

## Freedom of Thought

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

## Freedom of the Society

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

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



# THE THEOSOPHIST

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# 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 Fear

TIM BOYD

ONE of the core concepts of the Ageless Wisdom tradition relates to the multi-dimensional nature of the universe and of ourselves as individuals — the fact is that we function on many levels simultaneously. The range of consciousness within us and our surroundings is limitless — everything from the seemingly unconscious aspects of our being to the highest divine consciousness are continuously present at any given moment and form the core of our being. As we examine this concept more deeply we become aware that the most powerful dimension of our being is the part to which we seem to have the least access from moment to moment. The highest aspect of our nature is the most hidden. There are terms and names that we use to describe it — Higher Self, the soul, the Divine Spark, the Ego, the individuality, Ātma-Buddhi-Manas. Some of the qualities that seem to appear when this higher aspect of our being has a greater sway in our lives are peace, love, compassion, and wisdom.

The poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson beautifully describes the closeness and ever presence of this higher self in this way:

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears,  
And Spirit with Spirit can meet —

Closer is He than breathing,  
And nearer than hands and feet.

As time goes on, we become aware that this is not something that someone has created as a fiction. We have glimpses of it, our own experiences of this deeper nature. When this awareness moves beyond being a mere concept to the level of actual experience, we are faced with a problem. Looking out into the world inhabited by billions of people just like us, each one of whom is inhabited by that same Divine Spark, we find that there is an abyss between the higher nature and our normal behaviour. We see wars, famine, economic imbalance, the whole range of self-centred, humanly created problems. Even in our individual lives we find such contradictions.

Thus we have to ask if in fact this Highest is the core and foundation of every being, and what explains our own behaviour as we interact with others and with the world around us. It is an important question. One of the things that H. P. Blavatsky wrote speaks to this issue: ‘Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, the only realities.’ For example,

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a fish in water is surrounded by the creatures of the sea, lives in a watery world, and has no understanding or interaction with the birds flying in the air or people walking on the land.

The same example has been given for our consciousness as individuals. A thief, one whose consciousness and attention is focused on stealing, can look at a holy man and all he can see is his wallet or the bag on his shoulder, and view it as an opportunity to steal. To a liar, the world is dishonest. To a saint, every being, whether a holy person, a criminal, a beggar, a priest, or a businessman, every being and every thing is holy, because of the plane of consciousness on which she functions.

A great Greek thinker, Sophocles, said something on one occasion that speaks to the same concept: 'To him who is in fear, everything rustles'; everything is moving, and everything is a source of fear. We can imagine a frightened person walking down a road late at night, every sound appears in his/her mind as a warning of impending danger. The common emotion of fear is shared by everyone. This is something that influences everyone's life and behaviour at some point. For many, fear can be like a 'never-departing shadow'.

Some say that there are only four emotions — sadness, happiness, anger, and fear — and that everything else is just a mixture of these basic four. Fear is one of the core emotions that has a way of rising up and appearing in our consciousness at those times when we feel

threatened and in danger. Depending on the person, the list of things that can cause such fears is long. There are some for whom spiders would cause them to leave the room screaming and crying. Snakes, mice, thunderstorms, and so on are common examples, but we also have the same emotional response to other things. Many have a huge fear of standing in front of others and speaking about what they think or believe. The fear of rejection by others is a powerful fear. Many others are afraid of death.

We feel these fears in the present moment, yet we are mentally capable of projecting them into the future, so that people can be in a state of constant fear about things that have not happened and never will. We often succumb to this condition. The problem is, like many emotional states, it is not something that is isolated to only one plane of our consciousness. Strong emotion has a pervasive quality that reaches down into our physical bodies and into our minds as well. Just from a physiological point of view, the moment fear arises things start happening within the body. The term that is used for the response is 'fight or flight'. Our bodies become prepared for one or the other in the face of an imagined or real threat. With the arising of fear, hormones are released into the body; people begin to perspire, their hearts race, muscles tense up, sugar in the blood increases — all in preparation for the imagined fight or flight.

In our theosophical literature we have clairvoyant descriptions of thought-forms

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that are generated from a fearful mind. When they are described or depicted, a grey tone always predominates in these thought-forms. The vivid colours associated with love or some decisive emotion are absent. Clairvoyants also describe the aura of the fearful person as 'hardened' with a grey cast preventing the inflow or outflow of higher energies. The state of being in fear has a natural tendency to lock one into the experience of isolation. Fear can also contaminate others. It has a contagious quality.

Throughout *The Mahatma Letters* we repeatedly find admonitions or advice such as 'fear not' or 'never fear'. In the translations of scriptures from around the world there are numerous instances where this same word, 'fear', is used to describe a higher order of being. It is not used to describe our personal reaction to snakes, and so on, but a completely higher dimension of understanding. In the Bible there is a statement that requires some thought: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' It is an odd statement because it is talking about something quite different than our normal sense of fear that we feel when we are threatened.

Similarly, in one of the chapters in the *Bhagavadgītā* Arjuna asks Krishna to reveal his universal form. Until that point, Arjuna had been encountering Krishna in the physical body as his charioteer and counsellor, but at this moment he knew that Krishna was no less than the embodiment of the Divine, and he asked for this boon that he be allowed to see Krishna in his true form. Krishna responded

saying that no other person had ever seen this form, but Arjuna's karma was such that he would be permitted to see. What Arjuna saw caused his hairs to stand on end. First he saw Krishna's body with mouths on all sides, and from every direction all living things were flying into his mouth and being devoured. He had eyes in all directions and was so bright that he was burning up universes. The effect of this vision on Arjuna was so profound that he was filled with 'fear'. The sight was too much for him to bear, so much so that he requested Krishna to return to his prior form, because the true one was overwhelming.

The word used in the *Bhagavadgītā* to describe the state of awe, wonder, amazement felt by Arjuna was the word 'fear'. This type of fear results from a recognition that points to our utter insignificance as individuals, that we exist within something so grand and all-encompassing. It is perhaps a fearful thing to behold that the reality of our own present potential is limitless. This is a higher fear, not fear in any ordinary sense, but a quality that has great potentials for our exploration.

So what do we do? There is an expression that: 'The disease that is hidden cannot be healed.' To first become aware that there is a condition is the beginning of its healing. The awareness of this process and how it operates upon us is a beginning — its naming and recognition is a beginning. When a patient goes to a doctor, the first thing the latter would do is examine, diagnose, and name

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the condition. Then he might prescribe pills, but any good doctor would also advise changes in the patient's diet. On another level he might suggest exercises, and on another level it would be suggested that the patient needs to read some things that will elevate his thoughts, or engage in prayer or meditation.

A similar, multi-layered approach could be adopted in dealing with fear, but probably the best approach would be one that addresses the cause. One of the ways that our condition and our normal state of mind has been described is that we function out of 'the heresy of separateness'. This refers to the false idea that in some way we are separated, not just from one another, but from the Divine source that inhabits each and every thing. What is it that addresses that mindset that we seem to carry?

During HPB's lifetime she talked a great deal *about* meditation, but she said little in terms of direction in *how* to meditate. In 1888, three years before she died, she dictated a 'Diagram of Meditation' to one of her students in England. It is profound and has broad application, but particularly to the mind that feels itself walled-off and separate in states of fearfulness.

Its focus is on Unity. In fact it begins by saying: 'First conceive of UNITY by expansion in space and infinity in Time.' The first thing she advises is to make the attempt to conceive of Oneness. Of course, it is impossible, Oneness cannot be a concept, it cannot be grasped by the mind, but she urges us to begin with that attempt.

Then she presents very specific ways of directing our attention in meditation. We should first direct our attention to certain 'Deprivations', that is, a 'constant refusal to think of the reality of' five things: (1) separations and meetings — the sorts of things that happen all the time; (2) the distinction between friends and foes — those we are attached to and repelled by; (3) possessions; (4) personality; and (5) sensations. All of the things that we lend our attention to that tend to isolate us in the sense that 'these are mine', or 'these are my qualities', or 'these are the things that make me different and apart'. We are to deprive the mind-stream from assigning reality to these things. She adds that the culmination of this avenue of meditation would be the realization that 'I am without attributes'. There are no qualities that divide my consciousness; there are no identities that separate me from others; none of those things. This is the first part of this process. This is the *via negativa*, or the way of negation — *neti neti* in Sanskrit.

She then goes on to talk about the other side of this process, which she describes as 'Acquisitions'. There is a certain state of mind that we are to 'acquire', in this case through meditation on three elements: (1) a Perpetual Presence in imagination in all space and time — a continual effort to imagine ourselves as universally present in all space and time — is a most difficult thing to do. Obviously, any effort in this direction has the effect of diminishing the

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limitations of the personality. She says that meditating in this way has the effect of developing a background state of consciousness that operates even when we are asleep. So, even in dreams this state of mind remains active. She adds that courage becomes the characteristic of the person who goes along this path, and thus there is no dread experienced in facing the various dangers and trials that come our way in life. (2) The second acquisition that she lists is a continued attempt at an attitude of mind towards all things that is neither love, hate, or indifference — a state of equanimity that regards all as equal. There is no division

of better, higher, those to be loved or those to be rejected. (3) The third aspect she talks about is the mind that regards everything that exists as being an expression of limitation only. HPB suggests these three elements as a curative or medicine for the various ills that arise from this heresy of separateness, among which is fear. These acquisitions culminate with the recognition that 'I am all Space and Time'.

