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Cover: "Sistine Madonna" (between 1512 and 1513), oil on canvas by Raphael (1483–1520), depicts Mary with the Christ Child.

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Founded 17 November 1875

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

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

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

The Soul

TIM BOYD

THE heart cannot worship what the mind rejects.

The process we engage in that leads to what is described in spiritual traditions as awakening, or a new birth, is a necessary part of the human pilgrimage. Although a more potent center of life and energy may seem hidden to us over much of our lifetime, eventually many have the experience of connecting with it, of having their living guided and illumined by the clarifying light of this deep center of our being. In the Ageless Wisdom tradition this center is often simply called — the soul.

From the theosophical perspective it is that center of consciousness which preexists birth and continues after the death of the body, which extracts, stores, and grows from the essentials of the experiences of each successive life. The process of "spiritual self-transformation" is the stripping away of those obstacles to the experience of soul power and wisdom, which ultimately allows for the full and continuous, commanding expression of this Higher, or Inner Self. This is one aspect of the even greater process of spiritual evolution, the unending progressive unfoldment of ever-deepening layers of consciousness.

Each life brings its store of obligations and relationships. The truly important ones are connections formed from love or from unresolved antagonisms and misunderstandings in previous lives. As it is the nature of the universe to restore itself to balance, we each sometimes experience lives of difficulty, intense responsibility, controversies that force us to be an agent in the restoration of harmony. In such lives one's connection to the soul may seem tenuous, even hidden, and exposure to the Ageless Wisdom tradition may be limited, but ultimately the experience of the soul awaits us all — now or in some distant future.

The deep and soul-evoking teachings that comprise the Ageless Wisdom over the ages have been passed on in potent symbols, stories, and myth. These great stories are intended to reach beyond the analyzing and comparative intellect. These are the rich stories that stir the soul's attention by their demand for the engagement of the intuition. The meaning of the word "Islam" is "surrender". In the life of the Christ it is expressed as "Let Thy (God's) will, not mine, be done". It speaks of the development of a will that does not merely choose to submit to a deeper consciousness, but is capable of recognizing and allowing an all-encompassing higher will to prevail. The stillness and

poise of such a state makes it possible to hear the "still, small voice" of the soul — the "Voice of the Silence" that accompanies one's rest from the clouding influence of the dominating personal self.

In spiritual traditions throughout time it is viewed as a tragic loss of a rare opportunity to have had the good fortune to encounter the Ageless Wisdom, to feel it stimulating some resonant core, yet not pursue, or only half-heartedly pursue it. In the *Viveka Chudamani* (*Crest Jewel of Wisdom*) of Shankaracharya, it describes one who is presented with the wisdom teachings and turns away as a "suicide" — one who has not just chosen death over life, but has made a choice to self-inflict the dying through negligence and self-will. All of this speaks about the primary importance of the soul in the unfoldment process.

There is a contemporary student of stories and mythology named Clarissa Pinkola Estes. Over her lifetime of engaging with world mythologies for their revelations of deep and hidden truths she has at times attempted to distill her understanding. Much of it has been shared in the many books she has authored. Trying to sum up her lifelong understanding of the value of myth she made the following comment:

> This is the underlayment of Mythos, as I understand it: that there is a soul; that it wishes to be free; that it loves the human it inhabits; that it will do all it can to shelter the one it loves; and that it wants to be known, listened to, followed, given an enlarged broadcast range, granted leadership in the quest for experience that carries such worth for the higher self — and that its language is stories.

In its naked simplicity this is a powerful and deeply revealing statement. She describes the core understanding, which she regards as the "underlayment" of Mythos — that upon which myth is built and supported. This fundamental understanding is that "there is a soul". For someone who has no recollection of the quiet or self-forgetfulness of some soul-filled moment, this can seem to be an unjustified assertion — yet another person preaching a "truth" that cannot be substantiated.

There are things that we cannot see, until we can. For such individuals it is a statement that awaits some future sensitivity. In *The Idyll of the White Lotus* story by Mabel Collins, these words appear: "There are three truths which are absolute, and which cannot be lost, but yet may remain silent for lack of speech." The first of these is that "The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendor has no limit." Internalizing this truth is the beginning point for any genuine spiritual path, and sets the stage for our access to wisdom and to the process described as "spiritual self-transformation".

Estes's next point is that the soul "wishes to be free". Although accurate, this way of expressing it can be a source of some confusion. In normal speech when one uses the word "wish" it speaks of a desire for something over which one has little control. When we say "will" —

the will to achieve or accomplish — it relates to a strong level of engagement in fulfilling what for some passes as a mere wish. The potential confusion arises when one reduces the activity of the soul to a personal level.

At the human level we wish and maybe something changes, probably not. At the level of the soul its "wish" is the foreshadowing of a completely impersonal unfoldment of consciousness. It is an expression of the hastening energies moving us toward a promised condition of liberation. *Jivan mukta* is the Sanskrit expression for the liberated soul — liberated from the limitations and confinement of having to work through the personality and its instruments of body, senses, emotions, thought, and personal mind.

When I am at the Theosophical Society's Adyar headquarters in Chennai I am frequently driving on the city streets. For anyone who has experienced travel in Chennai, you know that proximity is part of the experience. Cars are close. Bicycles, motorized two wheelers, cows, pedestrians could be touched by just putting your arm out of the car window. In an effort to control speeding, every couple of hundred meters the city government has placed speed bumps in all the roads. Cars move quickly, but not fast.

Not long ago while driving, caught in the same community of traffic as the rest of us, I saw a bright red, very expensive, Italian sports car. Because of the normal driving conditions, this exotic, high-powered machine was completely incapable of expressing its potential. In fact, it was so low to the ground that the car would send out a spray of sparks passing over some of the higher speed bumps. In a way this is similar to the condition of the soul's limitations confined to the traffic of bodily demands, personal thought, and emotion. The soul's growth and splendor have no limit, but they depend on conditions being provided by us — the soul's temporary host.

"It loves the human it inhabits". This way of saying it, again, requires us to avoid getting caught in a personal interpretation. In our normal world so many of the songs, poems, movies, books, videos, and conversations that surround us speak about love. At our usual level, love is synonymous with desire of some type — everything from lust to like, from possession, ownership, sensation, to obligation and demand.

The higher, more mature love that arises from the recognition of oneness, the recognition of an undivided unity among beings, is out of reach for many. From the perspective of the soul, it sees the many ways in which we deny ourselves access to its elevating presence, and lovingly waits for its time to illumine, and fill us — the human it inhabits — with its native joy and intuitive insight.

"It will do all it can to shelter the one it loves." There is a familiar story that tells of a person who died. In her life's review, she saw the path of her life as footprints in the sand. In the vision she saw two sets of footprints side by side — hers and her master's. In her life she had some difficult times, yet in her vision she saw that in all

of the difficult times there was only one set of footprints. She complained to the master asking why every time when things got rough in her life, he deserted her and she had to walk alone. His response was: "At those difficult times there was only one set of footprints because those were the times when I carried you."

Whether or not we have done the necessary inner work to open our link with the soul, it does all it can to shelter us. This is not the same as saying that it shields us from difficulty or harm. It is a shared experience of many that in times of crisis or loss some stabilizing presence connects in a way that helps us pass through it. Countless human experiences speak to this fact.

The day before his assassination, Martin Luther King, Jr, had an experience he described as being taken to the "mountain top" where he was enabled to see a vision of a distant "promised land" that he would not live to enter. In her autobiography, Annie Besant describes a time she became despondent to the point of taking her own life. With poison in her hand, inwardly she heard a voice that said, "O coward, coward, who used to dream of martyrdom, and cannot bear a few short years of pain!" The title of the first chapter of the *Bhagavadgitā*, and the basis for the conversation between Krishna and Arjuna that is the substance of the *Gitā*, is "The Despondency of Arjuna".

Despair can open the door for the soul's influence. Why? Despair is the result of the bald recognition that we, of ourselves, can do nothing. Faced with an overwhelming crisis demanding some solution, we recognize that we are powerless. Left to our own methods, strategies, and techniques we are without hope. All of our connections, our position, our thoughts, our studies, friends, family, wealth, are impotent before the crisis we face. In such moments the normal obstructions to the soul's participation in "our" life fall away, and it makes its presence known. Even as a momentary experience this powerful connection can reorient one's life.

"It wants to be known, listened to, followed, given an enlarged broadcast range, granted leadership in the quest for experience that carries such worth for the higher self." In H. P. Blavatsky's prologue to *The Secret Doctrine*, she speaks about the soul's "obligatory pilgrimage". It describes the soul's journey through the repeated cycle of incarnation, which she calls "the cycle of necessity". Incarnation and the growth it stimulates in the soul are not optional. The soul's movement from an entity with little opportunity for worldly expression, to the role of the guiding presence in one's life takes place over many lifetimes as a human being moves from merely reacting to conditions to consciously creating conditions for growth.

