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INSIGHTS INTO THE AGELESS WISDOM

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From the Editor's desk

When Madam Blavatsky wrote about the spirit of truth passing over the face of the dark waters (over one hundred years ago) she did so at a time when material science had captured the minds of a growing number of reasoning people across the world and especially in the West. She refers to the awakening of minds to the emerging theosophical teachings stirring the interest in the fast-growing movement of the Theosophical Society. The society's motto "*There is no religion higher than truth*" not only challenged the stranglehold of religious mythology but also the wild assertions of the science of the day. But religion and science were not to be put aside so easily. In the century that followed, revelation, discovery, and achievement strengthened science to an almost infallible status.

In the first two decades of this century, the widespread use of the internet opened a vast communication opportunity in line with the advent of the Aquarian age. This has brought about a new shift to a greater acceptance of theosophy and the deeper aspects of spiritual teachings. The spirit of truth is once again passing over the face of the dark waters. However, in today's hectic world, we are seeing a widening split between spiritual and materialistic aspirations in society. Selfishness and greed pervade every aspect of our lives. The teachings of Theosophy are not easy to master but its study is the best hope for humanity in these troubled times.



"When the artificial chilly flame of modern materialism is extinguished for lack of fuel, those for whom the great hope of existence

beyond the grave is a vexation should prepare for the greatest disappointment they could possibly have.

For out of the deep muddy waters of materiality a mystic force is rising. It is the first rustling but it is a superhuman rustling, it is supernatural only to the superstitious and the ignorant. The spirit of Truth is passing now over the face of the dark waters; and in parting them, is compelling them to reveal their spiritual treasures; this spirit is a force that can never be hindered and can never, never be stopped."

The Spirit of Truth - Helena P. Blavatsky

The master K. H. has said that theosophy is the world's only hope. I believe that he is telling us that in the long term, however far into the future, it is only when humanity in the majority regard the teachings of theosophy as their living truth, that the world will be at peace and evolution will be firmly on track in its pursuit of perfection.

As H. P. B. says: "*This spirit is a force that can never be hindered and can never, never be stopped.*" ✨

Julie Cunningham Editor

Questions for a Lifetime

By *Barbara Hebert*



One thing is certain: we will all die. Therefore, the topic of death and the afterlife intimately impact each and every one of us. Because of the cyclic nature of death and rebirth, some of the questions that arise for me and upon which I ponder frequently include: What am I supposed to be learning in this incarnation? Why was I born into a Theosophical family? How does my

understanding of Theosophy impact spiritual development in this incarnation?

Being raised in a Theosophical family has many pros as well as some cons, as numerous individuals across the world who are multigenerational Theosophists can attest. Speaking from my own experience, I am grateful to my family for sharing Theosophical concepts with me, such as: life is inherent in all things; reincarnation exists; I



Hadja

am responsible for my own choices and actions; I am more than this physical body; and there are no differences at the core of existence between people or between religious traditions.

My grandmother taught my siblings, cousins, and me about Theosophical concepts from the beginning of our lives. For example, one summer when we spent a great deal of time visiting her, she put a note on her back

door that read: *“Don’t slam me. It hurts.”* She explained to us that even the door had particles of life in it and was a living thing. She taught us to be gentle with the leaves and flowers in her yard. To emphasize the importance of the Buddha’s blessing on the world during the Wesak festival, she had us put clean sheets on all of the beds, wear new nightgowns, and fall asleep with the intention of going to the festival on the astral level. The leaders of the Theosophical Society were heralded as eminent teachers. Her lessons were those of an elder student to much younger students. They were concrete and simple. It was the only way we would understand at that point in our lives.

As time went on and I continued my studies in Theosophy, I realized that the concepts my grandmother shared were not nearly as concrete and as simple as I had once assumed. My initial understanding of karma (if I’m mean to my sister in this life, then I’ll have a sister who is mean to me in my next life) changed dramatically over the years, as well it should have!

When we grasp a concept and hold on to it without examining it, we are not giving ourselves the opportunity to grow and learn. Only through continued and objective examination of our beliefs can we learn, grow, and deepen our understanding of the world — seen and unseen — around us.

It is certainly easy to accept our ideas as accurate and infallible. In fact, it can even feel somewhat comfortable. However, taking this action does not hold true to the basic precepts of the Theosophical tradition and may lead to stagnation. Self-examination, including

examination of our beliefs, allows for growth and expansion of awareness — a goal toward which seekers on the Path strive.

Along these same lines, many individuals tend to accept current and former leaders (and even members) of the Theosophical Society as totally infallible and their teachings as totally accurate. From my perspective, doing so leads us toward inertia rather than toward a vibrantly spiritual activism. While many have idealized leaders and members of the Society, the human fallibility that is a part of all of us has been dismissed, discarded, or ignored. There seems to be some perception that paying attention to the human foibles of an individual might negate or discredit the teachings that this person has shared.

It is not the individual who matters: it is the material that rings true for each and every one of us. However, in many instances, Theosophists and others have focused on the individual rather than on the material. This

focus has, at times, raised certain individuals onto pedestals, while at other times it has been solely on the individual's imperfections. Neither seems appropriate, as neither is a true representation of the individual.

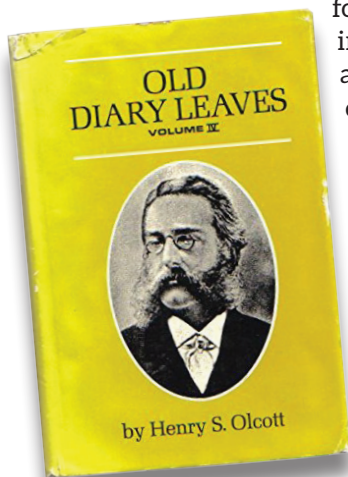
For instance, H.P. Blavatsky, one of our co-founders, was the recipient of malicious accusations and hurtful claims of charlatanism for much of her life and on through the present day. H.P.B. was a human being — a remarkable human being,

no doubt, but still a human being with a strong personality. She was capable of making mistakes and did in fact make mistakes. She was, as we all are, an imperfect human being. However, her humanness does not negate the validity of the material she shared. In an essay entitled “Concerning H.P.B.: Stray Thoughts on Theosophy,” her personal secretary G.R.S. Mead writes:

What we know is, that in spite of all that people have said against the extravagantly abused woman for upwards of a quarter of a century, the fundamentals of Theosophy stand firm, and this for the very simple reason that they are entirely independent of Madame Blavatsky. It is Theosophy in which we are interested, and this would remain an immovable rock of strength and comfort, an inexhaustible source of study, the most noble of all quests, and the most desirable of paths on which to set our feet (emphasis in the original).

In chapter 24 of the fourth series of *Old Diary Leaves*, H.S. Olcott, cofounder and first president of the Theosophical Society, writes about looking always to that highest aspect of ourselves for answers. He advises us to avoid bequeathing divine status on any person. Talking about H.P.B., he writes:

I do especially protest against and denounce a tendency which is growing among us to lay the foundations of a new idolatry. I protest against the first giving way to the temptation to elevate either them [the Masters], their agents, or any other living or dead personage to the divine status, or their teachings to that of infallible doctrine. I have been taught to lean upon myself alone, to look to my Higher Self as my best teacher, best



guide, best example, and only saviour. I was taught that no one could or ever would attain to the perfect knowledge save upon those lines.

He writes about H.P.B. after her death: *If she had lived, she would have undoubtedly left her protest against her friends making a saint of her or a bible out of her magnificent though not infallible writings. She did not discover nor invent Theosophy, nor was she the first or the ablest agent, scribe, or messenger of the Hidden Teachers of the Snow Mountains. Nobody living was a more staunch and loyal friend of hers than I, nobody will cherish her memory more lovingly. But I never worshipped her, never blinded my eyes to her faults, never dreamt that she was as perfect a channel for the transmission of occult teaching as some others in history had been, or as the Masters would have been glad to have found.*

If we are to be true students of the Ancient Wisdom, we must examine its teachings thoroughly and objectively. We must look to that highest aspect of ourselves and ask, does this teaching feel authentic and valid to me at this time? We cannot look at any individual, whether leader, author, or even ourselves, as having the ultimate truth. Few, if any, living human beings – unless perhaps they are adepts – possess such truth. Through study and meditation, some individuals may discover small fragments of truth, but not more. It is imperative to objectively examine and question any belief we may hold, whether about an individual or about a concept. Self-awareness and self-observation provide the basis from which we can continue to grow and learn. Through this process, we begin to experience those tiny

glimpses into what may be a portion of the ultimate truth.

Herein lie some answers to the questions with which this article began. For me at this point in time, these answers include the following: incarnating into various bodies provides the opportunity to learn and grow through continuous examination of self and beliefs; my best teacher is that highest aspect of my Self; and only a very small glimpse of the ultimate truth is available to us on this physical plane. ✨

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Barbara Hebert is National President of the Theosophical Society in America.

"The service of man is the noblest of privileges, and to work for the world the richest of prizes. Our philosophy, our science, and our religion have only worth as they make us more useful members of the brotherhood of Man."

Annie Besant

Theosophy: Ancient Wisdom for the New Age



What is Theosophy? H.P. Blavatsky once wrote: “It is no exaggeration to say that there never was – during the present century, at any rate – a movement, social or religious, so terribly, nay, so absurdly misunderstood, or more blundered about than THEOSOPHY – whether regarded theoretically as a code of ethics, or practically, in its objective expression, i.e., the Society known by that name.”¹

Does Theosophy claim to be some sort of new religion or previously unknown mystical revelation to the world? On the contrary, one of the Eastern Sages behind the Theosophical Movement wrote: “Theosophy is no new candidate for the world’s attention, but only the restatement of principles which have been recognised from the very infancy of mankind.”²

The term “Ancient Wisdom” is in popular usage nowadays. Almost anything and everything is classified as “Ancient Wisdom” in the world of popular spirituality. It seems that many people consider the term to mean something along the lines of “something wise that was said in ancient times.”

The fact is that the Ancient Wisdom is something very definite and specific, while at the same time being unsectarian and universal. It is a full and complete body of Knowledge, a vast, perfect, and unchanging system of information, instruction, and guidance. It is the natural unity and synthesis of religion, philosophy, and science. It is

something which contains the answer to every question and the solution to every problem. It is timeless Truth.

“Ancient Wisdom” is only one name which has been applied to the Great Knowledge. It has also been called Ageless Wisdom, Divine Wisdom, Divine Science, Gnosis, Atma-Vidya, Brahma-Vidya, Gupta-Vidya, Sanatana Dharma, Esoteric Philosophy, Esoteric Science, Occult Philosophy, Sacred Science, the Wisdom-Religion, and the Secret Doctrine. It is the Esoteric Teaching which underlies all the world’s religions. It is also the archaic and primeval source and fountainhead of all the truth which may be found in the various religions, philosophies, and sciences of the world.