These are suggestions. Although, for our present purposes I have pointed to the specific emotion of fear, they apply universally and are worth the attempt of exploring more deeply. ✧

**There is the perception that thought breeds fear and pleasure; and where there is pleasure there must be pain and therefore resistance to pain. I see that very clearly; the seeing of it is the immediate action; and the seeing of it requires perception, a thought, logic, thinking very clearly; all that is involved. And the seeing of it is instantaneous, and therefore the action is instantaneous, therefore freedom from it. That means you are a free human being, a different human being, totally transformed, not tomorrow but now because you see very clearly that thought breeds both fear and pain and pleasure. And all our values are based on it, moral, ethical, social, religious, spiritual, all the values are based on that. And if you see the truth of it, and to see the truth of it you have to be astonishingly aware, logically, healthily, sanely, observe every movement of thought. Then that very perception is total action, therefore when you leave you are completely out of it. Otherwise you will say, how am I to be free of fear tomorrow.**

J. Krishnamurti

# The Neurophysiology of Compassion

JOSÉ FOGLIA

**H**OMO sapiens is the last species of the genus Homo that has appeared on the planet. And for about 35,000 years, across the globe, we have left cultural testimonies that illustrate our creativity, resourcefulness, and determination. Cave paintings, caves decorated with animals and symbols, a variety of domestic utensils, weapons, and many other crafts claim artistic sensitivity, the capacity for abstraction and ingenuity evidently developing at that time. In those days, thanks to our musical talent, we also built the first wind instrument: the flute. However, of all our creations, the most significant was undoubtedly the development of verbal language. We are the only species on Earth today that can communicate through sounds and words structured into sentences, thanks to the talent we have developed over time.

Over the millennia the size of our left hemisphere has been growing. Perhaps the repeated use of the Phonological Loop, the verbal information store, has increased the memory, something very necessary to properly process all the

information that this complex function requires. Therefore the areas of Broca and Wernicke, the language-processing areas of the brain, developed considerably so that they could contain significant vocabulary; today this allows us to master several languages. If we make a horizontal cut (cross section) through the human brain where these areas are located, we find they are larger than their counterparts in the right hemisphere.

However, phylogenetically, at a particular time in our history, the right hemisphere was more developed than the left one. In fact, since Homo sapiens appeared on this planet some 160,000 years ago, we see examples of a tremendous creativity. Whether to face the challenges of life and respond intelligently, or to study every circumstance so as to move forward and meet our aims, we learned to plan strategies to achieve our goals successfully. Fighting weather and predators in order to survive, and later on controlling the environment, required much intelligence in our diaspora. Whether Homo sapiens had a single origin in

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**Dr José Foglia** is a neurologist from Uruguay. Theosophy-Science Lecture delivered at the international Convention, Adyar, 2 January 2016.

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Africa or appeared in different parts of the world, the fact remains that they populated the Earth in a short time. Does this not prove that we had an enormous creative capacity?

Our drive to meet and conquer had no limits, and certainly one day it will take us beyond the boundaries of our universe, to explore the possible existence of other ones. Apparently, nothing stops Homo sapiens. It is also a fact that the day we decide to destroy a large part of humanity, we will be totally successful. The array of mass weapons, chemical, bacteriological and other types of destruction, the hundreds of thousands of megatons of nuclear warheads and technology we have in the twenty-first century are much more effective and faster to kill masses of people than the carved stone axe of the Neolithic Age, and even more than those primitive weapons developed in the Paleolithic Age. Today it is clear that we care very little, that we could easily achieve our destruction of the Earth. There is no doubt that so many atrocities imply a factor that is seriously sick: the psyche of Homo sapiens.

When and how did this severe psychological deterioration occur? What is the cause of the tremendous crisis that affects humanity today? What dehumanized Homo sapiens?

Our story was full of learning from the beginning. However, when our brains developed self-awareness, it increased progressively over a few millennia to change our physical appearance, the

habitat that shelters us, the fauna, flora, atmosphere, forests, deserts, bacteria, and soon the Moon and Mars. The universe full of deep meaning, in which we lived during our stay in the caves just a few millennia ago, has been replaced in a relatively short time by the security that the Stock Exchange provides, and we continue to live this way every day thanks to cyber and internet communications. Is it not normal and logical that a lot of confusion reigns among mankind?

In a 'few hours' we have gone from living the meaningful life that we were offered to the accelerated virtual world of the values of intellect. The hypertrophy of the language areas in the left hemisphere granted the supremacy of our conscious reality as well as the control over its practically mute brother located in the right hemisphere. We boast of being the only beings having free will on this planet. And we have accepted this fallacy with pleasure and pride. However, is it right to claim that we are free when our behaviour is increasingly influenced by propaganda and conditioned by ideologies?

It is undeniable that we are facing an unprecedented crisis in the history of humanity. Several facts show that in the past we were much more humane and sensitive. Guns were for hunting animals to feed our families. Life had for us a deeper meaning and creativity was dedicated to building and working for survival. Using these skills and attributes we modelled the first clay pot, which allowed us to carry water across deserts

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or the first coat that we made to protect our children from cold during the glaciations. We were affectionate with each other, as the loss of a team member meant continuing our intrepid journey through the world with too vulnerable a flank. We loved each other dearly and we needed each other, leaving for posterity testimonies of funeral rites and tombs built with great affection to bury our loved ones.

What happened as time went by? What polluted our hearts? When and how did we start losing the ability to love?

In a short period of time, since we created the verbal language, we have been replacing the deeper meanings of the life given to us with constant pointless virtual chats, thanks to modern technology. Little by little our culture has been deteriorating to the point of turning our relationships into a vulgar and mediocre abstraction.

Insidiously, the neurotic thought processed through the Phonological Loop has progressively poisoned the human brain with arrogant ideologies and fundamentalism, thus provoking perturbed, psychotic, and hysterical behaviour. Consequently, our focus, weakened and distracted, can hardly keep pace with the rampant cyber fashion that currently aims to globalize the culture of the intellect. With great pride, we have altered the everyday rhythms of Mother Nature. Therefore, the survivors of this crisis will not be surprised when history points at us as being the only creatures responsible for a tremendous extinction.

After the first settlements of the

Neolithic Age, when we finally started living in cities, we created norms of behaviour which would ensure balance and harmony among citizens. It was so throughout history; we were creating paradigms and then replacing them, according to circumstances, with other more convenient ones. And this only strengthened the growth of our intellectual abilities, not our capacity to love. More and more our thoughts ignored the feelings of our heart. The activity of the Phonological Loop increased until a psychological dependence on the intellect was created. The damage our addiction to thoughts is causing, is threatening our lives. Therefore, now is not the time to propose a new paradigm, but rather to create an entirely new and unprecedented culture.

We could ask ourselves whether the massacres committed by the communists to achieve the ideal of social equality are justifiable. Or whether the killings in the name of God by religious groups can be justified? Can we condone our exploitative behaviour caused by greed and ambition?

Throughout history we have justified our behaviour in order to get what we thought was best for us, and we continue to do the same to this day. We lethargically consent to the production of war weapons, the atrocities of populist governments, and the corruption of the politicians in power. Worse, we allow, with total passivity, the loss of individual freedom, environmental pollution, the spread of Marxist absolutism, and the anguish of

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how to make ends meet in order to pay fees to the corrupt banks and mafia corporations that dominate the world.

What happened in our brain to allow this to occur? What separated us from the true meaning of life? When did we accept not to be free?

We will focus on these questions from a neuroscientific perspective, trying to give a reading of today's humanity in crisis. It is true that a reductionist approach may seem too rigid when it comes to explaining human conflicts, as these involve emotions and feelings. However, it is time for *Homo sapiens* to turn the focus through a lens of scientific knowledge and language to create a whole new culture.

The human brain consists of two hemispheres that exchange their information through a bridge: the *corpus callosum*. Both hemispheres process information very differently, have different abilities, and one could say that each has its own personality.

The left hemisphere of the brain is 'logistikon', as Plato called it, home of convergent, abstract, analytical, rational, and logical thinking. It is the seat of the Phonological Loop from which emerge direct, vertical, realistic, powerful, and dominant thoughts. The Broca area for the articulation of the word, Wernicke for language comprehension, and areas 39 and 40 of Brodmann modules that integrate all the perceptions of the same object, all constitute the Phonological Loop where we are constantly processing our thoughts. Some of them become con-

scious and are observed and evaluated in different areas of the prefrontal lobes. However, most of the thoughts are unconscious, submerged, as an iceberg. This hemisphere functions like computer processors placed in series. It has the ability to classify, organize, and analyse every detail of the information being processed. It is by constantly associating this with our past experience accumulated in memory, that we are able to plan an action in the future. This hemisphere 'thinks' on the basis of language, in a linear and methodical way. It is the seat of our intellect that orders information logically and rationally, and expresses itself through verbal, spoken, or written language. It is the brain that can talk, measure, compare, that can do arithmetical calculations and think of circumstances of the past, analyse the present, and plan a strategy for deferred action in a time we call 'the future'.

The right hemisphere, seat of the 'nous' of Plato, is our intuitive, imaginative brain, enabling divergent, flexible, complex, and funny thoughts, humorous visualizing, and mystical, submissive and sensitive interactions. It is the venue where new creative ideas emerge. The creative brain developed phylogenetically in our species long before the verbal language. It is the intelligent brain that creates new solutions to new circumstances. Being almost mute, it connects directly with our 'heart', so as to convey the information that is processed every minute. It is also home to the deep feelings and emotions that warn us about what is

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happening in our environment and our bodies, in our present state and the state in which other beings are. It is the empathic brain.