In one Biblical account the soul's light is depicted as a candle. The process of incarnation is compared to covering the candle with a basket. No one lights a candle in order to hide its brilliance. Light exists to shine, and in the case of the soul, to be a Light of the World. Those people whose lives are given over to the direction

of the Higher Self are referred to in India as Mahatmas — Great Souls. It is through the activity and teachings of these people that humanity over the millennia is urged toward its deeper potentials. The language of the soul is stories, and it is from the Great Souls that the great stories are told that become the foundation of every religion and spiritual outpouring. Over time those stories have become encoded in the *Vedas*, the *Ramayana*, the *Bible*, *Quran*, *Torah*, the *Stanzas of Dzyan* — all of the spiritual texts that move us to reach beyond what we can yet grasp. ✧

My guide, my soul, your only sadness
is when I am not walking with you.
In deep silence, and with some exertion
to stay in your company,
I could save you a lot of trouble.

Rumi

H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge: Two Souls, One Heart — One Vision

DAVID M. GROSSMAN

Gently to hear, kindly to judge.
— Shakespeare, Henry V, Act 1

THE story of H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) leading up to her coming to New York in July 1873 and launching the modern theosophical movement is a kind of epic story all by itself. But once she arrived in Manhattan, already a multicultural city of immigrants of over a million people, almost immediately she settled into the work of preparation for what was to come. She connected up with the spiritualist movement which was receiving some notoriety at the time and becoming an annoying adversary to the then, utterly materialistic, mainstream scientific views dominating the "Halls of Learning".

It was while interfacing with the spiritualists by writing articles for the secular press and for spiritualist journals and observing demonstrations of spiritualistic phenomena, most famously at the Eddy Farm in Chittenden, Vermont, that HPB first met Col. H. S. Olcott. He was covering the spiritualists as a journalist, but we are told his real interest was to satisfy a curiosity that arose within him, checking for the authenticity or fraud concerning such phenomena. He wrote articles in the *Daily Graphic* of New York and in 1875 published the book *People from the Other World*. Olcott was also captivated by the hidden side of Nature (the occult world) that he was being made aware exists. And when he met Blavatsky at the Eddy Farm this man of many talents had his life redirected forever.

Due to her articles, and knowledge displayed in discussion, HPB gathered around her spiritualists and others of a philosophical, scientific and religious bent for regular discussion as she slowly made a name for herself, often controversial, in New York City.

At the same time a young Irish immigrant named William Quan Judge (WQJ) had recently passed the New York State bar exam and become a lawyer. He also had a keen interest in everything with a mystical and philosophical leaning.

The story goes that the young William nearly died when he was seven years old

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back in Ireland. The doctor first pronounced him dead and then minutes later he revived. After that incident it is said that his parents found him able to read where he was not known to before and as time went on noticed in him a hunger to learn about everything mystical and philosophical from the Book of Revelations to astrology and other religious and mystical texts.





Having read some of the articles on spiritualism by Col. Olcott, where HPB was mentioned, Judge contacted Olcott, who was also a lawyer, to see if he might introduce him to HPB. Finally the meeting was arranged.

Judge recalled that first meeting many years later after the passing of HPB where he wrote in his article, "Yours till Death and After:" published in *Lucifer* in June 1891.

> It was her eye that attracted me, the eye of one whom I must have known in lives long passed away. She looked at me in recognition at that first hour, and never since has that look changed. Not as a questioner of philosophies did I come before her, not as one groping in the dark for lights that schools and fanciful theories had obscured, but as one who, wandering many periods through the corridors of life, was seeking the friends who could show where the designs for the work had been hidden. And true to the call she responded, revealing the plans once again, and speaking no words to explain, simply pointed them out and went on with the task. It was as if but the evening before we had parted, leaving yet to be done some detail of a task taken up with one common end; it was teacher and pupil, elder brother and younger, both bent on the one single end, but she with the power and the knowledge that belong but to lions and sages.

The official inauguration of the Theosophical Society took place on 17 November 1875. The three founders who happened to remain totally committed and involved in the work until their deaths were chosen as President, Col. H. S. Olcott; Corresponding Secretary, H. P. Blavatsky; and Counsel, William Q. Judge who was just 24 years old at the time.

In the early years after the formation of the Society, Judge spent much time in the quarters of HPB along with Olcott learning, observing, witnessing demonstrations of certain phenomena by HPB and helping her, along with his younger brother John, with the production of *Isis Unveiled*. Overall, Judge was from the beginning always totally supportive of HPB and the movement she represented. But he was young and had, shall we say, his own personal karma to work through with a demanding job, a wife, and then a child who died as an infant, sadly to say.

So it must have been difficult for him when HPB and Olcott packed up and left for India on 18 December 1878. In spite of the fact that HPB never returned to the USA where she had become a citizen, she and Judge always stayed in touch and were totally supportive of each other.

During those first years after the departure of Blavatsky and Olcott the work in the USA languished. Judge was going through his trials and tests so to speak. But finally early in 1884 Judge was able to go to Europe, first to London where he met A. P. Sinnett and others from the British Theosophical Society, and then to Paris where on 28 March he once again was joined with HPB and Olcott as they had returned from India.

In April of that year word came of what has become known as the "Coulomb Affair". HPB, and her work were unjustly attacked and lied about. Judge showed the depth of his fellowship with HPB and dedication to the movement, for Judge, at a moments' notice, at Olcott's request as President of the Society, sailed for India to do whatever he found necessary to straighten things out, to clear HPB's name, and get the theosophical headquarters back into functioning condition.

At Adyar he shut down HPB's private rooms, interviewed witnesses to what took place, and gathered the facts about the Coulomb attacks on HPB in support of clearing her name. Judge did this again at the end of her life when he was instrumental in suing *The Sun* newspaper in New York City and Prof. Coues due to the outright and totally unsubstantiated lies and libelous attacks upon her character which were finally refuted and given published apology. During this time HPB died, so all legal matters were dissolved according to law. To try and make up for the slander, even though the charges had been dropped, *The Sun* gave Judge space in the paper to write an article on the real HPB. The article is titled "The Esoteric She: The Late Mme. Blavatsky — A Sketch of Her Career", published in *The Sun*, 26 September 1892. What follows are a few paragraphs from *The Sun* article:

> Her life since 1875 was spent in the unremitting endeavor to draw within the Theosophical Society those who could work unselfishly to propagate an ethics and philosophy tending to realize the brotherhood of man by showing the real unity and essential non-separateness of every being. And her books were written with the declared object of furnishing the material for intellectual and scientific progress on those lines. The theory of man's origin, powers, and destiny brought forward by her, drawn from ancient Indian sources, places us upon a higher pedestal than that given by either religion or science, for it gives to each the possibility of developing the godlike powers within and of at last becoming a co-worker with nature. . . .
>
> As everyone must die at last, we will not say that her demise was a loss; but if she had not lived and done what she did humanity would not have had the impulse and the ideas toward the good which it was her mission to give and to proclaim. And there are today scores, nay, hundreds, of devout, earnest men and women intent on purifying

their own lives and sweetening the lives of others, who trace their hopes and aspirations to the wisdom-religion revived in the West through her efforts, and who gratefully avow that their dearest possessions are the result of her toilsome and self-sacrificing life. If they, in turn, live aright and do good, they will be but illustrating the doctrine which she daily taught and hourly practiced.

Looking into the flip side of their relationship and work together, we can find many examples of HPB's support for Judge and his work in America. For example, after WQJ launched the magazine, *The Path*, Blavatsky wrote him in 1886, when she was not well:

> ... I will begin to work from this day to bring Olcott to let you have 50 monthly for your *Path*. They must be found — for if we were three original ones to this day, very soon we will be two . . . (From an unpublished letter of HPB, printed in Boris de Zirkoff's magazine, *THEOSOPHIA*, Volume XVII, No. 4(86), Spring 1961)

Judge proposed the formation of an American Section of the Theosophical Society in 1886, with the approval of both HPB and Col. Olcott.

Also referring to Judge's magazine *The Path*, at the time HPB launched *Lucifer* in 1887, she wrote:

> If I thought for *one moment* that *Lucifer* will "rub out" *Path* I would never consent to be its editor. Now listen to me my good old friend: Once that the Masters have proclaimed your "Path" the *best* the most *theosophical* of all theosophical publications — surely it is not to allow it to be *rubbed out*!! — I *give you my word of honor, of HPB*. I will force people to subscribe for *Path* & this will never hurt "Lucifer". One is the fighting combative *Manas* — the other ("Path") is pure *Buddhi*. (*Letters Between Blavatsky and Judge*-12, Letter One-1887)

In her Letter to be read at the American Convention of Theosophists in 1888, HPB expresses in no uncertain terms not only her respect but heartfelt thanks to WQJ for aiding her in the work of "The Masters" to which she dedicated her whole life. She writes:

> In addressing to you this letter, which I request you to read to the Convention summoned for April 22nd, I must first present my hearty congratulations and most cordial good wishes to the assembled Delegates and good Fellows of our Society, and to yourself — the heart and soul of that Body in America. We were several, to call it to life in 1875. Since then you have remained alone to preserve that life through good and evil report. It is to you chiefly, if not entirely, that the Theosophical Society owes its existence in 1888.

Addendum

A brief note on the controversy concerning W. Q. Judge during his lifetime and carried on by others ignorant of theosophical history in the decades following his death and his prominent work for the movement, especially in America is presented below.

As far as "Was he considered one of the original founders?" of course he was, and not only did he become Vice President of the Theosophical Society but state-

ments throughout the years by not only HPB and Olcott but also Annie Besant puts any possible controversy to rest. We have already painted a clear picture, we think, about how HPB viewed her colleague. Here are a few comments made from other sources, including Olcott and Annie Besant, concerning WQJ.

