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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***Cover*:** Statue of Hindu deity Shiva, performing yoga in the lotus position, created by sculptor Kashinath. It is 65 feet (20 meters) high, made of concrete and is located at Shivoham Shiva Temple (also known as Kemp Fort Shiva Temple), Murugeshpalya, Bangalore, Karnataka, India. There is a tunnel-like structure underneath the statue where different models of Shiva are kept. (See p. 15 of this issue for an article on Yoga.)

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Founded 17 November 1875

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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.

Shaping the Future

TIM BOYD

THE author, Victor Hugo, expressed a thought with which most of us have become familiar: "Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come." Then he added: "Not all the armies in the world are more powerful." Whenever such far-reaching, strong thoughts are shared, we need to examine them to see if they are true, whether our own experience supports it.

In India's recent history it was under the domination of England, at that time the most powerful nation in the world. However, based on an idea that began with non-violent resistance to the practices of the British Raj, the mightiest military and strongest economy in the world was forced to release its hold and acknowledge India's independence.

Various ideas have come into the world and formed social systems which previously had not existed. Socialism and communism are ideas that had their beginnings in the 19th century. Democracy traces back to ancient Greece. It was an unpractised ideal, but at a certain time it took root and has become the current standard for governmental behavior around the world. So, Victor Hugo's expression seems to be correct, that when the time has ripened for a particular idea to take root, it will grow.

There are ideas that relate strongly to societal change, but, for the purposes of the Theosophical Society (TS), spiritual self-transformation as a process and possibility is central. This is a powerful idea, which in the form of Theosophy is of a fairly recent vintage. It was in 1875 when this expression of the Ageless Wisdom tradition took form. There are stages through which any idea passes. In order for something to grow, the ground has to be prepared. The ideas are *always* in existence. Everything that comes into being pre-exists its appearance, but seeds don't grow in winter. Timing is everything.

The driest place on Earth is the Atacama Desert in Chile, South America. It gets one inch of rainfall every couple of years. There are even places in that desert where no rainfall has been recorded. But there comes a time, maybe once every three or four years, when it does rain, and literally overnight this barren space bursts into bloom. Everywhere one looks is covered with flowers. The seeds were there, unseen, but waiting for the proper conditions. A great deal of the preparatory transformative work in our spiritual lives takes place in the world of ideas.

H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) made a statement to her inner group. She felt the need to define what she meant when she talked

about "the world". She described the world as "Man living in his personal nature". Although the comment applies to "man" as an individual, she was talking about something beyond individuals. Man is a collective entity composed of its billions of individuals, much like our body is one thing composed of trillions of lives. The collective behavior of Man(kind) has a tendency to express itself through the personal nature — its feelings, thoughts, and sensations. It is this pattern of behavior that creates the "world" with its politics, economics, preferences, prejudices, and constant wants.

The TS has been involved in the attempt to serve the world by, at the minimum, elevating it to the higher regions of the personal nature. Change at these deeper levels tends to be gradual.

It has been noted that any idea that puts forth some new theory, or vision of truth, passes through three distinct phases on its way to acceptance. First the new truth is ridiculed. In the face of long-standing accepted truths, the new idea is dismissed out of hand as unworthy of serious consideration. One can just look to the early history of the TS for examples.

The other day I had a lady in my office who is writing a book about Annie Besant. She had a lot of good questions about Besant's history. But when it came to the subject of the Mahatma Letters, an unbridgeable sticking point for her was the history of the letters being "precipitated", which from the author's point of view was "supernatural" in a way that was difficult for her to accept. She wanted me to comment on whether or not this precipitation aspect, and, what were to her, the questionable circumstances surrounding it, interfered with the value of the Letters.

For me, precipitation is far from one of the strangest things in human history. Levitation and clairvoyance are also quite well known. However, whether the letters were precipitated or delivered by the mailman is not a standard by which to judge their value. A tree is not judged by its leaves, or bark, or roots, but by its fruit. We read the letters, precipitated or not, and ask: In what way do they elevate my understanding? If they do not, we need not concern ourselves with them. But the fact is that, for many, the letters profoundly affect their understanding. The content must be allowed to stand on its own.

The first attempts to introduce a new truth are ridiculed, but it always happens that a small group of people who can see the value are drawn to it. With a growing credibility, the next phase is that, it is violently attacked — not just the idea, but the people who embrace it.

The fact that HPB lived at Adyar for only three years was the result of this violent attack that focused on her. The thinking, which turned out to be incorrect, was that if she could be defamed and removed from the picture, the whole theosophical movement would crumble. So, violent opposition is the second phase in the introduction of a new truth, before we reach the third phase, where what was once ridiculed and violently opposed is regarded as self-evident and obvious.

There is a long list of people in history who were killed or tortured because they

had a vision of what was true which was out of step with their time. Today no rational person would argue that the Earth is the center of the universe, but many people were persecuted and killed for contradicting this belief.

We have a World Congress coming up next year. Part of its title is "Our Role in Shaping the Future". It is an idea that many people in the world are trying to come to grips with. From the point of view of someone who is spiritually inclined, "Our Role" takes on a different meaning. One of the values of engaging with Theosophy is that it provokes insight. It raises questions which must then be explored such as: "Who am I? How did I get here? What has put me in this body, in this world, in this condition at this time?" One of the beauties of Theosophy is that it presents glimpses from an Ageless Wisdom tradition. At the outset of HPB's *The Secret Doctrine* the idea is stated that our composition as human beings is complex. Three completely different streams of evolution, with their own laws and directions, compose the human being: the monadic or spiritual, the intellectual, and the physical. That they are "interwoven and interblended at every point" is what makes us such complex beings.

In the Yoga tradition Patanjali condenses the idea. He refers to the coming together of Purusha [Spirit] and Prakriti [Matter]. He says: "The purpose of the coming together of the Purusha and Prakriti is the gaining by the purusha of the awareness of his true nature and the unfoldment of powers inherent in him and Prakriti." The image is given of a blind man carrying a lame man. Spirit cannot walk in this world on its own. Matter is blind and needs to be informed. But where is mind in this example?

A common phrase used by many is "spiritualizing matter". Matter's level of functioning can be elevated by its interaction with spirit. But the medium for this elevation is the mind, the point of contact, or bridge between Purusha and Prakriti. The linking mind is where they inform each other and draw out their latent potentials. Matter does not become spiritual, but its range of functioning expands. Spirit does not become "materialized", but it becomes able to function through the previously impervious agency of matter.

One of the roles that the Masters are said to play in their attempts to serve and help humanity is that they are generating a stream of energy at the highest levels of thought. Their constant advice is that if we really want to pursue the depths of the spiritual life we have to step out of our world and into theirs. There are people, even us on occasion, who find themselves elevated, approaching the high level of the Masters' thought. They might not fully enter into this stream, but they come near enough to be affected. An example I sometimes use is, if we put a bar of iron next to a fire, the iron may be cold at first, but if we leave it there, it warms. It takes on the qualities of the fire.

Our proximity to this stream, causes a certain quickening to take place within us. Inevitably, we come back to the world as we know it, but we come back slightly changed, and our "warmth" warms the

people and things around us. There are also those people who enter fully into that stream. Often the contact with this higher level, stimulates ideas for new inventions, vastly broadened perceptions, and seed ideas that form the basis for movements of thought. People sometimes ask: "If the Masters are real, why can't we see them, why are they not communicating and working on behalf of humanity?" The fact is that they are; their work is unceasing. It is humanity that is not working on behalf of itself.

There is a fairly long quote from a book by Dane Rudhyar, *Occult Preparations for a New Age*:

> We must ever be ready to accept the totally unexpected, the miraculous. We never have to feel totally defeated. A new dawn can always occur, in some way unlike any previous dawn; but we must have faith. Faith is the intuitive, unchallengeable, even if intellectually unexplainable, feeling-realization that the Ocean of Infinite Potentiality surrounds us; we live, move, and have our being in it, but most of us refuse to feel, refuse to see, so wrapt are we in our frantic agitation, our fear, our masochistic concentration on how much we suffer. Such a suffering is in vain and calls for endless repetition.

He then gives the advice:

> We must become still, and "feel" the soundless sound of the vast tides of spirit lapping at the shores of our consciousness, or perhaps beating at the jagged rocks of our pride and our greed. We must turn our consciousness toward this inner sea and try to sense the end of a cycle of experience peacefully moving into the yet imprecise and unfocused beginning of a new cycle. We must **dare** to summon the potentiality of an essentially new and, for us, unprecedented beginning.

In this quote he is speaking to the idea of what many feel, that we are on the cusp of some new level of understanding, and that the way in which we access this idea is by becoming still. We reach out toward that which is beyond our current grasp. We make the attempt, to expose ourselves, regularly, in order to be informed by this "ocean of infinite potentiality." These are not just nice words; it is the basis for a practice. It also speaks to our role in shaping the future. What ideas will come? Many are already here. More are flooding in. The capacity to be open to that Greater Life in which we live, move, and have our being is the basis of spiritual self-transformation. It is part of the role that we try to play in shaping the future. ✧

Believe that nothing is impossible for you, think yourself immortal and capable of understanding all, all arts, all sciences, the nature of every living being. Mount higher than the highest height; descend lower than the lowest depth.