H.P. Blavatsky begins her book *The Key to Theosophy* by stating that “*Theosophy is Divine Knowledge or Science.*” She then explains that the word itself is derived from the Greek term “*Theosophia,*” which “*is not “Wisdom of God,” as translated by some, but Divine Wisdom such as that possessed by the gods. The term is many thousands of years old. ... It comes to us from the Alexandrian philosophers, called lovers of truth, Philaletheians ... The name Theosophy dates from the third century of our era, and began with Ammonius Saccas and his disciples, who started the Eclectic Theosophical system. ... They were also denominated Neo-Platonists.*”³

Beginning in the closing quarter of the 19th century, the Ancient Wisdom – or “the



anciently universal Wisdom-Religion”⁴ – was presented to the world under the name of “*Theosophy.*” Theosophy, therefore, is the Ancient Wisdom.

Rather than being a religion, it could be described as the very essence of Religion itself. Rather than being a philosophy, it could be described as the very essence of Philosophy itself. Rather than being a science, it could be described as the very essence of Science itself.

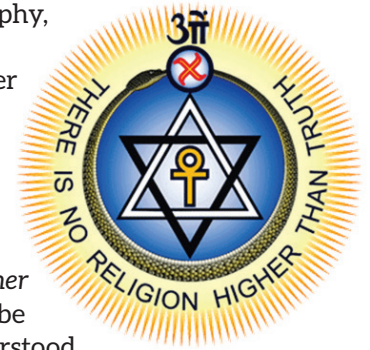
The famous motto of the Theosophical Movement is

“*There is no Religion higher than Truth.*” This can be

interpreted or understood in various different ways. Its main meaning for Theosophists, however, is that Truth exists and that it of course transcends and pre-dates all religions. Theosophy maintains and demonstrates that all religions are the same in their esoteric essence. All religions contain some portion of the

Truth, some to a greater degree than others. Since all religions are inevitably self-limited, however, none can contain the whole Truth. Theosophy is thus something universal and neither adheres to nor promotes any one religion.

Theosophists may belong to any religion or no religion at all. The quest for Truth and Reality in the midst of this ignorant world of delusion and deception...this is what actually matters.



And since Theosophy is itself universal, there are naturally many people who are true Theosophists without ever having heard the word “Theosophy” or of the Theosophical Movement. For the sake of clarity, however, we will use the term “Theosophist” throughout the remainder of this article to mean anyone specifically connected or associated with the modern Theosophical Movement.

Something insisted upon by H.P. Blavatsky (hereafter referred to simply as HPB) and her Teachers was the importance of providing proofs, references, evidences, and sources in order to show the validity, legitimacy, and authenticity of the teachings presented. Utilising thousands of supporting references from a multitudinous array of the most diverse and distant sources, HPB proved the timelessness, reliability, and universality of the Theosophical doctrines, even those which seemed at first glance to be the most peculiar. Her books *The Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled* contain a myriad of references and quotations from the realms of religion, philosophy, classical literature, ancient and modern history, and science.

HPB never claimed any of her teachings to be the result of any “clairvoyant investigations” or “readings of the Akashic Records” carried out by herself. Nor are they the result of any theories, speculations, or ideologies arrived at by herself. She specifically disclaimed this, writing that “The sole advantage which the writer has over her predecessors, is that she need not resort to personal speculations and theories. For this work is a partial statement of what she herself

has been taught by more advanced students, ... The writer ... believes in the ancients, and the modern heirs to their Wisdom. And believing in both, she now transmits that which she has received and learnt herself to all those who will accept it.”⁵

Similarly, her colleague William Quan Judge stated in the Preface to his book *The Ocean of Theosophy* that “No originality is claimed for this book. The writer invented none of it, discovered none of it, but has simply written that which he has been taught and which has been proved to him. It therefore is only a handing on of what has been known before.”

He then begins the book with this explanation: “Theosophy is that ocean of knowledge which spreads from shore to shore of the evolution of sentient beings; unfathomable in its deepest parts, it gives the greatest minds their fullest scope, yet, shallow enough at its shores, it will not overwhelm the understanding of a child. It is wisdom about God for those who believe that he is all things and in all, and wisdom about nature for the man who accepts the statement found in the Christian Bible that God cannot be measured or discovered, and that darkness is around his pavilion. Although it contains by derivation the name God and thus may seem at first sight to embrace religion alone, it does not neglect



William Q Judge
(1851-1896).



science, for it is the science of sciences and therefore has been called the wisdom religion. For no science is complete which leaves out any department of nature, whether visible or invisible, and that religion which, depending solely on an assumed revelation, turns away from things and the laws which govern them, is nothing but a delusion, a foe to progress, an obstacle in the way of man's advancement toward happiness. Embracing both the scientific and the religious, Theosophy is a scientific religion and a religious science.

It is not a belief or dogma formulated or invented by man, but is a knowledge of the laws which govern the evolution of the physical, astral, psychical, and intellectual constituents of nature and of man. The religion of the day is but a series of dogmas man-made and with no scientific foundation for promulgated ethics; while our science as yet ignores the unseen, and failing to admit the existence of a complete set of inner faculties of perception in man, it is cut off from the immense and real field of experience which lies within the visible and tangible worlds. But Theosophy knows that the whole is constituted of the visible and the invisible, and perceiving outer things and objects to be but transitory it grasps the facts of nature, both without and within. It is therefore complete in itself and sees no unsolvable mystery anywhere; it throws the word coincidence out of its vocabulary and hails the reign of law in everything and every circumstance.”⁶

In the view of HPB, “The Esoteric philosophy is alone calculated to withstand, in this age of crass and illogical materialism, the repeated attacks on all and everything man

holds most dear and sacred, in his inner spiritual life. The true philosopher, the student of the Esoteric Wisdom, entirely loses sight of personalities, dogmatic beliefs and special religions.”

“Moreover,” she continues, “Esoteric philosophy reconciles all religions, strips every one of its outward, human garments, and shows the root of each to be identical with that of every other great religion.

It proves the necessity of an absolute Divine Principle in nature. It denies Deity no more than it does the Sun. Esoteric philosophy has never rejected God in Nature, nor Deity as the absolute and abstract Ens. It only refuses to accept any of the gods of the so-called monotheistic religions, gods created by man in his own image and likeness, a blasphemous and sorry caricature of the Ever Unknowable.”⁷

It is said that the Ethics of Theosophy are the most important part of it; the way we live our lives, conduct ourselves, and behave towards our fellow living beings being of far greater import than any theoretical knowledge or practical development in Esoteric Science. We thus find it clearly stated that “Ethics are the soul of the Wisdom-Religion”⁸ and that “In its practical bearing, Theosophy is purely divine ethics.”⁹

One of the most important and inspiring passages in the whole of the vast Theosophical literature is the following,

“In its practical bearing, Theosophy is purely divine ethics.”

H.P. Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, Entry for *Theosophia*, p. 328, Theosophy Company.

published at the close of an article by HPB and attributed by her to one of her Teachers, also known as the Masters:

“HE WHO DOES NOT PRACTISE ALTRUISM; HE WHO IS NOT PREPARED TO SHARE HIS LAST MORSEL WITH A WEAKER OR POORER THAN HIMSELF; HE WHO NEGLECTS TO HELP HIS BROTHER MAN, OF WHATEVER RACE, NATION, OR CREED, WHENEVER AND WHEREVER HE MEETS SUFFERING, AND WHO TURNS A DEAF EAR TO THE CRY OF HUMAN MISERY; HE WHO HEARS AN INNOCENT PERSON SLANDERED, WHETHER A BROTHER THEOSOPHIST OR NOT, AND DOES NOT UNDERTAKE HIS DEFENCE AS HE WOULD UNDERTAKE HIS OWN - IS NO THEOSOPHIST.”¹⁰ ❀

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Notes:

1. H.P. Blavatsky, *Is Theosophy a Religion?* H.P. Blavatsky Theosophical Articles Vol. 1, p. 57, Theosophy Company.
2. Master Koot Hoomi, *The Mahatma Letters #VIII*, p. 34-35, Second Edition, Theosophical University Press.
3. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* p. 1-2, Theosophy Company.
4. H.P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled* Vol. 1, Preface, p. vii, Theosophy Company.
5. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. 1, Preface and Introductory, p. vii, xxxvii, Theosophy Company.
6. William Q. Judge, *The Ocean of Theosophy* p. 1-2, Theosophy Company.
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8. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 14, Theosophy Company.
9. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, Entry for *Theosophia*, p. 328, Theosophy Company.
10. H.P. Blavatsky, *Let Every Man Prove His Own Work*, H.P. Blavatsky Theosophical Articles Vol. 1, p. 78, Theosophy Company.

"There is only one religion though there are a hundred versions of it."

George Bernard Shaw

If a man could pass through Paradise in a dream, and have a flower presented to him as a pledge that his soul had really been there, and if he found that flower in his hand when he awoke - Aye, and what then?

Samuel Taylor Coleridge



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Sustainability, Deep Ecology and the Sacred

By *Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee*

As our world stumbles to the brink of ecological collapse, the “tipping point” of irreversible climate change, sustainability has become a vital issue. But in order to consider the question of sustainability, it is important to begin with the question: who or what is being sustained? Does sustainability refer to “sustained economic growth,” and an environment that is able to sustain our present human civilization with its energy-intensive, consumer-driven needs and image of material progress? Or does sustainability refer to the whole ecosystem, an interconnected web of life with its vast and rich diversity of species? Which world are we trying to sustain?

The first image of sustainability has economic models of growth and energy efficiency, often with accompanying “green” ideas such as green technologies or green jobs to help our civilization develop. It is orientated almost solely towards our human wellbeing, which the environment is seen as supporting. This is sometimes referred to as “surface ecology.”

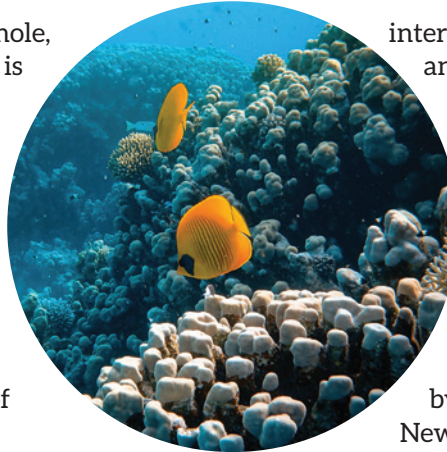
The second image of sustainability is often referred to as “deep ecology” and it considers the ecosystem as a living whole of which humanity is only one part. In this complex web of interrelationships all species are dependent upon each other, and it is this dynamic pattern of inter-relationship that needs to be sustained. No one part can be

considered as separate from the whole, and the idea that the environment is just here to support our human civilization is a travesty of real environmental consciousness.