This right hemisphere functions as if it had computer processors placed in parallel. It is our analogue brain. Its vision is global. It thinks on the basis of images instead of words; it learns through the movement of the body. It is the seat of the Visuospatial Sketchpad, the part of the working memory that enables the recollection of images. It only lives in the present; hence the perception is here and now. It has developed features that enable us to have a complete and total perception

of the universe that surrounds us and of our own body. Thus, thanks to this scheme, it is aware of the spatial location of the body and, because of the integration, makes it possible to relate to the space in which it is moving. It also understands the sensory information from the outside world, thus achieving a total perception of its surroundings. It is the seat of the creative talents, emotions, poetry, metaphors, symbols, music and other art expressions. It is our artistic brain.

When, how, and why did the left hemisphere supremacy of the human brain overpower our conscious reality?

*(To be continued)*

Then someone came who said, 'My Prince hath shot  
A swan, which fell among the roses here,  
He bids me pray you send it. Will you send?'  
'Nay,' quoth Siddartha, 'if the bird were dead  
To send it to the slayer might be well,  
But the swan lives; my cousin hath but killed  
The god-like speed which throbbed in this white wing.'  
And Devadatta answered, 'The wild thing,  
Living or dead, is his who fetched it down;  
'Twas no man's in the clouds, but fall'n 'tis mine,  
Give me my prize, fair Cousin.' Then our Lord  
Laid the swan's neck beside his own smooth cheek  
And gravely spake, 'Say no! the bird is mine,  
The first of myriad things which shall be mine  
By right of mercy and love's lordliness.  
For now I know, by what within me stirs,  
That I shall teach compassion unto men  
And be a speechless world's interpreter,  
Abating this accursed flood of woe,  
Not man's alone; but, if the Prince disputes,  
Let him submit this matter to the wise  
And we will wait their word.'

Sir Edwin Arnold, *Light of Asia*

# Love and Service: Twin Stars of Brotherhood

S. SUNDARAM

IT is a common observation that society in general is passing through a crisis resulting in confusion and disorder on several fronts. The individual is lost in the crowd, deprived of his sense of belongingness. With the result he feels no moral responsibility towards his fellow beings. As stated by a social philosopher, 'People in the present-day world take interest in Nature and man only if they provide some personal benefit to them'. Communities and society in general appear to be 'the mere sum of separate individuals' and not 'the totality of living relationships'. Members of the Theosophical Society, intellectuals and other concerned people have a tremendous and trying task before them.

Ethical values in the modern world are given less importance as compared to materialistic values. People's struggle for survival is so dominant that a development-oriented outlook is hardly generated in them. Development in the real sense means a sequence of continuous changes for the better in the system over a considerable period of time. It should

bring about change in inter-human relationships and standards of conduct. It should elevate not only people's intellectual level but also help in inculcating in them ethical and moral values. But we find that people in general have taken the easy path to success. Individual interests, primarily economic as well as parochial, are pulling people apart day by day. Whether one likes to hear it or not, this is the picture of the modern age — a grim situation of the present-day world. What is required is to create a positive bend of mind, one that is free from fetters and inhibitions and is not bound by narrow considerations or interests.

Discontent, disharmony, mistrust, conflict, and violence prevailing in society are facts of life. But in order to deal with such a situation we will have to seriously think and ponder over the positive factors and forces which can help and guide us to frame, formulate, and systematically work out our 'law of life'.

The word brotherhood has been used in different senses by different people, the most easily understood and important

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**Mr S. Sundaram** is General Secretary of the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society. Based on a talk delivered during the 10th World Congress of the TS held in Rome in July 2010.

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of these being 'harmonious relationship'. But, it is much more — values of co-operation, common good, sharing, and functioning as responsible members of society. In order to reach that stage we must concentrate on the supreme values with which we agree, and not on the matters which create tension and bring about disharmony. The causes of disorder, disharmony, tension, conflicts, and so forth have to be studied and understood in order to remove them. But, the effort has to be on spreading ideas which can positively strengthen the bonds of brotherhood, which can help in bringing people closer for the betterment and upliftment of society. Such an outlook and approach will not only deepen the intensity of our involvement in constructive activities but will also help in enhancing our level of performance in the responsibilities which we take up.

The relationship of man with man is what we are basically concerned with. It is a nearness of hearts, that is needed and not just physical proximity, not merely living side by side but living together. So could there be a conscientious effort and thoughtful approach towards preserving and fostering the dimensions of fundamental human values? Could there be a process of inner change, along with worldly changes, which will develop in us a sense of belonging to one another? We need to remember that what people in general call as progress is nothing if it does not lead to a corresponding inner change. There has to

be a proper and harmonious blend of 'hand, head and heart', or soul-force, for the making of a complete human being.

To realize the unity of life and understand the interdependency of all that lives are very essential. Many of us go through life without forming a single meaningful relationship with those who belong to other socio-economic strata. The pioneers, leaders and scholars of Theosophy and the Theosophical Society have said in clear terms that in thought, speech, attitude, and action one must rise above the considerations of caste, religion, sex, race, class, and colour. They tried to draw people's attention towards it and asked to understand and live the real essence of religion. So, the oneness and unity of life have to be realized and practised in inter-human relationships. As mentioned by Dada Dharmadhikari, an eminent Gandhian thinker:

To live is to relate. The purification of this relationship among human beings is what we call revolution, and this revolution is man's vision of progress towards truth. Nearness of heart is the sign of progress, and when people come close to each other, their relationship is pure and holy. Thus whatever efforts will be made in accordance with Truth, that is promoting inter-human relationship, unity, and harmony among fellow beings, will support and help in people's progress and upliftment. It will develop in people a sense of belonging to one another.<sup>1</sup>

There have been some outstanding personalities in human history who stood

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by what they considered to be true and just. These great seers and teachers of humanity drew men's attention to the path of moral and spiritual upliftment and laid great stress on the supreme value of moral regeneration over and above material advancement. They have been outstanding Guides, shedding Light on the entire world.<sup>2</sup>

The question arises as to why they were so keen on working for the welfare of the whole of humanity. There seems to be one motivating factor. A well known Urdu poet has said, of course in a different context, the word 'love' in its compressed and restricted form resides in the heart of the lover; but when expanded pervades humanity as a whole. In the case of Dr Annie Besant, we find that her love as well as concern for all living beings made her think and work with great zeal and enthusiasm. Her limitless love which transformed into tremendous energy, courage, and concern resulted in her untiring efforts and actions towards the welfare of all.<sup>3</sup>

One might ask, what do we mean by 'love'? Several saints, poets, and thinkers have explained it in different ways. Kabir, Tagore, J. Krishnamurti — they all have explained love beautifully. M. K. Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave have talked about 'Love Force'. But I would rather not go into those details. Here I would like to mention just three names in this context. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has defined 'love' as 'compassion in action' and 'to care with concern'. 'Love is a sense of caring with respect and responsibility.'

Dr Annie Besant has given a very broad and comprehensive concept of Love. She says:

Love is that Immortal Flame in whose Light one can perceive Truth. In the warmth of this Immortal Flame all the defects and vices flower into *Śivam* and *Sundaram*, that is, Welfare and Beauty.

And we all have read and heard that Dr Besant herself was Love and Dignity personified.<sup>4</sup>

As stated by Dada Dharmadhikari,

Only love can be material of which a bridge of cordial social relationship could be constructed, because love is the best solvent of all isolationist tendencies, of all egoistic identities which we call 'personality'. I am using the word 'personality' in a different sense, which is perhaps nearer to its original meaning. I am told that the original Latin word *persona* means 'mask'. It is not reality. So when a man seeks to preserve his personality, which is not the reality, he seeks to protect himself from his fellowmen and to adopt a defensive attitude. An attitude of defence isolates; whereas love is the best solvent of all 'egomania'.<sup>5</sup>

Now the root of man's happiness lies in the warmth of human relationship — relationship between man and man. People's coming closer to each other in a positive way is a sign of progress. Such people do not live in a closed house. They, with a broad outlook, try to reduce the distance between themselves and their fellowmen.

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‘Culture’, in Sanskrit, is *sanskṛti*.

*Sanskṛti* can mean *saha-kṛti*, meaning collective action, or it can mean *samyak kṛti* meaning proper action. I would prefer to emphasize a *sanskṛti*, which means ‘a proper action performed collectively’ by concerned people for the betterment of society. An action which can bring respect and honour to people in course of time might become a part of our culture as well. An action which can bring respect, honour, and integrity in the genuine sense of the term alone can provide us with a moral code. In this regard every value, norm, conduct, and responsibility which we require for our healthy, harmonious, and peaceful coexistence should be sought, located, and learnt. If we want to regenerate our cultural, moral, and spiritual values, we should first analyse and try to understand our own thoughts and actions.<sup>6</sup>

What unites fellow beings is as important as what makes a nation. People in India, and people in other parts of the world as well, did unite on several occasions in the past. This shows that the tendency to help and the feeling of compassion and cooperation are inherent in humanity and they arise during crises such as earthquakes, floods, famines, communal tension, war and so on. On such occasions people forget their petty differences and join together to cope with the situation.

Now the questions arise: why do we have to wait for some untoward happen-

ings in order to get united? Why do we wait for such critical situations to help those in misery? Why does the sense of commitment which awakens during times of crises remain dormant during normal times? What prevents this spirit of collective consciousness from functioning and operating during normal times? After all, maintenance of the collective consciousness is a very significant function of development and transformation. By proceeding in that direction we might be able to see and realize the beauty of performing proper collective action. Working together, thinking together silently, develops the feeling of togetherness and the perpetuation of this feeling leads to a state of emotional integration.