Giordano Bruno

As Above, So Below

G. R. S. Mead

Heaven above, heaven below; stars above, stars below; all that is above thus also below.
Kircher, *Prodrom. Copt.*, pp. 193 and 275

"As above, so below". Is this great "word" a sacramental phrase, a saying of wisdom, an aphorism, a mystic formula, a fundamental law; or a two-edged sword of word-fence that will probably do the wielder serious damage, if he is not first put through careful training in its handling? Whether this famous saying is of Hermetic origin or no, we will not stay formally to inquire. In essence it is probably as old as human thought itself. And, as probably, the idea lying underneath it has been turned topsy-turvy more frequently than any other of the immortal company.

"As above, so below" doubtless enshrines some vast notion of analogical law, some basis of true reason, which would sum up the manifold appearances of things into one single verity. But the understanding of the nature of this mystery of manifoldness from the one — all one and one in all — is not to be attained by careless thinking, or by some lucky guess, or by the pastime of artificial correspondencing. Indeed, if the truth must out, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, when one uses this phrase to clinch an argument, we find that we have begged the question from the start, ended where we began, and asserted the opposite of our logion [diminutive of logos].

Instead of illumining, not only the subject we have in hand, but all subjects, by a grasp of the eternal verity concealed within our saying, we have reversed it into the ephemeral and false proposition: "As below, so above". *Deus, inversus, est Demon* [God inverted is the Devil]; and there's the devil to pay. But fortunately there is some compensation even in this in an illogical age; for, as all the mystic world knows, *Demon* is nothing else but *Deus inversus*.

Yes, even along our most modern lines of thought, even in propositions and principles that are, with every day, coming more and more into favour in the domain of practical philosophising, we find our ageless aphorism stood upon its head with scantiest ceremony.

In the newest theology, in the latest

Mr G. R. S. Mead (22 March 1863–28 September 1933) was an English historian, writer, editor, translator, and an influential member of the Theosophical Society. He was H. P. Blavatsky's last personal secretary and his works included topics like Neoplatonism, Hermeticism and Gnosticism, among others. From his *Some Mystical Adventures*, as published in 1910.

philosophy, we find a strong tendency to revive the ancient idea that man is the measure of the universe — whether we call this concept pragmatism or by any other name that sounds "as sweet". "As below", then, "so above". In fact we do not seem to be able to get away from this inversion. We like it thus turned upside down; and I am not altogether sure that, even for the keenest-minded of us, it is not an excellent exercise thus to anthropomorphise the universe, if only to fling the shadow of our best within on to the infinite screen of the appearance of things without. For is not man kin really with all these — worlds, systems, elements, and spaces, infinitudes, and times and timelessness?

But this way of looking at the thing does not as a rule bother the beginner in mystic speculation. Fascinated with some little-known fact of the below, marvelling at some striking incident that has come under his notice — striking, fascinating for him, of course — he usually puts a weight upon it that it cannot bear, exaggerates a particular into a universal, and, with a desperate plunge of joy, imagines that he has finally arrived at truth — taking his topsy-turvy "as below" for the eternal "as above". He does not yet realize that, had he truly reached to that "above", he would know not only the solitary "below" that has come dazzlingly into his cosmos, but every other "below" of the same class.

But again from this height of "philosophising" let us come down to mystic commonplace. Of things physical we have certain definite knowledge, summed up in the accurate measurement, and observations, and general mechanical art of modern science. Beyond this domain, for mechanical science there is *x*; for the "seeing" mystic, however, there is not a simple *x*, but an indefinite series of phases of subtler and subtler sensations. Now, as every intelligent reader knows, it is just the nature of these extra-normal impressions that is beginning to be critically investigated on the lines of the impersonal method so justly belauded by all scientific workers.

In this domain, of such intense interest to many students of Theosophy, how shall we say our "as above" applies? And here let us start at the beginning; that is to say, the first discrete degree beyond the physical — the psychic or so-called "astral". What constitutes this a discrete degree? Is it in reality a discrete degree? And by discrete I mean, is it discontinuous with the physical? That is to say, is there some fundamental difference of kind between the two? "East is east, and West is west"; Astral is astral, and Physical is physical. But how? Sensationally only, or is it also rationally to be distinguished?

The first difficulty that confronts us is this: that, however keen a man's subtler senses may be, no matter how keenly "clear-seeing" he may have become, he seems unable to convey his own immediate experience clearly to a second person, unless, of course, that second person can "see" with the first. Try how he may, he is apparently compelled to fall back on physical terms in which to explain. Indeed, it is highly probable that all that has been written on the "astral"

has produced no other impression on non-psychic readers than that it is a subtler phase of the physical. And this, presumably, because the very seer himself, in explaining the impressions he registers to himself, that is, to his physical consciousness, has to translate them into the only forms that consciousness can supply, namely physical forms. Indeed, there seems to be a gulf fixed between psychic and physical, so that those direct impressions which would pass thence to us, cannot. In other words, they cannot, in the very nature of things, come naked into this world; they must be clothed.

Now if this is true, if this is an unavoidable fact in Nature, then the very nature of the astral is removed from the nature of the physical by an unbridgeable gulf: "East is east, and West is west." But *is* it really true? Is it only that, so far, no one is known who can bridge the gulf perfectly? Or supposing even that there be those who can so bridge it; is it that they are unable to make their knowledge known to others, simply because these others cannot bridge the gulf in their *own* personal consciousness, and therefore cannot follow the *continuum* of their more developed brethren?

But even supposing there is a continuity from physical to astral, it would seem that we must, so to speak, "go" there, and that it cannot "come" here. In other words, the astral cannot be precisely registered in the physical, the image cannot exactly reproduce the prototype; for if it could, the one would be the other. What, then, is the nature of the difference of quality or of degree? How, again, we ask, does astral really differ from physical? Can we in this derive any satisfaction from speculations concerning the so-called "fourth dimension" of matter?

This is a subject of immense difficulty, and I do not here propose to enter into anything but its outermost court. All that I desire to note, for the present, is that all analogies between [an imagined] "flatland" and our three-dimensional space, and between the latter and the supposed fourth-dimensional state, are based upon the most flagrant *petitio principii* [begging the question or assuming the conclusion]. It is a case of "As below, so above", to the highest degree.

"Flatland" — space of two dimensions, *plus* the further gratuitous assumption of two-dimensional beings who have their being and their moving therein — is inconceivable as *matter* of any kind. A superficies is — an idea; it is not a thing of the sensible world. We can conceive a superficies in our minds; it is a mental concept, not a sensible reality. We cannot see, or taste it, or hear it, or smell it, or touch it. Our two-dimensional beings are figments of the imagination. They are absolutely inconceivable as entities; they cannot be conscious of one another. For, *in* the abstract concept called a surface, there can be no position from the standpoint of itself and things like it, but only from the standpoint of another. Even the most primitive sense of touch would be non-existent for our "flatlanders", for there would be nothing to touch. And so on, and so forth.

Therefore, to imagine how three-

dimensional things would appear to the consciousness of a flatlander, and from this, by analogy, to try to construct four-dimensional things from a series of three-dimensional phenomena is, apparently, a very vicious circle indeed. We cannot get at it that way. We have to seek another way, a very different, "other way", apparently, by means of which we may get out of three dimensions into — what? Into — two, either way or every way? Who knows?

Anyway, the later Platonic School, curiously enough, called the "astral" the "plane", according to one of the so-called Chaldean Oracles: "Do not soil the spirit nor turn the plane into the solid",where the "spirit" corresponds apparently to what modern Theosophy calls the "etheric", and the "plane" to the "astral". As Psellus says, in commenting on this logion: "The Chaldeans clothed the soul in two vestures: the one they called the spirituous, which is woven for it (as it were) out of the sensible body; the other the radiant, subtle and impalpable, which they call the plane." Higher than this were the "lines" and "points", which pertained to the region of mind.

What, then, again we ask, is the astral proper as compared with the physical? How do things appear on the astral proper? For so far, in the very nature of things, whenever we talk "down here" of the astral, we have to talk of it in terms of the physical. In what, to use a famous term of ancient philosophising, consists its "otherness"? Is "otherness" in this to be thought of as distinguished simply by a gulf in matter, a gap? This seems to be absurd; for "nature does not leap"; she also "abhors a vacuum".

Here again we are confronted with the other side of the shield, with the unavoidable intuition that there *is a continuum* in matter; and if a human entity were to progress into space, he would successively leave his various "vehicles" — molecular, atomic, interatomic, and so on — in the spheres of the atmosphere and elements, while, as in the case of John Brown, his soul would "go marching on" until it arrived at the last limit, whenever or wherever that may be, in a universe that ever at every point enters into itself.

However this may be, the idea of a cosmic "stuff" or "matter", rolled up continuously into itself, so to speak, is exceedingly illuminative, if thought of as a *symbol* of force-systems. All things, then, would appear to be solidified down here by the "sky's being rolled up carpet-wise", to paraphrase the Upanishad. The "above" is thus "involved" into the "below"; and if we could only follow the process, perchance we should then be able faintly to understand the truth underlying our aphorism.

