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Cover: A painting on a hanging scroll, it is the copy of a famous painting 750 years old, in the temple of Enryakuji of Mt Hier near Kyoto, Japan. It represents Buddha Shakyamuni with Manjushri, Samantabhadra, and other guardian Bodhisattvas. It was a gift sent to Adyar by Beatrice Lane Suzuki from Japan, and is now in the Blavatsky Museum of Arts, TS Adyar.

This journal is the official organ of the President, founded by H. P. Blavatsky on 1 Oct. 1879. The Theosophical Society is responsible only for official notices appearing in this journal.

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.

Knowledge and Experience

TIM BOYD

IN gatherings devoted to the inner life, we have a precious opportunity: to turn together toward a single purpose. In a world of fragmentation and dispersion, we enter a space consciously dedicated to inward exploration. This is true whether we are speaking, writing, listening, or studying alone. Over decades, even generations, the places where such activity occurs become magnetized by one's aspiration, quiet, and contemplation. The atmosphere itself becomes a silent collaborator in our search.

One of the things that we seek in these settings is knowledge. Though "knowledge" seems to be a simple word, it conceals layers of meaning. It is everything from a random collection of facts to highly refined disciplines of observation. From science to philosophy, religion to agriculture, architecture to dentistry, humanity has developed arrays of knowledge. All of them are rooted in observation: the sun shines, rain falls, seeds germinate. From such simple observations entire sciences arise, pointing the way to endless depths of study and graded levels of complexity.

Even though, at least in English, we use the same word, sacred knowledge is not the same. It is a different realm. In Sanskrit a variety of words are used when referring to the knowledge that relates to spirit and the inner life. "The Golden Stairs" of H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) refers to keeping "a constant eye to the ideal of human progression and perfection which the ***secret science*** depicts". *Gupta-vidya* is the Sanskrit term for this "secret science" — secret, or esoteric, not because of someone's effort to conceal it, but because it is "hidden" beyond the reach of intellect and the normal working of the mind. Other terms such as *ātma-vidya* and *brahma-vidya* express deepening states of a knowledge that bears no resemblance to the forms with which we are familiar. It cannot be written or expressed in words, even though the attempt must be made; neither can it be learned, but given the right conditions it can and does become active within us. For clarity's sake, many use the word "wisdom" for this supramental, spirit-based "knowledge".

The words of wisdom, symbols, and wisdom stories shared by the great mystics and seers are powerful, but only if we can release the hidden potency locked in enigmatic myths, legends, and designs. When approached as a mental or emotional commodity, or as historical fact, wisdom remains inaccessible. There is something we must bring to it, some catalytic agent that dissolves the shell

of form and frees the hidden life — a quality of awareness that begins by pointing our attention in the direction of an interior reality, then focusing our will toward the persevering effort required to reveal it, and finally merging with the radiant, unveiled "hidden splendour". It is an awareness that translates itself into an actual experience, beyond theory, beyond mere knowledge. Knowledge and experience, though related, are different in important ways.

In some meditation traditions there is a recommended twofold approach. On the one hand there is what is described as "analytical meditation". In this approach the teachings of the particular wisdom tradition are examined. As in any analytical process the intellect is brought to bear on it. It is questioned, taken apart, put back together, related to other knowledge and experience, and extended to its possible limits. An example would be some of the introductory teachings related to death and dying.

In Buddhist tradition it is thought that a whole-hearted embrace and involvement in authentic spiritual practice requires a clear-eyed awareness of the fact of impermanence. Here the student is asked to deeply consider three things.

1. Death is certain; 2. The time of death is uncertain; and 3. A question: At the time of death what will be of value to you? So, for example, we first ask ourselves, Is it true? Does everyone die? Who do we know who has not? We analyze until we reach some satisfactory conclusion, then move on the second statement and repeat the process. Having satisfied ourselves of their correctness, we are prepared to explore the question, which is really the point of the whole exercise.

So we ask: Is there something I own that will help me at the time of dying? Cars, homes, bank accounts, all material things are being left behind, so not that. What about friends and relatives? The same answer holds true. Having gone through the various levels of analysis what these traditions assert is that the only thing of value at this moment is our spiritual experience, which is to say not merely what we have heard or studied, but those experiences, even momentary, of release from the confines of the body and personality into the more expansive freedom of a consciousness linked to a higher life. This assertion we also analyze.

This cycle of analysis could seem to be unending, but if rightly approached, it reaches a point where analysis reaches its limits and cannot take you any farther. Then, depending on our preparation and vigilance, we experience it as either a wall or a doorway. All of our analysis creates the need, and supplies the conditions for "concentrated" meditation. In the course of our analysis of ever higher, less material, states of being the capacities of the intellect are stretched. There is only so much that is unspeakable, unseen, and mentally unknowable that the mind can take. During the course of that process, moments occur when intellect can reach its limit and falls silent. The ability to remain undistracted, poised, concentrated on the moment, and still, is the need as such moments occur — to simply "be", unmoved by the mind's craving for more

topics to examine or pathways to pursue.

This is the point where the possibility of genuine spiritual experience presents itself, but only if we are sufficiently attentive, vigilant, and prepared to see and welcome it. For example, we could say that the analytical part is a lot like walking on a path through a dense forest. As we walk, we reach a point where the forest opens up to a clearing. In that space it is open to the sky, to the sun. Entering this open space, the location where the path continues on the other side of the clearing is not apparent. In this clear and open space we have some options; we can ignore the opening and keep our eyes on the ground, searching for the place where the path we have been traveling resumes; we can sit down in the open field and examine the flowers, insects, and qualities of the soil; or we can let go of analyzing, accumulating, even thinking, and simply rest, absorb, "be".

The difficulty for many is that such pregnant moments can go by unnoticed. There is none of the excitement, emotion, struggle, or effort that accompany other high points in our lives. If anything, the apparent absence of familiar touchpoints can be disturbing, even frightening. At its fringes it can seem to be a void, challenging to anyone invested in the binding familiarity of normal experience. The problem we face was addressed by J. Krishnamurti when he made the statement, "One is never afraid of the unknown. One is afraid of the known coming to an end", and that fear can be blinding.

Often, when describing their deepest spiritual experiences, the great saints and seers use the word "fear". Though similar in many ways to what we might describe as fear, their experience is different. In the Bible the statement is made that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." It would be safe to say that this fear is not the same as our fear of snakes, spiders, economic downturns, and so on.

The "fearful" experiences of the sages result from a proximity to the source of power, to the reality-shaking presence of Truth, Wisdom, God. Again from the Bible, in Psalms, there is a passage that says: "He (the Lord) utters his voice and the earth melts." It is the author's description of the effect of "hearing" the voice of an interior divinity that had been hidden to him. Essentially, the known melts. Only then can we experience the reality that lies beyond our senses, emotions, and thought. Only then do the words, symbols, and stories of the great teachers become real for us.

The *Bhagavad Gitā* is a short book — eighteen chapters in total. It is one of the inexhaustible founts of spiritual wisdom given to us. As a conversation between a human being, Arjuna, and the incarnation of the Divine, Krishna, it is relatable. Of course, Arjuna was no ordinary human being. In the *Gitā* he symbolizes that rare individual who is genuinely ready for truth, who has reached a point where he is open to receive. All of its chapters, except one, address the nature of the universe, the path of action, the qualities (*gunas*) of the manifested universe,

the nature of Yoga, and so forth. Chapter 11 is very different because it describes the experience of Arjuna. Previously he had regarded Krishna as his exceptional friend and his charioteer. However, at this point in the *Gitā*, Arjuna has become fully convinced that Krishna is nothing less than the incarnation of the Divine, and he asks for something: Can I see you in your true divine form?

When Krishna agrees to grant him this boon that has never before been done, he presents himself in his "omnipotent form". The vision that Arjuna sees causes the hairs on his body to stand on end from the mixture of awe, ecstasy, and fear. In the *Gitā* the details of what he sees are described — Krishna with thousands of arms, with eyes looking in all directions, with a body that contains all the Devas and the Asuras, with mouths into which the people in the ensuing battle are already flying and being crushed, with a brilliance so bright it is "burning up universes". Ultimately it proves to be more than Arjuna can stand, and he asks Krishna to tone it down, to reduce his form to something less fearful.

Though not our experience, it is an indication of the vastness and all-inclusiveness of our divine potentials. Our moments of open awareness do not yet allow for this level of vision, but whether it is as Krishna says, "I am the inner ruler immortal, present in the hearts of all beings", or the words of the Christ that "I and the Father are one", the sense is the same. Our deepest divine nature is always present and accessible. The experience of having a moment of awareness, in which, for some reason, the obstacles that had previously prevented it fade, even if momentarily, is only different in its degree of depth from the experience of Arjuna. The only thing that prevents its realization is our unwillingness to let go of the objects, titles, activities, and thoughts we cherish.

In some Asian spiritual traditions, there is a story called "The Monkey Trap". Whether it is the most effective method for trapping a monkey is not clear, but it illustrates a point. The trap is a jar or coconut containing food and staked to the ground. The opening is large enough for an open hand, but not for a fist. Once the monkey has reached in and grabbed hold of the food, the hunter captures him because he is unwilling to open his hand, let go of the bait, and escape with his freedom.

The story is often told to address the enslaving nature of greed, but it applies equally to those habits of mind that keep us from the freedom and spiritual experience that comes with their release, even if momentary.