Service is not mere action. It is not only relief work. It is not an ameliorative programme or routine work. It is not even an act of charity. One does service because it is one’s spontaneous expression of love, care, and concern. Those with such a state of mind alone are able to see things as they are and as they can be. Within its fold, service includes feeling, goodwill, and a great sense of responsibility. The significant aspect of service is that it demands complete identification with the sufferer(s) or the work at hand. The feeling of duality has no scope or place in it. Then only can one have compassion that will prompt him ‘to feel for others’ and do something to relieve them from their misery. The civic, moral, and spiritual character of society can be strengthened through service, cooperation, and love only.

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As observed by Professor B. Sanjeeva Rao, a close associate of Dr Besant and J. Krishnamurti:

Service without the background of selflessness is sterile, uncreative. Work which we love to do and not under the compulsion of any motive, is the right service and is its own reward.<sup>7</sup>

Then, Prof. Sanjeeva Rao says:

Sorrow, when you do not try to run away from it, contains a healing power that transforms it into wisdom. We do not seem to understand this secret liberating power implicit in human suffering and we are perpetually trying to evade, escape from our troubles instead of trying to understand the meaning of suffering.<sup>8</sup>

Pain and suffering are the means of our awakening.<sup>9</sup>

In Dr Annie Besant's case we find that personal suffering at crucial stages of her life made her understand human suffering at large. The suffering of her child and her suffering for the child got transformed into compassion for all of humanity.

In this connection I would like to add that there is one *bhajan* — a devotional song composed by Saint Narasimha Mehta — *Vaishnava Jana*. Wherever and whenever this devotional song is rendered, people immediately associate it with M. K. Gandhi. Why? Because, Gandhi tried his best to live all those moral and spiritual values mentioned in the song. Narasimha Mehta speaks of the

characteristics of a truly spiritual man whom he calls *Vaishnava Jana*. The first characteristic of such a person, according to the saint poet, is a sensitivity of consciousness so that he feels intensely the pain of the other person.

The 'Vaishnava Jana', the spiritual man,  
Is he who feels the pain of another,  
He relieves the suffering of others,  
Without feeling any sense of egoism.

Gandhi was highly influenced by this devotional song. He was, in fact, following in the footsteps of Lord Buddha by showing the strong connection between the service of suffering humanity and the process of self-purification, interpreting spiritual life to be a life of service.<sup>10</sup>

I would like to mention an incident narrated by a lady who lost her husband and two sons in the space of a month. This happened in 1931. One day she went to meet Mr Gandhi and the latter gave a patient and sympathetic hearing to her. He said:

It is not easy to overcome the blow which you have suffered. But I would suggest to you — if you can do that — to go and meet people whom you know, listen to their problems and sufferings, persuade them to come out with their problems and causes of their pain and sorrow, and then try to work out solutions as to what best you can do to reduce their sufferings.

The lady concluded by saying that this suggestion from Gandhiji provided a positive direction and constructive step to her — to forget her own sorrow

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and to help others reduce their suffering.

‘I will not cause harm to anyone’ is a very good idea. But a more positive step would be, ‘In what manner can I do good to others?’ In other words, the perspective, spirit, and attitude with which a work or a mission is carried out is very significant. In 1971, when a large number of refugees came to India from Bangladesh, a renowned artist of Kolkata, known to us, helped some of the refugees by giving money in order to buy sewing machines and other such equipment to earn and eke out their livelihood. But, he asked them to repay the money given to them, in instalments. As it generally happens, the person who gives develops a sense of ego and the recipients suffer from an inferiority complex. In the aforesaid case, the artist was not really interested in getting back his money. What he aimed at was that the refugees should become completely self-dependent and lead a life with dignity.

We have to ask ourselves: how can we generate, promote, and strengthen the spirit of selfless service? How can one rise above narrow considerations and live a dedicated and unselfish life? How can the bonds of brotherhood be strengthened? How can we live in harmony and with a sense of oneness with *all beings*? As long as the feeling of duality is there, as long as the mentality to take up responsibility *voluntarily* is not there — the sense of involvement in any work cannot exist.

This brief article may not be able to find a remedy for the situation which we

are facing. Neither is it possible to do so in the course of a single analysis. What seems important is to realize that the factors which count for brotherhood are possible to be located. So let us keep pondering over the issue and continue the dialogue in our Theosophical Lodges. It will help us in finding out ways to awaken sensitivity, a sense of awareness and the sense of urgency for a cause. It may help us to gather strength and courage to show our disagreement with thoughts and actions which cause social, moral and spiritual harm to the individual, group or society, and at the same time guide us to earnestly put in our efforts to work out and present an effective alternative based on love, concern, compassion and cooperation.

Behind the present crises lies the issues of moral and spiritual values and it is only through an affirmation of what is just and right that we can give meaning to our lives. Unless the human mind perceives the moral and spiritual dimensions of living, disharmony, conflicts and misery will not abate.

How can compassion, the basis of service and understanding be generated? How can a compassionate attitude be developed?

The TS lays great emphasis on the search for truth, commitment to truth, and putting in all one’s effort and energy to live that truth. This commitment to truth awakens sensitivity and a sense of awareness and urgency for a cause. When there is intense and complete commitment to truth, personal con-

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siderations automatically wither away, and the intensity channelizes itself in a creative, constructive, and positive way.

I would like to conclude with Dr Annie Besant's words:

As service becomes our habitual attitude to everyone we meet, we shall gradually find that everyone is profoundly interesting and that the giving of service is the greatest joy in life. ✧

### References:

1. Mentioned by Dada Dharmadhikari in his talk delivered at the Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanasi, on 7 October 1969.
2. S. Sundaram, 'Annie Besant — A Phenomenon', *The Indian Theosophist*, Sep-Oct 1997, Vol. 96, Nos. 9 & 10, the Indian Section, the Theosophical Society, Varanasi, p. 277.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid, pp. 277-278.
5. Dada Dharmadhikari, *Tasks of Social Research*, Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanasi, 1965, p. 34.
6. Veena Alase, 'Ethnic Identity and National Integration — The Role of Culture and Education', *Gandhian Perspectives*, Vol. IV, No.1, 1991, Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanasi, p. 76.
7. B. Sanjeeva Rao, *Letters of Wisdom*, Dipti Publications, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1989, pp. 71-72.
8. Ibid, p. 7.
9. Ibid, p. 73.
10. Raghavan N. Iyer, *Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, New York, Oxford

**The theosophic life must be a life of service. Unless we are serving, we have no right to live. We live by the constant sacrifice of other lives on every side, and we must pay it back; otherwise to use an ancient phrase, we are but thieves and do not repay the gift. Service is the great illuminator. The more we serve the wiser we become, for we learn wisdom not by studying but by living. There is a sense in which the saying is perfectly true: 'He who doeth the will shall know of the doctrine'. To live the life of service clears the mental atmosphere of the distorting fogs of prejudice, passion, temperament. Service alone makes the eye single, so that the whole body is full of light, and only those who serve are those who truly live.**

Annie Besant  
*The Theosophic Life*

# Boris de Zirkoff and the *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*

DARA EKLUND

TO trace the editorial life of Boris de Zirkoff (B. de Z.) with respect to the *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings (BCW)*, one would need to examine carefully not only marginal notes on his MSS, but his entire correspondence regarding them. These are available in the archives of the Olcott Library in Wheaton, Illinois, often in the form of first editions into which he entered his editorial marks.

Those who knew and worked for Mr de Zirkoff trusted his honest and thorough scholarship. They realize that he did on occasion make minor alterations. Most often these involved correcting a quotation by filling in missing words, perhaps dropped by the original typesetter. He would editorially plunge into a quote, placing the reference after the paragraph, rather than interjecting it in the passage. These were mostly matters of style and did not interfere with the meaning of a passage.

How many of those who rigidly insist the editor changed the words of HPB, have really examined his MSS to give his editorial labours a fair hearing?

In my years of assisting him, Boris would point out passages where a quote seemingly closed off in the original, yet would continue into portions of the text to follow and not be given quote marks again (again, perhaps dropped by the typesetter). As solution for these encounters, he would sometimes extract the portion, or phrase, and rejoin it to the body of the quote where it belonged. At least he would replace the quote marks into the discourse where they were required.

The reader of Boris' editions will also find bracketed remarks where the original word is shown first and HPB's rendition next to it. This occurs for instance on p. 284 of *The Secret Doctrine (SD)*, vol. I), where the Wilson edition of the *Vishnu Purāna*<sup>1</sup> was quoted. After checking the Wilson edition, the word 'development' was restored, but HPB's word [evolution] kept in brackets. This was meant to provide the reader a source for comparison. [In HPB's time, how many other translations existed for the reader to consult? Generally very few!]

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From *Theosophical History*, vol. III, 6 April 1991. **Mrs Dara Eklund** has, since her youth, cooperated for Theosophy with Pt Loma, Adyar, ULT, and independent theosophists. She has a Library Science Degree and is a member of the TS Pt Loma in the Hague; TS Adyar in Wheaton, IL; and TS Pasadena.

Boris made every effort to consult those editions available to students of HPB's time. For example on p. 286, *SD*, vol. I) the reader will observe that the footnote to Hermetic Fragments in *The Virgin of the World*<sup>2</sup> cites the 1885 ed., p. 153. HPB's parenthetical 'It?' is placed by Boris in brackets, providing the editorial impact of her pen by qualifying a Westernized attempt to deify the impersonal Deity. This type of attention to scholarly detail in no way hampers the student's comprehension of a passage. In restoring what Boris might dub 'the family honour' the quotation is found as originally printed, along with a key to a less anthropomorphic teaching of Gnostic antiquity. B. de Z.'s tremendous effort to relocate HPB's textual references is complemented by the current availability of modern reprints. Today a number of these ancient texts are available through the fine publications of Wizards Bookshelf in San Diego, as well as by such august publishers as Sam Weiser and Wisdom Books.