Deep ecology moves beyond the Newtonian idea of humanity being separate from the world in which we live – the image of humanity and its “environment.” It does not see humanity as a “superior” species, which the rest of the ecosystem should support in a subservient manner, or that nature is for humanity to master and control. Rather than embracing a Darwinian concept of the survival of the fittest, deep ecology sees life from the perspective of co-operation and interdependence. It brings into question whether our present civilization, with its model of continued economic and material growth, is ethically or environmentally sustainable.

Is it right that our human needs and desires take precedence over the whole of creation, to the point of unprecedented species depletion, pollution, and destruction of natural habitat – as well as constellating a climate change that is bringing our whole ecosystem into a dangerous state of imbalance? And if creation is an interdependent whole, how long can we all endure this present ecocide?

An interdependent ecosystem is closer to the dynamics of particle physics, which we begin to understand as underlying our physical world. Here not only is no one part separate from another, but everything is



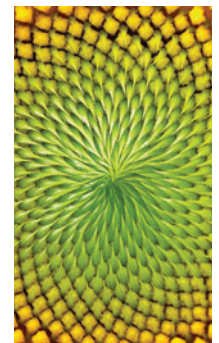
interacting, both locally and at a distance. And consciousness itself is not separate from physical reality. We are interdependent in ways we are only just beginning to understand. And yet we still live in a civilization dominated by an outdated Newtonian image of separation. Sadly even much

present “environmental consciousness” remains within this paradigm, seeing the ecological imbalance as a problem that we can solve scientifically or economically. We have only begun to recognize the degree to which this unprecedented global crisis requires a shift in consciousness. If we are to truly respond to the need of an interconnected whole, we need a quality of consciousness that embraces the whole.

Once we step into the reality of a holistic consciousness that is truly in “interrelationship” with the whole, we will find our self in a very different world in which everything is interacting with us in a continually dynamic state.

Even our consciousness is affecting the physical world. The question then becomes what is our role in this truly interdependent reality? Even our present image of “deep ecology” primarily sees the world through a consciousness of separation – the analytic and rational framework of our education and conditioning. We rarely experience our

Francesco Ungaro



Mathew Schwartz

consciousness merged into the oneness of the world around us, as for example exists with indigenous peoples for whom even the idea of an individual being separate from their environment does not exist.

Sadly separation is so embedded into our present Western consciousness that we are not even aware of the limitations of our perception, or how our problem-solving mentality has a determining effect on how we see and interact with our environment. We have been educated to see the parts rather than the whole and to think and act from an attitude of separation. If we are to truly embrace the reality of ecological

sustainability that recognizes the world as a living whole, we need to make the shift into a holistic consciousness, a consciousness that sees the whole in every part. Only then can we fully respond to the environmental crisis that is being caused by our present Western consciousness and the values it supports. Deep ecology requires not just a shift in values or ideology, but a shift in consciousness.

We cannot return to an indigenous consciousness, and we need the tools of science and technology to survive in today's world. However, within indigenous awareness, there is a key that can awaken us to an awareness of oneness. This key is the recognition of the sacred nature of creation. For indigenous peoples everything is sacred, and they live this primal knowing in all of their daily activities. All of the world is sacred, and everyday activities have a living relationship to the sacred. This is the

heartbeat of their world. It could be argued that our Western civilization is unusual in not having the awareness of the sacred at its foundation. In our image of "progress" we are unaware of having lost something so essential to life.

The "sacred" is not something primarily religious or even spiritual. It is not a quality we need to learn or to develop. It belongs to the primary nature of all that is. When our ancestors knew that everything they could see was sacred, this was not something taught but instinctively known. It was as natural as sunlight, as necessary as breathing. We all have within us a sense of the sacred, a sense of reverence, however we may articulate it. It is a part of our human DNA.

We each need to find this key within us. What does it mean for something to be sacred, what feeling does this evoke? How do we recognize the quality of the sacred, and how do we then respond?

If we recognize the sacred and embrace it within all of life, we will find that life will speak to us as it spoke to our ancestors. It will remind us of how to live in harmony with creation, and how to restore the balance that is intrinsic to life. This is the ancient wisdom of the Earth itself, the Earth which has evolved and changed over millennia, been through previous ecological shifts. Unless we return to this deep knowing, real sustainability will remain a concept rather than a lived reality. Thomas Berry speaks to this:

"We need not a human answer to an earth problem, but an earth answer to an earth problem. The earth will solve its problems, and possibly our own, if we will let the earth



Naja Bertolt



function in its own ways. We need only listen to what the earth is telling us."

We still carry this primal knowing of the sacred within our consciousness, even if we have forgotten it. A relationship to the sacred is older than any formalized religion, even though it is found at the foundation of many religions. It is a primal recognition of the wonder, beauty and divine nature of the world. It is a felt reverence, an inner sense –we even speak of “*a sense of the sacred.*” Once we bring this foundational awareness into our consciousness, into our relationship with the world in which we are present, we will find that it opens a door in our consciousness into oneness. The sacred is a quality of spirit in which all is one. Once we

recognize something as sacred we feel its unity – the whole of which it is a part – the sacred naturally draws us away from separation towards oneness. The remembrance of the sacred is a key that can awaken our consciousness to the oneness to which we belong.

The awareness of the sacred reconnects our consciousness to the primal structure of life which was known to our ancestors. For them

the world was sacred and whole – they could not conceive of it being other. The greatest tragedy of modern man is that we have lost this primal awareness, this knowing of the sacred. The most needed work is to reconnect with the sacred in our outer and inner life. Through this simple act of remembrance, we can regain the balance we have so dangerously lost. Then we can see how we are a part of the interconnected web of life and know the work that needs to be done. Our outer actions, rather than re-constellating the patterns of separation, will naturally come from oneness and help life’s unity to unfold. We will again be a part of the evolving organic interdependence of life. Without this simple key of awareness of the sacred, we

could remain lost in the wasteland world we are creating.

If we remember the sacred we will find ourselves in a world as whole as it is holy. This is not a world that sustains our models of economic growth and consumer desires. This is rather a world of wonder and magic, and a world that needs our attention – that needs to be sustained as much as it sustains us, sustains our souls as well as our bodies. But first we need to make this shift in consciousness, to see the earth with new

eyes. To quote the Canadian environmentalist David Suzuki:

"The way we see the world shapes the way we treat it. If a mountain is a deity, not a pile of ore; if a river is one of the veins of the land, not potential irrigation water; if a forest is a sacred grove, not timber; if other species are biological kin, not resources; or if the planet is our mother, not an opportunity—then we will treat each other with greater respect. This is the challenge, to look at the world from a different perspective." ✨

*Tread softly.
All this earth is holy ground.
It may be, could we look with seeing eyes,
This spot we stand upon is paradise.*

Christine Rossetti

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A Right Understanding of Karma

It is perhaps hard to believe, but true nevertheless, that virtually no one in the Western world had heard of the word “Karma” or knew anything clear or specific about it, until only 140 years ago when H. P. Blavatsky and the Theosophical Movement introduced the concept of Karma – along with other distinctly Eastern teachings such as reincarnation and the Oneness and Divinity of all life – to the West. Karma was largely a foreign concept to begin with but its truth and reality were swiftly perceived by many and eventually the word and the basic idea behind it entered into the mainstream.

Some may object to this and say that the teaching of Karma was in the Bible and therefore in the Western world for almost 2,000 years before, but while it’s true that the Bible does contain some very clear statements of Karmic Law, such as “*whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap,*” such verses appear to have never been interpreted as a teaching of Karma, since they were always made subservient to the more distinctly Christian doctrines such as



vicarious atonement: having the record of all one’s sins, misdeeds, and their consequences and responsibility, wiped out and eternally erased from the soul’s account just by asking God’s forgiveness and professing Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The 3rd century Church Father Origen of Alexandria did propose the possibility of reincarnation, in accordance with one’s past actions, in his “First Principles” but his ideas differed in various ways from the Theosophical perspective and



there is no evidence that the general mass of early Christians ever believed in or accepted such ideas; they seem to have gone no further than the limited confines of a few early Christian philosophers, some of whom would have been inspired by the Gnostic Gospels of that era but which also had by their very nature a limited audience. To conclude on this point, we would be extremely hard pressed to find record of anyone in the West clearly and definitely teaching the principles of

Karma as we know them today, prior to Helena Blavatsky.

Today, however, almost everyone in the West has heard of Karma and has at least some faint notion of what it means. But what exactly does it mean and how does it work? Many people misunderstand and misrepresent this noble and ancient spiritual teaching, which is intended to be not merely a “belief” but a practical basis for thought and action. Theosophy states that Karma and Reincarnation are the two most vitally important spiritual concepts for humanity to accurately understand. We hope that these ten points will help to bring about a better and also a more practical understanding of the Law of Karma.

1

“Karma” literally means “action” and “deed” in the ancient Sanskrit language of India. It is the Law of Cause and Effect, Action and Reaction, Sequence and Consequence. We are always setting causes in motion, every moment, through our every act, our every word, and even our every thought. For every cause set in motion, there is a corresponding and correlative effect which comes back. This is the way the universe maintains its harmony, balance, and equilibrium. If a cause was to ever be set in motion without having a corresponding effect, then the entire universe would immediately cease to be, since its continuity and existence depends on this great Law of balance and adjustment. But that will never happen because Karmic Law is immutable Law. In the words of H. P. Blavatsky, the Law of Karma is “*the ultimate*

Law of the Universe.” Every self-conscious being in the universe, without exception, is subject to the Law of Karma. Every being in possession of individual self-consciousness and the intelligent power of choice, is a creator of Karmic causes. Karma is the Law of self-created destiny and everything in the universe proceeds according to this Law. It can be good or bad, positive or negative, depending entirely on the nature of the causes we set in motion. It is entirely impersonal, yet it is entirely just and fair in its working.

2

To try to ESCAPE Karma is to create even worse Karma for yourself. Not only is it grossly unphilosophical, impossible, and spiritually and emotionally immature, but to attempt to somehow PREVENT and AVOID the manifestation of the effects of the causes that you yourself have set in motion is to attempt to engage in nothing less than cosmic injustice!



3

Many people have a one-sided view of Karma, where they gleefully say such things as, “*Karma’s going to get that person who wronged me . . . I can’t wait for Karma to catch up with them!*” whilst completely ignoring the fact that the person wouldn’t have been able to wrong them or harm

them in the first place if it wasn’t for their OWN negative Karma. Karma is never one-sided. For every effect, there was a cause. For every cause, there will be an effect. People who look forward to Karma “catching up” with others are just creating even worse Karma for their own future by their lack of compassion and spiteful nature.

