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Cover: "Miracle of Birth" by Sulamith Wülfing. Born into a theosophical family, she was an artist and illustrator best known for her fairy-tale-like ethereal works and mystical subjects. She did not give titles to her paintings. For an article about her see p. 19 of this issue and for more paintings see p. 39. For more images see: **<artlex.com/artists/sulamith-wulfing>**

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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

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

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

Self, No-Self, and the Self

TIM BOYD

The Universal Spiritual Problem

The world's spiritual traditions differ in many ways — rituals, methods of practice, descriptions of divinity — but in some essential areas, no matter in what time period, location, or culture the tradition has its roots, there is unanimous agreement. One of those areas of agreement is about the essential human problem holding us back from spiritual awareness. The names for this problem are many and vary across traditions: ego, man of clay/flesh, the Natural Man, personality, lower self, Nafs (Arabic), Nefesh (Hebrew), Ahamkāra (Sanskrit), Animal Soul, Egoic Mind, the self-cherishing, deluded mind. In theosophical parlance the term most often used is the "self", with a lower case "s" to distinguish it from "Self", the universal shared essence of all life.

Every valid tradition that points toward spirit has intensively analyzed this personal center, and has named and described its qualities and habits. The universal recognition of the problematic nature of the self is based on the observation that each of us functions from a personal center, and that our way of seeing the world and relating to its processes and its inhabitants is conditioned by it. Sages and close observers over time have understood that our clinging to, and being directed by this personal self severely limits our experience of a more expansive, richer, greater life within which we are embedded, but fail to realize. This, they say, is because our attention is fixed on servicing the wants, needs, and demands of what Rumi describes as the "corrupt, self-absorbed king". The First Object of the Theosophical Society (TS) is to "form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood", but it is an object which is unattainable while the self dominates our thought and behavior. What to do?

The Ascetic Response

The sense that the self is the problem preventing a deeper connection with spirit has led to a number of strange attitudes. In many approaches to spirituality, the body has come to be regarded as an enemy. In an attempt to control or subdue it, often continence and fasting are emphasized, but within all traditions there are forms of extreme asceticism embraced by some. Starvation, self-flagellation, sleeping on a bed of nails, wearing shirts made of hair, and many other imaginative forms of mortification of the body are practiced in the belief that somehow disdain and abuse of the body can diminish its authority and lead to union with spirit. Before becoming the Buddha, Siddartha tried it. He starved his body, becoming so emaci-

ated that every bone pressed against his skin. In his determination, he reached the point of death and was only brought back to life by a young woman who had come to give an offering of milk to a tree spirit. Mistaking him for that spirit she fed him the milk. When he eventually regained his strength, he realized that self-deprivation was as harmful as self-indulgence and abandoned his austerities to practice the Middle Way.

It is our inability to free ourselves from our attachment to the self that blinds us to our spiritual depths, but that same self is also the pathway that leads us to the heights — the boat that carries us across the water. It is through our personal relationships with family, friends, teachers, even pets, that we experience the liberating power and depths of love and compassion. Our body and its senses open us to experiences of beauty in Nature, music, fragrance, taste, that can move us to transcendent states. And our thoughts, though normally self-focused, can rise to levels touching on spirit.

Why Are You Unhappy?

A contemporary Daoist teacher once asked a rhetorical question, and then answered it himself. The question was simple: "Why are you unhappy?" And his answer was: "Because 99% of your thoughts are about your self, and there isn't one." It is a clever statement, but also profound and worthy of serious reflection. So much of our thought revolves around ourselves, yet deep down is it possible that such a thing may not truly exist?

That question and answer cut across all spiritual traditions. In every tradition there is an awareness of a self with which we identify. In scriptural imagery it is often portrayed as a person, far from home, estranged from their true source. In the Bible there is the story of the prodigal son who leaves his father's house and suffers in a far land. In Buddhism there is the Bhavachakra, the Wheel of Life, where beings cycle through repeating incarnations, driven by ignorance. In all of these traditions there is the sense of a self that is somehow unaware of its deeper nature and unable to reconcile itself with a greater reality. We often think in terms of a self with a little "s", but there is also the Self with a capital "S" — universal consciousness, divinity, God. There is the personal self, and then there is That. Spiritual traditions, in one way or another, attempt to bridge the gap between the two. The Mission Statement of the TS points us toward "spiritual self transformation".

Does the Self Exist?

On what basis can someone say that the self, the most immediate, most obvious aspect of our lives, is non-existent? Many people, when talking about themselves, take their finger and tap their chest to indicate "me" or "I". The body is undeniable and ever present as the most prominent aspect of self. In many ways it is like the sun whose gravity holds all of the planets in orbit around itself. We all are conscious of the flow of thoughts, feelings, and emotions that largely define who we are. So, how can it be said of this familiar, constant companion, that "there isn't one"? Clearly the self does exist, but like

a cloud its reality is temporary and conditional. In order for a cloud to take form many conditions come together — the right amount of water vapor in the air, temperature, and altitude precipitate a form which exists for a time. While the conditions last it has a shape, it can be seen, it moves across the sky bringing rain or shadow to the earth below. Then it dissipates, and all of its components dissolve into the surrounding environment. So, yes, it is real, but only so long as the binding conditions remain. It is real, but only relatively real.

Theosophical Perspectives on the Self

In Theosophy the conditions that give reality to the self are described using a number of terms from the spiritual traditions of West and East. In *The Key to Theosophy*, H. P. Blavatsky comments on the Buddha's concept of the Five Skandhas — Form, Sensation, Perception, Mental Formations, and Consciousness — equating all but Consciousness with the Lower Quaternary (the self, composed of its body, energies, desires, and desire-driven mind). She goes further in outlining the composition of the human being. At the outset of *The Secret Doctrine*, HPB describes humanity as the meeting point of three evolutionary streams: spiritual, intellectual, and physical:

> Each of these three systems has its own laws, and is ruled and guided by different sets of the highest Dhyanis or "Logoi". Each is represented in the constitution of man, the Microcosm of the great Macrocosm; and it is the union of these three streams in him which makes him the complex being he now is.

But the self we construct within this human dimension is something slightly different. It is a psychological construct through which we function.

The House of Self

In some ways, it is like a home. Some people live in a single room, others in an apartment, others in a mansion or palace. Regardless of size, it is a space we inhabit. We decorate it, embellish it, protect it. We insure it against loss. We install alarms to guard it. It is the place where we accumulate possessions, where we experience enjoyment and suffering, where we live and eventually die.

But what truly defines such a space? Ultimately, it is defined by its walls — by the barriers that enclose it. If we ask, what would happen if the walls were removed, we begin to approach the heart of spiritual inquiry.

***Neti, neti*: The Deconstruction of Identity**

In traditional practice there is the phrase *neti, neti* — "Not this, not this." It relates to a process of deconstruction in which one inquires into the components of the self. "Is my body the self?" "Are my sensations or emotions my self?" "Is it my thoughts or mind?" We ask, we test our answers, and one by one, layer after layer of identity falls away. Not this, not this.

The process is much like peeling an onion. If we persevere, eventually only one final layer is left. And when that too is removed, what remains? Some would say nothing remains. Others would say that what remains is what was always there:

infinite, indivisible, omnipresent space. We are the ones who erect these little houses, imagining that our space, our self, is somehow separate from all others.

The question then becomes: How do we dissolve these confining walls? How do we diminish the control of this self, or even make it disappear? This is where the spiritual path begins, with all of its teachings, disciplines, and practices. There is the personal self, and there is the Universal Self, but between them lies a space often described as "no-self". This no-self is the bridge toward the Self, Universal and impersonal.

The Mind as the Barrier

In *The Voice of the Silence*, HPB identifies the mind itself as the problem: "The mind is the slayer of the Real." The mind separates us from the greater Self, therefore, "we must slay the slayer."

Buddhism offers similar teachings. Among the six *pāramitās*, or perfections, the final one is *prajñā* — wisdom. But wisdom here does not simply mean knowledge about things. In many ways, it means the opposite. Wisdom begins with the realization of emptiness — that nothing possesses inherent, independent existence. A chair, for example, is not inherently a chair. What makes it a chair? Is the chair its legs? Its wood? Its shape?

As we examine more deeply, we discover that everything is composed of countless interdependent elements. The wood grew from a tree nourished by soil formed through the decay of innumerable living beings. Rain watered it. Sunlight sustained it. The carpenter shaped it. Someone else made the carpenter's tools. Every object is part of an immeasurable web of causes and conditions. The same is true of ourselves. It has been more than one hundred years since modern science moved away from the idea of an "ultimate atom", a final indivisible unit, discovering instead ever finer subatomic particles. There is no isolated, ultimate, independent material unit. Everything exists interdependently. If we could truly grasp this, the hold of the self might loosen. We would see that everything we call "me" is the product of countless beings, forces, and levels of consciousness participating in a shared process.

Dying to the Self

The final line of the Prayer of St Francis beautifully expresses this idea:

"It is in dying [to the self] that one awakens to eternal life."

Not the death of the body, but dying to the self. The self that has set up camp as "me". Through its dissolution comes birth into eternal life, into the divine, into universal consciousness, into the Self. This raises the practical question: How do we participate in the dying of the self? Spiritual teachings offer many approaches.