Another example of changes made in the *BCW* series is explained with regard to changing Cosmos with a 'C' to Kosmos with a 'K'. The editor explains this usage on pp. 656–57 of vol. XII, in the crucial 'Esoteric Teachings' Section.

It somewhat distresses this writer to observe B. de Z.'s labour of over fifty years questioned by those who have never retraced his steps through the great University Libraries, or perused his worldwide correspondence in ardent search for documentation. There are after all numerous notes and letters to track

down the hundreds of quotations checked. But why repeat that labour merely to satisfy some skeptical whim, or in order to please scholarly pride? It is the message beyond the quotes which counts anyway. Boris knew that message well, as anyone reading his forty-year journal, *Theosophia*, can prove to himself.

Perhaps, for the newer students, a brief sojourn into his theosophical history would be a keen way of appreciating what Boris de Zirkoff accomplished.

Growing up in St. Petersburg Russia, Boris knew little about his illustrious great aunt until around the age of sixteen. Escaping across Finland in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, he settled in Stockholm with his mother and step-father. There, at the home of the Russian consul, he saw the *SD* for the first time. This moment marked a beginning of his lifetime dedication to theosophy.

In 1923, at the age of 21, Boris met Katherine Tingley during one of her European tours as world leader of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society. She invited him to come to her headquarters in America, where at Point Loma his mission to compile the *BCW* would surface. There, some months later, he was afforded every chance to further explore HPB's articles in *The Theosophist*, *Lucifer*, and other Theosophical journals.

Sometime during 1924, while browsing through these journals, B. de Z. resolved to compile HPB's works into one uniform edition. He could by then see that the bulk of her accomplishment exceeded one thousand items, aside from her sublime

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literary tomes. For nearly six further years it was a private venture, involving a search for clues to other MSS from her pen, locating undated or incorrectly dated sources and starting a far-flung correspondence to elicit information not available at Point Loma.

In 1929 Dr Gottfried de Purucker suggested publishing a uniform edition of HPB's writings, and formed a small committee to bring out the first volume for her 1931 *birth* centennial. Since A. Trevor Barker (of Rider & Company) had been working along similar lines, he joined forces with the committee. Due to Barker's reputation as the editor of *The Mahatma Letters*, his name was to be on the title page.

On 1 April 1930 this became an inter-organizational publication venture, dovetailing with the Fraternalization Movement inspired by G. de Purucker, leader of Point Loma after the passing of Mrs Tingley. Dr Annie Besant's cooperation was secured at the TS Convention that July in Geneva, Switzerland. This meant permission to utilize the TS Archives at Adyar, and the collaboration of N. Sri Ram, Mary K. Neff, Jinarājadāsa and others. Meanwhile, The United Lodge of Theosophists kept faithfully in print *A Modern Panarion*, which was the TS' initial attempt to collate all of Blavatsky's articles. However, since 1895, nothing further had been accomplished towards the total magnum opus until the 1930 publication venture. Although ready for the printer in the summer of 1931, the first volume was actually published in 1933 as *The Complete Works of H. P.*

*Blavatsky*. Vol. II also came out in 1933. Vol. III appeared in 1935 and vol. IV in 1936, the year in which a new edition of *Isis Unveiled* was reset. All the Rider edition plates were lost in the London 'Blitz'! However, the lost volumes were eventually expanded and printed anew by Boris for the TPH edition of the series. This was after Boris had moved to Los Angeles and was working independently of any society. Vols. V and VI had been sponsored by the Philosophical Research Society under the auspices of Manly Palmer Hall, and a worldwide H. P. Blavatsky Writings Fund.

When the TPH of the American Section of the TS took over the funding of the entire project, naturally the later reprints bore the imprint of TPH. Boris continued to work independently from his Los Angeles office, with a handful of student helpers and co-workers. As president of the American Section, Joy Mills always gave full support to his efforts, as have all the presidents since the time of Dr Henry Smith. Stockton Trade Press of Los Angeles was his typesetter. However, after a fire wiped out much of the stock in the mid-seventies, the binding of future volumes was done in the Midwest, where as manager of TPH, Clarence Pedersen was of immense assistance. *The Secret Doctrine* edition of 1978-79 was typeset in Adyar originally, but in 1990 it was decided to buy the plates, so that future editions could be printed in the United States. A reset edition is forthcoming, just as soon as the existing stock at Olcott is depleted.

## Boris de Zirkoff and the *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*

Boris de Zirkoff died on March 4, 1981, after fifty years of labour, seeing twelve volumes of the *BCW* into print. Subsequently vols. XIII and XIV have been published from his MSS, as well as a combined Index (vol. XV) which came out this year (1991).

I wish only to add that Boris always gave credit to a wide range of resource people from such co-workers of HPB herself as Henry T. Edge, Bertram Keightley and E.T. Sturdy, to his own early co-workers at Point Loma. These early co-workers, namely Geoffrey Barborka, Grace Knoche and Emmett Small (and later John and Kirby Van Mater of the TS Pasadena), were all involved in the production at one stage or another. The librarians contacted through worldwide correspondence, his own research assistants and co-workers were always meticulously noted. The

man's frame was weak but his spirit never remitted towards his inspired mission.

In the year before his passing, Boris dictated an autobiographical sketch which later appeared, along with selections from his magazine *Theosophia*, in a Point Loma Publication entitled: *The Dream that Never Dies*.<sup>3</sup> From these articles one can surmise the inner astuteness of the editor and his deep comprehension of Theosophical philosophy. His reverence for H. P. Blavatsky is unquestionable. In his publisher's note to this 1983 tribute collection, Mr Emmett Small, the editor states on p. v:

As the last living relative of H. P. Blavatsky, Boris de Zirkoff held a unique place in the hearts of all Theosophists, and to them it has always seemed peculiarly appropriate that he should, in the karmic course of events, become the compiler-editor of the *Blavatsky Collected Writings*.

1. Translated by H. H. Wilson (London: John Murray, 1840). There is also an edition of Wilson's translation by Fitzedward Hall (London: Trübner & Co., 1864-77) in five volumes.
2. Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, *The Virgin of the World of Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus* (Minneapolis: Wizards Book Shelf, 1977). This is part of *The SD Reference Series*. Wizards Book Shelf (now spelled Bookshelf) is presently located in San Diego. [Now (2016) in Mecosta, Michigan.]
3. Compiled and edited by W. Emmett Small (San Diego: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1983).

Mrs Eklund's expression of gratitude to her spiritual teacher in 1973:

Dear Boris, may I learn to walk in the way of strict modesty and trust in our Teachers that your sterling life has demonstrated. That you have given me a share in that Trust and a faith in the guidance of these Teachers is ample proof that I now must live up to that challenge. Added thanks to you for your kind attention to many doors and windows of the soul whose rust needed freeing and panes needed clearing. I hope that in your lifetime much of this Work can be realized, if not all! Nevertheless, I will carry on with whatever lies in my power to accomplish, to see it to completion.

Gratefully, Dara

# Theosophy Undefined

RAFAEL MARQUES DE ALBUQUERQUE

THERE are plenty of beautiful and inspiring descriptions of what the word ‘Theosophy’ means. For a change, this article addresses an issue associated with the way we use the word. This is described as the ambiguous meaning of the word, which on the one hand refers to an individual state or quality, and on the other, to a particular doctrine described by modern theosophists. After clarifying these two meanings associated with Theo-sophy, the article describes three potential dangers stemming from the ambiguity, and finally outlines tentative solutions.

Certainly a historical exploration of the term Theosophy would reveal it has multiple meanings associated with it. In this article I will briefly describe and give examples of two of them, which seem enough to illustrate the point.

The first meaning of Theosophy can be described as a superior *state* of being, which includes comprehension of divine truths. H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) wrote in her article ‘What is Theosophy?’<sup>1</sup> in the first issue of *The Theosophist* (Oct. 1879):

By that higher intuition acquired by Theosophia — or God-knowledge, which carried the mind from the world of form into that of formless spirit, man has been sometimes enabled in every age and every country to perceive things in the interior or invisible world.

In *The Key to Theosophy*,<sup>2</sup> she explains:

this secret wisdom (Theosophy) cannot be attained by study alone, because it is a superhuman knowledge, infinite in nature, which can be communicated to the higher Spiritual Self in a state of ecstasy.

Later she also uses the term ‘samādhi’ to explain how Theosophy, or divine wisdom, can be attained. Therefore, Theosophy can mean a divine wisdom acquired by altered states, not something to be learnt in books. Rather than a body of knowledge, it is a *quality* or *state* achieved by individuals. In the terminology employed in *The Voice of the Silence*,<sup>3</sup> Theosophy can be considered Soul-Wisdom, associated to the Heart Doctrine.

The second meaning of Theosophy

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represents a particular set of beliefs or doctrine. HPB uses the term in this way in *The Key to Theosophy*,<sup>4</sup> when she asserts that the inner body of the Theosophical Society has a religious system of its own, which

was outlined a few years ago in *The Theosophist* and *Esoteric Buddhism*, and may be found still more elaborated in *The Secret Doctrine*. It is based on the oldest philosophy of the world, called the Wisdom-Religion [note: another term to refer to Theosophy] or the Archaic Doctrine.