In the July 1891 issue of *The Theosophist* it was stated:

> Mr Judge will remain in England until Col. Olcott's arrival early in July; his presence with us at such a sad time is most welcome, for all who have the privilege of knowing the Vice-President and Co-founder of the Theosophical Society will at once realise how we must value the sense of strength, courage and hope, which he inspires wherever and with whomsoever he is. (vol. XII, July 1891, p. 634.)

In 1892 Col. Olcott put in his resignation as president of the TS which he later withdrew. In the meantime, Annie Besant circulated this letter concerning the future of the Society:

> **TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE**
> **March 11th, 1892**
>
> My dear Colleagues,
>
> For the first time in the history of the Theosophical Society we are called upon to elect a President. When the Society was founded in 1875 by H. P. Blavatsky, H. S. Olcott, and William Q. Judge, H. S. Olcott was appointed its President, and has held that office down to the present year. Now the office is vacant, by his resignation, and it devolves upon us to fill it.
>
> Having in view the importance to the whole Society of a wise choice of our chief officer, I feel that you may fairly claim at my hands, as President of this Lodge, some expression of opinion, not as determining your votes, but as a factor in the formation of your judgment. I therefore frankly say to you that, in my view, the present Vice-President, and remaining co-founder of the Society, William Quan Judge, is the most suitable person to guide the Society, and one who cannot with justice be passed over. He is not only the Vice-President and a founder, but he was the trusted friend and colleague of H. P. Blavatsky from 1875 until she passed away. Belonging to the old country by his birth, he has gained the confidence of the American Section by his faithful work, and will doubtless command its unanimous support.
>
> Having thus placed my own views at the service of the Lodge, I leave the matter in your hands.
>
> Fraternally,
> Annie Besant,
> President of the Blavatsky Lodge

In Sven Eek's *Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Society* (TPH, Adyar, p. 658), we learn that Col. Olcott, when in America in 1906, the year before his death, met with Mrs Holloway-Langford, a good friend of Olcott and his sister. Laura Holloway relates Olcott's words to her referring to William Q. Judge:

> "[Olcott:] 'I know how you feel about him and always have felt.' Then, taking my hand in his, he gave my face a searching

glance, before he answered, in a manner subdued and most impressive:

'We learn much and outgrow much, and I have lived much and learned more, particularly as regards Judge. . . .I know now, and it will comfort you to hear it; that I wronged Judge, not willfully or in malice; nevertheless, I have done this and I regret it.'"

Again many years later after HPB, Judge and Olcott had completed their work begun together in 1875 and left the scene, and much of the dust had settled in the Society around accusations and disagreements involving Olcott, Judge and Besant, Besant wrote in the October 1922 issue of *The Theosophist* (vol. XLIV, p. 4, 9, 10):

> William Quan Judge [was] a much-loved friend and pupil of HPB's, and long the channel of life to the American Branch of the TS. A highly evolved man, with a profound realisation of the deeper truths of life, he built up the Society in America from small and discouraging beginnings. No difficulties daunted him, and no apparent failures quenched his fiery devotion. . . .
>
> He was beside HPB through those early days, saw the exercise of her wonderful powers, and shared in the founding of the Theosophical Society. And throughout the remainder of her life on earth, the friendship remained unbroken, and during the later years she regarded him as her one hope in America, declaring that, if the American members rejected him, she would break off all relations with them, and know them no more. . . .
>
> His real work, the spread of Theosophy in America, was splendidly performed, and his memory remains as a lasting inspiration. . . .

William Quan Judge must ever have his place among the "Theosophical Worthies".

It is now one hundred fifty years since the formation of the Theosophical Society and HPB began presenting the teachings of Theosophy. Not so many years later William Q. Judge followed by disseminating those teachings through his magazine *The Path*, pointing to their practical application and building up the Society in America. If you read the writings of both HPB and Judge today, they are for the most part remarkably fresh in their expression, and the principles put forth have grown in acceptance and influenced the "race mind" not only philosophically but also have had a noticeable impact on the arts, literature and the frontiers of science, especially psychology and neuroscience. From the look of things in our world we still have some way to go for recognition of the true purpose of life and our true nature as spiritual beings. ✧

Theosophy and the Return of the Christ

WAYNE GATFIELD

ORTHODOX Christianity constantly mentions the return of the Christ. They take this to mean Jesus in person. However, H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) states in her article, "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels" (*H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 8, p. 173):

> "(a) the coming of Christ" means *the presence of* CHRISTOS in a regenerated world, and not at all the actual coming in body of "Christ" Jesus; (*b*) this Christ is to be sought neither in the wilderness, nor "in the inner chambers", nor in the sanctuary of any temple or church built by man; for Christ — the true esoteric SAVIOUR — is *no man*, but the DIVINE PRINCIPLE in every human being. He who strives to resurrect the Spirit *crucified in him by his own terrestrial passions*, and buried deep in the "sepulchre" of his sinful flesh; he who has the strength to roll back *the stone of matter* from the door of his own *inner* sanctuary, he *has the risen Christ in him.*

It is the regeneration of this world by a Spiritual impulse that manifests in the heart of all those who foster a love for humanity and wish to bring a Golden Age of Peace, Love, and Harmony back to this planet in the face of all the negativity and cruelty that is so prevalent today.

The Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh has a similar thing to say regarding Buddha:

> The next Buddha will not take the form of a person. The next Buddha will rather take the shape of a community, a community that practices understanding and loving kindness, a community that practices a way of conscious living. This may be the most important thing for earth's survival.

Both the words "Christ" and "Buddha" convey the same idea. Jesus was a man overshadowed by the Christ Spirit as was Prince Siddhartha Gautama by the Buddha. Every one of us has the potential to become Buddha or Christ. "Look inward: thou art Buddha" says *The Voice of the Silence* (Frag. II, v. 116). It suggests that we are already Buddhas, we just need to remove the veils that prevent us seeing it.

In the words of the Mahachohan in his 1881 letter to A. P. Sinnett:

> Once unfettered [and] delivered from their dead weight of dogmatic interpretations, personal names, anthropomorphic conceptions, and salaried priests, the fundamental doctrines of all religions will be proved

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identical in their esoteric meaning. Osiris, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, will be shown as different means for one and [the] same royal highway to final bliss, *Nirvana*.

Mystical Christianity . . . teaches *self*-redemption through one's own *seventh* principle — the liberated *Paramātma* . . . called by one the Christ, by others the Buddha, and equivalent to regeneration or rebirth in spirit — [therefore expounds] just the same truth as the Nirvana of mystical Buddhism. All of us have to get rid of our own Ego, the illusory, apparent *self*, to recognize our true Self, in a transcendental divine life. But if we would not be selfish, we must strive to make other people see that truth, to recognize the reality of that transcendental Self, the Buddha, the Christ, or God of every preacher.

We should not wait for someone external to come to save us, but look within our very own hearts for the love and compassion that can help to heal the world. This can only be done by cultivating a Universal Kinship of Humanity regardless of race, creed, sex, caste and colour and never by any sectarian religion which professes that it has the only way to reach heaven, Nirvana or whatever term is used. The true spiritual teachers did not found religions, their followers did and also created the dogmas and many of the teachings ascribed to the original Master.

Turning to the *Bhagavadgitā* (4.7):

Whenever there is a decline in righteousness, O Bhārata, and a rise in righteousness prevails, then do I manifest myself.

This is said by Krishna but again it is symbolic, as Krishna is the Divinity in every one of us. If we have total faith, gained by study and meditation in our Higher Self, then we will find we have its protection constantly. Also, it refers to the return of a general spiritual impetus in the World in general, when evil prevails. It is due to the rejection of an unconditional spiritual Brotherhood of Humanity that led to the World Wars and the many conflicts we have now. The Theosophical Masters say that two-thirds of the world's evil is caused by religion and the other one-third by selfishness. This is a very important fact to take on board. If we attach ourselves to a particular religion, no matter how tolerant we are of other religions, we will always regard ours as the best and therefore fall victim to soul-killing separateness.

Theosophy reconciles all these differences by teaching that we can come together as truly human beings, beyond the dogmas and sophistry of many religions and sects that undermine the powers that we all possess, and can activate ourselves if we have the correct faith, knowledge, and wisdom to do so.

But to rely on intermediaries will take the power out of our hands and make us feel that we need someone else to reach enlightenment or heaven or wherever the religion or philosophy is leading us.

Robert Crosbie writes:

For the Theosophical Society in America impersonality means not to worship itself as an organization; to endeavour to get broader and freer; to merge itself, more and more, into the living spirit of the movement

> — its higher self; to neither despise itself because it is a form nor exalt itself because it has a soul; to become less doctrinal and more *human*.
>
> *The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 128)

Jesus was not a subscriber to the cruel God of the Old Testament; he told us not to follow the eye-to-eye teaching, but to love our enemies and bless those that curse us.