HPB, in her essay "What is Truth?", wrote that the personal self must be paralyzed in order for the inner life to be experienced. She spoke of "paralyzing the appetites of the lower personality" — not physical starvation, but starving the tendencies and desires that strengthen the egoic self.

In *Light on the Path*, the language is even more forceful. One of the repeated

instructions is "Kill out . . ." Kill out desire. Kill out ambition. Kill out the sense of separateness.

Yet the problem immediately arises: Who is doing the killing? Who is starving the self? The self itself is being asked to participate in its own dissolution. The ego is being enlisted to silence the ego. Is this even possible? This paradox appears throughout spiritual traditions. In Buddhist imagery, Samsāra is a wheel perpetuated by ignorance, and it is that ignorance that gives us the confidence in the reality and permanence to the separate self.

The Impossible Question

The American mystic Joel S. Goldsmith authored many books. The dedication in all of his books was a quote from the Psalms in the Bible and addressed this paradox:

"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain that build it."

Unless the structure of our life is built by a consciousness united with the divine, all human effort remains merely another construction of the ego.

Jiddu Krishnamurti approached the issue differently. In a series of talks collected as *The Impossible Question*, he suggested that transformation requires asking questions that cannot be answered within the limits of the self, of the known. One such question is: Can the mind free itself? Can the mind empty itself of the known, not through personal effort or control, but spontaneously, naturally, without the intervention of the ego? Just asking the question reveals its impossibility. How can "my mind" become free of conditioning without "me" doing something about it?

An answer to this impossible question may be another question. Does a plant break through its encasing seed and grow because of self? Does the chick keep pecking until its shell cracks because of thought, or personal motivation? After long, gradual preparation and growth the plant and the chick appear and the enclosed world of the seed and shell is left behind, not because of self-will, but because it is what life demands and the time has come. It isn't a decision or a plan. There is no choice involved. Just like the plant that sleeps in the seed and the embryo within the egg, there is a gestation period of seeming inactivity during which a swelling reservoir of energy and intelligence emerges as a new birth into a greater life, beyond the shell, beyond the self.

Ramana Maharshi repeatedly posed the question: "Who am I?"

At first, we answer in ordinary ways: this body, this personality, this history. But deeper inquiry reveals that whatever can be observed cannot be the true Self.

If one continues deeply enough into the question, eventually the independent observer itself begins to dissolve. The "I" ceases to exist as something separate. It is precisely at this point that the experience of no-self becomes possible. It is also at this point that people speak of enlightenment. ✧

Are We Not Born for Happiness? — I

PAVEL N. MALAKHOV

HAPPINESS has been defined in countless ways — some simple, some elaborate, some colloquial, others wrapped in the language of science. Yet one thing never changes: its irresistible attraction. People are drawn to happiness and continually strive for it. That very pull makes it worthwhile to look more deeply into its nature. In this article we will touch on several aspects of happiness, reflect on what it really is, and place these reflections in the broader context of the meaning of our earthly existence — that is, we shall try to understand what role happiness plays in the process of reincarnation.

What Makes Us Be Born?

Not every worldview even raises this question. In some traditions, the purpose of our appearance in this world is traced back to an unknowable source: God, Heaven, or Destiny. In others, it is attributed to an equally unfathomable cause: a blind force or an automatic, soulless law of reproduction, through which forms multiply and consciousness comes into being within them spontaneously. The question of why we are born is inseparably linked with another: Who are we? What is our nature? Our constitution? The purpose of our existence?

Theosophy offers a fairly detailed answer to this question, while at the same time affirming that, in essence, the same view can be discerned — though in varying degrees of clarity and completeness — in all the world's teachings.

Human nature is twofold. We have both an inner and an outer dimension. Incarnation is a temporary state, a periodic manifestation of the eternal inner reality into the temporal outer one — of the formless and boundless into limited forms. The former represents in us the spiritual nature, the latter the material. This, in simplified outline, is our constitution; and such a sketch will be sufficient for addressing the question at hand.

The two natures differ so radically in their qualities that it is impossible, while dwelling in one, to comprehend the other. What is needed is the experience of both states, in all their inner gradations and in varying degrees of intermingling between the two principles. Hence arises the necessity of alternating between these polar conditions, and, as we advance, we

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gradually deepen our understanding of the distinctive character of each.

It is natural, then, to ask: If our spiritual nature, being in a state of oneness with the whole of existence and unbounded by time, *knows everything* — past as well as future — then surely it must also know all that the embodied state has to offer. Why, then, should we need incarnation at all? Yet, paradoxical as it may sound at first, boundless knowledge has its own limitations, if we look at the concept in a broader sense. As is expressed in my poem "Infinity",

> Yet even boundlessness is incomplete,
> It seeks a something to make its wholeness meet.
> Infinity itself has its limitation —
> It cannot grasp the sense of separation.
> Possessing all that ever can be known,
> It cannot fathom what it means to lack, to be alone.

A broader sense of "knowledge" is revealed in expressions such as: "You do not know what it means to refuse a piece of bread after months of hunger", or "You do not know what it means to raise a child alone", or "You do not know what it means to find a beloved after so many years of searching". In all such cases, knowledge does not signify information, but lived experience — for experience too is a form of knowing.

As we are taught, the origin of this world rests on a threefold foundation. This means that in studying any phenomenon or concept we must approach it from at least three perspectives. The triad may be revealed in different ways, yet one of its most widely applicable forms is: *spirit*, *matter*, and *mind*. Thus, the *spiritual* aspect of knowledge — the most abstract and generalizing — may be called *information*, or theoretical knowledge; the *material* aspect is *experience*; and the *mental* aspect is *understanding*. All three components are indispensable to complete knowledge, and none can be ignored or substituted for another.

Thus, *omniscience* in the spiritual state does not mean *understanding*, but only an unlimited access to information; nor does it provide *experience*. *Experience* requires action under *specific conditions*, and for this it is necessary to step out of the *unconditioned* state. *Understanding* requires *comparison*, and for comparison one must leave the state of *unity* — for only that which differs can be compared. Consequently, true and complete knowledge is possible only when all three aspects are present. This is what gives rise to the constant circulation of the life-wave through different planes of being, which themselves come into existence in order to provide the necessary diversity of conditions.

But what, then, has all this to do with happiness? The point is that, in order to understand both happiness itself and its role in the process of reincarnation, we must also take into account several different contexts. To begin with, let us look at one of the contemporary scientific approaches to the study of happiness.

Hormones of Happiness

Materialistic thinking is inclined to look at everything "from the bottom up",

from matter to consciousness. In such a worldview, matter is primary; therefore, it seems quite logical that all states of consciousness are regarded as the effects of certain chemical reactions and external causes. We shall not here examine how well this perspective succeeds in explaining the *inner* world of the human being, but we will limit ourselves to its view of happiness.

Scientists have discovered that in a human being experiencing states of happiness, pleasure, and satisfaction, certain chemical substances are produced, which are popularly, though unofficially, referred to as "happiness hormones". In scientific language, of course, they bear less descriptive names. With regard to happiness, four hormones are considered especially significant: dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, and endorphins. Their functions are described as follows:

- **Dopamine** is responsible for motivation, goal-seeking, and the pleasure of achievement. It is the key component of the brain's reward system. When you complete a project, receive praise, or reach a desired goal, dopamine levels rise.
- **Serotonin** influences mood, self-esteem, and the quality of sleep. This neurotransmitter also plays an important role in regulating appetite, memory, and social behavior.
- **Oxytocin** is associated with closeness, trust, and social bonds. It is released when we feel emotional or physical warmth — for example, during hugs, interaction with loved ones, or even while spending time with animals.
- **Endorphins** are the body's natural painkillers. They reduce physical pain and emotional discomfort, and can also produce feelings of euphoria after physical exertion or pleasurable activities.

The foregoing description is taken from an article by an unspecified author, *Four Hormones of Happiness* (4 March 2025), published on the website *Planeta Zdorovya* (HealthPlanet: <planetzdorovo.ru>). It corresponds quite well to numerous other sources grounded in a materialistic worldview, including *Wikipedia*. One may note that — with the exception of the description of oxytocin — the formulations tend to emphasize the primacy of hormones in relation to states of consciousness.

Interestingly, however, the recommendations for increasing the production of these hormones, alongside the more predictable materialistic suggestions of physical activity and diet, also include such factors as gratitude, charity, meditation, and mindfulness. Within that world-view these appear to confuse the causal order, yet such a step toward non-material values and recognition of their influence on our lives can only be welcomed. Indeed, deeper reflection along these lines may eventually enable the sincere seeker of truth to step beyond the limits defined by the senses.

For the present, however, the materialistic outlook finds itself quite at home with statements such as the following from *Wikipedia*, where we shall italicize the elements that reveal the underlying worldview:

> Dopamine is of great importance *for the formation* of love, including maternal love. It *underlies* the feeling of attachment to a partner and marital fidelity.
>
> Oxytocin *induces* a more benevolent disposition toward other people . . . *administration of oxytocin reduces* selfishness in men and increases parochial altruism, that is, it strengthens "in-group love" and trust toward "one's own", while at the same time not increasing "intergroup hatred" or distrust toward "outsiders".