As a matter of fact, this *continuum* of matter is the ground on which all scientific thinking is based; perpetual and continuous transformation, but no sudden leaps — orderly evolution, no miraculous or uncaused, spontaneous surprises. If this be true, it follows that *someday* the direct line of "descent" from astral to physical will be controlled mechanically by human invention, and the astral would be made visible to even the most hopelessly profane from a psychic standpoint. And not only

so, but the errors of human observation, which vitiate all present psychic investigation, will be obviated, in as marvellous a fashion as the errors of physical observations are now eliminated by the wonderfully delicate instruments already devised by human ingenuity.

This seems immediately to follow from the major premise of our present speculation. But, somehow or other, I am by no means satisfied that this will be the case. Is our salvation to be dependent upon machines? Are we to become *dei ex machinis* [Gods from machines]!

But what has all this to do with "As above, so below"? Why, this: If the sensible world rises by stages from this gross state familiar to us by our normal senses, through ever finer and finer grades of matter, we finally reach . . . ay, there's the rub; what do we reach? Where do we start? The truth of the matter is — be it whispered lowly — you can't *think it out* in terms of matter. But take the "ever so thin" idea for the moment, as sufficiently indefinite for any mystic who is not a metaphysician, using the latter term in the old, old way, where *physis* included all Nature, that is, *natura*, the field of becoming.

"As above so below" — how many stages above? Let us say seven, to be current. The "above" will then be very nebulous, a sort of "primitive streak", from the within without, in its own mode and fashion totally different. There may be "correspondence", but that correspondence must be traced through numerous orders of "matter", where the very next succeeding order to the physical already acts as force, or energy, to the matter which falls beneath our normal senses.

Here we are again, at the very outset, face to face with the "astral" *x* — which, compared with the physical, should be regarded as a "system of forces", rather than as a mould of the same fashion and form as the physical. And if this view is, at any rate, one stage nearer the reality than the interpretation of the astral by purely physical imagery and symbolism — what *can* possibly be the nature of our "primitive streak" stage; when already at the first remove we exhaust all our possibilities of description?

For we certainly do not get much "forrarder" [further ahead] by simply flinging the picture of the physical, as it were, on to a series of mirrors which differ from one another only in their tenuity. At any rate, it appears so to the reflecting mind of man; though maybe it seems quite as natural to his subtler senses so to speak of their experience when he converses physically about them.

Let it be understood once for all, that I have not the slightest pretension in any way to decide between these apparent contradictions of sense and reason; indeed, I personally believe it to be unseemly and disastrous to attempt to separate the eternal spouses of this sacred marriage. In the most intimate union must they ever be together, to give birth to the true Man — who is their common source.

Still it is of advantage continuously to keep before our minds the question: What is a prototype; what is a paradigm; what a *logos* — a reason; what an idea? What, for instance, to use Platonic terms, is the *autozöon* [archetypal animal], the animal

itself, as compared with all animals; what is the ever the "same, as compared with all the "others"?

The intuition of things that underlay the philosophising of the Western world at its birth in conscious reasoning, from the time of Pythagoras onwards, comes forward with its setting of the noumenal or ideal over against the sensible or phenomenal — the mind over against the soul. The characteristic of the pure mind is that it "sees" itself. This is the "plane of Truth", where ever are the paradigms, and ideas, and reasons of all things; and when we say "where" we do not mean a place or space; for it is the everlasting causation of these, and is not conditioned by them, but self-conditions itself.

It would take too long further to pursue this sublime theme. One thing alone I have desired to call attention to: the careless translation of living ideas into rigid notions, the danger of falling too readily into that higher materialism that Stallo calls the "reification of ideas". For when you have "reified" your ideas — be it gravity, or atomicity, or vibration — you have got only the shadow and not the substance; the appearance, the phenomenon, and not the underlying truth, the noumenon.

But to conclude; that "sight" which reveals to man the "reasons" of things, is surely a more divine possession than that "sight" which sees the sensible forms of things only, no matter how exquisitely beautiful and grandiose such forms may be.

And when I say "sees" the "reasons" of things, do I mean the intellectual grasping of some single explanation, some formula, some abstraction? By no means; I mean by "reason" *logos* in its most vital sense. I mean that when we "see" the "reasons" of things, we see our "selves" in all things; for our real selves are the true ground of our being, the that in us which constitutes us "sons of God" — *logoi,* as He is *Logos*, kin to him.

"As above, so below". What, then, is the "above" where there is no place, no direction, no dimension, and no time? And *is* the "above" superior to the "below"? Ah, that is where the mind breaks down, unable to grasp it. Is Eternity greater than Time? Is the Same mightier than the Other? Of course it is, we say, as so many in so many schools have said before. But is it *really so*? Are we not still in the region of the opposites, neither of which can exist without the other, and each of which *is* co-equal with the other? We are still in the region of words — words in this case, not reasons; though the same term does duty for both in Greek — *logos*; showing yet once again that in verity *Demon est Deus inversus.*

No words indeed can tell of Him — or of That, if you so prefer, though the neuter gender is as little appropriate as the masculine. "Thou that art to be worshipped in silence alone!" As Thou art above, so art Thou below; as Thou art in Thyself, so art Thou in Man; as Thyself is in Thee, so is Thy Man in Thyself — now and for ever. ✧

What is Yoga?

KIRK GRADIN

Even a little of this practice delivereth a man from great risk.
Krishna, *Bhagavadgitā*, II.40

ACCORDING to trusted online news outlets such as the BBC, yoga is conquering the world. With so many people rolling out their mats, yoga has become a $40 billion a year business which grew by 63% over the last decade. In the US alone, there are currently over 7,000 yoga studios, 100,000 yoga teachers registered with the Yoga Alliance and over 34 million practitioners. Much of this widespread popularity in the West focuses primarily on various forms of hatha yoga, the practice of āsanas or physical postures and prānāyāma, ancient methods of controlled breathing. When used in moderation, there are well-documented physiological and psychological benefits to the practice of hatha yoga. It is also a traditional means of inducing a calm and steady state of body and mind for deeper meditation upon spiritual ideas and ideals. But if carried to its culminating stages, wrote both William Quan Judge and Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the more advanced practices of hatha yoga lead only to the awakening of the lower *tattva-s* or s*iddhi-s*. These are lower psychic capacities which if used without the guidance of a true guru, without higher knowledge, or for selfish gain, can be mentally and physically injurious and create karmic blocks to true spiritual development. But this problem is a recurring one in the history of yoga and so we find *The Voice of the Silence* opening with the warning: "These instructions are for those ignorant of the dangers of the lower *iddhi*."

So what is then, the true Raja or "Kingly" Yoga?

The word yoga has a very large number of meanings and is used by many different Eastern and now Western traditions. Its Sanskrit etymology means "to yoke, join, or unite." What are the two things which are being joined? In classical Hindu philosophy, it would be described as the union of *jivātma* with *paramātma*, the individual self with the universal SELF, the drop of human

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self-consciousness returning to the divine ocean of Absolute Consciousness from which it emerged. Yoga is the practical discipline or path which aims to bring about that union, as distinguished from the theory which confirms that such a union is possible. While exoteric forms of yogic practice have been given publicly in many sacred texts such as Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms*, the higher practices were only revealed in the Mystery schools of the ancient world through initiation.

Those capable of guiding a true disciple through the higher practices of Raja Yoga, would themselves have to be Masters of Compassion, White Adepts, or high Initiates who had mastered these stages in previous lives. Furthermore, all such lineages might vary somewhat in the details of their practice, unless they are directly linked to the trans-Himalayan Brotherhood "beyond the great range". The origins of this "exhaustless, eternal" yoga spoken of by Krishna in the *Bhagavadgitā,* "first taught to Vivasvat", far predates recorded history and any known religion or school of yogic discipline.

Why are the higher practices of yoga kept secret? Because they are both life giving and death dealing. Because to reveal all is akin to giving a child a lighted candle in a room full of explosives. Because it is that path by which the highest faculties and forces in the cosmos are awakened in human nature, leading to a progressive participation in Deity itself. The misuse or abuse of such faculties has grave consequences both for the practitioner and humanity at large.

Theosophy teaches that in 1889, through the Masters who stood behind H. P. Blavatsky, clear outlines of Buddhi Yoga — the Bodhisattva Path of Divine Wisdom — were revealed publicly to the Western world through the translation of a few fragments of the noetic science in a book titled *The Voice of the Silence.* In it we are given a synthetic overview of the mental and moral discipline involved in the Heart Doctrine cultivated through the Three Perfections known as the pāramitā path. It is consonant with a neglected strain of thought known as the "path of renunciation" found in the *Bhagavadgitā* which incorporates jñāna, karma, and bhakti yoga into one synthetic system. It would therefore be impossible for any student to presume to be able to summarize all the features of this highest form of Raja Yoga, even if we knew them. But as an introduction, we will mention what appear to be a few key points according to one student's limited understanding.