We need to come together as human beings beyond religions and dogmas, based on the fact that we all share the same Spirit. HPB states in her article "Our Three Objects" (*H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 11, p. 398):

> Though but a minority of our members are mystically inclined, yet, in point of fact, the key to all our successes as above enumerated is in our recognition of the fact of the Higher Self — colourless, cosmopolitan, unsectarian, sexless, unworldly, altruistic — and the doing of our work on that basis. To the Secularist, the Agnostic, the Socialistic Scientist, such results would have been unattainable, nay, would have been unthinkable. Peace Societies are Utopian, because no amount of argument based upon exoteric considerations of social morals or expediency, can turn the hearts of the rulers of nations away from selfish war and schemes of conquest.

It is the awakening to this that will bring us all together in a Universal Kinship of Humanity despite all that creates separateness in our lives. There has to be something seriously wrong if religions cause wars and conflict on all levels, taking into account that those teachers that initiated them all taught love and peace. They did not found the religion, this was done by lesser beings who could not grasp the cosmopolitan nature of the teachings and had to institutionalise them. From this a hierarchical system arose and ritual and dogma eventually smothered the original impulse. This is not to say there are no good souls living a spiritual life within their religion but they are in a relative minority in the modern world. Simply attending church, mosque, temple or synagogue does not necessarily make someone spiritual in any way. It is how we manifest the Higher Self in our daily lives that makes the difference and how kind and loving we are to our fellow creatures.

If we want to really understand the return of the Christ, we must come to realise that we are all Christ in potential, and the return is up to each one of us individually and collectively. As said earlier by Thich Nhat Hanh, it is not necessarily an actual person that will appear at a certain time or when the world is in danger, it can be just this spiritual awakening amongst the people.

Of course, that is not ruling out that it may be an actual person, but rather than waiting for centuries for someone to come and save us, we should be awakening to our Divinity and realising we can develop all the powers attributed to Jesus. He was just further along the Spiritual Path than we are at the moment, but he came to show us the way.

"The golden age has passed away, only the good have the power to bring it back" (Goethe)

HPB writes in one of the articles from her book, *The Tidal Wave*:

> Verily the Spirit in man, so long hidden out of public sight, so carefully concealed and so far exiled from the arena of modern learning, has at last awakened. It now asserts itself and is loudly redemanding its unrecognized yet ever legitimate rights. It refuses to be any longer trampled under the brutal foot of Materialism, speculated upon by the Churches, and made a fathomless source of income by those who have self-constituted themselves its universal custodians. The former would deny the Divine Presence any right to existence; the latter would accentuate and prove it through their Sidesmen and Church Wardens armed with moneybags and collection boxes. But the Spirit in man — the direct, though now but broken ray and emanation of the Universal Spirit — has at last awakened.

Can we not, as followers of the Christ Spirit, love one another as Jesus and Buddha told us to? Can we not pave the way for others, become a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood? In this world this is all that matters in the final analysis. This is what the theosophical Masters of the Wisdom wanted and what all the genuine spiritual teachers throughout the ages taught.

Yet, still the world is weighed down by wars and atrocities and the words of the holy ones are ignored as if they never existed. We *can* bring about the return of the Christ Spirit as Jesus and the Buddha wanted.

In Buddhist terms all those striving to put theosophical teachings into practice are budding bodhisattvas. We need to try to live the altruistic life that this points to. The vows of a bodhisattva are: "Suffering beings are numberless; I vow to liberate them all. Attachment is inexhaustible, I vow to release it all. The gates to truth are numberless, I vow to master them all. The way of awakening is supreme, I vow to realize . . ."

We may not be ready to commit ourselves to these vows, but we can at least take them as virtues to work towards. In the meantime, we just may do what little we can to make the world a better place to live in, no matter how small our contribution may be. As motive is everything, even positive thoughts towards the world can help to bring about the changes that are so needed! ✧

Has thou attuned thy heart and mind
to the great mind and heart of all humanity?
For as the sacred river's roaring voice
whereby all Nature-sounds are echoed back,
so must the heart of him "who in the stream would enter"
thrill in response to every sigh and thought
of all that lives and breathes.

H. P. Blavatsky
The Voice of the Silence

That Which Is Ever New

KRISTA UMBJARV

FIRST of all: happy birthday to all of us. I hope that we can all feel how special this World Congress is, as it is extremely rare to see an organization live to 150 years. Often, when the reason why it has been created has exhausted itself and the society around it has changed, it will slowly die. Or when its charismatic founders and leaders are no longer there, it becomes fractioned and fades away slowly.

How is it that the Theosophical Society (TS) has been alive so long? Have you ever thought about this? I think one of the main reasons why we are still here is because our role has been to answer the needs of the world and humanity. In the beginning of our existence this meant sharing the teachings and knowledge. There was no vocabulary — reading the Mahatma Letters we can see how early members of the TS struggled trying to find words to express certain new and foreign ideas. In our early years, we were here to share knowledge about Theosophy and to help to revive old, especially Eastern philosophies. It was a need of the epoch to counteract blind dogmatism and rampant materialism. H. P. Blavatsky's (HPB)*The Secret Doctrine* was there to explain the hidden meaning of many teachings and show their underlying unity.

Over the course of the past 150 years the needs of humanity have changed. Or should I say that the outer and superficial needs have changed? The fact that we are still here means that in some way we have been able to respond to these needs. The TS is still relevant and will stay relevant as long as , not only the organization, but we, as individual members, are able to see and understand both the temporary and the profound needs, and to respond to them.

This is our role: to be able to answer in the best way to the needs of different beings around us. In a book, usually translated into English as *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, an 8th century Indian Buddhist mystic, Shantideva, explained the wish to answer to such needs in the most poetical way. I would like to quote just a few verses from this beautiful book that has been used as a training manual of bodhisattvas for more than a thousand years. These verses are from the third chapter:

> 18. May I be a guard for those without one,
> A guide for all who journey on the road,
> May I become a boat, a raft or bridge,
> For all who wish to cross the water.

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19. May I be an isle for those desiring landfall,
And a lamp for those who wish for light,
May I be a bed for those who need to rest,
And a servant for all who live in need.

He goes on with these descriptions and examples, but they all express the wish to be able to fulfil the needs of those around us. But what does it mean to fulfil the needs or wishes of somebody? It certainly does not mean becoming a slave of others' egoism by fulfilling their personal desires. What does it mean then? In the long term, it means learning to see deeply what somebody needs to advance on their path of evolution or spiritual path when it has become something conscious. In the short term, it might mean giving an encouraging pat on somebody's shoulder or just being there in silence giving somebody the space that they need or even correcting injustice when we see it. What stops us from seeing these true needs?

HPB talked about what the members, and specifically the leaders of the TS, need in *The Key to Theosophy* where she says:

> You must remember that all our members have been bred and born in some creed or religion, that all are more or less of their generation both physically and mentally, and consequently that their judgment is but too likely to be warped and unconsciously biased by some or all of these influences. If, then, they cannot be freed from such inherent bias, or at least taught to recognise it instantly and so avoid being led away by it, the result can only be that the Society will drift off on to some sandbank of thought or another, and there remain a stranded carcass to moulder and die.

HPB did not mince her words. She pointed out that we should remove our unconscious biases and various cultural and generational influences. But how to remove these biases and influences? I think the keyword here is motive. As it is often quoted from the Mahatma Letters: "Motive is everything." If we wish to remove all these obstacles for our own sake, then it is very sure that we will not get very far, or the process will be absolutely laborious. Why is motive so important? Because it is the motive of our actions that defines on which plane of existence we function: whether we swim in the lower astral and mental worlds with its desires and fragmented thoughts and separation, or whether we are able to function on the level of the higher mind, see the interconnectedness, and touch *buddhi,* or intuition.

In the TS, people often ask: how to reach or activate *buddhi*? I think that the answer is actually very simple: start to consider the profound needs of others as important, if not *more* important than our own needs. How can we ever hope to touch this spiritual sun that shines in the same way for absolutely everyone if we wish to have all the sunshine for ourselves or only for some selected people? It is completely contradictory to its nature.

HPB said in her "Meditation Diagram" that our attitude of mind should be: "Different in external activity to each, because in each the capacity alters. Mentally the same to all." We usually do the opposite: we try to have the same kind of attitude towards others externally, and then call this brotherhood, but inside we have

quite a different attitude towards people.

So, what is our motive in doing things? There is an immense difference between studying a book or a topic out of curiosity or reading a book with the motive that one day when somebody needs this, that it may also benefit them. If we study something out of curiosity, we can be sure to forget the contents of the book quite quickly, maybe we will remember only vaguely what it spoke about. If we study with the thought that it could benefit somebody else when needed, something quite interesting happens: we will be able to remember what we have studied even decades later when the need for it arises.

How can this be explained? Again, it is our motive that defines, on which plane what we study will be recorded. If we just read a book out of curiosity, it cannot touch higher than the level of the lower mind. If we study something with the motive that it will benefit others when an occasion arises, it will come back when we need it. HPB explains these different types of memories in *The Key to Theosophy* (see Section 8).

What is our motive when we eat or take care of this physical body? Do we do all this just to keep it healthy for ourselves or do we take care of this, so that we can have a suitable vehicle to do something meaningful with it? Do we meditate so that we can have peace of mind or do we meditate so that the benefit that comes from it could serve others as well so that through our attention and concentration we could stop harming them and do something positive? The motive with which we meditate will define how quickly and easily we will be able to reach deeper levels of concentration and our own being.