From the standpoint of the theosophical worldview, in the statements quoted above, cause and effect have been reversed. It is not the release of dopamine into the bloodstream that generates love or ensures marital fidelity; rather, it is the capacity to manifest love and fidelity that finds its reflection in physiological processes, activating the relevant glands and producing the corresponding chemical reactions.

In the same way, the reduction of selfishness and the increase of altruism through the administration of a hormone would more accurately be attributed to an intoxicating effect — that is, a temporary dulling of awareness and a *detachment from reality* — rather than to that transformation of consciousness which allows a *clearer perception of reality* and *a deeper understanding of what is taking place*. Artificially introduced hormones can only bring about a temporary shift in consciousness and attitude toward the world. Once they are absorbed, broken down, and disappear, the "heightened altruism" also vanishes; the persons revert to their true level of selfishness, inherent to the present stage of development. Does not the fleeting action of hormones thus point to their secondary character in relation to consciousness?

Of course, the scientific world is broad and varied, and within it many schools and approaches exist, often *competing* with one another. There are also less materialistic perspectives, and even representatives of different religious traditions — and hence thoroughly non-materialistic views. It is clear, therefore, that not all scientists would agree to regard hormones as the source of happiness. Yet such an opinion does exist, and it is widespread enough to merit consideration.

The Philosophy of Happiness

The philosophical view of happiness belongs to a sphere beyond chemistry and physiology. A very different perspective on it is found in romantic literature, and indeed across literary movements of every kind. A well-known example is the opening line of *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy:

> "All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."

Here Tolstoy attributes to happiness the quality of unity, while its opposite, unhappiness, is marked by separation and estrangement. In this sense, happiness is seen as a spiritual category — one of union and belonging — which pertains to subtle and unseen realities.

Likewise, the *Great Explanatory Dictionary of the Russian Language*

defines happiness in a distinctly philosophical way, without any reference to processes on the physical plane:

(1) A state of the highest satisfaction with life, a feeling of deep contentment and joy experienced by someone; the outward manifestation of this feeling. (2) Success, good fortune. (3) Lot, fate, destiny.

Of course, philosophy, like science, takes many forms. "After us, the flood" or "Take everything you can from life" — these too are philosophies of life, and rather common ones. Yet such judgments arise from ignorance. This egoistic stance considers only one's own interests, desires, and sensations, without regard for the universal web of interconnection and mutual influence — a disregard that will inevitably bring consequences, often sooner than expected. The fact that egoists may be perfectly aware of the law of karma and of inevitable retribution does not alter their state of ignorance, for their knowledge is *incomplete*. As we have already noted, information alone is not enough to dispel ignorance; one must also gain *understanding* and *experience*.

It seems that in Russian the distinction between degrees of knowledge is reflected in a separate word, *vedat'*, meaning a deeper or more complete kind of knowing.[1] The saying, "You know not what you do", points precisely to such incompleteness of knowledge. A person who acts rashly or shortsightedly may be well informed, but without insight into the situation and its possible consequences. Such a person may act on what seems a reasonable basis, yet still without wisdom. In other words, one may be knowledgeable yet uncomprehending, clever yet unwise, resourceful yet lacking in true discernment. The mind is dual, with both higher and lower modes of activity and expression.

(*To be continued*)

Endnote

1. The Russian verb *vedat'* is an older and more elevated term for "to know", suggesting deeper insight or wisdom. It survives in expressions such as *ne vedaesh' chto tvorish'* ("you know not what you do").

Worry pretends to be necessary,
but serves no useful purpose.

Eckhart Tolle

The Eternal and the Becoming

FRANCISCO CUEVAS

DEEP down inside, in our innermost selves, many of us sincerely seek that which is eternal. This search is not something foreign to our lives, because while we live in ignorance of knowing it, we do not know where it is or how it can come to us. Meanwhile, the things of this world lead us every day to live in a constant state of becoming.

By the word "becoming", I mean the constant effort to achieve or accomplish something, to be someone, the constant effort to stop being one thing in order to be something else. For example, to be a better employee at work, the effort to stand out among our peers. Also, the effort to fulfill our role as fathers and husbands, or mothers and wives, the effort to fulfill everything that Western society expects of us.

And somehow we feel happy when we achieve something; indeed, the feeling of satisfaction when we have reached a goal or achieved a purpose is natural. But we know that this feeling of satisfaction is short-lived, and soon we are on the move again to reach a new goal, a new achievement.

If you pay attention to yourself, you will realize that this constant, daily change exhausts us, consumes much of our energy, and perhaps prevents us from truly enjoying or fully appreciating our achievements. They pass as fleetingly as the breeze. Living like this, in this constant flux, makes life feel rushed, as if time is passing quickly. We experience the transition of time, past, present, and future. Perhaps we hardly perceive the present, almost only moving between the past and the future.

Logically, the question arises: What is the Eternal? If I live in the flow of time, can my perception or consciousness live in a state beyond this flow? Certainly yes, and that state is the state of living in the Eternal.

The Eternal is not present — in my view — because when we speak of the present, we also establish the temporal categories of past and future. Therefore, the Eternal cannot be the present. It must be a state beyond the perception of the passing of time. A state in which "time does not matter", just as so many things in this world do not matter.

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If this "becoming" exhausts us, tires us, makes us feel that life is passing quickly, I think that in the Eternal this sensation and perception ends. The mind, not being involved in temporal efforts, can enjoy a certain calm and rest. Thus, a new type of state is experienced, one that is proper to pure consciousness, without additions. And in this state, much of the energy that was used for becoming is now available for something new, for new currents of thought.

At this point, I understand what these two states are about, how exhausting one of them is and how beneficial is the other. Is it possible to perceive, even for a few moments, the Eternal? It is interesting to ask ourselves this question because there must surely be a way.

In theosophical literature, we find that one of the fundamental problems in living Theosophy is learning to free ourselves from egocentricity or selfishness. Although it may not seem so, there is a direct relationship between "becoming" and "egocentricity". When one lives only for oneself, to fulfill one's personal, individual goals, the mind or consciousness remains only in the small field of action of one's small self. While doing so, all our desires, longings, fury, and anguish unfold within us. Most of us, even though we try by all means to fulfill our personal desires, life shows us a different path. Karma appears, and that which we cared for so dearly is taken from our hands, and then we start over again.

In other words, a mind focused on itself, on its personal affairs, actually lives for the world, outwardly, because it seeks in the world that which will give it the personal satisfaction it desires. As the world changes it is transitory, and ultimately the purpose of life is not to satisfy our desires but to learn, so we remain in a state of permanent dissatisfaction. Self-centeredness (or egocentrism) is the cause of change and of our pain. The more self-centered we are, the more unhappy we are, the more stress, the more anxiety, the more commitments, the more of everything. . . .

The opposite of egocentrism is altruism, or perhaps something greater, compassion. As an antidote to illness, altruism — in its many forms — halts the progression of the mind. Let us observe how someone who begins to work for others undergoes a transformation of the mind, because their focus of attention gradually shifts from themselves to their brothers and sisters, their family, their environment, and their community. It is another quality of perceptual experience.

There is no detailed recipe for how this works. As it is something alive and dynamic, it cannot be described in detail, but some ideas and guidelines can be given so that that which is Eternal can be presented, preparing the house for the guest to arrive.

Try to think about the lives of other people — perhaps those who live in places where poverty or war are present — be willing to attend to the needs of others, always be ready to help those who need it, try to be kind, try to pay attention to what others want to communicate, know

when to be silent when others are speaking, and not feel that you are the owner of the truth in any topic of conversation that arises. These are some of the qualities we could try to live by every day. Doing so allows us to become aware of the movement of egocentricity within us. Little by little, we will be able to see how the mind, in its ignorance, is continually projecting its needs, desires, past experiences, etc. To begin to see this movement is to begin to understand what egocentricity is and its illusion.

The habit of living selfishly and egocentrically for so many years is so strong that patience must be our companion so that at some point the Eternal becomes present. In the meantime, we must observe the unfolding of selfishness more and more, observe in order to free ourselves from it, observe in order to understand how the mind, our mind, projects its entire history and lives in that history; in order to perceive directly that, when it stops projecting, the mind is spontaneously free to experience life.

In the book, *Light on the Path*, we find the following instructions:

> Before the eyes can see, they must be incapable of tears. Before the ear can hear, it must have lost its sensitiveness. Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Masters, it must have lost the power to wound.

In a state of constant ambition, of constant selfishness, we become very sensitive to our interests. If we "see" that we have not achieved "something" that we were eagerly seeking, then we cry (either physically or internally). If someone questions our achievements or our projects or our convictions, then we suffer, we feel hurt by their words. Or perhaps we become so "insensitive" that we are unable to listen sincerely and attentively to another. And finally, when we feel that our desires and securities are in danger, we respond aggressively, with that capacity to hurt others, in whatever way we can.

It is sad to know, but it is precisely that kind of behavior, physical, emotional, and mental, that makes it impossible to experience life in its freedom, the Eternal.

But if one begins to live in service to others, if one begins to apply some of the ideas proposed in the preceding paragraphs, then the sense of perception changes. The mind, turned inward, begins a path of self-knowledge that allows it to learn about itself and then closes its eyes to ambition and comparison. It closes its ears to temptation or injury, remaining silent in the face of what it perceives in the world. In that silence lies the Eternal.