The Three Perfections mentioned at verse 103 of *The Voice of the Silence* (as in other Mahayana Buddhist texts) are *Śila*, *Samādhi*, and *Prajñā*.[1] Each of these Sanskrit terms has an enormous range of meanings, but for purposes of abbreviation and summary, we can translate them as Ethics, Meditation, and Wisdom. We can think of these as the three primary colors, which differentiate into the seven colors of the rainbow (the seven *pāramitā-s*) and which then further differentiate into a vast array of interrelated practices. The fact that *Śila,* or Ethics,

comes first is instructive, for over the portal to this path it is written: "Abandon hope all ye who enter here." That is, abandon hope for the personal ego, for personal stature, salvation, or individual enlightenment. Abandon all selfish intent, for this is a path only for the altruist whose purpose is to aid and serve others, to follow the path of duty to humanity, to work for long ages and over many lives under the guidance of wise beings for the authentic progress of the whole towards universal enlightenment. The process of self-study, which is part of the ethics of Buddhi Yoga, is also a commitment to ceaseless self-correction using the faculty of *manas,* or mind, to ever purify, refine, and elevate every waking and dreaming moment of embodied consciousness.

This purity of intent or motive, called *bodhichitta* in the Northern Buddhist tradition, will be tainted at first by ignorance, delusion, and attachment: *avidya, moha,* and *tṛshna*. Although we may have the heartfelt wish to be of spiritual aid to others, we must acknowledge at the outset that we are ignorant of our true nature and of the best and wisest way to be of true assistance to another soul. In addition, if we are at all self-aware, we can see that we are still subject to lower forms of desire, sensual or egotistical. We long for and cling to self-seeking worldly goals and ambitions. Besides being insatiable, these longings cloud and distort perception. At critical junctures, they will disrupt continuity of consciousness, solidify various forms of inertia and self-justification, further confounding creative imagination and the free flow of the spiritual will.

To cleanse and purify the perceptions and the will so that we see and know the good and can enact the good, we also need the other two perfections of meditation and wisdom, *Samādhi* and *Prajñā*. When all three of these have been fully realized, we will clearly apprehend the One and its best and highest expression in the Many, at least as much as is feasible under karmic law. We become increasingly capable of always breathing benevolently and noetically, of thinking and acting in exact harmony with the ceaseless breath of the One Life. At the same time, as we join with other "candidates" in nuclei of universal brotherhood aligned in devotion and aspiration, we will also progressively enter under the guidance and self-conscious union with those Masters and Adepts who perpetually serve the highest causes of human evolution and awakening. This is but one way to partially describe the great affirmation of perfectibility spoken of by many great teachers.

> Many who were free from craving, fear and anger, filled with my spirit, and who depended upon me, having been purified by the ascetic fire of knowledge, have entered into my being.
>
> (Krishna, *Bhagavadgitā*, IV.10)

In the opening passages of *The Voice of the Silence*, the aim of yoga is described as a capacity to hear that which is soundless: "He who would hear the Voice of *nāda*, the soundless Sound, . . . he has to learn the nature of *dhāranā*." The term *dhāranā*, as we learn in a footnote on the opening page of the *Voice*, is "the intense

and perfect concentration of the mind upon some one interior object, accompanied by complete abstraction from everything . . . [in] the external Universe, or the world of the senses". When *dhāranā* is achieved, we are later told, each of the five senses as an individual faculty is paralyzed on the physical plane, merged with the sixth sense, the mind, or *manas*, and passes into the seventh sense which is that of *buddhi*.

Buddhi is another term rich with many associations. Cosmically, it is linked with the guiding logoic intelligence behind the whole of Nature, the divine sun of manifested wisdom preeminently synthesized in the *Gayatri Mantram*, the *A-U-M* of the Vedas and Upanishads, the great swan of *kālahansa*. When *buddhi* is tapped by the conscious mind in the human constitution, it can bring profound seership, intuitions, and prophetic vision, the noetic apprehension of archetypes and essences linked to deep spiritual knowledge and discernment. The veils of external Nature lift to reveal omnipresent radiant essences. In time, the foundational abstract metaphysics and celestial hierarchies expressed in *The Secret Doctrine* are directly witnessed or cognized by the eye of the soul. This *buddhic* awakening is one reason why the intellectual effort to comprehend the fundamental philosophical basis of *Theosophia* is so critically important. It prepares the conscious mind to retain the experiences of the Higher Ego. It also provides a common symbolic alphabet, offered by true Seers, by which to meaningfully share inner experiences that transcend language. The flowering of this profound capacity of inner seeing and hearing, and its relevance and benevolent application to the whole of visible Nature in cyclic time and to every microcosm, correlates to what is later referred to in the *Voice* as the Sambhogakāya vesture, "the great and complete knowledge".

Dhārana, however, as exalted as this definition seems, is at first a periodical state of consciousness in the aspiring yogi. When meditative stability becomes a continuous unbroken flow, it is called *dhyāna*, the sixth *pāramitā* in this esoteric yoga system. *Dhyāna* at a beginning level means meditation or concentration and is derived from Sanskrit roots meaning both "to think" and "to envision". *Dhyāna* is summarily described in the *Voice* as that "golden gate" which, once opened, leads toward "the realm of *Sat* eternal and its ceaseless contemplation". *Sat* in Sanskrit is Truth, Purity, and Goodness, but in the Upanishads is linked with knowledge of Brahman, embracing both Being and Non-Being. Called "Be-ness" in *The Secret Doctrine*, it is the All, the One Reality.

The path of *dhyāna* or "*dhyāna mārga*" is said to have seven stages: four *rupa* and three *arupa*. These stages or states, described metaphorically in Christian, Buddhist, Kabalistic, and Hindu texts, roughly correspond to the seven planes of the cosmos indicated in the diagram on p. 200 of *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I. Notice that the four *rupa* planes are also sevenfold. Each of these seven principles or planes can be described in terms of consciousness, energy or matter, as well as

living beings or hierarchies crucial to both involution and evolution. At the pinnacle of each class is a Dhyāni Buddha. These hierarchies are all manifestations of the triune Word, the formless Army of the Voice, which synthesizes and maintains the symphonic harmony of the hidden architecture of Nature. Each of the seven also has their microcosmic reflection in the human constitution. *Dhyāna mārga*, as an indispensable portion of the Bodhisattva Path, leads towards a self-conscious awareness, attunement to, and mastery over these living streams of omnipresent intelligence, matter, and force on behalf of the Oversoul, that triune-unitary Spirit of humanity which transcends *manvantara-s*.

> Behold! Thou hast become the Light, thou hast become the Sound, thou art thy Master and thy God. Thou art Thyself the object of thy search: the Voice unbroken that resounds throughout eternities, exempt from change, from sin exempt, the seven sounds in one, THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE.
>
> (*The Voice of the Silence*)

The seven stages of *dhyāna* are accompanied by seven sounds and seven initiations,[2] critical junctures where the grace and influence of the Guru opens doors to higher faculties of perception and action encompassing expanding circles of responsibility. The luminous sphere of service widens immeasurably, touching every kingdom and all monadic consciousness. The culmination of *dhyāna* leads to "the thrice glorious state" of *samādhi*. *Samādhi* is described as a state of faultless vision where the ascetic loses consciousness of every individuality, including his own. He or she ceases to be a number and becomes ALL numbers. The deathless radiance of the purified immortal soul reunites seamlessly with the transcendent Absolute called *sat-chit-ānanda* in the Upanishads. The seer, the seen, and the faculty of perception merge in the untinctured bliss of a non-dual pristine awareness.

But for the true Raja Yogi even this is not the final aim. At each stage the Initiate's only purpose, notes Bhavani Shankar in *The Doctrine of the Bhagavad Gita*, has been the elevation of humanity. This ever-increasing force of compassion means that even at the dizzying heights referred to as the eighth *bhumi* of the seventh formless *dhyāna* (called "The Immovable"), the vow to ceaselessly serve all beings guides the choice of the Arhat. While the Pratyeka Buddha allows consciousness to slip into immense but ultimately transitory states of blissful rest and peace, the Nirmānakāya has chosen a steeper path. The Nirmānakāya robe is said to be the most difficult of the three vestures of the Path to cultivate, for it is that which allows the fully awakened Adept to join the *mahātmic* current bridging eternity and time, the noumenal and the phenomenal, heaven and earth.

This is precisely why even the beginning practitioner should aspire to utilize the resources and insights gained in deep meditation in the realm of mundane duties. Going high is less important than bridging meditative reveries with timely thought,

word, and deed on behalf of others. This is the self-conscious building of the purified *antahkarana* bridge. No longer muddied by the "highway of sensations" and lower forms of *ahankāra*, the spiritual spinal cord can allow the pure luminosity of non-dual divine knowledge to descend "from above below" and permeate the many-petaled lotus centers of incarnation.

> Compassion is no attribute. It is the LAW of LAWS, Alaya's SELF; a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting Right, and fitness of all things, the law of Love eternal. The more thou dost become at one with it, thy being melted in it BEING, the more thy Soul unites with that which is, the more thou wilt become COMPASSION ABSOLUTE. (*Ibid*)

By making this kind of choice at every step as well as on the threshold of Nirvāna, it is said the Nirmānakāya becomes one of countless stones in "the Guardian wall", an active agent of the unconditional beneficence, omniscient wisdom, and protective guidance of *Amitābha*, the boundless age and boundless light of the logos embodied in a living Brotherhood. This, says Robert Crosbie, is our true nature that is "waiting, watching, working". In *The Secret Doctrine* it is allegorically referred to as the "Blazing Divine Dragon of Wisdom", born of both fire and water, *prajñā* and *mahā-karuna*. At the upper end, it is the primordial undifferentiated fire of cosmic ideation and substance called *śuddhasattva*. At the lower end, it is the crystallization of that light in the permanent astral, wholly resonant with its source in *ālaya-ākāśa* while also perpetually attuned to the manner in which it may be best utilized to serve the oceanic needs of the specific epoch.