In *The Voice of the Silence*, HPB gives us a map of spiritual practice in two steps. She says: "To live to benefit mankind is the first step. To practice the six glorious virtues is second". In the Buddhist teachings, the first is traditionally referred to as aspiring *bodhicitta* (mind of enlightenment that wishes to reach full realisation to benefit others in the best way possible) and the second as engaged *bodhichitta*. The first refers to taking a bodhisattva vow and the second refers to actively practising the six *pāramitās*, namely generosity, ethical self-discipline, patience, joyful effort, concentration, and wisdom.

For many years, I wondered how is it that one should first take the bodhisattva vow, which basically means promising to reach the state of perfection for everyone's sake so that one could be of most use, and only then start to actually practise on this path. Obviously, we should know about the general outline of the path and its different stages, but this order of presentation points to something essential and this is our direction. We should set direction, the motive, before engaging truly on this path. Whether we call it the bodhisattva vow or a shift in paradigm it means deciding to take a certain direction that is no longer only centred on us personally. This vow is not taken once and for all, but taken daily to remind ourselves about this commitment and direction, because as human beings who tend to get lost in small things and events

of daily life, we have a tendency to forget the bigger picture.

Master M. said in Letter 29: "I am as I was; and, as I was and am, so am I likely always to be — the slave of my duty to the Lodge and mankind; not only taught, but desirous to subordinate every preference for individuals to a love for the human race." (*The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*)

When we reflect on this quote, I believe there is no question about the direction that has been pointed out to us.

It also indirectly points to a completely non-failing compass that we can use to recognize truly spiritual human beings who have transformed their whole nature. Obviously, they do not walk around with a name tag which says that they are very spiritual (if ever we meet somebody who does wear such a name tag, then I would recommend to run in the other direction). We can recognize somebody highly spiritual when, in coming into contact with them, we naturally wish to become a better human being for those around us and bring meaning to our life. Not in some self-centred way but in a way that touches the deepest layers of our being. This effect cannot be produced artificially, as it happens only because this person has begun to truly live on the higher levels of their being and when we come into contact with them the higher planes of our being, planes on which the ego does not exist, are evoked in some almost mystical ways and there arises this natural aspiration to transform ourselves.

If when meeting somebody who claims to be spiritual, they try to convince us about how we are special and highly evolved, and maybe have even passed some initiations, or on the contrary, that we will be able to learn about life and ourselves in the best way only with them, then this compass can again help us. If their presence evokes a feeling of us being somebody, in a magnifying or diminishing way, being special or separate from the others through whatever distinctions, then we can be sure that the thing we will learn with this person is just how to polish and refine our own ego and have nice walks in the labyrinth of the lower mind.

It is not the same effect that a spiritual being will bring about with their presence, namely that we are able to see all our limitations almost through a magnifier without them having to be pointed out to us verbally. It is a magnifier or a mirror that is provided by the reflection of the higher planes of a person who has truly transformed themselves and, again, it is an effect that cannot be created artificially. We will be able to see these limitations so that we can work on them and overcome them. Such beings are able to fulfil the profound needs of everyone with whom they will come into contact.

When our motive is the wish to be able to fulfil the needs, this aspiration will little by little create an inner space and silence in us, that is free from projections and stories, that is ever new, because its purpose is to respond in the best possible way to the needs that we meet. There is no repetition, no past, but the immensity of space that is ready to respond. ✧

Esoteric Vegetarianism: A Worldview Reflected in the Diet — I

PAVEL N. MALAKHOV

VEGETARIANISM, like any other sufficiently serious teaching, presents two aspects: the outer, visible, or *exoteric*; and the inner — causal and hidden, or *esoteric*. The former finds expression in diet — that is, in a defined selection of foods; the latter concerns the underlying motivation and worldview. This article outlines the philosophy of vegetarianism. Once this philosophy is grasped, it becomes easier to make deliberate and conscious choices in daily life — not only with regard to diet, but in many other spheres as well.

The esoteric dimension of vegetarianism — its hidden causal power — lies in discerning the very meaning of nourishment within the framework of the One Life. As we begin to feel and recognize ourselves as integral parts of a single living organism, our attitude will inevitably change toward everything around us: food, other human beings, the natural environment, events, and so on.

Reasons for Vegetarianism

The reasons why a person adopts vegetarianism can be quite diverse. Among the most common, we may distinguish the following seven, of which the first six are exoteric, while the seventh reflects an esoteric approach:

- **Tradition** — some are born into families where vegetarianism is observed, either on religious grounds or as part of a long-established household custom.
- **Fashion** — a trend that extends into every sphere of life, and diet is no exception. For some, vegetarianism becomes a way to signal modernity or progressiveness.
- **Health** — others are compelled to adopt this diet for medical reasons.
- **Deference to authority** —certain individuals, lacking the inclination or opportunity to examine dietary issues themselves, simply follow the guidance of a person whom they trust.
- **Compassion (sentiment)** — an unreflective empathy toward living beings, arising from intuitive sensitivity to their suffering and their desire for life, accompanied by a spontaneous urge to share in that experience.
- **Natural disposition** — for some, vegetarianism is innate: they feel no desire to consume meat, and are repelled by its appearance, taste, or smell. Such a tendency

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may be regarded as the result of merits accumulated in previous lives.

♦ **Worldview** — finally, some embrace this form of diet as part of a broader search for answers to fundamental questions, a striving to live in harmony with Nature, and a conscious effort to order one's daily life accordingly.

In each individual case, several of the reasons mentioned above may be interwoven, with their variations and nuances, as well as additional personal motives and preferences. These may even include quite selfish or self-serving considerations, which may be unfavorable for the person's own spiritual growth, yet still prove beneficial to other living beings. For instance, one who refrains from meat solely in order to rid the body of some ailment does not thereby advance in spiritual development; yet such a decision indirectly reduces the suffering of animals raised for slaughter, since it lowers the demand for them. And if the individual in question happens to be the owner of such animals — a cattle-breeder, for example — his decision may even prolong or save a number of lives.

The life of every human being is so individual and unique, and the experience required for our growth so unpredictable, that at times even what seems harmful may turn out to be useful. Yet let us leave such paradoxes to the intuition of the reader, for they concern only particular cases. Here we shall attempt instead to discern the universal laws, which are more constant and predictable, and therefore easier to trace and to comprehend.

Let us attempt to consider the question of vegetarianism in the broadest possible sense. We shall try to trace the fundamental premises underlying this phenomenon, and determine to what extent it is justified and reasonable, how far it accords with evolution, with the structure of the universe, and with the development of society. To this end, let us approach the subject by moving from the universal to the particular, so that by understanding how the world is constituted we may discover within it the most fitting and *beneficial* place and mode of action — one that serves both ourselves and the whole.

We shall begin with the theoretical aspect of the issue, starting from the widest perspective, then proceed to examine certain details, and finally conclude with practical advice and suggestions more directly related to daily life. Many people, in their impatient desire for quick results, tend to avoid theory and general reflection. Yet if we wish our lives to be *conscious* and *integrated*, we must form a clear picture of how the world is structured, what laws have led us to our present condition, and what consequences may follow from our choices and ways of living. With such an understanding, many of our questions and doubts will simply dissolve; choices will become easier and clearer, and life less chaotic and unpredictable.

Moreover, in accordance with the law of analogy — which affirms universal interconnection and mutual interpenetration — we shall find, in the course of our reflections, that while considering the subject of diet we are led, in a

remarkable way, to answers regarding other questions not directly related to diet — questions arising from entirely different spheres of life and activity.

Following the principle of "from the universal to the particular", let us begin by examining the foundations of the world's structure, with special regard to the emergence within it of various objects and living beings.

The One Element

First of all, it must be borne in mind that, according to the theosophical worldview, the entire diversity of our world is built from countless combinations of a single primordial element, manifesting in polar states and qualities: energy and matter, above and below, positive and negative, and so forth. On the physical plane this element may readily be discerned in hydrogen — the lightest and simplest of all chemical elements — where matter is represented by the atomic nucleus, consisting of a single proton, and energy by the electronic shell, consisting of a single electron.[1]

All the remaining chemical elements are but more complex variations of this simplest structure. From them are formed molecules, cells, organs, and living organisms. On the one hand, we can observe the widest possible differentiation, for, as the saying goes, no two grains of sand are exactly alike. On the other hand, all this diversity is nothing but the manifold expressions of the one element.

Describing the emergence of diversity in a slightly different way, we may say that at the *first stage* there appears the single and unique element; at the *second*, it assumes polarity; at the *third*, a relation arises between the two poles, giving birth to an inner triadic cause; and at the *fourth*, from this triad proceeds the vast variety of our manifested sevenfold world. Yet at every stage of the world's evolution we must never lose sight of the idea of the one source. This principle is fundamental, and to a great extent determinative, for understanding all that we shall discuss hereafter.

An important consequence of recognizing the one element as the source of our existence and of all the diversity around us is the conclusion that all beings and phenomena in the world are interconected. In particular, this means that aggressive human behaviour inevitably transforms the environment into a more aggressive one. An unhealthy attitude toward Nature and its resources generates an unhealthy habitat for ourselves. We see water and air growing increasingly polluted, the soil becoming less fertile, relations between people more strained, wars more extensive, crimes more sophisticated — all of this is the result of a selfish and exploitative attitude toward the world.