Living without ego, living without egocentricity or selfishness, must be a true blessing. Living without becoming is perhaps one of the greatest spiritual achievements one can experience in life. How burdensome it becomes to live only in the most concrete part of ourselves. On the contrary, our true nature, being spiritual, must bring us so much harmony and contentment.

Theosophy, in its many forms, teaches us the right way to live — to truly live —

because until we experience the Eternal, we are not really living, but rather projecting. We are unaware that we are not living, even though our physical senses tell us otherwise. This is a psychological issue, one of perception. It is not merely intellectual understanding.

Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, General Secretary of the French Section of the Theosophical Society, Adyar, puts it this way: "First, one must learn to Look, See, and Let Go."

Constant observation, or silent awareness, there can be no observation without silence. When one is alert, or pays attention, this necessarily comes from silence. Therefore, we only have to look in order to see, and then simply let go.

In other words, we discern and detach ourselves. But it is a loving, altruistic detachment and discernment.

What we do is actually look in the mirror, through our interaction with the world. And when we look in the mirror, we realize that there is little to hold on to. The sufficiency of the personal self dissolves. And the less egocentric we are, the freer we become.

Then, Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu points out: "We must learn to Live, Serve, and Die."

In conclusion, it must be said that no one can tell you how to do this; what is presented here are only guidelines. But just practical experience, living these ideas, will allow each of us to find our own way, to find our own way of inviting the other, the Eternal, to be present in us. No one can tell us when that will happen, and it is not possible to force its arrival. All we can do is live patiently and contentedly, and perhaps one ordinary day, any day of our lives, the Eternal will knock on our door. ✧

You must live in the present,
launch yourself on every wave,
find your eternity in each moment.
Fools stand on their island of opportunities
and look toward another land.
There is no other land;
there is no other life but this.

Henry David Thoreau

Beauty and Beyond: The Life and Art of Sulamith Wülfing — I

ISOLDE SUELTEMEYER

THE 125th anniversary of the birth of a great spiritual artist, Sulamith Wülfing, was celebrated on 11 January 2026. Her original paintings are not to be found in any of the great museums of the world, they are not part of official academic art history and they are not "modern". Sulamith Wülfing does not belong to any "school" or movement, she is in a category uniquely her own. Her works show a spiritual and feminine form of expression emanating from her own personal and inner life as a woman. She essentially lived a very private and normal life as a wife and mother, who was very balanced and down to earth. Unlike many artists she had no hallucinations. She was a *yogini* of beauty, doing her dedicated work in solitude and stillness.

Prints of her paintings have been sold by the millions in the form of books, calendars and cards, and have been spreading their beneficent and elevating influence around the globe already for one hundred years! She has left an immense gift to the world, but her art is much better known than her actual name. Even less known is her background, and in particular her deep links to Theosophy and the Theosophical Society (TS)!

She herself said that her life and art are closely interwoven. She was deeply influenced and shaped by her family as well as by the significant cultural and historical developments of the time. Her personal life story certainly holds a lot of interest and deserves a closer look.

Sulamith was born into an era that encompassed a time of great upheavals but was still filled with a certain innocence, idealism, and optimism. She hails from a small town called Elberfeld, in a beautiful hilly region in Westfalia, Germany, called the "Bergisches Land". It was situated very close to Wuppertal, which had developed into an industrial city.

Elberfeld is a familiar name in early theosophical history. In his *Old Diary Leaves*, President-Founder of the TS, Colonel Olcott describes his extensive travels in Germany in 1884. In July of that year he paid a significant visit to Elberfeld, staying in the mansion of the Gebhard family.

Dr Gustav Gebhard was a Consul, co-founder of the Deutsche Bank,

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Ms Isolde Sueltemeyer is a lifelong TS member and musician from Germany and lives in Australia. She lectures on the spiritual side of Art.

well-to-do manufacturer, and linguist. His wife Mary was a close friend of Madame Blavatsky (HPB) and a personal pupil of Eliphas Levi. She was a mystic and had one room in the house devoted to occult studies. Many renowned people were attracted, and on 27 July 1884 the first German branch of the TS was founded there. HPB arrived in the middle of August for a stay of seven weeks. She was accompanied by Bertram Keightley, Mohini Chatterji, Francesca Arundale and little George Arundale. In the summer of 1886, HPB spent another two months with the Gebhards in Elberfeld.

During those years, Carl Wülfing was a young man living in Elberfeld, destined to become the father of Sulamith. In his day job he was the director of the post office in town. But in his free time he delved deeply into questions of religion and Nature, pursuing botanical and astronomical research. By the time he got married in 1897 he was already a very active and enthusiastic member of the Elberfeld Lodge. His wife Hedwig was a very warmhearted person of Christian faith, but not tied to any particular denomination.

Their first child was born on 11 January 1901 and they named her Sulamith (meaning "peace-loving"). The Wülfings moved from a rented apartment in the city to a lovely house deep in the surrounding countryside, miles away from the nearest neighbours. The parents loved the seclusion and solitude of their "hermitage" amongst Nature. Thus, Sulamith was able to experience a unique early childhood. She was very fortunate to be able to spend the first five years of her life in these truly enchanted surroundings, as she later called them, playing in the big garden, totally immersed in Nature, establishing a deep rapport and opening up to its inner side.

She discovered and came to love the miniature world hidden in the meadows, teeming with life, in close connection to the soil: the delicate grasses, the grasshoppers, beetles, and butterflies, and above all, the beauty of the wild flowers in all their fragrance and glory. And she sensed, in their delicate petals, the great, yet most gentle, life force. She discovered the magnificence of life in even its smallest manifestations and became awake to the feeling that all creation is ensouled and interconnected.

Very early on she awoke to the artistry in Nature and began to look at everything with a deep love. In the cathedral of the adjoining forest, she saw the beauty of the foliage, the soft moss, meandering brooks, ferns, gnarled roots, deer, and heard the glorious song of birds. She closely observed and experienced the different seasons: the exhilaration of spring, joy of summer, inwardness of autumn and magic of winter. Her idyllic life and intimate closeness to Nature became embedded in her consciousness and would remain clearly reflected in her later drawings expressing a permanent sense of wonder and sacredness.

Sulamith had some favourite dolls but also many "living" companions: angels, elves, and gnomes, which she saw during those early years. And she developed communion with these little creatures. At the age of four she began to draw — her visible and invisible playmates.

Like all children in Germany, she grew up listening to Grimms' "Märchen" (so-called "Fairy Tales"), stories containing deep meanings. These naturally also fired her artistic imagination. Her enchanted childhood would continue to permeate and shine through her work, and the state of purity and innocence of childhood never left her. When her sister Hedwig was born and Sulamith had to start school the family reluctantly had to move back to town. Her idyllic life thus came to an abrupt end and now she became a rather serious little girl. But fortunately her parents were aware and protective of her unique sensitivity.

Sulamith developed a strong affinity to further influences from her birthplace which always remained with her. Close by was Castle Burg which provided her with important early impressions. Here she contacted the magical world of the Middle Ages. She studied the splendid ornamentation of the interiors, the impressive old wall and ceiling paintings for hours: there were maidens in ornate clothing and knights in shining armour. These were to become the ideal and noble archetype of manhood for her. The interiors would later appear as settings in her drawings, framing her figures and beings as in an inner royal realm, the splendour mirroring an inner glory.

Sulamith was also taken by her father to the Municipal Museum in Wuppertal to see their print collection of old masters. These she studied in silence to the last detail and felt an inner compulsion to draw better and better. But her parents were concerned about sensitive Sulamith and her talent. So her father went to see the director of the museum for advice showing him some of her recent drawings. He recognised not only her prodigious talent but also her extraordinary imagination — a rare gift. He told her father not to foist a drawing teacher on her, but to let her develop her own style naturally.

She learned a lot at home listening to the discussions between her father and his TS friends. She said:

> . . . I grew up in the atmosphere of our living room, I sat under the portrait of the great gurus: Morya and Kuthumi. Against the wall on the other side of the room there was a statue of Buddha and on the bookshelf a bust of Dante. Next to it hung a maxim of Angelus Silesius. . . . a pile of the journal *Isis Unveiled* [In those early years in Germany, the great works of HPB were first published in instalments in the form of journals]. Besides these were the *Bhagavadgitā*, the Bible, *In Tune with the Infinite*, a great deal of Goethe, Annie Besant, Charles W. Leadbeater and the three volumes of the co-founder of the Theosophical Society, Helena P. Blavatsky — *The Secret Doctrine* — with my father's countless punctuation marks and notes.[1]

There were also writings of Meister Eckhart and Confucius, Darwin and Haeckel — her father was a most serious student. When Sulamith was thirteen years old the First World War started. These were sad and difficult times, and the family suffered greatly from deprivations, particularly hunger. She became sorrowful.

Sulamith left grammar school in 1917

and entered the Academy of Arts and Crafts in Elberfeld. Here she blossomed and obtained the necessary expert technical knowledge, the use of materials, tools, and colour techniques.

At the art school shy Sulamith made friends with young people from the "German Youth Movement", called "Wandervogel" (literally "wandering bird", suggesting rambling or hiking), with which she felt a great affinity. It was a movement energised by a spirit of idealism, created as a reaction to mainstream bourgeois developments and values like increasing industrialisation and noisy and restrictive city life. It had started spontaneously in 1896 from very small beginnings, growing rapidly with thousands of members.