HPB described language as a "veil" — "a three dimensional shadow of a multi-dimensional reality". Until we allow for the experiences that give meaning to the stories and teachings passed down through the ages, they remain evocative, but incomplete. We require knowledge to point us in the right direction, to properly train the mind, and help us become sufficiently attentive and sensitive to inner states, but it is experience that makes it real. In the words of Albert Einstein: "Any fool can know. The point is to understand." ✧

Spirituality and Service: Foundations for a Better World

DEEPA PADHI

"LIBERTY is the keynote of the soul's growth", says Annie Besant, which reminds us that freedom is not merely political — it is spiritual, intellectual, and moral. Today as we gather for the Besant Lecture, we honour that great woman, whose life was a bridge between East and West, between science and spirituality, between reform and revolution. As we reflect on Annie Besant's legacy, let us remember that her life was not about theory alone — it was all about action.

The modern world today is defined by remarkable digital impact of Artificial Intelligence, technological progress, widespread access to information and global connectivity. In spite of these material achievements, most of the people experience stress, anxiety, loneliness and social isolation. Frequent changes in jobs, shifting of social norms, and technology are constantly shaping our daily life. Today's society measures success by wealth, productivity, and status. Despite being more digitally connected than ever, many people feel emotionally insecure.

It is in this context that the values of spirituality and service emerge not only as ideals but as urgent necessities. Spirituality, whether religious or non-religious has reemerged as an essential need. As we all know, spiritual practices such as meditation, prayer, and self-reflection activate a sense of resilience and peace. They quieten the mind that helps emotional balance as well.

Spirituality addresses the questions that technology cannot answer like "Who am I" ?, "Why am I here?", "What is the purpose of life?" Spirituality is knowing our true self. The physical body is not the self. Deep inside the physical form, there is the pure consciousness. Spirituality is about knowing: "I am not just a body; I am that pure consciousness". "I am the Universal self" — *aham brahmāsmi* — as Advaita Vedanta declares. Spirituality focuses on inner transformation, self-awareness, peace, connection with the higher self. It is Universal.

Service is the practical expression of spirituality. It means extending kindness, support, and resources to others without expecting anything in return.

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Besant Lecture delivered at the 150th International Convention, Adyar, on 3 January 2026.

Service does not mean spending a lot of money on others while helping. It can be as simple as listening to someone in distress or as significant as providing time, effort, and resources to uplift the underprivileged.

In the present times, people have access to more comforts than ever before, yet they feel emotionally drained, spiritually bankrupt, and also socially distanced. It is in this context that the values of spirituality and service emerge not only as ideals but as urgent necessities. Together they lead to inner harmony and social wellbeing.

Spirituality and service are crucial today because of rising mental and emotional stress, increasing social inequalities, lack of moral values and environmental crises.

Ordinarily people confuse spirituality with religion. Religion is community-based, while spirituality is individual-based. Spirituality is the practice of connecting more deeply with one's own self, with others, and with life itself. It is about meaning of life, awareness, compassion, and inner transformation. Spirituality is derived from the word "spirit", which means "inner self". It is therefore, knowing about one's own self. It is very much a human experience, not a religious one.

Of course, one should be aware of pseudospirituality which is spirituality used for satisfying the ego. True spirituality removes ego while pseudospirituality inflates it. Theosophy as true spirituality is the practice of deepening our consciousness, thoughts, emotions, values, and the life unfolding around us. It is about finding meaning in our everyday experiences, feeling more and more connected to people and serving them. It generates compassion, empathy, love, and kindness within us.

While spirituality and service are meaningful on their own, their power is multiplied when they work together. Spirituality without service can become self-centered, while service without spirituality may lead to a superiority complex. But when inner spiritual growth inspires our outward actions and outer actions reinforce inner growth, individuals transform into compassionate leaders, capable of lifting both themselves and society as well.

The world's greatest spiritualists like Annie Besant, Vivekananda, and others have always taught that inner transformation leads to outer transformation. As Sri Aurobindo had said, "All life is Yoga." Every moment is an opportunity to grow spiritually through patience, humility, honesty and love. Mahatma Gandhi expressed it beautifully. He said: "In a gentle way, you can shake the world."

This year's theme of the International Convention is "One World, One Life: The Spirit of a New Humanity". Spirituality and service are the pathways through which this spirit of new humanity can truly manifest.

Theosophy teaches that all life is one and that all humanity is spiritually interconnected. In Theosophy, spirituality means the inner realization of truth, wisdom and unity. It encourages indi-

viduals to look beyond material success and recognize their higher nature. Madame H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) explains, "Spirituality is the awakening of the inner self, the recognition of the divine essence in man." Theosophical teachings emphasize self-knowledge, moral discipline, compassion and the understanding that every human being is a spiritual soul evolving towards self-transformation. The Mission Statement of the Theosophical Society states: "To serve humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realization of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual self-transformation, and the unity of all life."

True spirituality is living with awareness, acting with compassion and thinking beyond one's own self. This spiritual awareness helps individuals overcome selfishness, hatred, and ignorance — qualities that cause suffering in a society as well as in the world. Annie Besant expressed this idea by saying: "Spiritual life is not a life apart from the world, but a life lived more deeply within." When people develop spirituality, they become more tolerant, peaceful, compassionate and understanding towards others. Annie Besant described spirituality as a "change in consciousness".

Theosophy strongly believes that service is the practical application of spirituality. Serving others is not done for any reward or recognition but out of compassion and a sense of duty towards humanity. Helping the poor, educating the ignorant, protecting Nature, and working for social justice are all considered sacred acts. Service purifies the mind and strengthens the feeling of Universal Brotherhood. According to Theosophy, spirituality and service are inseparable. Spirituality transforms the individual from within, while service transforms the society from without. Together they create the moral and ethical foundation needed for a better world. By living spiritually and serving selflessly, humanity can move closer to harmony, peace and inner progress.

Theosophy teaches that all life is one and that humanity is spiritually interconnected. From this point of view, Theosophy is not limited to personal belief, but is expressed through selfless service to others. We can say, it is a way of life expressed through selfless service. As Madame Blavatsky clearly states: "Theosophy is altruism, pure and simple."

True spiritual growth according to Theosophy, naturally leads to service and together, these two principles form the foundation of a harmonious world. In the words of Annie Besant: "The spiritual life is the life of unselfishness, of service, of devotion to humanity."

The foundation of Theosophy is expressed in its First Object: "To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, gender, caste or colour." This principle if truly lived, could transform the world. Theosophy teaches that humanity is one family, not just ethically but spiritually and also according to the law of Karma. As it is said, what affects one, affects all.

HPB wrote: "The whole world is under the law of mutual interdependence." In fact, brotherhood is a law of Nature. Students helping friends without any discrimination, communities supporting the marginalized, and so on, are examples of applied brotherhood, turning spirituality into a living reality.

Service is the natural expression of spirituality. It is not charity, but the recognition of oneness. The well-known spiritual teaching of Mahatma Gandhi is "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

Theosophical service includes sustainable living, education, respect for animals and ecological awareness. The Blue-Green centre, a garden developed by the Adyar Eco Development project in the Adyar campus which focuses on experiential environmental education for students and the Adyar Theosophical Academy for providing holistic education are the bright examples. In the context of education, one remembers J. Krishnamurti's words at the World University on 25 December 1925: "True education consists in training to serve, not for honours, not for self-glorification, not for recognition by the world, but for the sake of the work itself."

One of our cherished initiatives has been to educate the poorest of the poor girls in Odisha by offering them scholarships for five years each. This is a matching grant project with Italy for almost ten years. It is not merely a financial aid. It is an investment in human dignity, in the flowering of potential, and in the building of a better world.

Today, we rejoice in seeing the fruits of this effort. Some of these young women are now working as bankers, others as officers in the state administration. Some have joined leading companies such as Accenture and Bajaj Finance contributing to industry. Some others have become teachers, lecturers, and nurses, nurturing minds and healing bodies. And presently, two of them are medical students preparing to dedicate their lives to the service of health and humanity. Each of these lives is an example of the transformative power of service. These young women, once marginalized, now stand as pillars of strength contributing to the progress to a better world.

This reminds us of Annie Besant who was not only a spiritual leader but a champion of women's empowerment. Her struggle reminds us that true liberation is incomplete without the empowerment of women and her legacy continues to inspire movements for equality even today.

Sometimes the question arises: Why is service essential in Theosophy? The answer one can get from *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. The Mahatma KH wrote: "He who does not practise altruism, who does not work for others, is not a true Theosophist."

A key theosophical principle is selfless action, that is, service without desire for recognition or reward. The *Bhagavad Gitā*, which is highly respected in Theosophy, teaches: "*karmanyeva adhikāraste mā phaleshu kadāchana* — You have the right to perform your prescribed duty, but you have no right to the rewards of

the action ." Such service purifies our motives and strengthens inner peace.

The Law of Karma is central to Theosophy. It teaches that every thought, word, and action has its opposite effect. HPB explains in *The Secret Doctrine*: "Karma is the ultimate law of the universe, the source, the origin and fount of all other laws." When we serve others, we create positive Karma, reduce sufferings and accelerate our own spiritual growth.

Theosophy places compassion at the center of spiritual life. Madame Blavatsky writes in *The Voice of the Silence*: "Compassion is no attribute. It is the Law of laws — eternal harmony." This powerful statement reminds us that compassion is not weakness — it is Cosmic Law.

Compassion needs to be practised in daily life like listening without any judgement, forgiving instead of reacting, and helping without expecting anything in return. These are small acts, but when done consistently transform relationships and societies as well.