In other words, the *interconnection* of all beings — if regarded as a static characteristic, conveying information about their common origin and inseparable bonds — manifests itself in *interdependence*, a dynamic characteristic of mutual influence, expressed on the level of processes and events. Every action of every being affects others; and the more developed the being, the greater its capacities, the wider the consequences of its actions, and correspondingly the greater its responsibility.

In Nature there is not a single event absolutely isolated: on the one hand, nothing occurs without leaving its reflection in the world; on the other, every event is itself the reflection of something else. This perspective is key to understanding the philosophy of vegetarianism, and thus all other aspects of the question should always be considered against its background.

The world exists and evolves through balanced interaction; therefore, whenever we disturb that balance by seeking *more than is truly needed*, the resources available to us inevitably begin to diminish. If we act with cruelty toward Nature and living beings — slaughtering animals, cutting down forests, burning fields, destroying mountains, polluting rivers the response will mirror our actions: we shall face devastating floods and earthquakes, droughts, and swarms of ravenous insects, harmful viruses, and bacteria.

No epidemic or pandemic is ever a merely mechanical occurrence; all such phenomena reflect our *collective* attitude toward the world. It is not an individual or a single group of people who create such situations, but the persistent tendency of humanity as a whole toward a consumerist way of life. Every catastrophe is shaped across many generations. Nor does it matter what countries displayed which level of civilization: it is the constant inclination of great numbers of people toward selfish thought and action that lays the foundation for largescale calamities.

In the end, we must come to realize and to feel ourselves integral parts of a single world. Integral also in the sense that, whenever we strike a blow, we must be prepared for the inevitable sensation of pain; for our body, like a cell of a much greater organism, is inseparably linked with all the other cells. Figuratively speaking, we share a common nervous system with all living beings.[2]

Kingdoms of Nature and Living Beings

The interaction among the kingdoms of Nature, particularly in terms of their mutual nourishment, was examined in detail in the article *Forms of Nourishment*. Here, however, let us look more deeply into the characteristics of each kingdom, which in a broader outline may be grouped into six:

elementals (energy) – minerals – plants – animals – human beings – gods.

In order to grasp the esoteric aspect of vegetarianism, a few words must be said about each of these kingdoms of Nature — what distinguishes them, what their purpose is, what their unique function may be, and what role they play in the greater process of evolution. Once this is understood, we shall be able to build more harmonious relationships with them and to conduct ourselves in a manner appropriate to our place within the eco-system of the universe.

Since all beings are interconnected, the existence of each one of us requires the participation of many others. This leads to such notions as cooperation, symbiosis, sacrifice, and self-sacrifice — but also to such notions as abuse, violence, and the like. Although the whole world subsists through sacrifice, we must not

exceed the limits of what is rightfully ours.

The common task of the development of all kingdoms of Nature is to reflect as fully as possible the qualities of consciousness *within* or *through* matter. Yet each kingdom creates its own special conditions for this purpose. The task of every being is to evolve without violating those conditions, without creating obstacles for itself, and *without hindering the evolution of others.*

Minerals do not die when passing from one organism into another. The life of the mineral kingdom rests upon the cohesion of atoms; therefore its death is not the alteration of chemical composition, but the disintegration of the elements themselves. In this sense, an atomic explosion may be called the destruction of a being from the mineral kingdom. Yet no matter how finely we break coal, it remains coal in every fragment; likewise silver may be divided, cast into various shapes, and later remelted to form other alloys, but in all such cases it remains silver. This is because within the mineral kingdom no definite astral form yet exists.

As the fundamental and first kingdom upon the *physical* plane, it is destined to reflect and provide the building elements for the appearance and growth of all the kingdoms that follow. The "body" of a mineral is the chemical element of Mendeleev's periodic table, while its analogue of death may be seen in processes that bring about the disappearance or transformation of an element — for example, radioactive decay or synthesis within the stars.

Taking these features into account, we may conclude that when we consume minerals as food, we do not destroy them but merely rearrange their combinations.

Vegetables. A distinctive feature of the vegetable kingdom is that not every fruit gives life to a new plant, nor does every shoot mature into an adult plant. The greater part simply decays or withers. If we could recognize the fruits that would never yield offspring, and if we restricted ourselves to eating only these, our karma might be eased. More likely, however, in the light of the idea of the One Life — which affirms that all processes and beings are interconnected — we may suppose that the processes of producing all kinds of fruits and of nourishing all kinds of beings are synchronized. In this way, the fruits that remain uneaten are given a greater chance to sprout and reach maturity.

Another characteristic of the plant is that it is always growing. This order of beings has an astral body that remains in a formative stage, not yet assuming the definite and fixed outlines that will appear later in the animal kingdom. This trait enables plants to: (1) quickly restore lost parts (regeneration); (2) exclude certain parts from the life process by shedding leaves or layers of bark, drying up branches or roots, and so forth. Thus, when we eat a plant, we do not truly kill it, for it continues to grow from its roots, branches, or stems, restoring the portions that were consumed. Indeed, the very mode of reproduction of *fruit-bearing* plants consists in their fruits being eaten, so that the seeds may be carried to other places.

As individualization in the vegetable

kingdom is not yet developed, the vital or animating energy can freely flow from one form to another. For example, several trunks, stems, or shoots may grow from a single root. We may perceive them as separate entities, but in reality they constitute a single being. If one stem withers or is cut off, the plant continues to live and to develop by sending forth another.

Thus, in view of these characteristics of the vegetable kingdom, we may say that Nature itself provides a mechanism of nourishment whereby the use of another being to maintain one's own vitality does not involve us in a violation of equilibrium or of interspecies balance.

Animals. Compared with plants, animals possess only a very limited capacity for restoring tissues and members: lost limbs do not regenerate (except in certain primitive species, which bear witness to their recent transition from the vegetable kingdom). This is because the evolutionary task of this kingdom is already of another kind: they must develop organs of perception and the nervous system.

Blood holds a special importance in the killing and consumption of an animal. It embodies the life-principle on the physical plane and therefore possesses a distinctive transcendental quality: the capacity to serve as a bridge between the gross and the ethereal worlds — the physical and the astral. As H. P. Blavatsky stated in one of the meetings of her Inner Group,[3] the "white corpuscles. . . are oozed out of the Linga-Sarîra and are of the same essence as itself", while the red corpuscles "are the progeny of the Fohatic principle". This transcendental character of blood accounts for the various rites of bloody sacrifice.

It should be remembered, however, that blood represents the life-principle only in the *grosser* spheres and serves as a link with the *lower* astral regions. In higher worlds the life-principle is expressed through *light*, and those who seek to approach the *higher* powers turn to this source. This understanding gave rise to corresponding practices and cults. Some worship the Sun and fire as sources of light, while others turn to bloody idols. No doubt, ignorance may so confuse the concepts that even the Sun is made the object of bloody sacrifice. But this only testifies to a failure to perceive the difference between these sources of life — or, in the case of those who did perceive it, to a misuse of their knowledge.

Because of its transcendental property, blood possesses a special magnetism that attracts various lower entities. This exerts an influence on human well-being and, ultimately, upon psychic and mental health, and not infrequently upon physical health as well. Frenzy and the loss of reason on the battlefield are examples of such an influence, which, in the larger view, amount to a certain degree of possession.

Returning to the question of diet, it should be added that although meat-eaters in most cases do not themselves kill the animals, the transcendental and magnetic properties of blood remain unchanged and continue to affect them. Moreover, the slain animal, like the human being, lingers for a time in its ethereal body and accompanies the remnants of its physical body until their complete dissolution, mingling its animal eman-

ations with the aura of the person who consumes them. This point will be cosidered in greater detail below.

Human beings. The distinctive feature of the human kingdom is thought; and it is precisely on this level that we can be of greatest service both to one another and to the universe. Thought may be lofty or base, practical or abstract. In general terms, we may say that we nourish one another through the soul, through fellowship and mutual support; we sustain one another psychically; we uphold one another morally; and we enrich one another intellectually. Just as with physical food, human interaction may be wholesome or it may be poisonous. With some people we feel inspired and do not wish to part; with others, we prefer not to linger. From human contact we may be uplifted and encouraged, or we may be poisoned. One may even hunger for communication, or conversely, be surfeited with it to the point of aversion.

In the context of nourishment, and following the principle of what is necessary and sufficient, we ought to shape our communication so as to be content with only that which is essential for our existence and growth — without overindulgence, without monopolizing the attention of others, without abusing their patience or courtesy, without draining their time and strength (that is, without "vampirizing" them in the broader sense). In short, we must cultivate within ourselves the virtue of modesty.

What has been said above concerns *our own* nourishment. With regard to how *others* are nourished by us, the same principle of modesty should be applied: we should not impose ourselves or our ideas on anyone, nor should we attempt to indoctrinate others or force our values upon them. Just as we take from others only what we are able to assimilate, so others will take from us only what they are capable of digesting. Mental and psychic indigestion are very real and widespread phenomena.

Thus nourishment at the human level also takes place on several planes of being. In the extreme case there is even nourishment on the physical plane, when human beings consume human flesh — whether directly, as in cannibalism, or indirectly, in medicines that contain human tissue. Such practices, however, are exceptional and testify only to ignorance and the abuse of natural powers. We, for our part, will confine ourselves to those forms of nourishment in which we remain within the bounds of our humanity and feed one another without transgressing the laws of Nature.