The activity of such a series of luminous vestures is suggested by the tenth *bhumi* of the Bodhisattva described in the *Daśabhumika-sutra*. Called "the dharma cloud", it is that capacity to rain down the cool, nourishing waters of divine wisdom, impartially and universally, upon all beings in every kingdom, upon every point of visible and invisible space. Every drop of this rain is in itself a Buddha, radiating a healing golden elixir. What we call *dhyāna* then functions as an unbounded, creative capacity to selflessly emanate, differentiate, and incarnate for *kalpa-s* without number, in harmony with the music of the spheres, the ever-moving *mandala* of the highest beings protecting our planetary chain. All are engaged in the work of Compassion Absolute, ceaselessly manifesting only in order to aid each and every monad who is naturally aspiring, but trapped, lost, or suffering.

This is one way to briefly describe the yoga which the great and peaceful ones, the Buddhas of Compassion, the *tathāgata-s*, or Masters have realized. They are an ever-living, evergreen Banyan Tree of wisdom in whose song all Nature rejoices, for it is that which nourishes and uplifts all and which keeps the portals of entrance to this path open to every pilgrim soul whose heart and intuition hearkens to the call.

> Behold, the mellow light that floods the Eastern sky. In signs of praise both heaven

and earth unite. And from the four-fold manifested Powers a chant of love ariseth, both from the flaming Fire and the flowing Water, and from sweet-smelling Earth and rushing Wind.

Hark! . . . from the deep unfathomable vortex of that golden light in which the Victor bathes, ALL NATURE'S wordless voice in thousand tones ariseth to proclaim:

JOY UNTO YE, O MEN OF MYALBA.

A PILGRIM HATH RETURNED BACK "FROM THE OTHER SHORE".

A NEW ARHAN IS BORN. . .

PEACE TO ALL BEINGS.

(*The Voice of the Silence*)

Endnotes

1. Every passage in *The Voice of the Silence* should be considered as synthesizing at least seven levels of meaning. This verse, in particular, may also be a reference to the Three Vestures of the Path. The Three Perfections can be further elaborated as 6, 7 (per the esoteric tradition), 10, or 16, per verse 215: ". . . thou hast to master these Pāramitā-s of perfection — the virtues transcendental six and ten in number — along the weary Path."

2. While *The Voice of the Silence* is based on the seven-fold path, the Gnostics apparently held to 12 as the defining cycle. *HPB's Commentary on the Pistis Sophia*, p. 41: "The . . . pages which deal with the subject demand the closest attention of the student of Esotericism, for not only have we here a history of the "pilgrimage" of the Soul, but also a description of the degrees of Initiation which correspond both to the natural degrees or states of consciousness, and to the cycles of human evolution. The 12 stages of initiation correspond to the Zodiac, each of which has two degrees, making 24 in all."

To enter the Path, one must be free of all self-deception. Otherwise, as the Sutras teach, one will be arrested from further progress and thrown back from further growth. Such devices as prostration and chanting are intended to help one confront all one's errors, especially those that may have caused pain to other beings and which were avoidable, occasions when one knew better and yet acted wickedly. Purification in preparation for the Path leading to meditation requires that all of these must be confronted. They must be collected together, brought to the forefront of one's attention, and then burnt out at the very root. Their force of persistence must be destroyed through a resolve in relation to the future and an honest recognition of their effects upon others. This is, no doubt, a difficult practice and must be repeated again and again.

Raghavan Iyer
"The Mahamudra of Voidness"

The Sacred Journey

ABRAHAM ORON

THE entire universe is in constant motion, in a flow, nothing is fixed, not even for a moment. Everything flows, everything moves, stemming from the One and ultimately returning to the One. This journey has two parts: one descending into the depths of life, bringing experience into matter; the other returning to the source from which all life has emerged.

The sacred journey is the path that consciousness undertakes toward discovering its essence, uncovering the holiness that resides within it. This is not necessarily a physical journey, though it may manifest as one. It is a journey through the expanses of consciousness, towards our inner self, our heart, and our soul.

We begin this journey like a fresh, clear, abundant spring. But as the years go by, many of us drift away from our source, becoming stagnant, drying up, polluted, or lost in the desert. This separation from our source, the inner part of ourselves, leads to conflict and division, detaching us from holiness and passing us through the crucible of ignorance, illusion, desire, and suffering — until we begin to turn inward and seek our hearts.

What moves us in this sacred journey? What compels us to move? Why should we move at all?

What drives the tiny seed buried in the ground to grow into a mighty sequoia tree, towering over one hundred meters? What motivates such a tree to push through the rocks? The same thing exists within us. There is something within us that will not rest until we bring it to expression and fulfill our potential.

If we look specifically at the motives that drive us on this sacred journey, the first is the feeling that we are incomplete. There is a desire to find that which will complete us, to find something that will make us whole. We all have an inner sense that we have fallen from unity, from a state of completeness, and we long to return there.

Another thing that drives us is the sense of separation, of loneliness, of being disconnected from the whole, which stirs in us a yearning for connection, warmth, and love. We are also motivated by a longing for more life, for a more intense, vital experience of living. To be more alive, awake, and less in the sleep of unawareness.

We feel an attraction to beauty, wisdom, freedom, knowledge — qualities that propel us on this journey.

And what is this holiness that the journey brings us to? This holiness is an

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inner quality expressed as life, purity, wisdom, unity, and love. These embody the qualities that urge a seed to become a tree and a person to reach the highest and most sublime state. This holiness has many names. Some call it God, others call it soul, spirit, or universal self. The important thing to understand is that there is nothing in the universe that does not contain it. The problem lies in our inability to see and feel it, due to the barriers we have built within ourselves, which prevent us from being aware of it.

Dr G. De Purucker speaks about this idea of the "universal heart":

> When we speak of the heart of the universe, we mean that consciousness, that light, that understanding, that nature whose essence is joy, which is the life of the universe. Not a personal life, but an impersonal one, and from which the universe draws the forces that sustain it. These forces are the divine beings, the spiritual entities whose touch we may feel even through the veil of the physical world, and to which we attribute the title "the forces acting within matter." The heart of the universe is not located somewhere, for it is everywhere. It is called the heart because it is the hidden center within each one of us, the source of our existence, and also the conduit through which the higher divine forces flow into us.[1]

He goes on to explain that all beings, both higher and lower on the evolutionary ladder, come from this same source. As we evolve through our own journey, we pass through the stage of humanity, gaining self-awareness, and as we continue on this evolutionary path, we develop an ever-expanding universal consciousness that knows no limits. We leave our divine origin as divine sparks without self-awareness, and our destiny is to become conscious divinities, directly participating in the vast cosmic work.

On this sacred journey, we open ourselves and develop our inner senses, those through which we can feel and touch the life beyond form, the essence beyond the outer shell. A new dimension is added to our perception — the soul, the mysterious energy that exists behind every living being, whether animate or inanimate.

The sacred journey leads us to feel this soul within ourselves, to become more aware of our inner essence and of the holiness that is present in everything. Life changes beyond recognition when the sense of inner quality, the sacred, is added to the outer appearance. When we sense it, we not only see the external form, but we also feel its soul, the soul of the forest, the essence of the spring, the life force within every tree, the soul of the field in bloom, and the soul of a person, child or adult, who is with us.

It is important to recognize that the soul, or holiness, exists within every being and every thing, representing an aspect of beauty, light, and divinity within everything. As we learn to touch this soul and this holiness, our lives become more meaningful. This contact with the soul creates a sense of expansion, which can manifest as a greater sense of beauty, deep tranquility, insights into the wisdom of the universe, and a feeling of love.

Everyone is on this sacred journey. I would like to share some words from spiritual teachers and poets on their paths.

Let us begin with Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, founder of the Theosophical Society, who speaks about the universe's heart:

> There is a road, steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind, but yet a road, and it leads to the very heart of the Universe: I can tell you how to find those who will show you the secret gateway that opens inward only, and closes fast behind the neophyte for evermore.

This passage emphasizes that as we progress on this path, it becomes harder to imagine returning to the place of ignorance and illusion where we once stood. She continues:

> There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer; there is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through; there is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win onwards, there is reward past all telling — the power to bless and save humanity; for those who fail, there are other lives in which success may come.[2]

Blavatsky addresses the obstacles on the path, which are not imposed by anyone else but are rather created by our own ignorance. These obstacles are, as some people describe, the "monsters" we encounter that are, in reality, the fruits of our own making.