Therefore, Theosophy can be used to mean the body of knowledge many of us are very familiar with, involving root races, the septenary nature of man, and so forth. Another example of this meaning is illustrated by the way in which HPB uses the word Theosophy as a definite body of knowledge. For instance in her article ‘What is Theosophy?’<sup>5</sup> she mentions that ‘Theosophy believes also in the *anastasis* or continued existence, and in transmigration (evolution) or a series of changes in the soul.’ In these examples, Theosophy seems to be referred to as Head-Learning, or the Eye Doctrine, to use again the terms from *The Voice of the Silence*.

The two meanings described above are so widely used that they are analogous to the ones described in some dictionaries. For example, Dictionary.com<sup>6</sup> defines theosophy as either ‘any of various forms of philosophical or religious thought based on a mystical insight into

the divine nature’, or, when in capital, ‘the system of belief and practice of the Theosophical Society’, which illustrate essentially the same difference of meanings.

If we just consider for a moment these two meanings of Theosophy it will be clear why this ambiguity may create problems. When we use the same word to refer to two different meanings, the two meanings can begin to be understood as one idea rather than two. The problem begins because the rhetoric and status that applies to the first meaning of Theosophy does not apply to the second meaning, although sometimes it is described as such — possibly because of the ambiguous use, and nature of the term.

To further explain this confusion, let me describe the status given to Theosophy, in the meaning of a state of superior wisdom, in which the Divine Essence is communicated, the Truth unveiled, and so forth. This Theosophy is described by HPB as fairly universal, as recurrent in humanity, as something experienced by the great sages and founders of religions, and taught to initiates of every country. Supposedly sages, shamans, *yogin*-s, rishis, saints and others experienced this Theosophy alike, even though they expressed it differently due to their diverse background and incapacity of the finite mind to fully understand the infinite Divine Essence. When the characteristics described above are applied to the particular set of beliefs described by HPB, Alfred Snett and others, the problem begins. The particular

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set of beliefs described by HPB and others are historically situated, hence have particular characteristics that are unique and not shared by other sages throughout history.

In other words, it is an eclectic belief system developed in the 19th Century according to its zeitgeist, or spirit of the time. Moreover, those beliefs were communicated to us through the limitation of written text. Although this can be considered a brilliant mystically-inspired work of comparative religion, it cannot hold the status of Truth and universality we confer to the other meaning of Theosophy. If we do so, we embrace an understanding of Theosophy that is potentially problematic. In the next paragraphs I will describe what I believe to be three potential problems, leaving it to the reader to judge whether these problems actually exist amongst theosophists, or they are hypothetical possibilities.

The first potential problem is the development of an arrogant approach to spirituality. This danger arises from the belief that the doctrinal knowledge elaborated in the theosophical literature expresses the universal absolute knowledge behind all forms of religion. Logically, this leads to the conclusion that any doctrinal detail from a specific religion which agrees with 'Theosophy' is correct; whilst divergences are attributed to superstition, cultural bias, or a supposed failure of believers in comprehending their own religion. It can sound comforting to us to mingle the two interpretations of Theosophy, the

eternal Soul-Wisdom and the Head-Learning doctrine, because it suggests a superiority of our doctrine when compared to others. But, warns *The Voice of the Silence*:<sup>7</sup>

Self-gratulation, O Disciple, is like unto a lofty tower, up which a haughty fool has climbed. Thereon he sits in prideful solitude and unperceived by any but himself.

The above quote leads to the second potential problem: that theosophists become increasingly insular. Despite the historical involvement of theosophists in interfaith activities, which surely is not completely absent today, it becomes difficult to establish healthy and honest dialogues if we believe that our books express the true doctrine (that is, the true interpretation of deeper realities) and all the others are but distortions of it. If we consider Theosophy as the only true doctrine we hinder our potential to learn and grow from the wisdom of others, and assume the posture of teachers and 'light bringers' in relation to other religions, instead of humble and open-minded seekers of wisdom. In other words, to understand Theosophy as a doctrine spoils our interest in learning about other approaches and dissuades others' interest in communicating with us. The danger of becoming insular is not only related to religion. It might jeopardize the possibilities of approximation even to groups which have roots in the Theosophical Society, such as the Anthroposophical Society.

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The third potential problem of understanding Theosophy as doctrine is to become dogmatic, even though HPB warned against it. ‘Theosophists repudiate all claim to infallibility’, she wrote in *Society Without a Dogma*,<sup>8</sup> and yet some theosophists struggle to question her words or the Mahatmas, or to admit that despite all their wisdom they were still placed within cultural and historical boundaries, and were influenced (and sometimes misled) by them. Such a dogmatic approach to Theosophy is a natural consequence of using the word Theosophy to refer simultaneously to the universal Truth behind all religions and to the doctrine or belief system elaborated by Blavatsky and others.

This problem of the ambiguity of the term Theosophy is not new. For instance Sri Ram, in the ‘Watch-Tower’ article<sup>9</sup> of December 1955, argued against the use of Theosophy as ‘a set of ideas or beliefs’, defending the subjectivity and multiplicity of Theosophy. Years later, in July 1963, he wrote:

Theosophy has never, at any time in the course of the history of the Society, been officially defined or crystallized. On the contrary, the General Council of the Society adopted in December 1950, at the time of the Society’s double diamond Jubilee, a resolution explicitly calling it a ‘Wisdom undefined and unlimited’, and affirmed the freedom of each and every member to come to his own understanding of it. In stressing this freedom, it coupled Universal Brotherhood and this

undefined Wisdom in such a way as to suggest that it is these aims and methods which give the Society its unique character. The Wisdom has to remain undefined, partly because it is unlimited, and partly for the reason that it contains aspects and elements which are beyond the scope of words and our limited thinking.

As previously mentioned, it is beyond the scope of this article to judge the extent to which we as theosophists have fallen in the three traps described here. It is arguable, however, that the problems here raised — and also perceived by Sri Ram and others many decades ago — are not solved. This article argues that, if we want to address these problems, a key step is to rethink the terminology we employ when talking and writing about Theosophy. It seems wise to point out to the reader, however, that my intent is *not* to suggest that we have talked about Theosophy for so many decades wrongly; but to point out that being mindful of this problem when using the word Theosophy has the potential to bring benefit to how we communicate — to both theosophists and non-theosophists — and perhaps even to how we think about Theosophy.

The tentative proposal here outlined is that we use the term Theosophy solely in the first of the two possible meanings of the terms described in this paper. It means to refer to Soul-Wisdom, or the Heart Doctrine, rather than the Head-Learning, or the Eye Doctrine. It is beyond the scope of this article to

## Theosophy Undefined

discuss in depth the nature of Theosophy — for instance creating analogies between Theosophy and the Buddhist *prajña* or the Christian gnosis. Instead, I propose employing the term Theosophy to designate a *state* or a *quality* of being without discussing — in this paper — details of the nature of this state or quality. I suggest that, as state or quality of being, Theosophy *cannot* be communicated with words, it is experiential. Thus, conceptual or factual knowledge is not Theosophy.

This article will now outline a few possible uses of the term ‘Theosophy’. Phrases such as ‘Theosophy tells us that . . .’ or ‘According to Theosophy . . .’ make little sense in this perspective. Theosophy is neither a body of knowledge nor someone. Instead, we could say ‘Blavatsky tells us that . . .’, ‘The theosophical literature tells us that . . .’, or even ‘Theosophists often say that . . .’, or to be more rigorous such as “‘The Yoga Sutras of Patañjali” tells us that . . .’ or ‘*The Key to Theosophy* tells us that . . .’ Furthermore, we cannot *teach*, *spread*, or *explain* Theosophy. We can teach, spread or explain ideas, concepts, doctrines, knowledge, but not Soul-Wisdom. The use of Theosophy would then be employed as a state or quality, as in ‘Shamans develop Theosophy with time’, ‘Some priests surely reached Theosophy’, or ‘A personal search for Theosophy’. It could be replaced by the word ‘wisdom’, when applied to divine matters, hence the widely used synonym ‘Divine Wisdom’.

Another natural implication of this

proposal refers to the body of knowledge we have available in the theosophical literature. In this perspective, the seven root races, the three fundamental propositions, the septenary nature of man, thought-forms, the seven rays, and all the communicable ideas expressed in our books *are not Theosophy*. This should not diminish the value of our literature; we have impressive treatises of comparative religion, powerful texts, transformative perspectives, and a multitude of reasonable ideas that may or may not be literally truth, in the sense of having correspondence to the objective reality. Ultimately, it does not matter so much whether the theosophical literature expresses precise objective realities, for instance, whether or not the Lemurians existed and were exactly as HPB described. The ideas that can be expressed with words are tools to develop wisdom, to *develop Theosophy*. In other words, they are tools to allow us to experience transcendental Truth, they are not Truth themselves. To use a metaphor commonly used in Buddhism, the teachings are like a raft, you build it and use it to cross the river. But once you have crossed the river, you abandon it. To take the metaphor further, the value of the raft comes from its capacity to take you to the other side. The other side of the river, arguably, is ultimate Theosophy. Our teachings are just a raft, but there are several ways to build rafts.

In this way, Theosophy can become something universal, as a foundation of religions, since it is arguable that the great

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teachers and sages developed deep wisdom towards the divine, and hence they accessed some degree of Theosophy. In a more humble example, suppose a follower of any religion or doctrine seeks to be wiser in a spiritual sense. Conceptually, this person would be seeking Theosophy. However, this Divine Wisdom would manifest in the individual level according to her or his particular doctrine and individual traits. Perhaps they would develop a Buddhist Theosophy, a Zoroastrian Theosophy, or even a Blavatskian Theosophy. In that sense, we could even talk about a Leadbeaterian Theosophy, or a Krishnamurtian one. In other words, while Theosophy might be considered universal, when manifested in one's experience this wisdom is coloured by whoever accessed it, and is even further limited when communicated in words.