4

Karma and reincarnation are inextricably linked with each other. You can’t have one without the other. It is obvious that one single lifetime is by no means long enough to reap the full effects of every cause we have set in motion during that lifetime. It is also apparent that some of the aspects and circumstances of our current lifetime do not have their origins in the current lifetime but seemingly in the distant past. Physical incarnation itself is a Karmic effect, since one of the main reasons we reincarnate is in order to deal with our past Karma. To have a proper understanding of Karma, a person must also accurately understand reincarnation. To have a proper understanding of reincarnation, a person must also accurately understand Karma.

5

There are three divisions of Karma and in Hinduism these are called Sanchita Karma, Prarabdha Karma, and Agami (also known as Kriyamana and Vartamana) Karma. A person’s Sanchita Karma is their “Karmic account” or “Karmic reservoir,” the storehouse of all their Karma from past lives that has not yet been dealt with. Prarabdha Karma is the specific portion of that Sanchita Karma

which the person is destined to face and experience in the present lifetime. If successfully dealt with, that portion of their Karma will then be exhausted and wiped out. Agami Karma is the fresh Karma we are creating for ourselves right here and right now, as we live this present lifetime. It becomes added to our Sanchita Karma and will manifest itself as our Prarabdha Karma in future lifetimes.

6

It is true that we all have “a lot in life.” It is our Karmic lot, our Karmically determined allotment of situations, circumstances, and experiences. We should always strive for the best but when we just cannot succeed as we would like to in certain areas of life, no matter how hard or often we try or what we do, we should accept it as an indication of our Karma and be thankful and content for what we do have, rather than frustrated and depressed over what we do not or cannot have. No amount of positive thinking, creative visualisation, affirmations or prayers, can alter your Karmic lot in life. This is your Prarabdha Karma. This is not fatalism; it is the Law of self-created destiny. In the past you created your present and in the present you are creating your future.

7

EVERYTHING that happens to us is either Karmically DESTINED or Karmically PERMITTED. It cannot be otherwise, since nothing can happen outside the Law of Karma. Some things in our life are specifically destined to happen to us, as a result of our

Karma, while others are merely permitted. There are also things which do not happen to us, because our Karma will not permit it. Person #1 and Person #2 are

walking along together at night when a madman suddenly appears and stabs Person #1. It seems likely that he would also stab Person #2 but for no apparent reason he runs off without doing so. Person #1 was either Karmically destined to be stabbed or their Karma permitted that they could be stabbed, even though it hadn't been specifically destined to happen. The Karma of Person #2 neither destined nor permitted such a thing to happen to that person. While our Karma may sometimes seem like our greatest “punisher,” it can also be our greatest guardian and protector.

8

The Law of Karma applies to everything in the manifested universe. As well as individual Karma, there is also family Karma, group Karma, national Karma, racial Karma, planetary Karma, and beyond.

9

Karma and reincarnation are found clearly expressed in the world's oldest religion - Hinduism, in Buddhism, and in other Eastern religions but it is not solely an Eastern teaching. Reincarnation and Karma were a





part (though admittedly only ever a small part) of the teaching of Christianity until the 6th century A.D. At the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 A.D. those teachings were repudiated, declared heretical, and officially replaced with doctrines which are more representative of the present form of Christianity. Although the Law of Karma

and Reincarnation is not taught in the public, exoteric teachings of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, etc., it is taught in the inner, esoteric teachings of those religions and indeed of every religion.

10

The only way to free ourselves from negative Karma is to stop setting negative CAUSES in motion! To avoid creating any further future sorrow and suffering for yourself, stop creating it for others. Live your life consciously and harmlessly. Gain complete mastery over your thoughts, words, and deeds and live to be of help and service to others. But don't let your underlying motive for this be one of selfishness - i.e. for the sake of creating good Karma for yourself - but rather live a life of love and compassion simply because it is the right thing to do. Love goodness and virtue for its own sake . . . realise that selfishness is the great curse of humanity . . . and live merely to be an impersonal beneficent force for good in this world. ✨

Anon.

"A harsh word uttered in past lives is not destroyed but ever comes again. The pepper plant will not give birth to roses, nor the sweet jessamine's silver star to thorn or thistle turn."

H. P. B.

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I Return from Violent Death

By *James S Perkins*



Frankie Lopez

The noon sky was brilliant that wintry day in March 1948, as I walked along a country highway not far from the city of Chicago. A cold, gusty Northwest wind was blowing, and I had the collar of my overcoat turned up around my ears. The wide highway was well constructed, and at this particular time, was devoid of traffic. Nevertheless, I was careful to walk along the grassy shoulder of the road on the side that faces oncoming traffic. Having just returned from a strenuous lecture tour that began in 1947 - including visits to England, Europe, and the sub-continent of India, including new-born Pakistan - I was enjoying an unusual and infrequent moment of aloneness, peacefully content with the beauty surrounding me. At my place of residence no one knew that I was out for a brief walk and absent from the building. Feeling assured, therefore, of no disturbance for the present, I was in a completely placid state of meditation.

Without Warning

Meanwhile, far down the road, and entirely unknown to me, an automobile was swiftly approaching from the rear. Its driver had fallen asleep at the wheel, as he later admitted, and as was shown afterwards by the car tracks on the wet surface of the road. It may seem incredible that I heard nothing and was utterly unaware of the car's approach; but the wind in the collar of my coat, together with my confident assurance regarding any traffic from the rear, as well as

my absorption in other levels of consciousness, could account for the lapse of attention. As the car approached, it was veering across the width of the highway, and moving out upon the shoulder of the road behind me. Suddenly, with no note of warning whatsoever, the vehicle struck me with tremendous impact, shattering leg bones, and hurling me backward upon the radiator. The back of my head hit the car's hood with such a loud crack that the driver (as I learned later) was startled awake, and instinctively jerked the wheel, jolting the car again onto the highway. This sudden twisting force catapulted my body onto the paved highway, landing it on the forehead and face.

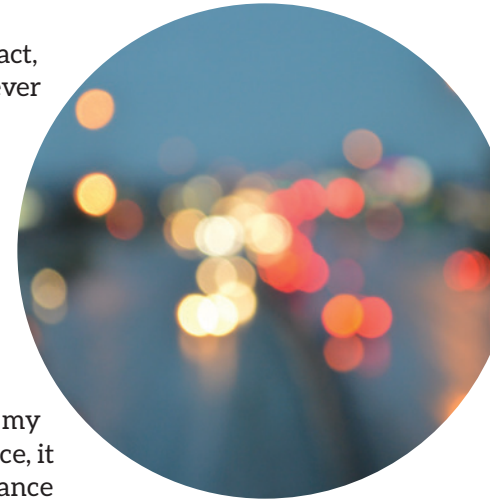
Death While Meditating

After such a smash, and judging from all outer appearances, I was surely dead. Certainly, I had been expelled from my body in a most violent manner. Someone in a neighboring house heard the crash and the shriek of tires and called the police. An ambulance conveyed my body to a hospital where I remained unconscious for five days. The question was whether or not I would live. So far as I was concerned, I had experienced the death of my body while in full, free action. But, the compelling interest at this point was not the body. It was my state of consciousness. I experienced no period of blackout, of which I was conscious. There was no tumult in me of fear, horror, pain, or that numbing paralysis of ultimate disaster. The astonishing truth is that my stream of consciousness, which was engaged in

meditation at the time of the impact, was not interrupted at all! Whatever happened to the physical body occurred with no attention given to it. My awareness remained focused in the abstract regions, which I had entered while walking peacefully along the road prior to the accident. The continuity of my mental pursuit remained unbroken during – and following – the violent change in my physical condition. This experience, it seems to me, has unusual significance regarding the importance of the state of mind just prior to, and during, the time of death. There have been many instances of people “experiencing death” and recollecting the nature of their last moments. Some have even brought back memories of what life seemed to them to be on the other side. But I believe the experience I am describing is unique, because the dreadful occurrence took place while I was in a state of meditation. I remained undisturbed, without any ripple of anxiety, because no warning factors were present. Then, what followed suggests that an extraordinary opportunity is offered at one's death-hour for an intelligent approach to the experience.

Into The All And The Alone

I did become gradually aware that a change had taken place, but it seemed of only incidental importance, as though my coat had fallen to the floor while I was engaged in some absorbing preoccupation. What was



Josh Book

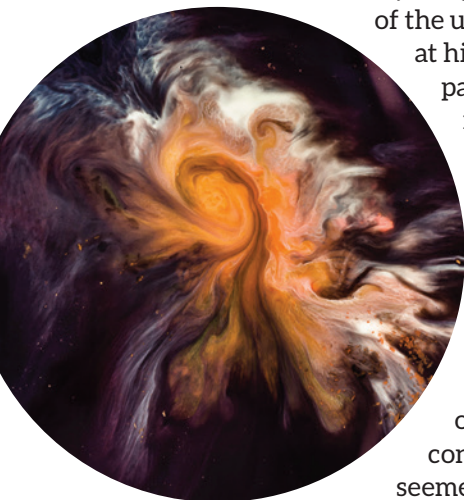
important was the expansion of consciousness that opened horizons vaster than any I had ever before experienced. Indeed, the expansion was overwhelming. I seemed suddenly directly related with everything in existence, and completely devoid of any sense of time and space. Awareness focused upon a Source of Life from which radiated forces flowing into everything, as though the cosmic projection of the universe is ceaselessly taking place at high velocity, and everything is participating in the action. All of this is veiled in the profoundest mystery, experienced as an awareness, rather than as something shown or revealed to me. It was not as though in a dream—not dissociated from my selfsystem, but identified with it. I was simply there, firmly centered in what must be thought of as an 'All-Self', because it was consciously within the body of All. It seemed there was no need of an individual form or body! This state of being continued throughout the five days that the physical body and physical brain were immobilized and inert. "I" remained consciously alive, freely and happily oriented as described.

The bond with the physical body had not been entirely severed. I found that I could return to the physical plane partially, if necessary. I did so on occasions, and delivered messages through my body to the nurse who happened to be present. Apparently, the brain was usable to a limited extent, but from

another base, I certainly dwelt apart from it. Whenever there was such use, consciousness immediately withdrew afterwards to that inmost realm, where it seemed now to be resident. Throughout the five days that I remained thus located, I was in undisturbed contemplation of the transcendence previously described, an awareness of which was taking place in me, in some way. It was characterized by a radiant union of beneficence; not as though I were in some isolated condition of detached intellectual inspection. Union with the All-ness seemed immune to hindrance. Were it not for this consciousness of unity, of Self-identity with the Whole, I would have experienced an awesome loneliness. I could have asked, where were all the people? Was no one else around? But the central characteristic of the experience was identification with all of life, with no necessity for graduated differences in persons, forms, and objects.