Another traveler on this sacred journey, Rabindranath Tagore, wrote:

> The time that my journey takes is long and the way of it long.
>
> I came out on the chariot of the first gleam of light, and pursued my voyage through the wildernesses of worlds leaving my track on many a star and planet.
>
> It is the most distant course that comes nearest to thyself, and that training is the most intricate which leads to the utter simplicity of a tune.
>
> The traveller has to knock at every alien door to come to his own, and one has to wander through all the outer worlds to reach the innermost shrine at the end.
>
> My eyes strayed far and wide before I shut them and said "Here art thou!"[3]

Tagore speaks of the deep truth that we all, each living being, must go through a descent into the depths in order to rise again.

The Sufi mystic, Jalaluddin Rumi, speaks similarly of this journey of life:

> I died as mineral and became a plant. I died as plant and rose to animal. I died as animal and I was human. Why should I fear? When was I less by dying? Yet once more I shall die human, to soar with angels blessed above. And when I sacrifice my angel soul, I shall become what no mind ever conceived.[4]

This is the great journey. We have all, in a sense, been asleep as minerals, dreamed as plants, begun to awaken in animals, and now, as humans, we continue this journey, which has no end. The way is more important than the goal. The journey is more important than arriving, for in truth, we never fully arrive.

This journey is often accompanied by suffering and pain. We are forced to touch our own pain, the pain of others, and if we try to escape from pain, it will pursue us. Both pleasure and pain are powerful motivators. Eventually, a person may experience a moment of liberation from

both, a moment when both pain and pleasure are released because they belong to a transient reality.

Rabindranath Tagore, a mystic filled with immense love and a yearning for holiness, expresses this in his *Gitanjali*:

> Here is thy footstool and there rest thy feet where live the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.
>
> When I try to bow to thee, my obeisance cannot reach down to the depth where thy feet rest among the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.
>
> Pride can never approach to where thou walkest in the clothes of the humble among the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.
>
> My heart can never find its way to where thou keepest company with the companionless among the poorest, the lowliest, and the lost.[5]

Rabbi Nachman of Breslow explores this theme, touching on the idea that to connect deeply with those in need, one must descend into the depths where they are. The *tzaddik*, or righteous person, goes into the depths of suffering to raise lost souls, as the Rabbi explains. To rescue someone from the mud, the *tzaddik* must step into that very mud.

The Sufi mystic, Bayazid Bastami, discusses the practices required to connect with the soul:

> For twelve years I was a blacksmith of my own soul. I placed it in the furnace of asceticism and purified it in the fire of struggle. I placed it on the anvil of repentance and hammered it with the mallet of self-accusation until I made my soul like a mirror. Five years I was the mirror of my own self, polishing it with many deeds of piety and acts of worship. Then, for a year I gazed into it, and I saw my loins girded with pride, self-admiration, and hypocrisy. I worked another five years until that girdle wore away. I looked, and saw all created things dead. I uttered four times, "Allah Akbar", and returned from the funeral of all things, without being interrupted by any created being, and with the help of Allah alone.[6]

Finally, a Christian mystic, François Fénelon, prays with total surrender:

> Lord, I do not know what to ask of you, you alone know what I need. You love me more than I know how to love myself. My Father, give your child what he himself does not know how to ask for. Strike or heal, humble me or raise me up, I adore all your designs without knowing them. Teach me to pray, may it be you praying within me."[7]

In this journey, one of the essential factors is the ability to turn our hearts towards this holiness. There are times in this journey when we may fall asleep and need to awaken ourselves again and again. As Tagore expresses it:

> He came and sat by my side but I woke not. What a cursed sleep it was, O miserable me!
>
> He came when the night was still; he had his harp in his hands, and my dreams became resonant with its melodies.
>
> Alas, why are my nights all thus lost? Ah, why do I ever miss his sight whose breath touches my sleep?[8]

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, in his own words on spiritual practice,

says:

> Know that the essence of nullification, when a person nullifies his being and becomes nothing, and is included in the oneness of the blessed name, is through solitude, which requires a specific place and time, undisturbed by distractions. This time is at night, when all sleep, and the place is a path less traveled. There, one can truly empty his heart entirely and connect with the oneness of the blessed name.[9]

Ultimately, the highest practice on this path is love. We find in Judaism the strong statement: "And you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might." Similarly, in the Hindu text *Viveka Chudamani*, we read, "If one loves Brahman with all his might, then he becomes Brahman."

The mystic Kabir expressed his awe:

> I played day and night with my comrades, and now I am greatly afraid. So high is my Lord's palace, my heart trembles to mount its stairs: yet I must not be shy, if I would enjoy his love. My heart must cleave to my Lover; I must withdraw my veil, and meet him with all my body.[10]

The mystic is one whose awakening, whose ability to overcome obstacles, comes from this great love, this absolute and holy giving. As Rabbi Zusha, who was often ill, expressed:

> Who suffers? Not I, I am happy; Zusha is happy to live in a world that the Blessed Name has created. Zusha lacks nothing, needs nothing, and his heart is filled with gratitude.[11]

This love can only arise from great inner love. Rabbi Nachman of Breslov illustrates the journey with a story about a mountain at the world's center:

> On this mountain is a rock, and from this rock flows a spring. Everything has a heart, and the world itself has a heart, with a face, hands, feet, eyes, and ears. This heart is filled with fire, longing to return to the spring on the other side of the world, on the other side of the chasm. The heart endures much suffering. The sun strikes it and dries it out. To continue living, it thinks of the spring, and as it draws closer to the summit, the spring disappears, and then its soul departs, for it lives only for the love it feels for the spring, and if it should cease, the world would perish.[12] ✧

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George S. Arundale

K. DINAKARAN

GEORGE Sydney Arundale was the third international President of the Theosophical Society, after Col. H. S. Olcott and Dr Annie Besant. He was born in Surrey, England, on 1 December 1878. He was a great theosophist, philosopher, educationist, orator, freedom fighter, author, and lover of art and beauty, and did his schooling in Italy and Germany. Eventually he received an MA degree from St John's College, Cambridge in 1902. "Together differently" was a winged word of George S. Arundale. According to him, every Theosophist had to develop certain qualities so as to become an expert in some specific field. Not in order to become proud of them, but to contribute in one's own and best possible way to uplift the *whole* world, because the world is full of differences in form, colour, living creatures, and so on.



George Sydney Arundale (1878–1945)

Theosophist and Philosopher

Arundale explains "Theosophy" as:

> . . . the Science of Discontent, but not of a grumbling, irritable, despairing, aggressive, thoroughly miserable discontent. It is the science of a delighted discontentment which is thrilled to think that there is something available to the present "I", far, far better than that which now characterizes it. An individual who is content where he is, is certainly not dead, but he is only half alive, for he is resisting contact with all that life has still to offer him. Instead of being part of the river, he insists on being a little stagnant pool in which pride seeks to usurp and kill the function of movement.

Mr K. Dinakaran is a long-term member of the Indian Section Council and Secretary of the Kerala Theosophical Federation.

On death he says:

> When a particular life is over, and is closed by what we call death, there is not written "The End" or "Conclusion", but "To be continued in his or her next". Death is but a doorway leading to refreshment and to further unfoldment.

He explains Theosophy in a very simple manner, understandable to everyone. If H. P. Blavatsky and Annie Besant explain Theosophy in profound language and depth, Arundale explains the Ageless Wisdom with beauty and fragrance. He says:

> Theosophy gives value to everything, purpose to everything, and *life* to everything. In the dictionary of Theosophy certain words are non-existent — lifeless or inorganic, hopeless, helpless, useless; all other words expressive of futility or annihilation; all words expressive of a ceasing of purpose or of eternal damnation; and all words expressive of an unhappiness which is other than fleeting, or of any hatred or wrath which shall not sooner or later succumb to love.

George Arundale declares:

> Theosophy is indeed the Science of true values, of true Optimism, of the wonderful worthwhileness of circumstances, of the silver lining to all clouds, however black or sinister. It is the science of all pervading justice and love in Life, of certainty, of opportunity, of success, of Joy, of Peace, of ceaseless Delight.

He says:

> The machinery of Life is immeasurably more effective in the realm of the will than its counterparts in the realms of mind and emotions. Yet the vibrations in the higher regions are of stillness and silence. Only in the stillness and silence can the will speak and be heard. The voice of the Will is the Voice of the Silence. . . .
>
> As a principle, let us have the habit of consulting the will in every little detail of choosing, to bring nearer that time, which must surely come, when the will shall be absolute monarch throughout his dominions, and the mind and emotions his perfect agents.

Arundale analyses human nature:

> It is easy to find fault with others. It ought to be still easier to find fault with ourselves, for we know ourselves better than we can possibly know others. But we need not really find fault with anyone, not even with ourselves, save sometimes and rarely in order to note a defect which needs adjusting.

With regard to the God concept:

> If Theosophy is concerned at all with God, it is concerned with the God within each individual rather than with any extraneous God, anthropomorphic in appearance as every such God must necessarily be. Yet Theosophy knows God in a nature indescribable to man. By no means is Theosophy Godless, for the God-Principle is one of the most wonderful and universal facts of Life.