It sounds naive to imagine that Gautama Buddha, Patañjali, and Jesus Christ, if they had the chance to meet and have a cup of tea, would agree about the seven root races and the septenary nature of man, because those are supposedly the inner teachings from time immemorial. In fact, Subba Row, who is believed to be a highly regarded *chela*, rejected the idea of a sevenfold division of human beings, describing it as 'almost unintelligible to Hindu minds' in *The Philosophy of the Bhagavadgītā*.<sup>10</sup> The point here is not that one of the two was wrong, but that either version is just a description of ultimately indescribable truths, given by two individuals who supposedly reached

a high level of wisdom, Theosophy. They are conceptual or factual knowledge, hence not Theosophy.

Another potentially problematic term associated to Theosophy is 'theosophical'. If Theosophy is defined as this Soul-Wisdom beyond our mundane capacity to know and communicate, then the definition of what would be a theosophical book, a theosophical concept, a theosophical method, or even a theosophical society becomes complicated. One solution to this would be the use of the term theosophical to refer to elements historically associated to the Theosophical Society, as the Theosophical Society has its name legitimated by use throughout time.

Therefore, the works of the members of the Theosophical Society constitute the theosophical literature, the ideas they created would be theosophical concepts, and the ways they employed, the theosophical methods. The danger this solution creates regarding the use of 'theosophical', is similar to the one described in the beginning of this article; it can lead to the mistaken interpretation that whatever is theosophical (that is, associated with the historical Theosophical Society) is universal and therefore absolutely superior to other doctrines and religions.

Despite the suggestions of how to use the words 'Theosophy' and 'theosophical' provided in this article, the solution to the use of both words is beyond a series of rules regarding 'right and wrong' ways to use the terms. My aim is that we

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as theosophists become aware of the potential problems of using both words and understand the differences between the two 'Theosophies'. Hopefully, as a

consequence we can become more mindful in our use of the word Theosophy and find our own solutions to achieve clearer communication and understanding. ✧

### Endnotes

1. H. P. Blavatsky. 'What is Theosophy?' *The Theosophist*, October 1879.
2. ———. *The Key to Theosophy*. The Theosophical Publishing House (TPH), New York, 1888.
3. ———. *The Voice of the Silence*. TPH, Chennai, 31st reprint, 2013.
4. ———. *The Key to Theosophy*. Ibid.
5. ———. 'What is Theosophy?' *The Theosophist*, October 1879.
6. Dictionary.com. Available at [dictionary.reference.com/browse/theosophy](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/theosophy) and accessed in December 2015.
7. H. P. Blavatsky. *The Voice of the Silence*. Ibid.
8. H. P. Blavatsky. 'Society Without a Dogma'. *The Spiritualist*, London, 8 February 1878.
9. Sri Ram. *On the Watch Tower: Selected Editorial Notes from The Theosophist 1953-1966*. TPH, Chennai, 1966.
10. T. Subba Row. *The Philosophy of the Bhagavad-gita: Four lectures delivered at the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society in 1886*. TPH, Chennai, 2007.

**There are different possible approaches to what Theosophy is. The longer one studies the wholeness of it, the less easy it is to define it. How can we define a Wisdom which belongs to life, therefore lives and breathes, in which there are the depths which belong to what we call the Spirit, which is subtler than the subtlest mind can encompass, whose every aspect is meaningful with the meaning of that Spirit?**

**The Truth, or the Wisdom, cannot be known except by a mind which is completely open to it. It is only when the mind is clear of every idea, every colouring wish, every element of self, that it can discover the Truth. That truth is reflected in such a mind; there is no need to go after it. The truth then comes to the person. He discovers it in his heart. It is only in absolute freedom of mind and heart that truth in its absoluteness can shine and manifest itself. Therefore, in the Theosophical Society we try to maintain that freedom which is the open way or space. That is the reason why Theosophy is left undefined.**

N. Sri Ram, 'Why Theosophy is Left Undefined'  
*The Theosophist*, October 1964

# Be Always Ready!

SVITLANA GAVRYLENKO

NOWADAYS, the notion of ever-changing life is very popular. Actually, many people consider a high level of ambiguity, uncertainty, chaos, disorder to be unhealthy to both society and the individual. Scientists have come to a disappointing conclusion about increase of entropy; many recall ancient Chinese wisdom about sympathy to those who live in times of change.

Optimists find in the epoch of change important advantages by claiming that such times bring in more possibilities for the development and evolution due to more degrees of freedom. Scientists tend to link it with the conscious resistance to entropy and call this process a 'syntropy'.

Let us take a look at the process of syntropy in its psychological sense and link it with such a quality or state which manifests itself as readiness. At the beginning, let us consider a scientific approach to this notion.

First of all, readiness is a *potential capability to react*. In the context of ordinary (that is, predictable, envisaged) situations, readiness means an almost automatic reaction which is developed in numerous repetitions and using practical

skills. Readiness may even be implemented through the use of automated processes, sensors, instructions, and training procedures. In the context of unusual (that is unpredictable, unexpected) situations however another mechanism is being brought into operation. What, in this case, is helping us? These are our life experiences, our mistakes, and our intuition. The psychological key to our ability to react is our predisposition to act in the direction of minimum resistance (predisposition to already fixed responses).

What do we understand in this case by 'react'? Reactions are our mental, emotional, physical actions. From this point of view, 'react' entails personal reference.

Then, readiness is a mobilization capacity which is a capability to collect, accumulate personal forces, to direct them at achieving certain results. In different people, the level of this quality varies. And in such a situation, a motivation component plays a major role which may bring in two opposite results: it can block the mobilization or it can foster the mobilization.

For instance, the threat to one's personal life can paralyse a person and

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further aggravate the existing situation. On the other hand, concern for the life of a close person can result in increased and multiplied forces thus helping to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Another example — a debutant speaker is presenting his/her first speech to an audience. It may lead to a dread of developing a distorted personal image which can paralyse the speaker and he/she would forget notes or words. On the contrary, the sense of responsibility for the teacher or the willingness to defend the team's honour can multiply forces and lead to success.

It is a very optimistic fact that readiness can be developed and, even more, the need for such a development is a part of inner human nature. Let us take a look at the factor in our life known as risk. Despite our personal attitude to this factor, we have to admit that risk is not only an integral part and parcel of our life but also an emotional experience desired by many of us; suffice it to mention adventure games, alpinism, windsurfing and other kinds of sport. Many heroic deeds and crimes are associated with deliberate and intentional risk.

When persons or circumstances of their destiny (which are the same from the theosophical point of view) prompt them to train their readiness, to test their ability to become mobilized, to perfect their capabilities to react — all these make them stronger (physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually), and at a certain stage they begin to enjoy it. That's why we use catchphrases such as the following:

- ◆ You should love difficulties because by overcoming them you are improving yourself
- ◆ God bless the obstacles
- ◆ Be glad of having difficulties because there is a special wisdom revealed to you along with them

Many acute, critical situations are described in the Mahatma letters dating back to the first decade of the Theosophical Society. In addition, the letters contain also several indirect indications that these situations were provoked by the Teachers themselves to bring forth the hidden potential in people. Many whose intentions were defective, selfish, and personality-centered and who acted for mercenary motives left the TS with resentment and indignation. Others whose intentions were more honest and lofty, on the contrary, were getting closer and became effective TS members.

Life experiences permanently provide us with an opportunity to witness that people can bring forth their most powerful capacities when they are acting unselfishly, for the sake of a lofty goal, and motivated by noble causes.

Following are factors that contribute to the development of our readiness:

- ◆ Life experiences, especially peak events and emotional experiences, dramatic and extreme experiences
- ◆ Recognizing invisible causes hidden behind visible effects as well as defining mechanisms of process development
- ◆ Becoming aware of our own responsibility, both external and internal

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- ◆ Unselfish ambition and striving for success

- ◆ Prior thinking over the sequence of our steps and possible ways to achieve the desired result.

Factors that impede the development of our readiness:

- ◆ Passive or alienated attitude towards the task or responsibility undertaken

- ◆ Indifference to the outside world, to oneself, and introversion

- ◆ Carelessness, thoughtlessness, which is sometimes called ‘trusting to chance’

- ◆ Lack of prior thoughtful plan of action

- ◆ Lack of experience.

Potential consequences of a lack of, or inadequate readiness:

- ◆ Irrelevant actions, wrongful efforts

- ◆ Mistakes, excess or lack of efforts

- ◆ Our mental/psychological functioning not meeting the requirements in certain situations.

From a scientific point of view ‘readiness’ can be defined as follows:

1. Ability of subject to implement necessary functions/tasks in specific situations, at specific moments and on condition that necessary external resources are available.

2. Physical and psychological preparedness to act or react.

Let us try to expand this definition by looking at this issue from the theosophical point of view. The sacred part of theosophical teaching is known as discipleship. This relates to a person’s readiness

to establish direct mental contact with the Teachers of Wisdom, who are the great souls regulating the evolution processes on our planet and accepting selected representatives of humankind for training to become apprentices, assistants, and collaborators. The stage of direct discipleship is preceded by a preparatory step which we call ‘the path of probation’. Are there any guidelines for improving the quality of readiness in somebody who has begun a journey towards spiritual growth? Yes, there are; and here, the majority of spiritual traditions are amazingly unanimous:

1. Capability to change one’s own lifestyle, habits, and predilections, to refine one’s ability to react emotionally, to purify one’s own way of thinking. Ability to change oneself is one of the greatest values for an apprentice; it requires willpower, consistency, and diligence. ‘The kingdom of God needs to be taken by force’ — this is a motto of Christian mystics which is fully applicable for aspiration to discipleship.