The young generation can practise service by volunteering, promoting kindness in schools, standing against discrimination, and helping in environmental protection. From a theosophical standpoint, youth are not "the leaders of tomorrow — they are the serving partners of today". Theosophy teaches that age is no barrier to spiritual responsibility. It teaches that the inner world shapes the outer world. Every kind thought, every selfless act, every effort to understand another human being is a step towards a better world.

The challenges of the 21st century demand more than just technical solutions. They require a shift in consciousness. Spirituality instills these values, and service expresses them. One does not need to be a saint or a social worker to live this ideal. Each one of us can bring spirituality and service into our daily life.

Spirituality and selfless service, together stand as pillars of human progress and form the foundations of a better world — a peaceful, compassionate and sustainable world which is the need of the times. Annie Besant did not separate meditation from action, nor wisdom from service. She showed us that the true measure of spirituality is how it uplifts others. In the present time of division and uncertainties, her legacy calls us to build a better world — where spirituality awakens us and service transforms society. ✧

The only journey is the one within.

Rainer Maria Rilke

Truth is Beyond All Views

PEDRO OLIVEIRA

THE expression, *satyāt nāsti paro dharma*, occurs several times in the *Mahabharata*. For example in 1.69.24:

> *nāsti satyātparo dharmo na satyādvidyate param |*
> *na hi tivrataram kimcidanṛtādiha vidyate ||*
>
> There is no dharma greater than truth. Nothing superior to truth exists.
> Indeed, nothing more severe than untruth is found here in this world.

Sometime towards the end of 1880, Col. H. S. Olcott paid a visit to the Maharaja of Benares. H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) joined him later on. During that visit, the Maharaja offered to the Founders of the Theosophical Society (TS) the use of his family motto: *Satyāt Nāsti Paro Dharma*, which they translated as "There is no religion higher than Truth". They adopted it as the motto of the TS, and it first appeared in the January 1881 issue of *The Theosophist*.

The word *dharma* has many different meanings:

- that which is established or firm, steadfast decree, statute, ordinance, law;
- usage, practice, customary observance or prescribed conduct, duty;
- right, justice (often as a synonym of punishment);
- virtue, morality, religion, religious merit, good works (holding to the law, doing one's duty);
- nature, character, peculiar condition or essential quality;
- doctrine. (Monier Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*)

The Founders were criticized in certain quarters for translating the word *dharma* as religion. Did they, as did the Mahatmas in their letters, foresee that religion would be a source of conflict, division, and evil in the twentieth century?

The word *sat* admits various meanings: that which really is, entity or existence, essence, the true being or really existent (in the Vedanta, "the self-existent or Universal Spirit, Brahma"); that which is good or real or true, good, reality, truth.

Nagarjuna (c.150 — c.250 CE), the great Buddhist reformer, introduced his concept of Absolute and Relative truths:

> *Paramārtha Satya* or Absolute Truth is the knowledge of the real as it is without any distortion (*akṛtrimam vastu-rupam*). Categories of thought and points of view distort the real. They

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unconsciously coerce the mind to view things in a cramped, biased way; and are thus inherently incapable of giving us the Truth. The *paramārtha* is the utter absence of the function of Reason (*buddhi*) which is therefore equated with *samvṛtti*. The Absolute truth is beyond the scope of discursive thought, language and empirical activity; and conversely, the object of these is *samvṛtti satya*. It is said: "The *paramārtha* is in fact the unutterable (*anabhilapya*), the unthinkable, unteachable, etc."

(*The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, T. R. V. Murti, Unwin Paperbacks, London, 1987, p. 244.)

From the First Fundamental Proposition of the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine*:

An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable Principle on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. It is beyond the range and reach of thought — in the words of *Mandukya*, "unthinkable and unspeakable".

All the above statements belong to time-honoured traditions of profound philosophical knowledge. They are profoundly relevant to the work and ethos of the Theosophical Society, which affirm, at its very beginning, as published on 30 October 1875, the Bylaws of the TS declared in their Preamble:

Whatever may be the private opinions of its members, the Society has no dogmas to enforce, no creed to disseminate. It is formed neither as a spiritualistic schism, nor to serve as the foe or friend of any sectarian or philosophic body. Its only axiom is the omnipotence of truth, its only creed a profession of unqualified devotion to its discovery and propagation. In considering the qualifications of applicants for membership, it knows neither race, sex, color, country, nor creed.

A great deal of expectations were created about the young boy J. Krishnamurti after it was announced, by Annie Besant, in 1909, that he would be the vehicle of the World Teacher, the Bodhisattva Maitreya. Indian and American members reacted immediately, decrying the announcement as wrong. They protested that an unknown Indian boy, who was lagging behind in school, had a vacant look, could not possibly be the vehicle of such lofty spiritual Intelligence. However, the vast majority of the TS members seemed to have accepted Dr Besant's announcement. In 1911, the Order of the Star in the East formed with Krishnamurti as its Head and Dr Besant and C. W. Leadbeater as Protectors.

It is widely known that Krishnamurti became quite uncomfortable in that role. He was even asked to accept Apostles! The fact that a number of well-known Theosophists were making statements about their perceived spiritual statuses led him to consider his position in a serious manner. It eventually led to his speech in August, 1929, in Ommen, the Netherlands, in which he dissolved the Order of the Star. That speech contains a truly historical statement:

I maintain that Truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path

> whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect. That is my point of view, and I adhere to that absolutely and unconditionally. Truth, being limitless, unconditioned, unapproachable by any path whatsoever, cannot be organized; nor should any organization be formed to lead or to coerce people along any particular path.

While most TS members were prepared to consider as relevant the above statements from the *Mahabharata*, from Nagarjuna, from the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine*, as well as from the original ByLaws of the TS and declared in the Preamble, thousands of TS members were dismayed, even furious, with Krishnamurti's speech. As a result, during 1930 and 1931, the Society lost in excess of 15,000 members. Not many organizations would survive that kind of loss.

Yet, Krishnamurti's statement profoundly resonates to the statements of those other sources. Naturally, hardly any student of Krishnamurti, or even perhaps the man himself, would agree to this. Therefore, it is worthy quoting it again: "Truth is a pathless land."

"There is no dharma greater than truth. Nothing superior to truth exists." So says the *Mahabharata*. In Nagarjuna's philosophy, "*Paramārtha Satya* or Absolute Truth is the knowledge of the real as it is without any distortion. Categories of thought and points of view distort the real." And in *The Secret Doctrine*, the ultimate Principle "is beyond the range and reach of thought — in the words of Mandukya, 'unthinkable and unspeakable'".

Perhaps such statements point to the fact that Truth is utterly inaccessible to the ordinary mind, which creates its own world of ideation, centred in the self. Everyone of its ideations is therefore self-referential — an exercise of intellectual narcissism. On the other hand, sages from different cultures, discovered how to leave the self behind. "I die daily", said St Paul. To live a life beyond the self is to move towards Truth: an utterly regenerating experience. In a statement during his discussions with Buddhist scholars in Brockwood Park, in 1979, Krishnamurti said: "Truth is when the self is not."

On the other hand, Krishnamurti once said: "A religious mind acts, because it is compassionate. And that action is born of intelligence. Intelligence, compassion, love, all go together." The present-day world provides ample evidence of the ubiquitous absence of a truly religious mind. Many manifestations of religion have become aggressively ideological, intolerant of differences and, in some cases, bastions of violence and extremism. Fear of the other is at the heart of some religious groups that do not seem to be religious at all.

Why did the Founders of the TS choose as its motto, "There is no religion higher than Truth?" Perhaps as a recognition that, even at that time, there were many instances of division within religious traditions. But perhaps more importantly, because the TS, from its very inception, encouraged an enquiry into Truth. The Founders made it very clear that the TS is not a belief-based organization. The kind of study which is encouraged within

the Society is not for us to become a one-author society, but to learn to reach wider views, deeper understanding and apply those to our daily lives. The motto also suggests that Truth is higher than any view, any discourse, any formulation. As Joy Mills once said, "Theosophy is a way of seeing that is constantly growing. And that is Wisdom."

Why did thousands of TS members react strongly — and still do — to Krishnamurti's speech of 1929? Most importantly, what would have happened to the Society if Krishnamurti remained in it as the World Teacher? Perhaps no better answer can be found than HPB's warning contained in *The Key to Theosophy*:

> Every such attempt as the Theosophical Society has hitherto ended in failure, because, sooner or later, it has degenerated into a sect, set up hard-and-fast dogmas of its own, and so lost by imperceptible degrees that vitality which living truth alone can impart. 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.

Had Krishnamurti remained in the Theosophical Society as the World Teacher the principle of authority — not in his mind — would assert itself and the TS would cease to be the Society chartered by the Founders. It became apparent that when Krishnamurti began to speak in a forceful manner about self-knowledge, freedom, conditioning, and the need for an open mind, a number of members became critical. He had defied their comfortable view of Theosophy as an ideology, a ready-made teaching, a known explanation for life and the universe. Some well-known members accused him of not knowing Theosophy! Such reaction is not new.

When the Buddha started his public work and declared that ceremonies were not essential for the spiritual life, the Brahminical orthodoxy of his time reacted vigorously. This may be one of the reasons why Buddhism did not flourish in India, but it did in Southeast Asia, Japan and China.

When Jesus started his ministry the same pattern was at play. He was considered to be blasphemous for declaring himself the Son of God. He was persecuted, arrested, tortured, and crucified.