Elementals and Gods. In the article, *Forms of Nourishment*, mention was already made of the special characteristics of elementals and gods. From the esoteric standpoint it may be added that these two kingdoms are for us entirely esoteric, for they lie *beyond the reach of the physical senses* and can be perceived only through the awakening of our subtler principles. Both kingdoms manifest on the physical plane only indirectly. We must be sufficiently attentive and observant if we are to discern the traces of their presence.

From this characteristic it follows that

the consumption of physical food has no direct relevance to them. Here the key factor is the moral dimension: our motivations, desires, and thoughts are what build the "food chains" between our kingdoms. On this level we feed and sustain one another.

Elementals. In the context of nourishment it should be noted that the role of the elementals lies in the creation of all material forms on the physical plane. Whatever our diet may be, all food is the result of the work of the elementals; it is through them that molecules and cells are formed and that the bodies of plants and animals develop. We do not consume the elementals themselves, yet they permeate our bodies and compose them; in this sense it may be said that they sustain us.

On the other hand, our thought activity provides for them a medium of nourishment and a means of existence. They are quickened by our thoughts, endowed with power, and set in motion. We are not the only beings who give them life, but we are among those who do.

Gods. As for the kingdom of the gods, we can only surmise the nature of their true being, for this is the next stage of our evolution — one for which we must long prepare ourselves, learn much, and acquire a deeper understanding of the structure of the universe. With regard to nourishment, we may recall the saying that no fish is caught in the fisherman's net without the gods' permission. This does not mean, of course, that the gods are concerned with every detail of our daily lives, but it does suggest that they represent the forces that organize all processes both *around* and *within* us.

The gods nourish us with *meanings*, *insights*, and *illuminations* — in other words, with spiritual food. And perhaps we, in turn, nourish them with our *higher* aspirations and *selfless* thoughts. As we grow and mature, our needs for nourishment also change. As infants we are fed with milk; then our teeth emerge and we are able to take solid food; later the mind develops and requires intellectual nourishment; and finally we come to realize that "man shall not live by bread alone",[4] and a hunger awakens for a subtler sustenance — the search for truth and the meaning of life. This is conscious interaction with the divine world.

(To be Continued)

Endnotes

1. The infinite divisibility of the atomic nucleus is of no relevance in this context, since the simplest stable element remains the hydrogen atom. Likewise, the number of neutrons in the nucleus — determining the isotopes of a chemical element — is also irrelevant here, for all isotopes are but variations of a single element.

2. See the article "Coronavirus — A Remedy for Aggression" (MTT 2020–1), where this interdependence is examined in greater detail.

3. *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*. Vol. 12. Instruction No. V, p. 700.

4. According to the Gospel of Matthew (4:4), Jesus gave the following reply to the devil, who had urged Him to turn stones into bread: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." This symbolizes not only the refusal to perform useless miracles, but also points to the necessity of nourishment on different levels.

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Adyar

***Theme:* "One World, One Life: The Spirit of a New Humanity"**

31 December 2025 to 4 January 2026

CONVENTION PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 30 December 2025

8.30 am	GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING of the TS, *GC members only*
3.00 pm	LIGHT CEREMONY, Order of the Round Table

Wednesday, 31 December 2025

8.30 am	OPENING OF THE 150TH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION Lighting the Lamp, Prayers of the Religions, Universal Prayer, Greetings Invocation and opening by the International President
9.30 am	PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AND TS REPORT OF 2024-2025 Tim Boyd, *International President, TS Adyar*
3.00 pm	RECEPTION
5.00 pm	PUBLIC LECTURE "Looking Through the Window of Eternity" Shikhar Agnihotri, *International Speaker, TS India, Resident at Adyar*
7.45 pm	RITUAL OF THE MYSTIC STAR

Thursday, 1 January 2026

8.30 am	SHORT LECTURES "One Life, Many Paths" Catalina Isaza-Cantor, *International Speaker, TS Colombia, Resident at Adyar* "A Timeless Message" Robert Beland, *Organizing Secretary, TS Canada*
10.00 am	INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION — I Inaugural Address Tim Boyd, *International President, TS Adyar* "State of The Indian Section Address" Pradeep Gohil, *President, Indian Section* Treasurer's Report V. Narayanan, *Treasurer, Indian Section*

3.00 pm	WORKSHOP — I "Peace in Action: A Theosophical Approach to Service and Self-Awareness" *TS Philippines Team*: Charlton "Chally" Jules P. Romero, Saturnina "Bebot" S. Rodil, Rekha Nahar,*TS Philippines, TOS Assistant International Secretary*, Emily Zen Chua WORKSHOP — II "Education for Life: Seeds of Gratitude" Sonal Murali, *Director, Adyar Theosophical Academy* WORKSHOP — III "Embodied Unity: Experiencing the Hidden Energies of the Self" *World Federation of Young Theosophists*: Bethan Vaughan, Tobia Buscaglione, Sharayu Wagdeo and Elmer Overdevest WORKSHOP — IV "The Living Experience in *The Voice of the Silence* — SOW seminar" Erica Georgiades, *General Secretary, TS Greece*
5.00 pm	PUBLIC LECTURE "Adyar Chronicles: The Living Heart of the Theosophical Society" Geetha Jaikumar, *Researcher, Surendra Narayan Archives, TS Adyar*
7.45 pm	EVENING CULTURAL PROGRAM "Ekam sat, Anant Aayami" — One Truth, Infinite Expressions Rahul Varshney, Odissi Nritya Sadhak

Friday, 2 January 2026

8.30 am	DEVOTIONAL MEETING Chandrika Mehta, *TS India*
10.00 am	DIALOGUE "Preparing for a New Humanity" Tim Boyd, *International President, TS Adyar* Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, *General Secretary, TS France*
11.00 am	THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE (TOS) "The Role of Service in Shaping the Future" Rekha Nahar, *TS Philippines, Assistant International Secretary, TOS* "Being Humanity" Nancy Secrest, *TOS International Secretary, TS USA* *TS International Treasurer, Resident at Adyar*
3.00 pm	WORKSHOP — I "Peace in Action: A Theosophical Approach to Service and Self-Awareness" *TS Philippines Team*: Charlton "Chally" Jules P. Romero, Saturnina "Bebot" S. Rodil, Rekha Nahar, Emily Zen Chua

WORKSHOP — II
"Education for Life: One Heart and Interbeing"
Sonal Murali, *Director, Adyar Theosophical Academy*

WORKSHOP — III
"Embodied Unity: Experiencing the Hidden Energies of the Self"
World Federation of Young Theosophists: Bethan Vaughan, Tobia Buscaglione, Sharayu Wagdeo and Elmer Overdevest

WORKSHOP — IV
"The Living Experience in *The Voice of the Silence* — SOW seminar"
Erica Georgiades, *General Secretary, TS Greece*

5.00 pm — BESANT LECTURE
Nirmala Seetharaman
Finance Minister, Government of India

7.45 pm — "ONE FIRE — 150 Years of Theosophy", Documentary by the TS
Director: Terhi Ahava, *TS Finland, Resident in Germany*

Saturday, 3 January 2026

8.30 am — WATER CEREMONY
Fátima Martin, *TS Spain, Resident at Adyar*

10.00 am — INDIAN SECTION CONVENTION — II
"Reach Within to Embrace the Unity of Life"
(1) K. M. Vanishree: "Serve Humanity by Realizing Unity of Life"
(2) Ananya Pati: "Perceive Life Which Is Within and Without"
(3) Sharayu Wagdeo: "Will Embracing Unity of Life Help in Transforming Our Society"
(4) Shree Hari Varma: "How Love and Compassion Help to Realise the Unity of Life"
(5) Shobha Prakash: "Seek the Truth by Retreating Within"

3.00 pm — CONVERSATION
"ART, THEOSOPHY, AND ADYAR"
Chair: Elif Kamisli, *TS Turkey*
Christine Ödlund and Fredrik Söderholm, *Artists, Sweden*

5.00 pm — THEOSOPHY-SCIENCE LECTURE
"Being, Consciousness, and the Future in an AI-Driven World"
Sangeetha Menon
Professor, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, India

7.45 pm — MEMBERS TALENT SHOW
Artistic Sharing by the Delegates
Vinay Patri, Moderator, *TS India*

Sunday, 4 January 2026

8.30 am	Conversation and Q&A "Let's Talk" Chair: Tim Boyd, *International President, TS Adyar*
10.30 am	Renovation Update "Eleven Years of Changes at the Adyar Campus" Report by Michiel Haas, *Professor, Sustainable Architecture TS the Netherlands* Followed by discussion with Tim Boyd, *International President*
2.00 pm	Admission of New Members
3.00 pm	Mini-Talks (1) "Inner Unity and Healing for Future Humanity" Svyatoslav Lipsky, *Organizing Secretary, TS Russia* (2) "*Vāsanā* and the World We Inhabit" James Madaio, *Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences* (3) "The All Prevading ONENESS" N. C. Krishna, *International and National Speaker, TS India*
5.00 pm	Public Lecture by the President "What's New? A Question Worth Asking" Tim Boyd, *International President, TS Adyar*
6.00 pm	Closing of the Convention

Other Activities

Daily at 6.00 am

1. Puja at Bharata Samaja Temple
2. Yoga at Blavatsky Bungalow
3. Prime at Liberal Catholic Church

Visits

1. Social Welfare Centre
2. Adyar Theosophical Academy
3. Olcott Memoral Higher Secondary School

Exhibitions

1. "Deck of Cards: Homage to H. P. Blavatsky"
   Art Conservation Laboratory
2. "100 Years Legacy", *Blavatsky Museum of Arts*
3. "Through Time's Lens: 150 Years of the Theosophical Society"
   Surendra Narayan Archives
4. "Echoes from the Shelves: Lesser-Known Works of Theosophical Leaders"
   Library Display Room

Fragments of the Ageless Wisdom

Question: "Sir Oliver Lodge says he has proofs that the individuality of a person survives intact after death and can be communicated with. Is this so?"