The Emptiness Potential

From this contemplation there arose an awareness of my own limitations. The transcendence that I seemed to be experiencing did not shut out perception of the awesome regions of emptiness in human consciousness. This emptiness I now beheld. The empty levels in myself are there because I have yet to reach unfoldment in those areas. I clearly knew that the awakening and fulfillment of these levels would require future evolutionary growth through many relationships with which I am yet to be identified. These relationships and situations



Joel Filipe

will ultimately draw forth every potential of love, wisdom and power that is to be unfolded. How precious, then, becomes every relationship in life, with family and kin, with friends and strangers, with companions, and business associates, with institutions and duties, with those kindly disposed and with difficult people as well. Each situation in life evokes some additional aspect of one's nature, some new depth in one's capacity to understand and to act upon creatively.

Thirst For Renewed Limitation

As these realizations became intensely clear, there was an urge reborn in me—the thirsting to renew sentient experience, as though there was unfinished business to resolve, undeveloped powers awaiting attention in the great schoolroom of the physical world. The urge to return to transitory experience drew me inexorably again into the physical form. The movement downward was a definite action from “there” to “here”. Consciousness became oriented to the necessity for limitation in worlds below – the need for boundaries that one could deal with – for confinement within what one could see and feel and know objectively. A newborn baby has the boundaries of the crib. The enclosure itself stimulates recognition, comprehension, and creative response. The walls of limitation for an adult are the whole wide world, and beyond. Even the Solar Logos can create only within a frame of limitation. Limitation is inevitable; orderly growth could not take place without it.

Re-entry To Earth Life

I could no more resist the tidal drift back into the limitations of physical life than can a leaf floating over Niagara Falls. The experience was essentially that of reincarnation in miniature, a descent through mental and astral levels that ultimately reached the veils of etheric awareness – the portals through which one passes into physical form. Here I experienced the ‘waters of Lethe’, or the ‘Nepenthean veil’ of forgetfulness that curtains off the flow of inner consciousness to and from brain consciousness. Through it I passed, slipping into full, agonized awareness of my physical body's condition. It was a passage into brain and body consciousness that was a dreadful shock. The experience of conscious re-entry was as though a thick blanket of fog was instantly drawn around

Wes Hicks



my entire system of information, blurring the inner-outer lines of communication. For me, it was a blotting out of the infinite horizons that had opened.

Upon resumption of physical life, my first most notable impression was of the complete beguilement to which the human being is subjected in his physical confinement. We truly are shackled by the brain-consciousness, with all values fundamentally distorted. It was only with the greatest effort that I could arouse interest

in pursuing normal lines of worldly activity. With reluctance I undertook existence again in physical form, knowing now of realities that lie beyond the deceptive screen of materiality – knowing that “I” am certainly not the physical body. I could never again be completely deceived by the conviction that physical life is all that there is for me, or for anyone else.

Free Of The Death-Fiction

My attitude towards death changed forever. The ultimate fate of the physical body could no longer be a matter of fearful concern. I was aware of a new freedom, a certain liberation from the dominance of the physical body over mind and soul. I had firsthand knowledge that the expanded Self-consciousness, which lie’s outside the physical barricades, is my real Self. In those

regions beyond the body and the mind, ultimate freedom and bliss are known. I could now see that the whole fabrication of fears about death is a fictitious delusion that is propagated and sustained by man’s own ignorance.

One feature of this experience continues with me: the remarkable fact that some part of my consciousness remains oriented to that exalted region and continues to provide a mystical pathway for inward exploration. It holds ever before me the challenge of those empty areas that are yet to be unfolded. This strange faculty for going there and returning here, remains as a resource for intuitive flashes on my horizon of awareness. ✨

Taken from the book *Experiencing Reincarnation* by James Perkins. ©1977 The Theosophical Publishing House.



James S. Perkins was president of the Theosophical Society in America from 1945-1960.

*The realization that every act,
every word, every thought of ours
not only influences our environment
but for some mysterious reason forms an integral and
important part of the Universe, fits into it as if by
necessity so to say, in the very moment we do, or say,
or think it – is an overwhelming and even shattering experience.
The tremendous responsibility of it is terrifying.
If all of us only knew that the smallest act of ours, or a tiny
thought, has such far-reaching effects as to set in motion
forces which perhaps could shatter a galaxy...
If we know it deeply and absolutely,
if this realization becomes engraved permanently
on our hearts, on our minds, how careful
we would act and speak and think.
How precious life would become in
its integral oneness.*

Irina Tweedie, Sufi and Theosophist

Mastering the Memory

Aaron Andrew Ang

Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences. Look not behind or thou art lost.”

These words are found in the first fragment of *The Voice of the Silence* (p. 18, Theosophy Company edition) and contain a great truth, namely that in one of its aspects the memory is a hindrance and a foe, a veritable obstacle in the way of true progress along the Occult Path, and one which we must master if we do not wish to be mastered by it.

In the pamphlet *Subjects for Discussion* - which consists of “condensed paragraphs on various subjects considered useful for discussion and study by individuals and Branches of the Society” - there is a section headed “MEMORY,” under which William Q. Judge states, amongst other things, that memory is “a cause of rebirth” and “fatal to concentration or living in the present.” He adds that the “Teaching of all sages [is] summed up in 'look not behind or thou art lost!'” and describes memory as “one great cause of the sorrows of the world.” “Students should practice preventing the mind from turning over and over again the past,” he says, since “Memory may be defined as a getting into the old astral currents.”

Of course, this is not saying anything at all against the faculty of human memory in

itself. This is a necessity of conscious existence and it helps rather than harms us to retain the memory of where we live, where we work, knowledge of our family and loved ones, how to perform the things we need to do, and any other information which enables us to be of use to ourselves or others.

The point made in the teachings of Theosophy – which was dubbed by H. P. Blavatsky “*the science of life, the art of living*” – is that we remember many things which we really ought to prevent ourselves from remembering. We keep in our minds things which are better off forgotten. We allow to return to our sphere of thought recollections of both pleasure and pain, which then often influence and impact us in a negative way, whether in the form of re-energised desire, longing, and passion, or a reawakened sorrow, sadness, frustration, and anger.

It is because of such effects of memory that the latter truly becomes “*a cause of rebirth,*” since we are thereby shaping and colouring our skandhas in a way that is guaranteed to attract us back to this Earth, to face and experience the Karmic consequences of such unwise emotional and mental indulgence.

How is memory “*one great cause of the sorrows of the world*”?

If something happens to us and causes us sorrow, that is one thing. But if we return to that occurrence or related aspects of it, in our memory, that is another. The former is generally Karma, an effect of past causes set in motion. The latter is the creation of further Karma and an adding to that which could otherwise be consigned to the past.

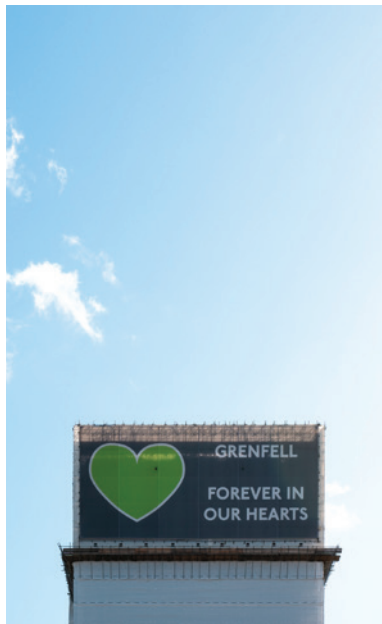
Maybe someone hurt us in the past. Why do we need to remember that? We have the choice and the ability to just let it go. Perhaps someone close to us passed away in tragic and upsetting circumstances. There is nothing preventing us from discarding the sad memories and mental images of their suffering and keeping only the positive and happy memories of our time and relationship with that person. We might possibly have once had an intense romantic encounter, memory of which brings back longing and desire.

The past obviously cannot be undone but we can decide to completely forget about it. Otherwise, is it not true that we are “*getting into the old astral currents*” and hindered from really “*living in the present*”?

In *Mental Discipline*, the Sage, probably representing HPB, tells the Student, “*Now as we are constantly looking at and hearing of new things, the natural restlessness of the mind becomes prominent when we set about pinning it down. Then memory of many objects, things, subjects, duties, persons, circumstances, and affairs brings up before it the various pictures and thoughts belonging to them. After these, the mind at once tries to go, and we find ourselves wandering from the point. It must hence follow that the storing of a multiplicity of useless and surely-recurring thoughts is an obstacle to the acquirement of truth. And this*



Francesca Zama



obstacle is the very one peculiar to our present style of life.”¹

So the memory of minor as well as major thing can often be detrimental. There are people who read a news article about something and are affected by it for days, weeks, or even months afterwards. We’ve all heard people say things such as, “I just couldn’t get it out of my mind” or “I couldn’t stop thinking about it.”

Thankfully, one can get things out of one’s mind and can stop thinking about those things that are not suitable or advisable for mental revivification. It is possible to live in such a way that we keep in our memory only the good and truly necessary things, allowing us to be freer in ourselves and more helpful and effective in our work for others and service of humanity, which is the primary goal and aim of the Theosophist.

It simply comes down to decision and effort. The ancient Indian sage Patanjali advises: “In order to exclude from the mind questionable things, the mental calling up of those things that are opposite is efficacious for their removal.”²

The mind can have no attachment for what it refuses to think about. Attachment to things comes by thinking about them. “Thought is the real plane of action” is a maxim often repeated in Theosophical circles. It truly is, for the Esoteric Philosophy teaches

regarding the reincarnating human soul that: “In its very essence it is thought, and is, therefore, called in its plurality Manasa putra, “the Sons of the (Universal) mind.” This individualised “Thought” is what we Theosophists call the real human EGO, the thinking Entity imprisoned in a case of flesh and bones. This is surely a Spiritual Entity, not Matter, and such Entities are the incarnating EGOS that inform the bundle of animal matter called mankind, and whose names are Manasa or “Minds.” But once imprisoned, or incarnate, their essence becomes dual: that is to say, the rays of the eternal divine Mind, considered as individual entities, assume a two-fold attribute which is (a) their essential inherent characteristic, heaven-aspiring mind (higher Manas), and (b) the human quality of thinking, or animal cogitation, rationalised owing to the superiority of the human brain, the Kama-tending or lower Manas.”³

When a desire, an impulse, an inclination, an imagination, a memory, etc. is no longer fed with any new thought upon it, it begins to fade out and lose its power over the thinker. This is the best way in which addictions and habits are broken and



overcome and it would not be unreasonable to suggest that the returning to unwanted memories is in itself a form of mental addiction, particularly if frequent. It is “normal” behaviour for the personality, the lower and transient ego, but not for the Individuality, the higher, permanent, and immortal Ego, our real Inner Being.