When a genuine teacher comes, he or she necessarily challenges the ordinary mind and its biases. This happens because Teachers are essentially concerned with Truth and not convenience. When Socrates did precisely that, he was condemned by the Athenian state to die by poison. Something similar, but more violent, happened to Hypatia in ancient Alexandria. The orthodoxy of her time did not tolerate a woman preaching the

depths of the Esoteric Philosophy. More recently, a similar pattern was unravelled upon HPB. Her character was attacked, repeatedly, and even those who were friendly towards her turned against her and caused her untold suffering. To try and awaken the human mind is a dangerous undertaking.

One of the important challenges when such Teachers come is to prepare oneself to listen to them. As Krishnamurti said, listening is an art. Such an art was taught in the Upanishads: *śravana*. If there is real listening, one becomes completely available to what is being said, not out of credulity, but by pure resonance. One then becomes acoustic to Truth, allowing that supernal influence to enter one's consciousness and see it for oneself: a message that comes from the utterly unsullied depths of life, a transformative experience that leaves nothing behind it, for it is the complete ending of self.

It is Truth that chooses its Teachers, those who have trodden the pathless path for many ages. When they communicate to humanity their discovery they point out that Truth, Love, Compassion, and Wisdom are one, not many.

Once, in a conversation in her house at Adyar, Parsi Quarters, Radhaji said to me: "My meditation these days is to realize that only Brahman is real." A teacher in the becoming. ✧

NOTICE

In accordance with Rule 11(a) of the TS International Rules, I nominated Mr Shikhar Agnihotri as the Vice-President on 12 February 2026. At the end of the voting period, we received 32 votes in favor and 0 votes opposing, from the General Council members. It is a pleasure and an honor to announce that, as of 5 March 2026, Mr Shikhar Agnihotri has been elected as the international Vice-President of the Theosophical Society, Adyar.

Tim Boyd
President

The Spirit of a New Humanity: Looking Through the Window of Eternity — I

SHIKHAR AGNIHOTRI

THE 150th anniversary of the theosophical movement in modern times is not only an occasion to reflect on the last 150 years but also a time of renewal, of making a conscious choice from the womb of which the future, the new humanity, will take birth within us as individuals and collectively for humanity. Let us try to see if, in the constant demands of daily life which is normally dominated by physical and mental conditionings and habits, it is possible, even if for a fraction of a second, to leave behind the concept of time, and give ourselves an opportunity to have a glimpse of that ONENESS/TRUTH for which Theosophy stands, through a small window of eternity in the mind made shell around us.

Consider the theme of this Convention, "One World, One Life — The Spirit of a New Humanity". For a rare few it is a statement of fact in Nature; for some it is a belief that has travelled from generations and has become a way of living; for some others it is an intuitive vision that motivates them to aspire and realise the UNITY OF LIFE; but the majority, who earlier used to think of this world only as a coincidental material existence in which comparison-competition-exclusivity-fragmentation are the only ways to live, are being compelled today to look in the direction of interconnectedness and interdependence, as we stand face to face with recurring global situations/problems that manifest themselves as harsh consequences at the local level — war and starvation.

The political world, too, has not remained untouched by this realization. Even setting aside for a moment the lack of depth of this realization and the slow pace of remedial action by the countries, it is heartening to see that there is a collective effort taking place among nations. A couple of such efforts which stand out in recent times:

The Paris Climate Pact, adopted in 2015, is a global agreement where almost every nation on Earth committed to limit

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global warming. It may not be legally binding for the countries but at its heart, it recognizes the simple truth that the Earth is the one home of all, and caring for it is the shared responsibility of all humanity.

The G20, or Group of Twenty, is the premier intergovernmental forum for international cooperation, representing 80% of the world's GDP, 75% of global trade, and two-thirds of the world's population, founded in 1999. If we look at the themes and thus the priorities of the G20 over the last decade, a quiet shift becomes visible. What began with a focus on growth and economic stability gradually moved toward interconnectedness, inclusion, and sustainability. This shift becomes even more visible in the 2023 summit of G20 countries hosted in India with the theme "One Earth — One Family — One Future". The African Union (55 countries) was added in 2023. This reflects, however faintly, a growing recognition of the fact that we all are interconnected. That no individual/nation can afford to stand alone, and our future depends on cooperation rather than struggle for one's own survival.

To some of us, it might seem somewhat out of place to touch upon matters that border on geopolitics, but as far as I understand it, it is not only the spiritual movements that are inspired by the Great Ones, but also politics, policies, and people as and when required within the ambit of the Law of Karma. The more important aspect is that *any* seeker of Truth can really help them in this mammoth task by aligning one's intentions, thoughts, words, actions in the direction of the Oneness of Life, thereby sowing the seeds of a New Humanity and helping in lifting a little of the heavy karma of the world.

Although normally when we say "world", it is used to indicate the planet earth, from a theosophical worldview I would say that it is a relative term, the meaning of which depends upon the person's state of mind and can equally be used to refer to a microcosm, a macrocosm, and anything in between. For example, academic world, corporate world, atomic world, visible world. Or the moments of joy when one's world expands to the whole existence, contrary to the moments of grief that can shrink one's world to the absence of a single person due to death or separation.

But in its absolute aspect, the world is not limited to space or time, though it becomes too abstract for the mind which exists in the realm of Space Time to comprehend.

That is why one of the most effective and practical teachings given by H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) is a document known as the "Diagram of Meditation". It begins with "First conceive of UNITY by Expansion in Space and infinite in Time" and goes on to "'I am all Space and Time'. Beyond that . . . (It cannot be said)."

When our mind expands across space, the sense of:

- "here" and "there" dissolves
- "you" and "I" dissolves
- The vision becomes holistic, due to which we do not see the forms in isolation any-

more; instead, we perceive them as unique, valuable, interconnected parts of the whole.

But there is something rather intriguing in this process of expansion. Unity by expansion in space can be imagined rather easily than infinity in time. As eternity in space is basically expanding the imagination far and beyond the earth, the solar system, the galaxies, for most of which we have visuals available thanks to modern science. But when it comes to time, science has yet to invent the time machine except in the movies. The immediate approach is to think in the direction of expanding the imagination in time as we know it — basically the past and the future. But the challenge with this is, that we know only a little bit of the past based on history/memory, and not at all the future; hence whatever we thus imagine may not be true and so we are kind of stuck with that.

But then here is a possibility to consider: what if expansion in time, or expansion into the past and the future, paradoxically (and practically) happens through the opposite path — not by expansion but by shrinking, leading to a dissolving of the past and future into the eternal now? Beginning with the *known* before taking a jump into the *unknown*? A process of "not adding more" instead of "unlearning". And this seems possible to do because there is something interesting in this line of thought, that the past and the future do not exist as labelled boxes in us; instead they exist in our mind in the garb of other things.

The past exists in the form of our memories, painful/pleasurable, in our guilt about what we did wrong, in our grudge against someone who hurt us, in the pride of our achievements and successes, in the frustration of our failures, in the sense of ownership of the materials or people that we already possess, in the opinions that we cherish, in the prejudices or biases that we so rigidly hold on to, and the future exists in our desires/ambitions/fear/anxiety/insecurity of losing what we possess and innumerable other forms. No matter how deep it is, there is a limit to such psychic garbage as long as we do not go on making new. The moment we begin to dispose/drop/reduce this baggage of past/future, the conditionings within Time, we give ourselves the possibility of the window of ETERNITY to open up with the glimpse of SAT-CHIT-ANANDA — TRUTH / ONENESS / BLISS. Maybe that is why forgiveness / contentment / letting go rank so high up in this process of self-transformation.

Of course, if it was that easy, we would not be taking incarnations after incarnations trying to learn and realise that what we carry in our minds as rewards or prized possessions often turn out to be the very cause of our suffering. But again, another idea to explore is that maybe it is really that simple, but the lower mind — notoriously known as the Slayer of the Real — makes it look like a complicated and a daunting task, so that it can then make elaborate plans to find a method, a technique, a philosophy to follow and keep the seeker bound to it, creating one

more conditioning, thereby extending its own existence/immortality.

The mind always aims to secure itself from all directions till the end of time, but those who try with sincerity always overcome this illusion no matter how many conditions or layers of security the mind creates, because in Nature everything is interconnected and has a solution to every problem.

In this context I would like to share the story of Hiranyakaśipu and Prahlada, narrated in the *Bhāgavata Purāna*, one of the most profound illustrations of the triumph of devotion over arrogance, and divine wisdom over ego. Hiranyakaśipu, the powerful king of the *daityas*, was consumed by rage after his brother Hiranyaksha was slain by Lord Vishnu. Determined to become invincible, he undertook severe penance to please Lord Brahma. When Brahma appeared, he sought immortality, but when that was denied, he cleverly framed a boon he believed would make death impossible. He asked that he should not die:

- at the hands of any human, animal, *deva*, or *asura*;
- neither during day nor night;
- neither indoors nor outdoors;
- not on land, in water, or in the sky;
- and not by any weapon.

Brahma granted the boon. Convinced of his invincibility, Hiranyakaśipu grew tyrannical, terrorizing the three worlds and demanding that he be worshipped as the supreme God. Yet within his own palace lived his greatest challenge — his young son Prahlada, a steadfast devotee of Lord Vishnu. From early childhood, Prahlada radiated serenity, fearlessness, and unwavering devotion. Enraged that his own son refused to worship him, Hiranyakaśipu tried everything — persuasion, threats, even attempts to end his life — to break Prahlada's faith, yet he emerged unharmed each time, protected by his devotion.