G. de Purucker:

A theosophist would answer this, Yes and No. It is a fact that the individuality of the human being survives intact after death, but it cannot be communicated with. The individuality is the spirit; its realm is the spiritual world; and once death releases it from its enchainment in the body, once the golden cord of life is snapped, like a winged spark of divinity it takes its rise into the spaces and has no more contact with earth — particularly not with the sensuous minds of human beings — than it had before it entered a human body in the last incarnation, drawn back by what we call karma.

All that survives the physical body and that can be communicated with, is what we call the "spook", the astral remnants of the man that was: all the lower part of his intermediate constitution, all that is material and sensuous and small and materialistic, remains in the atmosphere of the earth, where it undergoes slow decay, just as the body in the grave does, unless it be cremated.

But the spirit wherein resides the individuality is deathless, immortal, unstained and cannot be touched. There is the outline of our theosophical teaching, and you can have the whole matter developed, if you are interested in this point of study, by reading our theosophical books.

I do not want to hurt anybody's feelings — I have had many good friends among the spiritists — but I am not here to refrain from telling you what the theosophical teaching is; that is my present duty. Communications occasionally do come from something. Read them; and if you think that any eternal, immortal, deathless spirit can give utterance to such claptrap, then in my opinion you certainly lack in judgment. Most of it is plain piffle that would shame the average human incarnated being to duplicate. Read these so-called communications; mark their lack of intellectual force, their utter lack of spiritual impersonality: they are simply like squirrel wheels so to say, going the rounds over and over again of everything that the human did and knew on earth, which remain impressed on the astral image as astral impulses. These poor astral remnants are automatic; they can do nothing else than to repeat like

phonographs that which was impressed on the astral substance of the astral being which remains in the astral world.

It is blasphemous to suppose that the deathless individuality, the spiritual man of us, is subject to the call and interference of human beings, after this individuality has left our sphere. Think the matter over; think of the philosophic, think of the ethical, aspect of the thing.

Now, our spiritistic friends are in most cases sincere and kind-hearted people, earnestly and devoutly believing that they have the truth. But, immortal gods! sincerity and devotion and an aching heart are not enough to insure proofs of *post-mortem* communication. People are all too ready to accept what they want to believe. We love the memory of our dead, and in the cases of many lonely human hearts, when words come to us and claims reach us from somewhere (we know not where) that so-and-so is "on the line", unless we know better and have time to think and to analyze, how the heart of us jumps, leaps in gladness, and we say: Proofs of immortality!

Immortality? Immortal gods! Give me annihilation if such stuff comes from an immortal being! Glad to pass out in utter annihilation as a man, than to live, after the physical body is dead and broken up, uttering such unspeakable trash! Never has a thing of value been so communicated. Sometimes there are not even the first elements of grammar in these communications thus received. The mental squirrel wheel of the man that was, the lower, personal brain-mind impressions in these communications, are run like a phonographic record. . . .

Examine the matter along the lines that I have pointed out, and if you are satisfied, it is your choice. As regards proofs, what is proof? Proof exists according to the faculty of your own intelligence, its power of weighing evidence and its ability to abide by a preponderance thereof; but another man will take the same factors in the equation that you have studied, and will withdraw therefrom an utterly different answer. In the one case it is proof to you; in the other case the diametrically opposite deduction is proof to him.

Proof is merely what you believe to be a preponderance of evidence, as you interpret it. What we theosophists want is not proof; we want Truth: something which does not depend upon the judgment of the brain-mind resting on a so-called preponderance of evidence, but that quick and instant intuition of the human soul, of the human heart, that this or that is truth, and having this, then we test it by the experience of time.

Gottfried de Purucker (1874–1942) was head of the TS in Pasadena, California, from 1929 until his death. From *Questions We All Ask*, vol. III, pp. 651–52.

Theosophical Work around the World

Reflections on the TSEW Convention

The TS England and Wales Section held its 2025 Summer Convention on "Living a Spiritual Life in Challenging Times", in Swanwick, Derbyshire. The National President, Jenny Baker, has sent Tuanne Mac's (2nd photo on p. 39 of this issue) reflections on the Convention:

I attended the conference last year and somehow, this year was even better. It started with a delicious buffet dinner while meeting my fellow theosophists and I felt instantly at home.

Mindful Meals and Morning Rambles

The food had considerably improved since last year and there were plenty of healthy and delicious options. To compensate for my increased daily intake, I managed to get away in the mornings for an early walk and jog, exploring the footpaths and the numerous fields that surround the centre. This year all the talks took place in a smaller room, rather than an echoey stage, which created a more intimate atmosphere as if among friends.

Sacred Geometry and the Wisdom of Symbols

The talks were well organised with some standouts in particular from Pamela El-Hosaini who produced a riveting workshop on "Sacred Geometry" that spanned two days. We covered a wealth of material including the original human 12-strand DNA, the initiations that took place within the pyramids, the Platonic solids, the significance of the dodecahedron, the hexagon evident as the building block in insect nests as well as the cells of a fertilised egg, and the infinite fractal zoom of the Mandelbrot set. Truly, computer modelling has helped us to visually understand abstract mathematics and it was my favourite workshop of the year. It is clear that the secret of sacred geometry does not reveal itself instantly. It cannot be accessed purely through intellectual, linear means. This is where meditation by the higher mind can help.

The Blavatsky Lecture

Wayne Gatfield led the headline Blavatsky lecture, "Living a Spiritual Life in Challenging Times", sharing with us excerpts of poetry by Rumi and quotes on nurturing love and compassion within ourselves and others. A reminder for us to slow down and see the beauty in ourselves and one another, during these trying times.

Meditation, Movement, and Inner Stillness

The short morning and evening meditations were incredibly calming, and the resonance that arose in the group setting only amplified the serenity. I attended the early *qi-gong* session along with a dozen others, led by Terri King. The different movements helped shake off blocked energy and set us up for the day.

From Platonic Solids to Paper Models

I was delighted to take part in the geo-

metric block building session also led by Terri. The icosahedron was tricky to glue together, however I had much better success with the cube and took both my trophies home to dwell upon further.

AI and the Digital Blavatsky

The topic of AI was led by Andrew Swaffield, who drew upon ChatGPT to conjure up a digital Madame Blavatsky. During this live session, he asked a number of questions, sharing the results on the large screen. The only requirement was that the response came in the style of Blavatsky. Was this the digital equivalent of a modern Andrew Swaffield seance? I asked myself. Where it did fall down was when the conjured AI personalities of Buddha and Jesus cited the term Theosophy in their responses. An anachronism clearly, and a reminder that AI responses will be tailored to whatever the user wishes to hear, not necessarily what is factually correct. Still, the results provided much food for thought.

Evening Entertainment

On the first night, the evening entertainment was thoughtfully provided by tech and sound engineer extraordinaire, Damon. A video montage was played, ranging from classical to Paul Simon to inspirational life journeys. A mini documentary showing the impact of reintroducing wolves to Yellowstone Park was an eye-opener, as we watched the ecosystem flourish and rebalance itself. The following evening, Neville Crofts delighted us with an uplifting music montage including singers such as acapella choral group Voce 8, closing with a wickedly funny French parody by Kenneth Williams.

Quantum Truths and Cosmic Beginnings

One of the closing talks was led by the excellent Petra Meyers whose slides and talk on "Cosmogenesis" were incredibly well researched and left me scribbling away with notes to follow up on. We sat stationary in the room even as we deep-dived into the world of quantum mechanics.

The Book Table Temptation

Of course, what conference would be complete without picking up a few books from the table sale? Even though I had vowed not to add any more to my vast book collection, I spied a copy of Gurdjieff's *Meetings with Remarkable Men* which had been on my wish list for a while. I congratulated myself as the proud new owner after handing over the princely sum of four pounds!

A Soul-Enriching Experience

In short, the 2025 summer conference was the highlight of my year and the memories will nourish me until the next one. It was a very well-balanced four days that touched upon the topics of karma, compassion, poetry, sacred geometry, and quantum physics. I can only express my deepest thanks to the wonderful souls who attended and shared their wisdom and most of all to the hard-working people who helped make this happen — President Jenny Baker, Andrea and Damon.

Surrounded by good friends and enriched by good food, the theosophical conference was a unique blend of philosophy, science, and revelation. I found it joyful, uplifting, and inspirational, and I came away feeling energised and blessed. Coming together reminds us that we are not alone in our progress along the Way.✧

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