On p. 116-117 of the book *Forum* Answers the question is posed: “What mental obstructions are in the way of meditation and most frequently present?”

To this, Mr Judge replies: “The greatest foe and that most frequently present is memory, or recollection. This was at one time called phantasy. The moment the mind is restrained in concentration for the purpose of meditation, that moment the images, the impressions, the sensations of the past begin to troop through the brain and tend to instantly and constantly disturb the concentration. Hence the need for less selfishness, less personality, less dwelling on objects and desiring them, – or sensation. If the mind be full of impressions, there is also a self-reproductive power in it which takes hold of these seeds of thought and enlivens them. Recollection is the collecting together of impressions, and so it constitutes the first and the greatest obstruction to meditation.”

“I’ll forgive but I can’t forget,” some people say, thus showing that they haven’t really forgiven at all. You can forget, if you want to, and if you don’t want to you ought to sincerely examine yourself and try to discover why you wish to hold on to such memories.

One of the shortest verses in the Bible is *Luke 17:32*, in which Jesus is presented as saying, “Remember Lot’s wife.”

She was one who left an awful place and situation behind her but turned back to look

at it again and was promptly turned into a pillar of salt. Unlike many Christians, Theosophists do not take the poor woman’s ‘saltification’ literally but see in it a jewel of wisdom nonetheless. *The Voice of the Silence*, which HPB translated from the Book of the Golden Precepts “for the daily use” of chelas, disciples, and those who would become such, repeats the age-old message and warning: “Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences. Look not behind or thou art lost.” ✨

By kind permission of BlavatskyTheosophy.com



Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt during Sodom's destruction (*Nuremberg Chronicle*, 1493).

Notes

1. William Q. Judge *Theosophical Articles* Vol. 1, p. 435-436; also in WQJ Pamphlet #10 *Conversations on Occultism II*.
2. *The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*, II:33, interpretation by William Q. Judge, p. 29.
3. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* p. 184.

SUMMER SCHOOL 2023 PROGRAMME



**THURSDAY 10TH -
SUNDAY 13TH AUGUST**

**AT HILLSCOURT
CONFERENCE CENTRE
ROSEHILL
REDNALL
BIRMINGHAM**

Thursday 10th August

- **14.30 onwards**
Arrivals and registration.
- **19.30: Welcome**
By the President. Introduction of speakers and optional meditation.

Friday 11th August

- **07.00 - 08.00: Yoga**
with Teresa Keast.
- **09.45 - 10.00: Meditation**
- **10.00 - 11.00: Talk**
A Deep Dive into Meditation
by Teresa Keast.
An esoteric, psychological and practical exploration of meditation to further our understanding of this necessary practice for developing enhanced self-awareness, mental and emotional health and self-awakening. This talk will include many practical suggestions and experimental guidelines to enhance meditation practice.

- **11.30 - 12.30: Study Groups**
A. The Voice of the Silence 1
with Petra Meyer.
An introduction to *The Voice of the Silence* which HPB dedicated "to a few", a very mystical book for serious students of Theosophy. In these two sessions we will be discovering how meditating on its wisdom helps us reach higher levels of consciousness and understanding.

B. The Jewel in the Lotus 1
with Wayne Gatfield.

The Jewel in the Lotus is of our Higher Self, some may call it the Divine Spark. It is the real part of us, beyond the maya or illusion of our personal selves. In these three sessions we will explore our spirituality and find out who or what we are in essence and share our insights and thoughts on the subject and how we can apply them to our daily lives.

- **14.30 - 15.30: Study Groups**

A. Workshop on Meditation
with Teresa Keast.

An opportunity to understand and experience the power of group meditation and really appreciate its capacity now and in the future to awaken humanity spiritually and create positive change in our world.

B. Movements and Mudras 1
with Terri King.

The practice of Movements and Mudras (hand movements) establishes a connection with the Divine Consciousness. Weather permitting, this will be an outdoor session where we can commune with Nature to enhance this process of transformation.

- **16.00 - 17.00: The Blavatsky Lecture**

H P Blavatsky's Teachings on Theosophical Practice
by Pablo Sender.

Although Madame Blavatsky is widely acknowledged for the wealth of metaphysical and esoteric teachings

SUMMER SCHOOL 2023 PROGRAMME

she presented to the world, spread throughout her writings there is an important body of instructions that is less often recognised. These teachings outline a Theosophical Yoga especially adapted to those seekers who wish to be in the world but not of it.

- **19.30 - 20.30: Music**
Presentation by Neville Crofts.
- **20.45 - 21.15: Meditation**

Saturday 12th August

- **07.00 - 08.00: Yoga**
with Teresa Keast.
- **09.45 - 10.00: Meditation**
- **10.00-11.00: Talk**

The Wisdom of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

by Elizabeth Crofts.

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali form a practical guide to overcoming the obstacles to transformation and enlightenment. Each sutra is a succinct statement which needs close study as well as reference to commentaries by scholars versed in the Indian tradition and the Sanskrit language. There are several key principles contained within it – the need for stillness of mind, constant practice of remaining in the present, detachment from material objects, overcoming of ignorance and other obstacles and the need for discernment—are some of the main ones. This talk will explore some of these principles and how they can be brought into practice in our daily lives.

- **11.30-12.30: Study Groups**

A. The Voice of the Silence 2
with Petra Meyer.

B. The Jewel in the Lotus 2
with Wayne Gatfield.

- **14.00: TOS AGM**

- **14.30 - 15.30: Study Groups**

Movements and Mudras 2
with Terri King.

- **16.00 - 17.00: Public Lecture**

The Golden Stairs
by Pablo Sender.

Toward the end of her life, Madam Blavatsky produced a short statement presenting a set of precepts known as *The Golden Stairs*. She declared that this text came from a letter of a Master of Wisdom and was meant for those who seek guidance for Theosophical living. We will explore this remarkable document that has inspired Theosophists for over a hundred years.

- **19.30 - 20.30: Quiz**
by Damon Scotthern.
- **20.45 - 21.15: Meditation**

Sunday 13th August

- **07.00 - 08.00: Chi Kung**
with Terry King.
- **09.45 - 10.00: Meditation**
- **10.00 - 11.00: Talk**

H P Blavatsky and the Ethics of Theosophy

By Michele Sender.

From 1880 to 1891 Madame Blavatsky wrote a series of letters to the American Conventions which are as relevant today as they were at the time. Showing a concern with Theosophical living, these documents elaborate on the importance of what she called “*the Ethics of Theosophy*” highlighting the need to apply the teachings of the esoteric philosophy to our daily lives.

- **11.30 - 12.30: Study Groups**
- A. How to Survive in Precarious Times**
with Pam Evans.
- This study session covers why there is suffering in our cyclic existence, the power of prayer, mantra chanting and healing meditation.
- B. The Jewel in the Lotus 3**
with Wayne Gatfield.
- **14.00 - 14.30**
Closing of the Summer School.

Meal and break times

- **08.00 - 09.00** Breakfast
- **11.00 - 11.30** Coffee break
- **13.00 - 14.00** Lunch
- **15.30 - 16.00** Tea break
- **18.00 - 19.00** Dinner

The Nature of Acceptance

By *Richard Sell*



Naassom Azevedo

Imagine you are standing on one side of a river and you want to reach a spot on the other side. You dive in and start swimming but you have forgotten to take the river's current into account. You step up your efforts but no matter how hard you try you cannot quite overcome the currents. When you finally touch the bank on the other side you are quite some distance away from where you intended to be

We may not like to admit it, but our life follows a similar trajectory. People and events act upon our life, diverting us from what we think is our chosen path. The world's marketing machine of self-help gurus tells us that simple grit, coupled with positive thinking will overcome all. But as the ancient philosophers argued, we should instead make peace with the fact that life is dynamic and changing and we cannot control everything. Knowing what we can overcome and what just must be weathered is the art of *viveka* (discrimination).

Why is this so? As human beings, we seem hardwired to want to control the environment around us. This stems from a fear of the unknown, of change that will bring the unknown closer to us. Change is one of the few constants and we readily accept the phrase 'this too will pass', without actually believing it. We somehow think

things will remain the same.

In *The Secret Doctrine*, we hear about the 'Law of Periodicity', the ebb and flow in all departments of Nature; so too in the human department. The temporary appearance and disappearance of happiness and distress over time are like the coming and going of winter and summer seasons. They arise from sense perception, and our task is to keep ourselves equanimous through the disturbances of mind and emotions.

Acceptance has a significant part to play in how we perceive life and its impact on the outer person and Inner Self. Instead of fighting against the currents in our life, we can begin to live in harmony with them, taking the opportunities for growth from them as intended by life. It is not so much what happens to us that matters, as our attitude towards the happening – we can in fact be content under circumstances which would make many other people miserable.

But this is not so easy at first. Our feelings take over, our thoughts do not stop, driving down the same old grooves and patterns that they have driven down over countless lives.

To change, we have to make a conscious effort and apply our Will power to ourselves, bringing acceptance into the equation. This does not mean turning into a passive doormat and accepting everything that comes our way.

In our spiritual quest, we walk the narrow path between wise tolerance of others and acceptance of people and situations that we may not wish for, but we also hold fast to our principles concerning the right conduct of our life. I heard some sound

advice many years ago that goes like this: *"Give way in the small things but hold fast when matters of ethical principles are involved"*.

In Madame Blavatsky's *Golden Stairs*, we hear three lines that go like this: *'a courageous endurance of personal injustice, a brave declaration of principles, a valiant defence of those who are unjustly attacked'*

Let us explore these statements a little – *'a courageous endurance of personal injustice'* – what does this really mean?

On one level it will mean gritting our teeth to get through the unpleasant experience, but on a deeper level she might be talking about accepting our personal karma without getting riled up and resentful about it. By accepting karma that is due, which is better faced now than put off into the future, we can reap the benefit of the intended lesson now, rather than fearfully trying to avoid the circumstances and learning nothing.

It is after all an opportunity to learn more about the current personality, our push buttons, our levels of patience and tolerance. Importantly it is a chance to put into action our theosophical principles. It is an opportunity for achieving spiritual growth. One might say it is like the butterfly that has to push against the shell of the chrysalis to get the blood pumping into the wings, strengthening them as it does so. These trials are like our strengthening, pushing against the shell, of our current spiritual limitations.



The Soul may well have prearranged such trials before our incarnation.

H.P. Blavatsky said: *"Do not be afraid of your difficulties. Do not wish you could be in other circumstances than you are. For when you have made the best of an adversity, it becomes the stepping stone to a splendid opportunity."*

When so-called bad things happen to us, especially those that we feel are a personal injustice, we can reflect on this and hope to endure the experience, learn from it, rise above it and grow.