These young people longed for a closer and loving relationship to Nature, choosing a simple and alternative lifestyle, not consuming nicotine or alcohol. Many were vegetarians.

They enjoyed hiking, singing and folk-dancing in Nature. But the name "Wandervogel" and its logo (a heron) also expressed the famous yearning of the Romantic Movement. In essence it symbolised a metaphysical striving. Sulamith was very happy that she had found some kindred spirits. Now she sang and played the lute.

Inspired by the Youth Movement the Youth Hostel Movement had started in 1909, also from very small beginnings, close to Elberfeld. It spread like wildfire all over Germany — and eventually the world. It was meant to foster understanding and brotherhood by providing a meeting place for young people of all countries to get to know each other. The accommodation was very basic and inexpensive: simple dormitories for boys and girls where they slept on sacks of straw. Sulamith loved staying in the different youth hostels that were mostly set up in picturesque castles. This was very much in tune with her world.

Within the German Youth Movement there was both joy and seriousness. Good literature was read and discussed: the favourites were Goethe and the Romantic poet Novalis. His image and concept of the mysterious "blue flower", which was to be searched for, was for him a symbol of the final mysteries of life, an impulse to delve into the deeper regions of the soul. Further favourites were authors and poets Hermann Hesse, Rainer Maria Rilke, Christian Morgenstern and Manfred Kyber.

The prime inspirational icon of the movement was the painter Fidus, who extolled light and freedom. He was a member of the TS and designed covers for several TS magazines and books. Sulamith, being of a similar artistic sensibility, felt akin to Fidus and drew inspiration from him. Hermann Hesse, Rudolf Steiner, Romain Rolland, J. Krishnamurti and R. Tagore all showed great interest in this idealistic Youth Movement.

At the academy Sulamith met the son of the director, Otto Schulze Jr, who was a very good Expressionist painter. He started to take her under his wing and they fell in love, eventually getting en-

gaged and married in private. Their deep and loving relationship is reflected in many of Sulamith's paintings. Both artists worked enthusiastically. Sulamith had periods of great inspiration which she experienced as "glances through an open curtain".[2]

In 1929 they founded their own small publishing house (Sulamith Wülfing-Verlag) to assure a careful and accurate reproduction of her subtle artwork in outstanding quality. Otto gave up his own career as an artist; he became a teacher at the art academy and managed the publishing house. She was blessed to have him as her lifelong supporter and protector, a quiet presence. With him by her side she was able to fulfil her artistic mission in life.

Sulamith also took part in her father's TS work. He organised lectures in Elberfeld and did lecture tours to other cities. But naturally she also pursued her own thinking and reflection. In the 1920s Krishnamurti was, of course, a great topic. She became very interested in what he had to say and was very happy to find some of her own convictions confirmed. In 1929 she went alone to the Star Camp in Ommen, held on the grounds of Castle Eerde. She was greatly impressed by the events and by the thousands of interesting people from all over the world. When Krishnamurti spoke in the huge congress tent, she managed to make her way to the front — and heard him say the famous words, "Truth is a pathless land", when he dissolved the "Order of the Star".

She once attended one of his lectures and was able to present him with a copy of the first published book of her work called *Sulamith Wülfing: Dürer's Little Daughter*.[3] She later called Krishnamurti her "radiant star in the firmament of the wise",[4] but she never became a fanatical follower.

In 1933 Sulamith gave birth to a son, who unfortunately died the next day. In the words of her husband: she then "had to draw her cup of sorrow".[5] Meanwhile fascism was on the rise in Europe. In Germany the unstable Weimar Republic descended into total chaos (mass unemployment, hyperinflation, and so on) and the country fell under the sinister cloud of totalitarianism and terror. In Wuppertal socialists and communists were immediately arrested, interrogated or killed. The wonderful German Youth Movement was forbidden. Many members were taken and died in concentration camps. Actually, all independent and spiritual movements were outlawed, including Freemasonry and the Theosophical Society. (Professor Verweyen, who became the General Secretary also perished in a concentration camp.)

(*To be continued*)

Endnotes

1. Maurhoff, Marlene, *Sulamith Wülfing*, Sulamith Wülfing BV, Amsterdam, p. 35
2. Ibid., p. 47
3. A flattering reference to the great Renaissance painter Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528)
4. Maurhoff, p. 47
5. Ibid., p. 83

The Call of the Invisible

TIM WYATT

A DESPERATE call is going out to humanity from hidden worlds, but it is not being heard. If this continues the consequences are likely to be extremely dire for all of us. Not many people are aware of this.

All over the world there are a few individuals attempting to answer this urgent call. But it appears that they are pursuing a vital but seemingly futile and lonely venture. I am one of them. They are largely scorned, ignored, or made to feel foolish. And yet what they are trying to achieve is essential, if not fundamental for humanity's future — and possibly even for its very survival.

The call these individuals are answering is from mainly invisible entities which no longer wish to remain hidden and neglected. This call is as urgent as it is ignored.

Who exactly are these entities? They feature intermittently in the theosophical literature. There are two main classes: angels and elementals. Both of these hidden kingdoms have many different names. Each group is made up of numerous different hierarchies.

The angels, or devas, occupy a lofty nonphysical realm of Nature above the human kingdom. They operate principally on the mental and higher planes. They control the physical world as well as non-material entities from the elemental kingdoms below the mineral.

Many people believe in angels. Far less believe in the existence of elemental beings such as fairies, goblins and sprites — and countless thousands of other names. We will focus more closely on these.

There are vast, almost incalculable legions, of such elemental entities here on Earth. They are often mistakenly referred to as Nature spirits, but this description is inaccurate because they have no spiritual dimension to them whatsoever — nor a mental capacity. They are strictly beings of feeling. This is the way they communicate.

They exist mainly on the astral level but occasionally on the etheric. They have no physical bodies, but essentially impulses of energy without individual and localised.

Over the past 250 years of urban-

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ization and industrialization in the West, people have become increasingly alienated from the natural world as man foolishly continues to try to tame and conquer Nature. As human consciousness has been transformed by the grip of materialism and the lure of city-living, they have become ever more detached and concealed.

Our ancestors were able to perceive and engage with beings from these hidden worlds. They did not doubt their existence or their essential role in the cycles of life. Now these beings are much more difficult to identify although this is not impossible. It is mainly those with clairvoyant abilities who can easily see them, but others can also sense their presence. In today's world, the intellect and hard logic may act as a barrier or major obstacle to perceiving those who inhabit these hidden worlds.

However, there are other more subtle ways in which they can be perceived. Over the years a number of investigators have identified a variety of techniques to assist the more sensitive to view the inhabitants of the elemental kingdoms.

The elemental world is, of course, much broader than this. We create elementals with every thought and feeling we have. Thought forms are artificially-created elementals. Each one of us produces tens of thousands of such thought forms every day.

In an increasingly technologized world, there are also what are described as machine elementals, entities affecting the behaviour of computers, cars, and an array of electronic equipment. Many people experience this when their cars won't start or their computers go berserk — especially if they happen to be in a bad mood. A hidden interface exists between man and these "ghosts" in the machine.

There is growing and persuasive evidence to suggest that members of this elemental world are desperate to re-establish the relations they once enjoyed with humanity. Over the past few years, they have issued a number of pressing warnings to various researchers about what may occur if human beings continue to deny the very existence of these secret empires.

This is why it is vital to reestablish their existence and cooperate with these beings.

Angels and elementals are our most essential allies. Comparatively few are aware of this basic fact. They service all life on this planet. They help create and sustain every living thing. They may hold the keys to helping us resolve such crucial issues as resource depletion, pollution and a host of other man-made indignities inflicted on the Earth. They may even be able to teach us how to live at one with the world once again. But we continue to ignore them.

The problem is that the bulk of humanity deny that little folk, pixies, elves and fairies exist other than in people's imaginations. They mock such ideas insisting that they are just a quaint leftover from hoary myth, legend, and superstition. Such beings do not exist, they insist. Except in Walt Disney films.

Therefore, those wishing to communicate the existence and importance of these hard-to-spot beings, face extreme difficulties in overcoming such hard-wired scepticism and prejudice. In a world where "seeing is believing" it is hard to convince people otherwise. (However, we do not deny the existence of electricity, gravity, or subatomic particles even though we cannot readily see them.)

However, some continue to commune with this concealed commonwealth. All over Asia and elsewhere in the world elementals remain intimately interwoven into daily life. Millions have altars in or near their homes where they leave food, drink and other offerings to thank and sustain these local "spirits". This is not common practice in the West, although a few do engage in such rituals.

What happens, then, if we continue on our present course of hubristic denial? Without exaggeration, some are convinced that this could spell doom and could well represent a direct and imminent threat to our very existence.

A century ago, the German mystic Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) issued a stark warning about the consequences of this ongoing divorce between elementals and man. In a lecture delivered in 1922 he commented:

> If mankind does not become receptive to what streams towards him from the spiritual world, then the result of this dullness on man's part will be — and there are signs already of it happening — that these elemental beings will gather together to form a kind of union and place themselves under the leadership of the supreme intellectual power, Ahriman.