2. One of the essential qualities of disciples’ readiness is their capability to conceive new ideas, which means their mental openness. This quality is based on a deep inner conviction that the truth currently revealed to them is relative. Dogmatism, fanaticism, and freezing of knowledge limit growth and hinder the development of new understanding. This, of course, does not relate to the issue of safeguarding their own moral principles.

3. Readiness to follow the advice of the Teacher. The Teacher thoroughly

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strives to preserve the free will of disciples and just suggests to them one or another option for the behaviour or problem solution, leaving the final decision up to the disciples. However, the ability to cooperate with the Divine Plan allows disciples to be efficient collaborators and trust the Teacher's advice even if it is not always understandable. The Mahatma letters contain a great number of examples to this end. This represents a big challenge for aspiring persons from the Western world because of their overconfidence and arrogance. This is how a Teacher expressed this idea in his answer to one of the candidates for discipleship:

Before accepting a candidate as a disciple, the Adept will undoubtedly instruct him to leave his family, property and position, to put on rags and follow him to the thicket. Is there any British theosophist who is ready for that?

This question is relevant when addressed to other people also, not only to British theosophists.

4. Readiness to learn lessons from past experience is an important quality of a disciple. This is especially true when the experience is negative, when the pre-planned result has not been achieved. The usual reaction in such cases includes excusing one's actions and searching for external causes or circumstances of failure, and putting blame on other participants of the event. For disciples, it is very important to resist the temptation to have this reaction. It is essential to

try to objectively re-think their own behaviour and to replay retrospectively other options for their behaviour and their possible results. Such an approach is much more constructive and can significantly enhance a disciple's capability to identify a better strategy for future actions.

The very idea of the creation of the Theosophical Society initiated by one of the Adepts and approved at the highest levels of the Great Brotherhood was aimed at checking the readiness of humankind to conceive of a new understanding of the world and, based on such a new understanding, to build the foundation for a new civilization.

To conclude, I may state that people's readiness, when purified from the influence of their egoism, becomes real goodwill and is driven to action by its highest spiritual component — Ātman or the will to do good.

Readiness should not be mistaken for a constant state of effort and expectation of various troubles and threats which leads to chronic stress. Quite the opposite. The highest level of readiness is practically identical to the state of release or liberation in Buddhism. It means freedom from everything inferior which puts a burden and weakens man's forces and will. It means acquiring the ability to unite with the blessed force of Nature and become a helper to the Divine Plan. It means perfecting one's ability (1) to integrate into the evolutionary process sanctioned by the highest Planetary Spirits, and (2) to have the capacities

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of one's own personality accumulated over centuries — energy powers, professional, mental and physical potential; it means to integrate them into this evolutionary process consciously, unselfishly, effectively.

In Soviet times, the members of the Young Pioneer Organization used a motto: 'Be Ready!' with the reply: 'Always

Ready!' This slogan is very wise in the context of the development and formation of a person's identity. We, the theosophists, are also pioneers in our joint efforts: we are helping humanity to build new roads; however, each of us is also paving his or her own personal life's road.

That is why we would like to wish you all and each of us: Be Always Ready! ✧

**There are many people who are looking for practical instruction in Occultism. It becomes necessary, therefore, to state once for all:**

**(a) The essential difference between theoretical and practical Occultism; or what is generally known as Theosophy on the one hand, and Occult science on the other, and:**

**(b) The nature of the difficulties involved in the study of the latter.**

**It is easy to become a Theosophist. Any person of average intellectual capacities, and a leaning toward the metaphysical; of pure, unselfish life, who finds more joy in helping his neighbour than in receiving help himself, one who is ever ready to sacrifice his own pleasures for the sake of other people; and who loves Truth, Goodness, and Wisdom for their own sake, not for the benefit they may confer — is a Theosophist.**

H. P. Blavatsky  
*Practical Occultism*

# Theosophical Work around the World

## Brazil

The General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in Brazil, Marcos de Resende, reports that the international President, Mr Tim Boyd, and his wife Lily visited Brazil from 4 to 15 February, starting with its capital, Brasília, where he gave a talk for members of the TS at their national headquarters, and the next day a public talk, both of which had full houses in attendance. There was general joy in having the opportunity to get to know the President better and to appreciate both his simplicity as well as the depth of his talks.

From 6 to 9 February Mr and Mrs Boyd participated in the first International Gathering of Young Theosophists with approximately 60 participating. They were accompanied by Mr de Resende. This gathering took place at the Brasilia Theosophical Institute, a farm near Brasília named 'Paradise on Earth', a beautiful place with three rivers and several mountains and waterfalls. Some of the youth had travelled from Argentina, England, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain. The meeting was totally organized by the young members, including the activities programme, the reception at the airport, and so on. They had talks, debates, and some humour, with special moments of joy and fraternity. Throughout these days, a wonderful energy and great enthusiasm could be felt. The experience

in the enchanting surroundings of the Brasilia Theosophical Institute helped to forge numerous new bonds of friendship that will make a big contribution to the growth of the Theosophical Society and its younger generations. (*See p. 39 for an account of this gathering by one of the young participants.*)

On 10 February, Mr and Mrs Boyd travelled to Rio de Janeiro, where the President gave two talks, one for members and another for the public. Again, for both talks, there was a full house. The President also gave an interview for a radio station, with Mrs Isis Resende translating into Portuguese. The theosophists of Rio de Janeiro received our guests with music on both days, and they had time to do a little sightseeing as well.

Finally, they travelled to São Paulo on the 12th, where the President gave a public talk in the Pythagoras Theosophical Institute, with more than one hundred people present. During the weekend, a seminar on the three Objects of the TS was held in the Raja Theosophical Centre, near São Paulo, with the participation of fifty members. During these two days, the profound understanding of the President about theosophical subjects could be felt, and a great energy of inspiration and integration with all participants was present.

## Theosophical Work around the World



International Gathering of sixty Young Theosophists at the Brasilia Theosophical Institute, named 'Paradise on Earth', where they held talks and debates with international President, Mr Tim Boyd



*From left to right: Rodrigo and his wife Isis Resende, Tim Boyd, his wife Lily, and Marcos de Resende (far right) after Mr Boyd's Radio interview in Rio de Janeiro*

## Theosophical Work around the World



Participants in the President's lecture at the Pythagoras Theosophical Institute in São Paulo, Brazil



*Front row, centre:* The international President, Mr Tim Boyd, with his wife Lily, with some of the participants of the seminar he gave at the Raja Theosophical Centre near São Paulo, Brazil

## Theosophical Work around the World

### **Account of the International Gathering of Young Theosophists in Brazil**

(By a young participant representing the Italian Section of the TS)

My first memory of the International Gathering of Young Theosophists is a smile: the bright, candid smile of the people that came to pick me up from the airport in Brasilia. My last memory is of tears: emotions of the last day brought tears of joy to our eyes, as we realized that we shared a genuine, profound sense of ‘brotherhood’ in the true sense of the term. The thoughts behind our tears were not ‘Goodbye’ but ‘We are here, together, now and always’, because time, distance and separation ceased to exist in that brief moment of heartfelt union. Between the first memory and the last one, the centre played host to a week of boundless energy, hope and vitality, marked by a compelling need to tell the world that Theosophy is a vibrant force. It is the eternal flame that has always existed and will never end. It is the burning ardour deep inside each of us that — sooner or later — will embrace the essence of the human community with both the delicacy of a lotus flower and the vigorous power of waterfalls and the wind.

Just for a moment, picture a group of around 60 young people (some very young) from Europe and South America, with different cultures, lifestyles, ages, and mother tongues. Picture them passionately discussing freedom of thought, interdependence, and the thirst for knowledge, communicating in one language, and all understanding each other, even though not all of them are totally fluent in English. Picture them sharing ideas and

suggestions about how to finally create a hub of Universal Brotherhood in which every difference and individual trait is an instrument that plays its own music completely independently, but in perfect natural harmony with the rest of the orchestra. Now picture them while they all admire the sun rise and set in total silence, because words have no purpose when your souls are singing in unison. Picture them as they wander among woods, mountains, and waterfalls together, sing in one voice around a bonfire and laugh, cry, play, work, sleep, and eat together. Picture them sitting meditating, chanting a mantra together and experiencing the sacredness of the present moment.

Picture these young people emotionally bidding farewell to each other and preparing to head home, ready to spread their enthusiasm for the search for Truth, with their minds free of dogma, overflowing with love for study and knowledge, with their hearts in turmoil because of the sensations sweeping through them, but also in a state of profound tranquillity because they know that they are all part of one infinite, eternal, and unalterable Entity.

Now just think that it really happened in a piece of paradise on the mountains near Brasilia. Most importantly, bear in mind that it is possible and something that can be done in your country, your town, and your theosophical group. Tell your families, your friends, and your colleagues. Tell everybody that the Theosophical Society is alive and well and that it always will be.

PATRIZIA CONTE

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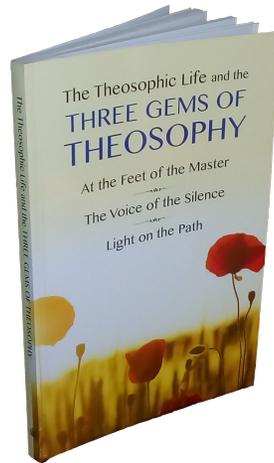
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