To help us succeed in this task is where 'a brave declaration of principles' comes in. Will we barter our principles away at the first sign of trouble or will we stand by our principles knowing it may very well end badly for us? What are these principles she speaks of?

In Madame Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy*, the enquirer asks, *"Have you any ethical*

system that you carry out in the Society?" and the Theosophist answers:

"The ethics are there, ready and clear enough for whomsoever would follow them. They are the essence and cream of the world's ethics, gathered from the teachings of all the world's great reformers. Therefore, you will find represented therein Confucius and Zoroaster, Lao-tze and the Bhagavad-Gita, the precepts of Gautama Buddha and

Jesus of Nazareth, of Hillel and his school, as of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and their schools."

When we adhere to living life according to the principles and ethics that we aspire towards we remain true to ourselves. Are we prepared to declare them and live by them even when faced with hostility and rejection? We also know the good opinion of the crowd, that fickle barometer, is rarely worth having. Master Serapis in a letter to Colonel Olcott wrote: *'Brother mine, he who cares for the opinion of the multitude will never soar above the crowd.'*

This brings us to the third line: *'a valiant defence of those who are unjustly attacked.'* In *The Voice of the Silence* we read *'Let not the fierce Sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye. But let each burning human tear drop on thy heart and there remain, nor ever brush it off, until the pain that caused it is removed.'*

So in daily life for example, perhaps we see bullying in the workplace and speak up. By putting our head above the parapet, we risk getting it lopped off. If we do suffer for holding fast to our convictions, then we fall back on our first line: *'a courageous endurance of personal injustice.'*

This line, *'a valiant defence of those who are unjustly attacked'*, is a call to action (being Karma Yoga), a recognition that each person is a brother or sister. We are fellow pilgrims on this planet and linked as one. New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, famously said after the Christchurch mosque massacre in 2019, *"They are us"*, which I think describes well the theosophical principle of the Oneness of all Life.

Clay Banks



One of the biggest errors we make is seeing others as separate to ourselves. We focus on the differences, often not liking them, and this breeds a certain level of contempt and therefore intolerance. Intolerance is the act of not accepting people as they are or things as they happen. We try and shape them to our own views instead of letting people find their own way. We each have our own lessons to learn and we learn in different ways – some faster, some slower. Ours is not to interfere with the development of others unless asked.

Voltaire asked, 'What is tolerance?'

He replied: 'it is a necessary consequence of humanity. We are all fallible, let us then pardon each other's follies. This is the first principle of natural right.' Some quotes about intolerance may help us here:

'In the practice of tolerance, one's enemy is the best teacher.' – Dalai Lama

'Tolerance isn't about not having beliefs. It's about how your beliefs lead you to treat people who disagree with you.' – Timothy Keller

'Tolerance becomes a crime when applied to evil.' – Thomas Mann

Less well-known is the paradox of tolerance, expressed by philosopher Karl Popper:

'Unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them.'

Intolerance is often based on fears. Our attitude towards acceptance is not only just based on things that are – or have been. What of the future? One of the biggest threats we face is our mind's ability to make up all sorts of 'stories' which play on these fears. For example, we have a small disagreement with our boss and we think we will be fired and start fretting about how we will pay the rent. These fears can take hold of us, taking us out of living in the now, and forcing us to live in some made-up world, where the future is bleak leading to worry, anxiety and so on. I am sure we all do it to an extent. The best advice I have learned to deal with this comes from the Master Kuthumi:

'Indulge not in apprehensions of what evil might happen if things should not go as your worldly wisdom thinks they ought; doubt not, for this complexion of doubt unnerves and pushes back one's progress. To have cheerful confidence and hope is quite another thing from giving way to the fool's blind optimism: the wise man never fights misfortune in advance.'

We cannot escape suffering however and it is something we all experience, probably at many points in our life. Our attitude to dealing with suffering helps shape our ability to voluntarily move beyond it and bring acceptance into our life. Suffering is resistance to what is and is created only by



Joice Kelly

oneself. Suffering deepens us and starts to erode the sense of self-importance.

Some say that the soul grows through suffering. This is not exactly so. It is by making mistakes and in the way we meet difficulties that we learn. Suffering invariably comes as a result of the mistakes; yet the growth does not take place during the suffering, but afterwards. A person may be better after an operation, but the improvement does not take place while the operation is being performed.

As we hear in *Light on the Path*, it is in the silence which follows the storm that the flower blooms. We must have gone through the turmoil of battle before we gain the reward, the real unfoldment of the soul. HPB said: *'Woe to those who live without suffering. Stagnation and death are the future of all that vegetates without change. And how can there be any change for the better without proportionate suffering during the preceding stage?'*

Moving beyond suffering and sense of personal injury, leads to forgiveness. Forgiveness can be very hard at times but ultimately, it is necessary for healing and moving forward. It helps to remind ourselves that those who do us an injury are really just messengers of our own karma, deliverers of experiences we need to go through in order to learn and grow. Nurture forgiveness, for it is very powerful, and the *Mahabharata* states:

'One should forgive, under any injury.'

It hath been said that the continuation of the species is due to man's being forgiving. Forgiveness is holiness; by forgiveness the universe is held together. Forgiveness is the might of the mighty; forgiveness is sacrifice; forgiveness is quiet of mind. Forgiveness and gentleness are the qualities of the Self-possessed. They represent eternal virtue.'

One of the biggest barriers to true acceptance is 'regret', which can be very powerful in self-reflection. In this process we aim to understand where we can do things differently. For example, if someone's feeling regret that they haven't used their time well, that they have been too caught up in their career, realising they don't know their children well and their marriage is on the rocks, then having regret in that moment can be a trigger to making positive change in their life patterns. Regret has then done its job and can be let go. Wallowing in regret without positive change is harmful.

Our ability to let go and accept is always filtered through the lens of our own worldview. When misfortune comes our way and hits us hard at times, how do we respond? Do we respond with negativity such as hate, revenge, and a strengthening of mistrust in others, or do we allow it to develop within us compassion, love, humility, and acceptance. Which road we travel on depends on how we view things – our worldview, if you will. Wayne Dyer put it well:

"With everything that has happened to you, you can either feel sorry for yourself or treat what has happened as a gift. Everything is either an opportunity to grow or an obstacle



Aaron Burden



Thomas Bjornstad

to keep you from growing. **You get to choose.**"

By acceptance of things as they are, not as we would have them, we can begin to live lives that are in harmony with Nature and the universe. We will witness a change in our own fundamental nature. Unhappiness slips away and contentment pervades. The true nature of acceptance enriches both the Soul and outer 'personality' of the man or woman. We become that calm centre in the whirlpool of life.

Understanding the nature of acceptance is of immeasurable aid to the seekers as they battle courageously on and eventually stand in awe, in the deep silence on the threshold, reaching out towards the light. ✨

From Vol. 142. 3 December 2020, *The Theosophist*.



Richard Sell is a life long theosophist, growing up in a theosophical family and he joined the Society when he was 16 years old. Richard has been President of Auckland's HPB Lodge for six years and also serves on the Governance

Board and is the Chair of the Board.

**You give but little
when you give of your possessions.**

**It is when you give of yourself
that you truly give.**

Khalil Gibran



World Federation of Young Theosophists

A newly re-ignited Federation made by young people, for young people with the aim of engaging in the propagation of Theosophy to help more and more people find their way.

“We are the reactivated World Federation of Young Theosophists (WFYT), seekers of the truth through the quest of life...”

The Young Theosophists movement first came into being in 1923 at the Vienna Congress. In 1935 at the Diamond Jubilee Convention; The Theosophical Society formed the World Federation of Young Theosophists (WFYT) with George S. Arundale as Honorary President, Srimati Rukmini Devi Arundale as President, and John Coats and Alex Elmore as joint Secretaries. In 1962, John Coats was elected President.

The history of the federation from 1962 onwards has proved quite difficult to trace, with bits and pieces of information scattered in the Adyar archives. Since 1999, it appears the Federation was dormant for two decades.

WFYT Re-ignited

In 2020, inspired by the former initiatives, a group of young Theosophists started to work towards the revival and strengthening of the Theosophical Movement among young members throughout the globe. From 3-7 June 2022, an in-person gathering of young

theosophists under the physical age of forty years old took place at the International Theosophical Centre (ITC) in Naarden (Netherlands). This was the first in-person gathering of young theosophists since the global pandemic began in 2020; with 31 participants from 16 different countries in attendance. It was during this event that the World Federation of Young Theosophists was re-ignited. The objectives of the Federation are:

1. To strengthen the sense of global community, collaboration and practical brotherhood amongst young theosophists.
2. To support it's mother institution, The Theosophical Society based in Adyar, in the accomplishment of it's objectives and mission which is stated as follows: *"To service humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realization of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual self-transformation, and the unity of all life."*
3. To prepare young theosophists to act as workers for the Theosophical Movement.

The Federation is made up of a Board of seven officers, 26 representatives from each country, including England and Wales, and Northern Ireland; and a number of volunteers from around the globe. The group are currently working on a number of projects and activities, including:

- Art manifestations (a collection of theosophical art)
- Children's books
- English lessons

- Lodge leadership training
- WFYT podcast
- In-person events
- Social media profiles (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter)
- Bi-weekly international theosophy discussion groups
- Youth outreach (finding new members)

The young theosophist movement was originally established so that younger members of the Theosophical Society could

"For those of us growing up at the turn of the 21st century, we are at a unique point within the development of humanity. We are the first generation in modern times with the ability to connect with each other instantly, across the globe; it allows us to build something that has never existed before. The World Federation of Young Theosophist (WFYT) is a grass-roots organization within the Theosophical Society (Adyar) we can use to grow together, in a Theosophical direction, and forge bonds that will last for the rest of our lives."

WFYT Board of Officers

express themselves and have input at lodge meetings and lodge programming. Today, the Federation aims to create content and events that can engage all young theosophists, helping them to connect, to discover their talents and know their individuality, so that they may live a theosophical-led life.



Upcoming Events

The next international gathering of young theosophists organised by the WFYT will take place from 9-15 June 2023 at the International Theosophical Centre (ITC) in Naarden (Netherlands). The Centre is part of the International Theosophical Society, with a unique and sacred atmosphere, and aims to

foster the principle of Universal Brotherhood and Peace through various spiritual activities.

This International Gathering of Young Theosophists will follow the theme of *‘The Path of Cooperation and the Spiritual Life’* and aims to *‘bring together like-minded people from all over the world during a few days, to work*

and inquire alongside each other with a spirit of community and cooperation, connecting and bonding during a few days whilst surrounded by the beautiful nature of the Centre.’

This week-long immersive workshop will involve interactive informational talks, volunteer work, meditation, and the sharing of spiritual experiences. As an attendee you will have the opportunity to take part in discussions around the gifts and challenges involved in the development of spiritual intuition and unity consciousness, and you will explore the possibilities for cooperative work with each rung of the Ladder of Lives, focusing on safety for yourself and for other beings.