Truth, Beauty, and Love

Arundale says:

> Theosophy declares that only the beautiful is essentially true, shows the beautiful to be the supreme heritage of growth, demonstrates the beautiful to be the enduring fra-

grance of experience, and foreshadows the beautiful as an increasingly dominant factor in the lives of all who live naturally and therefore truly. . . . Theosophy is the Science of Beauty because it is the Science of Truth. The smallest details of [a Theosophist's] daily life should, therefore, have a touch of beauty uncommon in their nature. He should be living a more beautiful life, with more beautiful feelings, thoughts, speech and action, more beautiful hopes, aspirations, and relationships with his fellow men. He should be able to perceive the beautiful in all around him more clearly and more appreciatively.

He goes on:

Most people might insist that in certain forms of life there is no beauty at all, that it is overflowing with ugliness. But the Theosophist knows that however full of so-called ugliness a form may be, it is eternally redeemed by a spark of beauty, however feebly the spark may glow.

Ugliness [is] either . . . beauty out of place, as that which for an earlier stage of evolution might have been beauty, but which has ceased to be the beauty appropriate to the later stage of evolution; or [is] undeveloped beauty, beauty at a primitive stage of unfoldment. . . . Ugliness and Beauty are, therefore, relative terms. . . . There is much that is beautiful in each one of us. There is much that is beautiful in all the world.

On Love he has his own interpretations based on Theosophy which can be compared to the teachings of St Paul:

Theosophically speaking, Love is the most wonderful power, the most wonderful quality in the world. The greatest of all powers and qualities is Love. . . . Love creates, sustains, and regenerates the world. It is the beginning, the way, and the end of growth.

Love is the heart of all things, and shines in and through them more and more unto their perfect unfoldment. There is nothing from which love is absent, however ugly, however seemingly debased. There is nothing which love does not glorify. Love is the golden chain which makes all things one. There is no one, nothing, ignorant or devoid of love, be it but the love Life has for him, or it. While the love of man for man or for animal may fail, or the love of man for flower or tree or weed or stone or earth, or the love of any one for any other, the love of Life for all never fails. For the love of Life knows no exclusions, is constant to all things, and is present in tenderness even where no love is seen by mortal eyes.

On war, Arundale comments:

If [the most pronounced pacifist] be an eater of flesh, a wearer of furs, a vivisector, a participator in the hunting of animals, or in any other way uses his might against weakness and the right of weakness, he is taking part in war — war against his younger fellow-members of the universal family.

For him the whole world is One Family consisting of minerals, plants, animals, rivers, mighty oceans, and human beings.

Educationist

In 1903 Arundale came to India as per Dr Annie Besant's request to work as

Professor of History at the Central Hindu College, Benaras, affiliated to the University of Allahabad. He became examiner both of the University and the Government of the United Provinces. In 1907 he was appointed Headmaster of the Central Hindu College School, and, in 1909, Principal of the College. He was an educationist par excellence. According to him:

> Education means, theosophically speaking, . . . the drawing out from within, with the help of the without, that which is awaiting unfoldment in these various reflection-bodies of the eternal soul. Environment knocks at the door. Power waits for release. Education is the link between the two, and its work is to help in the formation of, or rather in the strengthening of, character, attitude, and ability to discriminate with increasing accuracy between the less and more useful, the less and more true, and the more or less beautiful.

Arundale explains the teacher-student relationship as follows:

> Theosophy, while appreciating youth and age at their respective values, regards both as but aspects of growth, as but different phases of one movement. Specifically, a teacher has as much to learn from a student, as student from teacher. Teacher and taught are in fact learning and growing together.

He wonders:

> Who, in terms of life, shall venture to say who is teacher and who is student! And when the teacher understands that he too is no less a child than the children he teaches, then indeed, and then alone, will he have begun to enter into the spirit of science of education.

His concepts of education are worth pondering in this age when education has been reduced to mere gathering of information and knowledge, and to make the student fit to procure an occupation:

> If education were for living and not merely for livelihood, for joy and happiness and not merely for temporal success, for self-expression and not so exclusively for imitation, for eternity as it is for time, for service as it is for self-seeking, for wisdom and truth as it is for so-called facts, for the soul as it is supposed to be for the mind, then indeed would the younger generation be well-equipped for Life.

In 1911 Arundale established at Benaras a movement to help J. Krishnamurti in his work. In 1913 he resigned his Principalship of the Central Hindu College and accompanied Krishnamurti and his younger brother Nitya to Europe for studies. In 1917 he founded the Society for Promotion of National Education at Madras under theosophical auspices for which he established schools everywhere in India, his chief activity being Principal, National University, Madras, of which Rabindranath Tagore was Chancellor. Arundale also became Principal and Head of Teachers Training Department. For his services to education, the National University conferred upon him the degree of D. Litt. In 1920 he became Minister of Education to HH the Maharajah Holkar of Indore and introduced many improvements in that

State. He travelled extensively in Europe lecturing and studying education, political, and social conditions. He toured all of India in 1941 with a dance troupe which was led by his wife Rukmini Devi, for the promotion of Indian arts and culture. He visited the Anantha Theosophical Lodge in Trivandrum in 1941.

On Discipleship and Initiation

Arundale's *Thoughts on At the Feet of the Master* is a handbook for every Theosophist. He had a series of correspondence studies on *At the Feet of the Master* which he had been writing for two years on behalf of the members of the Order of the Servants of the Star. He considered *At the Feet of the Master* his constant companion, guide, and mentor. He considered J. Krishnamurti as his teacher. He said: "Ever by my side is the little copy given me by my young teacher." He stated that "*At the Feet of the Master* and *Education as Service* are Heralds of the New Age, Signs of the Coming Times, and should be carefully studied by those who seek to cooperate with the future, and who are not slaves of prejudice and custom." From his *Thoughts* . . . :

> You must not . . . think that the unreal is useless. It is through the unreal that we reach the real, which show up the more vividly by contrast. The stars are shining on us as much in the daytime as at night, but it is because of the contrast with the darkness of the night that we are able to gaze awestruck at the splendor of the starlit heavens.

On wisdom and knowledge:

> Knowledge belongs but to the mind, while wisdom is the science of the spirit. "From death lead me to immortality" — let the lower nature pass away and the higher shine forth for ever.

Of the Masters:

> We are one in spirit, what They are we shall be, what we are They have been; and to the great Shepherd we are all sheep of his worldwide fold.

Organiser and Leader

Arundale was a co-worker of Besant in the Home Rule Movement when she launched it in 1916. Within a short time, Home Rule became a mantra and every village in India was awakened with the spirit of freedom and self-rule. The British Government interned Besant, Arundale, and B. P. Wadia at Ooty for three months under the Defence of India Act. Due to public protest from every corner the trio was released. It may be a record in world history where two foreign nationals fought for the freedom of a country which was ruled by their own people! Besant was 70 and Arundale was in the prime of his youth — 39 years old.

When he became the President of the Theosophical Society after the death of Besant he developed his Seven-Year Plan. In 1935 he launched the "Straight Theosophy Campaign". The diamond jubilee of the Theosophical Society was celebrated in 1935 during his Presidentship. He presided over the Fourth World Congress held at Geneva during 29 July to 4 August 1936. An outcome of the Con-

gress was the International Theosophical Campaign for Understanding in 1937. He had joined International Co-Freemasonry in 1902 and became the head of its Eastern Federation in 1935. He was the Vice-President of the Madras Provincial Council Boy Scout Association and the Provincial Commissioner for Madras Presidency. In 1915 he was one of the workers in the British Red Cross Society. He was the first person to have been the General Secretary of three Sections of the TS: the English, Australian, and Indian Sections.

Author of Books

Arundale authored many books such as *Thoughts on At the Feet of the Master, Nirvana, Mount Everest, You, Lotus Fire,* and so on. He has 32 pamphlets to his credit, written since 1907 on education, economics, and so on, in the light of Theosophy, various articles in theosophical journals, and Convention lectures.

I am concluding with the following lines penned by him.

> I am the Light. No darkness can withstand my shining;
> I am the Light — Ray of our Lord the Sun;
> I am the Light, of every cloud the silver lining;
> I am the Light — the many and the One.

✧

References:

1. Hand Book of the Indian Section
2. *You*, George S. Arundale
3. *Thoughts on At the Feet of the Master*, G. S. Arundale

When Dr Annie Besant wrote about George S. Arundale, she often highlighted his passionate dedication to the Theosophical Society, his tireless work in education reform, especially in India, and his deep commitment to promoting spiritual development alongside intellectual pursuits, often describing him as a "true Theosophist" and a key figure in the movement's expansion in the East.