In utter frustration, Hiranyakaśipu finally demanded, "If Vishnu is everywhere, (Vishnu=all-pervading) is he also in this pillar?" Prahlada calmly replied, "Yes, Father, He is in every atom." Blinded by fury, Hiranyakaśipu struck the pillar. From it emerged Narasimha, the fourth avatar of Vishnu — neither man nor animal, but both. At twilight, (neither day nor night), Narasimha dragged Hiranyakaśipu to the threshold (neither indoors nor outdoors). Placing him upon his lap (not on earth, water, or sky), and using no weapon but his claws, he ended the demon king's life. Every clause of the boon was honored, yet divine will prevailed.

The story reminds us that the mind can go on securing itself as a separate unit only to find itself full of fear and anxiety, never realising that no form is secure. The only security lies in realizing the ONENESS OF LIFE. Similar truths echo across traditions — from the Pharaoh and the Exodus to David and Goliath to the Midas touch — affirming that wisdom always finds a way where egoism believes there is none.

(*To be continued*)

Theosophy and the Metabolism of Consciousness

SVITLANA GAVRYLENKO

THE study of internal processes, one's own resources of self-knowledge and self-transformation, is always a relevant topic among theosophists. So I would like to express a few thoughts on the understanding and practical implementation of inner changes. I want to start with something familiar to all of us, and then use the principle of analogy, or the well-known Hermetic principle, "As above, so below — as in small things, so in great ones."

Let us turn to our physical body, which is so familiar to us, and talk about the processes that support our vital activity. We breathe, eat food, then there are turned on the processes that digest it and convert it into energy, then there occur the synthesis of substances necessary for the body and the excretion of waste products. This is metabolism. It is a set of chemical processes that occur in the body to support life. This is a continuous process, which, according to scientific research, consists of two main areas, namely, the splitting of complex molecules to obtain energy and the synthesis of more complex molecules from simpler ones, which requires energy. That is, the combined material and energy aspects, the release and absorption of energy, alternate regularly.

So, metabolism supports our vital activity and we must promote its proper functioning. We know many signs of its violation and a large list of means and methods for restoring its work. Here are some of the more important aspects of metabolism:

Firstly, it is controlled by hormones and enzymes, which act as catalysts for many chemical reactions.

Secondly, a healthy metabolism depends on the balance between the breakdown and synthesis of substances, between the release and absorption of energy.

Thirdly, the metabolic rate of each person differs due to genetics, age, gender, lifestyle, and eating habits.

That is, *metabolism contributes to the process of assimilation of external inputs and their transformation into substances and energy necessary for the body.*

You probably already guessed what I am leading to. Let us apply the principle

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of analogy and try to consider Theosophy, or Divine Wisdom, as a factor contributing to the continuous process of transforming external income into internal accumulated treasures. I want to suggest that you apply the principle of analogy between physiology and psychology to a more detailed understanding of *the transformation of accumulated knowledge into Wisdom, as well as the process of transforming life experience into Love.*

Let us outline the path in such a direction, only outline it, so that later we can master our own life journey. So, point 1: **Theosophy can be considered as a method based on the acquisition and assimilation of certain knowledge leading to Wisdom.**

This knowledge concerns very diverse spheres of life, is assimilated gradually, forms, or rather even reformats our picture of the world, imperceptibly changing our worldview. The process of knowledge acquisition also has its stages and consists first in their decomposition into constituent elements (concepts, categories, ideas) and the identification of internal sources of inspiration and usefulness, and then in a certain internal synthesis, bringing together, rethinking, and ultimately transforming into updated ideas about this world and about ourselves in it.

Thus, learning and reflection contribute to the metabolism of knowledge, making it an integral part of us, forming our worldview. This advances us towards wisdom. But this process cannot take place separately from the environment, from communication. Wisdom is difficult to achieve in laboratory conditions; it is obtained in the whirlpool of life. What is the catalyst in the process of metabolism of knowledge into wisdom? What are the hormones and enzymes of this process? This is maieutics [literally, learning through questions and answers], that is, collective work, the creative and interested stay together with a certain goal and intention, collective creativity and exchange of thoughts, ideas, help, and support.

We have not come together by chance; we must be a support and encouragement for each other; we have no reason for competition and emulation, for distrust and criticism, because these are brakes on the way. *Wisdom* is the inner core of a person, which is formed under the influence of Theosophy, Divine Wisdom. It is not an automatic result of a passive increase in the volume of knowledge, but is an intense, internal, purposeful, and conscious process of balanced analysis and synthesis, and in the end becomes an antidote to manipulation.

Now let's consider the other side of the influence of Theosophy on us. Now point 2. **Theosophy can be considered as a method based on life experience, leading to Love.**

Let's consider some elements of this method that can play a role in Theosophy, which is based on conscious life experience, especially if they are imbued with beauty, love, and creativity in their interaction. This is primarily a detached, neutral observation, a calm and balanced

perception of everything that happens around; a perception open to the reality of what is happening and not conditioned by our projections. If we accept the world as it presents itself to us, full of trust in life, in God, in ourselves, if we are full of unconditional joy, then such perception contributes to the metabolism of life experience into Love. We must note that such perception is not passive, it does not exclude active interaction with circumstances, an active life position. At the same time, it does not contain destructive components — it is constructive and attractive to those in whom the spirit of a builder, gardener, creator resides. Again, we split life experience into its elements in order to form and synthesize what begins to constantly nourish our inner person. The most nourishing source of strength, inspiration, and creativity is Love.

Let us add to this another related element — meditation. This element has a broad interpretation and is understood very individually. But, regardless of the technique used, with the passage of time and the acquisition of experience, meditation begins to be a state of consciousness. It begins to cut a passage to the deep inner deposits of previously hidden treasures — treasures of love — quiet, calm, unshakable, and unconditional.

Service to people is a constantly operating catalyst for this metabolism, which allows us to go beyond the lower "ego" of the individual and open ourselves to action that benefits all living beings, perfecting our empathy, compassion and mercy.

And here we come to the most important element: ***Theosophy is the Path of the Heart.***

To achieve awareness of the paths of the heart, it is necessary to overcome the heresy of separation, to consciously abandon thinking based on a fragmentary view of the external world and to get rid of the need for discerning choice.

J. Krishnamurti argued: "The problem arises only when life is perceived separately, fragmentarily. See the beauty of the whole. When you see life as a whole, then there is no problem. Only the mind and heart, broken into fragments, create problems. The center of fragmentation is our personal "I"; it arises through thought; it has no reality in itself."

And he goes on to say, "Choice arises when there is confusion. The mind that sees clearly does not need to choose — it acts. This is where we seem to get into trouble, when we say that we are free to choose. That is, choice implies freedom. I say, on the contrary, that choice implies a mind that is confused and therefore not free."

Finally, J. Krishnamurti reminds us that "beauty is not an abstract thing, it goes with goodness — goodness in behavior, goodness in action".

The paths of the heart lead us to our dreams, which life has given us as pure expressions of our being. They live within us from birth, conscious or unconscious. Reason and emotion are used to balance the paths of the heart. These paths are also open to the essential triumvirate of meditation, awareness, and service. They

allow us to overcome a worldview based on the opposition between subject and object and to understand that relationships with others play a decisive role in the process of awareness and expansion of consciousness through an existence aimed at the Common Good.

How much our virtues shine on the Path of the Heart will depend on the breadth of our love. The generosity and height of our love is formed from the split, irritation, rejection, criticism, condemnation and, through internal synthesis, opens up all possibilities and brings us closer to the pure heavenly Love in which we are all truly immersed. Let us use our hearts to respond to the smallest manifestation of love that we receive, and the invisible divine light emanating from the heart will illuminate our lives.

Thus, we conclude that our consciousness is a certain system capable of self-observation and self-transformation, it is a certain node of integration of ascending and descending evolutionary influences, external and internal impulses to awakening and awareness, where the physical, psychic, mental, symbolic, and cultural are co-organized. It is time to approach this with openness and impartiality; it is time to take responsibility for the evolution of our own consciousness. Our Teachers expect from us and stimulate internal shifts. Let us not neglect the favorable opportunities of today's challenges. Let us unite for the good of the spiritual revival of Humanity, the practical affirmation of Good, Beauty, and Wisdom, and mastering the art of self-transformation! ✧

[Let the mind] pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of pity, with thoughts of sympathy and equanimity, and so the second quarter, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around, and eveywhere, he continues to pervade with heart of pity, heart of sympathy, and heart of equanimity, far-reaching, grown great and beyond measure, all embracing.

Gautama Buddha

Sacrifice and the Sacred

DAVID GROSSMAN

At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is.
(from *Four Quartets* by T. S. Eliot)

AT a recent lecture titled "True Sacrifice", a presentation in the ongoing "Aquarian Series" at the United Lodge of Theosophists, San Diego, many meaningful ideas were explored. One was that true sacrifice is the process of "restoring one's relationship with the Universe consciously". To put it another way, sacrifice is the process of giving up the *ever-fleeting* on behalf of the *everlasting.*

The word *sacred* is found at the root of *sacrifice* and usually refers to something religious or spiritual as in the idea of *sacred texts.* So true sacrifice from a theosophical and/or esoteric standpoint is an action that dedicates itself to the higher life or the good of the whole rather than our personal desires, wishes, or aims.

An archetypal example of sacrifice is found in *The Secret Doctrine* (*SD*) by H. P. Blavatsky (HPB) which presents the ideas of the Initiator and the Great Sacrifice.

