pave the way towards a future lifetime when the real practice of concentration may begin. Judge writes: “Some day we will begin to see why not one passing thought may be ignored, not one flitting impression missed. This we can perceive is no simple task. It is a gigantic work” (*Echoes of the Orient* 1:72).

Exercises for modern laymen appear in several recent books, such as Roger Walsh’s *Essential Spirituality*. Among “The 7 Central Practices to Awaken Heart and Mind” that this book enjoins, the fourth practice — to concentrate and calm our minds — involves numerous useful ideas. First Dr Walsh shows that Western psychologists for the past century did not believe one could contain the “meandering” mind. They accepted William James’ conclusion that “attention cannot be continuously sustained”. This came on the heels of the Freudian dilemma that we are victims of unconscious forces within us. The religions of the ages, however, while recognizing that the “Restless mind is as difficult to control as the wind” (*Gītā*, ch. 6), taught it can and *must* be subdued. That is why the Buddha taught mindfulness and why the Dalai Lama holds that the purpose of religion is to train the mind. True religion binds us back to our source; it teaches

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non-attachment, the equanimity which allows balanced minds, choices, and acts. We *can* turn attention to what is just, wise, and honourable. Dr Walsh insists that “unwise attention” is to be avoided, as our mental diet affects mental health. What we concentrate upon, we become.

Dr Walsh’s steps to developing a peaceful mind begin with several simple practices. One is to do only one thing at a time. Similar to the Zen idea of “When I sweep, I sweep”, we can give each task our full attention: not talking on our cell phones while we cook or drive, or listen to the radio while we read the newspaper. In time we allow each task to become a sacred ritual. Even the simple act of opening a door can be done with loving care, not bolting through, but softly closing it as well. Walsh suggests we start welcoming interruptions instead of getting irritated or disdaining them: when listening to a friend on the phone, we can give our total attention.

Contemplation and meditation are as much skills as learning to play an instrument. They require constant practice. Bringing our minds to tranquillity is the spiritual discipline of the *Gītā*. It refines the senses by relinquishing attachment to them. Walsh reminds us that “As the capacity for concentration matures, the ability to give care and attention to each moment becomes increasingly steady and continuous” (p. 169). In the *Gītā* we find it described as “That power of steadfastness holding the man together, which by devotion controls every motion of the mind . . .” (ch. 18). This trans-

forms living into an uninterrupted yoga.

Further steps outlined by Walsh: “Turn work into service”. When we embrace generosity and the joy of service, we give of the self, not just material objects. We may adopt a means of giving anonymously, such as the Talmud describes when generous folks leave food at the doors of the poor during the night, without seeking notice or reward. Mother Teresa summarized this by saying: “Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier.” These are the higher reaches of generosity. We can begin by transforming our motives and by dedicating our activities to others.

Nor should we omit the fine practice of silence, urged by all scriptures. For example, the Sufi teachings as well as the Torah admonish: “Be still, and know.” The skill by which we align ourselves with Eternity, the Taoists call living in harmony with Tao:

In stillness [the mind] becomes clear. In clarity, it becomes bright — and this brightness is the radiance of the Tao within. (*The Shambhala Guide to Taoism* by Eva Wong)

Confucius applied this precept to living in harmony with Nature and society. The Sufis, Quakers, American Indians, and Camaldolese monks all seek that “still small voice within”. For, as Black Elk asked, “Is not silence the very voice of the Great Spirit?” With silence the mind is calmed. Master KH wrote:

It is upon the serene and placid surface of the unruffled mind that the visions gathered

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from the invisible find a representation in the visible world. Otherwise you would vainly seek those visions, those flashes of sudden light which have already helped to solve so many of the minor problems and which alone can bring the truth before

the eye of the soul. It is with jealous care that we have to guard our mind-plane from all the adverse influences which daily arise in our passage through earth-life. (Letter No. 11, *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 64) ✧

In Memoriam: Dara Eklund



Mrs Dara Eklund was born into a family of Los Angeles United Lodge of Theosophists (ULT). After leaving ULT as a teenager in the late 1940s, she worked for Theosophy in a non-sectarian way, cooperating with Pt Loma, Adyar, ULT, and those theosophists independent of any organization. Her Library Science degree from UCLA helped her to do many years of research for Boris de Zirkoff, who was compiler and editor of the H. P. Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, and for her own writings. As her loving husband, Nicholas Weeks, reported on 4 August 2016, “the radiant soul we knew through her beautiful personality as Dara, passed on to her great adventure”. She will be missed by many.

Theosophical Work around the World



The international Vice-President, Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy, lighting the sacred lamp during the inauguration of the Dhyana Yoga, Naturopathy, and Ayurveda Centre at TS Adyar. Next to him is Dr Rasik Chandra Prasad, N.D., D.M., Y.S.



The General Manager, Mr Harihara Raghavan, chanting Sanskrit slokas at the inauguration of the Dhyana Centre. Also present are, Drs Rasik and Roopashri Prasad, B.A.M.S.

Theosophical Work around the World



The sacred lamp in front of the doctors' consultation office



Open central patio of the Bhojanasala, where therapeutic yoga exercises are to be conducted

Theosophical Work around the World

Wholistic Health Centre at Adyar

On 18 August 2016, at 3 pm, a wholistic health centre, the Dhyan Yoga, Naturopathy, and Ayurveda Clinic, was inaugurated with the approval of the International President, Mr Tim Boyd, who had met the doctors involved in June of this year. In his absence, the international Vice-President, Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy, cut the inaugural ribbon at the entrance of the Bhojanasala building, and the General Manager, Mr Harihara Raghavan, chanted inspiring Sanskrit ślokas befitting the auspicious occasion, and then introduced Doctors Rasik Chandra Prasad, N.D., D.M., Y.S., and Roopashree Prasad, B.A.M.S.

The doctors offer consultation and treatment services for Theosophical Society members, their family, and TS workers on Monday through Friday, from 3 to 6.30 pm. They also prescribe a vegetarian diet. Consultation fees are nominal, but Ayurvedic medicines are an extra charge.

Naturopathy and Ayurveda are the twin medicare systems that evolved originally in India. While Naturopathy points to a person's "good or bad life style", Ayurveda also has to do with that which suits an individual (*pathya*), diet (*āhāra*), and lifestyle (*vihāra*). Both

the systems have always advised prevention of disease rather than falling ill and then trying to find a cure, which may or may not be possible.

There is a saying in Ayurveda: "When there is a right lifestyle, why do you need medicines? What is the use of medicines when there is improper diet and lifestyle?" This holds good even today! Immunity against a disease is a recent concept. But Naturopathy and Ayurveda physicians have always regularly impressed upon their patients how important it is to exercise enough, have a proper diet, meditate, and thus improve their immunity. The great sages knew that wrong diet and lifestyle initially create a minor irritation in a healthy human being. If these warning signals are noticed and rectified without delay, then there will be no disease. Mostly negligence imbalances the body elements, creating a disease.

The Dhyan Clinic is an attempt to revitalize this wisdom tradition. TS members have been treated by the Dhyan Clinic in Kottivakam, Chennai, and have benefitted by this system. They often have enquired whether a similar Raja Yoga-type therapy centre using vegetarian diet could be started on the TS Adyar campus. Now many TS members will be benefitted by this endeavour. ✧

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