Theosophical Society, Adyar Archives

ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-NINTH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Adyar

***Theme:* "Practical Theosophy and the Art of Self-Transformation"**

31 December 2024 to 4 January 2025

CONVENTION PROGRAMME

Monday, 30 December 2024

8.30 am	General Council of the TS, GC members only
3.00 pm	Chalice Ceremony by the Order of the Round Table

Tuesday, 31 December 2024

8.30 am	OPENING OF THE 149TH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION Prayers of the Religions, Universal Prayer, Greetings Invocation and opening by the International President
9.30 am	"ADYAR TODAY AND FUTURE" AND TS REPORT OF 2023–2024 Tim Boyd, *International President, TS Adyar*
11.00 am	INDIAN SECTION COUNCIL MEETING — I
3.00 pm	RECEPTION
5.00 pm	PUBLIC LECTURE "The Value of Joy in Self-Transformation" Kurt Leland, *International Speaker, USA*
7.45 pm	Ritual of the Mystic Star

Wednesday, 1 January 2025

8.30 am	SHORT LECTURES "The Alchemy of Theosophy" Linda Oliveira, *TS in Australia* "Theosophy — the Philosopher's Stone" Shikhar Agnihotri, *TS in India*
10.00 am	INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION — I Inaugural Address Tim Boyd, *International President* State of The Indian Section Address Pradeep Gohil, *President, Indian Section*

	Treasurer's Report V. Narayanan, *Treasurer, Indian Section*
1.00 pm	TOS India Executive Committee Meeting
3.00 pm	Workshop — I "Invoking the Future Garden" *Adyar Eco Development team*
3.00 pm	Workshop — II "Theosophical Education" Sonal Murali, *Director, Adyar Theosophical Academy*
3.00 pm	Workshop — III "Expanding Perspectives through Forum Theatre" Yugesh Ramachandran, *Facilitator, TS in India*
5.00 pm	Public Lecture "Growing the Third Ear under the Great Astral Mother Tree — Art in Relation to Theosophy" Christine Ödlund, *Artist, Sweden*
7.45 pm	Evening Program

Thursday, 2 January 2025

8.30 am	Devotional Meeting Chandrika Mehta, *TS in India*
10.00 am	Dialogue "Can Theosophy Be Transformative?" Tim Boyd, *International President, TS Adyar* Pedro Oliveira, *TS in Australia*
11.00 am	Discussion Groups
1.00 pm	Indian Section Council Meeting — II
3.00 pm	Mini-Talks on the Convention Theme (1) "Hope" Vighnesh R., *TS in India* (2) "Small Steps Matter" Merike Martsepp, *TS in Estonia, Resident at Adyar* (3) "Inner Unfoldment and Theosophical Life" Svyatoslav Lipsky, *TS in Russia* (4) The Art of Self-Mastery" Catalina Isaza-Cantor, *TS in Colombia, Resident at Adyar*

5.00 pm	THEOSOPHY-SCIENCE LECTURE "Science of the Sacred: Water's Transformative Power" Alok Aurovillian, *Water Science Researcher*
7.45 pm	NADAM DANCE *Narthan Academy of Dance and Music*

Friday, 3 January 2025

8.30 am	THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE (TOS) Nancy Secrest, *TS in USA, TOS International Secretary, TS International Treasurer, Resident at Adyar, India*
10.00 am	INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION — II "Know Thyself" Opening and closing remarks Deepa Padhi as Chairperson (1) "Who am I?" Milind Joshi (2) "How to Know Thyself" Smitapragyan Patro (3) "Knowing is Loving" Arunima Baruah (4) "Liberation by Renunciation" M. S. Sridhara (5) "Self-Realisation through Knowing Thyself" Sushma Srivastava
1.00 pm	TOS INDIA Annual General Body Meeting
3.00 pm	THEOSOPHY AND ART "The Divine Hidden in Daily Life" Elif Kamisli, *Exhibition Manager, Turkey* Anupama Gaur, *Consultant Conservator, India*
5.00 pm	BESANT LECTURE Thiru R. N. Ravi *Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu*
7.45 pm	MEMBERS TALENT SHOW Artistic Sharing by the Delegates Vinay Patri, Moderator, *TS in India*

Saturday, 4 January 2025

8.30 am	SYMPOSIUM ON THE CONVENTION THEME Sabine van Osta, Moderator, *TS in Belgium* "The Human Mind: This Unknown Laboratory" Krista Umbjärv, *TS in France* "The Blossom of Intuition" Richard Sell, *TS in New Zealand* *"Self-Transformation through Values"* Dr Deepa Padhi, *International Vice-President*
10.00 am	Olcott School New Building Dedication
2.00 pm	Admission of New Members
3.00 pm	WORLD CONGRESS & WORLD FEDERATION OF YOUNG THEOSOPHISTS Invitation to the World Congress Update from World Federation of Young Theosophists
5.00 pm	Public Lecture by the President "Spirituality and the Practical World" Tim Boyd, *International President, TS Adyar*
6.00 pm	Closing of the Convention

Other Activities

Daily at 6.00 am

1. Bharata Samaj Puja
2. Silent walking meditation

Visits

Social Welfare Centre
Adyar Theosophical Academy
Olcott School
Garden Walks

Stalls

OES
BMAD

Exhibitions

"The Divine Hidden in Daily Life"
Art Conservation Laboratory
"HPB's Paintings, Satirical Sketches, and Doodles — Some Fascinating Glimpses"
Surendra Narayan Archives
"Kanjur and Tanjur — The Holy Books of Tibetan Buddhism"
Library Display Room

Theosophical Work around the World

England & Wales Section

Mrs Jenny Baker, National President of the England & Wales Section, has sent the reflections of Andrew Swaffield, President of their Worthing Lodge, on the Section's 2024 Summer School, with the theme, "The Mystery of Life and Death".

As the summer battled with autumn, the early September light bathing the serene grounds of the Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire (see below), the Theosophical Society's Summer School opened its doors to a gathering of seekers, all drawn by our timeless quest for knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual awakening. From 2 to 6 September, I had the privilege of immersing myself in a rich tapestry of talks, workshops, and contemplative practices that brought together both ancient traditions and modern insights.



One of the most profound highlights was learning the ancient Chinese art of Qigong with Terri King. The graceful, flowing movements and the deep connection to energy that Qigong fosters offered not only a new physical practice but also a spiritual awakening. It is something to continue to explore in the future, as it aligns so beautifully with the theosophical teachings of unity and balance.

Gary Kidgell's exploration of "Greek Hero Myths" and the "Quest for Transcendence" transported us back to ancient times, yet his message felt deeply relevant for today's seekers. Through the stories of these heroes, we are reminded of our own journey towards transcendence — a journey of struggle, courage, and ultimately, transformation. His talk was a reminder that, as Joseph Campbell said, we are all on a personal hero's journey, seeking to rise above the mundane and connect with the divine.

The Blavatsky Lecture, given by Petra Meyer, was a deep dive into the cyclic nature of life. Through her deeply researched words, I was reminded of the rhythms of existence, the eternal return, and how life's greatest mysteries unfold in cycles that we can only begin to comprehend. Petra also gave the public lecture on "Time", where she drew fascinating connections between science and spirituality, emphasizing that time, like all phenomena, is part of a greater cosmic dance. This lecture resonated deeply, reinforcing the growing belief that Quantum Physics and Theosophy are beginning to converge, offering us glimpses into a

unified understanding of our world.

Tony McNeile spoke very personally and directly about his own life experiences and the relationship with karma, destiny, and fate. His unique blend of life experiences was woven together beautifully as he spoke.

Elizabeth Crofts opened an entirely new realm with her intriguing talk on Shakespeare and Theosophy. Her deep knowledge of both subjects illuminated connections that I had never considered, and I left her talk with a newfound appreciation for the esoteric wisdom embedded within Shakespeare's works.

Neville Crofts led a thought-provoking study group on Socrates. As we explored Socrates' acceptance of his impending self-administered execution by hemlock, I was deeply moved by the philosopher's serene courage and his insights into the nature of existence and the soul's immortality. It was a reminder of how Theosophy continues to echo the wisdom of these ancient philosophical traditions.

Equally stimulating was the study group on near-death experiences led by Peter Brierley and Terri King. Their discussion on the theosophical stages of after-death brought fresh perspectives on the transition between life and death and offered comforting insights into what lies beyond.

Wayne Gatfield's heartfelt talk on awakening our true self, rekindled within all of us the deep truth that we are Buddhas in our essence, constantly awakening to our divine nature.

Jenny Baker brought the week to a fitting close with her excellent talk on the mysteries of existence (see below). Her words left me reflecting on the depth of the theosophical teachings and their relevance in navigating the complexities of life. It was a beautiful synthesis of the week's themes, and her wisdom grounded our shared journey.



Beyond the rich talks and study groups, one of the most rewarding aspects of the week was meeting fellow Theosophists in person. There truly is no substitute for face-to-face connection, despite the modern convenience of our Zoom gatherings. The sense of camaraderie, shared purpose, and the deep conversations we had, will stay with all of us long after we have parted ways.

It was intriguing to learn that the Theosophical Society was last at the Hays Conference Centre in 1956. To return to this venue 68 years later added a sense of continuity and history to our gathering. It was as if the teachings of Theosophy, like the cycles of life we explored during the week, had come full circle. ✧



Participants of the Summer School 2024. In the front row, fourth to seventh from left, are Petra Meyer, Jenny Baker (National President), Andrea Baptiste (Accounts Manager), and Elizabeth Crofts (National Secretary). The author of the report is Andrew Swaffield (the tallest person in the back row, left).

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1947	Africa, East and Central	Mr Narendra M. Shah	PO Box 14525. 00800, Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya	*The Theosophical Light*	**narendrashahi999@gmail.com**
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1956	Africa, West	Dr K. A. Tutu	PO Box 720, Accra, Ghana	*The West African Theosophist*	**katutu@gmail.com**
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