Guest speakers will include Kurt Leland and International President Tim Boyd. Kurt Leland is an International Lecturer for the Theosophical Society in Adyar, a musician, visionary and author of books including *Otherwhere: A Field Guide for Astral Travellers and The Multidimensional Human*. He specialises in the third object of the TS: the investigation of unknown laws of nature and the powers latent in humanity; and has been described as one of today’s most intrepid explorers of the inner planes.

Tim Boyd is the eighth International President of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, serving since April 2014. He has lectured in many countries around the globe, including the USA, South America, Europe, Asia and New Zealand; and has written and published in many theosophical journals. His involvement with the Theosophical order of Service (TOS) and the Chushul orphanage in Tibet led him to an audience with the Dalai

“Theosophy is certainly a beacon that can illuminate our path.”

Elena Bessie Camplone,
Media Officer, WFYT



Lama in Iowa in 2010.

If you are a young member of the TSE and are interested in attending this event, visit the WFYT website at www.wfyt.org.

WFYT Membership

If you are under the physical age of forty years old, and are currently a member of the Theosophical Society in England and Wales, you are welcome to become a member of the WFYT. For more information or to express your interest in becoming a member, please get in touch with the WFYT Board of Officers at info.wfyt@gmail.com.

A Message From Your TSE/WFYT Representative for England and Wales

"My birth name is Bethan Vaughan, my soul name is Avina. I am a Reiki Practitioner and channel, and your representative for England and Wales. Like many of us, I was not brought up in a Theosophical household, and I do not have a particularly religious background. I was led to the TSE nearly three years ago, after

pursuing a more committed spiritual practice at the age of 25 years. Finding the TSE and the WFYT has been truly life-changing for me. The connection I feel to each member, however 'far away' you are is wonderfully profound, I feel very blessed to have found you all here.

As a representative, I appear on behalf of the TSE and the young members of England and Wales at WFYT meetings and events and act as a link or contact person between the WFYT Board of Officers, the general members of the Federation and the TSE. My role is to be informed of the day-to-day activities of both the WFYT and of the young members of my region.

With inspiration and support from both the TSE and the WFYT, I am keen to establish our very own youth group here in the UK, for young theosophists living in England and Wales who are under the physical age of forty years old. If you are interested in being a part of this group, or in being a member of the Management Committee, please get in touch with me at bethanvaughan14@googlemail.com. I look forward to hearing from you. ✨



Bethan Vaughan is a Reiki practitioner and channel and WFYT representative for England and Wales.

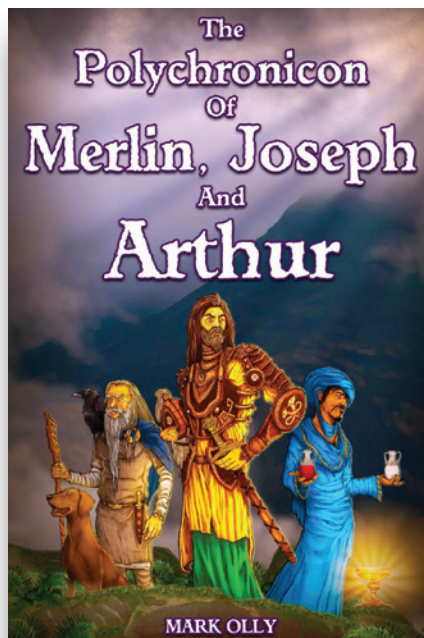
Book Review

The Polychronicon of Merlin, Joseph and Arthur

by Mark Olly

Imagine the most popular heroic story ever written, one which spans three millennia and goes to the very heart of the largest religion in the world, but which has now almost entirely devolved into myth. Ignored and avoided by the establishment, shunned and unexplored by archaeologists and historians, consigned to the back-rooms of academic study, yet everyone knows the characters and the plot - the tales of King Arthur and his Knights Of The Round Table. But no-one knows the reality! Or do they?

Suppose everything you thought you knew about King Arthur was invented by an invading foreign power unsympathetic to the truth and seeking to subvert and overthrow a long and ancient existing regime? Suppose the incredible truth was a story so strong and so mysterious that it could support an entire nation through its truly darkest hours and, perhaps, re-invent that same nation



for a new Millennium?

Here at last is what survives of that ancient truth.

The Polychronicon is a '*symphony of history*' over 45 years in the making, stretching from the end of the Greeks to the rise of the Tudors, focussing especially on topics which impact directly on the mythology of Merlin, Joseph of Arimathea, and Arthur, reconstructing the entire supposedly lost history of the Dark Ages from actual source materials written down at the time. This

'*symphony*' rises to a grand finale listing the majority of actual surviving written material clearly showing that Ancient Britain is nowhere as 'dark' as some would have you believe.

This is real history and archaeology, not just the invention of creative minds, and it reveals incidents and characters as they really were, listed in chronological order, leaving the impression that Britain has always been a very different place to the one painted by popular history. Merlin becomes one of an ancient line of Pythagorean scholars and political visionaries, Joseph of Arimathea a religious dissident fleeing persecution and death to far off foreign shores, Arthur a hardened womanising battle leader who loses his entire family and culture to war and eventually natural disaster.

For the first time ever the Saxons, Danes and Vikings are placed into an Arthurian context, associated legends are examined, international sources investigated, completing missing developments that led to the medieval legends we now know so well, revealing the real and surprising geography of Arthur's Britain and the 'Old North'. This is a book that will enable you to unearth a whole host of

Endorsements by **John Matthews** and **Adrian Laing**

real religious and historic conspiracies previously shrouded by myths.

If you want the whole truth about Arthur, the Holy Grail, Camelot, Excalibur, the Round Table, heroic knights, Guinevere, the 'Matter of Britain' and where this all took place, the popular and easy to read 'Polychronicon' is certainly the book for you.

The Polychronicon of Merlin, Joseph and Arthur is available at Amazon UK. Search Mark Olly books.

Endorsements

"Mark Olly has achieved the seemingly impossible in gathering together virtually every source and theory connected to the Arthurian legends in one place. Here are works that describe Merlin, works that deal with the enigmatic Grail, and of course the incredibly rich field of Arthurian studies, focussing on who he was, and if he was, and when and where he lived.... There is much here to argue over, much that many will disagree with.

There are theories from the wilder end of the spectrum, and others that are based on solid research and scholarship. This actually makes it a richer brew than one normally

encounters, and raises almost as many questions as it answers.

It is, indeed, a book that every student of Arthurian matters should have on their desk, and even if they do not read every page of its imposing bulk, they will certainly find things to consider, question, contemplate and dig deeper into. I wish I had had this book in my collection 40 years ago when I set out to explore the Arthurian legends. It is such a vast field that something like this book is an absolute necessity. We should all be grateful to Mark Olly for bravely doing the job."

John Matthews is co-author of 'The Complete King Arthur' and many others.

"Mark Olly's 'The Polychronicon of Merlin, Joseph and Arthur' is a work of unprecedented scope and ambition. It covers, with great authority and discipline, a huge historical landscape which embraces the legends and myths of Arthur, Merlin and Joseph of Arimathea."

The strength and integrity of this work lies in the author's ability to navigate his way through history's thick fog of stories, myths and tales to impose some sort of coherence over an incredibly entangled web of sense and

nonsense which has accumulated over hundreds of years. This is no mean feat; Mark Olly's archaeological professional roots provide him with the analytical tools to stay true to the work's intended aim of 'reconstructing the entire supposedly lost history of the Dark Ages from actual source materials written down at the time'.

For anyone remotely interested in what we call 'history', 'The Polychronicon of Merlin, Joseph and Arthur' should not be thought of as 'recommended' but compulsory reading."

Adrian Laing is the author of KOSMOS and many others.

The contents of the *Esoterica* magazine are chosen to inspire and enlighten the reader by reminding them of the oneness of life and the brotherhood of humanity. Your helpful comments and suggestions are most welcome.

If you would like to submit an article or letter for inclusion in a future edition of *Esoterica* please send it for consideration to Julie - esoterica@theosoc.org.uk

About The Theosophical Society

Three Objects of the Theosophical Society

1. *To form a nucleus of universal Brotherhood without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.*
2. *To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.*
3. *To investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man.*

The Theosophical Society is a worldwide community whose primary Object is the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction, based on the realisation that life and all its diverse forms, human and non-human, is indivisibly One.

Founded in 1875, the Society draws together those of goodwill whatever their religious affiliation (if any), social status, gender or ethnicity. The Society promotes such understanding through the study and practical application of the Ageless Wisdom of Theosophy.

The International Mission Statement of the Society is: *'To serve humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realization of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual Self-transformation, and the Unity of all Life.'*

Unity lies at the very heart of the theosophical community and inspires the lives of its members towards unselfish service and inner transformation. Divine Wisdom is One – the paths towards it are many.

The word 'Theosophy' is from Greek origin meaning Wisdom of the Gods (*theo* – of Gods; *Sophia* – wisdom). It is a word which has been used for many centuries and is also known as the Ageless Wisdom.

The Society imposes no beliefs on its members, who are united by a common search for Truth and a desire to learn the meaning and purpose of existence through study, reflection, self-responsibility and self-less service.

It jealously guards and promotes freedom of thought and no member may impose their views on any other.

Since *Esoterica* is available both in printed form and online please let us know if you would prefer to stop receiving the printed version, either by filling out the form below and posting to **50 Gloucester Place, London W1U 8EA**, or contacting **office@theosoc.org.uk**

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Last Words

"Be this as it may, the religion of the ancients is the religion of the future. A few centuries more and there will be no sectarian beliefs in any of the great religions of humanity. Brahmanism Buddhism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism will all disappear before the powerful avalanche of facts."

HPB, *Isis Unveiled* - Vol 1 page p.613

*When you make the two one and
When you make the inner as the outer and the above
As below, and when
You make the male and the female into a single one
Then you shall enter the kingdom.*

The Gospel of Thomas



ESOTERICA

INSIGHTS INTO THE AGELESS WISDOM

Esoterica, the journal of the Theosophical Society in England,
is a magazine for the inquiring and the curious.
It is for those seeking spiritual answers to those big questions of life:

Who are we?
Where did we come from?
What's our purpose and destiny in life?

Its mission is to explore those timeless truths, occult knowledge and universal laws
which pre-date but underpin all philosophy, science and religion.
We offer thought-provoking and original interpretations
of these fascinating ideas from the perennial philosophy
to unlock the secrets of ourselves and the cosmos.

Above all, it's our intention to offer not just dry theory but, wherever possible,
practical solutions to the difficult issues which face every one of us.

The next edition will appear on the autumn equinox,
23rd September 2023.