She speaks of higher beings, that is, souls who have evolved far beyond our present humanity in this evolutionary cycle, termed the fourth round in theosophical nomenclature. Much earlier in this round these more progressed beings from the (Lemurian) "third race" performed interestingly enough what she calls the "Great Sacrifice". It involved igniting the spark of individualized self-consciousness, referred to as "the lighting up of *manas*", or mind. This marks the point of the "Promethean gift and sacrifice" (see Myth of Prometheus) that allowed for the continued spiritual evolution of man, fully incarnated into material form, which is the most physical point (the middle of the fourth round) in the present great cycle (*manvantara*).

HPB comments in (*SD*) vol. 1:

> It was not a Race, this progeny. It was at first a wondrous Being, called the "Initiator", and after him a group of semi-divine and semi-human beings. "*Set apart*" in Archaic *genesis* for certain purposes, they are those in whom are said to have incarnated the highest Dhyani-s, "Muni-s and Ṛshi-s from previous Manvantara-s"

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> *to form the nursery for future human adepts*, on this earth and during the present cycle. These "Sons of Will and Yoga" born, so to speak, in an immaculate way, remained, it is explained, entirely apart from the rest of mankind.
>
> The "BEING" just referred to, which has to remain nameless, is the *Tree* from which, in subsequent ages, all the great *historically* known Sages and Hierophants, such as the Ṛshi Kapila, Hermes, Enoch, Orpheus, etc., etc., have branched off. . . . (p. 207)
>
> He is *the* "Initiator", called the "GREAT SACRIFICE". . . . Because, in short, he has sacrificed himself for the sake of mankind, though but a few Elect may profit by the GREAT SACRIFICE. (p. 208)

Simply put, this is the transitional evolutionary (major) event that permitted the infusion of self-consciousness to arise in human form and allow for the coming forth of the self-directing human Ego to arise on this plane and continue its evolution.

Another expression of true self-sacrifice is the action of what in Buddhist philosophy is referred to as the *Nirmānakāya*, who is often paired with the idea of the *Dharmakāya*.

In a footnote from *The Voice of the Silence*, fragment III, "The Seven Portals", HPB explains:

> The Dharmakāya body is that of a complete Buddha, that is, no body at all, but an ideal breath: consciousness merged in the Universal Consciousness, or Soul devoid of every attribute. Once a Dharmakāya, an Adept or Buddha leaves behind every possible relation with, or thought for this Earth. Thus, to be enabled to help humanity, an Adept who has won the right to Nirvāna, "renounces the Dharmakāya body" (in mystic parlance); keeps, of the Sambhogakāya, only the great and complete knowledge; and remains in his Nirmanakāya body. The Esoteric School teaches that Gautama Buddha, with several of his Arhats, is such a Nirmanakāya, higher than whom, on account of the great renunciation and sacrifice for mankind, there is none known.

Kwan Yin, also known as *Guanyin* or *Quan Yin*, is a widely revered bodhisattva in Buddhist and Chinese traditions, embodying compassion and mercy. *The Kuan Yin* pledge is a beautiful and inspiring expression of what we might call the sacred vow of the *Nirmanakāya*:

> Never will I seek nor receive private, individual salvation; never will I enter into final peace alone; but forever and everywhere will I live and strive for the redemption of every creature throughout the world from the bonds of conditioned existence.

What we call sacrifice seems to be built into Nature itself when we observe how the Earth provides for all its inhabitants.

The mineral kingdom, along with sun and water, provide the necessary elements for plant life, which in turn provides the nutrients to sustain life for all the creatures of the Earth. The food chain itself seems to be set up as a ladder of sacrifice and interconnectedness.

A shining example of sacrifice among humans as well as other species is a mothers' selfless commitment to her children and the extraordinary lengths she will go to nourish and protect them in their formative years.

It becomes apparent that true sacrifice demands inner refinement and transformation, external acts being the outward expression of the internal causation. Love and generosity must certainly be essential components of sacrifice.

True sacrifice calls for a kind of alchemical transformation of heart. It involves putting the needs of others above our own; demonstrating love and generosity, even when it requires personal cost, and finally recognizing the inherent *sacredness* in all things and living in a way that honors and reflects that sacredness.

Theosophy teaches that we are essentially spiritual beings evolving through temporary material instruments. From the higher perspective we can say we partake in the oneness of life but while in incarnation we tend to be more fragmented in temporary space and time as we identify with *kāma-manas* or our temporary identities; body, race, occupation, inclinations, experiences, and perspective.

When we are led around by the *kāma-manasic* impulses of our psycho/physical nature we become lost in the forest of separateness, pushed around by the unruly herd of impulses in the unmanaged sensual nature and drained by those vampires of fear, jealousy and pride, as well as the fractured sense of self that yearns for personal recognition from others.

In her article "Civilization, the Death of Art and Beauty", HPB saw this polarization of consciousness happening well over 125 years ago. She pointed out the rise from modern globalist tendencies and the slow erasure of the beautiful diversity of expression around the globe in the arts, religion and culture being replaced by a kind of controlled dimensionless homogeneity coming out of the West. Likewise in our own time poet musician Bob Dylan in a song titled "It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)" observes:

> Disillusioned words like bullets bark
> As human gods aim for their mark
> Make everything from toy guns that spark
> To flesh-colored Christs that glow in the dark
> It's easy to see without looking too far
> That not much is really sacred

With the pressures of sustaining physical life on the planet at this time, and the focus on acquiring material things along with our overdependence on technology to solve all our problems, human anxiety and its consequences seem epidemic. The newest expression and buzzword these days is AI (artificial intelligence), causing both interest and fear among people. We might ask what has happened to NI (natural intelligence)? Everything in the humanly created world emanates from there. We all should be embracing that.

Words are very telling in this regard. Take the word *Love* for example, instead of a selfless all-embracing feeling that transcends personal desires and seeks the well-being of others, the word is mostly

used to describe personal desires: I love chocolate candy or I love tennis. The Sanskrit word *avatār* means the incarnation of a sacred spiritual being like a *Christ* or a *Krishna.* Its meaning has been replaced in popular culture by the character one chooses to be in a video game. Our culture has in many ways obscured our sense of the sacred by dumbing down the real depths of language and meaning.

To borrow from the title of the book, *The Sacred and the Profane,* written by Mircea Eliade, when we use our intelligence for separative, often vacuous purposes without concern for the whole, we live in the realm of the profane. When we act on behalf of what Plato called "the good, the true, and the beautiful", we act in harmony with Great Nature uplifting the environment we inhabit and benefit our fellow beings along the way. It is here we embrace the *sacred.*

So the question becomes how do we shift our consciousness to the higher and begin to occupy what has been called "sacred space" once again? Another way to put it; how do we act from the higher or spiritual perspective with and towards our fellow beings?

When our directing inner impulse comes from the desire to know the truth and we use the compass of intuition to guide us along with the voice of conscience, and finally when we act for the benefit of others; we find ourselves in the realm of *sacred space.*

Theosophy holds that just as *Deity,* the *Ātman,* the Source, is in all things, so everything in the manifested universe, in our lives, has a sacred dimension. We all have the power to access the sacred at all times. It is expressed in *The Key to Theosophy* this way:

> Once grasp the idea that universal causation is not merely present, but past, present and future, and every action on our present plane falls naturally and easily into its true place, and is seen in its true relation to ourselves and to others. Every mean and selfish action sends us backward and not forward, while every noble thought and every unselfish deed are stepping stones to the higher and more glorious planes of being.
>
> Ch. XII, "What is Practical Theosophy?"

Putting it succinctly, the modern theosophical movement was inaugurated to reawaken us to the fact that life has a purpose, and we are here to carry it out by acting, as it is said, "for and as the self of all creatures", to continue to evolve and uplift all life as we are uplifted in turn by those great ones that came before us. We are all part of what has been referred to as the *guru parampara* (tradition of knowledge passed down in a lineage from master to disciple) chain. We are all climbing the Great Ladder of Being Together on this sacred journey.

> Old myths, old gods, old heroes have never died. They are only sleeping at the bottom of the mind, waiting for our call. We have need for them. They represent the wisdom of our race.
>
> (Stanley Kunitz, American poet)

✧

A Timeless Message

ROBERT BÉLAND

TODAY I would like to discuss with you a subject, which I believe is closely linked to the theme of this Convention, "One World, One Life: The Spirit of a New Humanity", but which could also be very well suited to the theme of our last World Congress, "Toward Insight and Wholeness: Our Role in Shaping the Future", or, to many other themes we have explored in the past. In that sense, I would say it is a timeless message.

Indeed, when I speak of "One World, One Life", isn't that the most profound answer to the question we all ask ourselves: "Who am I?" A question that for some has a very simple answer, and for others is a lifelong quest.

Now, if I think about "The Spirit of a New Humanity", I see two ways to interpret it: a more internal way and a more external one. What is this soul or spirit of the new humanity? Couldn't we compare it to "One Life"? But, if we're talking about the spirit in which this new humanity should exist, it can also refer to what we must do, and in what spirit we must do it.

So, we have two big questions: "Who am I?" . . . "One Life" and "What must we do?", which I associate with "The Spirit of a New Humanity". In what spirit should this new humanity exist? Or in what spirit should this new humanity undertake what it has to do?

For each of us here at this Convention, I believe the answer to "what to do?" is exactly the same. We must, or rather, we need to, practice Theosophy.

This leads us to another question: how exactly do we define what this means for us today, in the 21st century? And in what spirit do we want to practice Theosophy?