And later he added:

> The significance of spiritual knowledge for man's earthly destiny cannot be emphasized too strongly. Unless man draws near to spiritual reality, something completely different from what ought to happen will happen to the Earth.

More recently, other contemporary commentators have issued additional warnings from the elemental realms.

The Swiss geomancer and investigator Thomas Mayer echoes Steiner's assertions. In *Answering the Call of Elemental Beings* (Findhorn Press, 2021) he describes insights he gained from contact with various elemental entities over many decades of research:

> They are very worried and I learn the following: The mood is shifting, and morale is sinking. The Nature elemental beings of the earth are very disappointed with us humans and feel abandoned. The situation is dire. The elemental kings can no longer tell their entourage that everything will be well.
>
> A few years ago, elemental beings still expressed confidence that conscious cohabitation with humans would start, but nothing much has happened since. More people now know about the existence of elemental beings, but passive consumption of the subject matter has not led to action: hardly anyone is developing the will and love necessary to come into direct contact

with the elemental world, and everything depends on Nature elementals being seen by humans.

Mayer also asserts that he has been informed by advanced elementals that Luciferic and Ahrimanic elementals continuously created by materialistic and egotistic human thoughts have increased exponentially in numbers in recent times. He believes that some elementals will be more resistant to Ahrimanic influences than others.

> . . . if we humans continue to place more karmic causes on the side of "decline of the elemental beings", then this side will gain more and more weight, and it will be also the harder to tip the scale.

Interestingly, Mayer asserts that since the turn of the century a new fifth group of elementals have appeared alongside those of air, earth, water, and fire — what he dubs as the Christ elementals.

He also argues that the rediscovery of elemental beings could be a big boost for psychotherapy since human beings are essentially a "flock" of such entities.

The Slovenian writer and artist Marko Pogacnik has spent decades developing techniques to help people observe and commune with elemental beings. Like others he is convinced that the rational mind can act as a barrier to perceiving other dimensions.

In his book *Nature Spirits and Elemental Beings* (Findhorn Press, 2009), Pogacnik explains how human impacts such as the despoliation of Nature and deforestation have destroyed many of the elementals' natural habitats causing huge imbalances in the landscape. He describes his contacts with these entities in many different locations — and the increasing urgency of their warnings. He writes:

> My geomantic researches over the last few years have shown that there are places in the landscape that facilitate communication between the different levels of the physical body and the consciousness of earth. Such thresholds are a sort of tunnel in space and time that point to the entrances and exits in the different levels of the under- and overworlds of earth.

He asserts that in recent years something new and unexpected has happened in the elemental world — more than in the previous thousand. He believes that a major process of Earth change is underway which is leading humanity into a new "evolutionary age". This has been evidenced by a string of environmental catastrophes such as storms, floods, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. This, he believes, is a direct warning from the elemental kingdoms about these impending changes.

> The elemental beings are using the increasing occurrence of natural catastrophes to sound the alarm and bring humanity to the point where, in good time, we consciously uncouple ourselves from the old world structure and follow the stream of change which guarantees the continuance of life on the earth's surface.

Pogacnik says that for the past few years he has observed the emergence of

a new type of elemental being which has specifically developed itself to help with this earth change. Unconnected to the four usual elements, this fifth category seems to correspond to Mayer's belief in an emerging group of elementals with Christ consciousness.

The overall message, then, from researchers past and present is that the only realistic way to reconnect with these armies of elemental beings is first to change our attitude and actually admit that they exist. Additionally, it is necessary to upgrade our own individual consciousness so that we no longer solely rely on our physical senses to perceive the world around us. Instead, we need to bypass or even transcend the intellect and make greater use of that latent but incoming sixth sense of *buddhi* or wisdom-intuition we speak of so often in Theosophy.

And yet our contemporary culture built on scrutiny and scepticism demands more than mere intuition or suspicion. It demands cast-iron proof and solid physical evidence. And yet we are dealing with non-material realms which science still fails to recognise, and without recognition there can be no exploration of these dimensions.

Science should be interested in this fascinating and elusive world of fairies, gnomes, sylphs, and salamanders but stubbornly refuses to countenance such things. That would be too challenging to the ossified collective mindset which persists. And in any case, elementals cannot be examined in laboratory test tubes or studied via powerful microscopes because they are not part of the physical spectrum. They cannot be reduced to mathematical equations, chemical formulae, or datasets.

Nevertheless, the urgent call from these secret empires continues to resonate amongst a few who will continue attempting to recognise and reconnect with these entities. But for the time being the wider world continues to ignore both their existence and their warnings. The question is — for how long? ✧

In a world that often feels disconnected from Nature, elemental quotes serve as gentle yet profound reminders of the raw forces that shape our existence. From ancient philosophers to modern spiritual teachers, thinkers have long turned to the classical elements — fire, water, earth, air, and spirit (or ether) — for wisdom, inspiration, and guidance.

Spring Nguyen






A few representative paintings by Sulamith Wulfing. For an article on her life, please see p. 19.
For additional images and her history, please go to <artlex.com/artists/sulamith-wulfing>



Group photo of delegates attending the 112th Congress of the Theosophical Society in Italy

Peacefulness or Acquisition of War Skills — A Theosophical Perspective

MATTHIAS WENGER

CONSIDERING the many different cultures and beliefs that converge worldwide at the moment, the question, of our respected International President, Tim Boyd, "Are we pacifists?" seems more pressing than ever. It opens an explicitly political debate on a topic that is deeply affecting us these days. It is no coincidence that my response from "Old Europe" is perhaps particularly strong, but here it is.

When one considers the First and Second World Wars, and also the Napoleonic Wars and the Thirty Years' War, one becomes aware of the following: This continent has been the scene of devastating battles repeatedly over the last 300 years, battles that claimed the lives of a large part of the population and ravaged countless cities and entire landscapes. I myself lost two close relatives during the Second World War, and had to grow up without them.

At the same time, even after the Second World War, there were nations that waged numerous wars, not a single one of which took place on their own territory. I think it is therefore understandable that people in Western and Central Europe are reluctant to allow this to become another theater of war. This was already the case in the early 1980s, when parts of NATO fantasized about a nuclear war that could be confined to Central Europe.

I myself, born in the late 1950s, belong to a generation that has had the privilege of never having experienced war in its own country. That is another reason why I am not in favor of a new militarization.

The fact that I was born German, naturally makes me a sharer in our collective karma. I have never lost sight of our national coresponsibility for two world wars. But precisely this is an incentive for me to prioritize the balancing of interests, understanding, and diplomacy in every respect, over a warlike mentality. I can only personally reject the supposed virtue of "martial capability" demanded by large segments of the German political elite.

Despite our warlike past, German philosophers laid the foundations for a diplomatically oriented peace policy based on international law, which remain valid today.[1]

Mr Matthias Wenger is a member of the German Section of the Theosophical Society Adyar.

Tim Boyd's remarks address the problem of violence — indirectly in connection with the postulate of non-violence — but war is not simply a form of violence in an original anthropological sense, but rather in a sense shaped by civilization and technology. There may be something like an aggressive drive — in any case, it is surely a lower category of the soul faculty, from a theosophical perspective! But even if one assumes a naturalistically grounded aggressive instinct, the question of how humans give form to it is left to their free choice.

Even in the animal kingdom there are rituals of aggression inhibition and voluntary withdrawal when there is a risk that the exchange of aggression will take on life-threatening forms.[2]

The wars of the present day require a special evaluation. They are the endpoint of a historical transformation process in the practice of warfare. They are wars of a different kind than the wars of prehistory or of Hellenistic and ancient Indian history: and this has been evident at least since 1914–1918. Especially for the soldiers involved, many of whom entered this war with great enthusiasm, of which not the slightest trace remained for most of the survivors.

Wars in the classical sense, as individual personal experiences of combat combined with physically proving oneself, the virtues of bravery, and fairness towards one's opponent in battle — this no longer corresponds to the reality of modern warfare. Modern warfare increasingly manifests itself as mass, technologically enhanced slaughter, especially of civilians.

In Tim's essay, he suggests a largely intellectual-historical and abstract-philosophical approach to the topic, touching upon spiritual dimensions as well. However, war in its immediate reality is linked to extreme physical human suffering, a proliferation of anxiety, and the deliberate incitement of hatred. Its further consequence in the context of human life is the senseless destruction of cultural heritage and civilian property.

The crucial question is not simply: Is war justifiable, but rather: Am I myself willing and able to inflict maximum pain and kill another human being?

This very awareness is the focus of the Bodhisattva ideal, which is identical to the foundations of Christian esoteric ethics. It is easy to justify any war legally and theoretically, but one cannot avoid the question of one's own willingness to act — especially not as a spiritual person.

Indeed, Krishna demands of Arjuna in the *Bhagavadgitā* that he ignore the reality of an impending kin-killing, arguing that the death of a being is illusory due to its potential immortality. However, this passage can only be properly understood when one considers that it refers to the duty of the ancient Indian warrior caste. Today, however, we live in an era of individual ethical responsibility, in which class- or caste-based norms can no longer claim validity.

Another very real aspect of war, beyond any theoretical consideration of its legitimacy, is that it is almost always driven

by self-interest. Whether one considers the lobbying of the arms industry and the associated greed of its shareholders, or the need to expand one's territory at the expense of one's neighbors — interests are always debatable and should never be accepted without question.