So, regarding the question "What to do?" again, for some, the answer is very simple. This seems to be evident in the actions that they do, the few questions they ask themselves, and their contented attitude. They are very happy with who they are, and when they are not happy, it's not their fault. This is what Pablo Sender would call, if I understood one of his seminars correctly, the fifth state of consciousness. For others, just as with the question "Who am I?" it's an answer that develops and transforms throughout a lifetime.

With my professional experience as a traditional martial arts instructor for over 50 years, I have come to understand and put into practice the idea and the fact

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Mr Robert Béland is the Organizing Secretary of Canada, Theosophical Society. A short Lecture delivered at the 150th International Convention, Adyar, on 01.01.2026.

that it is always fundamental to practice, reflect, and meditate on the foundations of our art, our philosophy, or our Theosophy. So, I've believed for a long time now that it's still relevant to ask ourselves basic questions like: Who am I? Who is this "I"? What is the purpose of life? What is my role on this planet?

The truth is that there are no simple questions. There are questions that seem simple but can always be explored in depth.

So today I would like to share some thoughts on these topics, and since time is limited, I'll focus on the second question: What should we do? What is our role? In what spirit should we undertake what is to be done?

Before discussing the present and the future, let us take a brief look back at the past and recall some facts from our history.

In the very beginning, perhaps one of the fundamental goals of the Theosophical Society (TS) at that time, and normally for any organization, was to ensure its continued existence the following year. Indeed, after founding the Society with sixteen members, and with several members joining later, they were subsequently reduced to just three: Madame Blavatsky, Colonel Olcott, and William Judge. Even Mr Judge had to take time off for family reasons. So, there were only two of them left, and, as they often joked, they used the candlestick as a third member of their group. They undertook to gather information, through the creation of a library, an idea so dear to Olcott.

And, to train the trainers. The Masters trained Blavatsky, in many ways, notably by inspiring her to write *The Secret Doctrine*. They also trained Olcott and A. P. Sinnett through numerous letters. Blavatsky trained many students who claimed to be serious, through the esoteric school, and so on.

Next, the leaders and influential members of the Society pledged to continue and disseminate the theosophical teachings more widely through books and lectures.

It was the TS that revived the idea of the evolution of the spirit, which had been forgotten even in Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, where it was believed that the sole purpose of existence was to break free from the cycle of reincarnation and that the most effective way to do this was to cease all actions that created karma.

And we will, in fact, delve into the fundamental question of what actions we can take and at what level. Because of these actions, the TS has had enormous influence worldwide and currently exists in about sixty countries. In addition to being the progenitor of most of the esoteric movements of our time, it has had a significant influence on philosophy, science, politics, and many arts. It influenced the composition of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 2, paragraph 1 reads: "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status."

Nowadays and for the future

So far, I have told you a little about what

has happened. Let us now talk about the present and future of the Theosophical Society, and our own role in its development. What are the thoughts and emotions that must emanate from us, and the actions that we must take, here and now in the 21st century? Now that the documentation is widespread and accessible; now that we can, for example, have *The Secret Doctrine* in two clicks, and at no cost, what will be the purpose of the TS — and for us its members — in the years to come? What must this one humanity, which we are, do, and in what spirit must we do so?

In my view, one of the right things to do is to help people to understand the message gathered in the writings of Blavatsky and the libraries of Olcott and the messages all of the theosophists who followed have transmitted to us, to make it useful — and not only useful, but indispensable — to a wider audience.

It would be desirable for a larger part of the population to understand this message and realize that it must be applied in our lives.

As Tim Boyd said in one of his messages, "Theosophy will never be a mass movement", and I completely agree with this. I do think, however, that in some ways, we have regressed in the methods we use to spread our message. It is true that, since several of our members have founded or joined other movements, indirectly we can say that they are theosophists and that they have spread the theosophical message, even if sometimes in a somewhat diluted way.

Nevertheless, we must admit that if in 1928, when world population was around two billion, there were 45,000 members in the TS, we can ask ourselves if it is acceptable to have only 25,000 members now, with a total global population of eight billion.

As we know, the primary goal of the TS is to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity. I imagine that, as with atoms, there is always a nucleus, but that the nucleus can vary in size. The hydrogen nucleus, for example, is smaller than the nucleus of iron or gold.

If, as the Maha Chohan said, the Theosophical Society is to be the foundation of all future religions, isn't there an optimal size for its nucleus? We know that in our organization, as in all others, only 5 to 10% of people are truly involved. Is it possible to increase this percentage, or wouldn't it be more logical to increase the total number of members, which would directly increase the number of people who are truly involved?

Here are some excerpts from the letter of the Maha Chohan that may give us some guidance on how to proceed:

> That is the reason why Col HSO who works but to revive Buddhism may be regarded as one who labours in the true path of Theosophy, far more than any other man who chooses as his goal the gratification of his own ardent aspirations for occult knowledge.
>
> For our doctrines to practically react on the so-called moral code, or the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, and so on, we have to preach and popularise a knowledge of Theosophy. It is not the individual and determined purpose of attaining oneself Nirvana.

Maybe we could ask ourselves, was there something back then that we do not have today? Was there a way of doing things that is no longer used but perhaps could be used again, with some change of course, since times have changed?

Here is some information about Col. Olcott and Annie Besant that may inspire us.

• In Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Col. Olcott founded the Buddhist Theosophical Society, which led to the creation of 200 schools during his lifetime (including Ananda College).

• He, riding in an oxcart of his own making, traveled the island giving lectures and spreading his ideas.

• In 1894, he founded the Olcott School in Chennai, a free school for the poorest children, in a magnificent green campus adjoining the garden of the TS.

• It is said that in 1927, at nearly 80 years old, Annie Besant still gave 56 lectures in 3 weeks in all the European capitals.

• That she (also Olcott and Blavatsky) made countless trips by ocean liners and trains.

• At the age of 62, she did not hesitate to learn to drive.

• In 1924, she discovered the airplane and embraced it with enthusiasm.

• An excellent orator, she had a political career, undertaking lecture tours on feminism.

These are extraordinary individuals, without a doubt. It would likely be presumptuous for most of us to try to emulate them. But what can we do at our own level? One thing seems certain: Olcott and Annie Besant prioritized action.

Here are some possible solutions that come to mind: For their time, avant-garde thinking, courage, and even audacity was among the secrets of their success. Isn't there a path here for us to follow?

We must not hesitate to use the modern means of our time. We must not hesitate to take actions that most people would not dare to take. It is not by repeating the same actions we have taken in the last 30 years that we will obtain different results. Now, if for some individuals, some Lodges and even some countries, the results of the last 30 years are what they are content with, perhaps then there is nothing to change except for minor improvements. But for those who desire changes, it is clear that this must lead us to take very different actions.

The things you will do and my choices of actions may be completely different. I'm giving you a few examples here, but I'm sure many other ideas can emerge that are just as effective, or even more so.

• Some theosophists, with several years of experience, have pointed out to me that when questioned about their theosophical activities, they become uncomfortable and cannot give a clear and brief answer. I believe it would be beneficial, to have such a profound understanding of what Theosophy means to us, that when questioned about our practices, we can answer quickly and without hesitation. This confidence in our responses, I am convinced, will encourage more people to follow us.

• There will be training programs, to provide certification for Theosophists.

Among other things, these programs will cover how to study, to teach, and to work in Theosophy. Taking these courses will without a doubt be a way to help us personally, but also, and above all, a way to help us be more useful to the work of the Masters and in the service to humanity.

• Becoming more involved in TOS is in line with current trends, such as contributing to charitable works. And although TOS is not a charity, some of its activities come closer to the concrete action that the world today is accustomed to.

In conclusion, I would say that in addition to these qualities of being forward-thinking, courageous, and even audacious, one last quality is essential: discernment. This is something very delicate. For as it is said in *At the Feet of the Master*, Discernment is not only about discerning good from bad, which is generally easy, but also about discerning what is better from good, which requires a constant review of our actions with each passing day or week.

While I am stressing in this message, the importance of taking action, it's even more important to not just perform quality actions, but also to perform a great quantity of them — and this on all three plans. It is essential to always remain with the right view, the right intention, the right effort, in order to do the right action.

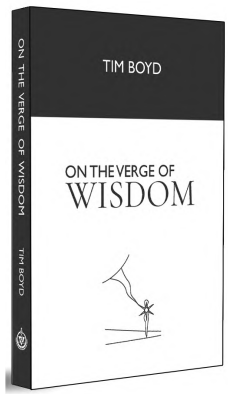
However, this doesn't mean waiting to be perfect or to know the perfect course of action before acting; that will never happen. I believe that before acting, we must distinguish between what is good and what is best, but more precisely, what is best in the present moment and according to our best understanding. This way, we ensure that we act in the best possible way, while remaining ready to adapt as the situation evolves.

I could say that we must reflect and meditate before performing the service that is the action. This brings us to the three pillars: study, meditation, and service. Or I could say that we must meditate in order to perform right action and be full of devotion when we perform that action. ✧

We have talked so much about rights
that we have forgotten that which is greater than our rights.
It is the power of seeing what is nobler than we have dreamed
and bowing before it till it permeates our life and makes us like itself.
Only those who are weak are afraid to obey;
only those who are feeble are afraid of humility.

Annie Besant, *The Spiritual Life*, p.9

Books of Interest



ON THE VERGE OF WISDOM by Tim Boyd, Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Chennai, India, 2025, pp. 226, Rs 250.