The Prophet of Nazareth offered the following reflection on this topic: First, he points to the prohibition against killing in the Decalogue. Then, however, he suggests that even a verbally expressed feeling of hatred is almost equivalent to murdering that fellow human being. Thus, it is not only physical violence that is condemned, but also the emotional and verbal preconditions — something that could be described as a "warlike" disposition. This suggests the next steps we could take in the process of our conscious development. It would certainly be absurd to conclude from this that we should project outwardly violent behavior onto our inner selves.[3]

The fact that there were a number of historical theosophical figures who justified wars or were even active participants in them must be justified by each of these figures with their own karmic consequences. We owe valuable spiritual impulses in many respects to all those mentioned here. On the other hand, it is also clear that there is no uncritical veneration of idols and their way of life in the theosophical movement. To deduce from the behavior of these historical figures that we should readily support wars would be an affront to the ethics of personal responsibility.

And let us not forget what the adepts at the dawn of the theosophical movement gave us. In the Mahachohan's letter, not only is the "soothing influence of a brotherhood" on the "combative natural *instinct* of man" invoked, but the curse of the so-called "struggle for life" is also denounced as "the most prolific parent of most woes and sorrows and of all the crimes".[4]

My most important argument against a laissez-faire attitude toward warfare, however, is based on our theosophical principles. How can we form the core of an all-encompassing brotherhood of humanity if we are prepared to wage war against one another? ✧

Endnotes

1. Immanuel Kant, *Zum ewigen Frieden — Ein philosophischer Entwurf*, Stuttgart 2013, Kant published this text in 1795.

2. For this purpose, one can draw on findings from ethology, such as those described by Konrad Lorenz in his book, *The So-Called Evil*, in 1963.

3. *Matthew* 5:21–22, 45.

4. *The Mahatma Letters*, Volume One 1880–1882, Satteldorf 1994.

Dancing with Death

MEENA KAUSHIK

AS a seeker, I have always understood the profound value of dying to oneself daily. Yet, as a consistent practice, it often falls away — captured by the forces of *abhiniveśa* (deep-rooted clinging to desires and the fear of death) and the body's natural tendency to remain cocooned in the status quo. Forgetfulness of the real becomes our lived reality; we slip into an unconscious sleep of habitual existence.

The saying, "If you die before you die, you will not die when you die", should not remain a mere axiom. It must become a daily reflection that brings death into our conscious awareness. But why must I remember death and dying to myself every day? What does this do for my spiritual practice?

There Can Be No True Life Without Death

The union we seek is between life and death becoming one. Standing between these two currents, we see that both are gateways to a deeper transformation — the soul's journey to its source. No transformation is possible without letting go of something within the body-mind, making space for something more eternal and true. I cannot live a true life unless some part of my lower self dies or is transformed. Death becomes the essential transforming force that allows life to become truer and more real.

As Rumi beautifully expresses it, the veils of our usualness cannot fall unless we "First let go of life. Finally take a step without feet." This allows ourselves to burn away and be reduced to nothing.

The Gentle Alchemy of Ego Transformation

Daily dying is not the destruction of the ego but a gentle purification and transformation — a spiritual alchemy turning lead into gold. Recognizing the grip of our ego and identifications is critical for tempering the soul. This preparation frees the soul from its dross so it can soar into the spirit.

Self-reflection helps us identify what obstructs our freedom and true nature. These obstacles — both positive and

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negative aspects of our personality — anchor the soul in a body-mind prison, denying its true reality. Can I see these hindrances clearly? Can I practise letting them go with love, acceptance, and non-judgment — not by being against the ego and its tendencies, but by observing them repeatedly until their hold weakens?

All self-reflection on what comes in our way of being free and unidentified; what prevents the soul to soar with wings, point to all those aspects of our ego that are rooted in a sense of false gravitas. When they are no longer fed, they naturally wilt and fall away. This is not destruction but daily dissolution, a loving letting go.

Life and Death Are In Each Other All Along

Conditioned by time, we often see death as an end and life as a beginning. In truth, life and death are not polar opposites but intertwined aspects of an eternal truth. There can be no life without death, and no death without life. To live meaning-fully and approach truth, we must embrace the transformative power of dying to something lower within before we can enjoy the joy of something higher and eternal.

Teachers like Carlos Castaneda and Brother David Steindl-Rast emphasize mortality awareness as a tool for living more fully and meaningfully. Death, when held as a constant companion — not a source of fear — reminds us to cherish each moment and live with wonder and fullness.

We often take our breath for granted, assuming it is merely a biological function. Yet, when we realize it is the Divine energy animating our body-mind, we awaken to the intimate daily communion with the divine. We realize that it is the divine energy that vivifies our body-mind. The divine seeks us daily via breath but we are asleep to this exchange, we take our breath for granted assuming it will be there always. Death lives within life as much as life lives within death — this truth sinks in when we understand we have no control over our breath.

As David Steindl-Rast says, "Death harvests the nectar, at every moment, of the visible and the great golden honeycombs of the invisible. And this unchanging self that I know to be, will be enriched by the grateful experiences of life."

I Cannot Serve Unless I Have Died to My Lower Self

What do I serve as I live my life? Often, I serve my likes and dislikes, needs and desires. I feed my identifications and bolster a false personality, believing I am in control and can shape my destiny through will and effort. I overvalue the known and material, closing avenues to true exploration and spiritual search.

Breaking free requires a death of habit and status quo — a willingness to see that the ego does not serve, but accumulates to bolster itself. For humility to arise, I must embrace poverty at the deepest level. Nothing is truly mine; I am nothing, I am but a conduit through which the soul works. Then who is this small "I" that commands my actions? How can it

be harnessed to the true driver of this carriage? What must I loosen and release for the soul to work freely?

All spiritual traditions speak of leaving the self behind. Yet what is truly required is not abandoning the self, but spiritualizing it — tethering it to the spirit so that the spirit may shine through.

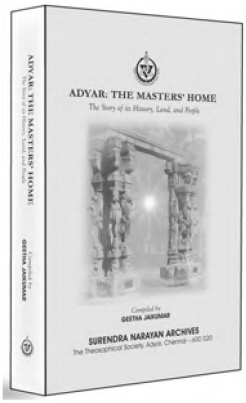
Acknowledging Death Makes Eternal Life a Living Truth

What is missing in our lives is true aliveness. We live burdened by fear, regret, tension, and endless yearning for "more". We are rarely fully present — fearless, free, joyous, or grateful. We dwell in the past, shackled by baggage, or in the future, caught in imagined dreams. We miss the blessings of the now: the sheer joy of being alive, the wonder of the visible world, and the depths of our invisible world.

By accepting the truth of death, the portal to living fully opens. The line between visible and invisible, inner and outer, dissolves. In the light, we are alive, eternal, and free. ✧

> **THERE IS NO DEAD MATTER. Every last atom is alive. It cannot be otherwise, since every atom is itself fundamentally Absolute Being. Therefore there is no such thing as "spaces" of Ether, or Akasha, or call it what you like, in which angels and elementals disport themselves like trout in water. That's a common idea. The true idea shows every atom of substance, no matter of what plane, to be in itself a LIFE. . . .**
>
> **Man is the MICROCOSM. As he is so, then all the Hierarchies of the Heavens exist within him. But in truth there is neither Macrocosm nor Microcosm but ONE EXISTENCE. Great and small are such only as viewed by a limited consciousness. . . .**
>
> **The Great Hermetic Axiom . . . really sums up and synthesizes all the others. As is the Inner, so is the Outer; as is the Great, so is the Small; as it is above, so it is below; there is but ONE LIFE AND LAW; and he that worketh it is ONE. Nothing is Inner, nothing is Outer; nothing is Great, nothing is Small; nothing is High, nothing is Low, in the Divine Economy.**
>
> Helena Petrovna Blavatsky
> *How to Study Theosophy* (Robert Bowen)

Books of Interest



Adyar: The Masters' Home — The Story of its History, Land, and People by Geetha Jaikumar, Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Chennai, India, 2025, pp. 512, Rs 450.

There are books that inform and inspire, and there are books that initiate. This book belongs to the latter category. From its very preface, it opens not merely as a chronicle of buildings and dates, but as a pilgrimage through memory, devotion, service, and the quiet grandeur of one of the most significant spiritual movements of the 19th century that gave rise to a new collective human consciousness of the modern world, either directly or indirectly.

This volume unfolds in sixteen carefully crafted chapters, each illuminating a distinct facet of Adyar's evolution — the spiritual heart of the Theosophical Society (TS). Yet what makes the book extraordinary is not only what it recounts, but also how it invites the reader to enter into the vibrant and vivid atmosphere of Adyar.

The journey begins with the founding of the Society, enriched by the evocative account of a prophecy by the revered saint Shri Ramalinga Swamigal (Vallalār), foretelling the arrival of the Founders — Mme H. P. Blavatsky and Col. H. S. Olcott — in India. From the outset, the narrative suggests that Adyar did not become the global centre of the theosophical movement by chance, but it was chosen and prepared, as per the Divine Plan.

As the chapters progress, we are led into the fascinating story of how Adyar became the international headquarters of the Society. The account of divine guidance and historical circumstance intertwining to shape this decision lends a sense of sacred inevitability. One feels that the soil itself was waiting for the seed of the theosophical thought to be sown.

The book then becomes architectural, yet never dry. Through vivid descriptions of the Headquarters Building, the Great Hall, the original Library wing, and the rooms once occupied by the Founders, Annie Besant, and C. W. Leadbeater, the author transforms brick and mortar into living testimony. These spaces are not presented as relics; they breathe and inspire. They whisper of meditation, of counsel, of invisible presences, of moments when the spiritual and the earthly stood face to face.

The narrative deepens as it traces Adyar during the presidencies of Colonel Olcott and Annie Besant — periods marked by innovation, vision, and tireless dedication and expansion. We begin to see that Adyar was built not only with funds and plans, but with sacrifice and love.

What elevates this book beyond institutional history is its insistence on the unity of life. A full chapter is devoted to animal welfare, detailing the establishment of an animal hospital and the Society's early advocacy against cruelty and sacrifice. Here, philosophy becomes practice. Compassion takes institutional form. Theosophy steps out of the lecture hall and into the village.

The chapters on the Adyar Library, Archives, Blavatsky Museum, and various departments — including the Vasanta Press and Theosophy-Science Centre — reveal a movement deeply committed to scholarship and dissemination. Knowledge at Adyar is not hoarded; it radiates. It is up to the individual to approach either with a small spoon or a big bucket, to assimilate as much or as less as one can.

Equally moving are the chapters on shrines and landmarks: the Trilithons, the Garden of Remembrance, the Founders Avenue. These are not mere tourist attractions but symbols — anchors of collective memory. The history of the Prayers of the Religions and Annie Besant's Universal Invocation is recounted in a way that reminds the reader that Adyar has always stood for harmony among faiths.

Then there is Nature herself. The majestic Great Banyan, the ancient Baobabs, the rich flora and fauna of the estate — these are not scenic embellishments but spiritual companions. Adyar emerges as an ecological sanctuary long before environmental consciousness became fashionable.

Perhaps the most touching chapter is devoted to the "Unsung Builders of the Masters' Home". Here the author pauses to honour those whose names history does not always record — the quiet workers, the devoted servers, the souls who gave their lives in humble dedication. Their sacrifices form the unseen foundation upon which the edifice of the theosophical movement rests. It is impossible to read this without feeling a stirring of reverence and gratitude.

The final chapter, aptly titled "Snippets", offers anecdotal treasures — small windows into the character and spirit of the place. They are like lamps placed along a twilit path, gentle yet illuminating.

Adyar – The Masters' Home is more than a commemorative volume. It is not only an act of remembrance and renewal, but more than that, it is an act of service by the author bringing to light the hidden, multidimensional treasure of Adyar, taking it to people — both members and non-members — across the world. It invites members, seekers, historians, and lovers of spiritual heritage to rediscover Adyar not merely as the headquarters of the TS, but as a living centre of Theosophy.

For anyone who has walked under the shade of the Great Banyan, attended a convention in the Great Hall or the Adyar theatre, felt the quietude of the Adyar river at dusk, or listened to the distant rhythm of the ocean waves gently echoing through the evening air, this book will feel like coming home. For those who have not yet visited, it will kindle a longing.

To buy and read this book is to parti-

ticipate in a lineage of gratitude. It is to understand how ideals become institutions, how vision becomes landscape, how selfless service shapes history. Above all, it is to glimpse how a place can become a vessel for spiritual insight and universal brotherhood.

If you wish to know the heart of the Theosophical Society — its struggles, its triumphs, its silent presence — begin here. Adyar is not only a location on a map. Through these pages, it becomes a state of consciousness.

Deep gratitude is due to Dr Geetha Jaikumar and her dedicated team, whose meticulous research, sensitivity, and devotion have brought this sacred narrative to life. Their work is itself an offering — preserving memory, honouring legacy, and ensuring that the spirit of Adyar continues to inspire generations yet to come.

The book covers the time frame of more or less 1882 until the early 1970s. I am sure after reading this book, the readers will definitely expect a sequel.

This is a *must-have and must-read* book — for members of the TS in particular, to know in-depth about Adyar, and for anyone else, to know that such a place as Adyar exists.

(*To order your copy of the book, write to* tphindia@gmail.com.)

SHIKHAR AGNIHOTRI

You are now identifying yourself with a wrong "I", which is the "I"-thought. This "I"-thought rises and sinks, whereas the true significance of "I" is beyond both. There cannot be a break in your being. You who slept are also now awake. There is no unhappiness in your deep sleep, whereas it exists now. What is it that has happened now so that this difference is experienced? There was no "I"-thought in your sleep, whereas it is present now. The true "I" is not apparent and the false "I" is parading itself. This false "I" is the obstacle to your right knowledge. Find out from where this false "I" arises. Then it will disappear. You will then be only what you are, that is, absolute being.

Ramana Maharshi

Theosophical Work around the World

Italian Theosophical Society (TSI)

The 112th National Congress of TSI took place in Padua from 28 to 31 May 2026, on the theme "Thought Forms, Architectures of Consciousness". It was well attended, with approximately 120 participants.

The Congress provided an opportunity to fulfil the association's statutory obligations, specifically with the Ordinary Members' Meeting, which, upon the proposal of the National Board of Directors, unanimously and by acclamation, awarded Antonio Girardi the title of President Emeritus of the TSI with the following citation: "The Italian Theosophical Society, with infinite gratitude and esteem, confers upon Antonio Girardi the title of President Emeritus for his extraordinary dedication to spreading the theosophical message."

The Congress also featured the presentation of the two latest publications from Edizioni Teosofiche Italiane. The first, *Thought Forms*, by C. W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant, which inspired the title of the Congress, was illustrated by Enrico Stagni, who was the translator. The second, *The Masters*, by Annie Besant, was introduced by Fabrizio Ferretti, who translated it.

The Congress guests also included the highly regarded Prof. Massimo Introvigne, who gave a presentation entitled: "Thought Forms and Modern Art: A Debate That Has Not Yet Concluded". He emphasized the formidable impact of the book, *Thought Forms*, published at the beginning of the twentieth century, on the culture and art of the era, as well as the lasting impression it has left in its wake, even to the present day.

Elif Kamisli, curator of the Adyar Art Project, presented the extensive work that was done at the International Headquarters under her expert guidance, to protect the artworks there. The occasion also provided an opportunity to illustrate the artistic journey of Hilma af Klint, deeply inspired by *Thought Forms* and Theosophy. A major exhibition of this painter is currently underway at the Grand Palais in Paris.

All the presentations on the conference theme were highly appreciated, highlighting its many facets: Antonio Girardi ("Power of the Mind and Spiritual Faculties"); Flavia Polignano ("The Symbolic Language of Color and Its Soul Inspiration: Some Case Studies in Figurative and Abstract Art"); Matteo Bonanno ("Composing Colors: The Relationship Between Music and the Thought Forms of C.W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant"); Giacomo Cucugliato ("How We Come into the World: Thought Forms and Characters in Pirandello"); Kurt Leland (video on "Practical Aspects of Working

with Thought Forms"); Enrico Sempi ("The Matter of Thought Transforms into Color"); Marina De Grandis ("The Role of Thought Forms in the Constitution of Man"); Patrizia Moschin Calvi ("Forms Clothed in Light from Other Worlds: Making the Invisible Visible").

Special mention goes to the work of the Young Theosophists, coordinated by Marina Tappa, for organizing the workshop on Thought Forms: a creative moment for all attendees, armed with paints and cardstock, scissors and glue, to represent what inspired them to listen to the Tibetan crystal singing bowls played by Elena Bessie Camplone and the quotes read by Nicoletta Boriello.

Meanwhile, Flavia Polignano illustrated the activities of the Theosophical Order of Service, also curating the traditional Charity Bazaar, which received generous donations from attendees.

Giulia Garagnani led the Peace Meditation (Naarden version) every morning, contributing to the strengthening of this important thought form for a more fraternal world.

The passing beyond the veil of dear Brother Ermanno Vescia, which occurred on the night between Saturday and Sunday, was also celebrated with a fond and grateful memory during the closing phase of the Congress.

The Congress also hosted two guests from the Brazilian Theosophical Society: Sergio Moraes, former General Secretary of the Section, and Teresa Botarro, National Director of the Theosophical Order of Service in Brazil. Sergio and Teresa brought greetings and good wishes from their Section to the Assembly and the gift of a book celebrating the 100th anniversary of the TS in Brazil.

A theosophical congress is never simply a cultural event: it is filled with human warmth, exchange, and discussion; it is a beautiful occasion when the theosophical community gathers together, unites, and strengthens through sharing and dialogue, and renews strong bonds and affinities. And this Congress was particularly heartfelt in this regard as well. ✧

We are part of one great Life, which knows no failure, no loss of effort or strength, which "mightily and sweetly ordering all things" bears the worlds onwards to their goal. The notion that our little life is a separate independent unit, fighting for its own hand against countless separate independent units, is a delusion of the most tormenting kind. So long as we thus see the world and life, peace broods far off on an inaccessible pinnacle. When we feel and know that all selves are one, then peace of mind is ours without any fear of loss.

Annie Besant
Thought Power

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