"Many of us feel it — a quiet pull toward something deeper. A sense that beneath the noise of daily life, something vital is missing. Something waiting to be remembered." This blurb sums up the theme of the book. The author has been the President of the Theosophical Society (TS) for more than a decade. His long experience of leading a spiritual life, continuous journeys to various countries, and meeting people of different religions, ethnic groups and social status enable him to ask some deeper questions of life: What does it mean to live a spiritual life? How can we move from seeking to knowing? From knowing to being? The book is divided into four sections, namely The Big Picture, Getting There, Practice, and Healing. Most of the chapters are articles published in *The Theosophist* during his presidentship.

The seven chapters in "The Big Picture" point to a fundamental change needed in human nature to understand Wisdom. In the chapter, "The Paradox of Self-Transformation", the author says: "In the absence of some shift in the centre of our awareness, a meaningful association with Wisdom is difficult to impossible. Our normal approach tends to be self-centred." The study of comparative religion, philosophy and science is the second of the three objects of the TS. He points out the similarity between great religious traditions: Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity. He says:

> Pick your tradition and there are specific steps that are enumerated. Yoga has its Eight Limbs, Tibetan Buddhism speaks about the graded path to enlightenment, the Lam Rim. Catholic Christianity has The Stations of the Cross. In a theosophical approach the practice we emphasize is study, meditation, and service. These are practices in which we engage with the assumption that they ultimately lead to self-transformation.

What is self-transformation?

> This process of self-transformation does have its steps, but self-transformation itself is something very different. There is not a certain number of correct books or of hours in meditation that results in the experience of transformation. In and of itself, transformation occurs as a very specific event. . . . People such as Ramana Maharshi, Jesus, Buddha, Muhammad and others led spiritual lives. They did practice the study, and it resulted in an experience that they then tried to teach. They spent a lifetime teaching, and everyone around them spent a lifetime listening.

It is said that when the Buddha spoke, "one of them hearing the very first words

. . . experienced enlightenment. . . . [H]is beloved disciple and attendant, Ananda, was with him for forty-five years . . . never had it. . . . Processes can be taught, learned and practised, but the experience itself is unspeakable."

The chapter "Divine Seed" opens with the sentence: "One of the things that characterizes the life of anyone who takes on a genuine spiritual practice, is that it puts one in touch with big questions." Quoting the Mahachohan's Letter, the author describes "two debilitating states of mind . . . [that] had come to characterize human consciousness". One was "brutal materialism" and the other was "'degrading superstition' or the reign over human minds of a dead-letter religiosity".

> We only become aware of the ever-invisible and ever-present spirit as it interacts with those principles that are capable of reflecting its presence. In reality we know nothing of spirit. What we do know are its reflections.

Regarding the limitations of material science, the author states that "Only 4% of all that makes up the universe is known to science." In this situation we are all in a condition similar to what St Paul described: "The things I would do, I do not do; the things I would not do, that I do." The same sentiments are reflected in the words of the character Duryodhana in *Vyasa Bharata*: "I know what is *dharma* (righteousness), but I do not have the inclination to follow it. I know what is *adharma* (unrighteousness), but I cannot refrain from it." The condition of modern man is no different.

The title of the chapter "The Solution to All Problems" is alluring to the reader. The author mentions a vast range of problems from a mundane headache to societal crime to global deforestation. As an example he considers a volcanic eruption, a most destructive event in Nature. Most of us see the eruption and the lava, but do not see the central cause as a long period of intense heat and pressure acting inside the earth. The central cause of suffering in modern society is our taking on a series of false identities similar to the prevalent problem called "identity theft". We are identified to our nationality, religion, family tradition, and so forth. We have to come out of these narrow cocoons by recognizing these layers of identity, using the traditional Indian process of *neti, neti* which literally means "not this, not this."

The chapters "The Illuminated Mind" and "Seasons of the Mind" are worth pondering on. In "Grace" the author refers to the four *āshramas* or stages of life such as:

> Youth, where we listen and learn; . . . the householder, where we apply the things we have heard to building a family and accumulating wealth. The final two phases relate to a process of maturation in the unfoldment of our consciousness. In the third *āshrama*, the ideal is a time of introspection. Having fulfilled the various responsibilities in life, one enters a time to look more deeply at things to try to connect with states beyond worldly conditions. It is described as the 'forest dweller' *āshrama*. The fourth and final *āshrama* is the renunciant, where all worldly relationships are abandoned and the remaining life energies are focused on union with the Divine.

By citing these traditional approaches to

spirituality or wisdom tradition he concludes: "We are surrounded and permeated by a universal consciousness that is divine in its nature. We are here to connect with that".

The concluding chapter of the first part is "Are We Pacifists?" The author says:

> Peace and its possibility are central to any genuine process of self-transformation. . . . "My peace I give unto you" is the promise of the Christ. "Peace comes from within, not from without" and "Cultivate this very path of Peace" are Buddha's words. "Shanti, Shanti, Shanti" is the threefold invocation of Peace that closes a Hindu session of prayer, mantra, or meditation.

We are always in search of solutions to problems. Here the wise words of Albert Einstein are worth pondering: "No problem can be solved at the same level on which it was created." Our functioning in all realms — political, personal, environmental, etc. — is determined by the range of our perception. We do not possess imagination enough to sense what we are missing.

The second part of the book, "Getting There", starts with "The Untold Story". According to the author,

> Throughout history the great teachers have recognized that, in spite of . . . our level of advancement, we are essentially a childlike humanity, filled with fears of the dark and unknown, and with a fascination for toys. And so they tell us stories that relieve our fears. . . . As if we were climbing a ladder, they lead us step by step to a place where the rungs end, to a plane that goes beyond the story telling to the untold story.

About the theosophical teachings, he states: "One of the great strengths of the theosophical tradition has been its unwavering focus on the importance of accessing the intuition. Regardless of our religious approach, or lack of one, genuine understanding begins beyond where normal thinking ends."

In the chapter "To Be Silent" the author quotes Confucius that "his tailor was the wisest man that he knew, 'because every time I see him, he measures me anew'. Just because he made a suit the last time, he does not make it in the exact same way. . . . It is a counsel to us to truly see and hear."

Like many other chapter in the book which deals with human problems and solutions, the chapter "On Fear" addresses the basic nature of fear.

> HPB [once] wrote . . . : "Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, the only realities." For example, a fish in water is surrounded by the creatures of the sea, lives in a watery world, but has no understanding or interaction with the birds flying in the air or people walking on the land. The same example has been given for our consciousness as individuals.

HPB's "Diagram of Meditation" is discussed in detail in this chapter. She suggests various ways as a curative for the various ills that arise from the heresy of separateness, among which is fear.

In subsequent chapters, the core teachings of Buddha are quoted as stories, examples and the Dharma teachings of the Tathagata. The author is also conversant with the teachings of the *Yoga-Sutras* of Patanjali, the Upanishads and

the *Bhagavad Gita*. The analysis of *dukkha* or sorrow by Patanjali is cited. The theosophical gems, *At the Feet of the Master*, *The Voice of the Silence*, *Light on the Path* are quoted with explanations, which will inspire the reader to go through the original text and detailed commentaries.

From the chapter "Ten People" :

> J. Krishnamurti once made the statement that if there were ten people in the world like him, the world would be transformed. . . . Clearly the ten transformative people he was talking about were not determined by their personalities, circumstances, or popular regard. . . . The "ten people" referred to something deeper. . . .
>
> In our home, among our friends, in our communities, in every place we are present we can be powerful. Even in silence.

The chapters, "Three Pillars of Practice" and "The Fourth Pillar of Practice", deal with the same subject of self-transformation. These pillars are 1. Elevation of mind, 2. Experiments with quiet, 3. Conscious compassionate activity, 4. Gratitude. The last is the most important one, which we miss always. Excerpts:

> The great wit and thinker Voltaire made the comment, "In the beginning God created man in his image, and man has been trying to repay the favor ever since." So, Yoga is reduced to a series of exercises and postures promoting health; Love becomes lust; Kindness is mistaken for weakness; Peace becomes suppression of war; God becomes "him". . . . There is nothing so pure that it cannot become tainted by the touch of the untransformed human mind.
>
> Gratitude of any scope is beneficial, but it takes on a different quality in the context of spiritual practice. . . . [In the East] "Guru Devotion" is the term for the acknowledgement and gratitude to one's teacher for their irreplaceable role in one's unfoldment. In the Lam Rim practice of Tibetan Buddhism, the opening words beginning any practice session are, "Following a kind master, foundation of all perfections, is the very root and basis of the path. Empower me to be constantly mindful of this and make every effort to follow well." This expression of thankfulness is . . . so important that without it, productive practice is not possible.

The chapters, "Message in a Bottle" I, II, and III are on basic qualities which we must cultivate in our life: Trust, Be Open and Do Something. The value of vegetarianism is emphasized in the chapter, "The Vegetarian Ethic".

The fourth part, "Healing" says the root meaning of "heal" is "to make whole". Thus, the work of the TS and its teachings are meant to heal the *bhava-rogas* — worldly diseases — of humanity, which can be healed only by a true teacher. The author's acquaintance with HH the Dalai Lama are recollected in the book. The Dalai Lama always stood for world peace, which was accepted by only a few countries in the world.

The concluding chapter is on "Peace". No doubt this book will be acceptable to Theosophy students as well as the general public. The author in great humility admits that this is only "The Verge of Wisdom" like the great Buddhist monk's statement, "Thus have I heard."

K. DINAKARAN

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